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The Critique of Onto-Theo-Logy: Kierkegaard and Later Heidegger

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Short Abstract

My thesis looks to the ongoing debate regarding the relationship between Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1854) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Although there has been significant research into their relationship, there has been little that engages with the continued resonances between Kierkegaard and Heidegger's later work. My thesis looks specifically at the critiques of onto-theo-logy offered by Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger. I argue that there are significant areas of structural resonance between them, with Heidegger often articulating neopagan content. They each argue that the problems of onto-theo-logical thinking manifest in society, leading to a problematic self-understanding of its members. They each show the intertwined nature of repetition/retrieval and the restarting of philosophy, the leap, and the moment or event. I further contend that each of them identifies the problematic nature of the autonomous ideal subject who is supposed to be a self-determining, self-causing originator of their own destiny. I suggest that they each present a critique of linear causality, finding the subject-object dichotomy problematic. I develop this to suggest that there is an element of critique of the Subject as a cause in productionist metaphysics and that each suggests ways in which artistic production must be considered a participation in aiding the thing into being rather than a mode of ownership and a locale of meaning for what is produced. This is an unusual approach to the issue of their relationships. I also argue that each sees a call to which the individual responds to leap out of onto-theo-logy and into participation and reciprocity in the revelation of truth.

Long Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Their relationship has been and continues to be a fecund locus of debate in theology and philosophy, both continental and analytic. However, the majority of the received literature that has emerged on the nature of their relationship has been confined to Heidegger's earlier work and *Being and Time* (1927). There are a number of exceptions to this rule, including work from Noreen Khawaja, Gerhard Thonhauser, and George Pattison, which will be discussed. A long-standing assumption that Heidegger's resonances with Kierkegaard wane after the publication of his magnum opus, and the 'turn' in Heidegger's authorial focus in the 1930's, will be challenged through this thesis. I show that these resonances continue past his authorial turn and into the work of the 1940's and 1950's.

Rather than attempting to place one or the other of my thinkers into frameworks which are foreign to them, I read my thinkers as having structural resonances and I show that Heidegger's content is often neopagan or postmonotheist. I argue that Heidegger's rearticulations of Kierkegaard's categories may be utilised to aid redescriptions of Christian concepts which avoid the inherent problems of the onto-theo-logical. Conversely, reading them as companions may also address some of the problems in Kierkegaard's reception, which have read him as solipsistic and somewhat of a Christian Nietzsche with an overhang from German Idealism vis-à-vis the Subject. I argue throughout, against this trend and in agreement with David Kangas and others, that Kierkegaard's self or subject is not identical to that of German Idealism, since Kierkegaard's subject is shattered in the abyss and rendered transparent before a wholly other God. Kierkegaard's subject, despite Heidegger's claims, is not the Creating Subject of productionist metaphysics or onto-theo-ego-logy.

As such, my thesis looks specifically to Heidegger's later work and its confluences and divergences with Kierkegaard, with particular reference to their critiques of onto-theo-logy and their suggestions for destabilising the problematic state of affairs in which onto-theo-logical thinking has left us. Heidegger uses this term to indicate the intrinsic linking together of God and Being in the tradition of metaphysics derived from Plato and especially Aristotle, which became the locus for Christian patristic, scholastic and modern theology and philosophy, particularly Hegelianism. This 'God of Philosophy' places God in the position of *causa sui* or *causa efficiens* which in turn locates meaning within metaphysical categories and not within lived encounters. This effectively reduces God to what can be thought humanly of Godself and precludes any genuine engagement with the divine, whilst simultaneously limiting our engagement with Being (or *beyng*). Whilst Kierkegaard does not use the term 'onto-theo-logy', I argue that his critique of Hegelian speculation and German Idealism nonetheless takes aim at the reduction of God to an object of human thought and the elevation of the Subject to a God-like perspective.

Tacitly agreeing that there are parallels in the earlier Heidegger, I show not only that there is a strong resonance between the content of Kierkegaard's and the later Heidegger's specific critiques on onto-theo-logy and linear causality, but also in the structure of the suggestions for overcoming these. I argue that each find onto-theo-logy insufficient as a means for describing reality, for it focusses on abstractions which suggest that reality may be observed from a static standpoint by human individuals as though the observer is somehow outside of that reality. Moreover, each finds this a dangerous position to attempt to maintain, for it closes off new possibilities for thought and reduces the difference between individuals. In turn, this attempts to elide the difference between humanity and divinity, and God and Being.

Each thinker shows that a retrieval or repetition of those possibilities is needed to try to save the human essence, to participation with the saving truth, whether that is expressed as divine revelation or 'unconcealment' (Heidegger's famous and important translation of the Greek *aletheia*, usually translated 'truth'). Each argues that in order to engage with this, the individual requires a step back from the onto-theo-logical worldview and a leap into the abyss (Kierkegaard's/Lessing's 'broad ugly ditch' or Heidegger's 'fissure'). Moreover, each suggests that these possibilities need to be engaged within the moment, or the event (of appropriation) in the later Heidegger, which requires a different sort of articulation of time that does not resolve into a series of 'nows'. Importantly, this also implies a rearticulation of causality since we do not have direct and objective knowledge of how things come to presence from out of their abyssal beginnings qua pre-emergent possibility.

I argue that neither of my thinkers positions the existing subject/Dasein as a self-determining, self-causing originator of their own destiny. This is potentially contentious, since both are commonly read as primarily interested in the individual's/Dasein's freedom to choose the authentic self and repeatedly actualise that self, in an ongoing process of self-determined self-realisation. However, I maintain that both Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger come to argue that freely responding to and participating in a call from a source beyond ourselves, and beyond our inherited thinking and social-historical situatedness, comes to constitute a possibility for becoming free from onto-theo-logy and its dangerous stagnation. I argue that this is a significant relocation of 'providence' (albeit emanating from very different locales) beyond the onto-theo-logical, which calls us out of the rigidity of onto-theo-logical linear causality. Further, I extend this argument by showing that the undermining of linear causality and linear time has significant impact on both thinkers' indirect communicative method (specifically in the later Heidegger) and also on their

understandings of authorship, in terms of repositioning the author as a participant who responds and is co-created and co-responsively caused in the writing. For, I argue, in relocating the source of inspiration outside of onto-theo-logy, each recognises and enacts a relocation of the position of the author vis-à-vis the text. This is itself a significant area of resonance between the two and, more than this, it is an important implication of both of their critiques of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

This dissertation consists of an extensive introduction which includes a literature review, five chapters and a conclusion, as detailed below:

Introduction

I briefly introduce the thinkers and the broad strokes of the nature and critique of onto-theo-logy, explaining the relatively under-developed and often dismissive discussion of the relationship between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger. I proceed to discuss which of Kierkegaard's works Heidegger is likely to have read, with references and arguments for each of the texts I go on to employ significantly in the larger discussion. I explore his often ambiguous comments on Kierkegaard, including references to the relatively recent publications of the later GA volumes.

The literature review progresses through recent positions specific to the later Heidegger, circling to wider indicative positions on their relationship, relevant positions regarding Kierkegaardian themes in Heidegger's later work, and the conclusion of the literature review. I pay particularly close attention to the secularisation thesis (that Heidegger simply "secularises" Kierkegaard's work), specifically as is put forward by Dreyfus and critiqued by Khawaja. Khawaja's argument that using Christianity as a generic and uncritical stance

of Kierkegaard's work obscures his unique problematisation of that term and that this is particularly unhelpful regarding the critique of onto-theo-logy, since Heidegger has trouble locating Kierkegaard in that schema, is of particular help in defining my own position.

I discuss the insightful work offered by Dreyfus, Pattison, Westphal, Caputo and others, and argue that what we are missing in the discussion so far, particularly with reference to the secularisation thesis, is an apposite way of mapping the resonances and dissonances between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger vis-à-vis their critiques of onto-theo-logy. The secularisation thesis does not extend to the later work in the received literature. Arguably Heidegger's atheism changes significantly during this period. I argue that we require a model which allows us to show, with nuance, the later Heidegger's more "religious" articulations of his critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy which resonate with Kierkegaard's own problematisations of German idealism and traditional metaphysics. I therefore suggest that we can borrow from Herman Phillipse in this regard, thinking about Heidegger's later work in terms of exhibiting a 'post-monotheistic leitmotif' (which Phillipse suggested was part of Heidegger laying out the foundations for a neopagan Nazi religion). Insofar as Phillipse argues that Heidegger's earlier reversal of Luther and his new post-onto-theo-logical (or post-monotheistic) religion is dependent on the religious structures he critiques, I suggest that we may draw parallels between Phillipse's argument and that of the secularisation thesis. I proceed to argue that his model allows us to take into account and avoid the pitfalls of Khawaja's criticisms of the secularisation thesis (the ambiguity of 'secularising' concepts and the false idea that the secular is ipso facto more formalised than the religious). Moreover, I argue that borrowing Phillipse's model allows us to divest ourselves of the idea of an undifferentiated 'Christianity' to which Kierkegaard belongs in relation to Heidegger, and I argue that Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy runs parallel to Kierkegaard's critique of

speculation in much the same way that Phillipse shows his post-monotheistic religion utilises the same structure as the Lutheran Christianity which it seeks to subvert.

I proceed to posit the work of Harold Bloom and Julia Kristeva as a backdrop against which to consider the Kierkegaard-Heidegger relationship, suggesting that their relationship is one of creative misprision and intertextual meaning. This allows greater nuance into the conversation, for Kierkegaard and Heidegger are not opposite thinkers. I progress the discussion to the nature of linear influence and inheritance, suggesting that since each effaces their own authorial authority, and destabilises the idea of the author as first cause of their text, using a simplistic concept of influence is disingenuous to the nature of their work and this project. I propose that Heidegger performs a powerful and creative misprision on Kierkegaard's critique of speculation and his suggested routes beyond the onto-theo-logical. I suggest that destabilising authorial influence aids the thesis in terms of articulation and flexibility which is needed to strike the right tone for the combined critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. I further extend this to suggest that both authors also critique linear causality and by extension the place of the subject in 'productionist metaphysics'. Overall, I argue that whilst the content of Heidegger's later work is often neo-pagan, the structure remains remarkably Kierkegaardian.

Chapter One

The first chapter works through the bulk of the critiques that each thinker offers. I discuss the Kierkegaardian critique of German Idealism and Christendom, identifying the main thrusts of his argument. I suggest that Kierkegaard's discussion of the philosopher's act of abstraction, 'smuggling' movement into the system, and the system's inability to fulfil its promise in that it forgets the existing human being in positing a false God-like perspective

for the existing subject, all show a critique of the onto-theo-(ego)-logical. I argue that the ‘objective categories of reflection’ are onto-theo-logical categories, locking meaning away from moving, living, and existing. I move on to discuss Kierkegaard’s critique of Christendom and how this plays out as social levelling and as a form of despair. With reference to Kangas, I suggest that Kierkegaard’s self is shattered in relation to the infinite, and any other concept of that relationship (of infinite qualitative difference) is a form of despair.

In moving to discuss Heidegger’s critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, in conversation with Hegel, and his discussion of many related concepts including the thing (as opposed to the object), distancelessness, the *Weltbild* (a phenomenon of modern onto-theo-ego-logical thinking), the fourfold, *Gestell*, *Bestand*, *Techne* and so on, I emphasise Heidegger’s discussion of the four causes as a co-responsive and co-responsible coming about with relation to *poiesis*. I argue that Heidegger’s development of his critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy is strongly structurally resonant with Kierkegaard’s, and that Kierkegaard’s critique provided insight, structure and material for Heidegger’s critique.

Chapter Two

I discuss the nature of Kierkegaard’s category of repetition with reference to several scholars, arguing that the re-opening of past possibilities, and the subversion of Aristotelian *kinesis*, suggest a critique of onto-theo-logy. Heidegger’s explicit use of this category throughout *BT* and through the later work as his defining method is a significant confluence between them, and it fits well with the adopted framework borrowed from Phillipse and with the argument from the position of Bloomian creative misprision. Furthermore, I argue that Heidegger develops ‘retrieval’ as the second or other beginning in his later work.

Chapter Three

The third chapter addresses the nature of the 'leap' for each thinker. I take the opportunity to address a prevailing misreading of Kierkegaard: that his leap is purely volitionistic and advocates a Nietzschean self-willed superman. Kierkegaard's leap is not a purely volitional act. Rather, as Ferreira argues, the leap is a decision to surrender. I proceed to discuss the nature of the abyss. For Kierkegaard, this is not Lessing's ditch, but rather it is a realisation of our abyssal dwelling.

I address Heidegger's leap in relation to the fissure of being and discuss of the need for patience and a passive element in becoming vulnerable and awaiting revelation or realisation. I argue that there are resonances in terms of the leap as a realisation and of a change in the individual rather than in the circumstance within which the individual finds themselves. This results in a need for patient vigil. A further shared element is that each thinker uses the leap to express a movement away from onto-theo-(ego)-logical thinking as both a decision by the leaper and as provided by a possibility from outside of the leaper. It is also a leap in thought for both thinker, although Heidegger expresses it in more neo-pagan language and imagery.

Chapter Four

The fourth chapter argues that the moment and Ereignis continue to exhibit Heidegger's earlier adoption of Augenblick in some respects, but that the idea is developed with respect to the historical occurrence of *Ereignis*. Although the earlier Heidegger of BT misunderstands Kierkegaard's moment as a series of nows in relation to a 'nunc sans'

eternity, Kierkegaard's moment relates to the future of the incognito of the eternal. As such, the eternal is placed into the category of possibility not the onto-theo-logically static category of eternity. I argue with Pattison that Heidegger's later articulation of the event as cor-responsive and requiring com-passion between Da-sein and Beyng fits very well with Kierkegaard's earlier discussion of the touching between time and eternity in the moment. There is an implied critique of causality here, where Kierkegaard argues that which comes about in the moment emerges from an obscured origin in simultaneity rather than from linear progression. Their arguments regarding time and eternity exhibit a shared concern about the God-like perspective of eternity falsely attributed to existing individuals. For both, the moment is groundless and aletheiological. The abyss that they each discuss is anarchic and ungrounding: for Kierkegaard this is the encounter with Godself, for Heidegger it is the mirrorplay of the fourfold. This is a very good example of my argument that Heidegger's later critique and suggested route for overcoming of onto-theo-logy chimes with a Kierkegaardian structure whilst holding with a neopagan articulation.

Chapter Five

The fifth chapter discusses the nature of governance and the destining of beyng (Geschick), which is sent by beyng. With regard to Kierkegaard, the hidden and yet personal nature of God's guidance is how and why he became an author. Governance is his co-author, and he expressed his indirection as an author in similar terms to the little nudges and hints that he is gifted by Governance. I strongly argue that Kierkegaard uses his method to reflect his relationship with Governance in his authorship: he is self-effacing in terms of his authorial 'I' and uses indirect communication. Further, I argue that the existential encounter and relationship with governance as unobtrusive guide and guardian is indicative not of a First

Cause of onto-theo-logy but of a radically other God who defies the abyss and the infinite qualitative difference as an act of divine love which transgresses onto-theo-logy.

I argue that Heidegger's discussion and development of 'destiny' as the sending of beyng which sends itself and gives itself shows a kind of repetition of possibilities in each epochal sending of beyng which acts to disrupt and undermine a linear or deterministic reading of fate and destiny. This is reflected in his expression of epochal change and destiny as well as his own understanding of authorial practice as a response to *Geschick*. Although Heidegger does not attest to a personal God who provides guidance, there remains nonetheless an intimate element in participating in the sending of being.

I argue that there are resonances here, albeit not as markedly as with the other aspects. Kierkegaard discusses a unique relationship with a radically personal God where Heidegger discusses the sending of Beyng as playing out through epochal changes. However, Kierkegaard's decentring of his authorial self challenges the idea of a known creator available for questioning which is resonant with Heidegger's discussion of beyng as *aletheia*.

Conclusion

I conclude that the most significant and pervasive areas of confluence between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger relate to the critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, most specifically the critiques of linear causality which each specifically linked to the creation of objects/subjects in onto-theo-(ego)-logy, the place of individuals in creative processes and the denial of the creating Subject of German Idealism and productionist metaphysics. Each relates these critiques to repetition, the leap, the moment/*Er-eignis* and Governance/*Geschick*. I suggest that this underlying drive to destabilise linear causality and the creating Subject is inherently

theological in the work of both thinkers, and that it may suggest important ways in which we could begin to rephrase traditional theological concepts and doctrines away from the onto-theo-logical.

I believe that taken altogether this thesis constitutes a significant and unique contribution to the discussion of the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger with particular theological significance. The adoption of Phillipse's model, literary theory and the suggestions for structural resonances between the two thinkers' critiques with the content differing between Kierkegaard's challenge to Christianity as a Christian thinker and Heidegger as a thinker setting up a neopagan religion with reference to their critiques offer a unique perspective and articulation of their relationship. It may also provide insight and potential material for ongoing projects in philosophy and continental philosophy of religion.

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Arwyn Ellery Marlon Davies;

to my father, Paul Charles Davies;

and is written in loving memory of my mother, Gwendoline Jean Davies (1952-2018),
who I miss every day.

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Writing this dissertation has been a life-changing experience and I am immensely proud to have completed my theology doctorate at the University of Oxford. What a great privilege.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the work of Martin Heidegger, in translation

| | |
|----------|---|
| AWP | Age of the World-Picture |
| BL | Bremen Lectures |
| BT | Being and Time |
| CP | Contributions to Philosophy |
| HH | Hölderlin's Hymns |
| HPS | Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit |
| ID | Identity and Difference |
| LH | Letter on Humanism |
| MGI | The Metaphysics of German Idealism |
| NI | Nietzsche Lectures Vol 1 |
| NI I | Nietzsche Lectures Vol 2 |
| NWGID | Nietzsche's Word 'God is Dead' |
| OCM | Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics |
| OWA | Origin of the Work of Art |
| P XII-XV | Ponderings XII-XV |
| P | Parmenides |
| QCT | The Question Concerning Technology |
| TB | On Time and Being |
| TE | The Event |
| WCT | What is Called Thinking? |
| WP | Why Poets? |

Abbreviations of the work of Søren Kierkegaard, in translation

| | |
|---------|--|
| BA | Book on Adler |
| CA | The Concept of Anxiety |
| CD | Christian Discourses |
| CUP1 | Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, Vol 1 |
| CUP II | Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, Vol 2 |
| 18UD | Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses |
| E/O I | Either/Or, Volume 1 |
| E/O II | Either/Or, Volume 2 |
| FTR | Fear and Trembling; Repetition |
| JC/DODE | Johannes Climacus; or De Omnibus Dubitandum Est |
| JP | Journals and Papers |
| KJN | Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks |
| LR | A Literary Review of 'Two Ages' |
| MOM | The Moment and Late Writings |
| PF | Philosophical Fragments |
| PIC | Practice in Christianity |
| PV | The Point of View for my Work as an Author |
| SLW | Stages on Life's Way |
| SUD | The Sickness Unto Death |
| UDVS | Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits |
| WA | Without Authority |
| WOL | Works of Love |

Italics are the authors own unless stated otherwise. My references in the text are to English editions, followed by pagination. Any references to GA are borrowed from the work which is under discussion.

Introduction

This thesis examines the relationship between Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and the later work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), with particular reference to the critique of onto-theology and suggestions for its destabilisation. Heidegger's challenge to the metaphysics at the heart of Western philosophy and theology, which he characterised as onto-theology, has been profoundly influential for contemporary debates in philosophy of religion.

His later work tries to forge a profoundly new way of thinking; it is far more innovative (and more difficult) than the early work, and it has enjoyed even greater influence. The group of thinkers loosely grouped together as postmodernists all work in the shadow of the later thought.¹

Lee Braver argues that Heidegger's early work created existential phenomenology by fusing his mentor Husserl's method with Kierkegaard's concerns, and that this movement was central to contemporary continental philosophy. However, Braver argues that after Heidegger's turn in the mid-1930s, he left Kierkegaard behind.

Many books and articles on the later Heidegger do not explicitly address the question about the later Heidegger turning away from, working parallel to, or exhibiting a continuing relationship with Kierkegaard. Of course, this is to be expected, for this relationship is not the focal point of every work on (the later) Heidegger. However, such absences are sometimes telling. For example, in the 1978 collection *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, with essays from philosophers such as Hannah Arendt, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricœur, and Ludwig Wittgenstein among many other established thinkers, there is not a single

¹ Lee Braver, *Heidegger's Later Writings: Reader's Guides* (London: Continuum, 2009), p.16.

mention of Kierkegaard.² Moreover, James Reid and Rick Furtak have recently noted, Kierkegaard ‘more or less drops out of focus after *Being and Time*’.³ This thesis takes issue with such assumptions, which are at best oversimplified and at worst are overlooking an important area of research. For, I argue that regardless of what Heidegger’s own intention may have been vis-à-vis Kierkegaard in his later work, his critique of onto-theo-logy nonetheless structurally resonates with Kierkegaard’s critique of (Hegelian) speculative metaphysics, and this resonance extends to repetition/retrieval, the leap, the moment/Ereignis, and their critiques of predestination/predetermined historical outcomes.

One of the first problems that emerged during the research for this project is the problem of “influence”. For “influence” is a loaded term. Specifically, it is loaded with the weight of onto-theo-(ego)-logical⁴ thinking. What do I mean by this? I mean that onto-theo-(ego)-logical thinking, which I argue each of my thinkers critiques, is the reason why we talk about “influence” in such a way as to denote a power possessed by the influencer over the person influenced. For, onto-theo-logical thinking is characterised by cause-and-effect: by calculative thinking that dominates and excludes other possibilities for thought. Onto-theo-logy, in merging Being and the Pre-Eminent Being (God) traces causes back to the First Cause without (as Heidegger would put it) ever questioning the belonging-together of the two. In order to take seriously the content and the intent of each thinker’s critique of this

² See Michael Murray ed, *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

³ James D. Reid and Rick Anthony Furtak, ‘The Time is Out of Joint: On Social Ontology and Criticism in Kierkegaard and Heidegger’, in Roberto Sirvent, Silas Morgan eds., *Kierkegaard and Political Theology* (Wipf and Stock, 2018), p.141.

⁴ Onto-theo-logy is characterised in its modern outplaying as onto-theo-ego-logy. What this means is that the subject of German idealism and of modern philosophy more generally is raised to a privileged position. When ‘ego’ is included, I am talking specifically about the modern iteration. When it is absent, I am talking about onto-theo-logy as a whole. When bracketed, I mean to imply both and their inherent relationship.

way of thinking, I have chosen to avoid language about “influence” in this thesis, outside of the introduction. It would be antithetical to the thesis to argue that one “influences” the other in a linear way or in a way that envisages some form of creative originary power over the other. This of course throws up difficulties regarding terminology and modelling the nature of their relationship. I will discuss this further in section D of this introduction. However, it is important to raise this here, in order to preface my use of more organic and/or sound-based terms for their shared structural similarities.

The resonances between Kierkegaard and Heidegger are well-known in terms of Heidegger’s earlier work, but as we shall see there are very few such forays as regards Kierkegaardian notes in Heidegger’s later work. Comparisons, careful articulations and more than a few accusations regarding Kierkegaardian themes in Heidegger’s earlier work abound, yet the continued relationship after BT, or after Heidegger’s turn to Nietzsche and Hölderlin in the mid-1930s either ignored or is more emphatically contested. The scholarship on the relationship between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger is still emerging. Notable recent examples of studies on this include works by Noreen Khawaja and Gerhard Thonhauser,⁵ who alongside George Pattison, Hubert Dreyfus, and the work of Merold Westphal and John D. Caputo, have contributed to my exploration of the different positions on Heidegger’s later resonances with Kierkegaard. These are explored in the

⁵ Noreen Khawaja, ‘Heidegger’s Kierkegaard: Philosophy and Religion in the Tracks of a Failed Interpretation’, *The Journal of Religion* (2015), 95:3, pp.295-317; Gerhard Thonhauser, ‘Martin Heidegger Reads Søren Kierkegaard – or What Did He Actually Read?’ *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, vol. 2016, no. 1, 2016, pp.281-304; Gerhard Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen: Zum Verhältnis von Martin Heidegger und Søren Kierkegaard* (De Gruyter: Bonn, 2016); Gerhard Thonhauser, “‘Thinker without Category’”: Kierkegaard in Heidegger’s Thinking of the 1930s’, in Arne Grøn, René Rosfort and K. Brian Söderquist eds, *Kierkegaard’s Existential Approach*, Volume 35 Kierkegaard Studies. Monograph Series (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp.27-47.

literature review, below. In addition, the review includes several others (including John van Buren and Kisiel) whose work relates mainly to early Heidegger as a helpful counterpoint.⁶

This thesis builds on the important body of scholarship which has laid out some ways of approaching Heidegger's later relationship to Kierkegaard. However, I contend that the present models for understanding their relationship tend toward overly reductive characterisations of either or each thinker. This will be shown and discussed in the literature review with particular reference to the secularisation thesis. As such, I argue that we need a more flexible and organic model and I take a leaf from Herman Phillipse's book which sees Heidegger not as a covert Christian theologian nor as an atheist in the simplistic sense of non-belief but rather as attempting to build a neopagan post-monotheistic spirituality which he bases on a Christian framework. Phillipse does not discuss any Kierkegaardian resonances. I am essentially borrowing his articulation of Heidegger's model, but rather than discuss Heidegger's relationship to religion as such, I argue that the structure that Heidegger adopts specifically for his critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy resonates with Kierkegaard's critique of German idealism, whether Heidegger is aware of this or not. This structural resonance extends past the critique itself and into areas where Kierkegaard suggests alternatives to German idealism such as his category of repetition (Heidegger's (method of) 'retrieval'), his work on the moment (Heidegger's 'Ereignis'), the leap, and Kierkegaard's Governance (Heidegger's 'Geschick'). So, I argue that the content of Heidegger's critique and suggestions for overcoming onto-theo-(ego)-logy is geared toward an attempt to build

⁶ John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Indiana University Press, 1994), esp.Ch. III; Judith Wolfe, *Heidegger's Eschatology: Theological Horizons in Martin Heidegger's Early Work* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

a post-monotheistic or neopagan spirituality, but the structure of this resounds with Kierkegaard's critique of German idealism and speculative metaphysics. There are also occasionally confluences in the content of the critiques, but these are less significant than the structural resonances.

The critique of onto-theo-logy is quintessential to the later Heidegger's thinking. Since, as we will see, he tries and fails to place Kierkegaard within the boundaries of onto-theo-logy, examining the structure of this critique and its resonance with Kierkegaard and suggesting a continuing structural confluence, goes part way to explaining why Heidegger's attempt to file Kierkegaard's work away into his *Seinsgeschichte* eluded him. For, if his own critique of onto-theo-logy was (albeit perhaps unconsciously) resonant with Kierkegaard's critique of German Idealism and speculative metaphysics, it would stand to reason that attempting to explain it as a part of what he critiques would not be successful.

Early appraisals from Heideggerians characterised Kierkegaard as either radically subjectivistic or overly religious, in agreement with Heidegger's own assessment of Kierkegaard as both caught up in Hegelian metaphysics and focussed on the ontic and singular concern of salvation and religious life.⁷ This plays into a homogenising tendency to see all religious or faith-based work as inherently onto-theo-logical irrespective of the accuracy of this label. It is hoped that exploring resonances between these two famously idiosyncratic thinkers may bring up ways to rearticulate Christian faith away from some of the problematic lines of thinking to which onto-theo-logy has directed it. As such, I will

⁷On this early reception, see Edward Baring, 'A Secular Kierkegaard: Confessional Readings of Heidegger before 1945', in *New German Critique* (2015), 42:1, 67-97.

argue in the comparative sections of this thesis that the critiques and suggestions for overcoming the problematic onto-theo-(ego)-logical metaphysics that each finds damaging when taken together may lead us to helpful ways of rethinking faith-based concepts, most specifically creation (how do we think about creation if we wish to avoid thinking of God as the First Cause), eternity (how do we think about time if we wish to avoid the problematic status of traditional concepts of eternity and presence), and destiny.

I will argue that although Heidegger's critique of causality centres around a neopagan intent, he nonetheless may have found a like voice in the critique of linear, objective causality in his engagement with Kierkegaard. This will be tied in with the comparative assessments of the resonances between Kierkegaard and later Heidegger's critiques of onto-theo-(ego)-logical metaphysics. We will also reflect on the nature of human creative action, arguing that each thinker moves away from the creating Subject of German idealism and productionist metaphysics to viewing human creative action in terms of a cor-responsive co-creating participant.

Positions that have been taken up regarding their relationship have varied. It is widely accepted that Kierkegaard played a formative role in Heidegger's development as an existential philosopher, but the nature and extent of that remains contested. Illustrating the established relationship between these two thinkers with regard to the earlier work is fairly straightforward. Heidegger himself acknowledged his use of Kierkegaard in the earlier

years, quoting him in lecture courses, seminars and papers.⁸ Stephen Mulhall, while accepting in broad terms Heidegger's Kierkegaardian – and theological – “inheritance”, also wants to preserve a sense of the distinctiveness and “originality” of their concepts and contributions. Meanwhile, John D. Caputo has seen Heidegger's existential reflections as being indebted so deeply to Kierkegaard as to be bordering on plagiarism.⁹ These positions, despite being mostly related to Heidegger's early reception of Kierkegaard, are nonetheless informative and useful to my project in terms of laying out the background of the issue.

It is important to note that there is far from consensus on where the line between Heidegger's early and late work should be placed, nor on what the ‘turn’ in his work really means: what he turned from and toward remains contentious. Moreover, as Thomas Sheehan emphasises, this authorial ‘turn’ should not be mistaken for die Kehre (‘the Turn’) which is an important philosophical motif and apparatus of the later Heidegger¹⁰: even if one is arguing that his authorial turn mimics, tries to instantiate, or even enacts die Kehre, they are still not to be conflated.

As mentioned, the periodisation of Heidegger's ‘turn’ is contested, but it may be said to begin with ‘On the Essence of Truth’ (1930), which Heidegger himself identified as marking

⁸ See John van Buren, ‘Heidegger's Early Freiburg Courses, 1915-23’ in *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. 23 (1993), pp.132-52; Clare Carlisle, ‘Kierkegaard and Heidegger’, in John Lippitt and George Pattison eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Ch. 22.

⁹ See Stephen Mulhall, *Inheritance and Originality: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Dan Magurshak, ‘The Concept of Anxiety: The Keystone of the Kierkegaard-Heidegger Relationship’ in Robert Perkins ed., *The Concept of Anxiety* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), pp.167-95; John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Chs. 1,3.

¹⁰ Thomas Sheehan, *A Companion to Heidegger's 'Introduction to Metaphysics'* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001), Ch. 1.

a shift, developing through CP and other poetic works of the later 1930s, his works on Hölderlin (including HH) and continuing in the “Letter on Humanism” (1946) and also the Freiburg lectures of 1951-52.¹¹ Also, as mentioned, there is far from universal agreement about the nature of the turn. For example, Sheehan has recently argued that ‘Heidegger remained a phenomenologist from beginning to end and that phenomenology is exclusively about meaningfulness and its source.’¹² As such, Sheehan argues that the nature of Heidegger’s project did not alter significantly from its original course, which he identifies as the search for intelligible meaning.¹³ We will also see below that there is some argument that the later work of Heidegger is a repetition or retrieval of his earlier work. Others have argued that the turn is one from a focus on ‘Dasein’ to a focus on ‘Beyng’, or from things in themselves (phenomenology) to words themselves (language). Regardless of what the turn itself is from or toward, or whether Heidegger is reinscribing earlier arguments, this thesis contends that the turn in Heidegger’s work need not preclude the search for structural resonances with Kierkegaard. The turn, for this present work, is most clearly shown in Heidegger’s coming to see that in order for there to be a sufficient redressing of the question of being and in order for the existential analytic to be successful, he needs to view non-human, produced items beyond their equipmentality: as such his turn can be considered his movement from viewing non-human produced items as things rather than objects.¹⁴

¹¹ On the evolutions in Heidegger’s later thought, see George Pattison, *The Later Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2000); Braver, *Heidegger’s Later Writings*; and Julian Young, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹² Thomas Sheehan, ‘What, after all, was Heidegger about?’ *Continental Philosophy Review* (2014), 47, pp.249–274.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Andrew J. Mitchell, ‘The Fourfold’, in Bret W. David ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2010), p.209.

There have been a number of recent and significant challenges to the view that Kierkegaard has no echo in the later Heidegger's work, which will be discussed below. Firstly, we will question which of Kierkegaard's texts Heidegger may have read and then look to Heidegger's own comments on Kierkegaard and his relationship with him.

A: Which of Kierkegaard's works did Heidegger read?

As with any comparative work between thinkers, when one is chronologically later than the other, the question arises as to which texts written by the former thinker the latter has actually read. As we might expect, the answer to this question regarding the Kierkegaard-Heidegger relationship is not straight forward. For, although we can have some clarity about (1.) which texts were available in published translations and (2.) which texts Heidegger himself quoted or referred to, we are left with the question (3.) which other texts may he have read which are not specifically referenced or discussed. I will take these in turn.

(1.) In his thoroughly source-critical and meticulously researched book, Gerhard Thonhauser provides a comprehensive picture of the various translations of Kierkegaard's works available in Germany in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵ By the mid 1920's, Christoph Schrepf and H. Gottsched had provided German translations of either two or three editions of each (or of parts of each) of the following: FT:R, E/O I, E/O II, SLW,CA, PF, CUP1 I, CUP1 II, SUD, PIC, PV, Two ethico-religious essays, On my work

¹⁵ Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*, pp.129-134. This section is almost entirely exposition from Thonhauser's work here.

as an author, and For self-examination. These were the *Gesammelten Werken* (Collected Works). Most of these were available in other translations prior to their publication in Schrenpf and Gottsched's *Collected Works*, as was *Judge for Yourself!*

Theodor Haecker published German translations of Kierkegaard's work from 1914-1923. 'Bei der Auswahl der Texte für seine Übersetzungen konzentrierte sich Haecker auf jene Teile des Werkes, die in den *Gesammelten Werken* vernachlässigt wurden.'¹⁶ [When selecting the texts for his translations, Haecker concentrated on those parts that were neglected in the *Gesammelten Werken*.] These included: excerpts from Prefaces and LR, *Crisis and a crisis in the life of an actress*, BA, JC/DODE, several of the Discourses, and a selection of the journals. Most of Haecker's translations appeared in the periodical *Der Brenner*, which we know Heidegger read as early as 1912.¹⁷ Thonhauser argues that the translations provided in the *Collected Works* and by Haecker were those which provided the possibility of a 'Kierkegaard Renaissance' in the German-speaking world of the 1920's. Moreover, they painted a very particular and peculiar interpretation of Kierkegaard.¹⁸

(2.) Regarding which of these Kierkegaard translations were demonstrably read by Heidegger, we begin by looking at those which he directly quotes.¹⁹ In his Augustine lectures of SS 1921, Heidegger quotes SUD three times (GA 60: 178, 248, 265) and CA twice (GA 60: 257, 268). In the next semester he quotes from PIC and E/O (GA 61: 182).

¹⁶ Ibid, p.132.

¹⁷ Thonhauser notes that we cannot prove when or if Heidegger actually subscribed to *Der Brenner*. See Gerhard Thonhauser, 'Martin Heidegger reads Søren Kierkegaard' p.283-4.

¹⁸ Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*, p.134, p.136 ff.

¹⁹ This section summarises Thonhauser's findings, in Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*, p.158-160.

CA is also quoted in *The Concept of Time* (GA 64: 42), the lectures from SS 1925 (GA 20: 404), and in *BT* (GA 2: 253, 313). PIC is quoted in a lecture series from 1921-22 (GA: 182) and WS 1942-3 (GA 54: 44). E/O is also mentioned in the Schiller seminar from WS 1936-7.²⁰ Heidegger also quotes PV in his lectures from SS 1923 (GA 63, 108) and in his Marburg lecture of 1923-4.²¹

In addition to direct citations, there are also indirect references to texts. For example, it is not clear to which ‘edifying writings’ Heidegger refers in his footnote in *BT* (GA 2: 313). Thonhauser suggests that he may be referring to SUD or PIC, but he may also be referring to edifying discourses.²² In WS 1931-2, Heidegger mentioned Johannes Climacus regarding ‘pseudonymity’ (GA 34: 135), and he refers CUP1 in SS 1941 (GA 49: 19-20). In WS 1942-3, Heidegger again discusses ‘pseudonymity’ and mentions FT and PF (GA 54: 44). (The content of relevant comments is discussed in the next section.)

Thonhauser concludes that direct and indirect references indicate that Heidegger refers to almost all volumes of the *Collected Works*, with the exception of *SLW*, and cites some translations prior to these. However, he argues that Heidegger’s picture of Kierkegaard was primarily formed by CA, SUD, PIC, PV and Haecker’s edition of the journals.²³ Nonetheless, he has shown that Heidegger also either read or was aware of FT, PF, CUP1, E/O.

²⁰ From Thonhauser’s discussion. Heidegger, Martin ([1936/37] 2005): *Schillers Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen: Übungen für Anfänger*. Wintersemester 1936/37, p.22.

²¹ From Thonhauser’s discussion. Heidegger, Martin ([1923/24] 1996): ‘, Das Problem der Sünde bei Luther’, in: Jaspert, Bernd (Hg.): *Sachgemässe Exegese. Die Protokolle aus Rudolf Bultmanns Neutestamentlichen Seminaren 1921 – 1951, Marburg*: Elwert, p.33.

²² Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*, p.159.

²³ *Ibid*, p.61.

(3.) These lists do not cover all of Kierkegaard's texts. However, we can make some further comments about other SK texts that he may also have read. Given that there were a number of available editions of most of Kierkegaard's oeuvre available in German translation, and Kierkegaard was widely discussed by Heidegger and his cohort, we may assume that he was aware of – and may have read – certain works that he did not reference directly or indirectly.

Two such texts of interest to this thesis are Repetition and LR: we do not have proof that Heidegger read them. Regarding Repetition, we do know that it was published in translation alongside FT which he has referenced. We also know that Heidegger talks about die Wiederholung throughout BT at the most crucial points and throughout the later work. Moreover, Kierkegaard's category 'repetition' is not limited to the book Repetition but is discussed in CA and several discourses. Clare Carlisle foregrounds it as Kierkegaard's 'one thought' – and his persistent calling.²⁴ As such, we can argue that Kierkegaard's category has held some significance for Heidegger. (The beginning of Chapter 2: II will discuss Heidegger's repetition/retrieval in BT to support this argument before moving on to its continued relevance in the later works.)

Regarding LR, we know that it was published in a shortened edition (excerpts from 'The Present Age', arranged as an essay) under the title Kritik der Gegenwart in translation by Haecker in Der Brenner 1914.²⁵ Haecker had seen in Kierkegaard's work a co-critic of

²⁴ Clare Carlisle, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming: Movements and Positions* (SUNY PRESS: Albany, 2005).

²⁵ See Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*, p.91 ff.

modernity. We know that Heidegger highly rated Haecker's translations as he quoted from the selection of journals the same year that they were published, in his SS lectures in 1923 (GA 63: 16-17). Furthermore, *Kritik der Gegenwart* was held up as a paradigmatic polemic against modernity by both Karl Jaspers and Karl Löwith.²⁶ So, whilst we may not be able to definitively prove that Heidegger read *Kritik der Gegenwart*, it seems likely that he would have been aware of it and probable that he would have read it.²⁷

We should also briefly discuss the picture of Kierkegaard that was mediated to the German-speaking world, largely through Haecker's translations. Janik suggests that Haecker's association with Kierkegaard may have coloured his reception with 'prejudices and misunderstandings foreign to his texts.'²⁸ Janik offers this translation of a crucial comment from Haecker, 'For Kierkegaard ... nothing is so unutterably real, so eternal and indestructible as the spiritual self of the individual man, the Ego that is here the highest reality and the opposite of an abstraction.'²⁹ This precisely encapsulates a prevalent misreading of Kierkegaard, which we find both in Heidegger and in comments on the relationship between Heidegger and Kierkegaard. For, as we will see throughout this thesis, this onto-theo-ego-logical reading of Kierkegaard's subject ignores both Kierkegaard's critique of speculation qua onto-theo-logy and his repeated referral to the infinite qualitative difference. Janik further suggests that Haecker's reading of the subjective thinker in

²⁶ See *Ibid*, p.92-3.

²⁷ Also see Allan Janik, 'Haecker, Kierkegaard, and the Early Brenner: A Contribution to the History of the Reception of *Two Ages* in the German-Speaking World', in Robert L. Perkins ed., *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Two Ages* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984).

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.191.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.202.

Kierkegaard's work indicates that Kierkegaard provides a Christian response to Nietzsche,³⁰ as a self-willed Christian hero, in Haecker's estimation.

This misreading of Kierkegaard's self as the Subject of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, the originating Subject of productionist metaphysics, is arguably part of the reason Heidegger had problems with Kierkegaard's work. However, as I will discuss at length in chapter one, this is not Kierkegaard's self. Kierkegaard's subject is radically ungrounded and the relationship with a radically subjective, infinitely reduplicated, infinitely qualitatively different God is not one of grounding nor of the self-willed, creating Subject undergirded by elevation to God-like status. I will return to this point below the literature review. For now, we have seen which of Kierkegaard's texts we can reasonably believe Heidegger to have read.

B: Heidegger's Comments on Kierkegaard

Before moving onto the 'literature review', it is helpful to discuss the main points of Heidegger's own comments regarding Kierkegaard, beginning with BT. The comments in BT often form the basis of a given stance on the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger for later commentators, as we will see in the next section. We will follow this with relevant comments in Heidegger's later work. Following that, we then move on to discuss broader positions taken up regarding the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger. It is intended that this will provide the basis for ongoing discussion of

³⁰ Ibid, p.193.

Heidegger's explicit use of Kierkegaard by grounding the later discussion in its more tangible roots.

Heidegger's BT footnotes pertaining to Kierkegaard are:

The man who has gone farthest in analysing the phenomenon of anxiety – and again in the theological context of a 'psychological' exposition of the problem of original sin – is Søren Kierkegaard (BT 235, n. iv.)

In the nineteenth century, Søren Kierkegaard explicitly seized upon the problem of existence as an existentiell problem, and thought it through in a penetrating fashion. But the existential problematic was so alien to him that, as regards his ontology, he remained completely dominated by Hegel and by ancient philosophy as Hegel saw it. Thus there is more to be learned from his edifying writings than from his theoretical ones – with the exception of his treatise on the concept of anxiety (BT 278, n.vi.)

S. Kierkegaard is probably the one who has seen the existentiell phenomenon of the moment of vision with the most penetration; but this does not signify that he has been correspondingly successful in interpreting it existentially. He clings to the ordinary conception of time, and defines the 'moment of vision' with the help of 'now' and 'eternity' (BT 388, n.iii.)

Whilst Kierkegaard offers 'penetrating' interpretations of 'the problem of existence', 'the phenomenon of anxiety' and 'the phenomenon of the moment of vision', Heidegger states that Kierkegaard's approach is 'existentiell' not 'existential'. Moreover, he 'clings to the ordinary conception of time' and regarding his ontology 'remained completely dominated by Hegel and by ancient philosophy as Hegel saw it'. Despite his seemingly consistent take on Kierkegaard in these two footnotes, the body of BT (especially division two) displays

underlying Kierkegaardian ideas. These include: the moment³¹, death³², repetition³³, authenticity³⁴, anxiety³⁵, care and anticipatory resoluteness³⁶, spirit³⁷, the task of the critique of philosophy³⁸, despair³⁹ and so on.⁴⁰ ‘There is a tension between the extent and significance of this engagement ... and Heidegger’s assessment of Kierkegaard’s contribution to philosophy.’⁴¹

³¹ For example, Joan Stambaugh, ‘Existential Time in Kierkegaard and Heidegger’, in Anindita Niyogi Balslev and J. N. Mohanty eds, *Religion and Time*, Studies in the History of Religions (New York: E.J.Brill, 1993), pp.46-60.

³² See, for example, Michael Theunissen, ‘The Upbuilding in the Thought of Death. Traditional Elements, Innovated Ideas, and Unexhausted Possibilities in Kierkegaard’s Discourse ‘At A Graveside.’ George Pattison trans, *Prefaces and Writing Sampler; and Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, The International Kierkegaard Commentary, Robert Perkins ed(Macon, GA; University of Mercer Press, 2006), p.321-358; George Pattison, ‘Death, Guilt, and Nothingness in Luther, Kierkegaard and *Being and Time*’, in Denis McManus ed, *Heidegger, Authenticity and the Self: Themes from Division Two of Being and Time* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2015), pp.57-71.

³³ See for example Wenche Marit Quist, ‘When your Past lies ahead of you – Kierkegaard and Heidegger on the Concept of Repetition’, *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2002), vol. 2002, no. 2002, 2002, pp.78-92; Carlisle, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming*.

³⁴ See, for example, Harrison Hall, ‘Love, and death: Kierkegaard and Heidegger on authentic and inauthentic human existence’, *Inquiry: An interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 27:1-4, 1984. pp.179-197; Daniel Berthold-Bond, ‘A Kierkegaardian critique of Heidegger’s concept of Authenticity’, *Man and World* 24, 1991, pp.119-142.

³⁵ Jeffery Haynes, ‘Anxiety’s Ambiguity: *Being and Time* through Haufniensis’ lenses’, in Denis McManus ed, *Heidegger, Authenticity and the Self: Themes from Division Two of Being and Time* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2015), pp.72-94. Dan Magurshak, ‘The Concept of Anxiety: The Keystone of the Kierkegaard-Heidegger Relationship’ in Robert Perkins ed., *The Concept of Anxiety* (Mercer University Press, 1985), pp.167-95.

³⁶ George J. Stack, ‘Concern in Kierkegaard and Heidegger’, *Philosophy Today*, Spring (1969), 13, pp.26-35.

³⁷ See Clare Carlisle, ‘A Tale of Two Footnotes: Heidegger and the Question of Kierkegaard’, in *Heidegger, Authenticity and the Self* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp.37-55.

³⁸ Merold Westphal, ‘Overcoming Onto-Theology’, in John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon eds. *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), pp.146-147.

³⁹ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Christianity without onto-theology: Kierkegaard’s account of the self’s movement from despair to bliss*, in Mark Wrathall ed, *Religion after Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.88-103

⁴⁰ For an elucidating overview of the complexities of Kierkegaardian themes in BT, see Vincent McCarthy, ‘Martin Heidegger: Kierkegaard’s Influence Hidden and in Full View’, in Jon Stewart ed, *Volume 9: Kierkegaard and Existentialism*, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources (London: Routledge, 2011), pp.95-125.

⁴¹ Clare Carlisle, ‘A Tale of Two Footnotes’, p.38.

In December 1927, Rudolf Bultmann consulted Heidegger on a biographical lexicon article for *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, which included a short account of Heidegger's primary influences and inspirations. Bultmann had written that 'Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard were influential for H. in the development of the understanding-of-Dasein'; Heidegger himself corrected this statement, clarifying that 'Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard were philosophically essential for H. in the development of a more radical understanding-of-Dasein'.⁴²

Clare Carlisle has argued that, even if Heidegger is correct that Kierkegaard's contribution to philosophy is existentiell and based on an understanding of spirit which has not been adequately interrogated with regards to the ontological question in the history of philosophy ('what is Being?'), Heidegger's own analysis of Dasein's temporality (repetition, anticipation, moment) is nonetheless based on Kierkegaard's work. Heidegger's own acknowledgement of his dependence on Kierkegaard, alongside other theologians, for his development of the 'understanding-of-Dasein' seems to support this. Further, Heidegger argues that his own work constitutes a legitimate working through of the question concerning the meaning of human existence. If that is so, why would Kierkegaard's account of human life in terms of these same temporal concepts not constitute a legitimate philosophical response to the meaning of being spirit? She concludes that Heidegger's claim that Kierkegaard has nothing to add here seems to require further interrogation, and that his

⁴²See Rudolf Bultmann, 'Heidegger, Martin': Lexicon Article Attributed to Rudolf Bultmann', in Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan eds., *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927* (Seattle: Noesis Press, 2nd. 2009), p.335.

reactivating Kierkegaard's solution in his existential analysis 'calls into question Heidegger's attempt to distance himself from his theological inheritance.'⁴³

This final comment leads to an important and related area of interest for this thesis: that is, the significance of Heidegger's relationship to theology and Christianity more widely, which I will go on to discuss with reference back to his relationship specifically with Kierkegaard below in the literature review.

The question of Heidegger's relationship to theology more widely is a complex one. It is complicated regarding his relationship to Kierkegaard specifically by Heidegger's famous ambivalence toward Kierkegaard as 'a religious author' rather than a philosopher or a metaphysician, and the appraisal of his thinking as being under the 'influence' of onto-theology, particularly Hegelian philosophy. It is, however, an ambiguous picture and not always negative. In the 1930s and 1940s, this ambivalence emerges most notably in CP (1936-38), MGI (1941), the note 'My Relation to Kierkegaard' in P XII-XV (c.1941), NWGID (1943) and WCT (1950-1).

In CP, Heidegger entitles a section 'Hölderlin – Kierkegaard – Nietzsche' and suggests that their untimely deaths were the result of having 'suffered most deeply the uprootedness to which Western history is driven and who at the same time surmised their gods most intimately' (CP, 160). In context, he is saying that Kierkegaard was one of the few who experienced the abandonment of being as a plight rather than as merely oblivion. As such,

⁴³ Clare Carlisle, 'A Tale of Two Footnotes', p.52-3.

he suggests that Kierkegaard was one of the few who saw the situation into which onto-theological thinking has brought us. Whilst he goes on to discuss Hölderlin and does not progress with this thought as pertains to Kierkegaard, it is important to bear in mind that this was not a dressing down but rather quite high praise. However, he goes on to say, whilst discussing the leap into an originary way of thinking, that within the history of metaphysical thinking, ‘What lies between Hegel and Nietzsche takes many forms, but nowhere, not even in Kierkegaard, is it metaphysically originary’ (CP, 183). So, he is not consistent in his argument, insofar as he suggests that Kierkegaard does manage to perceive and articulate something about the plight of Being and yet ‘even’ Kierkegaard remains caught up in the metaphysics of German Idealism and Hegelianism.

In MGI, Heidegger suggests that Kierkegaard ‘is a “religious thinker”; that is, not a theologian and not a “Christian philosopher” ... Kierkegaard is more theological than any Christian theologian and more unphilosophical than any metaphysician could ever be’ (MGI, 15). He lauds Kierkegaard’s uniqueness, saying that Kierkegaard is, ‘In an emphatic sense – regarding his stance and mode of thinking – incomparable; he must stand on his own; neither theology nor philosophy can include him in their histories’ (MGI, 15). Heidegger seems to find Kierkegaard so unique that he finds it difficult to consign him to onto-theo-logy, even though at other times he explicitly says he is caught up in onto-theological thinking. (This is a significant point that is taken up by Khawaja, below.⁴⁴)

⁴⁴ See Khawaja, *Heidegger’s Kierkegaard*.

Heidegger addresses the nature of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel. He argues that Kierkegaard attacks Hegel for 'abstract thinking' but suggests that Hegel's thought also tries to combat abstract thinking. There is a fundamental difference between Kierkegaard and Hegel's arguments regarding what constitutes abstraction. 'To think abstractly means for Kierkegaard to disregard the singular individual, this here and now, and think only the universal' (MGI, 17) whereas Hegel tries to think the universal and individual together to avoid one-sided abstraction. Heidegger argues that Hegel thinks concretely because he considers both sides (the individual and the universal): for Hegel thinking according to one direction of consciousness would be abstract. However, for Kierkegaard this kind of thinking is off-sided because it involves representing what is thought as what is metaphysically thought in detachment (MGI, 18).

Heidegger explains that, for Kierkegaard, the thinking individual is forgotten in Hegel's work. In trying to exist as the absolute himself, he mediates the infinite contradiction between time and eternity which sublates the infinite contradiction. This leaps over the individual who is 'connected to the essence of metaphysics – as metaphysics of the unconditional subjectivity of the spirit' (MGI, 20). He suggests that Kierkegaard's opposition to Hegel is really the opposition between the faithful Christian and the absolute metaphysics of German Idealism, which has first elevated Christianity to absolute truth.

On Heidegger's reading, Kierkegaard reverses Hegel insofar as he brings attention back to the human being, but he nonetheless remains within the metaphysics of speculation. Kierkegaard is not, however, just a Christian believer nor a 'Christian philosopher' but rather he chose to exist as an author, 'he thinks and writes and communicates and intervenes in the conflicts of the day; the thinking of his age becomes potent in him, and he thus establishes

a unique dwelling for self-reflection in the nineteenth century. He becomes indispensable, regardless of whether one is an adherent, an opponent or even merely indifferent' (MGI, 20-1).

Heidegger proceeds to defend BT, arguing that his is not a philosophy of existence *qua* Kierkegaard, but of Being and time. He has not 'gone further' than this because he is attempting to come closer to what he began in BT. Moreover, he says that anxiety, nothingness, death, and care (often brought up as the most Kierkegaardian themes in BT) are not the crux of BT (MGI, 23-4). Heidegger argues that even Kierkegaard's existing Christian individual does not manage a persistent steadfastness in the open of the truth of being, and states that such steadfastness would arise 'from a questioning concerning the truth of being that leaps beyond all metaphysics' (MGI, 58). As such, he suggests that his own use of Kierkegaardian existential categories does not conform to Kierkegaard's.

Regarding the types of abstraction discussed, Heidegger leaves to one side Kierkegaard's argument that the individual is lost and subsumed in the universal in Hegelian abstraction, and that this is why Hegelian speculation does not offer a balanced approach: mediation forgets the individual in the system. Heidegger declines to ask whether Kierkegaard is fair to Hegel 'or whether precisely because he is all too dependent on Hegel, he does not judge him unfairly' (MGI, 18). As we will see below, Thonhauser provides a recent and very helpful analysis of Heidegger's reading of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ See Thonhauser, 'Kierkegaard: Thinker without category'.

Thonhauser has recently argued that, contrary to the dominant approaches to the Kierkegaard-Heidegger relationship which tend to view BT as the most fecund ground for this discussion of their relationship, Heidegger's interest in Kierkegaard in the 1930s was more significant than it was during the time of writing BT – if we go by the frequency of references to Kierkegaard. In this context, Thonhauser address MGI's discussion of Kierkegaard and Hegel.

Thonhauser argues that Heidegger considered Kierkegaard to be a Hegelian who misunderstood Hegel, and this was the case because Kierkegaard read the history of philosophy through a Hegelian lens and because he relied on a concept of subjectivity which was developed by German Idealism. He argues that Heidegger always considered Kierkegaard to be, philosophically, Hegelian.⁴⁶ Thonhauser further suggests that Heidegger locates Kierkegaard with Nietzsche outside philosophy. Moreover, in coming to see Nietzsche rather than Hegel as the culmination of metaphysics, Nietzsche is later separated from his grouping with Kierkegaard and so Kierkegaard becomes a less interesting conversation partner after the mid-1930's. (However, we should note, contra Thonhauser, that Heidegger does still seem to consider Hegel as the culmination of metaphysics in OCM.)

On Thonhauser's reading, Heidegger's Kierkegaard manifests a misguided philosophy of the subject that has been established in modern philosophy: the understanding of the subject as creator and maker.⁴⁷ (We have touched on this a few times already, and we will come

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.34.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.37. This is a particularly interesting observation given Heidegger's critique of productionist metaphysics.

back to it.) Moreover, Kierkegaard's notion of the self as modern subject places him in the occidental history of the oblivion of Being.⁴⁸ However, Thonhauser has also noted that Heidegger's discussion of Kierkegaard as a religious writer is not necessarily pejorative.⁴⁹ Moreover, although he emphasises Kierkegaard's twofold dependence on Hegel and German Idealism which relegates Kierkegaard to the oblivion of Being on the hand, he also claims that Kierkegaard does not belong to philosophy or theology as his project is distinct from them.⁵⁰ He concludes that, for Heidegger,

This is what sets Kierkegaard apart from German Idealism: German Idealism wanted to bring Christianity to its metaphysical completion, which is why the perspective of the single individual was considered a (one-sided) element in the system. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, broke with the metaphysical striving for universality, and was thus free to seek the single individual in his or her singularity.⁵¹

We have seen, then, that Heidegger's reading of Kierkegaard on Hegel suggests that Kierkegaard misunderstood Hegel and remained tied to Hegelianism and German Idealism because of his reliance on a Hegelian framework and an idealist Subject. We will see throughout this thesis that Kierkegaard's 'subject' is not the subject of German Idealism but a subject whose abyssal reality renders them ungrounded and shattered in relation to the infinite qualitative difference.⁵² This is not, then, a Nietzschean hero who wills to will, but an existing subject or self whose precariousness requires a rearticulation of their relation to God without onto-theo-(ego)-logical categories of thought. This is discussed in greater depth in the first chapter. However, for now, we note that Heidegger's discussion of Kierkegaard and Hegel has indicated a complex relationship with Kierkegaard who he considers to be

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.40.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.37.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.42.

⁵² This is discussed in chapter one, and throughout, with reference to the work of David Kangas and others.

either metaphysically entangled or beyond philosophy. It is interesting to note that van Buren considers the earlier Heidegger to have, at least in part, ‘modelled himself on Kierkegaard’s critique of Hegelianism.’⁵³

We are given a rather succinct note in Heidegger’s black notebooks (P XII-VX, 169-170) regarding his relation to Kierkegaard. Heidegger notes that he is aware that ‘someone or other’ has critiqued him for using Kierkegaard atheistically by omitting the Christian aspects. That is to say, he is aware of what Khawaja identifies (below) as the ‘secularisation thesis’. Heidegger claims that this is inaccurate, and that the question that BT poses is utterly foreign to Kierkegaard and to all metaphysics – that is, the question of Being. Heidegger explains that he is not misusing Kierkegaard because Kierkegaard’s singular concern with Christian salvation is not the concern of BT. BT lies outside of Christianity, theology, and metaphysics. He explains that his comments regarding Kierkegaard’s upbuilding writings is about his appreciation of Kierkegaard’s discussion of the structure of selfhood not his philosophy. He argues that in BT the meditation of selfhood is compelled by the question of being ‘in such a way that already in the approach to this question ... all subjectivity is abandoned and the human being is grasped as Da-sein’ (P XII-VX, 169). Further, he argues that Kierkegaard’s selfhood is read in a more ordinary way in BT, from the viewpoint of Heidegger’s existential analytic which is a preparation of the truth of being out of the knowledge of Dasein.

⁵³ Van Buren, ‘Rumor of a Hidden King’, p.100.

A further passage of interest in the later Heidegger's work is found in his book on Parmenides, where he discusses dissembling. He progresses to talk about pseudonyms as 'false names', but explains that the pseudonym 'covers' but also allows the one who bears the name to appear 'in grandeur' and provide him with a means of 'stepping out' under a corresponding title. The pseudonym 'covers up' and makes the author 'unknown' but also manifests the concealed essence of the author: the pseudonym allows the author to express something more about himself than his correct name allows. 'Kierkegaard's pseudonyms ... bring out this essence of the pseudonym and consequently the essence of [pseudos]. [Pseudos] involves a covering that simultaneously unveils' (P, 36). He goes on to explain that pseudos is determined in the domain of concealing, unveiling and letting-appear, and the essence of pseudos resides in an exhibition of concealment. Given his discussion of aletheia as unconcealment which also conceals, and the importance he places on our need to rediscover the concealment of being within earth and experience the plight of the abandonment of being (all of which is discussed in the first chapter), we could argue that in 'pseudos' there is an important activity of dissembling that relates to Heidegger's discussion of aletheia which is also his discussion of being. We may suggest that Heidegger recognises something that reflects or perhaps mimics an element of aletheia (or lethe) in Kierkegaard's method.

There is another well-known comment in Heidegger's 1943 essay 'Nietzsche's Word: "God is Dead"'. Here he points to the common juxtaposition of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, arguing that Nietzsche is in closer proximity and preserves a relation with Aristotle that, for all his references to Aristotle, Kierkegaard does not. 'For Kierkegaard is not a thinker but a religious writer, and not just one among others but the only one who accords with the destiny of his age. His greatness lies in this fact' (NWGID, 186). To write in accord with destiny

(Geschick) of his age, as we mentioned briefly in discussing Thonhauser's article above, is not necessarily to be considered pejorative.⁵⁴ Thonhauser interprets it as a reference to writing as a Hegelian in an age dominated by Hegelian thinking. I argue, however, that Heidegger may have at least partially recognised something not only in Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelianism, specifically his critique of beginnings, but also in his method, that resonates with his own thinking.

One of the most famous comments that the later Heidegger makes about Kierkegaard is found in the published text of his 1950-51 lecture course, 'What is Called Thinking?'

By way of Hegelian metaphysics, Kierkegaard remains everywhere philosophically entangled, on the one hand in a dogmatic Aristotelianism that is completely on a par with medieval scholasticism, and on the other in the subjectivity of German Idealism. No discerning mind would deny the stimuli produced by Kierkegaard's thought that prompted us to give renewed attention to the 'existential'. But about the decisive question – the essential nature of Being – Kierkegaard has nothing whatever to say (WCT, 213)

Heidegger offers praise for the 'stimuli' and 'prompting', despite Kierkegaard's failure to extricate himself from metaphysics. It is a fairly simple thing to deny the significance of this as an ambivalent comment or as a dressing down, but if we recognise the context of these comments, we can hardly miss the importance of giving Kierkegaard credit for prompting or producing stimuli. For, as Mulhall explains in his *Inheritance and Originality*, Heidegger's concern throughout these lectures is to highlight that which calls for thinking, which provokes, invokes, irrupts, attracts us in its withdrawal, seduces us.⁵⁵ Is this not tantamount to providing stimuli, prompting thought? Although it is doubtful that Heidegger was intending a great compliment to Kierkegaard in these lectures, it also seems unlikely

⁵⁴ 'Geschick' as the sending of being is discussed in chapter five.

⁵⁵ See Stephen Mulhall, *Inheritance and Originality*, pp.287-293.

that he would miss the significance of crediting Kierkegaard for provoking or stimulating thought either. In a straight-forward way, one could argue that the comments in BT and WCT are relatively congruous and provide a consistent understanding of his relationship to Kierkegaard from the late 1920's until the early 1950's at least. However, this undisrupted picture is inaccurate given the greater breadth of Heidegger's comments as discussed here. Several works which highlight this inaccuracy of this undisrupted picture will be discussed in the literature review below.

C: Literature Review

Having identified the most important references to Kierkegaard in Heidegger's own writings, we now turn to a consideration of scholarly assessments of Heidegger's relation to the 'religious author' in the later period of the development of his thought. It is a timely moment to take stock of the debate, which has become considerably more intensive since the publication from 2014 of the *Schwarze Hefte*, among other writings.

The literature review is structured into three sections: i.) Recent positions specific to the later Heidegger; ii.) Indicative Positions on the Kierkegaard-Heidegger Relationship; iii.) Relevant Positions Regarding the Presence of Kierkegaardian themes in the Later Heidegger iv.) Literature Review Conclusion. This literature review cannot be exhaustive. The selection is based on the relevance of material to my own position. I treat the articles and manuscripts of each author under their name.

i.) Recent Positions Specific to the Later Heidegger

Gerhard Thonhauser

In his discussion of the now almost completely published Gesamtausgabe (GA) as a source material for Heidegger's reception of Kierkegaard, Gerhard Thonhauser challenges claims to a consistent relationship to Kierkegaard throughout Heidegger's life.⁵⁶ Thonhauser argues that the increased availability of literature provided through the ongoing publication of the GA reveals that Heidegger's discussion of Kierkegaard covers a much longer period of his intellectual life than has previously been assumed. This also applies to the *Schwarze Hefte*, the philosophical journals which, since their publication in 2014, have become notorious because of their antisemitic content, but which also contain important clues about Heidegger's views on a range of intellectual questions, including his thoughts on Kierkegaard. We are now able to see that 'Heidegger's relation to Kierkegaard was not consistent throughout the development of his thought but is rather a fragmentary succession of various relations.'⁵⁷ Thonhauser argues that there are a number of phases in Heidegger's engagement with Kierkegaard: an early period of engagement from 1919-1923, a few scarce comments between 1923-1928, three footnotes in BT, a sudden praise in the early 1930s, a dwindling interest from 1934 onwards when comments become focussed on the Kierkegaardian themes in BT and the history of Being, and a near absence from 1945

⁵⁶ Thonhauser, 'Martin Heidegger reads Søren Kierkegaard'; Thonhauser, ' 'Thinker without Category'' Thonhauser, *Ein rätselhaftes Zeichen*.

⁵⁷ Thonhauser, 'Martin Heidegger reads Søren Kierkegaard', p.282.

onwards (although there are some mentions in the *Schwartzte Hefte* which he recommends to further research).⁵⁸

Thonhauser suggests that the received literature on the relationship between these two thinkers assumes an earlier start date of Heidegger's reading of Kierkegaard than can be supported by the GA, and that there is an assumption that Heidegger misstates his use of Kierkegaard in work after the early 1920s. Thonhauser argues that in the earlier periods, Heidegger seems to have mostly engaged with SUD, CA, PV, PIC and Haecker's translation of the journals and notebooks. He argues that there is no sign of an early engagement with PF or CUP1.⁵⁹ Regarding the next phase, he explains that during the Marburg years there is little textual evidence of engagement and so the focus on BT in much of the literature is based on the footnotes in BT. He argues that most of this discussion is conceptual comparison, due to a lack of abundant evidence.

Thonhauser notes that Heidegger mentions Kierkegaard in almost all of his 1928 lectures, including four digressions in his lectures on German Idealism (GA 28, 205, 263, 311, 313). By the mid-1930s, Heidegger's mentions of Kierkegaard became more infrequent as he came to focus on Hölderlin. From 1936-1942, Kierkegaard is almost completely absent from the GA, including the treatises on the history of being which were published posthumously, and also from lectures and the notebooks. In early 1941, Heidegger breaks this pattern 'to write a number of texts where he is uncharacteristically outspoken about Kierkegaard.'⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ibid, pp.282-283

⁵⁹Ibid, pp.288-289

⁶⁰ Thonhauser, 'Martin Heidegger reads Søren Kierkegaard', p.301.

This includes most of the comments discussed above. Thonhauser shows that after 1945 there is a near absence of mentions. He argues that the comments in WCT and brief mentions elsewhere show no significant engagement with Kierkegaard, consisting only of short digressions. Added to this, Heidegger famously does not mention Kierkegaard in his 1963 ‘Kierkegaard Vivant’ conference paper, ‘The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking’ and did not attend the conference to give the paper.

Thonhauser’s contribution to the discussion is important and provides an evidential, empirical element. Although he argues that the work post 1945 shows little specific engagement with Kierkegaard, his comments regarding conceptual work in BT can certainly be transposed here: that although there is not specific evidence in terms of mentions of Kierkegaard by name, this does not preclude legitimate conceptual work. For, of course, a writer’s exposure to and appropriation of a precursor cannot be confined to explicit mentions by name of that precursor. Thonhauser has helpfully brought to attention the greater breadth of comments on and engagement with Kierkegaard.

Noreen Khawaja

Noreen Khawaja, in a recent article, expounds a thesis that Heidegger’s comments on Kierkegaard may be read as an indication of his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology.⁶¹ She begins by pointing out that Heidegger’s transgressive

⁶¹ Noreen Khawaja, ‘Heidegger’s Kierkegaard.’

readings of earlier thinkers are often contentious and that he reads them from a hermeneutical position which seeks the Unthought.⁶² However, he does not do this with Kierkegaard. Although his earlier work is ‘steeped in Kierkegaard ... explicit discussions of Kierkegaard are limited to the margins’.⁶³ Offering analysis of a wide range of Heidegger’s comments on Kierkegaard, Khawaja argues that Heidegger failed to appropriately articulate their relationship. Moreover, ‘Heidegger’s remarks do not diverge in a progressive fashion. The variance between them cannot be ascribed to increasing suspicion or appreciation.’⁶⁴ She argues

[T]he erratic, extreme, and often superficial character of these remarks, once brought into focus, actually tells us something more than what Heidegger really thought of Kierkegaard; it betrays the fact that the figure of Kierkegaard frequently served as the cipher for a deeper and more systematic concern, namely, how to circumscribe the role that religious thought ought to play in philosophical inquiry.⁶⁵

When Heidegger acknowledges Kierkegaard he tends to credit him as ‘an impetus’ (with an implied ‘merely’) and yet at other points he lists him alongside Nietzsche and Hegel, as one of the “three greatest thinkers” of the nineteenth century (GA 16:317).⁶⁶ He moves between exclaiming Kierkegaard as an originary pathbreaker greater than any other of his generation and yet accuses him of being stuck in Hegelian metaphysics; that his work is an untapped and unclassifiable detour in Western metaphysics and yet his work belongs to the Christian past, where he ‘remains’ as though ‘left behind by progress’.⁶⁷ Khawaja argues that whilst Kierkegaard had already begun troubling the metaphysical tradition from his own Christian

⁶² This is a concept of Heidegger’s which will be discussed in several chapters.,

⁶³ Khawaja, ‘Heidegger’s Kierkegaard’, p.296

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.301

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.297.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.296

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.304.

position, Heidegger's critique of metaphysics was so deeply un-Christian that it was supposed to lie beyond the Christian/secular distinction. However, when Heidegger tries to apply his critique of metaphysics to Kierkegaard, he develops a kind of 'analytical hysteria' regarding the relationship between philosophical critique and Christian theology.⁶⁸

Complaining about his association with existentialism, Heidegger tries to distance himself from the theological emphasis that the study of Kierkegaard had brought about in his academic and social context. 'To be called existentialist is to be surreptitiously associated with a religious renewal of Kierkegaard.'⁶⁹ Kierkegaard had been hailed by Heidegger in 1921 for his 'methodological rigour' which had 'rarely been achieved in philosophy or theology' (GA 9:41), but by 1941 he is 'demoted' to 'religious thinker' (GA 49:19) and by 1943 merely 'religious writer' (GA 5:249). Khawaja argues that Heidegger is attempting to 'immunise' his philosophy from the Christian intensification of Greek metaphysics, particularly the belief in God as creator of humanity (GA 6.1:136, 65:126, 411, 66:28–29, 39, 328).⁷⁰ 'It is probable that Heidegger's vacillating appraisals of Kierkegaard's religious identity reflect, at least to some degree, the complexities of Kierkegaard's own authorship.'⁷¹

Heidegger also describes Kierkegaard as responsible for a kind of detour in the consummation of metaphysics (GA 6.2:472–73): Kierkegaard's complex relation to

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.297.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.299.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.301.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.301.

theology and philosophy has caused a deviation in the end of metaphysics.⁷² Then in 1941, he is positively appraised as standing on his own, incomparable; resisting categorisation by theology or philosophy.⁷³ ‘By framing the disciplinary question as a question of “belonging to the history of” philosophy or theology, Heidegger underscores this link between the disciplinary and philosophical-historical questions.’⁷⁴ Whilst Kierkegaard does not escape metaphysics, in Heidegger’s estimation, he also does not fit within it.

Khawaja argues that although Heidegger is keen on Kierkegaard’s anomalous character, he is critical of modish Kierkegaard scholarship. For, in his reception of Kierkegaard something is overlooked.⁷⁵ For example, when appraising Kierkegaard’s conception of ‘moment’, and describing it as holding the possibility of a new epoch in philosophy – that is, the elusive new beginning – Heidegger laments that this remains only a possibility because that which ‘is decisive in Kierkegaardian philosophy remains ungrasped’ (GA 29/30:226).⁷⁶ Although Heidegger seems to have valued Kierkegaard’s nature, he does not directly engage him in the same manner as thinkers which he often mentions alongside him in the later work, such as Nietzsche and Hölderlin.

Khawaja argues that Heidegger cannot come to terms with Kierkegaard’s category of ‘faith’. He tries to insert ‘faith’ between Kierkegaard and Kierkegaard’s understanding of existence, but his own understanding of it comes from scholastic theology. As such, whilst he expects

⁷² Ibid, p.304.

⁷³ Ibid, p.305.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.305.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.305.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.306.

Kierkegaard's work to slot into his critique of 'onto-theo-logic' on the basis of Kierkegaard's explanation of existence in terms of Christianity and Christian faith, it does not. For Kierkegaard's God is not described as the most fully actualised being. Rather, Kierkegaard's most articulate account of God is 'that all things are possible' (SUD, 40). This dissociates God from actuality (Being). 'Kierkegaard so consistently refuses the tendency to describe God in ontological terms, in fact, that it would be reasonable to say that for him God is not even a being.'⁷⁷

Whilst Heidegger distanced himself from the religious legacy of Kierkegaard in the 1930's, he later seems to realise that he was fighting a scholastic degeneration of Christianity. Khawaja argues that his ongoing indecision regarding Kierkegaard seems to reflect his understanding of the role that religion should have in the new way of thinking. 'Heidegger was vague about his relation to Kierkegaard because his way of interpreting Kierkegaard involved a question about Christianity that he never fully came to terms with.'⁷⁸ This in turn is reflected in his failure to explain the appropriate dialogue between religion and philosophy more generally.

Perhaps if Heidegger had been more faithful to his own recommendation to shake things up, to grapple with *das Christliche* in Kierkegaard, and less intent on mapping Kierkegaard within the history of metaphysics by virtue of his Christianity, it would be possible to do more than to refer the problems of Heidegger's Kierkegaard to the equally problematic terrain of Heidegger's Christianity. Heidegger appropriated Kierkegaard's insights and his words as extensively as his other great interlocutors, but when he found Kierkegaard's thought itself resistant to being classed within the historical system he had devised, he alternated between blaming Kierkegaard's metaphysical backwardness, admiring his protorevolutionary prescience, and tuning out the difficulty altogether.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Ibid, p.309.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.313.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.314.

Khawaja's explanation of Heidegger's comments on Kierkegaard is extremely helpful. That Heidegger was unable to slot Kierkegaard into his devised plan of the history of philosophy and theology – as a chapter within the history of metaphysics – is apparent and convincing. However, in order to undertake a comparative piece of work on Heidegger and Kierkegaard which does more than highlight the inconsistencies in Heidegger's appraisals and inability to get past both Kierkegaard's Christianity and his resistance to classification, we will need a model that will exhibit what Khawaja has identified as 'appropriated insights and words' (above) as well as showing the strong structural resonances between Kierkegaard's critique of idealism and Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy and their suggested routes beyond those situations which this thesis will identify. For, both thinkers were arguably involved in disrupting what Heidegger identifies under the rubric of onto-theo-logic. It is, however, unclear to what extent Heidegger recognised Kierkegaard's contribution to that project. Perhaps Kierkegaard's deviation of the consummation of metaphysics was also a 'thought-provoking' impetus, and their relationship goes beyond the 'reawakening of the existential' or the renewed attention to the moment where Heidegger recognises Kierkegaard. So far, we have seen that the argument that Heidegger had a consistent at-arm's-length appreciation for Kierkegaard but little interest after BT is by no means the full picture.

ii.) Indicative Positions on the Kierkegaard-Heidegger Relationship

The purpose of this section is to fill out the picture of the typical perspectives in received literature on the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger in a general sense.

Judith Wolfe

It is often the case that books which span Heidegger's work in full will look to Kierkegaardian themes in the earlier work. For example, Judith Wolfe's *Heidegger and Theology* in part discusses early Heidegger's reception of Kierkegaard, with reference to the work of the 1910's and 1920's, including the themes in *Being and Time* (anxiety, the moment, death, etc.).⁸⁰ Kierkegaard is not mentioned in chapters referring to the later work. However, she helpfully explains that two theological appropriations of Heidegger – phenomenological Thomism (Edith Stein, Karl Rahner and Max Müller) and theological existentialism (Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, John McQuarrie) – look to the earlier theological work, and offer Christianity as a path to authenticity over against Heidegger's 'resoluteness toward death'.⁸¹

Iain D. Thomson

Iain D. Thomson offers the other (Heideggerian) side of the counter-position to my argument that there are significant resonances with Kierkegaard in Heidegger's later thought. He argues that Heidegger's later focus is directed toward 'ontohistorically revolutionary philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, and Nietzsche, and secondarily toward those philosophers who significantly refine the epoch-grounding understanding of being those

⁸⁰ See Judith Wolfe, *Heidegger and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), chapters 2 and 3, pp.33-80.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp.177-8.

metaphysicians inaugurate, such as Aristotle and Kant'.⁸² Thomson argues that Heidegger does not claim that every major philosopher in the Western canon was a metaphysician.

Some important thinkers, such as Kierkegaard and Hume, clearly are not "metaphysicians" in Heidegger's distinctive sense, since they do not even attempt to reconceive the being of entities, let alone successfully advance an epoch-grounding ontotheology. Although the influence of such thinkers may still, of course, be considerable, this influence will not operate directly on our ontohistorical self-understanding, and it is the fact that such thinkers do not significantly impact our historical understanding of being which makes them of little interest to the later Heidegger.⁸³

Thomson goes on to explain that for Heidegger the great metaphysicians do not simply give creative insights but focus and disseminate the truths of their respective ages.⁸⁴ This position seems to agree that Kierkegaard is not part of the onto-theo-logical schema, but sees him as merely a writer. Yet, as we saw above, Heidegger says that Kierkegaard is the (religious) writer most in tune with the destiny of his age. To be in tune with the destiny of his age certainly implies that he is involved in disseminating the truth of his age, even if it is as a religious writer. Moreover, this position does not take into account Heidegger's own inconsistencies regarding Kierkegaard's alleged metaphysical entanglement.

Michael Inwood

Michael Inwood defends Heidegger against any charge of excessive adoption of ideas from his environment, in the earlier and in the later work. Although he concedes that the focus of

⁸²Iain D Thomson, *Heidegger on ontotheology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.25.

⁸³Ibid, p.25.

⁸⁴Ibid, p.26.

Existenz, Angst and Augenblick stem from Kierkegaard, he argues that Heidegger distinguishes himself from other thinkers insofar as he traces concepts further back, even to the Presocratics, and unearths their ‘remoter ancestry’.⁸⁵ ‘This insulates him against the direct influence of his contemporaries, or, indeed, of any single philosopher or school.’⁸⁶ Heidegger, in adopting this method, reads Kant and Aristotle as though they are as much in his debt as he is in theirs. Moreover, ‘once we have encountered Heidegger’s interpretation of a philosopher it is hard to read him through wholly non-Heideggerian eyes.’⁸⁷

Whilst this does seem to be what Heidegger would like us to take from reading his work, the idea that an author is free of influence seems naïve. Moreover, in his discussion of being-thrown and in his discussion of language, Heidegger acknowledges that no one is free from influence or from their context. There will be further discussion of the recognition of the lived facticity of the thinker in chapter one.

Van Buren (and Kisiel)

Some scholars see Heidegger’s later work as a return to themes he was interested in before he wrote *Being and Time*, most notably Edward J. van Buren and Theodore Kisiel. Kisiel’s study ‘The Genesis of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*’ looks to the way in which Heidegger’s earliest work builds toward themes in *Being and Time*. He identifies strands of thought from

⁸⁵ Michael Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.133

⁸⁶Ibid, p.132.

⁸⁷Ibid, p.133.

several different sources and shows how Heidegger uses them. With regard to Heidegger's comments on Kierkegaard in BT footnotes, he says one can see that Heidegger is 'subtly downplaying, disguising or otherwise distorting some of the deepest routes of his thought.'⁸⁸ Kisiel argues that Heidegger was sensing a deep divide between his concepts (particularly regarding time) and those of his precursors, and as such he intentionally distorted his influences. This is the other side of what Michael Inwood's argument, above. Much of the rest of his work coheres with and is indebted to that of Van Buren, discussed below.

Van Buren argues that Heidegger's earliest work, although markedly different from both his Being and Time period and the later work from the 1930's onwards, nonetheless already worked out the themes of the 'question of Being', 'the end' and 'the other beginning'.⁸⁹ However, he does note that the later work 'reinscribed the seminal way-traces of his New Beginning', and offered rich analyses of the end of philosophy, new beginning, Kehre, Ereignis, Es gibt, aletheia, the worlding of the fourfold, the divine, Gelassenheit, technology, and so on.⁹⁰ He argues that Heidegger did not simply move into a simplistic form of existentialism. This misunderstanding, van Buren contends, leads to the mistaken idea that Heidegger's work turned from Dasein-centred to being-centred around 1930. Van Buren argues that BT is more of an aberration than the culmination of early thought and the beginning of later thought.⁹¹ For van Buren, Heidegger's later work was a return to early speculative and religious concerns and language of his doctoral and habilitation theses but

⁸⁸ Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p.422.

⁸⁹ John van Buren, 'The Young Heidegger: Rumor of a Hidden King (1919-1926)', *Philosophy Today* (Summer 1989; 33, 2); p.99.

⁹⁰ John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994),p .362.

⁹¹ Van Buren, 'The Young Heidegger', p.102.

worked out in the horizons of time and factual life that he first explored in the early 1920's. These 'paths that would again be taken up in his later thought after *Being and Time*.'⁹² He further suggests that Heidegger's reform of ontology was in part originally begun as a reform of theology, and a move away from scholasticism (and so begins his later critique of onto-theo-logy). 'Only a new ontological language able to do justice to the historicity of Being in general would be able to displace the objectifying language of Aristotelian scholasticism.'⁹³

Van Buren suggests that Heidegger's early discussion partners, including Kierkegaard, are more suited to his later theme of the 'forgetfulness of Being' (rather than fourfold, dwelling or destiny of Being).⁹⁴ The earliest allies in Heidegger's philosophical rebellion were 'a band of anti-Greek and anti-philosophical Christian trouble makers.'⁹⁵ Van Buren does not simply suggest that Heidegger's earlier work anticipates his later thought in its 're-turn to earlier themes'⁹⁶, but that the earlier work achieved greater clarity in the later work's major themes.⁹⁷ However, van Buren argues that 'the later Heidegger himself no longer pursued his ... Kierkegaardian paths in the same manner'.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, this change of path in the later work should not prevent us from finding meaning in the earlier writings, regardless of Heidegger's own later comments on his earlier work. Moreover, Heidegger's own comments on his work should not prevent us from making our own appropriations: Heidegger himself argued that the meaning of a text is not determined by its author.

⁹²John Van Buren, 'The earliest Heidegger: a new field of research', in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall eds., *A Companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), p.24.

⁹³ Ibid, p.25.

⁹⁴ Van Buren, 'The young Heidegger', p.105.

⁹⁵ Van Buren 'The earliest Heidegger', p.24.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.30.

⁹⁷ Van Buren, 'The young Heidegger', pp.105-6.

⁹⁸Ibid, p.105.

Van Buren nonetheless appears to agree that the later Heidegger exhibits a ‘sophisticated reversion’ to ‘speculative aestheticism (Kierkegaard)’ which speculates on the essence of death and looks down on the actual suffering. He identifies a deep relationship here with later Heidegger’s Nazism.⁹⁹ Other authors have identified his discussion of the onslaught of modern technology and the reduction to standing reserve armies as a critique of the Nazis. Of course, the publication of Heidegger’s black leather journals, exhibit at several points the depth of his Nazism and its presence in his later thought. With Richard Wolin, we can agree that the response to Heidegger’s political involvement ‘need not be that we no longer read him but that we no longer read him naively.’¹⁰⁰

We have found that Van Buren’s focus on the earlier work does not negate an enduring theological significance in the later work. Indeed, van Buren argues that the later work does retain theological significance and some of the earlier influences are still at play in the later focus on the forgetfulness of Being, albeit through paths that are differentiable from earlier ones. Further investigation into the Kierkegaardian confluences or divergences with the later Heidegger is, however, absent. Nevertheless, the well-researched and highly discussed presence of Kierkegaard themes in the earlier work, coupled with the argument that the earlier work provides better articulations of later themes, does not render an exploration of other paths in the later work fruitless. If anything, it simply leaves aside the question of what resonances with Kierkegaard we may still find in the later work.

⁹⁹ Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger*, p.380.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Wolin, ‘Introduction’ to Karl Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p.25.

Moreover, the later Heidegger's protestations that his work should not be compared with Kierkegaard or Nietzsche may be read a similar way. It is not for him to predetermine how we may read the intertextual meaning in his work. I argue that looking to Kierkegaardian themes in later work may open up ways of appropriating Heidegger's paths of thought and those which remain 'unthought'.

We have seen in this section that there are a range of positions regarding the nature of the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Wolfe identified a preponderance of theological engagement focussing on Heidegger's earlier work, and argues that Kierkegaard's narrow existentialist focus on the individual an insufficient means of reopening the question of Being. (At several points throughout this thesis we will see that reading Kierkegaard as merely an existentialist focussed narrowly on the individual is a position that lacks nuance.) She also argued that Heidegger's later philosophy only serves as a skewed lens for a theology which attempts to reappropriate his work for theological ends and is left with only the option to reinscribe God as Beyng.

We saw that Thompson denies any significant resonances between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger, arguing that Kierkegaard did not manage to disseminate the truth of his age in his writing and so the later Heidegger had no interest in him. As I noted, this does not cohere with a more in depth investigation of what Heidegger himself said and I will show throughout this thesis that strong structural resonances with Kierkegaard remain at play in Heidegger's later work. We also contested Michael Inwood's claim that Heidegger's approach is so unique that he is free of significant influence from precursors, with reference

to Bloom and to Heidegger's own understanding of the philosopher's lived actuality and thrownness.

In considering Kisiel and Van Buren we have seen that there is some mileage to the argument that many of the themes in Heidegger's later work are developed out of and rearticulated in his later work. Whilst they have suggested that this signifies a movement away from explicitly Kierkegaardian paths of thought, the repetition of such paths holding Kierkegaardian resonances is not precluded. Rather, the question of Kierkegaardian themes in the later work is simply left to one side. We may suggest that if the later work rethinks and reworks earlier themes, and there are Kierkegaardian elements in the earlier work, there is no reason to think that the later work would be absent of those (albeit rearticulated) resonances.

As such, this section has exhibited a number of different positions regarding the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger which do not as yet provide a satisfactory model for their relationship. Moving on to the next section we will look at positions which are more specific to the later Heidegger in order to arrive at a more satisfactory model. I will show that a model which focuses on structural resonances between the two thinkers but may be flexible enough to also map any resonances and dissonances in terms of content would be the most apposite for this thesis. This model may also allow for a project which does more than rearticulate God as *Being* or attempt to 're-Christianise' Heidegger's mysticism.

iii.) Relevant Positions Regarding the Presence of Kierkegaardian Elements in the Later Heidegger

This section will explore some of the most relevant positions regarding Kierkegaardian elements which are shared with the later Heidegger. I will discuss the contribution of each towards the position taken up in this thesis.

Hubert Dreyfus: 'The Secularisation Thesis'

The secularisation thesis, as a way of understanding Heidegger's reception of Kierkegaard, was not unpopular with the first readers of Heidegger. 'Heidegger's secularization of Kierkegaard was first remarked on in a variety of religious contexts: most importantly, among groups of neo-scholastic and dialectical theologians.'¹⁰¹ Such confessional interpretations of Heidegger's secularisation rendered the boundaries between faith and unbelief unclear.¹⁰² Moreover, 'his secularization of Kierkegaard was read by many as a result of Protestant influence and as alien to his Catholic inheritance.'¹⁰³ Additionally, that which appears to be a secularising move in one theological context 'might be re-described as religious revival from the perspective of another theology.'¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, when different theologies have different understandings of secularisation then the line between

¹⁰¹Edward Baring, 'A Secular Kierkegaard: Confessional readings of Heidegger before 1945', in *New German Critique* (2015, Vol. 42:1), pp.68-9.

¹⁰² Baring's article looks at the early reception of Heidegger among theologians such as Gerhardt Kuhlmann, Karl Löwith and Rudolf Bultmann.

¹⁰³ Baring, 'A Secular Kierkegaard', p.96.

¹⁰⁴Ibid, p.97

secularisation and reformation/heresy is blurred. When the process of secularisation has myriad definitions, it may become less clear that they share the same referent.

Hubert Dreyfus, whilst certainly not the first to propose the secularisation thesis, nonetheless is very well-known for expounding it so clearly with reference to the published text of *Being and Time*. Focussing on part one of BT, Dreyfus explains that Heidegger ‘takes over much more from Kierkegaard than he acknowledges’.¹⁰⁵ He makes this point throughout *Being-in-the-World*. For example, with reference to the concept of ‘authenticity’, he argues that Heidegger repudiates the ‘Christian dogmatic side of Kierkegaard's thought [which] we call Heidegger’s secularization of Kierkegaard.’¹⁰⁶ In this case, he argues that Heidegger proposes a version of Religiousness A which that could work as a way of life, but also salvages aspects of Religiousness B as far as makes sense without faith. This argument is repeated throughout, with reference to several thematic similarities. Overall, he argues that the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger can be defined in terms of their response to nihilism and their critiques of modern culture.

Significantly, in the appendix, Dreyfus argues that the later Heidegger makes a break with what he comes to realise is an essentially Christian analysis of fallenness, which is a key theme in his earlier work.¹⁰⁷ ‘Kierkegaard is never mentioned except to portray his concept

¹⁰⁵ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being in Time, Division I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), p.299.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, p.301.

¹⁰⁷ Dreyfus and Jane Rubin suggest a similar argument regarding authenticity in their article ‘You can’t get something for Nothing: Kierkegaard and Heidegger on how not to overcome nihilism’, *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* (Vol. 30:1, 1987), pp.33-75. This is an earlier version of the appendix to *Being-in-the-world* quoted here.

of existence as a stage in the nihilistic development of Western metaphysics.’¹⁰⁸ Heidegger’s concern, he argues, shifts from becoming an individual in a differentiated public world to the levelling brought about by modern cultural practices. (We will return to this in the first chapter.) Dreyfus argues that this shift shows a separation of paths between the two. ‘[After] Kierkegaard’s profound but mostly unacknowledged influence on early Heidegger, we find Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger following separate but parallel paths. They agree that nihilism is the most crucial issue of our time, but they differ in their responses to that issue.’¹⁰⁹ Whilst Kierkegaard is concerned about how individuals can establish meaningful commitments in a nihilistic culture, he has nothing to say about changing the cultural situation: all cultures would require the individual to make commitments to become a self. Whilst he thinks that our culture is problematic, his concern is with individual salvation. On the other hand, the later Heidegger is less interested in individual salvation or meaningful living than with diagnosing the way in which philosophy propagates nihilism and with preserving those practices which have yet to succumb to the levelling of technology (art, poetry, etc.) in order to save culture as a whole. ‘The one thing upon which Kierkegaard and later Heidegger do agree is that only an incarnate God can save us.’¹¹⁰ Dreyfus argues that for Kierkegaard this is the God-man, a paradigm for individual commitment and salvation, where Heidegger’s description of the Greek temple defines the importance of cultural salvation.

¹⁰⁸ Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World*, p.338.

¹⁰⁹Ibid, p.339.

¹¹⁰Ibid, p.340.

Since the defining difference between Kierkegaard and Heidegger according to Dreyfus here seems to be the distinction between the concern for liberating the individual and the concern for freeing culture, it is important to mention an aspect of my argument which will be more fully developed in chapter one. For, Kierkegaard's concern with liberating individuals to make the choice to become a Christian is very explicitly written by Kierkegaard with consistent reference to Christendom, specifically despite Christendom. 'Christendom' is for Kierkegaard a description of what is wrong with culture and with society, for it is of significance not only in individual spirituality but in a wide range of social institutions including the church and academia. Moreover, a concern to motivate individuals to passionately engage with Christianity would always have a cultural effect. On the other side of it, Dreyfus's distinction also rests on an argument about the difference between Heidegger's early and later work which sees a 'turn' from an interest in Dasein to an interest in Being/Beyng which does not always hold up, and more basically it does not account for the breadth and complexity of the later Heidegger's comments on Kierkegaard which we have discussed above.

Noreen Khawaja, in her article discussed above, offers a critique of the secularisation thesis. She points out that Heidegger (and Jean Beaufret) both pre-emptively refuted the claim.¹¹¹ Moreover, to describe Heidegger as a seculariser of Kierkegaard plays into Heidegger's erroneous connection of Kierkegaard to 'Christianity' as a kind of pre-established and unambiguous identity to which he passively belonged. This fails to account for the innovative way in which Kierkegaard's writing, 'stretched exceptionally among the drives

¹¹¹ Khawaja, 'Heidegger's Kierkegaard', p.311.

to reform, to rationalize and to radicalize Christianity, reconstituted for itself the meaning of that term.’¹¹² For, Kierkegaard’s work does not simply pick up the term ‘Christianity’ from the received tradition and hold with it but rather his whole oeuvre seeks to examine what it means to become a Christian within and despite the context of Christendom. As Khawaja goes on to explain, it is not a valid hermeneutic for their relationship: it obscures Heidegger’s attempts to invent Kierkegaard’s Christianity neatly into the history of metaphysics and with it all of the popular Kierkegaardianism he encountered.

The second criticism that Khawaja makes of the secularisation thesis is that it is vague when applied to an almost exclusively conceptual discourse.¹¹³ How does one secularise an idea? When a religious concept is placed into a philosophical system rather than its traditional concept, what changes? Khawaja offers the example of Kierkegaard’s radicalisation of the Christian concept of sin and Heidegger’s supplied philosophical grounds for it. Does this make ‘sin’ secular? ‘Such a conclusion confuses ... the secular with the formal or methodological and, in tandem, religion with the dogmatic faith that has been abstracted and formalized.’¹¹⁴ This puts the question of Heidegger’s relation to religion into terms of stylistics, rhetoric, biography and reception. ‘What differentiates, formally speaking, a philosophical reading that formalizes Kierkegaard’s religious psychology under the charge of a phenomenological ontology, from an apologetic discourse that develops a rational, phenomenological context for certain theological ideas?’¹¹⁵ She goes on to argue that Heidegger never offers a precise account of the differences between his aims and methods

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.311.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.312.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

and those of Kierkegaard. Heidegger failed to ‘specify the nature of that voice capable of arbitrating the dialogue between philosophy and religious thought and experience that occurs in his own work.’¹¹⁶

The secularisation thesis, whilst it is well-established and recognises the strong Kierkegaardian themes in the early work and in BT, has some flaws. As Khawaja identifies, the thesis plays into Heidegger’s inaccurate labelling of Kierkegaard as somewhat passively using a generic term ‘Christianity’ which ignores Kierkegaard’s problematisation and radicalisation of that term. Further, it is unclear how one secularises a religious concept. The secularisation thesis, as Baring points out, allows for varying interpretations of the term from differing theologies to come into play and this does not necessarily help to clarify our understanding of Heidegger’s reception of Kierkegaard. This is particularly the case with respect to the critique of onto-theo-logy, since Heidegger has trouble locating Kierkegaard in that schema. In his frustrated attempts to locate Kierkegaard within the confines of onto-theo-logical thinking, Heidegger exhibits the complexities of his own relationship to the religious, and this results in muddying his own claims that he presents an atheistic philosophy. Arguably, this is because Kierkegaard himself eschews onto-theo-logy and problematises Christianity and what it means to be a Christian. As mentioned, when the process of secularisation is muddled with reformation and heresy, it is unclear to what ‘secularisation’ refers.

¹¹⁶Ibid, p.314.

George Pattison

Writing about the relationship between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger, Pattison points out that it is plausible to read Heidegger's turn from philosophy of existence towards poetic-meditative thinking as 'a turn away from Kierkegaard and everything Kierkegaard stood for in the context of German Philosophy in the 1920s and 1930s, and towards a paradigm for which the Pre-Socratics and the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin provided the main sources of inspiration'.¹¹⁷ However, 'there remain important analogies between some of the central concerns of the later Heidegger and elements of Kierkegaardian religious thought'.¹¹⁸ Pattison argues that, whilst the later Heidegger may have moved away from the existential anthropology of Kierkegaard he moved closer to the theological Kierkegaard. He illustrates this argument with reference to an analogy between the mediatory role that is ascribed to Christ for Kierkegaard and to the poet by Heidegger. (This is taken up in chapter four.)

Whilst 'Heidegger himself would almost certainly have resisted the idea that what he was attempting to think through was a topic within or for Christian theology', the analogies between Kierkegaard's discussion of coming to the knowledge of a loving God and Heidegger's problem regarding hearing the poet's word concerning gods and mortals remain fruitful.¹¹⁹ Drawing attention to these analogies is not a route to discrediting Heidegger as a philosopher nor side-lining him in terms of the concerns of theology. Rather, the exploration of these analogies is intended to open a perspective that takes Heidegger's problematic more

¹¹⁷ George Pattison, 'Heidegger's Hölderlin and Kierkegaard's Christ', in Stephen Mulhall ed., *Martin Heidegger* (Routledge, 2006), p.50.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.392.

seriously within theology and to show the continued relevance of the questioning of Philosophical Fragments to issues of contemporary thought. Pattison argues that

the specific tension generated by both the positive and negative analogies between Heidegger and Kierkegaard goes a long way to determining the field within which ... a contemporary thinking about God that wishes to think otherwise than in those modes of thought that have culminated in what Heidegger called the dominion of planetary technology will find that simple theological exposition or argument will no longer serve their purpose.¹²⁰

Pattison's multiple insights into the work of Heidegger and Kierkegaard and the relationship between them are indispensably important throughout this thesis. The example picked here is one of his most specific comments on their relationship and showcases his position. The significance of this argument relates to the purpose of this thesis: that is, the attempt to take the later Heidegger's problematic seriously in theological terms without attempting to sideline him in theological discussion. This particular example exhibits resonances between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger which does not privilege one over the other but attempts to think through together. Pattison's articulations of aspects of both Kierkegaard and later Heidegger individually and their relationship will come up throughout this thesis.

Merold Westphal

Westphal argues that Heidegger provides a self-corrective for theology. Heidegger 'learnt from Kierkegaard' that theology 'trivialises the appropriation of revelation in which existence is reoriented and believer reborn by replacing this task with a speculative task that

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.402.

is at once too easy and too elitist.’¹²¹ For both, theology should be in service of the life of faith, not the onto-theo-logical knowledge of philosophical tradition;¹²² for both, theology and philosophy should be kept separate.¹²³ In chapter one, we will see that Kierkegaard criticises onto-theo-logy: the hubristic attempt of humanity to occupy the divine perspective of existence, to attempt to erase the infinite qualitative difference between Godself and humanity. Westphal’s congruous reading of Kierkegaard and Heidegger argues that they each critique onto-theo-logy as ‘a degradation of God and a danger to the life of faith.’¹²⁴

Moreover, ‘Kierkegaard is with Heidegger one of those who calls Jerusalem back to itself from Athens.’¹²⁵ Westphal further argues that a second-hand knowledge of Heidegger results in a belief that the critique of onto-theo-logy ‘targets thinkers such as Luther, Pascal, Kierkegaard ... but Heidegger targets the tradition from Anaximander to Nietzsche, not Augustine to Kierkegaard.’¹²⁶ Reading Heidegger as a critic of the tradition from Augustine is based on incomplete reading.¹²⁷ This position contradicts Khawaja’s argument that Heidegger is unable to place Kierkegaard in his structure. It also perhaps oversimplifies Heidegger’s take on Kierkegaard given Heidegger’s inconsistent comments regarding his precursor. Nonetheless, Westphal’s work remains a significant resource in identifying various elements of resonance between the two thinkers and will be brought into the conversation throughout this thesis.

¹²¹ Merold Westphal. *Overcoming Onto-theology: toward a postmodern Christian faith* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), p.15.

¹²²Ibid, p.26.

¹²³ Ibid, p.39.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.233.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.6.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.257.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p.277.

John D. Caputo

Caputo's perspective on the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger is unambiguous. He chides Heidegger for essentially plagiarising Kierkegaard with the added insult of parsimonious footnoting.¹²⁸ From Caputo's perspective, Heidegger presents Kierkegaard as a 'timely, if narrow, protest against the reigning metaphysics of the day'.¹²⁹ In this presentation, Kierkegaard failed to step back from the Hegelianism of his age – which was his age's destining of Being – and think the destining of Being itself. However, Caputo argues that Kierkegaard's writings do have ontological weight and that these writings go to the heart of Heidegger's project.

Caputo works through the Kierkegaardian themes throughout *Being and Time*, with particular reference to repetition. Over and above others whose work in this area has focussed on BT, Caputo's relevance for this thesis is that, as he explains, Heidegger only came to engage in the destabilising of onto-theo-logy (that Kierkegaard was already practicing a century before) in his later work. Not only does Kierkegaard's influence extend to the unpublished project of BT, but Kierkegaard was already beyond it. He was already involved in the end of philosophy. 'Kierkegaard was already at work on making metaphysics

¹²⁸ John D Caputo, "Heidegger, Kierkegaard and the Foundering of Metaphysics," *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, Vol. 6: *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Robert Perkins ed (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), pp.201-224.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.201.

waver like the late Heidegger.¹³⁰ Kierkegaard's key category in this transgression is faith. Far from being the ontic stumbling block to transgressing metaphysics, Kierkegaard's Christian faith is a central to it.

On Caputo's account, Heidegger's famous reversal got him only to Kierkegaard's starting point: he did not merely anticipate Heidegger's project but moved beyond it. 'Heidegger's well-known reversal consisted largely in discovering what Kierkegaard had already known about the limits of existential subjectivity and willing.'¹³¹ His later writings only got as far as *Repetition*.¹³² *Repetition*, Caputo explains, is Kierkegaard's argument for a deconstruction of ontology. Caputo, then, agrees that Kierkegaard is not an onto-theo-logian, or a metaphysician. He is not caught up in Hegelianism, for Kierkegaard knows that repetition is only possible in *physis*.

The scholars discussed so far in this section provide a kind of spectrum of positions for the relationship between later Heidegger and Kierkegaard. We began with Dreyfus's argument that the later Heidegger moves away from Kierkegaard, for whilst each responds to nihilism, Kierkegaard's response is concerned with individuals whilst Heidegger's response is concerned with saving culture as a whole. I argued that this distinction does not always hold up and we can see that it does not provide a means to map out their relationship with regard to the later work. We moved to Pattison's argument that important analogies remain between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger and that we should approach them in such a way that

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.204.

¹³¹ Ibid, p.222.

¹³² Ibid, p.224.

does not side-line Heidegger's concerns but takes them seriously as theologically important and relevant insights, because those of us wishing to grapple with the problematic that Heidegger's later work identifies as planetary technology (which Heidegger argues is inherently related to onto-theo-logical thought, as we will see in chapter one) will find that simple theological exposition may not be up to the task. Pattison does not, however, go on to provide a model for mapping these analogies. We considered Westphal's argument that Heidegger is working toward a self-corrective for theology, and that his criticism of onto-theo-logy is not aimed at the tradition to which Kierkegaard belongs. I argued that, whilst I agree that they are both working to destabilise metaphysics, Westphal's argument cannot always be held up by the comments that Heidegger himself has made both about Kierkegaard and about his own relationship with theology. Finally, we looked at Caputo's argument that Heidegger heavily borrows from Kierkegaard without acknowledgement and that Heidegger's later work only begins to approach what Kierkegaard's work had already been achieving a century before, particularly as regards repetition (discussed at length in chapter two). Whether or not this can be upheld with respect to the later Heidegger's work is questionable, for his relationship with Kierkegaard in the later work is less demonstrable than it is in the earlier work, hence the problem that this thesis addresses. It would be difficult to maintain an argument that the later Heidegger intentionally plagiarises Kierkegaard when his work has shifted to develop in other ways. This does not, of course, mean that there are no resonances with Kierkegaard in the later work. Moreover, neither Westphal nor Caputo, proceed to provide a model for mapping out the ways in which Kierkegaardian themes and elements may resonate with or be dissonant from the work of the later Heidegger.

Returning to my discussion above of the secularisation thesis as expounded by Dreyfus, and the criticisms that Khawaja provides, we can see that the secularisation thesis in and of itself

is not satisfactory. This is partly because it relates almost exclusively to Heidegger's earlier work. Whilst there is some evidence that the later work plays out themes which are first considered in the earlier work, and that this includes elements which may have come about through Heidegger's early engagement with Kierkegaard's work, the secularisation thesis does not extend or has not been extended to the later work. Moreover, considering Khawaja's criticisms, we saw that the secularisation thesis tacitly agrees with Heidegger that Kierkegaard can be simply regarded as writing about established and unambiguous 'Christian' concerns which does not do justice to Kierkegaard's own problematising of what it means to be or become a Christian or, to put it another way, to Kierkegaard's eschewal of onto-theo-logy. Furthermore, the secularisation thesis confuses the secular with the formal and the methodological and religion with dogmatic, abstracted and formalised faith. This is a vast over-simplification of both the secular and the religious, ignoring or side-lining the ways in which both exceed such categorisations. Surely, if each of these spheres were so clear-cut, easily described and binarily separable, Heidegger would have had a much easier time describing the relationship between his own allegedly atheistic work and the religious.

It would seem that, if we wish to trace the resonances between the work of the later Heidegger and that of Kierkegaard, especially one which takes into account that both of them were working toward destabilising a problematically rigid metaphysical thinking, (whether that is articulated as a critique of German Idealism or of onto-theo-logy) and focusses specifically on those critiques, then we need a model that itself can be more flexible and dynamic than that of the secularisation thesis. We require a model which allows for later Heidegger's less explicitly atheistic articulations of his critique of onto-theo-logy to resonate with Kierkegaard's own problematisations of German idealism and traditional metaphysics.

iv.) A Further Consideration

Herman Phillipse

In his 'Heidegger's Philosophy of Being', Phillipse reads Heidegger's later writings which are often picked up upon as 'religious' in nature (for example, the fourfold, thinking-as-thinking and so on) as articulations of a kind of 'post-monotheistic leitmotif' in which he suggests may be conceived as laying out the foundations for a neopagan Nazi religion.

Phillipse suggests that this post-monotheistic leitmotif is an inner tendency of Heidegger's work. He points to elements in the earlier Heidegger where he describes himself as if on a kind of personal quest to understand theological and phenomenological elements together and goes on to explain that on his reading the Heidegger of the 1930's, even after explicitly rejecting Christianity, was still on a religious quest. On Phillipse's reading, Heidegger still wanted to be a Luther, a religious innovator, and his later works radicalise Luther. For example, for Heidegger, the Lutheran emphasis on grace means that 'human activity no longer has a part in the ultimate determination of man's destiny¹³³'. As such, human destiny is reconceived in terms of being sent to us.

¹³³ Phillipse, p.182.

Significantly, Phillipse argues that the later Heidegger shows a Lutheran form rather than content. From Luther we have the following pattern: there is an original revelation, but traditional theology betrays that revelation by re-casting concepts in Greek philosophy; the concealment of the truth is sent by God, an Aristotelian 'plague'; when tradition falls away from the origin, the tradition must be revived to its original message. Heidegger, he argues, borrows this model and applies the idea of tradition as apostasy to his work in a number of phases, including his early rediscovery of Luther (1916-1922), his modification of Luther to traditional Greek thought (that philosophy has fallen away from Plato and Aristotle and needs to re-focus on phenomena, the concealed origin of their thought, begun by the time of the 1933 rectoral address), and throughout the later works in which the history of metaphysics has fallen away from the original disclosure of Being. Phillipse hypothesises that 'Heidegger's initial metaphysical attempt to bring man before God by methodological atheism (1928-1930) failed.'¹³⁴

In his reversal of Luther, Heidegger explains the basic problem of onto-theo-logy. That is, Being interpreted as a being (God). He attempts the 'destruction' of the Greek element, in order to retrieve a more originary Being. Onto-theo-logy falls away from an originary disclosure of Being. Phillipse identifies this as a reversal of Luther in which Heidegger uses the Lutheran model against Luther, to remove the Christian God from metaphysics. When looked at in this manner, we can see that Heidegger retains a Lutheran character to his project whilst rejecting explicitly theological (Christian) concerns. On this reading, the death of God is the death of a mistaken interpretation of Being. Heidegger, for Phillipse, offers a reading

¹³⁴ Phillipse, p.184.

of Being as a mysterious transcendent agent, but not the personal God of Christianity.¹³⁵ Phillipse suggests that just as Luther considered Aristotle to be a plague sent by God on account of sin, Heidegger saw the self-concealment of Being in the history of metaphysics as a fate sent by Being/Beyng.

Phillipse calls this later reversal of Luther Heidegger's 'post-monotheistic leitmotif'. It is 'post-monotheistic' because, after the death of God, the question concerning Being (why is there something rather than nothing?) opens up the possibility of transcending beings to their ground (Being) in a leap which the Christian believer cannot achieve. This is Phillipse's reading of Heidegger, and is not a statement with which the thesis concurs. For, whilst Heidegger may think that Christian believers are unable to ask the question of Being without simply falling back into onto-theo-logy, this position lacks nuance. We have seen a plethora of specifically Christian responses to his question of Being which have arguably gone further past onto-theo-logy than Heidegger himself was able.¹³⁶

Phillipse goes on explain that it is the structural parallelisms with Christianity which give intelligibility to Heidegger's discourse on Being.¹³⁷ Further than that, he suggests that the post-monotheistic leitmotif, in which Heidegger attempts to replace the Christian religion with a different variety of religious discourse (the neopagan) is 'parasitic upon the monotheistic discourse it intends to destroy'.¹³⁸ In showing us that the removal of the idol of onto-theo-logy should help us to remove Christianity from our thinking, he falls back on those very structures which he rearticulates away from their Christian contents.

¹³⁵ Phillipse, p.185.

¹³⁶ Reference Marion and others here.

¹³⁷ Phillipse, p.187.

¹³⁸ Phillipse, p.187.

For Phillipse, where Luther had the Bible as the source of divine revelation, Heidegger's attempt to retrieve the originary revelation of Being was dependent on the saying of Being found in the historical Dasein of a people (thinkers, poets, art, religion). But it involves working with fragments from Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Anaximander. As such, Heidegger's model for a post-monotheistic mythology is so dependent upon Christianity for any intelligibility and meaning that it 'turns out to be parasitic on the Christian tradition that Heidegger wanted to supersede.'¹³⁹ Moreover, he was compelled to work it out in this manner through his long-term study of and appreciation for the Lutheran method of de(con)structing tradition.

Phillipse proceeds to describe several areas wherein analogies and parallels exist between theology and the later Heidegger's construction of post-monotheistic mythology. This includes the uniqueness of Being, creation, revelation, eschatology, repentance, and so on. Phillipse suggests that when the monotheistic elements are removed, Heidegger is still left with the Christian structure which he then projects back on to the philosophy of the pre-Socratics.¹⁴⁰ This rings with the secularisation thesis insofar as it suggests that Heidegger has gone about removing Christian elements in order to construct a post-monotheistic mythology just as he was accused of picking the Christian elements out of Kierkegaard's thought in order to borrow extensively from his ideas in BT.

Now, we can see that there is some overlap between models regarding that of the secularisation thesis as relates to early Heidegger and that of the post-monotheistic leitmotif which borrows a Lutheran model of 'destroying' tradition in order to construct a neopagan

¹³⁹ Phillipse, p.201.

¹⁴⁰ Phillipse, p.202.

mythology from the bones of Christianity in the later work. If we borrow this model from Phillipse, we may find a way of approaching a search for resonance and dissonance between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger, leaning into the dual ideas of the Lutheran approach used against Luther and the construction of a post-monotheistic neopagan mythology. However, whilst this allows us side-step the problems of describing Heidegger as himself remaining a covert Christian theologian or of attempting to accuse him of plagiarism, it remains to be seen whether or not such a model would also sidestep the criticisms of the secularisation thesis that Khawaja highlights above. We recall that these criticisms were: firstly, it assumes that Kierkegaard belongs to a pre-established and unambiguous 'Christian' identity which completely ignores that Kierkegaard problematises 'Christian' and 'Christianity' whilst simultaneously obscuring Heidegger's (failed) attempt to slot Kierkegaard into Heidegger's schema; secondly, it is unclear what is changed when an idea is 'secularised' (what changes about Kierkegaard's radicalised concept of sin when Heidegger 'secularises' it?) and that this confuses the secular with formalised philosophy and the religious with formalised and abstracted dogma.

Taking the second critique first, we could argue that the polarity between secular and religious is sidestepped when we rethink Heidegger's position. If he is undertaking a construction of a post-monotheistic mythology, dependent itself of the bones of Christianity for its intelligibility, the consideration of the secular, and its false connection with formalised philosophy, vanishes from the field of our concern. Regarding the first critique, that the secularisation thesis would assume Kierkegaard belongs to an unambiguous Christianity and ignores his problematisation of the term, we can see that this need not necessarily be the case is borrowing Phillipse's model. For if Heidegger is constructing a post-monotheistic mythology from the structure of Christianity, or more specifically in terms of this thesis, constructs a neo-pagan mythology that feeds into and coheres with his critique of onto-theo-

logy which is (whether intentionally or not) resonant with the Kierkegaardian critique of speculation then this does not require that we confine Kierkegaard to an unambiguous and undifferentiated 'Christianity'. Moreover, it is my intention to show that, part of the reason that Heidegger is unable to confine Kierkegaard in his schema of the history of metaphysics is because his own work runs along with the Kierkegaardian structure he engaged with in the earlier work. Further, it also resonates at points in terms of content, as we shall see.

Although Kierkegaard himself was Lutheran and engaged with Luther, I argue that he has enough divergence from Luther (his target (German Idealism, the Danish (Lutheran) Church), his method, his focus on the existential and his radical destabilisation of speculation) that his project does not resolve simply into his precursor. Moreover, Heidegger's early engagement with Kierkegaard and his explicit discussion of him is significant. Whilst both Luther and Kierkegaard were conversation partners, that does not resolve to the same conversation.

There is a problem when comparative work assumes a binary opposition between thinkers when the truth is more complex and nuanced. If we posit a backdrop consisting of the work of thinkers like Harold Bloom (who argues that all writers suffer under an anxiety of influence and write in creative misprision or misreading) and Julia Kristeva (who discussed the intertextual nature of words and concepts which are never free from their use in other works), and attempt to apply the ethos of these ideas to our approach, we may reposition ourselves in such a way that permits Heidegger to have creatively misread Kierkegaard, and to have used words and phrases with Kierkegaardian resonance in his work, without attempting to oppose them.

If we can find a way to read the later Heidegger alongside Kierkegaard, then we may also find that ways are opened up for developing a way of taking seriously the problematic that

Heidegger articulates about onto-theo-logy that steps over the oppositional approaches which may lack the flexibility and nuance needed to listen to the resonances between Kierkegaard and later Heidegger.

D: The Problem of “Influence”

As mentioned above, there are inherent problems with discussing “influence” or “inheritance” when dealing with two thinkers who work towards destabilising onto-theological thinking. For, onto-theo-logical thinking is characterised by an unquestioning acceptance of cause-and-effect thinking which also privileges the creating Subject of onto-theo-ego-logy. To discuss influence in a linear way would render Heidegger’s work as a consequence of Kierkegaard’s writing. Since I argue within this thesis, especially the fifth chapter, that Kierkegaard deliberately eschews the authorial ‘I’ in order not only to point away from himself and toward Governance but also to show that any objective ‘knowledge’ of God as creator (or First Cause) is impossible and claims to such completely wrong-footed, it would be a mistake to attribute a commonplace understanding of “influence” to him. Moreover, there is an important sense in which Heidegger as a reader of Kierkegaard is also a ‘cause’ of the text as Kierkegaard is qua author.

Harold Bloom famously discussed the anxiety of influence in his book of that name. He argued that in trying to create something new or unique, the later writer creates anxiety over the influence that precursors may have had on their work. A strong misreading of the precursor’s work tries to resist influence in order to assert distinctiveness. It is not mere imitation: it is ‘the agonistic misprision performed upon powerful forerunners by only the

most gifted of their successors.’¹⁴¹ Although such misprision is best thought of as a space from which creativity emerges, it has come to have a negative connotation.

Influence, Bloom tells us, has come to mean having power over another. Originally, it indicated an ‘inflow’, ‘an emanation or force coming in upon mankind from the stars.’¹⁴² It meant to receive an ethereal liquid from the stars that affects character and destiny. It is a ‘secret power’, defying all that seems voluntary through directing and modifying. ‘Influence is influenza - an astral disease.’¹⁴³ Yet, the stasis of health is not to be preferred, for stasis has no creativity as it has no possibility of change or growth. Without the ‘influenza’, there would be no new writing, whether that is poetry, philosophy, theology, and so on.

Bloom argues that poets create their precursors in reading them, insofar as every reader creates a writer by reading them. In bringing up the nature of the reader’s influence, Bloom begins to show that influence need not only flow in one direction and sets up the destabilisation of linear influence. However, Bloom complains, the critic approaches the poetic text with pre-set ideas about what influence is and how it works, focussing on the historical (linear) model. This reduces “influence” to intellectual revisionism, the ancestor of which is heresy. He shows that “influence” is the fruitful history of poetic misreading, that has come to be considered ‘more of a blight than a blessing, from the Enlightenment until this moment.’¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.xxiv.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, p.26.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p.95.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.50.

So, we can see that “influence” in its usual (critical) meaning functions in such a way as to reduce a text which is chronologically later in line with preconceived linear notions. The idea that “influence” should or does work in this simplistic way undercuts the creative act, and I argue that it is in direct contradiction to various articulations from each of my thinkers. As we will see in the first chapter, Heidegger critiques the cause-and-effect, productionist metaphysics into which the common understanding of “influence” plays. Heidegger instead unfolds what he argues is a more originary, perhaps more authentically Greek, way of thinking about causality – that is, the four causes. Kierkegaard likewise presents what I interpret as a critique of causality in his discussion of beginnings, but also (as we will see in chapter five) he reflects this in his method.

If we think back to Phillipse’s discussion of Heidegger’s ‘parasitic’ use of Christian ideas, we may bring a different articulation to bear. Perhaps we can think of the later Heidegger’s structure not as parasitic on that which he seeks to destroy (Christianity) but as a strong and creative misprision. More specifically if we bring this to bear on his relationship with Kierkegaard we may argue that in some way, even if he fails to recognise it or realise it, the later Heidegger’s critique of onto-theo-logy may be thought of as a misprision of Kierkegaard’s critique of Hegelian speculative metaphysics.

If we think a little more about the ways in which Heidegger may have “influenced” Kierkegaard we may be aided in turning briefly to consider Roland Barthes’ essay, *The Death of the Author*. For Barthes, it is not just the author and the reader who communicate through the text: the characters and their voices are used by the author to communicate to

the reader. These voices become indiscernible and obscure the ‘origin’ of the work.¹⁴⁵ In writing, the author’s ‘voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins.’¹⁴⁶ In literature, the subject loses their identity ‘beginning with the very identity of the body that writes.’¹⁴⁷ The author’s ‘person’, Barthes explains, has taken on importance only in the modern period (biographies, interviews, private journals) asserting a tyranny over the text centred on the author.¹⁴⁸ ‘The explanation of the work is always sought in the man or woman who has produced it.’¹⁴⁹ Barthes argues that this is a problematic reduction of the possibilities of the text as must be avoided. He argues that the text does not simply deliver a message from the Author-God: the writer is merely a gesture, never an originator. Barthes concludes that the restoration of any future to writing must involve the death of the Author for the birth of the reader.¹⁵⁰

Barthes’s work here further illustrates why the common or critical concept of influence is problematic. It asserts the modern subject as creator, originator of the text, giving them control over interpretation and meaning. Again, this plays into productionist metaphysics and the onto-theo-ego-logical thinking which both of my thinkers critique. Relocating meaning in the existing, reading individual and destabilising the authorial ‘I’ as the Author-God would play into the destabilisation of onto-theo-logy which each of my thinkers suggest, whereas the common critical idea of “influence” is in contradiction to the projects of both thinkers.

¹⁴⁵ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), p.142-148.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.142.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.143.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.148

We may see, then, that the linear concept of “influence” is not helpful for this thesis. Moreover, whilst there are arguably points at which this thesis reads Kierkegaard through a Heideggerian lens, this need not be problematic or reductive. Rather it may be thought of as allowing the destabilisation of “influence” the modern sense. It is hoped that it is now clear why “influence” is a term that this thesis avoids, preferring to discuss the comparison between thinkers in terms of structural resonances/dissonances, confluent/divergent streams, and so on. Further, when we add what we have arrived at in this section to our model, we can see that destabilising the understanding of “influence” allows a more organic and fluid approach to their work. Whilst we are appropriating Phillipse’s model to a specifically Kierkegaardian end, listening for the chimes between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger, and arguing that Heidegger has rearticulated a lot of the Christian content from Kierkegaard’s critique with neopagan intimations, we are not compromising by attributing to Kierkegaard a nonproblematic and homogeneous ‘Christianity’ as the secularisation thesis arguably does. Rather we are showing that Kierkegaard’s own critique of German idealism and speculative metaphysics resonates with Heidegger’s critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, and that this may be why Heidegger failed to place him in the history of the oblivion of Being. Further than that, we are suggesting that destabilising “influence” is a concept is a necessary part of the critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, and a model that allows for such destabilisation is important for this thesis. An upshoot of this may be a reconsideration of what is meant in the received literature when scholars suggest that Kierkegaard “influences” Heidegger.

E: The Thesis Argument and Layout

This project argues that there are strong structural resonances between the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy and the critique of German idealist speculative metaphysics he found in Kierkegaard. These resonances are mostly found structurally, for the later Heidegger's critique is often articulated in neopagan or postmonotheistic terms. Borrowing Phillipse's model, however, should not suggest that I am intending to trace all of Heidegger's neo-pagan works and their connections with Kierkegaard. There simply is not enough space to attempt such a thing here as well as examining his critique of onto-theo-logy and so on. What I suggest is that a model which allows a more organic understanding of Heidegger's later resonances with Kierkegaard is preferable to a more arbitrary 'secular'/'religious' divide as per the secularisation thesis.

I will show that for both thinkers a significant aspect of the critique of onto-theo-logy is tied up with the critique of causality. In terms of Heidegger's work, this is fairly self-evident as he explicitly identifies linear causality as a significant problem. However, Kierkegaard does not offer sustained or systematic critique of causality. In fact, in PF's interlude he often sounds as though he is proffering causes over grounds, to emphasise that a cause is a freely chosen action (of God) over against the necessity of a ground. However, when Climacus suggests that, he is specifically countering the argument that the Paradox of the God-man was a necessary occurrence. He proceeds to emphasise its paradoxical nature. This does not mean that Kierkegaard is suggesting that onto-theo-logical causation is appropriate. He does not imply that the 'cause' that is the prime mover is available through objective speculation to proffer answers about how and why we came into being. Rather, I argue that at several

points his critique of beginnings and his suggestion that things come about enigmatically through qualitative shifts indicates or implies a critique of cause-and-effect thinking.

I deepen the argument regarding causality with reference to the problem of the subject as creator and how this pertains to human creative activity. Both Kierkegaard and Heidegger offer alternative ways of looking the human participation in creative activity which will be highlighted throughout and brought together in the conclusion.

Regarding Heidegger's reinscribing of his previous work in the later work. This does not mean that he failed to develop his thinking in the later production. Rather, it is to be expected that there would be notable moments of confluence between his earlier and later concerns precisely because of his method of retrieval (itself, also, a moment of resonance with Kierkegaard as I show in the second chapter). Heidegger's retrieval of his earlier themes in the later work does not imply that this turn is not significant and that the later work is 'derivative'. Rather, the persistent calling of the question of being and the incomplete articulation of the existential analytic called him to retrieve his earlier work and attempt to reopen the question of being. Ironically, he retrieved repetition as retrieval and repeated repetition (in a non-identical way) in his later work in terms of the second beginning. What all this means is that his resonances with Kierkegaard are not simply left-over from his earlier work. Rather, his engagement with Kierkegaard's repetition was so profound that strong structural resonances remain throughout his later work, including that of the critique/overcoming of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Regardless, these resonances pervade through the critiques themselves and into the ways in which each thinker tries to suggest or articulate the route away from the onto-theo-(ego)-

logical. For Kierkegaard suggests that repetition offers a more apposite way of coming to understand how one builds meaning and identity in the world without recourse to Hegelian thinking. Heidegger develops his concept of repetition in BT as a means of retrieving possibilities for authentic selfhood and then suggests it as a model for his own philosophical projects and as a way of understanding the possibility of a second beginning in philosophy that was latent within the first. So, Heidegger's method is itself confluent with Kierkegaard's category of repetition. Kierkegaard establishing a qualitative leap as a sudden and enigmatic emergence of the new. Heidegger discusses the leap in terms of a step back, as the emergence of a new thing, and as the instantiation of the new beginning. Both suggest that the leap is a shift in which a perspective is changed and the reality of humanity's abyssal dwelling is recognised. Kierkegaard discusses the moment of vision in which a new reality and the capacity to respond to it are co-given. Heidegger articulates Er-eignis as appropriation. We can see, then, that there are basic structural similarities here. The chapters will each present these in depth with careful articulations of more specific moments of resonance between the two.

The approach taken in this thesis is not attempting to "rechristianise" Heidegger's Being. Rather I seek to show how Kierkegaard's radically ungrounded Christian self and his critique of both German Idealism and Christendom vis-à-vis contemporary Danish society are resonant with the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. This is to be undertaken in terms of showing how (borrowing Phillipse's model), whilst the content of Heidegger's later work is often neo-pagan, the structure remains remarkably Kierkegaardian. However, because Kierkegaard himself problematises the term 'Christian' and shakes the metaphysical underpinnings of traditional onto-theo-logy, and because Heidegger is often reworking a theme from his earlier work, there are also occasional aspects

of Heidegger's later content which chime along with Kierkegaard, too. I will trace these structural resonances, and the occasional chimes in content, throughout this thesis. Chapters will take each thinker in turn and proceed to analyse the findings, listening for resonances primarily in structure.

The first chapter will discuss the Kierkegaardian critique of German Idealism and Christendom, identifying the main thrusts of his argument. This will begin with discussing the term 'ontotheology' and the fact that Kierkegaard would likely have known the word and what it meant (as it was used by Kant to refer to the ontological argument for God's existence) and did not choose to use it. I will argue that Heidegger re-popularised and redefined the word in such a way that when he uses it (with or without the punctuation used in this thesis) he is not specifying that particular argument. We must note that there is at least an element of a reverse reading (e.g. we are reading Heidegger back 'into' Kierkegaard to some extent in adopting this term). Nonetheless, I argue that there is enough resonance between the two critiques presented that this is not a problematic misreading of Kierkegaard, and indeed several thinkers already discussed have associated Kierkegaard with a critique of 'onto-theo-logy' including Caputo, Khawaja, and Westfall.

The first section of chapter one will also address the question of who Kierkegaard's critique is aimed at, which is related to the first section. For identifying his target helps to outline the nature of his critique. I argue that Kierkegaard's critique is directed toward Hegelian ideas even if it is not directed at Hegel himself and as such provides a critique of Hegelian 'onto-theo-logy' expressed as a critique of German idealist speculative metaphysics.

I proceed to discuss the main features of this critique primarily in terms of Kierkegaard's discussion of the philosopher's act of abstraction, 'smuggling' movement into the system, and the system's inability to fulfil its promise in that it forgets the existing human being in positing a false God-like perspective for the existing subject. I proceed to argue that that 'objective categories of reflection' are onto-theo-logical and move on to discuss Kierkegaard's explanation of the dissembling danger in this kind of thinking (and in becoming a Christian). I go on to discuss Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom and how this plays out as levelling and in terms of despair. I suggest that Kierkegaard's understanding of the subject in despair shows a relationship with God which is anarchic and ungrounding and displays a critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Moving to Heidegger, I discuss his critique of the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics in conversation with Hegel, and I move to exposit his critique of onto-theology as it plays out in modern technological society. I explore his attention to the coming to presence of things and conversely the loss of distance and differentiation in *Gestell* and *Bestand*, where things are reduced to objects in a world-picture. I also examine the nature of the danger for Heidegger as a dissembling danger.

I argue that there are significant resonances between the structure of these critiques in terms of their critiques of Hegel, in the problematic subject-object relation, in an objective world-view which plays out that relation, and in terms of the duplicitous and dissembling nature of 'danger' to the human essence inherent within onto-theo-logical thinking in terms of levelling and *Bestand*.

I will show that the way in which Kierkegaard articulates his critique of Hegel and speculation provides a structure of critique from which Heidegger is able to build his own critique of onto-theo-logy. Heidegger presents his critique of onto-theo-logy with reference to such neo-pagan or post-monotheistic elements as ‘the fourfold’, but resonances with Kierkegaard abound.

This chapter is by necessity the longest of the thesis. In covering so many different and yet interrelated themes in both thinkers, and proceeding to discuss the resonances between them, this chapter covers a lot of ground. It also forms the basis of the ongoing discussion and is referred back to in the following chapters.

In the second chapter, I argue that Kierkegaard’s category of repetition is a critique of and a means of destabilising the onto-theo-logical whilst also pointing to a commitment to the life of faith. I explore repetition in terms of the reopening of past possibilities, as gaining one’s soul through patience and discuss the significance of repetition with reference to a subversion of Aristotelian kinesis. I move on to ground the discussion of repetition in BT, to show that Heidegger appropriates it for his method and that it is key to not only his work in BT but – as I show – continues to be the basis for his method far into the later work. I argue that the hermeneutic principle that Heidegger adopts in BT is still apparent in his later work in terms of the second beginning of philosophy and the retrieval of still unthought possibilities. We will see that there is a structural resonance between the two of them in terms of how repetition is understood to interrupt and destabilise the stasis on onto-theo-logy.

In the third chapter, I discuss the nature of the ‘leap’ for each thinker. Here I address a prevailing misreading of Kierkegaard’s leap that sees him as purely volitionistic and advocating a Nietzsche-style self-willed hero. For Kierkegaard’s leap is not this, but rather as Ferreira suggests it is a decision to surrender. I discuss the nature of the abyss as not quite Lessing’s ditch, insofar as the leap reveals that we are already in the abyss. I proceed to discuss Heidegger’s leap in terms of the fissure of being and the need for a patient and passive element in becoming vulnerable. I argue that there are resonances in terms of these elements, and that structurally each uses the leap to express how a movement out of onto-theo-logy is both a decision by the leaper and is provided as a possibility from outside of the leaper. It is also a leap in thought for both thinker, although Heidegger expresses it in more neo-pagan language and imagery. For both it is a leap away from onto-theo-logy and into a different mode of living.

In the fourth chapter I address the moment and *Ereignis*. I argue that Heidegger’s earlier use of ‘*Augenblick*’ continues in some respects in his later works and is developed as the ‘historical occurrence’ of *Ereignis*. I suggest that Heidegger misunderstands Kierkegaard’s moment in dismissing it as a series of nows in relation to eternity. Kierkegaard’s moment is related to the future as the incognito of the eternal which places eternity in the category of possibility rather than the onto-theo-logical manner of eternity as a *nunc sans*. I argue along with Pattison that Heidegger’s later articulation of the event as cor-responsive and requiring a compassionate, touching between Da-sein and Being chimes with Kierkegaard’s discussion of time and eternity touching in the moment. I further argue that there is an implied critique of causality here from Kierkegaard since he sees that which comes about in the moment as emerging from an obscured origin, and that it comes about in simultaneity, rather than in a linear progression from a known source. I argue here that their approaches

to time and eternity suggest that they share a concern about the false God-like perspective being taken up by existing individuals and how this manifests in society. For each thinker, I argue, the moment is groundless and aletheiological. The most significant dissonance is in the nature of the abyss that they discuss: for Kierkegaard the abyssal quality of the moment is the touching with eternity in terms of the ungrounding and anarchic relationship with God whereas for Heidegger the event takes one up into a reciprocal mirroring with the fourfold. This is a particularly good example of my overall argument that the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy rings with a Kierkegaardian structure whilst pursuing a neo-pagan articulation. It also exhibits Kierkegaard's destabilising approach to traditional onto-theological concepts.

The fifth chapter discusses the nature of governance and the destining of *beyng* (*Geschick*), which is sent by *beyng*. For Kierkegaard, the hidden and yet personal nature of God's guidance is how and why he became an author. He describes governances as his co-author and expresses his indirection as an author in similar terms to the little nudges and hints that he is gifted by Governance. I argue that Kierkegaard uses his method to reflect his relationship with Governance in his authorship, insofar as he self-effaces his authorial self and uses indirect communication. Moreover, I argue that the existential encounter and relationship with governance as unobtrusive guide and guardian is indicative not of a First Cause of onto-theo-logy but of a radically other God who defies the abyss and the infinite qualitative difference as an act of divine love which transgresses onto-theo-logy.

Regarding *Geschick*, I argue that Heidegger's discussion and development of destiny as the sending of *beyng* which sends itself and gives itself, Heidegger shows a kind of repetition of possibilities in each epochal sending of *beyng* which acts to disrupt and undermine a

linear or deterministic reading of fate and destiny. This is reflected in his expression of epochal change and destiny as well as his own understanding of authorial practice as a response to *Geschick*. Although Heidegger does not attest to a personal God who provides guidance, there remains nonetheless an intimate element in participating in the sending of being.

I argue that there are resonances here, albeit not as markedly as with the other aspects. Kierkegaard discusses a unique relationship with a radically personal God where Heidegger discusses the sending of Being as playing out through epochal changes. However, Kierkegaard's decentering of his authorial self challenges the idea of a known creator available for questioning which is resonant with Heidegger's being as aletheia.

The structure of each thinker's critique follows a pattern. To put it in overly simplistic terms: Firstly, they identify the problems of traditional onto-theo-logical thinking: it loses focus on existence, it abstracts existing thinkers from their own existence, it places people (and things) objectively over-against each other and the world, it privileges the objective thinker into a position that is harmful to human self-understanding, it paves the way for mass society and a loss of human identity, it dissimulates the danger of such a loss. Secondly, they suggest that we need a way out, and they both identify repetition in terms of attempting to re-uptake previous or latent possibilities as a route. Repetition, for each of them, works through a leap in which the individual is gifted the possibility to make a choice to leap. The moment/the event is the space in and into which the leap is made. Each suggests that such a leap may lead us to a new destiny away from the onto-theo-logical.

Of course, this is oversimplified, and the thesis will show the variance between them in their content and emphases. Moreover, it will show a specifically Kierkegaardian resonance with the later Heidegger's work and the occasional chime in content. I will suggest that Heidegger was unable to put Kierkegaard aside altogether in his later work because he was still engaged in thinking through the process for escaping onto-theo-logical metaphysics that Kierkegaard had indirectly presented a century or more before.

The extent to which Heidegger fully recognised that Kierkegaard's method was part of a dissimulative and deconstructive effort remains unclear. As Khawaja suggests, Heidegger saw in Kierkegaard an anomalous and uncategorisable enigma who also served as a cipher for Heidegger's own relation to Christianity. On the one hand, he finds him caught up with Hegelian metaphysics and onto-theo-logical concepts and on the other hand he finds a corresponding voice against the levelling effect of modern technological society which is inflected with a spiritual element that Heidegger is not always completely at odds with. This also chimes with Kierkegaard in Heidegger's later emphases on reciprocity, correspondence, vulnerability and surrender.

Kierkegaard's anomalousness and refusal to fit into Heidegger's schema manifests Kierkegaard's intentional eschewal established philosophical/theological method and his deliberate authorial blurring. It is no accident that he frustrates Heidegger and other readers in this way. Kierkegaard's deliberate eschewal of biography and his resistance to claiming authority over his works is also inherently linked to this protest against what Heidegger calls onto-theo-logy. We will see throughout this thesis, in agreement with Khawaja and others, that Kierkegaard's God is not the God of onto-theo-logy, not the *causa sui*. As creator, Kierkegaard's God is not available for objective categorisation. Kierkegaard's thought

resists this speculative, onto-theo-logical tendency despite Heidegger's statements regarding his being hopelessly caught up in Hegelian thinking. For, where Heidegger tries to explicate himself from the language of onto-theo-logical thinking in terms of subject and object, Kierkegaard uses this language against onto-theo-logy as a subversion.

My argument will proceed as follows. Firstly, I will show that there are still confluences between Heidegger and Kierkegaard in the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy. Secondly, I will argue that both thinkers present a substantial critique of causality, albeit indirectly in Kierkegaard's case. Thirdly, I suggest that the resonances are largely structural and highlight points at which Heidegger explicitly links his project with a neopagan or postmonotheistic spirituality. I will tease out the points at which this critique of causality presents in each thinker's work regarding the related outcome for understanding human creative activity (authorship, artistry, poetry, *techne* and so on) and suggest that for both thinkers the critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, and by extension causality, implies an important refiguring of such activity e.g. as a participant in the artistic process rather than the sole source of meaning for the produced thing. I conclude by arguing that the critiques may suggest ways of rearticulating important Christian beliefs in a manner which may be able to avoid some of the problems of traditional Christian onto-theo-logical articulations.

Chapter 1 – Critique of Speculation and Onto-theo-logy

This chapter addresses the critiques of speculation and onto-theo-logy as presented by Kierkegaard and Heidegger. The first section will explain Kierkegaard's critique of speculation and argue that this is also a critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. The second section discusses Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy and related themes. The third section will look discuss the extent to which Kierkegaard's critique of speculation provides a structural frame upon which Heidegger is able to build his own critique of onto-theo-logy. I will argue that there are resemblances between the two but that the way in which later Heidegger sets out his critique is structured similarly to Kierkegaard's even when he differs in content.

This chapter will begin by showing that Kierkegaard targets onto-theo-logy, albeit not explicitly using that term, through his critique of speculative metaphysics and German Idealism particularly when he targets Hegelian thought. (This will address Stewart's argument that Kierkegaard is not targeting Hegel.) We will discuss the basic features of his critique as laid out by Pattison and expand on these with reference to Kierkegaard's own work. These basic features include: the Hegelian 'system' beginning with abstraction and failing to explain its own beginning, forgetting the philosopher themselves and the individual, 'smuggling' movement into metaphysics, the system's failure to deliver the promised totality, that it downplays the time-conscious importance of ethical choices, it is not an apposite model for faith, it presupposes faith but claims presuppositionlessness. We will see that these criticisms of Hegel are also criticisms of (Hegelian) speculative onto-theo-logy.

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We then progress to discuss Kierkegaard's 'categories of reflection', which when objective, are also characterised by the tendencies of onto-theo-logy. Since reflection is the possibility of the relation between reality and ideality, it mediates the two. Reflection when not related to something of existential significance and is devoid of interest. So, when existence is cast into categories of reflection, existence itself becomes devoid of meaning and passion. When the philosopher casts themselves as presuppositionless, they lose themselves in an abstraction. We will see that this is the upshoot of speculative (onto-theo-logical) metaphysics: the loss of the self, the individual's significance, and by extension, existential significance.

We will see that Kierkegaard discusses the danger, in relation to his critique of speculative idealism. (Hegelianism is a symptom of this society, and its growing popularity in Kierkegaard's Denmark indicates a deeper disease.) For in a society characterised by objective, disinterested reflection, we are presented with a false image of safety, a reflected façade. Kierkegaard explains that the danger in this society is dissimulated. The true danger is that we will fail to become Christians due to Christendom. For Christianity is a passionate, subjective, interested choice. Moreover, in a reflective age, impassioned calls to action are met with scorn, the web of reflections reducing each individual to behave accordingly. The individual is reduced to a number, a member of the crowd, a mass person. This social levelling is expressed as a reflection-game, played by a faceless public. This is the outplaying of the objective way of thinking that culminates in Hegelianism. To make this final point, we will discuss Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom.

Having established this basis for the chapter, I will proceed to discuss Heidegger's explicit critique of onto-theo-logy which he writes in response to Hegel. Heidegger argues that Hegel

thinks of Being as the pre-eminent Being (God) and as such places God and Being as static objects of inquiry. Being is presented as the ego thinking itself into Being. (That is, in Kierkegaardian terms, reflection reflecting upon itself.) Heidegger also complains that Hegel reduces time to spatial categories in order to grasp it in terms of timeless speculation.

We will discuss Heidegger's argument that the deity of onto-theo-logy is the deity which enters into philosophy as and how philosophy demands and requires it. It is the *causa sui* or the *cause primae*. That is, the deity of productionist metaphysics. A means of explaining a 'beginning' which fails to explain the beginning because it fails to clarify the origin of the unity between God and Being, which remains still unthought. We will see that Heidegger identifies the problem of representational thinking in tandem with this critique. Representational thinking is characterised by a reductive objectification of things.

We will progress to discuss the nature of unconcealment which provides a challenge to representational thinking by considering the movement of concealment and unconcealment in the differing sendings of the truth of *beyng* in each epoch, thus challenging the idea that what it represented in objectness is the full truth. We will discuss that *aletheia* is the primal play between a thing coming to presence and turning away from presence, also expressed as a primal strife between Earth and world. This is an example of Heidegger's later development of neo-paganism, or at least feeds into his later description of the fourfold. We will see that this dynamic interplay between what presences and what is concealed is the truth of *Beyng*, the truth of a reciprocal movement or swaying of un/concealment. With this, Heidegger challenges the static notions of onto-theo-logical (objective) truths and refocuses on the truth of things as a partial self-revelation of *Beyng*.

We will then proceed to discuss the relation of things to objects in order to show that the reduction to the subject-object relationship robs things of their possibilities and of the richness of their corresponsive and reciprocal coming about through the dynamic interplay of the fourfold. The thing, then, has a much richer ontology in Heidegger than the object. We will move on to show how Heidegger conceives of the work of art as standing against the sheltering earth. The interplay between earth and world is described as a ‘primal strife’, characterised by movement not by suspension qua onto-theo-logical thinking. Moreover, when we reach the Bremen lectures of 1949, we will see that Heidegger’s ‘thing’ has become the meeting point of the fourfold (earth, sky, divinities, mortals) which is a further example of his neo-pagan content. In this, he challenges the scientific manner of viewing objects.

We will see that Heidegger argues that science only ever encounters those aspects of a thing which it has already admitted as possibilities, rather than those aspects which are inherent to the thing beyond the scientific-objective view. When the thing is reduced to object, that over against which it stands (the earth) and by extension the fourfold aspects of its thingliness are stripped away from our experience of it, it is reduced to a simple representation of itself in the subject’s objectifying gaze. It denies the thing’s possibilities for nearness and remoteness, for it is simply in the stasis of representation. The world becomes a series of static objects: the world picture, in which the world is determined by the mathematically knowable and measurable.

We will go on to examine Heidegger’s argument that, in rendering the world in terms of object, and the human representer as subject, the subject becomes the referential point for all objects and for all producing. Beings, entities, things, are all reduced to what the human

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subject's gaze represents and produces (onto-theo-ego-logy). In then adding itself into the picture, humanity objectifies itself. When this process of objectification strips both other entities and humanity down to this distanceless objectness, we find ourselves reducing and reduced to standing reserve, in which objects and humanity are stockpiled in terms of usefulness. This process occurs through what Heidegger calls 'Ge-Stell'. This is the way in which technology renders and positions the world and things, requisitioning everything in challenging it forth into this standing reserve.

This requisitioning, Heidegger explains, draws humans and things away from their essence and divests them of their destiny. In questioning the essence of requisitioning, he discusses the essence of technology. We will see that Heidegger progresses to explain that positionality (Ge-Stell) is the outplaying of the subject-object defined *Weltbild*, which in turn is the repercussion of the middle age's sent truth of 'the created order'. We can see already, then, that both thinkers present a challenge to objective knowledge of God and thinking of God as the uncaused cause.

We will proceed to discuss Heidegger's 'the danger'. The danger severs us from the history of being, just as calculative thinking cuts us off from the possibility of authentic thinking or reflection. However, for Heidegger, the danger is an essential part of being. We are, and being is, in essential danger. The danger is not that of finitude itself but of forgetting the play of *aletheia* in being. The danger dissimulates itself and being in interplaying with being. When the danger presences as danger, it will also bring the saving power.

Moving on to the final section we will discuss the essay the question concerning technology where Heidegger offers a reading of the traditional Greek four causes. He explains a thing's

presencing in terms of the co-responsive, mutually obliged four causes. In discussing the cooperation of the causes in bringing forth the thing into presence, Heidegger shows that the essence of technology is nothing technological but is rather a mode of *aletheia*, an artistic *poiesis*.

We will see that Heidegger shows that when everything is presented in the light of cause-effect qua representational onto-theo-logical thinking, everything is reduced to linear causality, including God. God comes to be viewed as simply the efficient cause and the essential provenance of causality itself is never considered. This is what is meant when scholars talk about ‘productionist metaphysics’, that is, a metaphysics which reduces everything to the chain of cause and effect and thus renders everything in terms of use.

Once all of this has been explained and established with respect to my two authors, I will move on to the comparative section. This will first discuss and establish that Kierkegaard’s ‘subject’ is not the idealist subject of German idealism. It is rather a completely ungrounded inversion of the subject of German idealism whose being in relation to God (the self-reduplicated infinite subject) is anarchic and destabilising. Having established that Heidegger’s read of Kierkegaard’s ‘subject’ was flawed, we will proceed to discuss the structural resonances between their critiques, with particular reference to the levelling and *Bestand*.

I: Kierkegaard and the Critique of Speculation

Kierkegaard's critique of philosophy, and particularly his attack on Hegelian speculation and speculative theology, is present throughout his authorship, both pseudonymous and veronymous. Although the broad topic of Kierkegaard's critique of speculative metaphysics (particularly German Idealism), alongside Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy, is the basis and topic of this work and will be explored throughout, it serves well to articulate the main aspects of his critique at the start. This section begins with the main points of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelian speculative metaphysics, as per my outline above.

A. Kierkegaard and 'Onto-theo-logy'

It was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who is typically credited with coining the term 'ontotheology.'¹⁵¹ In distinguishing between natural and transcendental theologies, he further identified two types of transcendental theology: cosmotheology and ontotheology. According to Kant, ontotheology 'endeavours to cognise the existence of [a Supreme Being] through mere conceptions, without the aid of experience.'¹⁵² His identification of this type of theology was particularly concerned to critique the Anselmian ontological argument.¹⁵³ Heidegger later popularised the term in his critique of the kind of thinking that conflates God and Being.

¹⁵¹ Critique of Pure Reason (A631)

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ See George J. Seidel, 'Heidegger and the Overcoming of Metaphysics' in *Forum Philosophicum*, 26 (2021), no. 2, p.284.

Whilst Kierkegaard did not use the term ‘ontotheology’, there is nonetheless a substantive link between Kierkegaard’s critique of Hegelian idealist metaphysics and what Heidegger critiques under the rubric onto-theo-logy. Kierkegaard’s critique of speculative philosophy and theology is focussed on the failures of idealist metaphysics as a system aimed at explaining the nature of reality, God and human beings. He particularly focusses his critique on the Hegelian System for, as we will see, he argues that the ‘System’ fails to explain beginning, movement or the emergence of the new. This is tied in with what this thesis sees as Kierkegaard’s implied critique of linear causality.

B. Who is Kierkegaard Critiquing vis-à-vis ‘Hegel’?

Kierkegaard’s relationship with Hegel has been a subject of conversation and contention between academics for well over a century. Kierkegaard and Karl Marx were the most outspoken and well-known critics of Hegel in the post-Hegelian generation¹⁵⁴, agreeing that ‘Hegel’s idealism lead[s] to a neglect of the concrete historical reality of human life.’¹⁵⁵ Kierkegaard (under various pseudonyms) writes his engagement with ‘Hegel’ as an attack and a critique of the earlier thinker. However, there is some debate over the extent and opacity of this attack.

¹⁵⁴ See George Pattison, ‘Hegelianism in Denmark’, in Lisa Herzog ed, *Hegel’s Thought in Europe*, Currents, Crosscurrents and Undercurrents, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.93-105.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.93.

Jon Stewart argues that a lot of Kierkegaard's criticisms of 'Hegel' were truly directed at his own Hegelian Danish contemporaries.¹⁵⁶ Stewart argues that a lot of Kierkegaard scholars do little to situate Kierkegaard's thought in relation to 'the tradition of German idealism which preceded him or the Danish philosophical milieu in which he was educated.'¹⁵⁷ Arguing that the relationship between Kierkegaard's philosophy and that of Hegel has not been treated with sufficient nuance in much of the preceding scholarship (particularly the Anglophone scholarship), Stewart suggests that Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel is better understood as a critique of his contemporary Danish Hegelians.¹⁵⁸ Stewart is particularly critical of the 'standard view' of Kierkegaard as an anti-Hegelian thinker which he considers to be too abstracted from Kierkegaard's historical context.¹⁵⁹ He argues that Kierkegaard's relationship to Hegel and Danish Hegelianism reveals not only that Kierkegaard was deeply engaged with Hegel but that the variation in his engagement with Hegel shows that Kierkegaard's position in the history of philosophy must be called into question.

Stewart then proceeds to argue that his specialised analytic-historical approach calls for a 're-evaluation of Kierkegaard's place in the development of continental philosophy.'¹⁶⁰ Stewart argues that Kierkegaard never gave a critique that specifically aimed at Hegel.¹⁶¹ Moreover, Stewart argues that since Kierkegaard did not consider himself a philosopher, it

¹⁵⁶ Esp. Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860) and Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–1884). Ibid, p.96.

¹⁵⁷ Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, Modern European Philosophy (CUP1: Cambridge, 2003), p.1.

¹⁵⁸ Stewart identifies three stages: 1. an early period of positive engagement (1838-1843); 2. a period of intense criticism of primarily his Danish contemporaries (1843-1846); 3. period during which his polemic wanes with fewer references to 'Hegel' (post-1846). Ibid, p.33-4.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.44.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.596-8.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p.623.

‘would therefore seem to be something of a mistake to regard him as participating in the history of nineteenth-century philosophy.’¹⁶² He suggests that we might better think of Kierkegaard as a moralist, a social critic, or a religious thinker. Stewart then claims that this necessitates a re-evaluation of the validity, cohesion and existence of a continental tradition. However, it is one thing to claim that Kierkegaard himself did not write in direct critique of Hegel but of fellow Hegelians and that he did not intend to write philosophy, but quite another to claim that subsequent thinkers should not use their reading of him to reflect on positions in continental philosophy.

Pattison agrees that ‘much of the vehemence of Kierkegaard’s polemical stance vis-à-vis Hegelianism is also tied up with his relations to Heiberg and Martensen, his sense of having been side-lined by the one and his sibling rivalry with the other. Particular passages in the Postscript and other works can be tied directly to one or other of these two.’¹⁶³ However, whilst he may have had personal reasons for some of his criticisms of these Danish Hegelians, ‘in the end, Kierkegaard is making substantial objections to actual features of Hegelianism.’¹⁶⁴ Whether what he criticises in these passages is directly from Hegel or not, he is nonetheless critiquing the Hegelian school of thought. ‘Kierkegaard early on had an eye for the faddishness and thoughtlessness of a certain modish ‘Hegelianism’... [It] is unlikely that he was ever entirely seduced by this vogue.’¹⁶⁵ Contra Stewart, Pattison argues that Kierkegaard is part of a larger group of Hegel/Hegelianism critics. Moreover, he

¹⁶² Ibid, p.650.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p.96.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.97.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.99.

suggests that the Hegelians Kierkegaard targeted, ‘even if they fell short of Hegel’s own intellectual stature’ were not necessarily ‘essentially divergent from Hegel.’¹⁶⁶

Moreover, he explains that ‘Hegelian theology was ‘speculative’ in the sense that it claimed to base itself upon a noetically determinate knowledge of God known in the manner of seeing or speculating, i.e. its content is manifest and not inferred or postulated.’¹⁶⁷ For Hegel, true speculation is focussed on the idea of God as historically revealed, concrete, actual, unfolding.¹⁶⁸ Kierkegaard finds Hegelian speculative theology particularly incompatible with Christian theology, due to contentions about the nature of God, the nature of the existing individual and because the ‘attempt to give an exhaustive account of the meaning of faith cannot itself be carried through without the destruction of the faith that such an exercise seeks to defend.’¹⁶⁹ So, Kierkegaard was working and writing in relation to speculative thinkers, and ‘the cumulative force of his notes on the speculative theologians argues for a set of intellectual objections that must be taken seriously in its own right.’¹⁷⁰ For the purpose of this thesis, whether or not Kierkegaard was targeting Hegel directly or Hegelians more locally does not affect whether or not he is targeting onto-theo-(ego)-logy. Nonetheless, it is important for the sake of nuance to have acknowledged Stewart’s argument.

¹⁶⁶ George Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century: The Paradox and the ‘Point of Contact’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p.32.

¹⁶⁸ He also responds to non-Hegelian speculative theologians, e.g. I. H. Fichte (1796-1879).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p.55.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p.35.

C. Basic Features of Kierkegaard's Critique of Speculation

Hegel's system embodies a kind of thinking that sees all cognitive categories and notions of truth in organic relation to each other. This is over and against 'dogmatism' which isolates concepts or categories from one another.¹⁷¹ The universal perspective 'constitutes a panoptic, objective view, transcending all individual and partial perspectives' which 'implies a speculative conception of all the various finite notions of truth.'¹⁷² Kierkegaard attacks this objective view for being a deceptive abstraction away from the individual perspective and lived experience.

On Kierkegaard's reading, Hegel begins with an act of abstraction that yields a category of immediacy or pure being and then deduces the whole system of logical categories that are projected onto and realised in the development of life itself.¹⁷³ Pattison identifies several points at which Kierkegaard finds this process flawed: 1. Hegel ignores the role of the act of abstraction (that the philosopher must voluntarily choose to begin philosophising); 2. he argues that doubt itself can never yield a positive content (a Schellingian intellectual intuition provides a better starting point than a supposedly total act of abstraction that then generates a positive content); and in connection with this, 3. Hegel commits a further false move when he deduces the category of 'movement' from the initial pairing of Being and Nothing (arguing that movement has no place in logic and that this is a covert introduction of empirical and nonlogical experience into the system); that 4. the system is flawed in

¹⁷¹ Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, p.2.

¹⁷² Ibid, p.3.

¹⁷³ Pattison, 'Hegelianism in Denmark', p.94.

beginning but also in its inability to deliver the promised totality, as it can only provide an abstract model of reality – a logical system is only possible when it is not applied to anything other than itself (that is, that an existential system is impossible at least for human beings including philosophers since we are all temporally finite and locally situated, unable to achieve the view from nowhere, as the *sub specie aeternitatis* is only possible for an eternal being); and 5. this particular criticism finds a further deepening in Kierkegaard's focus on the question of time since, particularly our individual experience of time and finitude which adds ethical meaning to our choices, whereas the Hegelian perspective robs life of its ethical importance; and 6. because of all this Hegelianism is the culminating point of German idealism.¹⁷⁴

Pertaining to the first of the features Pattison identifies above: for Kierkegaard, the speculative thinker has become so objective that they can no longer speak of themselves. The system ignores the thinker *qua* human being. When the speculative thinker approaches Christianity, they will fail because Christianity is subjective, an inward deepening. 'If Christianity is essentially something objective, it behoves the observer to be objective. But if Christianity is essentially subjectivity, it is a mistake if the observer is objective' (CUP1, 53). In explaining that speculation is not an apposite model for observing Christianity, Climacus also shows us that it ignores the existing nature of the thinker in trying to think from nothing. Moreover, the speculative thinker must know that this thinking is not meaningful in the manner of faith. For the speculative thinker handles objective knowledge

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp.94-95.

with indifference: ‘the question of his personal eternal happiness cannot come up at all, precisely because his task consists in going away from himself ... and becoming the gazing power of speculative thought’ (CUP1, 56). Climacus’ critique of the forgetfulness of the philosopher and the existing human being are illustrated by his method. ‘The speculative thinker is not only taken apart as a philosopher, but his very existence as a philosopher is lampooned as a kind of continuous state of self-forgetfulness’¹⁷⁵, except ‘every three months when he draws his salary’ (CUP1, 192).

This loss of the thinking existing individual leads to the problems of speculative and onto-theo-logical thinking. The attempt to achieve a view of the whole of existence from the position of an individual leads us to believe that a partial view is holistic; it is imagining that a ‘God’s-eye-view’ is achieved within the confines of one’s own limited capacity, and it attempts to place the individual subject in a god-like position, qua onto-theo-ego-logy. Kierkegaard denies this is possible, telling us that he is not able to find the ‘Archimedean point’ of reality as he is with a work of art or a philosophical argument. Kierkegaard is very clear that no actually existing person may comprehend the full truth.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, he argues that logical systems can have nothing at all to do with describing reality or temporal categories of movement, since they are detached from them (CUP1, 109). To introduce movement into logic as Hegel does with mediation is to use an abstraction between supposed opposites and nullify their difference so that they resolve each into the other.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p.95.

¹⁷⁶ Pattison, *Philosophy of Kierkegaard*, p.14.

Briefly, regarding the second of Pattison's features identified above, Kierkegaard has a complex understanding of the nature of doubt, Greek scepticism and the attempt to begin with and overcome doubt in modern philosophy. This need not be considered a great deal here since it is not fundamental to the thesis. We must suffice to say that although the possibility of doubt is essential to existence and is the secret of human existence (PF supplement p. 256), beginning philosophy with doubt does not make sense within the system, for doubt involves interested thought rather than the disinterested thought of the system. However, the system is fundamentally sceptical, and 'it turns in upon itself in order to think about itself' (CUP1, 335). 'The initial act of abstraction is thus seen as placing the philosopher in an implicitly sceptical position from which he is unable to escape ... scepticism is a debilitating philosophical position.'¹⁷⁷

Famously, Kierkegaard is attributed with having brought the attention of philosophers and theologians back to the issue of 'existence', the existential. Pertaining to points three and four above: Climacus argues that, in ignoring the individual philosopher, the system cannot explain its own beginning. It imports a beginning and obscures the nature of philosophy as arising from existing individuals. Moreover, in purporting to relate to existence it introduces movement into logical categories which confuses logic (CUP1, 112)

The system begins with the immediate and therefore without presuppositions and therefore absolutely, that is, the beginning of the system is the absolute beginning. ... But, why, then before the system is begun, has that other equally important ... question not been clarified and its clear implications honored: How does the system begin with the immediate, that is, does it begin with it immediately? (CUP1, 111-112)

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p.25.

Climacus complains that the system is assumed to come about after existence and so it cannot begin immediately: the immediate is always annulled when it is, so the beginning of the system must be achieved through reflection. Then, he asks, how does one ‘halt the reflection that has been set in motion in order to reach that beginning?’ (CUP1, 112). Climacus argues that the beginning has to be a breakthrough in order to halt reflection, but then presuppositionlessness is lost. The system claims a beginning that cannot be.

Furthermore, Climacus argues that since the system has not yet achieved its absolute ending, there is no conclusion and ‘if the conclusion is lacking at the beginning, this means there is no system’ (CUP1, 13). In presupposing faith (despite claiming no presuppositions), and moreover presupposing that faith should want to understand itself in terms of an abstract system, the system is an insult to faith (CUP1, 14). He likewise complains that Hegelian speculative theology further undermines its claim to presuppositionlessness since Christianity is presupposed on part of the systematician (CUP1, 50-1). However, this accumulation of presuppositions in an allegedly presuppositionless system is, for Climacus and for the authorship more widely, a smuggling-in of both beginning and movement which lacks adequate explanation and shows a deception behind the system as a whole. Kierkegaard’s concern is to free existing individuals from the confines of the rigid categories of reflection and the false ‘movement’ of the system which is truly static.

D. The ‘Categories of Reflection’: Objective and Subjective Reflection

To corroborate my argument that what Kierkegaard calls ‘categories of reflection’ are onto-theo-logical when in the objective mode, we look first to what it is that Kierkegaard means by ‘consciousness’, ‘reflection’, and ‘categories of reflection’, and move on to discuss the difference between objective and subjective reflection.

We have already seen, in relation to his critique of Hegelianism and of the false beginning of speculation, that the system does not begin immediately and so the immediate is always mediated. That is, as soon as we are aware of the immediate it is transcended: as soon as we become aware of existing, we become thinking or conscious beings¹⁷⁸, beings who are aware of our existence through reflection, and not immediate beings (such as a rock or a tree). So, the immediacy with which the system claims to begin is ‘then itself achieved through reflection’ (CUP1, 112). The real beginning of the system is an act of will on part of the thinker: a logical leap. Reflection therefore is required to begin the system. Although not all ‘categories of reflection’ are objective – after all, ‘subjectivity’ and ‘existence’ are ‘categories of reflection’, too – we nonetheless will see that when Climacus has the objective in mind, the categories of reflection are onto-theo-(ego)-logical.

Climacus (DODE)¹⁷⁹ explains that there is a difference between an immediate reality and ideality. Reflection is the possibility of relating the two, although they do not resolve into each other. Rather the inherent contradiction between them provides the possibility of relating them (reflection) and the relation itself (consciousness). Note that this hinges on the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.20.

¹⁷⁹ Johannes Climacus or DODE was published posthumously, but written after PF and before CUP1.

irreducible difference between reality and how we represent it to ourselves in ideality qua reflection. Consciousness begins at the moment of bringing ideality into relation with reality, and so consciousness exists in possibility (JC/DODE, 169). Listing reality and ideality, body and soul, God and world as dichotomous ‘categories of reflection’, he further explains that ‘[i]n reflection, they touch each other in such a way that a relation becomes possible’ (JC/DODE, 169). So, reflection is the possibility of the relation, and is disinterested. Consciousness is the relation and it is interested: inter-esse (between being). So, when Climacus or other voices in the authorship talk about ‘categories of reflection’ in terms of objectivity or speculation, they are talking about disinterested knowledge, with reference to ‘systematic’ knowledge. When the philosopher abstracts himself from existing in order to achieve an allegedly ‘presuppositionless’ perspective, they are thinking objectively or are engaged in objective reflection. Having lost their starting point in existence, Kierkegaard quips, the speculating philosopher is lost in reflection until a decision is made to stop (CUP1, 116).

Since a system of existence is not possible for an existing, temporal philosopher, the only systematic thinker who may achieve such a perspective is ‘he who himself is outside existence and yet in existence, he who in his eternity is forever concluded and yet includes existence within himself – it is God’ (CUP1, 119). Over against objective thinking, Climacus argues that becoming subjective, and specifically appropriating the subjective truth of Christianity, is the true task of thinking and more importantly the true task of the life of faith.

When discussing the nature of reflection, we must note the difference between the objective, abstracting ‘categories of reflection’ in which ontological concepts are upheld as truth over above the existential, and subjective ‘categories of reflection’. ‘To subjective reflection,

truth becomes appropriation, inwardness, subjectivity, and the point is to immerse oneself, existing, in subjectivity’ (CUP1, 192). Conversely, objective reflection turns the individual into something unimportant and renders existence trivial. The truth becomes indifferent— ‘because the interest, just like the decision, is subjectivity’ (CUP1, 193). Becoming Christian necessitates subjectivity and becoming subjective. Reflecting objectively on the existence of God attempts to ‘bring God forth objectively, which is not achieved in all eternity’ (CUP1, 199). The objective categories of reflection posit God outside of the possibility of genuine encounter: philosophy tempts the individual into theological misapprehensions. Kierkegaard articulates God’s otherness in terms of the infinite qualitative difference (SUD, 40). Speculation attempts to annul that difference by placing the systematician as one who has the perspective of God. ‘Hegel represents one of the highest moments in the onto-theological tradition ... modern onto-theology tries to introduce “movement” into a system based on an initially logical notion of being.’¹⁸⁰

E. The Danger

Bringing with us what we have established from our discussion of Kierkegaard’s understanding of speculative metaphysics and objective categories of reflection as inherently disinterested, static and passionless, we move on to consider that this state of affairs, from Kierkegaard’s perspective, is dangerous. We have seen that Kierkegaard takes

¹⁸⁰ Dario Gonzalez, ‘Kierkegaard’s skepticism’ in Jon Stewart ed., *A Companion To Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2015), p.131.

issue with the way in which Hegelian speculation and categories of objective thought have shaped both Church and academy. Kierkegaard believes that most of society fails to become Christian not despite but because of Christendom. Kierkegaard's discussion of the danger and the double-danger is a part of his critique of the misrepresentation of existence, epitomised in speculative philosophy, echoed in the reflected image of Christendom. As we will see, danger is not recognised as such in Christendom to the point that it is almost forgotten, and 'double danger' is overlooked when society has adopted a pretentious display of Christianity.

Kierkegaard argues that when the danger is considered in merely 'reflective' terms, it is no longer recognised as the existential state of humanity. He describes the danger in terms that relate to failing to become a Christian, including the loss of the right God-relationship, the loss of the soul and the self. It is inherent to being human that a person is placed between God and the world 'and the choice is left up to him'; when a person 'forgets this enormous danger in which he is ... then the gospel's message must seem to him a foolish exaggeration' (WA, 34). If the person making the choice between God and the world chooses the latter, they risk losing that relationship which permits their humanity. That is, the relationship with the infinitely qualitatively different. Further, if the reality of the danger is not evident, the need for salvation is not evident either. This lack of recognition has consequences for the state of Christianity in modernity (and post/modernity).

In his literary review (LR) of *Two Ages*, Kierkegaard explains that the present age renders acting in the face of danger foolish behaviour. In discussing the difference between the revolutionary age and the present age, he explains that in the former people may have enthusiastically cheered an act of bravery, but in the latter they now scorn the decision to

undertake dangerous action. He gives an imagined example: a skater daring to retrieve a treasure that everyone covets but which is on thin ice. In a revolutionary age, the skater daring to retrieve is would be lauded. In a reflective age, devoid of passion, the shared prudence on the crowd would resolve in agreement that anyone attempting the feat is foolish. The acrobatics of an exceptional skater who could swerve before reaching the dangerous point would be more worthy of praise (LR, 72). To place oneself in a dangerous position is a risk not worth taking and is not laudable. Further, a display of acrobatic (or, without the metaphor, philosophical and theological) competence may be considered elegant, admirable and well-executed whilst it remains safe but foolish if it becomes dangerous. Moreover, Kierkegaard warns that the danger is not an invitation to valour and that the person recognising their danger has not boldly entered into it (JP, 2359).

The leap is not a valiant display of bravery, but a realisation of one's pre-existing existential predicament.¹⁸¹ One does not voluntarily enter into the danger. 'Is there, then, no danger or are you unaware of it, you who perhaps want to ... go to the farthest limits of the world, conceal yourself in the abyss, and then see whether the justice that imprisoned you does not know how to go and fetch you out' (CD, 350). Kierkegaard explains that Christianity must show the danger (WOL, 198). Further, when we are unwilling to venture into danger or to make decisions which require the granting of faith, we lose everything (CD, 245). Kierkegaard advises that the Christian must seek bold confidence in the face of the danger. 'Dangers are diverse, and most people pay attention only to earthly dangers' yet 'to lose

¹⁸¹ Please see chapter three for an in-depth discussion of the nature of the leap.

one's soul – that is the danger; that is the terrible thing, and what one does not preserve one can indeed lose' (18 UD, 185).

In a journal entry in 1848, Kierkegaard wrote that there is also the double danger which consists of an intense internal suffering (becoming Christian, losing human reason and being crucified on the paradox) summed up in CUP1, and the danger of having to live and express Christianity in a secular world in the manner he describes in the later work (WOL, 481). 'The first is the inner suffering of self-denial and the infinite humiliation preparatory to receiving the ultimate gift ... the second danger is that of the Christian's having to live in the world with its qualitatively different finite values and goals.'¹⁸² As a part of the critique of Christendom, Kierkegaard argues that Christianity fails if the person choosing Christianity is unaware of the repercussions to becoming an earnest Christian (WOL, 194). The danger of failing to become a Christian (the loss of the God-relationship and consequently the loss of one's soul or self) is downplayed in Christendom.

Before moving on to discuss the critique of Christendom, we should note and carry forward the following points: the danger is an existential characteristic of humanity; in modern Christendom we are encouraged to forget the danger (and the affect it should have on our relationships with God and with each other); nonetheless, recognising the danger is not an act of valour but an acknowledgement that salvation is necessary. Finally, it is worth considering that the acknowledgement of the existential danger that is intrinsic to human

¹⁸² Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, 'Historical Introduction', in MOM, p.xv.

being is also a decision to accept one's vulnerability and the vulnerability of one's social and cultural milieu.

F. Kierkegaard's Critique of Christendom

Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom has earned him the reputation for being 'a formidable diagnostician of late modern European culture'¹⁸³, who 'deserves to be considered alongside the most celebrated psychologically attuned social theorists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including ... Martin Heidegger.'¹⁸⁴ Kierkegaard was not only concerned to critique the playing out of speculative onto-theo-logical thinking in the present age but also to help disclose the spiritual distress that afflicted his contemporaries. 'Believing themselves to be acting in their own best interests, and receiving no meaningful rebuke for doing so, they had become increasingly content to bear the spiritual costs of their supposed "progress".'¹⁸⁵ In Christendom, the religious has collapsed into and become synonymous with ethical pronouncements, and simultaneously passion is removed from the ethical, which leaves both the religious and the ethical greatly reduced to universal passionless principles.¹⁸⁶ Many of those who have engaged with Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom have noted it is 'eerily prescient in its anticipation of the onset of cultural decay.'¹⁸⁷ This

¹⁸³ Daniel Conway, 'Reflections on Late Modernity: Kierkegaard in the 'Present Age'', in Jon Stewart ed., *A Companion to Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2015), p.399.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p.400.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p.402. Conway explains that this includes any teleological suspension of the ethical and points to FT.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p.405.

section will explore Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom, including the loss of inwardness, meaninglessness, 'levelling', the public and the illusion of Christendom.

As a topic about which entire manuscripts have been written, this section will be unable to satisfactorily discuss every aspect of Kierkegaard's critique of his contemporary Danish society, late modern society more generally, or the Church. It will instead focus on LR, with mentions of 'The difference between a genius and an apostle' and (briefly) PV. Whilst his personal reasons for attacking the Church and academy remain interesting¹⁸⁸, I examine the content of his critique of Christendom which is in concert with his critique of speculation offered above. Westphal identifies this connection, pointing out that LR appeared just one month after CUP1 in which Climacus offers his critique of Hegelian thought: 'Postscript provides important context for Two Ages.'¹⁸⁹ Westphal further states that there is a correlation between what Climacus describes as 'objectivity' and what Kierkegaard in LR labels 'reflection' (as discussed above). Likewise, 'subjectivity' and 'passion' are congruous.¹⁹⁰

Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom largely but not exclusively found in his literary review (LR) of Thomasine Gyllenbourg-Ehrensward's *Two Ages* (1845). The 'two ages' are the age of revolution and the present age; the latter of which Kierkegaard also calls the age

¹⁸⁸ See Matthew Kirkpatrick, and Gerard B Kelly, *Attacks on Christendom in a World Come of Age: Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, and the Question of "Religionless Christianity"*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 166 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), pp.24-47, 176-85. Kirkpatrick explains in detail the importance of the Danish revolution of 1848 to Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom.

¹⁸⁹ Merold Westphal, 'Kierkegaard's Sociology', in Robert L. Perkins ed, *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Two Ages* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), p.319

¹⁹⁰ Ibid,

of reflection (Reflexion). Kierkegaard praises the novel's premise: the distinctive totality of the age (LR, 32). He explains that the novel reflects (Reflex) the way in which domestic life is affected by the age, and how it in turn reflects and produces the age. Identifying essential differences between the ages, he uses his review of the novel to discuss his own concerns about late modern European culture and Christendom. Westphal argues that this exhibits Kierkegaard's sociological perspective: the individual and society stand in a relation of dialectical interaction and although one does not unilaterally condition the other, they are nonetheless mutually determinative.¹⁹¹

The revolutionary age is essentially passionate (LR, 61). It has an idea for which it strives and toward which all inwardness is focussed. When every individual is passionately and essentially related to the same idea, the relation is 'optimal', and the individuals are separate and in unity (LR, 62). However, if the relation to the idea is en masse, the inward relation is lost and the situation becomes chaotic, crude, aggressive, herd-like and driven by rumour and 'levelling reciprocity' (LR, 63) in mutual opposition. Without the inward movement which then turns toward the other in unity, inwardness and passion are replaced by outward suspicion and disunity. While passion is the driving force for a life lived in touch with the idea, reflection is thought's thinking its way out of this relation.¹⁹²

The present age, by contrast, is 'essentially a sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in superficial, short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing in indolence' (LR,

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p.138.

¹⁹² Ibid, p.137.

68). Moreover, if ‘we say of a revolutionary age that it goes astray, then we must say of the present age that it is going badly’ (LR, 69). It is an age of ‘calculating shrewdness’, ‘false enthusiasms’ and ‘negative use of power’, whose ‘chimeric exertions’ lead to exhaustion. These chimeric exertions manifest the loss of ‘the idea’ for which the individual in a passionate age may live and die. Within the present age, the ‘single individual ... has not fomented enough passion in himself to tear himself out of the web of reflection and the seductive ambiguity of reflection’ (LR, 69). The age of reflection both produces and is produced by individuals in which reflection predominates and the idea is absent.¹⁹³ Underlying the age is a ‘force of inertia’ and constant deference of action. ‘The hallmarks of the age are meaninglessness, illusion, fraudulence, and exhaustion.’¹⁹⁴

Kierkegaard’s description of the present age exhibits an age which presents a façade: a false and theatrical display of life which is devoid of existential meaning (LR, 74-5). This meaning has been drained out of existence by excessive ‘reflection’, scrutiny and negative relations. Conway describes Kierkegaard’s critique as exhibiting ‘purveyors of reflection’ who will eventually have to reflect on the justification of reflection itself: ‘the practice of reflection will be disclosed as self-consuming in nature, and the “present age” will be revealed as an essentially nihilistic epoch.’¹⁹⁵ This nihilistic epoch is characterised by a false and tranquillising sense of comfort in its equally false presentation of safety.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p.139.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Hoberman, ‘Kierkegaard’s *Two Ages* and Heidegger’s Critique of Modernity’, p.234.

¹⁹⁵ Conway, ‘Reflections on Late Modernity’, p.405.

‘There is no task ... more difficult for the individual as well as for the whole generation than to extricate oneself from the temptations of reflection’ (LR, 77). If there is no pathos-filled change after inwardness and reflection lead to an altered belief, then reflection ‘lets everything remain but subtly drains the meaning out of it’, and exhausts the relations of reflection, which transforms ‘the whole of existence into an equivocation’ (LR, 77). Within such a society, people fail to relate to each other through inwardness (LR, 78-80). Instead, there is a kind of endless play of scrutiny. This is the outplaying of uninhibited reflection: a symptom of cultural degeneration, which in turn forces inertia and stagnation upon those who perpetuate it. Westphal identifies faith as the highest passion which Kierkegaard perceived as absent, and sorely missed, within Christendom.¹⁹⁶

Kierkegaard explains that scrutiny results in ‘levelling’ which stifles and impedes: a negative unity and a negative reciprocity. Arguably, he is explaining that the age of reflection reduces individuals to objects, losing the subject, which disregards ‘the separation of the religious individual before God in the responsibility of eternity’ (LR, 86). So, ‘levelling’ not only reduces the differences between individuals ‘but also affects man’s capacity for authentic subjectivity.’¹⁹⁷ What is at stake here is nothing less than our capacity to be human, which has been eroded and corroded by levelling and reflection. Anything which invokes passion is rebutted. ‘A passionless life is ipso facto sub-human.’¹⁹⁸ Westphal explains that Kierkegaard’s ‘herd’ or mass society is the result of passionlessness and a lack of

¹⁹⁶ Westphal, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’, p.318-9.

¹⁹⁷ George Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith: An Introduction to his Thought* (London; SPCK, 1997), p.18.

¹⁹⁸ Westphal, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’, p.318.

commitment.¹⁹⁹ ‘Levelling’ is not an individual action but a ‘reflection-game’ that plays out ‘in the hand of an abstract power’ (LR, 86). It is a principle of abstraction that can only be interrupted by the ‘leap out into the depths’ (LR, 89) through which the individual comes to love themselves and others.

Kierkegaard goes on to explicitly link ‘levelling’ with the phantom of ‘the public’ (which comes about through the aid of the press). Kierkegaard’s ‘the public’ is a kind of ‘colossal something’ but also a void, and a nothing. ‘The public’ is the result of the passionlessness and reflectiveness of the age. The public is ‘the real leveller’ (LR, 93). It is a result of the web of reflection (LR, 104). ‘The empty subjectivity of reflection thus paradoxically serves to bring about a constant objectification of the world ... embodied in scientific knowledge and in social organisation.’²⁰⁰ That means, the subject is caught up in this process of objectifying the world through their reflection, and that of the public who objectify them in return.

‘Levelling’ is a nihilistic phenomenon. When Kierkegaard takes issue with Hegelians, it is because ‘he finds that that philosophy as whole embodies and articulates the fundamental presuppositions of modern nihilism.’²⁰¹ Whilst reflection itself is a part of humanity, radical reflection reduces everyone caught up in it to objects over against each other; those who engage in it will ‘find themselves locked in a descending spiral of self-consuming

¹⁹⁹ Merold Westphal, ‘Kierkegaard’s Sociology’.

²⁰⁰ Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith*, p.21.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.52.

reflection.’²⁰² Moreover, his analysis of the failings of Hegelianism ‘leads him to identify a faultline running through the whole tradition of philosophising in the West since the Greeks – and not just philosophy in the narrow sense but in the whole way in which we relate to and construe reality.’²⁰³ To put it directly, Hegelianism is a symptom and a cause of levelling. Moreover, as Westphal argues, it is Hegelian philosophy and its attempt to supplant faith with knowledge in its pursuit of science that Kierkegaard has in mind when he writes this review, and when he criticises the use of Christian terminology in the System.²⁰⁴

When caught up in this monstrous abstract crowd, ‘the public’, communication is also drained of meaning: talking becomes chattering (LR, 97). It is a failure of authentic communication.²⁰⁵ Kierkegaard’s search for an authentic voice, whilst in some ways opposed to the postmodern arguments that there can be no single authentic voice, nonetheless involves admitting that it is extremely difficult and problematic to find the authentic voice, and further admits that it is almost impossible to justify in terms of objective knowledge.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, Kierkegaard’s critique of Christendom and of speculation is not exclusively pessimistic. Rather, he repeatedly presents the end of the present age as an ‘occasion for the infusion of infinite enthusiasm, such that one might launch oneself into the waiting embrace of God.’²⁰⁷ Kierkegaard offers a strange theodicy, that God permits

²⁰² Conway, ‘Reflections on Late Modernity’, p.407.

²⁰³ Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith*, p.52.

²⁰⁴ See Westphal, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’.

²⁰⁵ Kirkpatrick, *Attacks on Christendom* p.176.

²⁰⁶ Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith*, p.28.

²⁰⁷ Conway, ‘Reflections on Late Modernity’, p.407.

‘levelling’ in order to draw individuals out of it (LR, 103). Conway suggests that this means that for Kierkegaard we should not attempt to combat or counteract social decay.²⁰⁸

Conway argues that for Kierkegaard, ‘levelling’ will not be resisted by claiming authority to denounce it, but through suffering and serving without authority, indirectly. It is through suffering that ‘the unrecognisable one’ (LR, 109) will bear witness to the epoch. Kierkegaard’s goal, Conway argues, in writing the review is to ‘limn the otherwise undetectable presence of an individual who, despite being reduced to his suffering, is nevertheless of service to others.’²⁰⁹ Conway identifies ‘the ironist’ as the unrecognisable one, pointing also to Pattison’s description of the ironist as ‘a sign of the times.’²¹⁰ The unrecognisable one is also homologous in some respects to Kierkegaard himself from the perspective of his reader regarding pseudonymity.²¹¹

In PV, Kierkegaard identifies his purpose in writing: to divest his reader of the illusion of Christendom so that they may be able to see that they are not yet Christian. He writes with ‘direct and indirect polemical aim at that enormous illusion, Christendom, or the illusion that in such a country all are Christians of sorts’ (PV, 23). He will go on to explain that this is indirect communication, used to deceive out of a deception and into the truth. Here he plays on the double meaning of ‘reflection’. This is evident in his discussion of the illusion (false image, not the real) and façade (surface image, not the true image) of Christendom.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p.408.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p.409.

²¹⁰ Pattison, *Kierkegaard, Religion, and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ch. 11, ‘Learning to read the signs of the times’, pp.222-44.

²¹¹ Conway, ‘Reflections on Late Modernity’, p.410.

To achieve a route back to the real and to the simple, one needs to be aware that Christendom is the reflected (or represented) image, not itself the real; to appositely approach Christianity one must come to think of Christendom and the theological and philosophical thought inherent to it as a reflected, abstracted, static image not the reality. For, his task is to show individuals that they need to become Christians despite Christendom. As Westphal explains:

if you live in a world where objectivity and reflection have supplanted subjectivity and passion, you have no chance to be truly human or, a fortiori, truly Christian. If you live in a world where subjectivity and passion are seen as essentially human, there is at least the possibility of being authentically human or authentically Christian.²¹²

The individual for whom Kierkegaard writes, his reader, is ‘the individual portrayed as an authentic but as yet unrealised potentiality trapped within the insubstantial melancholy of the present age.’²¹³ Kierkegaard writes to show that individual their position and their potential.

Kierkegaard’s critique of Christendom shows us that the ‘dominant philosophy serves with the press and the preachers as the flatterers by which the present age is soothed into wretched contentment.’²¹⁴ The Church, the academy and the press are all completely caught up in ‘bourgeois philistinism’ through which reflection and levelling create a public of spectators who cheer for a theatrical show of ‘revelation’ but are ill-equipped to recognise these in their authentic presentations. Calling for an overhaul of philosophy, a disillusionment, ‘a critical understanding of actuality which is conditioned by the undeveloped ‘potentiality’ obscured

²¹² Westphal, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’, p.321.

²¹³ Harvie Ferguson, *Melancholy and the Critique of Modernity: Søren Kierkegaard’s Religious Psychology* (London: Routledge, 1994),p.57.

²¹⁴ Westphal, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’, p.324.

by modern conditions is at the same time the demand for a new way of life.²¹⁵ It is not an overstatement to argue that Kierkegaard's entire authorship is directed against the levelling reflection apparent in Hegelian and idealist philosophy and theology and within the illusory Christendom of late modern European society. If, as I have argued, what he critiques in Hegelianism is onto-theo-logical, and if the objective categories of reflection are also onto-theo-logical, then we could argue that the attempt to critique and destabilise onto-theo-logy and his ardent attempt to show readers that their predicament is dangerous is also a central thrust of his project.

We find a correlative to this call to disillusionment in SUD, where Anti-Climacus expresses a type of despair manifest in social levelling. To understand what this means, we must first discuss what Anti-Climacus means when he talks about despair. In SUD, Anti-Climacus shows us that despair, in relation to anxiety²¹⁶, is manifest in certain reflective possibilities. In his topology of despair, Anti-Climacus argues that despair is the failure to see the self as looked upon by the power that established it (SUD, 12-15). Moreover, despair indicates the capacity for reflection, despite despair being indicative of a failure of spirit.²¹⁷ Despair, like anxiety, is fundamental to being human and becoming a self: it is a (subjective) category of reflection and a part of the human reflective nature.²¹⁸ It indicates a split in the nature of the self, in oscillating between the two things that it is not: finite and infinite. Infinitising

²¹⁵Ibid, p.228.

²¹⁶ This is a central Kierkegaardian theme, touched on in chapters two, three and four. It also features heavily in early Heidegger.

²¹⁷ Michael O'Neill Burns, *The Matter for Philosophy: A Fractured Dialectic* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), p.77.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

reflection, Anti-Climacus explains, must come back to the finite for the process of becoming the self is the self (SUD, 30).²¹⁹ Despair, then, whilst indicative of the possibility of becoming a self is also a failure to actualise that possibility, particularly when the self is caught in reflecting on the infinite and makes no return to itself (which leads to abstractions in thinking, knowing and willing (SUD, 31-32)) or conversely when the self plunges into finitude and avoids infinitude altogether. The self either reflectively abstracts itself into possibility or comes to lack possibility. It is the latter of the pairings (the despair of necessity) that he describes in terms which cohere with the description of the crowd and of levelling.

Anti-Climacus explains that the despair of finitude is reductive and is characterised by ‘becoming a number instead of a self’ (SUD, 33). Moreover, this form of despair ‘seems to permit itself to be tricked out of its self’ and finds it safer to ‘become a copy, a number, a mass man’ (SUD, 33-34). This reduction of the person to a number, a mass man, a member of the crowd is expressed as a result of the self’s lost relation to possibilities.²²⁰

Harvey Ferguson, in relating Kierkegaard’s critique of the modern age to an underlying and ubiquitous melancholy, explains that, for Kierkegaard, ‘in the Present Age nothing withstands the dissolving tendency of abstraction.’²²¹ The ethereal plain of speculative metaphysics seems to have escaped from reality. Whilst it makes claims about objective knowledge, it has unmoored from empirical contingencies and is made up of abstract

²¹⁹ The self as becoming a self, and the oscillation between polar opposites, is what Kierkegaard calls ‘repetition’ and is discussed in chapter two.

²²⁰ We will see the argument that this is also a lost relation to God (who is that all things are possible (SUD 40)) in the third section of this chapter and at points throughout this thesis.

²²¹ Ferguson, ‘Society, Politics and Modernity’, p.77.

concepts.²²² Ferguson argues that the surface of modern life is a really a kaleidoscope of reflections which are abstracted in the metaphysical. This abstraction leads to a loss of self and an externalised superficiality. Levelling reduces modernity's human contents to a 'characterless flux of essentially identical elements.'²²³

Having established the central points of Kierkegaard's critique of German idealist speculative metaphysics, which I argue are tantamount to a critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, we now move to discuss Heidegger's specific critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy and related concepts. Following this we will discuss areas of confluence in their thinking and assess the strengths of the resonances between the structures of their critiques.

II: Heidegger's Critique of Onto-theo-logy

As we have seen, 'ontotheology' is a term that was used prior to Heidegger's treatment of it, for example, by Kant who expressed a dissatisfaction with the Anselmian argument from ontology for the existence of God. We also mentioned that Heidegger's articulation of his later critique of onto-theo-logy was written as a response to Hegelian thinking. 'Not only is the 1957 paper "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics" offered as a postscript to a seminar on Hegel, but an important early introduction of the term is found in the 1930–

²²² Ibid, p.119.

²²³ Ibid, p.80.

31 lectures on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.'²²⁴ Indeed, (contra Thonhauser's comment in the introduction) Hegel and Heidegger seem to agree that Hegel's work is both the consummation and the definitive articulation of the entirety of Western metaphysics.²²⁵ Heidegger's articulation of the problematic nature of onto-theo-(ego)-logy is tied up with his understanding of Hegel and by extension the entirety of Western metaphysical thought.

In what follows we will explore the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy. This will include sections on Onto-theo-logy, Aletheia (unconcealment) and Beyng, the Thing and the Object, Weltbild (World-picture), Ge-Stell (positionality) and Bestand (Standing Reserve), Gefahr (Danger), and Technology. It is important to remember that this chapter focuses on the diagnosis of the problem with onto-theo-logy, technology and so on. The suggested attempts for overcoming or destabilising onto-theo-logy will be looked at in successive chapters.

A. Onto-theo-logy

Onto-theo-logy (Onto-theo-logie) is 'the name for any discipline that intertwines ontological and theological approaches – by, for instance, accounting for entities in general through their

²²⁴ George Pattison, 'Onto-theo-logy (*Onto-Theo-Logie*)', in Mark A. Wrathall ed., *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p.547. (This collection will hereafter be referred to as *Heidegger Lexicon*.)

²²⁵ Ibid. It has also been argued that Heidegger was himself, in some ways, caught up in Hegelian metaphysics throughout *Being and Time*. See Thomas Schwarz Wentzer, 'Heidegger and Hegel: Exploring the Hidden Hegelianism of *Being and Time*' in Michael Bowler and Ingo Farin eds., *Hermeneutical Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016), pp.142-72.

ground in the highest being or understanding God in terms of entities.’²²⁶ Heidegger uses the term to indicate that there is insufficient division between philosophy and theology throughout the Western tradition.

Pattison explains that, in the 1930-1 Phenomenology of Spirit lectures, Heidegger explicitly links absolute cognition in Hegel with onto-theo-logical thinking. ‘In accounting for entities in the light of cognition of absolute being, speculative thinking accounts for them by reference to God and does so consciously and deliberately, seeing God as the pre-eminent object of philosophical thinking itself.’²²⁷ Problematically for Heidegger, Hegel reduces time to spatial categories in order to grasp it through timeless speculation. ‘In his later writings, Heidegger identifies Hegel as the most prominent exponent of Western metaphysics in its “onto-theo-logical constitution” – a rather dubious characterisation from the perspective of the history of Being.’²²⁸ Moreover, it is in these same lectures that Heidegger explores the problem of subjectivism in relation to onto-theo-logy (HPS, 126). Heidegger here argues that Hegel’s Absolute Spirit is also the knowing ‘Ego’ and so the question of Being for Hegel is onto-theo-ego-logical.²²⁹ This explicitly ties the problematic modern concept of the subject in with the progression of onto-theo-logy, and as we will see the subject-object dichotomy is unambiguously part of the diagnosis of modern technological society.

²²⁶ Pattison, ‘Ontotheology’, p.547.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Wentzer, ‘Heidegger and Hegel’, p.143.

²²⁹ George J. Seidel, ‘Heidegger and the Overcoming of Metaphysics’, in *Forum Philosophicum* 26 (2021) no. 2, pp.281–302.

The paper ‘The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics’ deepens Heidegger’s critique of Hegel. Here, Heidegger argues that the interconnection of ontology and theology is characteristic of western philosophy. Presented as a conversation with Hegel, Heidegger describes Hegel’s absolute idea as pertaining to being as ‘thinking thinking itself; and thinking comes to itself only in the process of its speculative development’ (ID, 45). Hegel, Heidegger explains, has made three assumptions: that the philosopher thinks the truth of entities whose totality is knowable; that thinking being requires thinking through the preceding history of philosophy as it unfolds dialectically; that thinking being has the character of completing and superseding all previous thinking. Conversely, Heidegger explains that he sees the matter for thinking as the difference between being and entities; that thinking through the history of philosophy must direct itself toward the unthought; and that rather than superseding previous philosophy the philosopher’s task is to step back into the unthought realm from whence the question of being first arises which has been hitherto overlooked (ID, 49).²³⁰

Heidegger argues that for the entirety of Western philosophy, ontology and theology have been intertwined: they were thought together paradigmatically in the philosophical theology of the middle ages, and have been thought together since Aristotle.²³¹ Western thinking has been and ‘is, in other words, an epoche where being manifests itself as the highest divine entity (theos) or the most general grounding entity (on).’²³² For Heidegger, then, onto-theo-

²³⁰ Pattison, ‘Onto-theo-logy’.

²³¹ Ben Vedder, ‘Ontotheology and the question of the Gods’, in Bret Davis ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp.223ff.

²³² Richard Kearney, ‘Heidegger, the possible, and God’, in Christopher McCann ed., *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, Vol. IV: Reverberations (London: Routledge, 1992), p.314.

logical thinking has failed to think through the unity of ‘theo’ and ‘onto’: to think through a unity requires acknowledging the difference between and therefore the possibility of their unity. Moreover, Heidegger explains that logic is the means by which truth comes to be present to thought, as the grounds upon which we may maintain truth. When the object of logic is the ground of entities, this has been presumed to be God. ‘God, in other words, is the assumed answer to the question why there is being at all and not nothing.’²³³ As such, Heidegger argues that the history of Western philosophy has conflated Being and God as the logical response to the question of existence. Hence, ‘onto-theo-logic’. ‘Importantly, this also means identifying what is universally true of all possible entities with what is highest: in other words, the ultimate principle of explanation is also what is most to be venerated and worshipped.’²³⁴ The deity enters into philosophy in such a way that ‘philosophy... requires and determines that and how the deity enters into it’ (ID, 56). This is a deity of philosophy: the *causa sui* and *causa primae*. Heidegger goes on to explicitly say of God of philosophy:

Man can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god. Before the *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music and dance before this god. ... The god-less thinking which must abandon the god of philosophy, god as *causa sui*, is thus perhaps closer to the divine God. Here this means only: god-less thinking is more open to Him than onto-theo-logic would like to admit (ID, 72).

Heidegger explains that thinking through the history of philosophy must direct itself toward the unthought; and that rather than superseding previous philosophy the philosopher’s task is to step back into the unthought realm from whence the question of being first arises which has been hitherto overlooked (ID, 49).²³⁵ It is finding the ‘still unthought’ in the history of

²³³ Pattison, ‘Onto-theo-logy’, p.548.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Pattison, ‘Onto-theo-logy’.

philosophy which may allow for the unconcealment of preserved past possibilities and ‘the criterion of what has not been thought does not lead to the inclusion of previous thought into a still higher development and systematisation that surpass it’ (ID, 48). Heidegger shows that theological and philosophical questions about God are different despite having been thought together.²³⁶

When Heidegger discusses the ‘unthought’, he does not mean implications or conclusions inherent within the history of thought or of a particular thinker. The unthought is where the true uniqueness of a thinker resides (WCT, 76), ‘Thought is ... always lead or lured on by what it has not been able to pin down.’²³⁷ Moreover, Heidegger explains that that which calls for thinking (Being) also withdraws and self-conceals (WCT, 9). Since thinking is always governed by what is unthought, by that which is anterior to what we have already understood, so too is interpretation. ‘[I]nterpretation of a great thinker does not seek merely to extract and reformulate’ their work but also ‘to look beyond the work itself to the original puzzlement that inflamed the thinker’s own passion for thought.’²³⁸

As such, Heidegger argues that the difference between God and Being has not been thought through. Heidegger also questions from where the difference between them comes – or more specifically – whence the ‘between’ into which the difference is inserted? (ID, 63). His answer is that this between is that which holds the nature of their

²³⁶ Ben Vedder, ‘Ontotheology and the question of the Gods’, p.225.

²³⁷ George Pattison, *The Later Heidegger*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (London: Routledge, 2000), p.118.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, p.193.

belonging together, their essential origin. As we will see in the chapter on the leap, this between is the hidden heart of being.

Another problem that Heidegger identifies regarding onto-theo-logy is that it has resulted in representational and calculative thinking. ‘Representational thinking’ simply means that we form a representation in our minds of whatever we are thinking about and we do not allow for other aspects of it to emerge. Trying to think through the essential belonging together of onto and theo is further clouded due to the nature of thinking representationally. Moreover, if ‘we try to form a representational idea of it, we will at once be misled into conceiving of difference as a relation which our representing has added to Being and to beings’ (ID, 62). This reduces the difference to a distinction which we have created in our thought. We are unable to form a representational idea of the difference between thinking and being precisely because that difference is elided in representational thinking: e.g. that which we are thinking about is simply what we think it is.

Representational thinking reduces whatever it is that we are thinking about to an object and in representing it to ourselves as an object we place it in opposition to ourselves as the subject. In thinking in this manner, and in thinking that what we think is fully correct or true, we also conflate thinking and being: that is, when we think about something and we think it correctly then it is as we represent it. This precludes other possibilities. When we think of truth as correctness in this way, we reduce that about which we are thinking to what we are already able to think. As something not yet thought out, the unity of the primal and the ultimate – as it currently presents itself to us – is not only flavoured by representational thinking but dominated by it. Calculative thinking is also a part of the problem with onto-

theo-logical thinking, which is tied in with the reduction of thing to object alongside representational thinking.

We next discuss aletheia and beyng. Both of these are essential to understanding Heidegger's work, since he sees all revelations of Beyng (including the calculative and representational which is related to the problematic of onto-theo-logy) as a movement of aletheia.

B. Aletheia (Unconcealment) and Seyn (Being)

Truth as unconcealment is central to Heidegger's thought and it will feature throughout this thesis. In Greek, 'lethe' means 'concealment' and so Heidegger translates 'aletheia' which usually translates 'truth' as 'unconcealment'. Heidegger argues that 'the word "truth" fails to capture what he thinks is philosophically significant in the Archaic sense of ἀλήθεια, namely the uncovering of entities, the disclosedness of Dasein, and the unconcealment of being.'²³⁹ Truth as correctness is only a truncated aspect of truth.²⁴⁰ However, unconcealment was not fully thought out or developed by the Greeks. 'The hidden history of Greek philosophy consists from its beginning in this, that it does not remain in conformity with the essence of truth the flashes out in the word aletheia' (OWA, 113).

²³⁹ See Taylor Carman, 'Aletheia', in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.34.

²⁴⁰ Heidegger had maintained that the ancient Greeks saw understood 'truth' as unconcealment not correctness. He stated that the idea of truth as correctness only came about with Plato's allegory of the cave. However, this has been largely critiqued since Homer used 'aletheia' as an assertion of correctness prior to this. See Taylor Carman, 'Aletheia' in *Heidegger Lexicon*, pp.34-36.

Heidegger uses this translation to argue that the ‘truth’ of something is concealed in such a way as to afford an unconcealment: ‘the lighting sheltering of the presencing of what presences in its unconcealment’ (BL, 47). Importantly, it is central to how being sends itself or its dispensations differently to each differing age. This means that it is from within truth as aletheia that being gives us the presencing of things (Heidegger prefers ‘presencing’ as presence is not static or continuous) and the paradigmatic way that we are able to encounter them, ourselves and being.

‘Unconcealment does not consume concealment, but instead unconcealment constantly requires concealment’ (BL, 47). Lethe sustains aletheia, and aletheia falls back into lethe in favour of that which presences. Aletheia lapses into concealment, which he also calls forgetfulness. This lapsing into lethe withdraws the essence of aletheia and presencing, which remains inaccessible to human perception and representation (BL, 48). We are unable to grasp fully the essence of aletheia, because it withdraws. As such we forget the nature of truth as aletheia because it conceals. It is inherent to unconcealment that concealment takes place. This in itself already implies a critique of calculative cause-and-effect thinking and linear causality, for the emergence of a thing in its truth is always accompanied by its withdrawal and can never be fully understood in terms of linear cause-and-effect.

There is, then, a dynamic interplay between that which conceals or presences and its lapsing into concealment or forgetfulness. This interplay of a/letheia is ‘the truth of beyng’. This idiosyncratic translation is intended to indicate a difference between the German words Sein (Being) and Seyn (Beyng). Seyn is an archaic word for what is usually called ‘Sein’. Heidegger uses Seyn, particularly in the later work, to indicate the reciprocal movement of

un/concealment, a ‘swaying’ movement of beyng (for example, throughout CP), which is also what is expressed as a primal ‘strife’ between the earth and the world (OWA, see below). It is also the horizon within which things may come to presence and withdraw. It is fluid and dynamic, and changes in differing epochs. It is also described as an ‘absence’ which allows presencing in its self-refusal, a ‘between’, a ‘rift’, a ‘clearing’. This refusal is not simply an absence of beyng but an allowance for entities to presence.²⁴¹ ‘Seyn’, then, is used by Heidegger to articulate a non-objective ontology and it is intrinsically tied up with aletheia. He does not, however, use it consistently or unambiguously. It is important, as we move on to discuss the thing and the object to remember that aletheia requires lethe to lapse in order for things to presence, and that this is the dynamic flow at the heart of beyng.

C. The Thing and Objectness

It is imperative in understanding the later Heidegger’s critique of onto-theo-logical thinking, technology, Ge-Stell, Bestand and indeed much of his later thought, to be clear about the difference between the presentation of entities as things and the view of entities as objects. What is at stake, or in danger, when the thingliness of the thing is passed over? ‘Heidegger’s most considered views on the thing, as the gathering or meeting point of the fourfold, are tied to ... the technological interpretation of entities (or things) as Bestand.’²⁴²

²⁴¹ See Mark Wrathall, ‘Beyng (*Seyn*)’ in *Heidegger Lexicon*, pp.121-123.

²⁴² James D. Reid ‘Thing (*Ding*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.739.

Heidegger argues that the reduction of things to represented object over against ourselves as subject, as a metaphysical way of thinking, has led to modern technology and threatens the essence of humanity. His expression of the essence of the thing is his articulation of a much richer ontology than is allowed for in onto-theo-logical thinking: ‘a sort of poetic ontology of what there is, beyond metaphysics in general, and the metaphysics of subjectivity in particular.’²⁴³ Heidegger’s discussions of the thing (and of the fourfold which it brings into presence as a mutual mirror-play) is quite poetic and is articulated in an idiosyncratic manner which we will see throughout this thesis.

James D. Reid identifies a series of stages in Heidegger’s use and development of ‘Ding’²⁴⁴, which show a shift in the later work to a more sharply defined difference between thing and object. The Heidegger of BT seemingly thinks of the thing as a formerly useful item which has been stripped of function and torn out of context: this thing, here interchangeable with object, has lost its function and is no longer of interest.²⁴⁵ However, by the time he gives the lecture ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ (and concurrent lecture courses, 1935-6)²⁴⁶, the thing has taken on a distinction from the object and become synonymous with ‘entity’. ‘It is ... remarkable that Heidegger makes the thing and the tradition of interpreting the thing central to his sense of both his own project and, crucially, his approach to the history of philosophy.’²⁴⁷ In this lecture, he describes the thingliness of the work of art. He also relates it, crucially, to truth as *aletheia*.

²⁴³Ibid, p.740.

²⁴⁴ See Ibid.

²⁴⁵ See Ibid.

²⁴⁶Ibid, p.737-8.

²⁴⁷Ibid,p.740.

Still later, Heidegger distinguishes more sharply between Object (Objekt) and Thing (Ding). ‘Gegenstand’ is a more ambiguous term, since it describes ‘standing against’ which is common to both a thing (which stands against the Earth, or which presences the mutual interplay and gathering of the fourfold) and an object (which stands in opposition to the subject).²⁴⁸ Heidegger also explains that Gegen-stand is a German translation of the Latin ob-jectum and that the object is that which is brought to the cognising subject.²⁴⁹ However, because he sees the spatio-temporal nature of the object as depending on the subject, he also uses objekt because Gegenstand is also used to imply independence of the subject. Heidegger also sometimes uses the term ‘Gegenständigkeit’ or ‘objectness’ to stress this standing-over-against of the object, and also ‘Gegenständlichkeit’ or ‘objectivity’ which is the characteristic of being an object. It is from the object’s character of objectivity that the scientific attitude of objectivity may be undertaken by the subject. It is the objectifying that the object undergoes that leads to the scientific investigations, mathematical theoretical systematisation, and technological implementations.²⁵⁰ These objectifying practices articulate a theoretical attitude in which Heidegger finds a reductive and misleading approach to Being.²⁵¹

We now turn to discuss Heidegger’s articulation of the thing in OWA, in order to fully understand his critique of objectness. Significantly, Heidegger challenges the normal view

²⁴⁸ See David Espinet, ‘Object (Gegenstand)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, pp.531-4.

²⁴⁹ See Ibid.

²⁵⁰ See Ibid, pp.531-4.

²⁵¹ Ibid, p.533.

that the meaning and origin of the work of art belongs to the artist or to the artist's subjectivity, bringing the emphasis to the artwork itself as a thing.²⁵² Rather than focussing solely on the 'meaning' of the work of art, we must also account for its thingliness. He expresses the artwork as a thing which discloses a truth, qua aletheia, describing the emergence of truth in the artwork as a shining. He argues that the artwork is not just a reproduction of a single thing but reproduces the essence of things. The artwork opens up the truth of being in essence (OWA, 104-5). Using the example of a Greek temple, he describes this artwork as a thing standing up from the earth, the ground. Earth holds up and shelters that which presences. The artwork resting against the earth 'sets up a world', indicating a nexus of relationships for a destiny of an historical people, where the earth in self-secluding shelters and conceals. 'The world, resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there' (OWA, 111). As mentioned, Heidegger describes this opposition between earth and world as 'strife' – but a mutual striving in which the opponents raise each other up in their self-assertion. The artwork instigates strife. Heidegger develops his argument throughout the rest of OWA regarding the nature of a work of art as a created thing and explains that created things became 'objects' in the modern age 'that could be controlled and penetrated by calculation' (OWA, 131). We can see there is a criticism here of productionist metaphysics (onto-theology) in terms of the created thing being reduced in its thingliness to an object created solely but a subject whose intention in creating possesses the meaning of the thing.

²⁵²Pattison, *The Later Heidegger*, p.79ff.

By the time he gives the Bremen lectures in 1949, the thing is now considered to be a gathering point of the fourfold (Geviert) of earth, sky, divinities and mortals. ‘This fourfold offers Heidegger a way of envisaging beings that, he believes, is radically distinct from... the ‘nature’ of natural science.’²⁵³ Heidegger claims that if we were able to perceive the thing as a thing, this would unveil the reciprocal play of the fourfold. Further, this would show us the real nature of the world as it presences the play between these four (qua swaying of beyng mentioned above).

Heidegger uses the example of a jug: he asks how we can encounter the ‘nearness’ or ‘distance’ of the jug. He points out that our usual explanation or consideration of things is guided by their characteristics, usefulness, and the intention with which they were made. We explain things in terms of their causes and not in terms of their thingliness itself. The jug ‘stands on its own’ as a thing (Selbststand) and in that way we may distinguish it from an object (Gegenstand). ‘The thinghood of the thing does not reside in the thing becoming the object of a representation, nor can the thinghood of the thing at all be determined by the objectivity of the object’ (BL, 5). The jug is a thing whether we represent it to ourselves or not. That it stands on its own is nonetheless a consequence of its having been brought to stand: a posing, a positioning (ein Stellen), through a producing (das Herstellen). The jug, however, is still considered in terms of its production as an object, even if not as a mere representation. He furthers the example:

²⁵³ Ibid, p.101.

Chapter 1 – Critique of Speculation and Onto-theo-logy

The thinghood of the jug lies in that it is as a vessel. We become aware of what does the holding in the vessel when we fill the jug. The base and the siding obviously take over the holding. But, not so fast! When we fill the jug with wine do we pour the wine into the sides and base? We pour wine at most between the sides and upon the base... the empty is what holds in the vessel. The empty, this nothing in the jug, is what the jug is as a holding vessel (BL, 7-8).

We can give a scientific explanation of the jug: it is made of clay, filled with air or fluid, it weights or measures a certain amount. These are however qualities of an object rather than of a thing. 'Science only ever encounters that which its manner of observation has previously admitted as a possible object of itself' (BL, 8). When we view it this way, the jug's thingliness is neglected, obstructed, obscured. The empty of the jug is not allowed to be 'empty'.

Heidegger goes on to explain that the thing has not yet been allowed to appear as thing. 'The human can represent, regardless of the manner, only that which has first lit itself up from itself and shown itself to him in the light that it brings with it' (BL, 9). This poetic description of the thing's self-showing, albeit quite beautiful, is also simply Heidegger's way of describing what a phenomenon is and what phenomenology does.

Heidegger illustrates the nature of his neo-pagan concept of the fourfold with reference to the jug: we can see that its emptiness is what 'holds' it insofar as the emptiness is what takes and retains that which is poured into it. This pouring is a giving, a gift. In pouring water, the gift is a stream which abides in the earth, receives the rain and dew of the sky: sky and earth are 'married' in the gift of the pouring, which is also the jughood of the jug. The gift is given to mortals, to quench their thirst. Sometimes it is consecration, which is 'spent for the immortal gods' as a sacrifice, donation, gift (BL, 10-11). The mortals and the divinities abide in the gift of the pour: 'in the gift of the pour there abides at the same time earth and sky,

divinities and mortals: these four ... belong together' (BL, 11). This reciprocity of the fourfold into a single fold allows their unconcealment: the thing things and it gathers the fourfold in its thinging (BL, 15).

Heidegger explains that terms for 'thing' have become synonymous with 'entities' and that, through Roman adoption of Greek terms, through to Meister Eckhart and eventually Kant, 'that which is becomes the object of a representing that terminates in the self-consciousness of the human I' (BL, 15). The character of the object in Heidegger's reading of Kant is that it is 'an object that is not an object because it is supposed to stand without a possible against [Gegen] for the human representing that comes across it' (BL 15). As we saw, above, his use of different words for 'thing' or 'entity' or 'object' are sometimes ambiguous, but here he is saying that Kant has reduced the object as it has nothing other against which it stands within representational thinking. Again, this is tied in with Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Heidegger explains that in thinging, the jug draws near to us and it brings the fourfold together in closeness, but nearness also 'guards remoteness'. Each of the fourfold is 'reflected in its way back to the into that is its own in the fourfold of the four' not as a reflected image but 'this mirroring appropriates the essence of each to the others in a simple bringing into ownership' (BL, 17). The four reflectively play with each other, and appropriate each other in reciprocity: mirror-play. This mirror-play is the world: causes and

grounds are unsuitable for describing this playing, ‘the round dance of appropriation’ (BL, 18).²⁵⁴

The view of the thing as an object denies this essential reciprocity and strife: it does not let the world ‘world’. It removes the possibility of nearness and withdrawal. Everything becomes distanceless. Representational thinking removes the distance and nearness of things, and gives us only objects standing in the distancelessness. We have seen, then, that the object and the thing are different ways of articulating an encounter with entities in their emerging. The thing is intrinsically bound up with the disclosure of truth in terms of aletheia and the fourfold whereas the object is scientifically weighed, measured and calculated or merely represented. The object, over against subject, is how Western metaphysics (onto-theo-logy) has developed with regard to our encounter with entities.

D. Weltbild (World-Picture)

The object and its objectivity have, Heidegger argues, provided the possibility for the modern scientific Weltbild. ‘Heidegger often remarks that the sciences (for instance, chemistry, mathematics, botany, and even theology) “objectify” the entities they study, and in so doing,

²⁵⁴ We will return to discussing the nature of appropriative play between the fourfold and its relation to that which comes to presence in the fourth chapter. It is interesting to note that the mirror-play of the world discussed here echoes the strife between earth and world above, and that both are inherently playing out the un/concealment of the truth of being.

view said entities simply as Objekte.’²⁵⁵ He argues that the scientific system consists in coherence between procedure and stance so that the objectification of beings falls in conformity with planning (AWP, 65). As we will see, this determining of the world in terms of the mathematically knowable sets it out in advance for the purposes of technological manipulation.²⁵⁶

Heidegger explains that research, as the production of scientific rigour, defines knowledge in terms of the way in which and extent to which it may be ‘placed at the disposal of representation’ (AWP 65). The interaction of subject and object in representational, onto-theo-(ego)-logical thinking involves setting before or re-presenting (Vor-Stellen) aimed at calculation of the object (AWP, 66). Scientific research is possible only when ‘truth’ has transformed itself into the certainty of representation. This has come about through the metaphysical ground of research determined by the essence of modernity, which he argues is to do with the interplay between subjectivism and objectivism. However, this interplay refers back to deeper processes: in being the subject, ‘Man becomes the referential center of beings as such’ (AWP, 67). He argues that the *Weltbild* – the possibility of the world being represented in this way – has come about only with a modern kind of representing, wherein the totality of beings is placed as an image for the subject’s gaze. Beings are set in place for a humanity that represents and produces. Previous epochs or ages have not been pictured in this way through representation. ‘That the world becomes a picture at all is what distinguishes the essence of modernity’ (AWP, 68). The Middle Ages’ conception of Being

²⁵⁵ Sam Richards, ‘Object (*Objekt*)’ in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.535.

²⁵⁶ Pattison, *Later Heidegger*, p.96.

focussed on the Creator God as highest cause, where the ancient Greeks (Parmenides) perceive of Being as that from which beings are demanded and determined. Neither of these involved humanity's representation vis-à-vis subject viewing an object.

When humanity puts itself 'in the picture' regarding beings it does not only represent beings as a whole, but humanity 'becomes the representative of beings in the sense of the objective' (AWP, 69). When the world becomes a picture, then a worldview for the subject becomes possible. 'The fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as picture' (AWP, 71). This picture is a summation of the production of representation, whereby beings are ordered, measured, organised into categories of usefulness. Interestingly, Heidegger proceeds to talk about the 'gigantic', which has taken on a qualitative rather than merely quantitative element in modernity: 'a remarkable form of the great' (AWP, 72), and this shift to holding a qualitative element renders it incalculable. He argues that this incalculability casts a shadow over all things, and the modern world withdraws to a space beyond representation. However, the shadow points to something the knowledge of which is refused to modern humanity (AWP, 72). Humanity can only come to know the incalculable and safeguard its truth in creative questioning formed out of genuine reflection. This element of 'the incalculable' remains important throughout his discussion of Ge-Stell and Bestand, as we will see below, for it lies beyond the reduction of objects to the orderable in the Weltbild.

E. Ge-Stell and Bestand

We explored Heidegger's argument that representational thinking renders everything that is in terms of orderability and as distanceless monotonously present objects. This also allows the subject to see the world as a picture into which they may place themselves as object, but that is perceived by the subject as master. In positing the world in terms of orderable objects, and for the subject as that observer for whom the objects may be ordered, the thinghood of the thing and correspondingly the worldhood of the world do not take place. This section will explore the development of these themes in terms of Ge-Stell and Bestand, which are the outplaying of the dominance of representational thinking and onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Bestand is fairly universally translated as 'standing reserve' – it is usually just 'stock' in common usage. Ge-Stell has a much more complicated history of translation, although in common usage it is simply 'frame' or 'rack'. It has been translated variously, including as 'Enframing', 'Positionality', 'Inventory' and Kisiel has recently offered the descriptive 'Syn-Thetic Com-Posit(ion)ing'.²⁵⁷ Although Kisiel's translation is a bit cumbersome, it is designed to bring together what Heidegger describes when he says Ge-Stell is an integration of 'all the modes of placing, positioning, and positing that impose themselves upon the human' (BL, 74). We will adopt 'positionality' where needed because, regarding the nature of the thing and the object, rendering the world as a picture, the opposition between subject and object, and the loss of the object in the positioning of standing reserve, the word 'positionality' makes the most conceptual sense in this context and in this text. However, we will mostly simply use 'Ge-Stell'. Mark Wrathall explains that 'for Heidegger, the term

²⁵⁷ See Kisiel, 'Syn-Thetic Com-Posit(ion)ing (*Ge-Stell*)', in *Heidegger Lexicon*, pp.710-718.

is meant to capture what is essential about technology – namely the way that the technological understanding of being discloses everything as orderable into an inventory or reservoir of options and strives to transform everything into a stock of goods.’²⁵⁸

Returning to the Bremen lectures, we find that the discussion of *Ge-Stell* begins with this above-mentioned concern regarding distancelessness: loss of nearness, remoteness and safeguarding. Heidegger explains that distance does not simply consist in an object standing at a particular length away from the observer. Rather, the oppositional object is only the final remnant of that which stands at a distance, and once it is presented as an oppositional object, distancelessness has prevailed. Although is it proffered as purely present, the object’s representation hides the ‘greed of representational calculation’ (BL, 24). In this oppositional objectivity, we dissect and measure not only objects but also ourselves. ‘Everything slides into the basic trait of the indifferent ... a wresting away into monotony ... neither nearby nor far off’ (BL, 24-25). The distanceless, moreover, has its own ‘standing’ which dissolves the object in standing reserve, as it loses that over against which it stands, for even the subject is lost when dissected and distanceless (BL, 25-26). Standing reserve requisitions, it positions everything in advance.

In questioning what it means to position, produce and set before, Heidegger argues that it involves a challenging forth from what is positioned, a ‘conscription’ (*die Gestellung*). This is not limited to humans, but includes the way in which land, stone, soil is imposed upon

²⁵⁸ Mark Wrathall, ‘Inventory (*Ge-Stell*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.434.

(BL, 27-8). Heidegger goes on to describe the production from land, to coal, to heat, to steam, to turbines, to factories which produce tools to continue this activity of mechanised challenging forth. This requisitioning and conscription persist to place everything in a constant, monotonous, ordered standing reserve. Nothing is allowed to remain outside of this positioning. Everything is ordered according to what it can provide the next stage in the sequence of production, its consequence. It is the outplaying of productionist metaphysics as linear causality. Positionality, like ‘the created order’ of the Middle Ages, or the subject-object defined *Weltbild*, addresses itself to the whole of that which presences. *Ge-Stell* presents the actual as the uniformly distanceless as monotonous presence. Returning to Kisiel, he describes the progression of the modern technological age and the reduction to standing reserve in terms of the completion of the history of metaphysics. Kisiel describes *Ge-Stell* and *Bestand* as ‘the most extreme gestalt of the history of the metaphysics of constant presence’.²⁵⁹

The challenging-forth of requisitioning is not, Heidegger argues, a human machination. Humans are, like everything else, requisitioned by the ordering: ‘Humans, in their relation to what presences, are already challenged in advance, and therefore everywhere, and thus constantly, to represent what presences as something orderable for a requisitioning’ (BL, 29). Humans are part of the process of requisitioning and not its master, and it assaults the destiny of humanity (BL, 35).

²⁵⁹Kisiel, ‘Syn-Thetic Com-Posit(ion)ing’, p.717.

F. The Danger

‘Danger’ as a translation of ‘Gefahr’ is not problematic. However, as we will see, ‘The Danger’ is a complicated and ambiguous concept. For the danger is at the heart of being and it is concomitant with Ge-Stell, and yet Heidegger quotes Hölderlin, saying ‘Where the danger is grows the saving power also’ (QCT, 238). ‘The danger is that that in the technological age, calculative rationality is becoming the dominant, even the only, type of thinking.’²⁶⁰ ‘Calculative rationality’ is the playing out of onto-theo-logical thinking and representational thinking. Belu identifies three ways in which calculative rationality is dangerous: it assaults human nature, it reduces both nature and humans to resources, and it is unhistorical. In Heidegger’s view, calculative rationality and the modern technological age have disallowed other ways of thinking and have driven us into Seinsvergessenheit or the forgetfulness of being.

Heidegger describes the ‘extreme danger’ as the ‘prevailing’ of Ge-Stell (QCT, 230). Not only does Ge-Stell ‘challenge forth’ and reduce to standing reserve, it also occludes the autochthony of humanity and threatens to place us outside of the possibilities for new ways of thinking – this is the sense in which it is unhistorical, because it is severed from the history of being. This would also place us outside of the possibility of encounter with primal truth.²⁶¹ Although it affects human self-interpretation, it is a sending of being, a destiny. Nonetheless, it not only conceals other possibilities for the unconcealment of truth, it also

²⁶⁰Dana S. Belu, ‘The Danger (*Die Gefahr*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p. 199.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*

conceals unconcealment itself. Through the progression of calculative thinking, our thinking ‘condenses into efficient sound bites, leaving little room for authentic reflection, ambiguity, or nuanced meanings.’²⁶²

In his essay ‘The Danger’, Heidegger brings his observations about the danger together in a three-level ontology: ‘The essence of technology is the [Gestell]; the essence of the [Gestell] is the danger; and the essence of the danger is “nothing other than beyng itself” (GA79:57).’²⁶³ Moving now to explore that text, we note that it is still written with reference to ‘thing’, ‘fourfold’ and ‘world’, as per the previous essays in this series. Heidegger expresses the danger with respect to the exclusion of nearness/distance. When Ge-Stell determines everything as pieces of inventory, the thing is no longer guarded by withdrawal. It becomes less protected as positionality ‘ever more decisively wrests away all that presences into standing reserve’ (BL, 45) as the technological age progresses. Importantly, we are unable to think of the world as worlding from within our context. Worlding happens as an appropriating event.

Ge-Stell, however, is also Beyng itself, yet it pushes presencing outside of its own essential provenance and allows the essence of being to be transposed outside of the truth of its essence. However, in unguarding the thing it also withholds the world’s worlding. Which means it conceals ‘world’ and maintains a hidden distance to the world’s worlding. So,

²⁶²Ibid, p.200.

²⁶³Ibid.

although Ge-Stell completes the destiny of Seinsvergessenheit there also ‘shines a ray of light from the distant arrival of world’ (BL, 50).

This means that even as it forgets the essence of Beyng, it retains and pursues the truth of being in withholding world. In completing the forgetfulness of being, the truth of being is pursued. This pursuit is the danger. Beyng endangers its own essence. ‘Beyng, as it has hitherto unfolded itself in metaphysics from the idea up to now and in accordance with its hitherto concealed essence, belongs to the danger that now reigns over beyng’ (BL, 51). As it conceals unconcealment itself, it also withholds unconcealment. The danger is inherent to beyng’s essential self-concealment and self-forgetting.

It is because beyng is the danger that it is also dangerous for human thinking. Human thinking must traverse this danger in order to experience the essence of beyng, and risk errancy. ‘In this regard, what is most dangerous in the danger consists in the danger concealing itself as the danger that it is’ (BL, 52). He later calls this the disguise of danger (BL, 64). Ge-Stell dissembles the danger. Heidegger goes on here to discuss death, pain, poverty, distress, arguing that these disguise the danger of beyng.

As mentioned, Heidegger argues that with the danger there grows also that which saves: a concealed possibility that a turn will take place in which Seinsvergessenheit turns the truth of the essence of beyng properly towards beings. However, this turn to the guardianship of being only takes place when the danger presences as danger ‘the danger itself is what saves’ (BL, 68).

In summary, the danger is that human thinking and flourishing has been cut off from the essence of being. However, the danger also is within the essence of being. It disassembles and disguises itself. Until the danger presents as danger, the saving power is also withheld. Heidegger describes both the danger and the saving power as not yet here, but underway. When the danger presents as danger, it will emerge as a ‘flash of lightning’ from the heart of being.

G. Technology and Techne

Heidegger’s *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953) is a revision of *Ge-Stell* (1949). Here he discusses the nature of techne, arguing that ancient technology possesses a different ethos and quality to modern technology. It should already have become clear that Heidegger does not consider technology to be a result of scientific invention, but rather a technological mode of disclosure has made scientific thinking possible. Having explained that the essence of technology cannot be discovered through ascertaining causal effects (BL, 58), Heidegger goes on to show us that our common understanding of cause-and-effect has been truncated to the efficient cause. He points to the early Greek ‘fourfold causality’ (QCT, 219). The four causes are: *causa materialis* (material), *causa formalis* (form), *causa finalis* (end or intention), *causa efficiens* (that which brings about the effect). Using the example of a chalice, Heidegger shows that the material (silver), the form (chalice), and the end (religious use) are not today understood as ‘causing’ the product to come into existence. ‘But suppose that causality, for its part, is veiled in darkness with respect to what it is?’ (QCT, 219). He

explains that the Greeks had a ‘co-responsible’²⁶⁴ concept of causality in which the silver, the chalice and its anticipated use (or telos, which he develops to mean ‘that which gives bounds’ (QCT, 220) are as much a ‘cause’ as the silversmith. Since they are co-responsible for its ‘presence’, these aid its coming about, let it occur, and set it free. In a non-moralistic sense, it is obliged to them in reciprocating its occurrence.

Heidegger complains that the *causa efficiens* in his chalice example is not the silversmith. Indeed, the ‘Aristotelian doctrine neither knows the cause that is named by this term, nor uses a Greek word that would correspond to it’ (QCT, 220). Rather, the silversmith gathers and considers the three other ways of ‘being responsible’ or indebted. Linking careful consideration with *legein* and *logos*, he continues to argue that in the Greek doctrine of the four causes, the silversmith’s co-responsibility lies in bringing-forth into appearance. ‘Thus four ways of owing [thanks] hold sway in’ that which ‘lies ready before us’ (BW, 220). Whilst the ‘causes’ differ from one another they nonetheless belong together. He continues to question where this unity lies, arguing that today the understanding of ‘owing’ or being indebted or being responsible implies a moralistic aspect or is taken in terms of ‘effecting’. This ‘bars’ our way of understanding the primal meaning of causality.

The chalice in Heidegger’s example owes an ‘obligation’ which can be identified as being ‘much obliged’, or thanking a supportive person: a stance between passivity and activity.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴Rojcewicz argues that *Verschulden*, mistranslated as ‘being responsible’, should indicate ‘nurture’. See Richard Rojcewicz, *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), p.31.

²⁶⁵Ibid, p.23.

The four causes encourage the development of the thing, but they also allow it to develop (let it be or let it come to presence). ‘Letting presupposes something already there to be let; and so existence is presupposed by letting and cannot follow from it.’²⁶⁶ The thing that comes about is ‘let’, allowed to freely arrive, a starting that is occasioned but the coming about of the thing is not ‘caused’ as such by the letting: it is not ‘created’ by letting. The ‘occasion’ or event of its coming about holds the ‘essence of causality’ (QCT, 221): seeing the four causes as ‘playing in unison’. The causes, then, allow or let that which is not-yet present transcend non-presence and pass into appearance or ‘presencing’.

Heidegger also explains that in letting be there is also ‘bringing-forth’ (poiesis). This does not apply only to art and poetry, but also to physis (physis brings forth from itself, e.g. a blossom). Turning to the Greek root word of ‘technology’, Heidegger explains that techne is a way of knowing, a mode of aletheuein. ‘Techne is a mode of disclosure in the light of which technical devices – ranging from ancient Greek swords to contemporary smart phones – can arise.’²⁶⁷ Heidegger specifically argues that the essence of modern technology is only understood in light of Aristotle, and the ancient Greek description of techne as a mode of ‘knowing how.’²⁶⁸

So, technology is essentially a mode of poiesis, a bringing-forth, an art. However, as we have seen above, in modern technology the mode of revealing has lost the bringing-forth

²⁶⁶Ibid, p.36

²⁶⁷Michael Zimmerman, ‘Technology (*Technik*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, pp.721-726.

²⁶⁸ See Ibid, p.721. Also, see Zimmerman, ‘Chapter 11: History of Productionist Metaphysics’ in *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp.166-190.

aspect and has taken on ‘challenging-forth’ of requisitioning. Everything is on-hand, standing by, and even the object no longer holds its own: ‘whatever stands by in standing reserve no longer stands over against us as object’ (QCT, 225).

The bringing-forth of the chalice differs from the challenging-forth of Ge-Stell, but they remain essentially related. Ge-Stell is the destined paradigm of Western thinking. Heidegger reiterates previous comments regarding the God of philosophy:

...where everything that presences itself exhibits itself in the light of a cause-effect coherence, even God, for representational thinking, can lose all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance. In the light of causality, God can sink to the level of a cause, *causa efficiens*. He then becomes even in theology the God of the philosophers, namely, of those who define the unconcealed and the concealed in terms of the causality of making, without ever considering the essential provenance of the causality (QCT, 231).

When God is conceived as the God of philosophy, this reduces both Godself and Being. The essence of technology, the fourfold causality, is obscured in the manifestation of modern technology as Ge-Stell, and yet this was always destined from the outset of Western thinking. Technology (and Ge-Stell) has always been tied up with onto-theo-logical, representational, calculative, productionist thinking.

Heidegger is clear that Aristotle and Plato modelled their ontology on production in terms of blueprints (Plato) and formed matter (Aristotle)²⁶⁹, and that the Presocratics, who caught a glimpse of beyng presencing, immediately began the metaphysics of presence (being as an

²⁶⁹Ibid.

eternally present entity). For something ‘to be’ came to mean ‘to be present’ and to have been produced into presence.

Zimmermann discusses this ‘history of productionist metaphysics’ from Plato to Nietzsche.²⁷⁰ He shows that Heidegger progresses through various stages: awe at the essence of presencing became an interest in the causal existence of the entity; Christian theologians interpreted the productive being as the self-grounding creator who produced all creatures and was depicted as ‘the truly real... in the sense of the effecting, calculating, planning agency’²⁷¹; the turn to subjectivism through Descartes in which humanity began to arrogate itself into the role of God as cognising subject and producer of ‘the object’, through representational thinking; and the further degradation of the being of entities from objectivity to ‘value’. Human subjectivity becomes the unshakable ground of all certainty, and ‘Nietzsche’s doctrine which makes everything which is and how it is a “property and product of man” merely carries out the furthest unfolding of Descartes’s doctrine’ (N II, 129), with further developments from Leibniz, Kant and Hegel.²⁷² ‘Heidegger’s narrative of decline is strikingly opposed to Enlightenment modernity’s narrative of historical progress.’²⁷³ This disposability of the object to the subject leads to standing reserve.

²⁷⁰ See Zimmerman, ‘History of Productionist Metaphysics’.

²⁷¹ See Zimmerman, *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity*, p.171.

²⁷² Ibid, p.171-173.

²⁷³ Zimmerman, ‘Technology’.

III: Divergence and Convergence

Before proceeding to discuss the areas of structural similarity, it is worth taking a moment to show that Heidegger's reading of Kierkegaard regarding the earlier thinker's entanglement with the idealist subject is flawed. We touched on this in the introduction, showing that Heidegger's comments on Kierkegaard's reading of Hegel are ambiguous. Heidegger's comments fail to grapple with the nature of Kierkegaard's critique and its destabilising aim not simply on Hegel's universalism, as Heidegger seemed to be suggesting in MGI, but on the project of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. Whilst, as we discussed, Heidegger recognised that there was a significant difference between Kierkegaard's faithful Christian on the one hand and Hegel's absolute metaphysics of German idealism on the other, he did not seem to allow for Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel to also be a critique of onto-theo-ego-logy. As we saw in the introduction, Thonhauser suggested that Heidegger's Kierkegaard manifests a misguided philosophy of the subject as creator and maker. Having explored the critiques (of speculation and onto-theo-logy) presented by each thinker we can see why such a subject presents a problematic for Heidegger and indeed for Kierkegaard. For Heidegger, the subject in modern thought has been inserted into onto-theo-logical thinking, and it is in the opposition between subject and object that distance is annihilated, first positioning entities and the world as a static image (Weltbild) and then eventually in reducing things to represented objects with no inherent merit outside of their place in the stockpile of standing reserve: the subject of German idealism comes to threaten the essence of humanity and the world. Moreover, in placing the subject in this elevated position, the subject produces of the object through representational thinking and obscures the nature of fourfold causality as indeed the focus on the intent of the 'efficient' cause of an object obscures the thing's coming about through the corresponsive action of the fourfold itself. For

Kierkegaard, the subject of modern idealism is disconnected from the existential self, and it ignores individual in favour of abstraction, forcing the status of the objective categories of reflection to play out in social levelling in which we run the risk of losing the possibility of becoming a self.

The convergences and divergences will be drawn out following our discussion of the Kierkegaard's self and the subject of German idealism. For we have not yet adequately shown that this is Kierkegaard's target. For, whilst Kierkegaard's authorship elaborates specifically existential subjectivity, he does presuppose certain aspects of German idealism including the absolute and being-in-and-for-itself. Additionally, like the idealists, he does posit the absolute as pure or infinite subjectivity. However, this does not necessarily mean that he is caught up within it as Heidegger claims.

To aid our discussion of Kierkegaard and onto-theo-ego-logy, we turn to the work of David Kangas. 'Kierkegaard's appropriation of the metaphysics of absolute subjectivity operates within a more general movement of reversal. For Kierkegaard absolute subjectivity is no longer ground but, anarchically, that which interrupts grounding.'²⁷⁴ We did note in the introduction that Heidegger identified a reversal of Hegel insofar as Kierkegaard brought attention back to the individual human being, but he did not account for Kierkegaard's inversion of absolute subjectivity from ground to an anarchic interruption of ground. When Heidegger discusses onto-theo-ego-logy, he shows that it posits the subject as the ground of

²⁷⁴ David Kangas, 'Absolute Subjectivity: Kierkegaard and the Question of Onto-Theo-Ego-Logy', in *Philosophy Today* (Winter; 2003), pp.378-391.

all that is in which thinking and being are identical (representational thinking). However, Kierkegaard's emphases free the concept of infinite subjectivity from its onto-theo-ego-logical articulation

Kangas points to two journal entries from 1854 which express the Absolute as subjectivity which in turn is expressed as infinite reduplication.²⁷⁵ Kierkegaard expresses the God as 'pure subjectivity' in which there is nothing objective, for an objective element would reduce God to relativities, and discusses that God is infinite reduplication. Although God can transcend himself in order to relate objectively to himself, he remains pure subjectivity. Human beings, moreover, are not able to transcend themselves and relate themselves to their own subjectivity. As we saw, Kierkegaard criticised Hegel for placing the philosopher as though they have an objective view of themselves and of reality.

Kangas explains that although Kierkegaard relates to both the Fichtean self-positing ego and Hegelian absolute subjectivity, he expresses infinite subjectivity in total absolution from anything objective, determinate or conditioned. If infinite subjectivity 'has' being, it is not the being of beings.²⁷⁶ Kangas further argues that whilst Fichte's ego absolves itself from objective being and is in its own self-positing (like Kierkegaard's), Fichte 'also grasps the absolute ego as precisely the transcendental ground of the "system of presentations,""²⁷⁷ which is not a move echoed by Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard pushes the transcendence of absolute subjectivity beyond all grounding. He asserts an absolute that 'ungrounds and

²⁷⁵See Ibid, pp.379-80.

²⁷⁶Ibid, p.380.

²⁷⁷Ibid, p.381.

interrupts egological consciousness.²⁷⁸ Moreover, Kangas suggests, the relationship between finite (existential) subjectivity and infinite subjectivity is anarchic, and that infinite subjectivity does not ground but ungrounds finite subjectivity. Contact with the unconditioned extinguishes consciousness. Any attempt to reason the unconditioned makes it conditioned, turns it into something conditioned. An authentic relation to God is a relation to that which ungrounds.²⁷⁹

In relation to Hegel's 'infinite subjectivity', Kangas shows that Hegel reverses Meister Eckhart's argument that God is not knowable because Godself elides any determinate predication. God is the negation of negation, and irreducibly paradoxical in self-reduplication or self-birth. This effects, for Eckhart, a concealment. However, for Hegel, God's self-birth is interpreted as mediation.²⁸⁰ Kierkegaard critiques this movement by Hegel and reverses his reversal of Eckhart in affirming an apophatic reading of 'infinite subjectivity'²⁸¹, and one which shows infinite subjectivity as constituting an unconditionality that interrupts the development of the egological and posits instead an unrepresentable identity which surpasses any attempted enclosure within the onto-theo-logical system.²⁸² The God who is represented in the onto-theo-logical system under these terms is a relativised representation of a merely human subjectivity. The mystery of God, Kierkegaard argues, rests in the otherness of a qualitatively infinite difference between humanity and Godself. Kierkegaard does not, then, presuppose the identity between thinking

²⁷⁸Ibid, p.382.

²⁷⁹Ibid.

²⁸⁰Ibid, p.385.

²⁸¹Ibid, p.387.

²⁸²Ibid, p.388.

and being which Heidegger finds particularly problematic within German Idealism. Nor does his discussion of the finite subject and the Infinite Subject work towards conflating the two. Rather than representing the Infinite Subject as the ground and cause of the finite subject (qua onto-theo-ego-logy), Kierkegaard posits a radically ungrounding relationship which is anarchic and abyssal (af-grund). Kierkegaard's God qua Infinite Subject is unknowable, indescribable and unrepresentable: when he describes God as pure subjectivity and argues for an infinite qualitative difference between God and human subjects, this is what he means. Thus, we can see that Heidegger's dressing down of Kierkegaard as irretrievably caught up in Hegelian metaphysics and onto-theo-(ego)-logy lacks nuance and perhaps recognition of Kierkegaard's destabilisation of the subject of German idealism.

Now we move on to discuss possible structural resonances between Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelian speculation and idealism and Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. I argue that in his development of his critique of onto-theo-logy and its playing out in technological society, Heidegger's development of his argument presents a structure whose elements resound with Kierkegaard's, despite Heidegger's often neopagan content. I will show that there are significant areas of resonance throughout their critiques, arguing that their shared critique of Hegelian metaphysics and onto-theo-(ego)-logy converge in several areas. I will highlight the points at which we begin to see the destabilising of linear causation in creative action (or productionist metaphysics), of the metaphysics of constant presence and eternity, and of destiny. I will suggest that Heidegger's consideration of the four causes resonates with Kierkegaardian critique of beginnings, again not in content but in terms of how it serves the structure of his critique.

Both thinkers critique the positing of God as the Highest Being of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. For Kierkegaard, speculative theology posits an intellectual knowledge of God which is manifest in content in order to be observed, understood, objectively known. Heidegger critiques Hegel positing God as the pre-eminent object of thinking and conflating God as the Highest Being and Being itself. In both cases, God is reduced in being cast as the God of Philosophy. Kierkegaard's critique as I have laid it out above begins with the complaint about the system beginning with an abstraction, forgetting the philosopher's choice to begin philosophising. This is developed into a related issue about abstracting the existing finite subject into a position only possible for the Infinite Subjectivity, elevating the finite thinker to a false perspective as though under the aspect of eternity. The system not only confuses the finite 'I' with the eternal 'I'²⁸³, it posits a God who is merely an allegory of the human subject. Moreover, beginning with an abstraction rather than the immediate as it claims, the Hegelian method tries to describe movement which itself has no place in a logical system. The beginning is posited despite the claim to begin with the immediate. Kierkegaard's criticism so far, therefore, pertains to the abstraction at the beginning which presupposes a starting point that it fails to explain, despite claims to presuppositionlessness.

Heidegger complains about elevation of the subject in terms of onto-theo-ego-logy and identifies the insertion of the cognising 'I' into onto-theo-logy as the quintessential paradigm of Being in modern occidental philosophy culminating in Hegel. This clearly resonates with Kierkegaard, specifically insofar as each highlights the subject and the subject-object

²⁸³ See Jon Stewart, *Søren Kierkegaard: Subjectivity, Irony, & the Crisis of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.94.

dichotomy as problematic. Although Heidegger does not specify that the Hegelian system begins with abstraction as such, he does complain about the reduction of time to spatial categories and the replacement of the thing's drawing near and withdrawing with a constant presence. However, the reduction of the thingliness of the thing abstracts it from its thingliness, placing it as a distanceless object under the gaze of the subject. This is surely an abstraction, as the thing is pulled out of its appropriate primal context (which is, resting against and in a reciprocal strife with earth, and also characterised by a reciprocal interplay and movement). Kierkegaard's complaint about abstraction relates to the lived, real thinker who begins to philosophise, and is also brought to bear on the elevated subject of onto-theo-logy, given an impossible and false God-like perspective. Heidegger's complaints about abstraction pertain to the both to the subject's elevation and to the thing's uprootedness when it is rendered as an object. Both highlight the problematic subject-object dichotomy which abstracts and reduces both.

Kierkegaard complains that it also attempts to smuggle movement into logic, which is not a logical category, and envelop the existential within the logical. Movement is inferred but not explained and so nullified in the logical. For Heidegger, the thing's drawing near and withdrawing are also aspects of its movement, of its possibilities. When it is reduced to a monotonously present object observed by the subject this movement of drawing near and withdrawing is denied. Kierkegaard argues that movement may not be explained by a logical system and that positing movement without recognising the irruption or breakthrough of movement nullifies true movement and the emergence of the new. Heidegger suggests that a thing's possibility of being close or far away is stripped away when it is reduced to an object and as such its emergence is not considered in essence. For each of them, the reduction of movement is tied to the critiques they have made of speculation and onto-theo-logy. For

Kierkegaard, movement is not explained in and by the Hegelian system because it does not explain its own beginning and simply infers movement from the philosopher's lived experience. For Heidegger, the dynamic possibilities and movements of the thing are overlooked by onto-theo-logy when it reduces the thing to object and renders it distanceless.

We are not here suggesting, remember, that the distancelessness of the object and the lack of true movement within the system are the same. What we are suggesting is that there is a resonance in the structure of their critiques. It is possible that the later Heidegger reinscribes or rethinks Kierkegaard's argument about the nullification of movement within the system in terms of a denial of the possibilities of the thing's movement in terms of its being rendered distanceless. This links up structurally in both thinkers with their complaints about the elevation of the subject and the posited objective noetic knowledge about God (and Being).

As such, we can see that the development of their critiques move from identifying the problem of positing an objectively knowable God/ the God of philosophy (First Cause) as making God the preeminent object of enquiry of philosophy (thus merging God and Being), the history of philosophy has ended up with an elevated subject whose gaze on the object reduces everything that is to whatever the finite subject is able to think. This in turn attempts to smuggle in movement without recognition, which in turn elides the existential significance of true movement and denies the thing, rendering it a distanceless object. Heidegger argues that onto-theo-(ego)-logy has produced calculative and representational thinking which closes humanity off from a truly immersive encounter with things and world.

These critiques differ insofar as Kierkegaard does not explicitly discuss the importance of 'things' or 'world' as Heidegger does. He does not articulate the 'unthought' or its

relationship with aletheia. His focus, in critiquing the system, is explicitly a concern about becoming Christian, whereas Heidegger is concerned to question the belonging-together of God and Being. Heidegger, for his part, does not here articulate concerns regarding beginning from doubt and is not concerned explicitly about the ethical in his critique of onto-theo-logy. Nonetheless, there are significant resonances that we have identified so far.

Moving on to consider the categories of reflection and representational thinking, we see another area of convergence. That is that both thinkers wish to highlight the irreducible difference between reality and the subject's representation of it to itself. Kierkegaard explains that our 'objective' view of the world posits an eternal perspective which is false and impossible for finite subjectivities. He suggests that this view of the world could only be achieved by one who could surpass their own subjectivity, which finite subjectivities may not. It also detracts from the finite subject's engagement with other subjects, since in the objective view, disinterest and a lack of inwardness leads to excessive scrutiny and a breakdown of intersubjective relationships.

To return briefly to Kangas's discussion of onto-theo-ego-logy, he explains that Kierkegaard is careful to stage absolute knowledge anarchically with respect to existential subjectivity and apophatically with regard to an unrepresentable standpoint that is outside of objective being or predicative sentences.²⁸⁴ This results in a position that shows the subjectivity of the existential subject as itself predicated on being seen by an essentially invisible God. The

²⁸⁴Kangas, 'Absolute Subjectivity', p.388.

existential subject is its being seen within a horizon of absolute vision without the possibility of being able to absorb or take up this standpoint. Kierkegaard's subject does not see itself absolutely but recognises itself as absolutely seen.²⁸⁵ As such, the false God's-eye-view leads to a social breakdown and cultural decay, and it results in the façade and illusion of Christendom. An illusion out of which we must be reflected or reflect ourselves implies a problematic and flawed image.

There are two areas in which we find resonance in Heidegger's critique here. Firstly, his discussion of the *Weltbild*²⁸⁶ is based on the false objective image of a world rendered for the subject's gaze. The interplay between subject and object eventually also objectifies the subject in inserting itself into the world. So, both things and humanity are reduced to a static and eternally present image or worldview. Then, as an outplaying of this situation, the object which has lost the over-against which it stands (earth), loses its character as an object and becomes *Bestand* (standing reserve). We will discuss standing reserve in relation to levelling below. It is important to mention it here because we can see a structural resonance insofar as each thinker sees the false view of reality, which is a product of onto-theo-ego-logy and the subject-object duality, as reductive and harmful to both subjects and objects. Moreover, the way in which this problematic picture functions in each thinker's critique to move from the more singular perspective to a wider socio-cultural focus is also an interesting area of confluence. Dissonances again occur largely in content and intent. Kierkegaard wants to free

²⁸⁵Ibid, p.389.

²⁸⁶ Hoberman identifies a certain Kierkegaardian flavour to Heidegger's discussion of *Weltbild*, but unfortunately he only writes a one-sentence list of these and does not develop the point further. See Hoberman, 'Kierkegaard's *Two Ages* and Heidegger's Critique of Modernity', p.238.

the existing individual from the huge illusion of Christendom in order for them to realise they need to become Christian and become an authentic self. Heidegger wants to show that there is a fourfold reciprocity in which mortals, gods, sky and earth allow the thing its thingliness in a mutual mirror-play and in order to free being and humanity into the primal swaying of being and set them free for a richer destiny. So, again we see that Heidegger's critique structurally resonates with Kierkegaard's, yet Kierkegaard's content remains Christian where Heidegger's is developed qua neopaganism. That does not, however, mean that Kierkegaard's Christian focus is onto-theo-ego-logical since he challenges that variety of metaphysical thinking.

The danger is also a point of resonance. We have seen that for Kierkegaard, we are suffering under a dangerous misrepresentation of the truth of existence which has come about through the outplaying of 'system building' and in placing the existential subject in a godlike position. The danger for Kierkegaard is that we will fail to recognise that we need to become Christians, become subjective – and, as argued above, regard ourselves as looked upon by the ungrounding and anarchic gaze of God. Kierkegaard explains that Christendom dissembles and forgets the danger: it has become a reflective rather than existential category, and in becoming reflective it loses its sense of urgency. Since salvation is presented as something already achieved, the danger is that the individual will not recognise the self and the self will be lost. Since being in a state of danger (of failing to become Christian) is something to be recognised by each individual, there is a strong sense that the danger is an ontological aspect of being human.

Heidegger's articulation of 'the danger' is, of course, more explicit. Heidegger is concerned that, as calculative rationality becomes the dominant or only way of thinking, the truth of

being qua aletheia is being elided. The danger again is dissimulated in aletheia, and the interplay of both aletheia and of beyng are also the danger. The danger is in reciprocity with aletheia and of beyng. In some part, the danger seems to play into the description of earth, insofar as – in dissimulating itself – it allows for something to be withheld or safeguarded. This is why it holds ‘the saving power also’. On the one hand there is the danger of uninhibited calculative thinking reducing everything to standing reserve without the danger recognised as danger and which conceals aletheia, on the other hand the essence of danger is beyng, is ontological, and when it presences as danger it is the danger which saves. For each thinker, the danger fails to manifest as a danger because of the outplaying of calculative, objective thinking which has obscured the danger in modern society. Again, we see that there is a double nature to the danger in each thinker, insofar as the nature of the danger as danger is not immediately evident. Nonetheless, both thinkers show recognising or realising the danger as part of the destabilising of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Nonetheless, like Kierkegaard, Heidegger relates danger to a double movement of endangering and saving, although for Heidegger this simply runs together where for Kierkegaard recognising the danger is a step toward salvation but not necessarily intertwined and ‘sent’ together as for Heidegger. Again, we can see a structural resonance wherein the danger functions as a duplicitous ontological situation, but where for Kierkegaard its recognition pertains to Christian salvation despite Christendom, for Heidegger it is itself expressed as the possibility of salvation in terms of the world worlding and the thing thinging vis-à-vis the reciprocal action of his neopagan fourfold.

A further area of structural resonance relates to the concept of levelling and the extent to which this converges with Heidegger's *Bestand*.²⁸⁷ Although some work has been undertaken with regards to Heidegger's BT, our focus is on the later Heidegger's resonance with Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom regarding the reduction to standing reserve. When Dreyfus discusses the later Heidegger, he argues that although Heidegger never abandons the lasting contribution of BT's existential analytic, he reinterprets it in terms of Dasein's receiving world disclosure: he reinterprets anxiety not as a part of the existential structure of Dasein but as a sign 'of the total nihilism of this last stage' of the decline of Western thinking wherein 'we experience everything including ourselves as resources to be enhanced, transformed, and ordered simply for the sake of greater and greater efficiency.'²⁸⁸ Dreyfus proceeds to argue that Heidegger's concern moved from a more Kierkegaardian emphasis on how an individual can form their identity in a differentiated public world to the levelling that is brought about by modern cultural practice.²⁸⁹ He furthers this by stating that later Heidegger is only occasionally concerns himself with how an individual should behave in a nihilistic world in order to live despite nihilism vis-à-vis Heidegger's use of *Gelassenheit*.

²⁸⁷ There are numerous publications regarding resonances between the Kierkegaardian concept of 'levelling' and the crowd in Heidegger's BT. For example, Dan Magurshak argues that Heidegger's discussion of fallen everydayness which is characterised by absorption in the They, owes a great debt to SUD. See Dan Magurshak, 'Despair and Everydayness', p.217. Hoberman suggests that Heidegger's critique of modernity is exhibits his reading of LR. He argues that Heidegger's refusal to judge the age is a significant point of difference between LR and BT. He argues that for Heidegger human freedom is not an act of will (WCT, 253) but for Kierkegaard it is. See Hoberman, 'Kierkegaard's *Two Ages* and Heidegger's Critique of Modernity'. Alistair Hannay suggests that Kierkegaard's levelling has a different quality to what is found in BT. He argues that Kierkegaard's concept of levelling is ambiguous as it is also a part of achieving a self. See Alistair Hannay, 'Kierkegaard's Present Age and Ours', in Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas eds., *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2000), pp.105-122.

²⁸⁸ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p.338

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.339.

On the back of this, Dreyfus argues that later Heidegger follows a parallel but separate path to Kierkegaard with regard to their differing responses to nihilism. Where Kierkegaard's concern remains the individual's forming their identity in a nihilistic culture, Heidegger is not very concerned with the individual finding a life worth living but with diagnosing the problems of philosophy and technology.²⁹⁰

Dreyfus' reading of Kierkegaard here seemingly overlooks that Kierkegaard suggests in LR that a society of individuals relating inwardly to the idea and coming together in unity escapes the problems of the present (reflective) age. Kierkegaard is interested, at least in part, in how a different relation between the age and the individual could provide a more cohesive and united society. Dreyfus's focus on Kierkegaard's concern with individual forging commitments in a nihilistic culture sound like a voluntaristic and solipsistic, self-willing-itself, reading of Kierkegaard. Dreyfus also echoes this reading of Kierkegaard elsewhere when he states that for Kierkegaard, '[o]nly an unconditioned commitment and the strong identity it produces give an individual a world with that individual's unique qualitative distinctions'²⁹¹ and when he says that for Kierkegaard, breaking out of the web of reflection involves commitment to 'any activity – as long as one threw oneself into it with passionate involvement.'²⁹² But, Kierkegaard's leap is not a leap into just any activity and Kierkegaard's commitment is not a commitment to having a strong enough identity to

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p.341.

²⁹¹ Hubert Dreyfus, 'Kierkegaard on the Internet: Anonymity vs. Commitment in the Present Age', *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (1999): p.108.

²⁹² Ibid, p.103.

create one's own world. It is, as we will see, a commitment to vulnerability and a choice to become obedient to Governance. We could even argue that Dreyfus is perhaps guilty of secularising Kierkegaard himself. We will see throughout the following chapters that this reading of Kierkegaard is not upheld in relation to his authorship or his method. It also overlooks the point of Kierkegaard's focus on becoming a subject or a self which we have argued is to shatter onto-theo-ego-logical subjectivity rather than to champion a heroic self-willed Subject (in the manner of Nietzsche). Whilst it is true that both Kierkegaard and Heidegger respond to the nihilism in onto-theo-logical, objective, calculative thinking as it outplays in Christendom or technological modernity, their concerns regarding re/opening possibilities for new ways of thinking each both decentre and reappropriate humanity to a radical groundlessness which is, simultaneously, a new (non-)position.

To return to our discussion of levelling and Bestand, we are given a hint from Dreyfus that Heidegger's discussion of technology (qua nihilistic, onto-theo-logical thinking) involves an echo of his earlier interest in levelling.²⁹³ Barnett similarly posits that Heidegger's analysis of 'the They' in BT is developed into his Ge-Stell as a lens through which being is understood.²⁹⁴ Moreover, Barnett states that in seeing modern technology as a mode of revealing in which entities are shown in terms of utility (the world appearing as standing reserve), 'Heidegger converts Kierkegaard's insights into a philosophical register.'²⁹⁵ He proceeds to argue that Heidegger's critique of technology is predicated on Kierkegaard's insights. However, he does not then proceed to discuss Kierkegaardian elements specifically

²⁹³ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, p.339.

²⁹⁴ Barnett, *Kierkegaard and the Question Concerning Technology*, p.123.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.125-6.

in QCT or relate it to Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-logy but turns back to BT to discuss the They and so on.

So, what are the convergences and divergences between Kierkegaard's discussion of levelling and Heidegger's later discussion of Bestand and Ge-Stell? We saw in our discussion of Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom that the categories of (objective) reflection have resulted in a tranquillising way of thinking which discourages movement in favour of inertia. This is described as a web of reflection in which everyone is caught. It encourages levelling in which people are endlessly scrutinised by one another. We also discussed the characteristics of calculation, shrewdness, disunity, and passionlessness. Kierkegaard argues that these negative values hold people apart and reduce them to objects in public life (the crowd), which renders people herdlike and in abstracting from reality stakes our capacity to be human. We also saw that this is particularly nihilistic in terms of draining the meaning out of existence, and out of Christianity. The 'levelling' of society which Kierkegaard discusses in LR and Anti-Climacus explains in SUD/PIC is at least in part the result of the despair of finitude that, rather than coming to know the existential subject as seen (and anarchically ungrounded) by the invisible eye of God, rather experiences the individual as constantly surveyed by the levelling gaze of other externalised existential subjects. Breaking out of this web of reflection requires a leap, a qualitative shift into living as a looked-upon, existential I. Anti-Climacus specifically addresses the reduction of people to a number, a mass man, not a self and complains about the self's lost relation to possibilities which has been replaced by shrewd calculations of probabilities. Moreover, we can see that the onto-theo-ego-logical way of thinking calculatively and speculatively is abstraction and this abstraction has to a dissolving tendency.

For the later Heidegger, Ge-Stell as the ordering paradigm in which entities are presented renders all that is as Bestand. Things are denied the possibility of distance in reduction to object and the fourfold is obstructed. In losing distance, things are rendered as objects and then as pieces of inventory. This inventory as standing reserve consists of replaceable and equivalent parts. These parts are constantly exchangeable, equivalent, and so constantly held in a monotonous presence (P, 42). Everything stands in equal value in distancelessness, without character, without other qualities.

We find resonant comments in LR. Kierkegaard describes the crowd as ‘composed of ... nobodies ... an abstract void and a vacuum that is all and nothing’ (LR, 93) and a ‘monstrous abstraction’ (LR, 90). It is in this void that individuals are lost, and differences are worn down by the ‘quiet, mathematical, abstract enterprise’ (LR, 84). In rendering society as undifferentiated mass of equally vacuous nobodies, levelling presents the public as a mass of people reduced to numerical value who are taken up into the public as non-persons. Likewise, standing reserve reduces humans to a part of the inventory – to their usefulness, equivalence and replaceability.

Kierkegaard’s descriptions of the web of reflection implies holding apart the constituent parts of the crowd who are all caught up in levelling. As ‘mass men’, and numbers rather than people, there is a sense in which the possibility of a fluid relationship is eroded and which treats the crowd as made up of replaceable and ‘faceless’ inventory.

We should note that the idea of humans reduced to ‘cogs in the machine’ was already a ubiquitous idea in 1920’s Germany. Fritz Lang’s film *Metropolis* (1927) came out the same year that BT was published. Nonetheless, we have seen that there are several confluences

with Kierkegaardian reflection on the crowd, levelling and reduction of human essence within the later Heidegger's discussion of Bestand and Ge-Stell, which may have developed out of his engagement in BT with LR and SUD.

Each thinker, we have seen, critiques linear causality. For Kierkegaard we have seen that the inclusion of movement in the system is a false step which abstractly claims to have no presuppositions and yet presupposes movement itself. It claims to have an absolute beginning, but ignores the existential beginning of the philosopher's choice to philosophise. Heidegger's more explicit critique of causality has shown that the origin of the work of art cannot be properly thought of as its cause, because its coming about has occurred through the strife of earth and world which has shown its createdness. He later moves on to show that the causes of a things coming about are not observable, but fourfold. I suggest that Heidegger's fourfold causality maps onto the fourfold and that as such the creative coming about of the thing, its emergence into being holds a sense of holiness, one which is rooted in the historical encounter with holiness rather than in the linear philosophical sense of the first cause. The holy is what comes to presence when the fourfold engages in its mirrorplay.

Chapter 2 – Repetition and Retrieval

Repetition is presented by Kierkegaard as an alternative to the ‘sub specie aeterni’ approach of onto-theo-(ego)-logical speculative thought, which points away from the temporal flux due to its abstraction away from temporal thinkers and abstract attempts to nullify movement in a logical system. We saw this in our discussion of Kierkegaard’s critique of Hegelianism in chapter one. Repetition focuses on how to build meaning, or establish an existing concept of self, without recourse to Hegelian abstraction or Greek anamnesis. Movement and temporality are specifically linked here, arguably in an attempt to invert Hegel’s reduction of temporality to spatial concepts.

We will see that for Kierkegaard, repetition is articulation of the existing person who comes to see that they are composed of paradoxical elements insofar as they are entirely permeated by temporality or becoming, and yet ‘have a claim to be acknowledged as persons, as free, spiritual beings who are not reducible to a mere chain of temporally conditioned causes.’²⁹⁶ This ties in with the continued implied critique of linear causality tied up with the myth of progress and the idea of a predetermined conclusion of that progress. Again, as we have seen, this is a critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

In the most direct terms, ‘repetition’ is an oscillating movement between the different aspects that make up a person: between temporality (the flux) and the promise of eternity.

²⁹⁶ Pattison, *Philosophy of Kierkegaard*, p.40.

In chapter four, we will see that Kierkegaard's concept of eternity is not simply defined, since he uses his reflections on the moment to destabilise that, too. The focus of this chapter, however, is the movement of repetition. It is the possibility of meaning in a thoroughly temporal life: its inherently 'possible' because it repeats possibilities forwards, a 'dynamic movement between present and future, as given-possibility-in-process-of-actualisation.'²⁹⁷. Moreover, for Kierkegaard it is the repeated commitment to the life of faith, in which one repeatedly becomes nothing before God, which ties in with the arguments seen in the previous chapter regarding Kierkegaard's destabilising of finite subject in anarchic and ungrounding relation to Infinite Subjectivity. Our discussion of Kierkegaardian repetition will focus on his novella *Repetition*, with reference also to *Climacus*' works and (briefly) 18UD.

We discussed in the introduction that we would look to BT in this chapter to ground the conversation due to some ambiguity regarding whether Heidegger read *Repetition* and whether it was tangible that this is developed in the later work regarding the restarting of philosophy. For Heidegger discusses repetition at greatest length in BT, in terms of the possibility of becoming an authentic Dasein between birth and death by relating oneself to oneself as thrown-projection.

It is also, significantly, the method that he takes up in BT and throughout his later work. We will explore BT in order to ground the discussion of his repetition vis-à-vis authentic selfhood and move on to his later work to exhibit his continued resonance with Kierkegaard

²⁹⁷ Ibid, p.75

throughout his later work, most specifically in his method of retrieval, which looks to the unthought. We will see that he seems in part to think the (perhaps unthought) outplaying of Kierkegaardian repetition in terms of a method approach to retrieving the meaning of being both in BT and his later work. He applies this method to his own earlier work when he retrieves and reinscribes his own earlier thinking in terms of both neopagan spirituality and his critique of onto-theo-logy.

This chapter will show that Heidegger's retrieval resonates with Kierkegaard's repetition, and that it is taken up as Heidegger's method of 'philosophising'. Moreover, we will see that Heidegger uses his method to suggest that restarting (retrieving) philosophy may allow for destabilising onto-theo-logy and allow for the retrieval of the possibilities of the thing and world. I will progress to argue that this critique of beginnings in suggesting another way of understanding beginnings may allow for the emergence of the new is once again tied with a critique of linear causality.

I: Kierkegaardian Repetition

Gjentagelsen means 'to take up again' in Danish. It holds the meaning of the German 'weiderholung' which is not adequately reflected in the English (Latinate) 'Repetition'. Kierkegaard wrote Repetition in 1843, and published it alongside FT, and on the same day as 3UD. Repetition was written by the pseudonym Constantin Constantius. Constantius expressly takes aim at the problem of movement in philosophy, which is clearly tied with the critique of Hegel discussed in chapter one and developed here in greater detail. He is critical of the idealising logical systems which attempt to remove the significance and

meaning of movement (and therefore of becoming) from existence and from existential experience. However, his complicated relation to Aristotle, as we will see, do not render his ‘category’ open to simple summary.

A. Repetition

Constantin’s concern is neither with movement in the natural world, nor with drawing conclusions about the nature of physical movement from observation of it, despite beginning the book explicitly with discussing movement as such in ‘the Greeks’. This is clarified by his somewhat sarcastic and hostile response to J.L. Heiberg’s ‘correction’ of Repetition (FTR, 283-298). Heiberg (a leading ‘Golden Age’ Danish Hegelian thinker and theatre director²⁹⁸), according to Constantin’s response, has argued that repetition is found in nature – in astronomy – but not in ‘the spirit’, for the spirit grows and develops with each generation. Constantin complains that Heiberg’s Hegelian concern with the history of the world spirit, is not relevant to the life of the existing individual. ‘The question [about repetition] becomes that of repetition within the boundaries of his life, of repetition in his life’ (FTR, 288). He is concerned with the possibility of beginning again within life, to recover something in the initial beginning that has been lost, a possibility not yet actualised.

²⁹⁸ See, for further information on Heiberg, Jon Stewart, ‘Johan Ludvig Heiberg: Kierkegaard’s criticism of Hegel’s Danish Apologist’, in Jon Stewart ed., *Kierkegaard and his Danish Contemporaries: Tome 1: Philosophy, Politics and Social Theory*, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, Volume 7 (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), pp.35-76.

Kierkegaard is particularly concerned to show that the kind of movement that Hegelians have ‘explained’ through mediation is not ‘real’ movement: mediation is rather a synthetic form of movement that idealises it, nullifies it. Mediation reduces movement to something which is immanent, whereas for Kierkegaard movement is always transcendent, not least in transcending logic. Constantius tells us that ‘movement is a concept that logic simply cannot support’ (FTR, 308). As a static construct (which he argues has been misunderstood by Parmenides and the Eleatics as ‘being’) logic cannot instantiate movement: it cannot cause movement. Movement has always to be posited to be realised (see FTR, 309-10).

The significance of the question of movement as such, raised first by ‘the Greeks’, is used by Constantius as a route to the question of existential movement – for the question of freely chosen individual action – which is of great significance within the authorship. For, if we are thoroughly construed by our being in ‘the flux’, then we are at the mercy of forces beyond our control and cannot retain meaning or identity. Attempts to logically explain movement nihilate freedom by undermining genuine movement; complete resignation to being in the flux nihilates freedom along with identity and the possibility of choice. Thus, we are left with two options for building up genuine meaning, truth and identity: either recollection or repetition. Recollection, or Platonic anamnesis, Constantius argues, is a backward-looking movement which constrains the individual to the past, denying the new, and likewise constrains the philosopher to existential irrelevance. Throughout the authorship, becoming a self requires action and a repeated renewal of that action: repetition is a re-opening of past possibilities which allows for the emergence of something genuinely new inside of the individual, a genuine future fulfilment. The emphasis on inwardness and individuality throughout the authorship serves to exhibit existential freedom as playing out in a repeated decision toward a chosen life-view despite the flux.

Turning to Climacus's criticism of the Hegelian removal of movement from existence, we see that he wishes to reinstate existence itself as the locus for meaning and truth, reclaiming these from the onto-theo-logical and into the physical, moving, living world. CUP1 discusses the locus of truth as thoroughly existential. Climacus's main concern is to ascertain the possibility of thinking one's way toward belief in God, which he finds he cannot achieve without faith and the qualitative shift instantiated by the leap.²⁹⁹ However, his critique is (ironically) aimed at philosophical and logical arguments which divorce reality from existence and he wishes to relocate knowledge and the possibility of knowledge within existence.

Climacus tells us that 'the knowing spirit is an existing spirit' (CUP1, 189) and that any enquiry into truth must start from there. He argues that this has been 'fantastically disregarded' by the 'posturing' of metaphysical thinkers who, in abstracting themselves from their own existence have thus only succeeded in positing an abstract, objective and ultimately meaningless concept of truth. When truth is understood existentially, it is as part of the process of becoming: it cannot simply be something static and disengaged – it must be rooted in becoming rather than being. If it were purely in flux, it could not be identified as truth; if it were abstracted from existence it would not 'be' truth. Since we are situated in time and not able to take a view 'sub specie aeterni' of which the German idealists and speculative thinkers claim to be capable, we must explain how it is that meaning, identity and truth can occur in time (if indeed they can). This is to be undertaken in a way that is not

²⁹⁹ The leap is discussed in chapter three.

indifferent to existence but is interested ‘because the interest ... is subjectivity’ (CUP1, 193). Without the focus on existence and subjectivity the truth becomes only ‘an artificial product’ (CUP1, 196). Moreover, it is this interest that Constantin will later emphasise: it is the ‘highest pitch of subjectivity’ (CUP1, 199).

However, for Climacus, since the subject is existing and in a process of becoming, the identification of thought and being as the locus of truth becomes problematic: an individual’s identity cannot be predicated on absolute truth, since he cannot have a genuine knowledge of absolute truth or of holistic being. His solution is to relocate truth within existence; to prioritise existence over essence. ‘All essential knowing pertains to existence’ (CUP1, 197). It is how the individual relates themselves to truth that provides the possibility of that truth to the individual: one can relate to the truth in an untruthful way or relate to untruth truthfully. For Climacus, there is no ‘coming to rest’ for existence has no rest, it is all in flux (CUP1, 307).

Truth, then, is something that is not reached objectively by an objective thought process, but rather something to which one must relate oneself through self-transcendence. If trying, like Hegelians, to explain only the possibility of actuality, within pure thinking, the ‘whole thing is within the sphere of possibility’ (CUP1, 307). To actualise and realise possibility, then, is a task of the subjective thinker, who is to understand themselves in existence. He tells us that the principle of contradiction only works in actuality: abstract thinking, which disregards existence, cancels the difficulty of contradiction (CUP1, 351). We can see that this relates to what we have already discussed regarding finite and infinite subjectivity. Our finite subjectivity is not grounded in an objectively knowable and qualifiable God who is the ultimate object of knowledge. Rather, our relationship to God is ungrounding and anarchic,

and as such it needs the repeated oscillation between the finite and the infinite, for in every moment we are both ungrounded and leap into re-relation to the infinitely qualitatively different.

Having established this, we may return to our exploration of Repetition. Repetition is introduced to the reader on the title page as a work of ‘experimenting psychology’ which begins with discussing Greek philosophy. It is not a systematic philosophical explanation of movement, repetition, or psychology; it is a literary work which comprises two main parts. The first is a report from Constantin about his attempts to discover, through observation and experiments, whether repetition is possible. This also includes his account of a young man he meets who falls in love and wishes to instantiate a repetition of that but cannot because his love has become recollective. The second part has two more interjections from Constantin regarding his concern for the young man who has fled the country rather than marry, and a series of letters from the young man to Constantin.

When Constantin questions the possibility of repetition – ‘whether or not it is possible, what significance it has, whether something gains or loses in being repeated’ (FTR, 131) – his unstated question is whether, if existence is entirely comprised in movement and time, it can still be open to the possibility of truth. It is the question of how to live as an individual within the flux, without objectively construed metaphysical grounds providing a ‘way out’.³⁰⁰ Constantin explains that repetition is for modernity an expression of what recollection (that all knowing is remembering – anamnesis) was for the Greeks and that, ‘Repetition and

³⁰⁰ See John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp.1-10, 11-35.

recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward' (FTR, 131). Prior to that he stated, 'Just as they taught that all knowing is a recollecting, modern philosophy will teach that all life is a repetition' (FTR, 131). This underscores Climacus's concern to reinstate truth and knowledge in the existing individual.

Constantin goes on to tell us: 'Repetition is the interest [Interesse] of metaphysics, and also the interest upon which metaphysics comes to grief' (FTR, 149). This 'interest' is the 'esse' (essence) which is 'inter' (in the midst of) the flux, what Heidegger will call the ontic, the existentiell.³⁰¹ Repetition is inter-ested in existence: it is essentially engaged, 'a creative production that pushes ahead, which produces as it repeats, which produces what it repeats, which makes a life for itself in the midst of the difficulties of the flux.'³⁰² It is the interest of metaphysics insofar as the flux, the original difficulty of existence, is the possibility of philosophising and that which calls for philosophising: it is that upon which metaphysics comes to grief insofar as it is essentially within the flux, and so it cannot be predicted, tamed or observed.

Constantin tries then to instantiate a repetition through several experimental acts: he takes another trip to Berlin; he returns to the theatre on several occasions; he paces back and forth in his house; he returns to his favourite coffee shop and restaurant. None of these actions, of course, instantiate a repetition because they are not inward movements: they are all 'the

³⁰¹ See John D. Caputo, 'Kierkegaard, Heidegger and the Foundering of Metaphysics', in Robert L. Perkins ed. *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Vol 6, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993), pp.201-224.

³⁰² Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, p.3.

same sameness' (FTR, 170) and do not allow for an irruption of newness but merely continue in a drab monotony, with its 'anaesthetic power' (FTR, 179). Interestingly, he declares that the coach horn will be his sigil; it is not a predictable instrument so one can be certain of neither what noise it will make nor whether it might randomly produce the same note it has produced before. To existence he says, 'travel on you fugitive river! ... you want only to flow along and lose yourself in the sea' (FTR, 176). He is incapable of understanding or experiencing a genuine repetition because he is coming at it entirely the wrong way: through logic and detached observation. His attempts are like that of Climacus's 'posturing metaphysicians' who cannot achieve an objective understanding of faith. He tries to explain and explicate repetition from existence (past/present), precisely undermining his prior association between repetition and living (future). He tries to seek it as an object and comes to the wrong stance. Lacking the passionate inter-esse; he lacks love. Constantin is awed by the 'transfiguring' that his friend undergoes; not able to be transfigured himself he can only observe. The young man's love of his fiancée and indeed his "religious" love are a source of amazement for Constantin: his own enlivening comes about only through observing the passion of his friend, but he never appropriates it as his own. Constantin is tied to his attempts to relive the past through his objective, 'scientific' approach, but he fails.

The young man (who remains nameless) is a poet. He falls in love with a young girl, but his love quickly becomes meaningless to him. He recognises that his love for the girl is a recollection of falling in love and that it is not sufficiently genuine. He exists, he believes, in a state of guilt which binds him to his past. 'What am I doing at present? I begin from the beginning, and then I begin backwards ... all life seems to contain only allusions to this past' (FTR, 194). He complains that his name reminds him of the past and he no longer wants it: his lost identity. 'Could I anticipate that my whole being would undergo a change, that I

would become another person?’ (FTR, 201). He feels that he has lost his identity in guilt, and he has essentially changed.

It is in reading Job that he begins to have some intuition of what religious repetition (genuine repetition) is: ‘Although I have read the book again and again, each word remains new to me. Every time I come to it, it is born anew as something original or becomes new and original in my soul’ (FTR, 205). He waits for the thunderstorm, the ordeal. This ordeal is a temporary category which is annulled in time, in actuality. Being guilty has created a schism within the young man’s being: a dissociation of himself to himself. Once it has passed, and she is married to someone else, he tells us: ‘I am unified again’ (FTR, 220). In his own estimation, the ordeal, and the repetition, have returned the young man to himself, and allowed him to become himself. He concludes that ‘only repetition of the spirit is possible, even though it is never so perfect in time as in eternity, which is the true repetition’ (FTR, 221).

Repetition is, then, not fully discontinuous with the past, but rather it is the opening up of the possibility of eternity. However, every repetition, in being open to possibility, is inherently dangerous. The danger is the loss of self yet it is the only route to acquire the self: recollection consigns the self to the past, and in never being ‘risky’ it loses itself, just as Constantin’s young man loses his love in recollection. Repetition transcends the self to gain the self: it goes away from speculative thought and engages with existing, despite the possibility of ‘falling into’ the abyss. This may mean that, when the young man eventually commits himself to dancing in the face of the abyss, he finally achieves ‘a repetition’ – but this remains (deliberately) ambiguous. He seems to believe that he achieves a repetition but his aesthetic descriptions and his forays into ideality may indicate that, like Constantin, he

slips back into his recollective state, and perhaps he mistakes the comfort of this relapse for repetition. After all, if repetition struggles in the face of the flux, of the afgrund, then perhaps the ordeal is not overcome. Moreover, as Marcel shows us with his discussion of ‘intersubjectivity’³⁰³, it is in love that a genuine ‘redoubling’ of being, recognition of the other self as a self, allows for a significantly ‘dense’ experience of being: in repetition’s love (or love’s repetition) the self is reciprocated and returned to the self. This is in contrast to the scrutiny and externalised relations in the levelling crowd. Since the young man did not continue or resume his relationship, his perception of the other subject as subject may not have been maintained.

B. ‘To Gain One’s Soul in Patience’

In his 18UD, Kierkegaard employs different terms to do similar work to ‘repetition’: as we have seen with the young man, there is something in repetition that must be anticipated, and awaited, patiently. In its association with expectation and its inward nature, patience is necessarily a part of a genuine repetition. In ‘To Gain One’s Soul in Patience’, Kierkegaard tells us that ‘life is gained in patience’ not through ‘bold expectancy’. He explains that the soul is not like an ordinary possession, but it is rather that which we always already have but do not yet possess; it is presupposed in being acquired. The soul contradicts both the temporal and the eternal: the soul is an internal self-contradiction which can never be gained

³⁰³ See Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, Vol 2, trans G. S. Fraser (South Bend: St Augustine’s Press, 2001)

or lost. From the first moment a person is both lost in the life of the world and distinct from it. This sense of resistance is to become more pronounced, because the ‘soul was this very difference: it was the infinity in the life of the world in its difference from itself’ (18UD, 165). The soul is gained from God, away from the world, through the self. But through patience: patience is both passive and active; an active passivity and a passive action which calmly waits. It is a choice that is repeated in every moment to be passive. Kierkegaard tells us: ‘The condition of patience is the object, it serves the gaining and remains as that which is gained’ (18UD, 173).

C. What is the significance of ‘repetition’?

This section will look at responses to this question from John D. Caputo, Clare Carlisle and Neils Eriksen. Carlisle argues that Kierkegaard’s is a more or less Aristotelian approach, which sees him reshaping Aristotle’s kinesis to Christian ends, emphasising movement albeit in terms of becoming a Christian; Eriksen is more concerned to show that Kierkegaard is not undertaking philosophy, but is rather a writer with a keen (if unthematized) sense of the nihilistic tendencies of modern philosophy whose ‘category’ of repetition is fundamental to returning genuine meaning to existence; Caputo provides a ‘postmodern’ approach which seeks to reveal Kierkegaard’s repetition as engaged in radical deconstruction of metaphysics and philosophy. This section aims to show that repetition is a part of Kierkegaard’s destabilising of onto-theo-logy best understood as an inversion or critique of the tradition from Aristotle to Hegel which has been focussed on a linear concept of causality leading to a problematically static concept of eternity and inhibits newness.

Carlisle argues that, for Kierkegaard, repetition, which is in opposition to recollection, is engaged with recollection as an opposite movement, like the Aristotelian principle of contradiction. She argues that movement is the central guiding aspect of Kierkegaard's thought, and gives his philosophy coherence and integrity. However, this movement is primarily and most importantly inward, within the self. For Carlisle, Kierkegaard found in Aristotle a 'conceptual structure that anchors movement in reality'³⁰⁴ which he used to clarify the nature of real, existential movement. Aristotle's concern to make human experience intelligible was not, she argues, a problem for Kierkegaard's anti-intellectualism because he relocated kinesis to inwardness, to existential subjectivity, on one hand, and because he was seeking to 'make intelligible, both to himself and others, some of his most personal experiences', on the other.³⁰⁵

She argues that Aristotle provides a parallel for Kierkegaard: 'Both thinkers counteract idealism by searching for a source of motion within existing things.'³⁰⁶ However, whilst Aristotle's substantialist metaphysics insists on no essential change with regard to movement, and thus requires an unmoved, unchanged and eternal prime mover or first cause, Kierkegaard insists that a real qualitative shift comes about during a genuine existential movement which brings into existence something new. Rather than an abstract eternity which is the ground of Being, Kierkegaard posits an anticipation of the eternal within becoming. However, movement remains 'something unthinkable: it is not a concept but a

³⁰⁴ Clare Carlisle, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming: Movements and Positions*, SUNY Series in Theology and Continental Thought (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), p.21.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p.22.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, p.12.

theme that opposes intellectual reflection and “the truth as knowledge”; that reaches beyond thought trying to transcend it.’³⁰⁷

Although Kierkegaard does work with Aristotelian ideas such as kinesis, to aid his exploration of the transition between potentiality and actuality, we must emphasise that, in divorcing these from the ground of substantialist ontology and placing them into the individual’s existence, his move is radical and should not be understated. In tearing away the onto-theo-logical basis, cause, and sustainment of kinesis as ousia (which is also translated as ‘being’ as well as ‘substance’) he renders the existing individual as the only basis upon which we can have any meaningful encounter with ‘being’ and ‘truth’, which will be enormously significant for Heidegger and others. Placing kinesis within the existing individual is a not a mere transition of meaning from ‘outside’ to ‘inside’ but a significant and powerful denial of meaning within philosophy: both in Greek recollection and German idealism as onto-theo-logy. We can see that with repetition, he is offering a means of critiquing the onto-theo-logical grounding of metaphysics vis-à-vis movement and temporality.

Eriksen offers another reading of repetition: he describes Kierkegaard as ‘not a thinker who is concerned with religious issues, but a writer whose thinking is a religious quest.’³⁰⁸ Repetition, then, cannot be understood apart from Kierkegaard’s overarching goal of becoming a Christian despite Christendom. ‘The unity of the authorship, therefore, is not

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p.113.

³⁰⁸ Neils Nyman Eriksen, *Kierkegaard’s Category of Repetition: A Reconstruction*, Kierkegaard Studies: Monograph Series 5 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2000), p.6.

grounded in the unity of one basic thought, but in its character of response to one persistent calling.³⁰⁹ Eriksen proceeds on to argue that Kierkegaard's critique of the meaninglessness of metaphysics reveals the nihilism at its core. Repetition, then, attempts to move away from this nihilism by placing genuine meaning in the flux. 'The meaning of repetition presupposes the breakdown of the dualisms of traditional metaphysics.'³¹⁰

Eriksen explains repetition in terms of authentic historicity, as a relation to the other, and in terms of a solution to the gap between being and becoming. Repetition 'would imply a new starting point for philosophy.'³¹¹ Metaphysics has misunderstood human being as *esse* rather than *inter-esse*; repetition returns human being to its *between-being*. It is in this way that metaphysics 'comes to grief'. However, the Danish term 'strander' is not adequately translated as 'founders' or 'comes to grief' but also holds the more ambiguous description of 'coming to ground', 'to beach', or the end of a journey. As such, repetition works toward not only the downfall but also the culmination of the metaphysical project.³¹²

As such, Eriksen argues that Kierkegaard's use of Aristotle's *kinesis* is as transition from nonbeing to being. Repetition is not merely an existential movement but a transition into genuine existence itself: a beginning and an emergence of newness from previously unrealised possibilities. Freedom becomes the freedom to repeat the same choice and repeat existence, to renounce freedom in choosing to annihilate possibility. The ground of being is incomplete, unknowable within existence, which means that we are *not-yet-being*. Faith sees

³⁰⁹ Ibid, p.6

³¹⁰ Eriksen, *Kierkegaard's Category of Repetition*, p.9.

³¹¹ Ibid, p.15.

³¹² Ibid, p.115.

the possibility of ‘being’; repetition actualises it. As such, Eriksen offers a radical reading of Kierkegaard’s repetition which coheres with my argument that not only is Kierkegaard critiquing onto-theo-logy he also implies a critique of linear causality which problematically allies God with the Prime Mover and results in the presentation of God as an object of knowledge in Hegel.

Caputo argues that ‘despite his talk of ‘subjectivity’, what Kierkegaard has in mind is the ‘foundering of all human categories, the shattering of the subjective and the anthropocentric. In the face of the fury of the flux, only faith can move forward.’³¹³ Moving forward into the future is the only possible way to gain eternity: repetition is the way to live open to the possibility of radical newness within time, brought about by essential change or restoration of possibilities. Caputo also points to Kierkegaard’s use of Aristotle: ‘Repetition is an existential version of kinesis... a movement which occurs in the existing individual.’³¹⁴

However, Caputo explains Kierkegaard is not ‘arguing for an [Aristotelian] ontology... but rather... is arguing for a “deconstruction” of ontology.’³¹⁵ For Caputo, Constantin’s quest is to make existential progress despite the flux and to expose philosophy as a fearful reaction to the unpredictable nature of the flux. Philosophy is not the way of the existing individual: recollection is more of an ‘un-movement’,³¹⁶ whereas repetition creates the self in time. In being open to the radically new, repetition is also open to the radically Other. Significantly, Caputo argues that Kierkegaard is already involved in what Heidegger only comes to later:

³¹³ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, p.34.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.11.

³¹⁵ Caputo, ‘Foundering of Metaphysics’, p.205.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.208.

working ‘on the “foundering” of metaphysics and ontology ... bringing it to grief, in a disruptive, unscientific transgression of metaphysics.’³¹⁷ The clearest manifestation of this transgression is, Caputo argues, faith.

Finally, we will look at Kangas’s interpretation of repetition. Kangas focuses on the implied question in *Repetition* of whether there is a way of getting beyond the thoroughly mediated nature of existence (as discussed in German Idealism) to a new immediacy in which everything becomes new, or as he rephrases it, a way of coming to the originary time behind the time that consciousness represents to itself.³¹⁸ Kangas explains that for Kierkegaard, idealism is founded on the erasure of the distinction between the originary time and the represented time of consciousness. Kangas comes to argue that for Kierkegaard repetition is an interest in freedom, but ‘[freedom] is not an interest in oneself or in a return to self, that is, in the recovery of an originary presence to self, but rather in a departure from self.’³¹⁹ Kierkegaard, then, is not presenting us with an articulation of achieving the self-positing subject, but in departing from it: not a freedom for the self but a freedom from the self. Arguing that *Repetition* shows that it is not possible to ‘return’ to the self through willing it so (since the self is anarchically shattered and ungrounded), he argues that achieving atonement or repetition cannot be a project of the will but enabled by a power upon which ‘one can only await with an essential patience.’³²⁰ Further, this would not so much constitute

³¹⁷ Ibid, p.204.

³¹⁸David J. Kangas, *Kierkegaard’s Instant: On Beginnings*, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), p.91.

³¹⁹ Ibid, p.95.

³²⁰ Ibid, p.125.

a return to the self, but a departure. But perhaps in departing the subject, one may become a self before God.

We have seen that Kierkegaard's category of repetition is offered as an alternative to traditional onto-theo-logical metaphysics. He presents it a restoration of possibilities and a commitment to building meaning despite the flux. However, it is not a simple development of Aristotle or Hegel, but an inversion, since it denies an abstract concept of an eternal ground of being, preferring to think of the eternal as a future promise and a possibility. Although not specifying a critique of causality per se, Kierkegaard's work critiques the Prime Mover as a ground. Although in the interlude of PF, Climacus comments that everything that comes into being does so through a cause not a ground (PF, 75) this does not mean that the cause is available for objective scrutiny.

II: Heidegger and Repetition/Retrieval

In order to underscore the later Heidegger's interest in 'repetition', we will first turn to his Heidegger's most famous earlier work, BT. This will lead to his later development of 'retrieval' and his emphasis on restarting the new/other beginning. Kierkegaard's treatment of repetition is, as we have seen, a reflection on the nature of time and being-within-time (inter-esse) that constitutes the becoming individual, and the possibility of achieving a self (which is always in relation, to others and to the world, and is between-being within the flux).

For Heidegger, the ‘existential analytic’ and the process of undertaking it are inseparable. This means that repetition for him is not just about the life of the individual but is intrinsically related to the possibility of his own research. It is not possible, he argues, that one can undertake an authentic explication of the nature of being and existence – including repetition – without the appropriate method, which for him involves the hermeneutic circle and the destructing of the meaning of Being. His method is itself in the form of repetition.

In his Heidegger dictionary, Michael Inwood discusses repetition (‘Weiderholung’, from ‘weiderholen’ which holds the meaning of ‘repeat’ and ‘retrieve’) in terms of an appropriate attitude to the past. He states that is very important to BT in terms of the necessity of repeating the question about Being or the question of the meaning of ontology, which is the premise of the work. Repetition is also intrinsic to the discussion about retrieving the ‘basic problem’ as disclosed in original as yet unthought possibilities. These possibilities for renewal of the present must be retrieved from the past, thereby freeing the present and purposefully facing the future. Inwood argues that for Heidegger in BT this relates specifically to inheriting a tradition, a conversation with a ‘past hero’.³²¹ Explicitly, this means the philosophers of the ‘first beginning’ (Parmenides, Heraclitus, Anaximander and so on). So, Inwood argues that repetition is to be a non-identical repetition of philosophy.³²²

The repetition of the past, then, involves the destruction of it, in order to bring the conversation back to its essential origin, and to the possibilities within the history of ontology to subvert traditional accounts of the question of the meaning of Being. Repetition

³²¹ Michael Inwood, ‘Repetition’, in *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p.128.

³²² *Ibid.*

remains an important idea for Heidegger throughout his work, insofar as it relates to restating and unconcealing of the nature of Being. However, Inwood then goes on to state that Kierkegaard's discussion of repetition, that 'all life is a repetition', bears no relation at all to Heidegger's main concept of repetition.³²³ He is not able here to give a full argument about this, as it is a brief dictionary contribution, but his refusal of this is nonetheless striking. As we see below, there are many areas of resonance between the two thinkers on repetition.

A. Repetition in BT

As discussed in the introduction, we do not have definitive proof that Heidegger read Repetition. Although it was published in translation alongside FT, to which he does refer, he does not explicitly mention Constantius's text. As such, in order to sufficiently ground the discussion of repetition/retrieval (Wiederholung), we will first look to the extent of its presence in BT, and how important it is both to the existential analytic and to his method. We will see that Heidegger shows us in BT that repetition is the means by which we may establish our identity and the means by which genuine ontological enquiry may be made. Heidegger employs repetition at crucial points in BT, and in his later work.

Heidegger explains at the beginning of BT that his purpose in writing is to reprioritise the question of the meaning of Being ('why is there something rather than nothing?') which he argues has been lost and overlooked in the history of occidental philosophy. He seeks to get

³²³ Ibid, p.136.

behind the layers of what he later calls the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics: to get back to the original question of being which is more ‘primal’ than the scientific and metaphysical projects which, manifesting in the ontic (more or less meaning ‘concerned with entities’) sciences, have obscured the pre-scientific, and pre-ontological experience of the nature of Being and of being a being. In order to undertake such a task, we must start from our position and resource: Da-sein (T/here-being). As an ontic entity, Dasein alone is distinguished by its being the site of Being (Da-sein), and of being concerned about its being. Dasein is the ontological enquirer, and so to get to the question of being we undertake an analysis of our existential situation: the existential analytic. In order ‘to work out the question of Being adequately we must make an entity – the inquirer – transparent in his own Being’ (BT, 27). This requires a return to phenomenological being, as we each are here and now. In other words, we need to return to our existence in order to establish meaning within the existential.

As such a being, who relates its way of being to its understanding of Being, Dasein’s understanding and interpretation of Being is always conditioned by time, and finitude. ‘Time’ is ‘the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it’ (BT, 39). We may only come to an understanding of Being which resists the onto-theo-logical through a temporal framework. Retrieving the originary question of Being is intrinsically retrieving the originary question of our being. We are each always contextualised (or historically and culturally situated) in advance and projected into the future, and therefore in order to come to the question of Being we must understand that it too is tied up with being contextualised in advance and projected into the future. This is what Heidegger means when he says that we are ‘thrown’. We are also always brought back to ourselves here and now by being faced with our finitude (death). As such, we must face our own possibilities, which

have been handed to us from the past, re-evaluate and/or reaffirm our choices, and be projected into the future. Facing death shows Dasein the necessity of genuine and authentic choice, through the state of mind of ‘anxiety’: indeed, it is through being faced with the indeterminate determinacy of death that we are given the possibility of authentic self-fidelity (BT, 229). Moreover, this comportment of Dasein involves a step back from the everyday.

In overcoming its own self-dispersal, stepping back and re-affirming authentic choice, Dasein demonstrates an overall unity of the self, which is characterised by ‘care’ (Sorge) rather than disinterest.³²⁴ Care is the tripartite structure of Dasein’s being (which correspond more or less to past, present and future) and Heidegger argues that this comprises Dasein’s existence. Care is interested. It is, for Heidegger as for Kierkegaard, the nature of being between, inter-esse, and essentially unfinished, that is a stumbling block for philosophy, and is characteristic of our existence (BT, 276). In coming to grasp the possibility of wholeness, Dasein must retrieve or repeat possibilities of not-yet being.

In calling Dasein forth to its potential wholeness, from within its essential incompleteness, the call exhibits the repetition that being (in) care requires. For, as we have seen with Kierkegaard’s repetition, this is the repeated choice to become ourselves through striving and repeatedly re-affirming that choice as that with which we are intrinsically (and for Kierkegaard, passionately) interested, despite the contingency of (our) existence. This is not a monotonous repetition such as that exhibited in Constantin’s behaviour, but a non-identical repetition which renews as it repeats. In opening up the possibilities and potentialities, the

³²⁴ Stephen Mullhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, p.110.

call reopens the past. ‘Freedom, however, is only in the choice of o n e possibility – that is, in tolerating one’s not having the choice of the others and not being able to choose them’ (BT, 331).

To peel back the layers of prior interpretation, and to retrieve the meaning of the first articulation of philosophy, requires an apposite hermeneutic position. Heidegger talks about a ‘hermeneutic circle’ which may (for the later Heidegger) facilitate a retrieval of the ‘first beginning’ of occidental philosophy. He explains that all interpretation, all hermeneutic postures, have elements that are ‘thrown’, presupposed, as the ontological enquirer is always ‘thrown’ (BT, 362).

The hermeneutic circle is not something from which we should try or wish to escape: it is intrinsic to how we are. ‘We must rather endeavour to leap into the ‘circle’, primordially and wholly, so that even at the stage of the analysis of Dasein we make sure that we have a full view of Dasein’s circular Being’ (BT, 363). The most primordial truth is ‘the disclosedness of the meaning of the Being of care’ (BT, 364). It is only with the structure of care recognised, and the associated recognition of the hermeneutic circle, that an appropriate interpretation of the existential analytic may take place.

Heidegger argues that the only way to become authentic is through ‘repetition’ (BT, 388). He contrasts this with an inauthentic projection, wherein Dasein forgets itself. Thus, Heidegger calls this ‘the existential condition for the possibility of irresoluteness’ (BT, 389) wherein indifference (disinterest) is characteristic of abandonment to one’s thrownness. Dasein, as being between birth and death, is the only entity that presents the whole of temporality: despite the constant(ly) changing (flux), ‘the Self maintains itself throughout

with a certain selfsameness' (BT, 425). Dasein is the 'between' (BT, 427). Dasein is brought back to the factual 'there' (Da) by the manifestation of possibilities through repetition. 'Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them in terms of the heritage which that resoluteness, as thrown, takes over' (BT, 435). This allows Dasein to realise its fate, as that which it hands down to itself through both inheritance and choice. To be appositely positioned within the moment of unconcealment of possibilities, and to come back to itself in this moment 'then becomes the repetition of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Repeating is handing down explicitly – that is to say going back to the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there' (BT, 437).

It is by way of being temporal that Dasein may hand down its possibility and inherit that, allowing it to take over its thrownness and be appositely positioned within the moment to receive the truth of its time (BT, 437). In coming back to itself, resolute Dasein hands itself down to itself and inherits itself, through reopening possibilities. The repetition 'makes a reciprocative rejoinder to the possibility of that existence which has-been-there' (BT, 438).

Heidegger explains that disclosing and interpreting – which belong to Dasein – lead to the possibility of 'disclosing history explicitly and getting it in our grasp' (BT, 428). Just as he has shown that the grasping of the Dasein happens through 'thrownness' (being contextualised and projected) and retrieving possibilities to reaffirm and hand down to ourselves, so history hands down our possibilities and the future is handed down to us through those possibilities. As such, the possible futures are given through an epochal determination of an unconcealed truth. Repetition is both the possibility of the forging authentic Dasein through time and a challenge to onto-theo-logy.

Heidegger in BT seeks ontology before the constructed regions of objectification of beings and things, in order to ‘wrest free the primitive ‘ground’ that opens amidst the projections of the horizontal ecstases of one's ... temporality.’³²⁵ That is to say that he wishes to repeat or retrieve the originary possibilities, peeling back the layers of onto-theo-logical construction in the clearing of being. We will see that this retrieval of possibilities remains a centrally important theme throughout his later thought.

A further and significant point must first be made. As mentioned in the introduction, Heidegger’s project both in BT and his later work was at least in part inspired by a move away from the concept of the subject of German idealism and towards an articulation of Dasein as the site of Being in terms of the existential analytic. Heidegger came to realise that whilst articulating the equipmentality of things in the world alongside Dasein in BT, he had not granted those things their own sufficient possibilities. In order to sufficiently rethink the subject as Dasein, the later Heidegger came to realise that he must also rethink the object as thing. ‘The rethinking of the fourfold provides this rethinking of thing and world.’³²⁶ There is a sense, then, in which the fourfold comes to be articulated as a repetition or retrieval of the latent possibilities of the thing. Another way to phrase this is that the thing is to the object as Dasein is to the subject.

³²⁵ James Luchte, *Heidegger's Early Philosophy: The Phenomenology of Ecstatic Temporality* (London: Continuum, 2008), p.11.

³²⁶ Andrew J. Mitchell, ‘The Fourfold’, in Bret W. David ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2010), p.209.

B. Retrieval and the Later Heidegger

The connection between Dasein's resolute repetition and the possibility of the recurrence of past possibilities that emerges as a prominent theme in Heidegger's later works, regarding the Second Beginning in philosophy. The relation to an originary or primordial temporality, and how past latent possibilities can be realised by engagement with the ancients (pre-Socratics) is essential to this, as ontological enquirers on the path to unconcealment and the significance of the unthought.

In the first chapter, we saw that (in OCM) Heidegger converses with Hegel regarding the nature of the matter for thinking. For Hegel, this involves maintaining a concept of Being as 'thinking thinking itself' and thinking itself through to the absolute, whereas Heidegger argues that the difference between thinking and being must be elucidated and thought through as difference. For Hegel, we enter into the thought of a previous thinker as a part of what unfolds in one of the stages of absolute thinking, moving between the stages of the speculative process. For Heidegger, the force that he seeks is not that of what has been thought, but of that which has not yet been thought 'and from which thought receives its essential space' (ID, 48). We mentioned in the first chapter that trying to think the unthought is not an attempt to look at the 'causes' or 'calculate the developmental conditions' (TE, 35) for the thought of the original thinker, but to try to think about the other possibilities that may have been potentiabile at the 'first beginning'. He explains that

tradition prevails when it frees us from thinking back to thinking forward, which is no longer a planning. Only when we turn thoughtfully toward what has already been thought, will we be turned to use for what must still be thought (ID, 41)

Although Heidegger accepts that attempting to think the unthought and therefore to bring latent possibilities for thinking into current thinking does violence to previous thinkers, it is

not though the imposition of alien concepts foisted on to past thinkers but ‘of rendering anew the fundamental aporiai which, perhaps only very implicitly, served to give motivation, direction, and structure to their inquiries in the first place.’³²⁷

Heidegger explains that trying to reopen these past possibilities involves a step back into this domain from which the possibility of authentic thinking first emerges. This would be a step back into *beyng*, or into a relation with *Ereignis*. It would involve a repetition of ‘the other beginning’ which is ‘the inceptuality of the unbegun’ (TE, 21). ‘The first beginning is recollected in thinking ahead to the other beginning’ (TE, 22). We can see that this structure of stepping into ‘the essential space’ of the unthought in order to open up possibilities for thinking from the past and think them ‘into’ the future of a second beginning holds with repetition as recollecting forwards.

The step into the unthought creative centre of the first beginning cannot be an isolated step (or leap) in thought but it must be repeated to lead to a path of thinking, away from the onto-theo-logical. The originary beginning inspired an expression of a particular unconcealment – that of *physis* and *Ge-Stell* discussed in the previous chapter. In order to bear out the call of *beyng* in terms of new possibilities for thinking, we would have to repeat the step back to try to hold open the new beginning. This means that the step back onto a different path, which requires repetition to maintain its significance, would involve a move into the essential nature of metaphysics.

³²⁷ Daniel Watts, ‘Repetition (*Wiederholung*),’ in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.636.

However, the later Heidegger does not think that this is something which we may will of our own volition. In WCT he explains that a new thinking would be given or sent in such a way that it would not be ‘the effect of our doing and thus dependent on us’ (WCT, 201) but would nonetheless require an active element in terms of perceiving ‘in such a way that we take it up specifically and do something with it’ (WCT, 203).³²⁸ This would involve ‘taking-to-heart’, a commitment. Pattison highlights that this is related to ‘thinking-as-thanking’: Heidegger’s argument that these words ‘are not merely interconnected but are interconnected in such a way and at such a level as also to bring memory into the picture.’³²⁹ ‘In giving thanks, the heart gives thought to what it has and what it is ... it thinks of itself as beholden, but beholden because its devotion is held in listening. Original thinking is the thanks owed for being’ (WCT, 141).³³⁰ Whilst this is not within our control or is not solely something that we do or will, it is also something that requires us to be both passive and active. If we think back to the discussion of technology in the previous chapter, we remember that the cor-responding four causes bringing the thing poietically into presence as being ‘much obliged’, also a thankful and reciprocal participation. This taking to heart, and participation in committed choice, is also a characteristic of the ‘repetition’ he discusses in BT, above.

This link with ‘memory’ is important. In remembering, and thinking thankfully, repetition for the later Heidegger expresses a ‘reciprocal rejoinder’³³¹ to the thinkers of the past.

³²⁸ Pattison, *The Later Heidegger*, p.148. Here Pattison discusses the active and passive elements in thinking the new beginning.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Daniel Watts, ‘Repetition (*Wiederholung*)’, p.638.

Further, Heidegger articulates ‘remembrance’ as greeting and being greeted by the past in his lectures on Hölderlin’s poem by that name.³³² Heidegger explains that to hear the poem we must not focus on its beauty, but be ‘touched’ by it (HH, 18). Focussing in on the final line of this poem – ‘Yet what remains, the poets found’ – Heidegger explains that the founding of something yet to come is being presented, not simply the memory of something that has passed. What remains is not simply what has happened, what has gone before. What remains retains past possibilities. If we think back to the discussion of the Greek Temple in OWA, it, too, remains in such a way that it is not simply past. We may also see that repetition/retrieval is Heidegger’s method for his phenomenological approach as regards retrieving the thing’s ‘distance’: approaching the thing as a thing, as something which is not an object, is a part of the retrieval of the possibility of the fourfold cor-responsively reciprocating in bringing about world’s worlding qua poiesis. Since this worlding has not yet been actualised and has remained sheltered in aletheia, it is a retrieval not only of factual possibilities but of ontological possibilities. When we approach the poem, the temple, the work of art, the thing or the ancient Pre-Socratic fragments, and we are able to do so reciprocally in such a way that does not objectify, we may be able to engage in a ‘reciprocal rejoinder’ with the poietic coming about of that which remains or abides, and in so doing, and in thinking-as-thanking, we may be able to glimpse the inspiring event which lays behind its coming-about and comes into being with its coming about. This is also what Heidegger means when he says that a dim distant light of the still concealed and sheltered world may shine.

³³² Ibid.

III: Divergence and Convergence

This section addresses the areas of convergence between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger on the matter of repetition. We will see a number of areas of confluence and discuss the structural resonances between the two. I will argue that each presents repetition as not only the means of repeating an authentic choice of self but as a critique of onto-theology. I will show that Heidegger's method is one of retrieval and suggest that this is a significant convergence between the two thinkers. It is not only the structure of Heidegger's suggestion for using repetition to get back to the unthought behind or before the onto-theological that converges with Kierkegaard's category of repetition, but his very method of 'doing' philosophy/phenomenology also resonates with Kierkegaard.

We saw in the first section that Kierkegaard's repetition is presented as an alternative means of thinking about the possibility of building meaning and identity despite the radically transitory nature of living within the flux. Kierkegaard has used Aristotle's kinesis, subversively, to discuss the nature of existential movement, but in tearing it away from the concept of the eternal Prime Mover, Kierkegaard's move is also a radical critique of kinesis, and Aristotle, and onto-theo-logy more generally. As we will see in chapter four, Kierkegaard's concept of eternity is significantly different to that of onto-theo-logy, relating to the anticipation of the eternal in becoming.

Kierkegaard explained that the nature of being between the radical flux of time and conscious of time as an existential being is both the interest of metaphysics and that upon which metaphysics culminates. However, for Kierkegaard, repetition is not just an

alternative means of thinking about being. It is also the way to an authentic selfhood, appropriate intersubjective relationships and the possibility of gaining one's soul (which is always already posited).

Kierkegaard has aimed to return meaning to existence, exhibiting the meaninglessness and existential impotence of systematic and recollective metaphysics; he has at least instantiated the 'postmodern' deconstruction of onto-theo-logical categories. Whether or not Kierkegaard takes aim at ontology, in his task to become a Christian and to communicate this indirectly to the unchristian Christendom, he hints at questions about 'being' (esse) in emphasising 'becoming' (inter-esse).

Throughout BT there are areas which present resonances with Kierkegaardian repetition. These includes choosing to reaffirm a choice of self despite the dispersal in the flux. Each thinker considers the means of sustaining a meaningful self-identity as a kind of productive creation. Both are critical of the idea that meaning is developed in relation to onto-theo-logical grounds. Both argue for a non-linear concept of time in which possibilities must be retrieved in order for choices to be reaffirmed.

Kierkegaardian repetition does not necessarily relate to a whole community's destiny as Heidegger's discussion does. Kierkegaard's concern is explicitly stated: that the single individual comes to a life of faith. Nonetheless, as we have seen in the first chapter, Kierkegaard is highly critical of a society caught up in the web of objective onto-theo-logical reflection. Although Kierkegaard does not explicitly state that his concern is the destiny of a community, he may be seen to be laying the groundwork for such an interpretation or development.

Carlisle argues that the task of becoming a Christian relates in Kierkegaard's work to the individual's ontological status, and therefore since the life of faith is characterised by repetition, repetition is ontologically important. Repetition, she argues, has to do with the atonement of sin which is a forgiveness of past, reopening the past to its possibilities and decreasing its binding power. The past can in some ways be changed, and its impression on present possibilities can be altered, because God (who is that all things are possible) can transform the meaning of the past, allowing things to 'become new'.³³³

Repetition for earlier Heidegger in BT, she argues, has much to do with understanding the preconditioned nature of Dasein, and of all philosophy by extension. She also argues that, for both, repetition is relational: we are construed by our relationship with ourselves and with others, but not in the sense that we are in relation but rather we are relation, and so repetition is about community.

So, we may argue that whilst Kierkegaard does not explicitly discuss ontology as such his work on repetition nonetheless has ontological implications and whilst he does not explicitly link repetition with community repetition is relational in such a way that it intrinsically refers to community. Whether or not he wishes to restart philosophy in a way that bears relation to Heidegger's task remains a question for further discussion. Although Carlisle's argument that repetition is a central concept for both Kierkegaard and Heidegger in BT is certainly helpful and accurate, the constellation of different concepts and facets in Kierkegaard's

³³³ Carlisle, 'Kierkegaard and Heidegger', pp.422-29

thought is truly held together by his often stated intention to show the individual caught up in the levelling crowd that they must convert to become Christian.

Along a different vein, Caputo argues that Heidegger, regarding repetition, fundamentally misunderstands Kierkegaard, who was more successful in ‘shipwrecking’ metaphysics than Heidegger. Heidegger was taken in by Kierkegaard’s ruse: ‘he thought repetition was a concept that could assume its rightful place in an existential-analytic with pretensions to being phenomenological science.’³³⁴ Elsewhere, Caputo argues that Heidegger’s method of ‘circular hermeneutics’, in contradistinction to Kierkegaard’s concern for the free emergence of something genuinely new, is only the ‘repetition’ of factual possibilities. Being falls into beings in a self-concealing mutual gesture of turning away. In dismantling Being, Heidegger’s hermeneutic destructs as it retrieves. Repetition for Heidegger is a downward spiral away from metaphysical thinking.³³⁵

Caputo explains that without Dasein, moreover, there is no ‘meaning’ to be worked out: meaning cannot be something prior or separate from Dasein; it does not exist separately to Dasein. Being is always being as ascertained and reciprocated in Dasein’s being-there. The forestructures of retrieval and understanding are revisable but they are also primordially the very possibility of knowing. They are grounded in advance: they are posited and realised but in terms of the possibility of Dasein and in terms of Dasein’s apprehension of them.

³³⁴ Caputo, ‘Heidegger, Kierkegaard and the foundering of metaphysics’, p.215.

³³⁵ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*.

Caputo convincingly argues that Heidegger first found this suggestive hermeneutic principle in Kierkegaard.³³⁶

Regarding repetition, Caputo argues, ‘Heidegger not only understates his dependence on Kierkegaard, he misstates it. In borrowing upon Kierkegaard’s theory of repetition – without acknowledgement – he invokes Kierkegaard at the most crucial ontological juncture in the published text of *Being and Time*.’³³⁷ Caputo convincingly argues that the constancy of self, repetition, and the radically existential temporality of *Dasein* are strongly resonant with Kierkegaard.

In summary, we have seen that Heidegger’s *BT* resonates with Kierkegaard’s concept of repetition, and that it is of central importance to the existential analytic. Moreover, it provides a means of countering the layers of onto-theo-logical thinking which have obscured the question of being. It is already in *BT* the method by which Heidegger intends to discuss the reopening and restarting the central question of occidental philosophy. Whilst the findings of Carlisle, Mulhall and Caputo have varied, each sees some resonance between Kierkegaard and Heidegger of *BT* in repetition/retrieval.

Regarding Heidegger’s later engagement with repetition/retrieval, we have seen that the second beginning involves retrieval of past possibilities through entering into the ‘realm’ of the unthought of a thinker, or of a poet. This ‘step back’ needs repeating, and ‘taking to heart’, in a commitment. We also saw that there is an element of remembrance and abiding

³³⁶ *Ibid*, p.72.

³³⁷ *Ibid*, p.82.

meaning ‘behind’ and ‘beneath’ texts and things which may, if we appositely comport ourselves to thinking as thanking, allow the disclosure of new possibilities. The elements of commitment and thankfulness resonate with Kierkegaard, although he does not present the ‘unthought’ or apply repetition specifically to the ancient Presocratics in the manner of the later Heidegger. Although Heidegger’s approach to the Presocratics is ‘striking and highly original’³³⁸ in content, the method that he undertakes resonates with Kierkegaardian repetition. If this is particularly the case with Heidegger’s ‘hermeneutic circle’, then he resonates with Kierkegaard regarding his method in most if not all of his work.

A further point to be made here as regards Heidegger’s method (retrieval) and his discussion of retrieving the possibilities of things in the previous chapter. For objectivity has reduced the thing’s possibilities to the represented object. Coming to philosophy with a method of retrieval and comporting oneself appropriately to the unthought in philosophy may allow the de(con)struction of the object allowing a retrieval of the thing’s possibilities. This in turn would allow for a glimpse of the thing’s thinging to be possible. This production of the thing through the interplay or mirrorplay of the fourfold would, in Heidegger’s parlance, be a possible glimpse of the holy. For Heidegger the holy may be glimpsed in the event of enowning, which would only be possible through the interplay of the fourfold. So, in Heidegger’s own terms, retrieval of the things possibilities through an appropriate comportment toward the unthought is the horizon of the possibility of an historic encounter with the holy. As such, although Heidegger’s more formulaic articulation of repetition as his method of retrieval does not immediately seem to resound with his concept of the fourfold

³³⁸ Pattison, *The Later Heidegger*, p.137.

or with his neopagan agenda, it does play out that way when taken in tandem with his other articulations.

We have argued that both thinkers present repetition/retrieval as an alternative way to approach building meaning and articulating latent possibilities for thinking. For Kierkegaard, repetition is both a form of philosophical thinking and a way of expressing the way to reiterating one's choice of self in relation to the ungrounding and anarchic relationship with the Infinite Subject. In reaffirming this choice, the self willingly obliterates the other choices. For Heidegger, repetition relates not only to Dasein's authentic self but also to the destiny of a people. Moreover, his method of retrieval which he uses throughout BT and into the later work is consonant with Kierkegaard's repetition. Moreover, we discussed that Kierkegaard, when considered in terms of intersubjectivity, does seem to have some concern for the outplaying of repetition in the wider community. We can see that both thinkers suggest repetition as an alternative to onto-theo-logy. Each express this not as a search for the causes or the action of the eternal prime mover but as a critique of such. Moreover, both suggest a nonlinear model of time and of building meaning vis-à-vis repetition.

Chapter 3 – The Leap

This chapter will look primarily to the notion of ‘the leap’, looking first to Kierkegaard’s articulation of it, and then to Heidegger’s. Whilst the leap has been long associated with Kierkegaard (often misrepresented as a leap ‘of’ faith, rather than ‘into’ faith), it is a relatively underdeveloped area in the received literature for Heidegger. The Danish and German words for leap – Springet and Der Spring – both imply a jump, a leap into, a leap over, skipping-over, and both hold the implication of a spring of water, or a ‘welling up’ from a source.

This chapter looks to Kierkegaard’s leap as it is discussed in CUP1 and CA. We will see that Kierkegaard’s leap applies both to a leap in thought and a leap into faith. He discusses it in terms of the emergence of a new quality – hence a qualitative shift. We will discuss different interpretations of his leap and how it relates to faith, grace and the passive and active elements in the leap. We will see that he presents it as a movement away from problematic Hegelian metaphysics and toward a life a faith. We will then proceed to consider the argument that Kierkegaard’s leap is also about recognising our abyssal dwelling in reality which would be realised in the execution of the leap.

As regards Heidegger’s leap, we will consider the dual nature of his leap as both the emergence of a new thing from its origin and the inception of an as yet unrealised possibility for thinking. Moving on we will discuss the ways in which a thing emerging from its origin is able to unconceal something of its created being. Moreover, we will consider the ways in

which this is a leap is a shift how Dasein's relates with things. We will show how and in what way the leap is expressed by each thinker as a challenge to the predetermined outplaying of the system and the ways in which the qualitative shift or leap into being is a challenge to the assertion of objective and knowable causes in Hegelian metaphysics.

I: The Kierkegaardian Leap

With a characteristic provocation in the direction of the life of faith, Kierkegaard presents the leap as an essential facet of this life. It is not intended to be an item of knowledge, however, but to show a leap beyond the limits of our knowledge. The discussion of the leap will work through some of the material from Climacus and Haufniensis. The material from CUP1 has been mentioned in previous chapters, however it is essential here in terms of explaining the importance of the leap, and the treatment here offers a closer reading of the text. We will see that Climacus's discussion of the leap is written from the perspective of a thinker who argues that, for Christianity to be Christianity, it must leap beyond what is logically understandable and will beyond itself. Following this, we will see that Haufniensis writes with reference to original sin and the emergence of the new through a 'qualitative' leap which is apprehended in the state of anxiety.

A. Concluding Unscientific Postscript

In CUP1, Climacus writes as one who is unable to attain faith and become a Christian. Although he writes against the theological endorsements of speculative metaphysics,

Climacus does not write as one who is able to achieve that about which he is writing: he is interested in opening up the question rather than offering an answer. He nonetheless encourages the reader to try to make the decision of faith for themselves. This would involve becoming a subjective thinker.

As we discussed in the first chapter, Climacus tells the reader that the Hegelian system hinges on a promise of completion which is never fulfilled and so there is no system per se. For if there is no conclusion at the end, nor at the beginning, it all becomes doubtful and hypothetical (CUP1, 13). Further, '[s]ystem and conclusiveness are just about one and the same ... if the system is not finished there is not any system' (CUP1, 107). As such, the system does not relate to existence as it claims. Moreover, what has been presented by Hegel and others is a fragment of a system prematurely announced and falsely sold (CUP1, 108).

As a young dialectician, Climacus had begun in PF by trying to understand the issue of faith and its relation to historical knowledge, as presupposed by the System. Setting his eyes upon the clarifying reflection of the conclusion on the whole, the young dialectician reads on and on, but, finding no conclusion, feels himself abandoned, intimidated, and disappointed. The issue of faith does not emerge in the systematic process. Worse than this, the issue of faith is a presupposition of the system which claims to be presuppositionless; the system presupposes that faith should be interested in understanding itself in a way that moves on from passion; and faith is insulted by this, since it was clearly never understood in the first place (CUP1, 14).

This is to do not with the truth of Christianity, but one's relation to it in terms of infinite interestedness in eternal happiness, which it makes important for 'my own little self and to every ever-so-little self' (CUP1, 16).

Without having comprehended Christianity – since I am merely presenting the question – I have at least understood this much, that it wants to make the single individual eternally happy and that precisely within this single individual it presupposes this infinite interest in his own happiness as *conditio sin qua non* (CUP1, 16).

Climacus prefers to hold on to the possibility that one day he may, possibly, become eternally happy, rather than assume that this has already been achieved. Questioning how to become individually, appropriately related to Christianity keeps the possibility open, rather than assuming that faith and eternal happiness are givens in Christendom, which will simply foreclose the question and with it the possibility of an answer.

In the first part of CUP1, Climacus questions the objective truth of Christianity, which he identifies with historical truth and philosophical truth. For the former, it is to be established through critical consideration of reports, for the latter it is in relation to a doctrine. This misses the truth of appropriation (subjective truth), and the infinite, personal, passionate interest is missing. The individual is irrelevant to objective truth. Regarding historical truth, he explains that it is an approximation, and does not relate to the decision of an eternal happiness. It fails to relate to faith and does not pertain to eternal happiness. There is also the problem that the believer may be tempted and to 'confuse knowledge with faith' (CUP1, 29). It is when faith loses passion that it starts to call for demonstration. Yet to attempt to enter into Christianity by means of historical truth is 'dubious' (CUP1, 32) since 'Christianity is spirit; spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity; subjectivity is essentially passion, and at its maximum an infinite personally interested passion for one's eternal happiness' (CUP1, 33). All decision is rooted in subjectivity: an observer does not

need a decision. He moves on to show that similar objective approaches to the truth of Christianity include appeals made to the Church on ground of objective historical truth of Christianity, ‘the Living Word in the Church, the Creed, and the Word with the sacraments’ (CUP1, 37). This attempts to put Christianity forward as an immediate relation of spirit to a sum of propositions. So, the idea that the truths of Christianity may be learnt from observing the Church (because the Church has existed for ‘1800’ years as the Church) which assumes that the truth of Christianity is available through an unchanging Creed, is still predicated on an immediate relation to truth, which once posited and accepted no longer holds the meaning of a passionate and interested faith.

This objectivity is an ‘extremely unfortunate category’ since Christianity is ‘a matter of spirit and of subjectivity and of inwardness’ which renders Christianity incongruous with objective thinking (CUP1, 43). A passion cannot be appropriately staked on an approximation. A central problem of coming to an objective stand on Christianity is the paradoxical form: grasping it as an objective truth necessarily renders the observer outside of it. ‘There is no direct and immediate transition to Christianity’ and those who may try to claim that there is and even to demonstrate such – ‘they are all deceivers – no, they know not what they do’ (CUP1, 49). The reference to Jesus’s words from the cross is intentional and is meant to show the damage that employing objective categories for truth does to Christianity.

The speculative point of view is likewise problematic, forcing Christianity to become an eternal thought without presuppositions. However, it is presupposed that everyone is already a Christian, in Christendom. To doubt being a Christian in Christendom seems odd, because to move from the objective element (Christendom) to the individual element (the Christian)

is a presumption of objective thinking which has become predominant. The speculative thinker does not talk about himself as an individual, as his individuality is an object of doubt. But, Climacus argues, if there is no speculative thinker there can be no speculation. Objective, speculative indifference cannot pertain to being Christian.

To relate to Christianity appropriately, the thinker must become subjective, not objective. Turning to Lessing, Climacus praises his ‘knotty difficulty’ and relatability, for Lessing ‘knew ... that the religious pertained to Lessing and Lessing alone, just as it pertains to every human being’ and that every human being is infinitely related to God. Lessing has ‘indeed grasped that Archimedean point of religiousness, by which one is not exactly able to move the whole world, but for the discovery of which a world-force is needed when one has Lessing’s presuppositions’ (CUP1, 65). Lessing rejects the objective fallacy and has no trace of a ‘result’ in his work.

Climacus does not ‘appeal’ to Lessing but rather considers him as one who seeks to overcome objectivity. With regard to becoming subjective, the religious person ‘has the peculiar quality that the pathway comes into existence for the single individual and closes up behind them’ (CUP1, 67). By this he means that the individual’s becoming subjective in coming to faith is always individual and unique. As such, expressing it in objective terms and attempting to demonstrate or quantify it is always an error. Lessing was ‘crafty’ and as a dialectician, he was able to say something that ‘remained the same while it continually changed form’, that ‘produces and alters and produces, the same and yet not the same’ (CUP1, 68), much like repetition.

Thinking subjectively involves interest and existing: an inward reflection, which is always in the process of becoming. Expressing an inward reflection, becoming subjective, requires a different form of communication. It must be undertaken artfully by the subjective thinker, in order to set the other person free: as an indirect communication. He takes his time to express indirect communication in relation to becoming subjective, quipping that he has plenty of time since ‘what I write is not the awaited final paragraph that will complete the system’ (CUP1, 77).

Bringing up Hegel’s comments on becoming, consisting of the alternation between being and non-being, he argues that the positive thinkers (who base their thinking on sensate certainty (a delusion), historical knowledge (an approximating illusion) and the speculative result (a phantom)) are actually following a fiction, an illusion of the existing subject who is trying to abstract from existence ‘and wants to be sub specie aeterni’ (CUP1, 81). Negative thinkers have, on the other hand, a single positive thing to base their thinking on – the negative. This is the only deliverance from it: ironically trying to grasp the infinite in the form of ignorance. After all, finding a result would be an end to the existing thinker’s unique path of thinking. Further, the prevalence of both negativity and positivity in the existing thinker’s thinking does not simply go through the process of mediation but is continually striving. He ‘always keeps open the wound of negativity, which at times is a saving factor’ (if the wound were to close the thinking would become positive, which is a deception) (CUP1, 85).

Climacus moves on specifically to the notion of the leap (CUP1, 93ff), having set it within the discussion of the nature of the co-constituting positive and negative thinking of the subjective thinker, and the becoming, incomplete, and striving nature of the life of that

thinker. As Climacus points out, Lessing has said that contingent historical truths can never become a demonstration of eternal truths of reason, and that such a transition between these is a leap. Climacus argues that Christianity, in considering the individual as a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal constantly relates time and the historical to the eternal, which also requires a leap since these are paradoxical.

On Climacus's reading, Lessing opposes quantifying oneself into a qualitative decision: there cannot be a direct transition from historical reliability to a decision on an eternal happiness. This does not simply follow as if accepting one can guarantee another. The transition whereby the historical thing becomes decisive for eternal happiness is described as a shift of genus, a leap (regardless of whether the individual is contemporaneous or comes later). Lessing employs this idea 'within the accidental limitation that is characterised by an illusory distinction between contemporaneity and non-contemporaneity' (CUP1, 98). Nonetheless, as Climacus points out, any leap between an 'objective' truth and a subjective decision regarding eternal happiness would be suitably broad for one who is unable to leap at all, given that it is repellent to objective thinking. Climacus goes on to complain that earnestness cannot relate to a leap since it is broad only inwardly. To 'have been very close to making the leap is nothing whatever, precisely because the leap is the category of decision' (CUP1, 99). Regarding Jacobi, Climacus comments that he did not know that the leap must be communicated indirectly, and that it is an isolating act of the single individual to decide whether to accept in faith that which cannot be thought. Despite his good intentions, Jacobi does not know that inciting a person to a leap is a contradiction and an obstacle to it (CUP1, 100). After all, Climacus has already explained that the decision is a unique and isolating individual one. If someone is averse to the leap, constructing a springboard will not help: one cannot be guided or aided into it by another person. 'Lessing

perceives very well that the leap, as decisive, is qualitatively dialectical and permits no approximating transition' (CUP1, 103). Hannay has helpfully explained that Kierkegaard chose Lessing, rather than Hamann or Jacobi, to help make his point about the leap because the Hegelian system has been unable to reduce his work to a subsection of itself: that is, because Lessing opposed the transition between historical truths and eternal decision, and any attempts to quantify oneself into a qualitative decision.³³⁹

Commending Lessing's argument that historical facts cannot lead to spiritual truths, but less so the gap between contemporaneity and non-contemporaneity, Climacus talks about the unbridgeable gap between these two as a 'ditch' that is 'repugnant and wide', a ditch which Lessing had 'tried', without success, to leap over. In inverting Lessing, Climacus shows that salvation does depend on the truth of history, but in terms of the specific truth of the incarnation in relation to the specific individual.

Moreover, Climacus shows that Lessing's 'attempt' is nothing: one cannot try to leap, it is a decision; either leap or do not. It remains unclear whether there is any 'location' envisaged as such, since the point at which one may arrive after leaping could not possibly be thought until it is enacted in the leap, which is necessarily beyond the presented possibilities for thinking. The leap onto the individual's path toward eternal happiness contains the threat of nothingness: the lack of an objective grounding for the choice is dangerous. The ditch is repugnant but it is also compelling, holding as it does the as yet unrecognisable promise of eternal happiness. The repugnance of the ditch is used by Climacus to show 'the abhorrence

³³⁹See Alistair Hannay, 'Having Lessing on One's Side', in *Kierkegaard and Philosophy: Selected Essays* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.49-63.

one feels at the brink when one acquires enough negative dialectic to realize what is risked when the gap between finite and infinite is itself infinite.³⁴⁰ The compelling and the repulsive aspects are not resolved by one another so that the leaping itself becomes moot (as seems to be the case in Climacus's view of mediation) but they are in tension with each other; never disinterested. Although leaping requires that the individual should become nothing, projecting itself away from itself into the uncertainty of possibility it remains an isolating act, which is nonetheless the basis of genuine relationship, with God and with others. Lessing is symbolic: he stands at the edge of a precipice aware of what jumping beyond can mean. This relates to the argument that has come up throughout this thesis that, due to the ungrounding and anarchic nature of coming into relation with the Unconditioned and Infinitely Qualitatively Different, the finite subject is annihilated in in the abyss as the way in which the self comes to be transparent before Godself.

Of utmost significance to Climacus and Kierkegaard is the issue of 'freedom'. If all things are within the system, and are unfolding, then everything is already essentially concluded, completely denying the possibility of human or divine freedom in participating in the bringing about of something genuinely new. Moreover, 'by leaving no room for transcendence, for qualitative change, or for newness, it rules out the possibility of ethics, and thereby excludes the possibility of radical freedom.'³⁴¹ As mentioned above, there is a passive element in the leap. One of the questions that must therefore be addressed is whether there can be a passive element in the leap whilst it remains a decision, and from which a truly ethical life is begun.

³⁴⁰Ibid, p.223.

³⁴¹Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith*, p.62.

Climacus points out that the leap is ‘a lyrical culmination of thinking’ (qua subjective thinker). ‘In lyrically seeking to surpass itself, thinking wills to discover the paradoxical’ (CUP1, 104), and this is the last will of human thought, beyond oneself. (He proceeds to mention De Silentio’s FT, in which the leap is the decision par excellence for what is Christian, and a way out of the mediation of the system.) As we have seen, the system attempts to abstract reality into conceptual absolutes. Movement between them is inconceivable, as logic cannot explain movement. As we discussed in the first chapter, ‘In a logical system, nothing may be incorporated that has a relation to existence, that is not indifferent to existence’ (CUP1, 110). The system does not begin immediately with the immediate, but through reflection. This thought itself shows that there is no pure beginning without presuppositions which unfolds through mediation. Attempting to show that there is a presuppositionless beginning necessitates pausing reflection to get to the beginning in order to show that it is presuppositionless. To resolve this question of how to begin with no presuppositions, reflection must be stopped by something altogether different. This must be a ‘breakthrough, so that the absolute beginning itself breaks through the endlessly perpetuated reflection ... But if it is a break whereby reflection is broken off in order that the beginning can emerge, then this beginning is not absolute’ (CUP1, 113) since it comes about through a leap. We can see that Climacus critiques the idea of finding an absolute beginning from within our contextualised and temporal existence, and from our limited human perspective.

We have seen, then, that Climacus is dissatisfied with the rationalist theological endorsements of the onto-theo-logical world-view, which ‘inhibit the development of the

subjective spirit which is the essential presupposition of faith.’³⁴² Speculative and idealist metaphysics abstract existence and truth into conceptual objective absolutes, reducing existence (including God’s) to the logically thinkable. The associated undermining of genuine movement disallows newness and constrains freedom. Nothing new can begin from speculation, as speculation pertains only to that which is static and observable.

We can see that Climacus, although he does not offer an explicit criticism of ‘causality’ per se, in criticising the possibility of comprehending an absolute beginning from our perspective – both as human beings who are not granted the god’s-eye-view of reality and as existing subjectivities who are ungrounded in coming before God – implies a critique of linear and objective causality, which assumes that causes are able to be deduced in a direct manner from existence. This is a good place to move on to Haufniensis who agrees with Climacus that genuine movement comes about through the emergence of a new quality, which is also a genuine change, and shows the opening up of possibilities. This emergence of the new is a qualitative leap, rather than a quantitative accumulation of knowledge. Moreover, the ‘cause’ of the new thing’s coming about is explicable only in terms of a qualitative leap rather than linear progression.

B. The Concept of Anxiety

³⁴²Ibid, p.11.

Vigilius Haufniensis (author of CA) focuses his discussion on the nature of sin and how it came into the world. It is within this context that he develops his concept of the leap. He argues that sin is not inherited but chosen – freely and not out of necessity – by each individual as by Adam. Sinfulness does not exist prior to its actualisation (although it is always an existential possibility) but comes about with its actualisation. As such, the first sin is the sin, not predetermined by a pre-existing (quantitative) sinfulness but a new quality. ‘The new quality appears first with the leap, with the suddenness of the enigmatic’ (CA, 33). Sin and sinfulness mutually presuppose each other. Although there is quantitative sin within the human race, each individual participates in it qualitatively, via the leap in which innocence is lost. The quantity does not affect the quality, even if it suggests the circumstances for the occurrence.

Innocence does not know sin and can have nothing against which to strive, no possibility, no freedom, and nothing to actualise, which results in the indefinite and ambiguous fear of nothing(ness) – anxiety. Anxiety apprehends possibility but cannot realise it. Likewise, the expectation of salvation is nothing whilst it remains merely a possibility. Both sin and salvation must be ‘apprehended’ in order to be actualised in the qualitative leap. Anxiety is not a state of innocence or a state of sin, but an apprehension of the possibility of newness beyond what can be logically thought or perceived. This qualitative leap is a category outside of scientific understanding, or objective categories of reflection. The outcome of the leap cannot be predicted or calculated in the manner of objective thinking.

Faith anticipates this promise in every moment, exemplified in atonement: a state which occurs only through the actualising leap into faith, ‘and not in virtue of a logic of necessity and immanent reason, but in virtue of the absurd’ (CA, 29). For Haufniensis, then, the new

quality is not merely recognised in the leap, but brought into being in simultaneity with the leap. It is not a slow, quantitative process of recognition but a sudden irruption of the new.

He says,

sin comes into the world as the sudden, i.e., by a leap; but this leap also posits the quality, and since the quality is posited, the leap in that very moment is turned into the quality and is presupposed by the quality and the quality by the leap. To the understanding, this is an offense; ergo it is a myth. As a compensation, the understanding invents its own myth, which denies the leap and explains the circle as a straight line, and now everything proceeds quite naturally (CA, 34).

Haufniensis proceeds to explain that trying to think ‘the circle as a straight line’ presupposes a ‘natural’ progression toward sin and/or salvation. As we will see in the fourth chapter, this kind of onto-theo-logical, linear concept of fate is alien to Kierkegaard’s pathos-filled Christianity.

That the new quality of sin and the leap are simultaneous also leads to the argument that faith also only comes about in simultaneity with the leap: we do not somehow acquire faith and then leap into it, but the leap is the coming about of faith – they are simultaneous. This is why the common phrase associated with Kierkegaard – ‘leap of faith’ – is a misnomer. We will see in the next chapter that the offense of the Paradox and the capacity to come to the truth or the life of faith are co-given by the Teacher in the moment.

C. The Character of the Kierkegaardian Leap

This section will consider the character of the leap in terms of the active-passive tension. The leap is, for Climacus, an activity of the striving, becoming self. It is a decision and a task. However, there are important ways in which it is also passive insofar as it is not solely

an undertaking of the individual but requires an act of surrender to God in willing to leap beyond the self.

M. Jamie Ferreira discusses the passive element with reference to an ‘imaginative unity of paradox’.³⁴³ This is undertaken in an infinite ‘passion’, which has a passive character in being something beyond control – affection. It is a balancing of the infinite and the finite, united in the individual. It is not then, pure decision: the will can only take us so far. The qualitative transition into faith is rather a passively experienced ‘gestalt shift’, which manifests in the dawning of a changed worldview. Ferreira emphasises Climacus’s discussion of the passion of inwardness and possibility. The act of faith has a passionate and active character, and the ‘Climacus account of the transition to faith is best understood on the model of an imaginative surrender composed of moments or aspects of imaginative suspension and imaginative engagement.’³⁴⁴ She points out that, in PF, Climacus discusses faith as a ‘letting-go’ (PF, 43) in the leap, paralleled by the stepping-aside of the understanding. ‘The notion of surrender is particularly suggestive because even at a common-sense level it embodies an inherent tension between active and passive which is similar to ... the dual character of passion.’³⁴⁵ The maintenance of holding elements together in tension requires passion, imagination and repetition. Belief and faith require that one wills the suspension or downfall of the understanding. Yet it is not just acceptance against the understanding or denial of the understanding that present themselves as options. It is ‘active enough to continue to perceive a paradox and yet not so active as to reject it

³⁴³ See M. Jamie Ferreira, *Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith* (London: Clarendon Press, 1991).

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.142.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

automatically as an offence to its standards.’³⁴⁶ It is both a perception of paradox and its embrace, where the tensions are held in unity, occurring at every moment of passion, and not resolved.

Giles offers a critique of Ferreira, on the basis that, if the leap is not a pure decision, then the qualitative leap in which each person newly brings about their own sin ceases to be the responsibility of the sinner. This directly contradicts what Haufniensis says in CA, which is that each new sinner newly brings about their sin into the world. ‘The qualitative leap is a particular event which cannot be subsumed under any generalisations, has no causal antecedent and is thus not subject to determination.’³⁴⁷ He agrees that Climacus uses the leap when talking about inductive inference, but argues that this does not render it passive. Even in a gestalt shift, he says, there is a choice at some level of consciousness. It is the moment before choice that we feel anxiety, because the essential nothingness of the abyss opens around us.³⁴⁸ This is an important point: the abyss opens around us. We are already within the abyss. We do not leap into it but come to realise that it is where we always have been. However, there are some problems with Giles’s reading. He suggests that the individual fully wills their leap. How could this be so when, as we have seen, the leap comes about in simultaneity with the new quality? Would not a leap that is fully willed by the individual imply some prior knowledge of the state of affairs or the new quality that is to come about?

³⁴⁶Ibid, p.145.

³⁴⁷ James Giles, ‘Kierkegaard’s Leap: Anxiety and Freedom’, in James Giles ed, *Kierkegaard and Freedom* (Basingstoke: Pelgrave, 2000), p.72.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, p.88.

His comment about there being no causal antecedent is interesting. Whilst he is of course right that Kierkegaard does not consider there to be a determinative ‘cause’ for the coming into existence of this new quality, the argument that there must be both a passive and active element in the leap does not require there to be such a cause. The circular movement of apprehension, positing, and the actualising leap is not linear. The suggestion that a passive element necessitates a linear cause is mistaken. It also assumes that causes of beginnings are open to objective investigation. The leap is enigmatic and beyond the realm of objective articulations which rest on linear concepts of causality.

Furthermore, there is something important missing if the leap (into faith) remains singularly a choice willed by the leaper: grace. From a Christian position (Kierkegaard’s), in order for there to be any room for grace and for God’s co-responsive action (salvation), there must be some reciprocity between the individual and God: a dynamic play between the poles of active and passive. Would Giles exclude God from the leap altogether?

Pattison argues that for Kierkegaard, faith is participation in the divine incognito.³⁴⁹ The leap (into faith) is the moment of wakening to the true life of the self. Despite the indescribability of the leap, Kierkegaard moves toward identifying the structures of selfhood within which the leap occurs. We balance the polarities but we are called to be responsible for repeating that balance.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Crisis of Faith*, p.94.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

We can see that the movement from logic to reality does indeed involve a leap. For us, the Archimedean point of reality is unavailable, as it a presuppositionless starting point. For Kierkegaard, Christianity is ‘an existence-communication rather than a doctrine, a truth to be appropriated in existence rather than comprehended by thought ... it must be regarded as being essentially subjective rather than objective in nature.’³⁵¹ The leap is, then, a leap beyond what is thinkable, and beyond the self and the self’s limited capacity for thought. In LR, Kierkegaard also explains that the leap is a leap out of the ‘snare’ of objective and levelling reflection (onto-theo-(ego)-logy) and into the religious reflection which ‘catapults one into the embrace of the eternal’ (LR, 89). This implies a leap into a new kind of reflection or thinking, which is also a ‘leap out into the depths’ (LR, 89).

II: Heidegger’s Leap

As we have seen, Heidegger’s work is focussed on the method of ‘retrieval’, which requires a ‘step back’. The ‘step back’ is discussed in BT as a movement into the recognition of Dasein’s factual thrown-projection, or the recognition of Dasein living in the flux. The step back describes his project of a return to the basic question of being, through ‘destruction’ of the history of ontology, to retrieve the essential nature of metaphysics. In his later work, this is developed and or expressed more frequently as ‘the leap’, most extensively in his poetic work of the mid 1930s to early 1940s. These works are complex and fragmentary, often

³⁵¹ Sylvia Walsh, *Living Christianly: Kierkegaard’s Dialectic of Christian Existence* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), p.34.

explained by Heideggerians as a ‘composition’, a fugue of different voices hinting toward something not quite expressible. He also discusses it in OWA, ID and some other later essays, which we will come to discuss toward the end of this section. Before looking at the specific discussion of the leap in Heidegger we will first discuss what it is. We will see that there are several areas of resonance with Kierkegaard, including the leap as a shift in thought as well as a shift in how Dasein understands the relation between Dasein and the world. The term ‘Springen’ is ‘in German semantically and in Heidegger’s work also conceptually related to the lexical field that is captured by the English notions “primordial,” “origin,” “spring from,” “spring forth,” “passing over,” “leaping over,” “leaping after,” “leaping ahead,” “leaping into,” “arise,” and “runaway.”’³⁵²

A. The Leap in Heidegger

The leap holds a double usage and meaning in Heidegger’s work. Firstly, it the event or process by which something springs from its origin (Ur-sprung) and, secondly, it is a transition to a new condition that is incalculable or unpredictable in terms of the old.³⁵³ The first of these relates more to the emergence of a new thing: ‘Heidegger employs “leap” in the first sense mainly if the knowledge of the origin is necessary for a correct understanding of a phenomenon.’³⁵⁴ However, this does not require that the origin be singular: there may be multiple characteristics of being that are primordial (equiprimordial) for the emergence

³⁵² See Christian Schmidt, ‘Leap (Springen)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.454ff.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, p.454.

of the new thing. This is the case with the fourfold and fourfold causality. The origin of a thing, however, is not reducible its cause in the linear sense. This will be developed in the next section.

In the second sense it relates more to the second ‘inception’ or second beginning in philosophy. The first inception was the beginning of Western thinking which holds within itself the endpoint to which it leaps ahead. The first inception ‘determines all occidental orientations including those of the currently prevailing technological era. The “other inception” is a new orientation that accounts for the possibility to set up non-metaphysical fundamental orientations.’³⁵⁵ A leap, then, in the second sense is the instantiation of retrieval. In CP, he develops the leap as a shift from the first (Greek) inception of metaphysics to the second beginning. By this point the first inception has become a hindrance to the leap into the second beginning (CP, 79) and rather than the leap mostly focussing on a shift to Dasein’s self-understanding, it has taken on the meaning of a return to the as yet unthought of the first inception.³⁵⁶ It is about restoring the originality of the first inception in order to realise latent possibilities which have remained hidden. There’s still a tension here between leaping back to the first inception and the leap which actualises to the new realisation. The preparation for the leap is itself a leap which ‘must originate in and spring from the confrontation (interplay) with the first inception and its history.’³⁵⁷ As such we may argue that Heidegger’s thinking about the history of being is driven by the problem of how to make the transition to the second or other beginning.

³⁵⁵ See Christian Schmidt, ‘Inception’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.417ff.

³⁵⁶ Schmidt, ‘Leap (Springen)’, p.456.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Although Heidegger comes to acknowledge that this cannot be willed by the leaper, he does nonetheless suggest a comportment toward listening for the voice of being. One such route, we could argue, would involve a contemplation of a created thing's thingliness rather than its objectivity or the creator's intent. This focus on origins, he suggests, may instantiate a leap or a shift, and as such we return to OWA and QCT.

B. The Origin

When developing his concept of the leap, Heidegger discusses the way in which the origin of the thing both founds and preserves its order of meaning. The thing springs from a source even though the essence of the source is hidden. The 'spring' metaphor works well because the origin of a spring or stream of water is often concealed. When something is allowed to arise or brought into being through a founding leap, it retains and conceals that origin.

In his OWA, Heidegger expressly makes the connection between the leap and emergence of a thing, a creation. In discussing the nature of created things, he explains that artistic creation is not an activity of handicraft or making equipment (OWA, 122). The characteristic of an artwork is that its being created emerges from the work: the unconcealment of a being has happened. This is particularly the case when the specific circumstances of the artist remain unknown. The more the work stands on its own, as created, the more it essentially it thrusts itself into the openness of being and 'transports us into this openness and thus at the same time transports us out of the realm of the ordinary' (OWA, 123).

The created work of art, then, especially when we do not know the circumstances of its causes, can transport or shift Dasein to encounter what createdness is, but only when we submit ourselves to this displacement. This displacement or shift is a leap instantiated by the work of art qua its createdness. Again, we can see that Heidegger resists the idea that the artist's intention holds the meaning of the work of art, since its createdness is the focal point.

Heidegger explains that all creation draws up 'as of water from a spring' (OWA, 130). He complains that modern subjectivism misinterprets creation 'taking it as the sovereign subject's performance of genius' (OWA, 130). He further explains that beginning, which is unmediated and comes from out of the unmediable, is a leap which is always a head start which leaps over the middle because it holds the end latent within itself. The unmediable, he explains, is not the primitive: the primitive lacks a ground (even an abyssal one) and a 'head start' and as such is always futureless since there is no projection. A real beginning, a leap, begins in awe and discloses the abundance of the awesome. He continues to explain that every new beginning in which beings come to be established in a particular way (or sending) is a leap and a work of unconcealment. The leap, then, is intrinsically related to aletheia.

Further, Heidegger explains that a beginning, a leap, an artwork (and, we might add, a *techne*) 'thrusts' or irrupts into history, and history 'begins or starts over again' (OWA, 131). Art, he explains, is the leap that brings the truth of beings within the work. 'To originate something by a leap, to bring something into being from out of its essential source in a founding leap – this is what the word "origin" [Ursprung, literally primal leap] means' (OWA, 131). This origin both creates and preserves a people's historical existence. If art is an origin, Heidegger explains, it must also be a forward spring (OWA, 132).

So, if a leap occurs when coming to see a (created) thing as a thing rather than an object, then the possible glimpse of the fourfold that we explored in chapter one must also involve a leap into primordial beyng. Heidegger suggests that a step back from the representational is required (BL, 19) in order to come to see the thing as a thing, then the appropriating mirrorplay of the fourfold worlds as the singlefold. Moreover, ‘the inexplicability and ungroundability of the worlding of the world lies much more in the fact that things like causes and grounds remain unsuitable for the worlding of the world’ (BL, 18). A mutual appropriation rather than grounds and causes is what lights the fourfold, offering a possible future event or historic encounter of the holy which is only possible when the fourfold is ringing in the circle of mutual appropriation and mirrorplay. As such, we can see that the leap in coming to view the thing as a thing is also a leap into a potential encounter with the holy which is explicitly articulated as a move beyond or away from representational thinking and subject-object dichotomy.

D. The Fissure

The leap is ‘into’ beyng, which Heidegger describes as the fissure. As we have seen, Heidegger complains that in the history of metaphysics, ‘Being’ comes to mean that most common, emptiest, best known, and cause: the absolute. It is ‘being in service to beings even if, as cause, being would seem to be the master’ (CP, 181). As we discussed in the first chapter, Seyn is intended to be non-metaphysical: the ‘swaying of’ beyng, which, significantly, is experienced and participated in through the event (Ereignis), the essential occurrence of truth as unconcealment (aletheia). Powell argues that ‘the so-called ‘Leap’ is

a thought-act, a path of thought; what we leap into is the unique fact that we are alive, and that there is existence at work; being is not, rather, it is happening, it ‘sways.’”³⁵⁸ It leaps into a ‘beyng’ which, in swaying, has the character of being underway.

The relationship between Da-sein and beyng is one of reciprocity. Da-sein is the site of the truth of beyng, and yet Da-sein depends on beyng to become Da-sein (and come to truth). There is not a relationship of objects or object-subject between Da-sein and beyng, where one is over-against the other. It is a mutual belonging together: a leap into being appropriated by the event. It is a dynamic relationship, as expressed in his discussion of primal strife, fourfold, and the four causes. It is also a leap into an abyssal reality. Although abyssal, the nothingness at the center of the event is also the withdrawal of the beginning in which beyng turned away from beings so that beings may manifest qua Da-sein. He explains, ‘[n]othingness is neither negative nor a “goal”. Instead, it is the essential trembling of beyng itself and therefore is more than any being’ (CP, 209). It is the earth against which the thing may stand, and in relation to which the fourfold may world. The abyss which is the ‘destination’ of the leap is also the creative ground out of which new thinking as a response to renewed possibilities may emerge. Heidegger’s leap into the abyss is not a leap over the abyss: ‘The leap into the “between” is what first reaches and opens Da-sein and does not occupy a ready-made standpoint’ (CP, 14).

Heidegger explains that there is a fissure in beyng itself which, in order to experience the truth of beyng as the event, must be leaped into. ‘We place ourselves in what is thereby

³⁵⁸ Jason Powell, *Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2007), p.5.

opened up, become steadfast, and by being appropriated come to ourselves for the first time’ (CP, 182). To choose to become oneself, for Heidegger, is to choose to become the site of being which is essentially abyssal. It is to be between, to leap into the fissure. ‘The knowledge of the essence requires Da-sein and is itself the leap into Da-sein’ (CP, 226). To know oneself as groundless is to become the site of a truth which is the hidden ground of metaphysics: the abyss, the flux, the essential contingency and fullness of existence.

To leap is both possible and impossible: it is not impeded, rather, as Brogan explains, ‘the leap itself, the very character of leaping, is to be fissured and split.’³⁵⁹ It is an original juncture, both joint and parted which occurs in the juxtaposition of opposites, the primal strife or sameness of opposition, of belonging together and of alterity. This ‘strife’ constitutes Da-sein. However, the moment in which it is constituted is also the moment of the leap into the unsurpassable fissure: the heart of selfhood is abyssal, and simultaneously is constituted in departing the self.

Further, for Heidegger, the leap is not something that is ‘achieved’ by Dasein as such. The opening up of the essential occurrence of being ‘manifests that Da-sein does not accomplish anything, except for catching on to the oscillation of appropriation, i.e., entering into this oscillation and thus for the first time becoming itself’ (CP, 188-9). Becoming Dasein is becoming the abyssal site of the truth of being: thus, Powell can say, ‘Da-sein itself must

³⁵⁹ Walter A. Brogan, ‘Da-Sein and the Leap of Be-ing’, in Charles E. Scott ed, *Companion to Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p.175.

be understood as a leap, a strife, essentially an action.’³⁶⁰ This coheres with being ‘between’ and being the site of being.

In his later work *ID*, Heidegger discusses the ‘belonging together’ of thinking and being. Here he discusses the leap as entering into the domain of belonging together (*ID*, 32). In moving away from representational thinking we leap into the belonging together of truth and being. ‘This move is a leap in the sense of a spring. The spring leaps away, away from the habitual idea of man as a rational animal who in modern times has become a subject for his objects’ (*ID*, 32). It is a leap away from onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

Heidegger explains that the leap is a leap into an abyss from the perspective of onto-theology. If we spring and let go, it is into being. He describes it springing into the abruptness of an unabridged entry into that belonging which grants *Da-sein* and being toward each other. That is, it leaps into the belonging together of *Dasein* and being in the event of belonging to each other. He suggests that this leap would yield the insight that we do not yet sufficiently dwell where we already are (*ID*, 33). In this sense, then, Heidegger’s is a leap beyond convention, a radical movement that forsakes a placating and stultifying way of thinking which has ordered the world as monotonous represented objects and standing reserve.

Pattison offers an elucidating account the relationship between the leap, presence and *aletheia* in Heidegger’s work.³⁶¹ He explains that, for Heidegger, beings come to be present

³⁶⁰ Powell, *Heidegger’s Contributions*, p.15.

³⁶¹ Pattison, *The Later Heidegger*, pp.154-157.

(e.g. we recognise the mountain as a mountain) within their ‘penumbra’ of concealment. The self is not a perspicuous consciousness who relates to its ontological foundation and perceives the presence of beings in relation to that but it rather finds itself in the opening of being against which beings are illuminated. Relatedly, his view of the will is not that of the idealists for whom it is virtually limitless or sets its own limits but rather ‘Heidegger allows for a note of acceptance or passivity, such that the will can only operate within the boundaries set by ... the disposing of beings.’³⁶² He points toward Heidegger’s use of the term *Riss* (‘rift’, ‘fissure’). In seeing the mountain as a mountain it is torn from its background. Holding the mountain in one’s thought brings about the fissure between the mountain and that which falls back against the penumbra of concealment. This rift is revealed in the presencing of the thing (mountain) as over against the concealment of the penumbra. The leap here is a leap into seeing the thing as a thing, but the presencing itself remains obscured in the rift and in the earth. This element of passivity relates intrinsically to coming to see that behind the present thing there is an obscured presencing and a concealed truth.

III: Divergence and Convergence

This section will explore the areas of structural divergence and convergence between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger regarding the nature of the leap in each thinker. I will develop this claim below with reference to structural resonances between the two leaps and

³⁶² Ibid, p.154-5.

with reference to Heidegger's development of neopaganism. I will also further the arguments I have been making throughout these comparative sections regarding a shared critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logical causality.

Each thinker considers the leap as a movement in thinking beyond the confines of the onto-theo-(ego)-logical tradition. For each of them, this involves a radical shift away from previous ways of thinking that allows for the irruption of the new. Heidegger specifically articulates this as a step back and leap into a previously unthought or latent possibility for thinking that has been safeguarded (hidden) in the history of occidental thinking as a part of aletheia. His leap has a double aspect insofar as it describes both the coming about of a thing (emergence of a new quality) and the instantiation of a new way of thinking (inception).

Both thinkers present the leap as both active and passive. For Kierkegaard we saw that this was articulated as a gestalt shift which is neither an act of will nor a completely passive undertaking. Rather, since the leap is posited in order to be actualised, it oscillates between the two. For Heidegger, the leap cannot be willed but we need to comport ourselves appropriately toward the possibility of the leap. Polt argues that Heidegger's leap is not reducible to a choice, implying that Kierkegaard's is, saying:

The notion of an originary leap recalls Kierkegaard's leap of faith. Both Kierkegaard and Heidegger oppose the view that our every relation to beings can be grounded on true and certain propositions about them. For Kierkegaard, a genuine way of existing requires sheer decision ... which would be ludicrous to base on any speculative claim about what is.³⁶³

³⁶³ Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.169-170.

I would qualify this by arguing that there is also a passive element in Kierkegaard's leap, which is important in understanding how the individual comes to faith through right relationship with God and through an appropriate comportment toward faith especially in understanding the action of salvific grace. Heidegger presents the leap as in some part an act of obedience to the voice of Being which awaits our appropriate comportment and worthiness.

For both thinkers the leap is also a recognition of reality. It involves accepting and coming to see the reality of the present situation, and for each of them the present situation is marked by the outplaying of onto-theo-(ego)-logical thinking. Both of them see the leap as a leap away from the self as the subject of German idealism who creates objects in relation to themselves. For Kierkegaard this pertains to a leap into an anarchic and ungrounding relationship with the Infinite, whereas for Heidegger it involves a leap into recognising the interplay and mirroring action of the fourfold. Again, we can see moments where Heidegger reinscribes the leap in terms of a neopagan articulation.

For both, existence is radically transitory. It is characterised by groundlessness and nothingness, which is simultaneously the very fullness and vitality of life. It is being held out into the nothing that constitutes existing as between-being. Both understand an essential split in the nature of being between polarities and a certain dynamic balancing and turning takes place: a kind of relentless dancing between the poles. For Kierkegaard this is the nature of the paradox, for Heidegger it is the originary ungrounding of thinking itself, the basis of the possibility of distinction. We see a shared resonance here where Kierkegaard discusses a shift that recognises the reality of the abyss all around us and Heidegger who encourages viewing this as a rift or fissure. The abyss and the fissure are those essentially

constituting abyssal realities which must be leaped into in order to successfully project the self away from onto-theo-logical categories and participate in the free emergence of new or renewed possibilities.

Although Heidegger was not undertaking Christian theology we can see areas where his discussion of the leap is convergent with Kierkegaard's. Significantly, a further strong divergence is that Heidegger does not seem to have clear ethical commitments as such in mind when discussing the leap. Although this is not the place to discuss Heidegger's ethics or lack of in any great detail, it does seem as though his project does not address them *per se*. One could argue that there is a certain way of behaving that is implied in questioning and searching after the truth which could be profoundly ethical. Whilst this is possible it does seem as though his main point is exhibit the possibility or preparation for something new and other, rather than any ethical concern.³⁶⁴ A further point of divergence is that Kierkegaard uses the leap to explain the emergence of a new quality which had only been 'apprehended' prior to its actualisation. Heidegger's slightly different emphasis is on the emergence of an as-yet-unrealised possibility which is latent in the first beginning or remains unthought.

We have seen that there are moment of structural resonance between the two leaps, and moments where Heidegger advances his postmonotheistic spirituality with reference to the leap and its relation to the fourfold. Finally, we note the critique of linear causality in each thinker. For Kierkegaard the new quality which emerges enigmatically can not be reached

³⁶⁴ See Pattison, 'Ethics, Ontology and Religion'.

by objective thinking. It cannot be achieved through thought or known in advance. The causes of the leap cannot be interrogated in advance or scientifically quantified. We can see no absolute beginning point for the leap into faith and no destination or outcome. The critique of linear causation is clear, showing that the new quality cannot trace its cause back to what was apprehended of it before it was actualised. The causal antecedent of the emergence of the new quality which comes about through the leap is unavailable for scrutiny. Moreover, it is not fully reducible to the individual's choice to leap, so the individual is not the cause of the leap. The subject's objective inquiry into the leap had not created the new quality: it did not come about through a mediation between subject and object, nor simply through the subject's will. The leap is the coming about of something unpredictable, a reckless act of faith and grace which has nothing to do with onto-theo-(ego)-logy.

With regard to Heidegger, we can see another resonance within his critique of causality and the leap. For he shows that the leap is either an emergence of a thing from its origin or a movement toward the origin of occidental thinking in order to aid the inception of the second beginning. Neither of these coheres with a productionist metaphysics of causes and grounds. The shift that comes about through an appropriate comportment toward a created thing (artwork) shows that causes are a pale onto-theo-logical echo of origins. Origins speak of being appropriated, of creative emergence and of the possibility of a glimpse of another truth of being. This is a direct affront to linear concepts of causality and to the idea that the subject's intention in creating holds significance over the things thinging and standing out against the earth.

Chapter 4 - The Moment and the Event

Kierkegaard's 'category' of the moment is a well-researched and widely discussed aspect of his work. The moment (*Øjeblikke/Augenblick*) is an area where the earlier Heidegger rather uncharacteristically states a debt to Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's discussion of the moment permeates throughout the Kierkegaardian authorship, with the most development coming in PF and CA, but with a different and more mystical element in the 18UD. Heidegger's later discussion of the event (*Ereignis*) is particularly focussed in his collections translated into English as CP and TE, as well as a number of later essays.

Kierkegaard presents the *Øieblik* as the space in which possibilities are actualised, in which the leap happens, and in which truth is revealed. It is the place in which everything comes freely into being: the transition from possible to actual. It is also the point of intersection between the temporal and the eternal: the wherein of the encounter with the Paradox. Kierkegaard criticises the understanding of time as a series of 'nows'. Rather, his understanding of time is much more kairological and existential. And, as Pattison argues, his demonstration of the relationship between time and eternity is not as straightforward as Heidegger's critique suggests.³⁶⁵ His moment is pregnant with possibility and able, in an instant, to suddenly reveal the truth. This gives his work urgency. For one's life, world, and destiny can suddenly and enigmatically alter to the completely unexpected through a mystical encounter with the divine. As we have seen in previous chapters, the leap from

³⁶⁵ George Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

nonbeing to being or from unbelief to faith – and its repetition in the committed life of faith – all hangs on the actualising moment.

Heidegger's later work on the event (Ereignis) is, arguably, a development of his earlier work on the moment (Augenblick). Heidegger discusses the event of appropriation in terms of coming to experience a mutual transition between Dasein and beyng which may imply a new beginning for thinking but also a new way of living in light of the experience of being appropriated or being the site of the clearing of beyng. The event indicates Da-sein coming to participate in the self-unconcealment of truth. I argue that, although Kierkegaard's 'moment' relates the temporal and the eternal and Heidegger retains an extreme scepticism toward eternity, Heidegger's understanding of what Kierkegaard means by eternity is not adequate. Moreover, there are a number of areas of structural resonance between the two thinkers which will be explored. I will argue that the destabilising of the concept of eternity is a challenge to onto-theo-(ego)-logy that the thinkers share. Moreover, I will show that it also takes aim at linear cause-and-effect thinking.

I: The Kierkegaardian 'Moment of Vision'

As we have seen, in terms of the critique of onto-theo-logy, repetition describes an alternative way of thinking and living which moves beyond the onto-theo-logical and the leap describes finding the alternative. The instantaneous point of contact between the temporal and the eternal, the moment, allows a mutual encounter to occur between what is infinitely qualitatively different. This section will explore the discussion of the moment throughout CA and PF, with reference to the upbuilding discourses insofar as these express

a mystical encounter in the moment. The discussion will identify themes relating to the moment and situate them in a detailed exposition, arguing that Kierkegaard's concept of the moment is part of his critique of speculation.

This also points to the critique of onto-theo-logy, insofar as he avoids equating God with the necessary being of onto-theo-logical causality. For as we discussed in chapter two, God is that all things are possible, and as we will see throughout this chapter, encountering God in the moment qua the Eternal presents an emphasis on the future as possibility, which in turn opens up the past.

A. Kierkegaard's Øieblik

The Danish Øieblikket is usually translated 'the moment' throughout the authorship, but translated literally it means 'the blink of an eye', a glimpse, a sudden and fleeting vision. Kierkegaard uses it to 'elevate an everyday phrase to the richly nuanced concept'³⁶⁶ that it acquires through his work. We do also find the Latinate 'moment' throughout, which more closely matches the meaning of 'moment' in English. This is also related to the word 'momentum', the movement of a vanishing 'now' or 'nu.' 'Nu' derives from the Latin 'Novus': something new or novel. It is not simply the present but the time in which something comes to be, irrupts, or emerges: a moment of coming about. Another expression of this kind of moment of newness is 'Kairos', the Greek word for 'moment' which is not

³⁶⁶ Koral Ward, *Augenblick: The Concept of the 'decisive Moment' in 19th and 20th Century Western Philosophy*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.3.

quite synonymous with the chronological.³⁶⁷ There is some confusion introduced by the conflation of the Latinate ‘Moment’ and Kierkegaard’s Øieblik in translation.³⁶⁸

When he employs Øieblik, Kierkegaard extends the temporal meanings of ‘moment’. For, it illustrates the happening of an event which holds the possibility of deep existential change in one’s life and points to the transitory nature of life itself. But, perhaps more significantly than this, he uses it to explain the existential relevance of eternity. Rather than allowing eternity to be an interesting category of objective reflection lacking personal meaning or importance, Kierkegaard uses ‘the moment’ to show how the Eternal (as a synonym for God) can imbue an individual life with eternal meaning through the Christ event. Moreover, the Christ event is a communication of God’s eternal love in time.³⁶⁹ As we will see, the relationship between the moment and ‘eternity’ is more complex than a simple summary suggests, since Kierkegaard’s critique of speculation also incorporates a critique of a simple understanding of eternity. For Kierkegaard uses his reflections on the moment to ‘attack on what he regarded as the illusory nature of Hegelianism’s attempt to see human life sub specie aeternitatis.’³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷Ibid, p.8.

³⁶⁸Ibid.

³⁶⁹ See Pattison, *Philosophy of Kierkegaard*, p.171.

³⁷⁰ Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time*, p.110.

B. Philosophical Fragments

Climacus famously begins PF with the simple question, ‘Can the truth be learned?’ He starts with the Greek Socratic response to this question: the response from anamnesis that ‘all learning and seeking are but recollecting’ (PF, 9). Continuing his own thoughtful reflection on coming to truth (revelation), Climacus argues that the anamnestic Socratic response (that knowledge is remembered) gives the moment no importance beyond the historical or poetical. He explains that for anamnesis

The temporal point of departure is a nothing, because in the same moment I discover that I have known the truth from eternity without knowing it, in the same instant that moment is hidden in the eternal, assimilated into it in such a way that I ... still cannot find it even if I were to look for it, because there is no Here and no There, but only an *ubique et nasquam* [everywhere and nowhere] (PF, 13)

Climacus does not hold with recollection in this way. It loses the significance of the moment as an existential category and renders times meaningless. The moment must have a decisive and unforgettable significance, ‘for the eternal, previously non-existent, came into existence in that moment’ (PF, 13). He clarifies the nature of the ontological significance of the transition of coming into existence. ‘If, in coming into existence, a plan is changed, then it is not this plan that comes into existence; but if it comes into existence unchanged, what then is the change of coming into existence?’ (PF, 73).) It is the transition from possibility to actuality: a change from non-being to being, which happens in the moment.

Climacus argues that that which is necessary cannot come to be, for the necessary is. ‘All coming into existence occurs in freedom, not by way of necessity. Nothing comes into existence by way of a ground, but everything by way of a cause’ (PF, 75). He argues that every cause is free in both beginning and end: there is no necessity in causation, but rather that which was caused was freely caused rather than necessitated. ‘As soon as any coming

into existence is definitively reflected upon, even an inference from natural law is not evidence of the necessity of any coming into existence' (PF, 75). For all his talk of causes here, Climacus does not suggest that we can 'grasp' the transition into being or come to an objective understanding of it by reflecting on causality.

Individuals become a unity of temporal and eternal when they are granted the truth through the moment. The condition for acquiring the truth was given and was lost; not taken away but lost through the fault of the individual's sin. The learner who is in untruth may appear free, but 'he is indeed unfree and bound and excluded, because to be free from truth is indeed to be excluded, and to be excluded by oneself is indeed to be bound' (PF, 15.) The moment allows the possibility of freedom through the realisation of truth which comes about only with the realisation of untruth.

Climacus offers a description of the Øieblik in terms of existential encounter and personal significance:

A moment such as this is unique. To be sure, it is short and temporal, as the moment is; it is passing, as the moment is, past, as the moment is in the next moment, and yet it is decisive, and yet it is filled with the eternal. A moment such as this must have a special name. Let us call it: the fullness of time (PF, 18)

He describes the turning around of a person's life as a conversion or a break (PF, 19) with the prior state and as such it is the equivalent of birth, since it is so significant that the prior state cannot even be considered living or being (PF, 21). This kind of bringing into the truth is not merely a Socratic reciprocity between the learner and the teacher, but an act of procreative begetting. It is also an act of love, always unequal and a descent of the Lover to the beloved. Climacus inverts Aristotle's 'unmoved, He moves all', placing this classically

onto-theo-logical comment regarding causality into the context of emotive, passionate love: a movement of spirit and heart, not the nonmovement of speculative philosophy (PF, 24).

Ward argues that the ‘fullness of time’ in this context refers to a conjunction between the promise of the incarnation and the subjective experience of its fulfilment in conversion.³⁷¹ She argues that it is a third factor which incorporates the moment of incarnation and the moment of individual conversion but does not annul those meanings. Whilst interesting in terms of echoing the synthesis between the paradox and understanding in faith (discussed below), this reading is problematic. It does not adequately take into account Climacus’ argument that the encounter with the eternal in the temporal is that which brings the individual into existence and into truth. For, if the moment of incarnation is a promise of the moment of conversion, it is presupposed that the individual has some awareness of the promise of the incarnation prior to being brought into the truth through conversion. This is in contradiction to both Climacus and Haufniensis. Moreover, it fails to accommodate Climacus’ argument that truth and the capacity for its realisation are co-given. For Climacus, as for Haufniensis, the capacity to come to truth is not within the individual. This would resolve faith to Socratic anamnesis and takes no account of the qualitative nature of conversion. The promise of eternity is given with conversion, not prior to it. It is a promise of eternal happiness, which inspires action and striving. A promise of salvation means nothing to one who does not know that they are in danger. Ward further problematically suggests that ‘conversion’ for Kierkegaard is ‘a return to, or renewed commitment to, the faith into which one is born, brought about by an intense experience of a new awareness.’³⁷²

³⁷¹ Ward, *Augenblick*, p.15.

³⁷²Ibid, p.29.

This inserts a false redefinition of conversion which is not substantiated by the authorship: the authorship precisely takes aim at the false “Christianity” of a given social context. It also suggests that a person is a nominal Christian before the encounter with the divine in the moment of vision.

Regarding the incarnation and the paradox, Climacus describes the Paradox (qua incarnation) as he discusses the search for truth, explaining that a revelation of the eternal in the temporal moment is paradoxical; the existence of the Godman (eternal-temporal) is the Absolute Paradox. Climacus expresses it as the passion of thought. For to think the paradox is ‘to will to discover something that thought itself cannot think’ (PF, 37). Climacus explains that the Absolute Paradox – the existence of the Godman – cannot be reasoned or demonstrated. It is not within the power of the human intellect to demonstrate the truth. Rather, it must be willing to surrender:

[W]hen I hold tight to a demonstration of the paradox, the existence of God does not emerge. But let go, and it is still there. ... Yet this letting go, even that is surely something; it is, after all, *meine Zuthat* [my contribution]. Does it not have to be taken into account, this diminutive moment, however brief it is – it does not have to be long, because it is a leap. However diminutive this moment, even if it is this very instant, this very instant must be taken into account (PF, 43)

Whilst avoiding repeating material from chapter three, we should note that it is the moment in which the leap occurs (and into which one leaps) that opens up the future: that the future is the incognito of the eternal.

When the understanding collides with the paradox, the capacity to accept the limits of the understanding and be awestruck is given. Faith synthesises the zenith of our capacity to understand and its willing self-downfall with the Paradox. ‘The understanding and the paradox happily encounter each other in the moment, when the understanding steps aside

and the paradox gives itself, and the third something, the something in which this occurs ... we shall call ... faith' (PF, 59). This happy encounter in the moment gives space for the surrender to occur, and the God-relationship to begin. An unhappy encounter leaves the individual without genuine relationship to God, temporal existence, themselves and each other: in despair. Moreover, a moment in which there is not an equal meeting of God and the individual, through love, is a moment that is swallowed up by eternity (PF, 24-25). The moment is, then, the site of mystical encounter.

The offense that comes about when understanding and paradox meet belongs to the paradox, not the understanding, as the understanding does not cause the paradox. The paradox is given in the moment of vision. 'All offense is a misunderstanding of the moment – as it is offense at the paradox and the paradox in turn is the moment' (PF, 51). So, the awareness of sin or being in untruth, the recognition of the Absolute Paradox and the offense to reason, and the faith to believe and commit to a Christian life are all co-given in the moment of vision. We have seen that, for Climacus, the moment is described as a site of divine encounter, in which the understanding is suspended by and for the paradox, which gifts faith and brings about a consciousness of being in untruth (sin) along with the promise of eternal happiness (redemption) and instantiates the loving God-relationship.

Climacus offers several criticisms of the philosophical-speculative understanding of eternity, emphasising the opening of possibilities which is offered when one truly comes into existence through the momentary encounter with divinity. There is also a double quality to the moment, which brings the learner both the realisation of being in untruth and also brings them into truth; the Paradox (which is also described as the moment) brings offense to the understanding and faith. Note that it is when the learner is given the knowledge that

they are in untruth or brought into an appreciation of the offense to the understanding that they are gifted with the truth and with the capacity for faith. This again ties in with the authorship's emphasis on being refracted out of the plastic, static representation that is onto-theo-logical metaphysics.

Before moving on to discuss CA's moment, it is worth noting an idiosyncratic element in PF. At several points throughout PF, at the end of a given chapter, Climacus posits an imaginary critic. Given the context of his discussion as the question of whether or not the truth may be learned, regarding seeking and being granted truth, and his final sentence 'How shall we ever manage to begin?' which pokes fun at causality and speculation, we should not be surprised that he does not claim to originate his own project. He rather accepts that he is not the originator of his project. It is, after all, largely a discussion of Christian doctrine. He argues that, since this cannot be said to originate with any person and is ubiquitous, it is difficult to attribute it to a human inventor. It is worth quoting him at length here, as he exhibits not only Kierkegaard's take on his whole authorship as well as on the moment of encountering the truth (moment of inspiration, perhaps) but also with the problems of authorship which will be developed in the next chapter:

I am just as close to having invented it as any other person. Therefore you are not angry with me because I falsely attribute to myself something that belongs to another human being, but you are angry with me because I falsely attribute to myself something that belongs to no human being... Is it not curious that something like this exists, about which everyone who knows it also knows that he has not invented it, and that this 'Go to the next house' does not halt and cannot be halted...? Yet this oddity enthralls me exceedingly, for it tests the correctness of the hypothesis and demonstrates it. It would indeed be unreasonable to require a person to find out all by himself that he does not exist. But this transition is precisely the transition of the rebirth from not existing [at være til] to existing. Whether he understands it later certainly makes no difference, for simply because someone knows how to use gunpowder, knows how to analyse it into its components, does not mean that he invented it (PF, 22)

We can see that Climacus does not believe that coming into truth is a matter of expressing it appropriately afterward, and nor is it a matter of invention or philosophical investigation. When a thinker claims to own a portion of the truth, that claim in itself is deeply problematic since the truth is only given in this divine encounter, and the immediacy of it is lost in communication. He reiterates (PF, 35-6) that he has not plagiarised a person but has perhaps ‘robbed the deity’ of the ‘wondrous’ poem.

And since we both are now standing before this wonder, whose solemn silence cannot be disturbed by human wrangling about what is mine and what is yours, whose awe-inspiring words infinitely drown out human quarrelling about mine and thine, forgive me my curious mistaken notion of having composed it myself (PF, 36)

Climacus’s refusal to claim to originate his work is multifaceted, since he is a pseudonym and is at least in part writing in jest here. Climacus also goes on to allude to his “famous editor” and to other pseudonyms at several points in CUP1. However, we will see in the next chapter that this is not all there is to his interjections regarding plagiarism and origination, for this comes up throughout his discussion of Governance, who he says guides him but does not give him a revelation of the kind that Adler claims.³⁷³ I argue that his method plays into his critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy and his argument that we are not coerced by necessary being or set on a preordained path by fate. This is consonant with his expression of the moment as the irruption of the new and his emphasis on freedom. These comments nonetheless imply his understanding of the moment of inspiration as an encounter with an ineffable truth. We will return to these considerations in the next chapter.

³⁷³ See the discussion of Adler in chapters one and five.

C. Concept of Anxiety

The discussion of Haufniensis' CA is brief here, since it is discussed in the previous two chapters. I focus on chapter three as the most relevant material is found there. As we know, the context of the discussion is original sin, but Haufniensis discusses the moment as the actualising moment of sin: that which was apprehended but not known prior to its actualisation.

Haufniensis explains that time is not merely a series of 'nows'. Time expressed in this way is existentially unrecognisable. For such a succession nullifies past and future in privileging the present. He argues that the separation of time into present, past and future is incorrect if this is considered implicit in time itself, 'because the distinction appears only through the relation of time to eternity and through the reflection of eternity in time' (CA, 85). It is only seen as past, present and future if it can be viewed from the dividing point of the present: but every moment passes and none is a present, 'and accordingly there is in time neither present, nor past, nor future' (CA, 85). When it is argued that this division (between past and future, between moments) can be maintained, the moment that is expressed as 'present' in this way is only a representation: this prolonged present. When halted, the infinite succession of time is an infinitely contentless present. The present becomes nothing when it is represented. In lived experience there is no 'present'. It is an abstraction and it fails to communicate or explain the moment. It is in representational thinking that 'the eternal ... is the present' (CA, 86).

Having gone through what the moment is not – 'present' – he explains that the moment is time and eternity touching each other. The moment of vision is swift and yet commensurate

with the eternal (CA, 88). The future is the incognito of the eternal and, with regard to repetition, gives the striving for eternal happiness its significance. As such, Haufniensis argues, the Greek understanding of eternity as past lacks this. 'In a deeper sense, the Greeks did not have the concept of the eternal; so neither did they have a concept of the future' (CA, 89). Defining the concepts of past, future and eternal defines the meaning of the moment. When there is no moment, the eternal appears as the past; when it is posited as a mere division, then the future is the eternal; when it is posited so is the eternal, and also the future which reappears as the past. Arguably, this backward-looking concept of eternity relates to the preoccupation with linear causes in classic onto-theology.

'The pivotal concept in Christianity, that which makes all things new, is the fullness of time, but the fullness of time is the moment as the eternal and yet this eternal is also the future and the past' (CA, 90). Haufniensis argues that Christianity needs an appropriate concept of the moment in order to maintain the concepts of conversion, atonement, redemption, judgement and resurrection. The moment has an abyssal quality; it is that into which one leaps without the certainty of foreknowledge. Beyond the capacity of the human intellect, it appears as nothing for we know nothing of it. But, following the leap, it is the meeting place with the infinitely contentful. This abyssal quality and the relation between time and eternity we will now discuss with reference to secondary literature.

D. The Moment as Abyss and the Relation to Eternity

In describing the moment as the vanishing beginning in which we are gifted the affront of the Paradox and faith, we are presented with a moment that requires a letting-go of onto-

theo-logical conceptualisations of time and eternity. To cling to onto-theo-logical conceptions of time cuts us off from the possibility of an appropriate God-relationship. Pattison suggests that, for Kierkegaard, ‘to have time is to lose eternity. To gain eternity, we must be ready to sacrifice time and all that belongs to time.’³⁷⁴ In terms of the critique of speculative onto-theo-logy, this means surrendering both the common chronological concept of time and the understanding of eternity as everlasting time or a constant present.

Kierkegaard breaks down the common conception of time in his discussion of the moment. In CA, Kierkegaard discusses a self who has not yet identified their sinfulness. This discussion, leading to the ‘dimension of selfhood that lies below the threshold of articulate self-consciousness’ points toward the ‘dimension [in which] the interplay of time and eternity first makes itself manifest.’³⁷⁵ The experience of the eternal in time is expressed as the moment of vision, which is not really an atom of time but of eternity.

Kierkegaard’s articulation of the moment as a touching of the eternal and time shows the moment itself as the productive centre from which ‘time is set free to become time and eternity to be eternity.’³⁷⁶ In order to inflect time with a meaning other than that of a vanishing now in relation to constant presence of eternity, Kierkegaard rearticulates the future qua possibility as the incognito of the eternal. When we think this through, we see that the eternal becomes possibility in relation to a God who is that all things are possible.

³⁷⁴ George Pattison, *Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses: Philosophy, theology, literature*, Routledge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Philosophy (Routledge: London, 2002), p.130.

³⁷⁵ Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time*, p.247.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.251.

So, the moment of vision, and the future as possibility, may become a means of rearticulating the eternal.³⁷⁷

How does this tie in with the Paradox? We have seen that there is a duality in Kierkegaard's 'moment', since it implies both the moment of the Incarnation of the God-Man and the moment in which the self is gifted the truth and the faith to believe it. Both implications are examples of eternity acting within time through the moment of vision. 'Although it is objectively actual only once in history, the possibility of the condition, having thus been thus actualized, remains a subjective possibility for all historically existing human beings as such.'³⁷⁸ The person who gives the condition and the capacity of faith is also the one who saves, the Paradox. This means that it is the Paradox who provides the possibility for coming to a proper relation to time and eternity in terms of moving beyond onto-theo-logy.

We should also note that, for Kierkegaard, if it is possible to speak of God's 'timelessness' it would not be specifically in discussion of divine attributes but in terms of a vision of time which implies 'the possibility of a kind of love and faithfulness that does not pass with the passing of time, the kind of possibility that might therefore be believed on in terms of divine promise.'³⁷⁹ For, since God is unconditioned, we cannot objectively speak of God's attributes without adding conditions.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p.273.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p.400.

³⁷⁹ Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time*, p.284.

So, if Kierkegaard's moment involves a radical rearticulation of time which also implies a rearticulation of eternity qua possibility, then the movement into being – the movement of coming into being in the moment – which has been described above regarding conversion, is in another sense a movement into nonbeing. Kangas offers a reading of the 'instant' in Kierkegaard as ungrounding.³⁸⁰ Kangas shows that, in refusing 'positing' as an absolute beginning, Kierkegaard indicates an infinite beginning that is not representable, an *afgrund* or abyssal beginning.

Kangas explains that 'the instant is the gift or birth of presence'³⁸¹ and that Kierkegaard radically rearticulates the distinction between temporal instant which allows presence and presence itself. Kierkegaard achieves this by bringing attention to the instant of beginning which is itself always prior or anterior to presence as its condition. The beginning falls away prior to presence and can only be spoken of in terms of rupture. This turns Kierkegaard's thinking on the moment 'toward a ground that will always already have withdrawn.'³⁸² As such, the subject cannot come to see themselves as their own ground. Kangas argues that the self/subject lets go of the idea of being an onto-theo-ego-logical Subject and goes toward a dissolving self who slips into non-being.³⁸³

So, Kierkegaard's 'moment' is a re-articulation of time (which may offer a way of coming toward the question of eternity beyond the onto-theo-logical) which describes a double movement of coming into being (in terms of coming into relationship with God) and also

³⁸⁰ Kangas, *Kierkegaard's Instant*.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.4.

³⁸² *Ibid*, p.7.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p.11.

into nonbeing (in slipping into becoming nothing before God). It is also the place in which the possibility for salvation is presented to the believer and the capacity for faith is given. It articulates the Paradox as the possibility for salvation, which is inherently beyond the capacity of an existing human being to represent since we may not achieve an objective viewpoint of reality. We have seen that Kierkegaard's moment offers a critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logical conceptions of eternity and of time as a series of 'nows', and he uses it to critique the false aspect of eternity with which the subject of German idealism has been imbued. The present itself is a representation of time from this false perspective of the world as if seen from above or outside of time.

II: Heidegger and Ereignis

Heidegger's comment on Kierkegaard's moment (quoted in the introduction) clearly shows that he ascertained an important, penetrating thinking-through of the 'existentiell phenomenon of the moment of vision' in Kierkegaard's work. He then claims that Kierkegaard has not been 'correspondingly successful in interpreting it existentially', because Kierkegaard 'clings to the ordinary conception of time and defines the 'moment of vision' with the help of 'now' and 'eternity'' (BT 388n). As we saw in the introduction, there is a general agreement amongst scholars that Heidegger nonetheless resonates with 'key elements of Kierkegaard's understanding of time.'³⁸⁴ Heidegger considers Kierkegaard's relating the moment to the eternal to be a sign that Kierkegaard's conception

³⁸⁴ George Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time*, p.110.

of time is onto-theo-logical. Despite his critique of Kierkegaard's understanding of time and eternity, I will argue that Heidegger's later work retains elements of Kierkegaard's moment regarding his development of Ereignis. This borrows and develops an argument that Pattison makes across several works, namely that Heidegger significantly misreads Kierkegaard on this point.³⁸⁵ Moreover, on the one hand (as we have already discussed above) Kierkegaard's understanding and articulation of eternity is not onto-theo-logical as per Heidegger's estimation and that on the other hand a certain reading of the later Heidegger allows for a rearticulation of eternity that is not completely at odds with Christian belief.

This section will look briefly at the 'moment' in BT and move on to discuss Ereignis. Daniella Vallega-Neu offers a distinction whereby the 'moment' becomes a part of what Heidegger discusses regarding Ereignis: the moment retains an historical meaning whereas Ereignis takes on a different emphasis. I will discuss what Heidegger means when he says that the event is 'abyssal', and how he characterises Da-sein's engagement with Ereignis with reference to obedience, transition and cor-respondence – with reference to his poetic writings of the 1930's and early 1940's. I will also consider his later development of Ereignis. I will discuss whether or not we can see implications for a rearticulation of eternity from this reading and the implications that my reading of Ereignis has with regard to my prior discussion of Kierkegaard's 'moment'.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p.138.

A. Heidegger's Augenblick

‘Augenblick’ has the same meaning as ‘Øjeblik’: that is, the glance of an eye, or Paul’s ‘the twinkling of an eye.’ Although we do not need to dwell very much on BT here, we should make a few notes regarding the ‘moment of vision’ found there. ‘A moment or “moment of vision” is an experience of insight into one’s situation, an insight that breaks through the fallen temporality of everydayness and confronts one with one’s own, authentic, and historical temporality.’³⁸⁶ Polt explains that a precursor for the moment of vision in Greek thought is Kairos. ‘His concept of the moment can be seen as combining the classical and Christian senses of Kairos: the moment is a turning point that has practical consequences in a situation and is also a transformative experience.’³⁸⁷ This experience is a ‘moment of transformation’ from ‘falling’ to ‘resoluteness’ which ‘crucially affects all Dasein's future acts as well as its interpretation of its past.’³⁸⁸ Polt also explains that the moment of vision is a more profound and ec-static experience of time, which holds a sudden and transformative element like a lightning bolt, which he describes as a favoured image for later Heidegger.³⁸⁹

It would lack nuance to claim that ‘event’ replaces ‘the moment’. Rather, it incorporates and develops the earlier articulation. At several points, the later Heidegger links the meaning of Er-eignen and Er-äugen. For whatever reason, Stambaugh’s translation edits out an interesting sentence from Heidegger’s ID (ID, 36). The original has this sentence: ‘Er-eignen

³⁸⁶ Richard Polt, ‘Moment (*Augenblick*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.497.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world*, p.321-2.

³⁸⁹ Polt, ‘Moment’, p.498.

heist ursprünglich: er-äugen, d.h. er-blicken, im Blicken zu sich rufen, an-eignen [Er-eignen originally means: to ‘eye’, e.g. to see, to call to oneself in looking, to appropriate]’ (ID, 101). Although Heidegger does not bear out the link between the event and Augenblick explicitly in ID, this nonetheless implies a connection between Augenblick and Ereignis.³⁹⁰ Heidegger also indicates that the event is a catching-sight-of in TE, where he delineates Er-eigen as Eräugen as ‘to catch the eye, come into view, seize the gaze, to appear to manifest itself’ (TE, 156).

B. Heidegger’s Ereignis

‘Ereignis’ commonly means ‘event’. Heidegger breaks it down into the constituent parts ‘er’ (to begin or achieve) and ‘eignis’ (own or proper), but this also ties in with BT’s Eigentlich (authentic). It comes to mean ‘an appropriating event’, although Wrathall suggests ‘adaptation’.³⁹¹ It has also been interpreted as ‘en-ownment’. Daniela Vallega-Neu points out that he first used it in 1919, and as such it is not exclusive to the later Heidegger.³⁹²

By the 1930s, Heidegger has developed this. Ereignis involves thinking from out of the open horizon of beyng – from within the abyss, the fissure, the between. Da-sein needs to be within the fissure of beyng to think from out of it, from the shifted compartment enacted in

³⁹⁰ Ibid, p.150.

³⁹¹ Mark Wrathall, ‘Adaptation (*Ereignis*)’, in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.19-30.

³⁹² Daniela Vallega-Neu, ‘*Ereignis*: the event of appropriation’, in Bret W. David ed., *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2010), p.140-141.

the leap. From out of the experience of being thrown into the fissure ‘we experience a disclosing event in which we also first find our own being’³⁹³ and as such experience our being as en-owned or appropriated. It is for this reason that Heidegger clarifies that the disclosure (aletheia) of being needs Da-sein, and that Da-sein is appropriated by this disclosure. This appropriation requires a response from the one who will first through this response find themselves coming to themselves.

Vallega-Neu identifies three ways of articulating Ereignis.³⁹⁴ She argues that, firstly, Ereignis names an historical occurrence that is the Augenblick, the moment that may mark the other beginning of history and in which beings are no longer abandoned by being, and being holds sway as appropriating event. Da-sein needs to comport toward this. Secondly, Ereignis is a possibility that calls out to a few poets and thinkers: Heidegger himself attempts to speak out of this preliminary presentiment of Ereignis. These few avoid living in the oblivion of being (Ge-Stell) but experience the withdrawal of being as such. Thirdly, Ereignis holds sway as Ent-eignis: as the withdrawal of being and abandonment of beings in Ge-Stell. Ent-eignis is ex-proprietation but it is also a form of appropriation, and it holds the possibility of turning to appropriation (the saving power).

In CP, the abandonment of beings needs to be experienced as a plight, which happens through ex-proprietation. As such, the truth of being has this abyssal character which we must preserve as the possibility of Ereignis. Ent-eignis, or ex-proprietation, although negatively construed in terms of refusal and continued concealment, also belongs to er-eignis insofar

³⁹³ Ibid, p.143.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, p.145-6.

as lethe belongs to aletheia, Beyng would not (could not) give itself completely to humanity even in a new beginning.

Vallega-Neu identifies a difficulty: ‘we cannot wilfully subject ourselves to the experience of being as appropriating event.’³⁹⁵ She rearticulates this in another essay: ‘Whoever believes in the power and necessity of human agency will have the most difficulty with this aspect of Heidegger’s thinking.’³⁹⁶ The problematic area that Vallega-Neu highlights is really an intentional subversion of the active-passive dichotomy. Heidegger deliberately moves away from Da-sein as willing themselves toward authenticity in standing out from the They (BT) toward a Da-sein who comes to recognise their own appropriation within the event. He recognises that it is a painful process to be obedient to the ‘experience of the abyssal ground’ (TE, 38). CP is an attempt to prepare the site of beyng – Da-sein – that would allow beyng to hold sway as Ereignis (CP, 299).

Vallega-Neu explains that ‘the moment’ would ground another inception of history ‘of which one can only have a presentiment.’³⁹⁷ This does not place Ereignis solely in a distant future: Dasein’s presentiment arises out of beyng’s appropriation of humanity through Ereignis. How so? Through ex-propriation, which we may come to experience through Ge-Stell if we recognise the plight of the abandonment of beyng. This involves attending to the hidden dimension of beyng – the lethe of aletheia. In tending to lethe, we may find ourselves

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Daniella Vallega-Neu, ‘Heidegger’s Poietic Writings: From *Contributions to Philosophy* to *Das Ereignis*’, in Jeffery Powell ed, *Heidegger and Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), p.126.

³⁹⁷ Vallega-Neu, ‘*Ereignis*’, p.145.

appropriated by the event and assigned to the abyssal opening of being in which being's self-concealment may be recognised as concealed.

In CP, it 'is within this encounter, that is, in the in-between of being-there opened up in the dividing encounter between gods and humans, that the strife of world and earth and the relation to beings are situated.'³⁹⁸ Heidegger discusses 'the site of the moment, the strife of world and earth. The strife; the sheltering of the truth of the event' (CP, 292). Once being and Da-sein are mutually appropriated, the strife of world and earth is disclosed.³⁹⁹ It is within this mutually appropriating event that the truth of being in being-there (Da-sein) allows the transformation of being and beings in simultaneity.

Ereignis 'begins' with aletheia; it begins with the essential occurrence of aletheia. Heidegger explains that 'Aletheia is the disconcealment of concealment and occurs intrinsically in the abyssal and the enigmatic' (TE, 5⁴⁰⁰). It is more inceptual than physis. Its presencing as poiesis hides in favour of presence. The event reveals the play of aletheia. When presencing hides in favour of what becomes present, we are tempted to metaphysical misconceptions: 'presence must be experienced aletheiologically and not metaphysically in terms of the constant and the objectively present' (TE, 28). When those things which are physically present are the focus of our relation with being we miss the occurring, presencing, the abyssal beginning which remains concealed. 'Being is the concealment and the origin' (TE, 38).

³⁹⁸ Ibid, p.147.

³⁹⁹ We saw this with regard to Heidegger's discussion of the thingliness of the work of art in chapter one.

⁴⁰⁰ Heidegger's 'The Event' is a set of ponderings that were not intended for publication, published posthumously (2009). They are characterised by inceptual thinking,

C. Da-sein and Ereignis

It is only within the event that the uniqueness of the character of human being is experienced. Heidegger explains that Da-seyn,⁴⁰¹ is the essential occurrence of the clearing (as the site of beyng), and that Da-seyn is the appropriation of the event. So, coming to the event is a recognition of our character (TE, 153-4). The event is ‘the intrusion of beyng as the appropriation of the there’, which ‘brings Da-sein to itself’ and thus to sheltering (CP, 323). ‘If, through the event, Da-sein as the open center of the selfhood that grounds truth is first thrown to itself and becomes a self, then Dasein again, as the concealed possibility of the grounding essential occurrence of beyng, must belong to the event’ (CP, 323). What this means is that Dasein is only Dasein when it may come to recognise its being the site of beyng, which is inherently reciprocal and relational, but that the nature of that reciprocal relation remains concealed.

So, how does Dasein come to experience the event, the beginning of which is obscured, the meaning of which is hidden? There are a number of different aspects which may be brought together to form a response to this. Firstly, Heidegger identifies ‘the inceptual disposition of compassion [Rührung]’ although he quickly states that this is not a ‘movement of the soul’ but ‘a touching [Rühren] appropriation’ (TE, 154). It is not a ‘causal movement’ but ‘a touch from the domain of the inceptual’ which shows a deep, intense affecting which provokes

⁴⁰¹ He uses this term inconsistently, so I have not tried to adopt it elsewhere.

care. 'In inceptual thinking, beginning is not 'undertaken' it is being taken hold of by something, moved and affected' (TE, 154-5). Secondly, he describes Dasein in terms of 'steadfastness' (TE, 165-7). This chimes with our previous discussion regarding repetition. Thirdly, he discusses 'obedience' with regard to thinking inceptually (TE, 191). Fourthly, we may consider 'cor-responsence' as the mode of response to the call of beyng in the event.

'Correspondence is the later Heidegger's term for the distinctive relation between the human being and being – a relation in which the human being responds to the "appeal" (Zuspruch) or "voice" (Stimme) of being as emergent manifestation.'⁴⁰² Although Heidegger only fully discusses it in a few later essays⁴⁰³, Capobianco explains that he uses it as a way of describing how we 'cor-respond' (Ent-sprechung) to beyng, and as such is a fundamental feature of our essencing.⁴⁰⁴ Heidegger uses it to encourage attentive listening for the voice of beyng.

Although Capobianco does not make this connection, we discussed in the first chapter that Heidegger gives a reading of the four causes as cor-responsive in aiding the coming into presence of the thing. Cor-responsence is a mutual response to the call of beyng which aids the poietic presencing of the thing in the event of its coming to presence. In cor-responding to the coming about, the four causes simultaneously aid the thing's emergence into presence. Moreover, it is the event of coming into presence that allows Da-sein to catch a glimpse of the hiding of presencing behind the present thing. This would mean that even the production

⁴⁰² Richard Capobianco, 'Correspondence (*Entsprechung*)', in *Heidegger Lexicon*, p.193.

⁴⁰³ See Ibid. These essays are not treated in depth in this thesis due to constraints of the thesis.

⁴⁰⁴ See Ibid.

and challenging-forth of the technological age may allude to the presencing which remains in abeyance. Cor-responsence is another way in which Heidegger expresses mutual appropriation in the event. Heidegger discusses the call of being as a silent call which transposes the respondent, through leaping, into being a site for being as an appropriating event. Heidegger also discusses the reciprocity of call and response as an oscillation. But, both call and response in simultaneity are required and recognised in the event.

D. Later Developments of Ereignis

When we get to Heidegger's essay *The Thing* and other later works we find a shift from the thing's manifest strife of earth and world, to the fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and gods, with the world worlding through the fourfold's mutually appropriative mirror-play. The coming to presence of the thing is Ereignis. Ereignis occurs in the appropriating mirror-play between the four.⁴⁰⁵ The four achieve mutual appropriation as the event in which the world worlds. Moreover, a glimpse (or *Blitzen*) of the holy in Heidegger's sense of the fourfold playing in reciprocity (fourfolding, perhaps) may only happen in and through *Er-ignis*. As such, it has developed into a more clearly neopagan articulation.

It is also in these late works that Heidegger emphasises the more positive aspects of expropriation. Whereas it has previously implied privation, he comes to stress 'letting-go' in terms of each mutually expropriating the other to their own being within the mutual

⁴⁰⁵ Vallega-Neu, '*Ereignis*', p.148-9.

appropriation. Heidegger also discusses Ge-Stell as a preliminary Ereignis, in the sense of the essence of technology. In ID, he discusses the belonging together of humanity and being. Stressing that the onto-theo-logical character of discussions of this have failed to address the issue sufficiently, he states ‘we stubbornly misunderstand this prevailing belonging together of man and Being as long as we represent everything only in categories and mediations’ (ID, 32).

Heidegger explains that the leap into Ereignis must involve a recognition of the mutual appropriation from whence thinking is experienced (ID, 33). Whilst Ge-Stell places humanity and Being in a relation of challenge it nonetheless ‘drives home with a startling force that and how man is delivered over to the ownership of Being and Being is appropriate to the essence of man’ (ID, 36). What we experience in Ge-Stell’s mutual challenging is a prelude to the event of appropriation. The event of appropriation would possibly overcome the mere dominance of Ge-Stell and ‘turn it into a more original appropriating’ (ID, 37). Nonetheless, the event of appropriation does not focus on the far off and general, but describes that which is closest in terms of bringing us to where we already are, through allowing both humanity and Being to ‘achieve their active nature by losing those qualities with which metaphysics has endowed them’ (ID, 37). From the perspective of metaphysics, the event is abyssal (ID, 39).

Heidegger progresses in his later essay TB to explain that the event is also the co-comittant sending (Geschick) of time and being.⁴⁰⁶ It is the event of their coming into appropriation

⁴⁰⁶ See 5.II.

with one another. Appropriating is hidden in the 'es gibt' of time and of being: 'we can neither say that it is nor that it is given. This would be like deriving the stream from its source which can and cannot be named.'⁴⁰⁷ Nonetheless we note that, in German, to say 'es gibt' means 'there is', but it also means 'it gives.' For Heidegger, the 'it' that gives is not one. The giving is the appropriating event, which is not set in motion by an 'it'. The giving is what gives.

Nonetheless, we note that Heidegger's discussion of the nature of being and the obscured origin and abyssal ground of the event indicates that the event remains enigmatic, unpredictable and unscientific. Although it 'must often speak in the mode of denial', it attends to a transition which he describes as being 'twisting free' of Ge-Stell which is also 'the overcoming of metaphysics' (TE, 40). That is, moving away from metaphysics is being twisting free of the dominance of technology. The twisting, though, is 'wound into a wreath' in the event (TE, 119), in which the fourfold rings.

E. Ereignis and the Poet

The later Heidegger, having recognised the difficulty of expressing the event in philosophical terms moves to explicate a description of certain poets as a speaking from an experience of the withdrawal of being rather than consignment to the oblivion of being. That is, they come to experience the withdrawal of being as a plight. Particularly in relation to

⁴⁰⁷ Joan Stambaugh, 'Translators Introduction' to TB, p.xi.

Hölderlin. Heidegger articulates the poet as both given in the event and as one who hears the voice of being and communicates it to us as given. Pattison explains that, for Heidegger, 'the moment of poetic utterance' is an 'an invent of understanding/interpretation' in Heidegger's sense of Ereignis.⁴⁰⁸ The event of hearing the voice of being and corresponding to it gives birth to the poet and the event of appropriation. It is not the call that 'causes' the poem, nor the response, but the corresponding itself. The abyss of 'the world's night' is experienced by poets who 'specifically speak the essence of poetry in their poems' (WP, 203). The essence of poetry is poiesis. Heidegger directs us to 'think soberly in what is said in his poetry, to experience what is unsaid' (WP, 204). (This 'unsaid' is a clear correlation with the unthought.) The event of poetic cor-response is presented as a risk. This is also the site of retrieval, in which the poet 'retrieves' from a source: 'to retrieve from a source means to take in what rises up and to bring away what has been received' (WP, 224). This risking involves 'defencelessness', a recognition of the defencelessness to which Ge-Stell predisposes us but to which the majority of those caught within it are unaware.

Heidegger's discussions of Hölderlin's poetry are mostly written around the same time (mid 1930's to early 1940's) as his own poetic writings. He describes the event as something which, in beginning may lead us to an origin (HH, 4), and explains poetising as the event of being as such (HH, 233). He also discusses that awaiting the event does not involve boredom or diversion, 'but a struggle for the duration and fullness of time that is preserved in awaiting' (HH, 53).

⁴⁰⁸ Pattison, 'Heidegger's Hölderlin and Kierkegaard's Christ', p.397.

Pattison points to this poetic event in discussing the relation between Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin and Kierkegaard's discussion of Christ. The 'eigen' ('one's own') of Er-eignis is here is the poet's 'taking-to-themself' a meaning which is not a heroic assertion of an 'authentic' (Eigentlich) self but a meaning that is given in a trans-subjective manner as an event in which the poet receives and takes to themselves a call to song by which he is called to be a poet in and by the event of his calling.⁴⁰⁹ The event of the poetic production is not, then, just the moment of finding the right words but also the moment that the poet accepts their vocation. The event of inspiration is both 'in time' and yet simultaneously extends meaning beyond that particular moment to encompass the vocation.⁴¹⁰ The word that translates 'vocation' (Bestimmung) also implies 'determination' in the sense of having been determined or called.⁴¹¹

F. Ereignis and Eternity?

So, may Heidegger be read as providing an articulation of the event that may help to rearticulate the more problematic elements of an onto-theo-logical 'eternity'? Pattison has taken a clue from Heidegger here, arguing that for Heidegger how we think of eternity is in part dependent on how we think of time and so 'we cannot therefore rule out in advance the possibility that a rethinking of time might provide the occasion also to rethink what we mean

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ See 'Translators' Foreword', to HH, p.xv.

by eternity, and to do so in such a way that the distortions consequent upon the older metaphysical views are avoided.’⁴¹² Whilst remembering that, for Heidegger it is axiomatic that ‘beneath, behind, or beyond the repetition of the moment of vision there is no eternal being or power, only the transcendence of temporality itself,’⁴¹³ Pattison suggests that if we accept time as the horizon of being we may not exclude modified rethinking of the eternal.⁴¹⁴ Pattison points to Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin, in particular his thoughts about the ‘long time’, which is long as a time of preparation for the event of beyng’s unconcealment, a time which has not yet come (HH, 56).⁴¹⁵

Elsewhere, Pattison suggests that Heidegger’s lectures on Hölderlin articulate that ‘sempiternitas’ (everlasting time) or ‘nunc stans’ (eternal present) relate to a ‘time’ based on a ‘vanishing now’.⁴¹⁶ However, Pattison suggests that the idea of the earth correlates with death and ‘calls us home so that we can become who we are.’⁴¹⁷ We may tentatively suggest, then, within the mutual mirror-play of the fourfold, Ereignis expresses a coming about and passing away which in its own sense abides. Particularly, the sheltering of beyng in aletheia protects and hides possibilities for future disclosures of truth whilst also allowing a few people to correspond to a call from the earth. It is the poetic word that calls us to abide in the event. Although this is not ‘eternity’ in the sense of everlasting time or eternal presence, we may nonetheless see within this reading of Ereignis the possibility of something that is more than the simple flux and which shows an interconnectedness of past, present and future which, in Heidegger’s particular articulation of the event, abides.

⁴¹² Pattison, *Eternal God/Saving Time*, p.110.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p.139.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, p.140.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, p.322.

⁴¹⁶ Pattison, *Heidegger on Death*, p.146.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p.151.

III: Divergence and Convergence

We may now see that there are a number of elements within a nuanced reading of Kierkegaard's moment which show that Heidegger's assessment (in BT) of Kierkegaard's moment was a misreading. His assessment of Kierkegaard's articulation of the moment as being tied up with a problematic onto-theo-logical concept of eternity due to his articulation of the moment as a series of 'nows' fails to come to terms with what Kierkegaard was expressing. Kierkegaard distances himself from the reading of time as vanishing presents grounded by everlasting time or eternal presence. For Kierkegaard, there is no present or eternity from the perspective of the existing individual. The present is a representation of time from a false abstracted perspective. The moment, on the other hand, is the possibility of the Eternal (about whom we know nothing objective) coming into time.

Kierkegaard's expression of the moment implies a moment which is an atom of the eternal, but that is also related to the eternal as to the future: as possibility, or even as nonbeing as Kangas reads it. The moment is one of significant existential transition (whether this is read as a movement into being through rebirth or nonbeing in terms of becoming nothing before God). And it is both of these, simultaneously. For whilst the moment is a movement toward a right relationship with God which reflexively returns significance to the existential it is also a radically ungrounding and anarchic movement which shatters subjectivity. The shattered subject becomes transparent before an invisible God.

Furthermore, Kierkegaard's moment implies a beginning which is obscured and unavailable for objective investigation and representation. He critiques the Aristotelian backwards-looking concept of eternity, which again relates to the eternal prime mover and a critique of linear causality. However, it also implies an historical occurrence (the Incarnation) which is the basis for further actualising moments. This moment of emergence of the new is nonetheless characterised by the Absolute Paradox (God-Man), and retains the abyssal element from the perspective of human reason. In coming to the moment of vision, the individual is gifted both the offense of the paradox and the capacity for faith. The individual must will themselves to let go, to surrender to the call in order to come to truth. In this moment, the truth first manifests: it is not a truth that could be ascertained through some other means, without the moment of vision. So, the Teacher brings the condition for learning the truth and the capacity to respond to it. Kierkegaard expresses the moment as the abyssal intersection in which time and eternity 'touch', as the dimension in which (as Pattison expressed it above) the interplay of time and eternity are first manifest.

There is not a sense in Kierkegaard's 'moment' of an eternal ground to or cause of temporality, but rather Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelian idealism attacks this framework, denying the possibility of coming to a perspective of eternity or having any kind of objective knowledge that such a thing is possible. Rather than being caught up in a model of time which bases itself on a series of nows caused by an eternal prime mover, or a concept of time caught up in onto-theo-(ego)-logical Hegelian philosophy, Kierkegaard offers an understanding of time which requires us to surrender both common 'time' and 'eternity'. He argues that the moment of vision is an unrepresentable, abyssal beginning, a beginning which Kangas articulated as an instant of rupture which is prior to presence, a ground which has always already been withdrawn.

Despite Heidegger's dismissal of Kierkegaard's concept of time which Heidegger claimed was caught up in Hegelian metaphysics, his own descriptions and elucidations of Ereignis nonetheless resonate strongly with Kierkegaard's moment, as we shall now see. Heidegger's Er-eignis presents a disclosing event in which Da-sein first comes to themselves, through a mutually appropriating cor-responding movement that marks the beginning of a vocation for Da-sein, and also implies the other beginning which may come to 'save' human essence. He will later explain this salvation in terms of coming to be freed from the onto-theo-logical thinking inherent in Ge-Stell and from Bestand. This resonates with theological accounts of being called, and in particular with Kierkegaard's explanation of the moment as letting-go into the abyss as the encounter with the call of faith. This shows another area of resonance: each of them argues that from the perspective of the onto-theo-(ego)-logical, the moment and Ereignis appear as abyssal, but once the leap into those abyssal time-spaces has happened, they are key to recognising our own nature and to the coming about of creative emergence.

If we agree with Vallega-Neu, Heidegger expresses Ereignis as an historical occurrence (Augenblick) which may indicate the first beginning, but this historical occurrence (as the beginning of the first philosophy) is not a beginning that is available for empirical or objective investigation. Moreover, due to the inherently shrouded nature of lethe and beyng in their withdrawal, it is a beginning which would always have been inexplicable. So, it indicates an historic and yet inexplicable event which brings Da-sein to their position as cor-respondent to the call of beyng.

Seidel has helpfully identified that Heidegger's discussion of the encounter between Da-sein and Seyn in the moment as en-owning (taking to one's own, qua vocation) relates to Kierkegaard's moment. However, he argues that Heidegger 'cannot view the Paradox as the infinite in the finite or the eternal in time, as does Kierkegaard, since in his philosophy he has already demythologized the notions of infinity and eternity.'⁴¹⁸ Seidel progresses to argue that Heidegger's critique of causality which is bound up with his discussion of Ereignis renders his account of Ereignis significantly different to that of Kierkegaard's moment due to Kierkegaard's discussion of eternity. However, as we saw above, Kierkegaard's moment is also groundless insofar as it encounters that which ungrounds. Kierkegaard's 'eternity' does not suffer from the same articulations as that of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, for he explains that eternity is not objectively available to the human perspective and that we are not able to view time as a *nunc sans*. Kierkegaard's moment, then, is not a reflection of causality: despite Climacus's talk of 'causes' rather than 'grounds' bringing the new into being, what is articulated is that it is not the necessary that 'brings about' but a decision, that is, a new irruption. Kierkegaard's moment is not inflected as a happening of causality in an onto-theo-(ego)-logical sense. Although Kierkegaard retains his belief in the Christian God, he does not express the moment of something coming into being as the result of a sequence of ontic events or as caused by an objectively explicable Prime Mover. Kierkegaard's moment has only abyssal and shrouded beginnings, wherein the 'touching' between participants brings the truth into being. So, when we investigate Kierkegaard's

⁴¹⁸George J. Seidel, 'Musing with Kierkegaard: Heidegger's *Besinnung*', *Continental Philosophy Review* 34: 2001, p.411. Seidel offers a reading of Seyn as a type of Christology for Heidegger the theo-logian. This is a problematic reading of Heidegger's neo-paganism.

moment, we find that his discussion of presence is, despite Heidegger's comments, 'aletheiological'.

As we saw in the introduction, Carlisle suggested that comparisons between Kierkegaard's God and Heidegger's beyng are inherently problematic due in part to the 'turning away' of beyng from beings. But, what does this 'turning away' mean? Arguably, the turning away that Seyn and Da-sein make in relation to each other provides the possibility of Da-sein as being the site of Beyng. If beyng did not turn away, could Da-sein be Dasein? Would not beyng's full disclosure obliterate what is it to be Da-sein? Even if the event of the world worlding were to come about, there would always be that which withdraws and shelters in the earth. Moreover, although God does not turn away in the subjective sense, from the perspective of onto-theo-(ego)-logy, the lack of an objectively available God in Kierkegaard's thinking might imply a God who has absconded.

Further resonances are found when we consider the nature of the moment and event in terms of the will. For neither the individual nor Dasein is able to choose to come into the moment of vision or Ereignis. It is something to await and hope for, but it is not something that the individual may will. It is a response to a call, but not a causal movement: a mutual touching in the moment of vision or a hint from inception in Ereignis. This is not an action undertaken by Dasein or by the individual, but rather has the character of an affect. It is also a relationship characterised by obedience for both thinkers.

The most significant difference between the two is not so much that Kierkegaard reiterates a problematic temporal/eternal duality whereas Heidegger breaks free of onto-theo-logy in his discussion of event and moves toward an aletheiological discussion of presence. Nor

does not lie in Heidegger trying to use Kierkegaard's concept after picking the theology out of it. Rather, the most significant difference lies in how each of them characterises the nature of the abyssal quality of the moment. Where Kierkegaard discusses the moment as a 'touching' the 'eternal' (where the eternal is rethought as the being-possible of the future and thus perhaps also the being-possible of God), Heidegger's abyss 'touches' or affects *Da-sein* from within the mutual mirror-play of the fourfold – which is also not yet actual. How much of a difference is this? Perhaps the real difference lies in the personal nature of the relationship for Kierkegaard, within which God both ungrounds and draws near. We have seen that for Heidegger there is an element of compassion, but – he insists – this is not a movement of sadness in the soul but a touching, affecting, nearness. May this be read as an intimate element, even if it is not 'personal' as such? And how can we have a personal relationship with a God who ungrounds and shatters the existing subject through the very nature of the infinite qualitative distance? These questions will be taken up in the next chapter.

We saw that Kierkegaard's moment is explicitly Christian, albeit not onto-theo-(ego)-logical. Heidegger's *Ereignis* was explicitly discussed as the meeting point of the fourfold in which a new thing may emerge or through which a new thinking may be instantiated in their reciprocal action. It is clear with respect to the structure of each thinker's discussion of the moment or *Ereignis* that there are areas of strong resonance. We can also see once again that the structure of Heidegger's *Ereignis* resonates with Kierkegaard's moment of vision, but the content of his *Ereignis* is neopagan or post-monotheistic.

We also considered in our discussion of Heidegger's *Ereignis* the way in which it, as a beginning, may lead us to an origin. This chimes to some extent with Kangas's reflections

Chapter 4: The Moment and the Event

on Kierkegaard's instant as an always already withdrawn ground prior to the moment. A further interesting point to bear in mind as we progress to the next chapter is the way in which he considered the poet accepting and responding to a vocation as not caused but called.

Chapter 5 - Governance and The Sending of Being

This chapter explores the way in which each thinker articulates the ‘guide’ to accompany the individual or Dasein’s leap out of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. Guide is not quite the right word, for Kierkegaard’s Governance is a personal guide, but is completely objectively obscured as the origin or beginning of the life of the Christian, and Heidegger’s beyng is not rightly thought of as an agent per se, since it transcends all notions of agency and passivity. Nonetheless, we will see that each of these is presented as a kind of guide by each thinker. These guides have very different characteristics. Kierkegaard speaks almost affectionately of the work of governance in his life whereas Heidegger’s beyng does not properly cohere with those sorts of terms. Nonetheless, this chapter will show the way in which each thinker envisages the relationship with these guides.

We will first explore in great depth the way in which Kierkegaard presents Governance in his thought and how and in what way this is a variation of Providence. We will discuss Kierkegaard’s rebuke of predestination and fate and move on to discuss the characteristics of his guide. This chapter will develop in detail the way in which Kierkegaard’s method exhibits his understanding of his relationship to Governance and his critique of linear causality insofar as this is shown in his method. For he deliberately obscures the objective ‘cause’ of the text in surrendering his authorial ‘I’, just as he has arguably been calling for the surrender of the onto-theo-(ego)-logical ‘I’ throughout this thesis. Just as Heidegger’s method of repetition/retrieval was presented as an enactment of his critique of the onto-theological and of linear causality, so too will Kierkegaard’s method be shown as a critique of that situation.

Moving on from that, we will discuss Heidegger's concept of the sending of being (Geschick) which also considers the nature of fate and predestination. We will look at his epochal understanding of the sendings of being and the dominant paradigms of occidental thinking, and how each epoch is given its own paradigm. We will consider the way in which being sends or gifts time and being to Dasein, how this giving has been overlooked in epochal erasure and the interrelation of technology as Ge-Stell and Geschick.

I: Kierkegaard and Governance (Styrelsen)

Kierkegaard's concept of governance has been a sparsely researched area in Kierkegaard studies. It is often seemingly assumed that it is a straightforward adoption of the theological concept of providence, an unfashionable and 'premodern concept of divine action in history'⁴¹⁹ which has lost its significance due to the Enlightenment 'disenchantment of the world.'⁴²⁰ Historically, 'providence' has functioned to render 'the transcendent God into a more personal, intentional being, compassionately engaged in the fates of persons and nations; a providential God is ... a caring Provider, one who is near and active in the historical sphere.'⁴²¹ Not only has humanity been decentred vis-à-vis divine cosmic purposes, but also the scientific worldview has replaced teleology with material and

⁴¹⁹ Timothy Dalrymple, 'Modern Governance: Why Kierkegaard's *Styrelse* Is More Compelling Than You Think', in Robert L. Perkins ed, *The Point of View*, International Kierkegaard Commentary 22 (London: Mercer University Press, 2010), p.157.

⁴²⁰ Markus Kleinert, 'Kierkegaard and Nietzsche', in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, John Lippitt and George Pattison ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.403.

⁴²¹ Dalrymple, 'Modern Governance', p.158.

mathematical laws, and cultural shifts have ‘preferred to remove God from the uncouth intimacy of boudoirs and battlefields.’⁴²²

The idea of providence was replaced, arguably, with the myth of Progress⁴²³: the Hegelian argument that rationality will culminate in the mediation of present conflicts into a higher unity, in which the world is presented as gradually unfolding toward a final cohesive Idea and a world-historical goal. As we have seen, Kierkegaard argues that this is an abstract speculation which has little existential significance and which not only does not aid but actively obstructs the individual from coming to a genuine self-understanding in relationship with God. As we saw in the first chapter, Kierkegaard sees Christendom as a false presentation of the world, mired in despair, and he is critical of stasis-posing-as-safety since it prevents human flourishing both a symptom and a cause of Hegelianism. As we will see in what follows, he considered the Calvinist doctrine of predestination a symptom of this social disease.

This first section of the present chapter will show, in part, that Kierkegaard’s concept of governance expresses his critique of modernity: ‘modernity’s conceit is that the powers of human will and rationality are sufficient to bring forth what must be from what has been, and what must be known from what has been known.’⁴²⁴ Timothy Dalrymple, whose work has been instrumental for developing my arguments on Styrelsen, argues that Kierkegaard’s

⁴²² Ibid, p.160.

⁴²³ ‘Progress’ is a much-debated term in contemporary Hegelian scholarship, with many pointing out that the concepts and relation of concepts of ‘thesis’, ‘antithesis’, ‘synthesis’ (which lead to ‘Progress’) are absent from Hegel and are added on by later scholars.

⁴²⁴ Dalrymple, ‘Modern Governance’, p.169.

aim with the concept of governance is to show modernity that its self-confidence in a ‘philosophically supervised linear progress of society and culture’ and its reliance on human will and rationality to bring about progress is symptomatic of ‘a hubristic overestimation of human powers, an arrogance and egotism that dissipate the desire and obscure the need for the grace of the self-giving God.’⁴²⁵ This overestimation of human powers is also evident in Kierkegaard’s discussion of revelation in the modern context and the way in which it is misunderstood. I will bring this into his discussion of governance, authorship and revelation.

We will see that, in presenting governance as an updated and contextually relevant version of providence, Kierkegaard engages indirect communication – which is a necessity given the problematic nature of Christendom. I will show that he uses authorial self-effacement and a kenotic sense of creation/authorship to exhibit the radically personal and everyday nature of governance’s engagement with the individual with reference to Merold Westphal’s discussion of the topic.⁴²⁶ I will also explain and partially adopt the sophisticated and helpful model of Kierkegaard’s method provided by Joseph Westfall, whose explanation of the layers of the authorship, specifically the ‘author of the authors’, is paramount to my understanding of Kierkegaard’s presentation of governance’s characteristics through his method.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Merold Westphal, ‘Kierkegaard and the Anxiety of Influence’, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1) (1994): 5-22.

⁴²⁷ See Joseph Westfall, ‘Who is the author of *The Point of View*? Issues of authorship in the posthumous Kierkegaard’, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38 (6) (2012): 569-589.

This chapter will argue that Kierkegaard offers a perspective on Styrelsen that may overcome many problems with providence and also critiques predestination. His presentation of the characteristics of governance aids in the rupturing of the metaphysical and onto-theo-logical concept of God-as-First-Cause, who predestines and controls the world from without. For, as we will see, Kierkegaard is highly critical of the kind of Christianity which believes conversion is predestined. He shows that this involves a need for action, choice, risk, or being open – even vulnerable – on part of the individual. But, more than this, he presents governance as a co-traveller, a friend, a beloved, a parent, a teacher, a guide; this presentation is based on a reciprocal relationship wherein there is struggle, which fluctuates in different contexts, and which needs to be re-engaged, as does any close relationship with an Other.

Whilst some have assumed that Styrelsen (governance) is a synonym of Forsyn (providence) and that both are interchangeable designations for God, I agree with and argue alongside Dalrymple that there are important distinctive elements to the uniquely Kierkegaardian governance. So, whilst I do not deny that Styrelsen is linked to and a part of Forsyn, I nonetheless argue that there are important differences in emphasis and presentation of Styrelsen. Dalrymple also pursues the argument that the concept is present and ‘substantially the same’ in the PV and the rest of the authorship,⁴²⁸ in tacit agreement with Kierkegaard that the religious element has been consistently present throughout.

⁴²⁸ Dalrymple, ‘Modern Governance’, p.174.

This half of the present chapter looks primarily to PV, although it focusses on the (Other) co-author – governance, to which Kierkegaard attributes his work and inspiration explicitly in PV. It looks specifically to what Kierkegaard really means by ‘governance’. Beginning with a discussion of the terms translated as ‘governance’ and ‘providence’, I will move on to look briefly at Kierkegaard’s discussion of fate and predestination. Providing a full account of the historic development of the doctrine of providence or the centuries of argument and apologetics on the relationship between divine foreknowledge, grace and human freedom is not necessary here. However, I will draw on aspects of these well-known debates in order to develop the discussion where needed.

In establishing the distinct nature of Kierkegaard’s governance, I isolate and assess several aspects. These include: that it is highly specific and personal; that it is non-coercive; that it is present throughout an individual’s suffering; that it works through context; what it means for revelation and who receives revelations in the problematic context of modernity; the nature of authority; the wider significance in terms of world history; and what it can mean for governance to be co-author. The first three are borrowed from Dalrymple, and I include an assessment of his elucidating contribution. Finally, I try to establish how Kierkegaard demonstrates his unique position on governance in his writing structure, and that this reflects his wider concern to critique speculative onto-theo-(ego)-logy and linear causality.

A. Kierkegaard’s use of ‘Styrelse ~ n’

Firstly, a brief look at the meaning of the Danish words is instructive, as they reveal an interesting tension between guidance, control, and looking ahead or fore-sight (perhaps also

foreknowledge). The noun Styrelsen is derived from Styre, Old Norse Stýri, Middle-Low German Sture, Old high German Stiura, Old English Steor, which becomes ‘steer’ in modern English. ‘A primary meaning of the root is to steer a ship or vehicle. Other meanings reflect control, ruling over, management, and administration.’⁴²⁹ It can also mean to turn, direct, guide or pilot. Styrelse is a kind of ‘steering’, needed when something is underway, moving or flowing. Styrelse could be interpreted as an active controlling (for example, steering a ship) or as a more indirect attempt to hint toward a desired outcome (for example, to steer a conversation toward a particular topic). Whether steering is necessary in order to safeguard (a ship needs direction, or guiding around some obstacle, to avoid being shipwrecked or lost), or to achieve a desired outcome, the steering is required rather than simply enforced. ‘Steering’ can also mean to follow a course already set out.

Forsyn (providence) comes from Old Norse Forsjá, whose meaning has been influenced by the Latin providentia, holding the meaning of caring for or providing for something. Forsyn also carries the meaning of ‘looking ahead’ and implies fore-sight, and perhaps fore-knowledge. Similarly, the Latin prefix pro- (‘ahead’ or ‘forward’) and -videntia (from videre, ‘to see’) implies this looking and seeing ahead. When we consider that in order to steer, one needs to be able to see ahead (For-syn) we can see that Styrelsen and Forsyn are, at least, complementary. Several scholars have stated that these terms are synonymous for Kierkegaard.⁴³⁰ However, there are patterns to the usage of each term which at least imply

⁴²⁹ Jack Mulder, Jr, ‘Governance/Providence’, in *Kierkegaard’s Concepts: Envy to Incognito*, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, Volume 15, Tome III, edited by Jon Stewart, William McDonald, and Steven M. Emmanuel (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), p.113.

⁴³⁰ See, for example, Heiko Schulz, ‘Kierkegaard on Providence and Foreknowledge: A Critical Account’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 41 (2) (1999): p.117, FN 8.

a shift in preference through time. Alternatively, as Dalrymple argues, the concept itself may remain largely consistent throughout and it is simply that he writes more about it in his later work.

To corroborate the argument that these two terms are not just synonyms, and in terms of a factual statistical analysis, Alistair McKinnon's research⁴³¹ identifies a number of significant trends in the frequency of word usage. He looks at the movement in the authorship from Kierkegaard's use of the word *Skjebne* (fate) and how it relates to his use of *Forsyn* and *Styrelse*.⁴³² He presents an informative correlation between the frequencies of these terms, showing that Kierkegaard came to favour *Styrelse* as his main 'combatant' for *Skjebne*. This more or less holds true across the published *Samlede Verke* (SV) and the *Papirer*.⁴³³ McKinnon suggests that explanations for the statistically significant changes in the texts' uses of words may be down to 'author intention, changing emphases, hidden struggles, etc.'⁴³⁴ Kierkegaard's 'early life seems almost dominated by a sense of Fate.'⁴³⁵

Despite conceptual links and complementary word meanings, there is an authorial differentiation between the context and use of 'providence' and 'governance', so we can see that conflating them may be erroneous. In order to answer the question as to why

⁴³¹Alistair McKinnon, 'Dating Kierkegaard's Battles with Fate', in *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser*, 52 (3) (1986): pp.1-31.

⁴³² Ibid, p.11.

⁴³³ The main findings in greater detail are as follows: *Skjebne* decreased in late summer 1844, whilst *Forsyn* and *Styrelse* increase; there was an 87% increase in '*Styrelse*' occurrences after February – November 1846; a decrease of *Skjebne* from March 1846, with an increase in *Forsyn*, and *Styrelse* staying stable; a third shift is identified in November 1846, with a decrease in both *Skjebne* and *Forsyn* and an increase in *Styrelse*; a fourth is identified in May 1848, with a continued decrease in *Skjebne*, *Forsyn* staying stable and *Styrelse* increasing.

⁴³⁴ McKinnon, 'Dating Kierkegaard's Battles with Fate', p.7.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, p.24.

Kierkegaard differentiates and how he does so, I turn first to discuss the work on predestination and fate. The millennia-long discussion of divine foreknowledge and human freedom leads inexorably to these. Kierkegaard strongly reacts against predestination yet, nonetheless, had a pervading sense of his own fate (for example, he seemed certain that he would die before he reached thirty-three as a punitive act against his father's cursing God as a child (JP, 5430).

B. Predestination and Fate

Kierkegaard's thought on predestination presents a balanced consideration of (in particular) Schleiermacher's work on the matter yet remains highly critical.⁴³⁶ The most ambiguous of his comments on predestination are in reference to the moment of confrontation with the offer of grace, at which point one may refuse or accept. He questions whether that moment may be considered predestined. Kierkegaard argues that 'the whole doctrine is only an attempt to make "fear and trembling", which has its truth in the individual life, into a scientific-dogmatic notion' (KJN 2, 19). This exemplifies his sustained critique of the tendency in speculative theology and philosophy to remove significance from existential engagement with God. He later complains that Schleiermacher considers theology only in the sphere of Being and ignores the significance of striving and becoming (KJN 7, 55-6).

⁴³⁶ Kierkegaard studied Schleiermacher's dogmatics with Martensen, who was one of his mentors, from 1834.

Finding a hint of predestination in Romans 8.28ff, Kierkegaard explains that here the idea of a preconceived plan may apply to the whole of Christianity in terms of ‘its manifestation in its wholeness’ which was ‘determined from eternity’ (JP, 227). Whilst we may believe that the overall outcome of world history is predetermined, the individual must still be confronted by Christianity in order to be called. The individual may experience being called, but this call is within the existential rather than a call ‘from eternity’ in the sense of predestination. Moreover, he complains, if the elect are called then those who are not called are predestined negatively. He points out that this contradicts predestination for predestination is predicated on the call. Those who are not called could not be predestined, precisely because predestination (*quos vocavit*) requires the call (JP, 3547).

As we have seen, Vigilius Haufniensis addresses the predestination of sin and original sin (CA). He is critical of original sin for it makes sin a reality in advance of its emergence, for – we remember from previous chapters – anxiety is a presentiment not over the actuality of sin, but over its possibility. Haufniensis explains that an individual’s increasing reflectiveness is a predisposition. Nonetheless, sin is only sin once it is actualised: ‘when by the qualitative leap he becomes guilty, it is the presupposition by which he goes beyond himself, because sin predisposes itself, obviously not before it is posited (which is predestination), but in that it is posited’ (CA 62). We are not predestined to sin, even if we are predisposed toward it. It remains our responsibility.

Conversely, the pseudonym Johannes Climacus complains that some Christians consider themselves to have been granted preferential treatment ‘and if a Christian selfishly perceives it as this, we have the desperate arrogation of predestination’ (CUP1 582). Regarding the salvific action of grace, Kierkegaard is critical of predestination as it implies that humanity

deserves or earns salvation. For example, if Paul were predestined to become Paul because God knew of his goodness and the outcome of his activity, it is implied that Paul deserved God's grace in light of his later actions (JP, 3546). In turn, this indicates that Paul's future works earned his conversion in advance, before the possibility could be actualised. This would render the moment of actualisation superfluous – and Christianity, sin and salvation merely theoretical. Kierkegaard retains the Lutheran emphasis on grace not works – he is not Pelagian thinker, although this is a common misinterpretation. His focus on freedom and choice is part and parcel of his critique of pretentious and perfunctory Christianity which assumes that all in Christendom are Christian without commitment or conversion.

Kierkegaard recognises unresolved tension between the traditional attributes of God (particularly omnipotence and foreknowledge) and human freedom, but argues that predestination does not resolve it. 'The concept 'predestination' must be regarded as a thoroughgoing abortion. Doubtlessly having originated in order to relate freedom and God's omnipotence, it solves the riddle by denying one of the concepts and consequently explains nothing' (JP, 1230). Whilst he maintains that God may well have foreknowledge, this does not equate predestination.

Only when the conception of human freedom had developed and in reflection was coupled with the conception of God's governance of the world [Guds Verdens-Styrelse], only then could [the doctrine of predestination] arise, and it had to make its appearance as an attempt to solve the problem. But in this connection it is nevertheless curious that the intended solution of the problem now constitutes for us the problem, namely, how these two concepts are to be united (JP,1231).⁴³⁷

⁴³⁷ Danish added.

Kierkegaard clearly identifies theorising and speculating as a significant part of the problem with predestination. Specifically, when we speculate on the nature and activity of *Verdens-Styrelse*, we create the doctrine of predestination for ourselves as an attempt to solve the problem we perceive between our freedom and God's governance (of the world).⁴³⁸ It is then that the created solution (predestination) becomes the focal problem, and we forget the original tension. In order to arrive at predestination, we first shift focus from the existential to the theoretical-philosophical sphere.

In terms of the psychological effect of believing in predestination, he is concerned about the 'horrible consistency' of predestination (JP, 3542), which traps thought in a downward spiral.

Imagine that a man were told in advance that he would become one of the greatest scholars; if it were something he desired, he would promptly say: All right, I'll begin at once to study hard. Or – if he did not care for it, he would say: I will not look at a book. Both statements are equally wrong. In any case he would become what he was supposed to become, and he completely forgot that everything was predetermined, so that his statement also was predetermined, and he only got himself entangled in the worst contradictions (JP,1231).

The thought of predestination would either inspire activity toward that end, or deliberate inactivity in order to avoid it. However, if it is predetermined both responses are wrong. Moreover, if a person believes they are predestined, they may feel carried on to some consequences beyond their control.

Therefore one ought ...[not] occasion an anxious consciousness in which innocent but fragile souls can be easily tempted to believe themselves guilty, to despair, and thereby to make the first step toward the goal foreshadowed ... an occasion for reducing them to a kind of spiritual paralysis (JP, 91).

⁴³⁸ Whilst he does still use *Styrelse* here and not *Forsyn*, his addition of *Verdens-* is significant. It indicates the need for a qualification of *Styrelse*, which indicates that in itself, *Styrelse* does not always cover the wider 'world' context.

In E/O, the description given of The Seducer is that of a man who is playing at controlling the fate of others, but in so doing attempts to avoid his own destiny by keeping the possibilities open in his aesthetic life. He nonetheless considers himself caught up in a predestined fate: ‘In vain do I resist. ... I am predestined; fate laughs at me when it suddenly shows me how everything I do to resist becomes a factor in such an existence’ (E/O I 36). Judge Wilhelm admonishes him, explaining that to freely choose oneself according to one’s possibility is life’s task and that predestination is a trap, between the aesthetic and the ethical, to the soul of one who believes that life is simply about enjoyment (E/O II 232).

Kierkegaard comes to a more outspoken critique in a later journal entry entitled ‘Christianity Slackens – the Doctrine of Predestination’, worth quoting at length:

That the doctrine of Predestination emerges is ... an unmistakable sign of how the existential velocity has decreased.
By slackening, Xnty has gotten the mass of hum. beings to be Xns – and now the Xn sits and wonders how it is possible that a hum. being can be saved. And then comes the dogma of sedentary piety: predestination.
In general one could draw a distinction between existential Xnty – and sedentary Xnty. The latter makes Xnty into a doctrine, the gets into disputes about doctrine, orthodoxy, and degenerates into fantasy (KJN 8, 288).

Predestination, then, is a part of the quiescent Christianity which Kierkegaard considers to be at the heart of Christendom’s illusion. The reduction to doctrine pushes Christianity into the objective categories of reflection, removed from reality. Although Kierkegaard may believe that God has a plan for the world, he objects to theorising about it over and above becoming Christian.

In his notes on Clausen’s lectures, Kierkegaard exhibits a very particular perspective on the relationship between divine and human will and the action of grace within the New

Testament. He writes that the ‘figurative expressions used to speak of how God or the Holy Spirit effects, completes, and preserves the good in human beings contain a warning against wanting to fathom the nature and means of this activity’ (KJN 3, 61). Furthermore, he suggests that there is in the biblical account ‘a certain receptivity, capacity, and will on part of human beings’ which is called for, yet ‘these conditions too are attributed to God or God’s grace in Holy Scripture. God makes, as it were, hum. beings disposed to receive the teaching’ (KJN 3, 62). This is not resolved by Paul, who disallows a final conclusion on the matter of how human and divine wills resolve to work together. Kierkegaard argues that predestination is one-sided in conflict with scripture and with Christian life. Whilst it has a certain rigorous consistency, it is not validated by scriptural or existential criteria (KJN 3, 64). He explains that those traditions which adopted it ‘went deeper into a wilderness from which [they were] unable to escape’ (KJN 3, 66).

As mentioned above, Kierkegaard had an occasionally fatalistic outlook in terms of his own life. Julia Watkin offers a helpful take on his understanding of fatalism and determinism.⁴³⁹ For Kierkegaard, the illusion of freedom within the System is not tolerable once we realise it is false. For, it excludes possible newness with the focus on a necessary and predetermined outcome. Both fatalism and determinism are despairing.⁴⁴⁰ Kierkegaard seemingly treats fatalism and necessity as having the same result: they are dangerous insofar as they engender a failure to engage with one’s life. In having been causally predetermined, the person becomes caught up.⁴⁴¹ Fate for Kierkegaard ‘is the necessity over which one has no control,

⁴³⁹ Julie Watkin, ‘The Idea of Fate in Kierkegaard’s Thought’, in James Giles ed, *Kierkegaard and Freedom*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp.105-120.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, p.105.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

also to be experienced as the accidental or incidental passage of events unprovoked by the individual.’⁴⁴²

In the first chapter we saw that Kierkegaard argues that society is caught up in objective categories of reflection as a consequence despair. Predestination is what happens when this despair becomes doctrinal. As McKinnon pointed out above, Kierkegaard seems to contrast and oppose fate and Styrelsen. As such, governance cannot be considered to be tantamount to the same thing as fate or predetermination. As we will see below, Styrelsen is not an impersonal force controlling the lives of human beings for Kierkegaard, but a personal confidant, guide, teacher, parent, upbringer, and co-sufferer.

C. Characteristics of Styrelsen

Moving now to the discussion of the characteristics of Styrelsen, I return to Dalrymple’s work. For Dalrymple’s reading, governance is ‘both distinctly Kierkegaardian and distinctly modern’, reframing the medieval concept of providence.⁴⁴³ Dalrymple argues that, rather than just inheriting a prescientific ‘relic’ uncritically from his Lutheran upbringing, Kierkegaard presents governance as a modern version of medieval theology’s subcategory providentia specialissima or ‘God’s provision for the sake of the pious.’⁴⁴⁴ In order to make that claim, and to establish the principle of specificity, Dalrymple takes us through three sets

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Dalrymple, ‘Modern Governance’, p.181.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, p.164.

of distinctions between the wider traditional concept of providence and the specialised form that Kierkegaard employs. Firstly, he argues that whilst *Styrelse* relates specifically to God's governing the world's affairs, which would have been familiar to those who knew their catechism,⁴⁴⁵ *Forsyn* is a broader concept which encompasses the governance of world affairs whilst also relating to the preservation and care of the broader created order. Secondly, he distinguishes between Latin *conservatio* and *gubernatio*, explaining that the latter need not imply miraculous interventions that interrupt the natural order or that would be out of place in the normal day-to-day of a person's life.⁴⁴⁶ This is significant because he argues that Kierkegaard's *Styrelsen* is highly personal, working through the smallest occurrences. Thirdly, he distinguishes between *providentia universalis*, *providentia specialis*, and *providentia specialissima*. These categories of providence become more specified as they progress, and on Dalrymple's reading it is the final and most specific form which allows Kierkegaard to develop his personal and intimate sense of governance as the 'seducing will of God within the innermost chambers of each individual's heart and mind.'⁴⁴⁷ On Dalrymple's reading this personal emphasis may bypass some of the more problematic onto-theo-logical speculations on God's attributes, which operate as though that depth of knowledge about God's nature is readily available to thought. Dalrymple argues that Kierkegaard's *Styrelsen* is specific and it can be hidden in natural, daily impulses.

If we interrogate the authorship we find corroboration, since 'Kierkegaard presents the whole of his life and literary production as an artefact of divine creativity.'⁴⁴⁸ It is

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p.162.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, p.163-4.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, p.181.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p.160.

governance which has provided Kierkegaard with his gift for writing, his particular personality, and the inspirations throughout his life and upbringing, including his ‘depression’ – these have all predisposed him to become this kind of author. These circumstances of his life and upbringing have not been under his control, but were a gift of governance (PV, 79). When Kierkegaard explains in PV that his ‘personal existing’ has been changed by circumstances to fit in with the change in the authorship, but that he did not have an overview of the authorship as he wrote, he is telling the reader that governance has provided a ‘hint’, ‘a little circumstance’ (PV, 64) for him to follow. Further, he describes hearing a voice telling him to write calmly and slowly. He explains that his writing is ‘not the work of the poet passion or of the thinker passion, but of devotion to God, and for me a divine worship’ (PV, 73): this personal and specific relationship he describes as worship because he writes in obedience to governance, as and when required. He remains ‘awake, responsive and obedient’ (PV, 72) to this particular voice, this relationship. He further describes that when he did certain things, took certain paths, followed natural impulses and developed certain moods, these later turned out to have a different meaning than he may have thought (PV, 76), as they were part of governance’s specific intervention in his daily life. When he had spent too long on the poetic, he felt nudged by governance asking, ‘Aren’t you soon finished with that?’ (PV, 85, 86). Kierkegaard’s thankful obedience is almost the opposite attitude to that displayed by the Young Man in Repetition, who, frustrated and indignant at having been thrown into circumstances beyond his control without being informed of the rules first, wants to know why he was not given a choice about coming into the world and demands be allowed to make a complaint to the manager (FTR, 200). We can agree with Dalrymple, then, that Kierkegaard’s *Styrelsen* is presented as drawing him through the process of spiritual maturation via various particular circumstances and

encouraging him to express that process through and in his authorship: this literary dialectic ‘mirrors and guides the reader through the dialectic of spiritual becoming.’⁴⁴⁹

The next Styrelsen characteristic discussed by Dalrymple is that Styrelsen works through being present throughout individual human sufferings and providing a ‘lavish care.’⁴⁵⁰ He links this to Kierkegaard’s view that Hegelian philosophy considers individual suffering insignificant and ‘submerged in the universal end.’⁴⁵¹ For Kierkegaard, suffering helps the individual to become weaker so that they can find strength in God. Dalrymple continues his appraisal of Kierkegaard’s discussion of Leibniz’s typology of evils, arguing that for Kierkegaard the possibility of choosing to receive the good and perfect gift is predicated on the ontological separation from and dependence on God. However, whereas for Leibniz the individual’s suffering can be counterbalanced elsewhere, for Kierkegaard suffering has (to have) a pedagogical element for the individual subject who suffers. Leibniz’s explanation for suffering pertains to the cosmos, to a distant providence; Kierkegaard’s relates to personal governance and the individual. Rather than appealing to onto-theo-logical abstractions, he presents sufferings which flow from the ‘infinite qualitative difference as significant opportunities for the willing individual to annihilate the false self.’⁴⁵² We could also suggest that this is what happens when the onto-theo-ego-logical subject is ungrounded. Moreover, the ‘battle over the justice of God in the face of suffering is to be fought not on the world-historical or cosmic scale but in the intimate arena of the individual.’⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p.177.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p.166.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, p.170.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p.174.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

This may be stated more emphatically. I argue that, for Kierkegaard, suffering is the most individuating experience and thus it is in suffering that the individual can come to see their dependence on a personal, specific relationship with governance.⁴⁵⁴ When Kierkegaard discusses suffering it is always particular to the sufferer, so much so that he considers empathy (insofar as this means an experiential participation in the suffering of the sufferer) something that only the divine is able to offer, since Christ suffered superlatively. The individual suffers uniquely and the extent of suffering cannot be judged externally as the experience will differ even when circumstances appear the same. It is only within the personal relationship with governance that the individual receives true compassion from one who has experienced all depths of suffering in suffering-alongside.

It was indeed sympathy that was determinative for him in coming into the world, and it was sympathy again, it was in order to be able to have true sympathy, that he in free decision was tested in all things in the same way, he who can put himself ... completely in your place, in my place, in our place (WA, 116).

Only in the particular individual's connection with governance can true consolation be encountered. Moreover, 'the experience of suffering which no one is able to share makes The Comforter the paradigm for all other sufferers.'⁴⁵⁵ It is in suffering that true compassion – divine empathy – may be experienced. It is not cruelty; it is pedagogy and divine solidarity with the sufferer, identifying with the sufferer's suffering. As such, we do not need a theodicy which demands that God explain Godself to humanity, for the experience of

⁴⁵⁴ Victoria Davies, 'Sympathy/Empathy', in *Kierkegaard's Concepts: Salvation to Writing*, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, Volume 15, Tome VI, edited by Jon Stewart, William McDonald, and Steven M. Emmanuel (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), pp.127-32.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.129.

suffering is mutual – it is not inflicted from without by an omnipotent, uncaring and distant God.

Governance is not only alongside the sufferer in their experience of suffering but also employs that for upbuilding and communication. These ‘specific sufferings in his life turn [Kierkegaard] away from dependence on himself and toward dependence on God.’⁴⁵⁶ Kierkegaard describes his suffering (spiritual, physical and social) as something which is used by governance and he describes himself one who ‘became a martyr to liberate the age’ (PV, 89). In the Christian Discourses (‘Adversity is Prosperity’) he discusses the situation of Christendom where, caught in the objective categories of reflection, the truth of a situation is reversed: in this context, he explains that the goals of temporality may not fit the goals of ‘eternity’. Governance arranges a situation which removes temporality’s goals to help us renunciate them, speeding one towards eternity’s goal. ‘All that you have to do, then, is lend assistance to Governance, the Governance that has helped you. Adversity is prosperity, and you do indeed have adversity’ (CD, 157). In PIC, the author explains that the youth’s image of perfection is unlikely to become fully actual and so they will suffer. Governance tests the youth but gently and not beyond their ability (PIC, 190). There is a deception, a delusion, an ordeal through which to pass: suffering is inevitable and yet the image remains. Kierkegaard explains that, when older, the individual will look back and realise that the image has been fulfilled after all – just not in the expected manner. The Young Man of Repetition provides an example: in refusing Constantin’s complicated plan to disenchant his fiancée, which may be considered one of the ‘goals of temporality’, he finds himself in a situation where

⁴⁵⁶ Dalrymple, ‘Modern Governance’, p.177.

governance may help him (FTR 213). The goal of ending his unhappy love is achieved, but not as he expected.

Kierkegaard tells the reader that whilst adversity is indeed painful, and their suffering is real, governance has not abandoned them but has provided a specific liberation. This is mirrored in the goal of the authorship, which he repeatedly tells us is to reveal the mass illusion of Christendom by removing the obstacles to seeing the truth and to show humanity the task of becoming a Christian. It also reflects his ongoing concern to show the individual that choice is required – we must choose to lend assistance to governance and to sacrifice temporality's desires. (This is reminiscent of the Pauline exhortation (1 Cor.7) to remain in positions which are seemingly unedifying in order that they may facilitate God's salvific action.)

At several points during PV, Kierkegaard describes his 'unhappy' life as a sacrifice to governance, again linking suffering to sacrifice. 'In every generation there are two or three who become sacrifices for the others' (PV, 81). The author considers himself designated for or set toward (udseet) this sacrifice (PV, 81). In writing PV, he (ironically) claims to have sacrificed his interestingness 'for boring categories of the good' (PV, 92). He has been 'a sacrifice against the uprising of rabble-barbarism' (PV, 92). Interestingly, he argues that 'true martyrdom is to contend via powerlessness' (PV, 53). As we will see when we discuss revelation and authority, Kierkegaard is ambivalent regarding whether he is (an) extraordinary – although he does consider himself a sacrifice. Overall, Dalrymple's argument that governance works through suffering is upheld, albeit more emphatically.

The third of Dalrymple's principles is that governance preserves human agency, working through maieutic rather than coercive means so that the individual is drawn toward self-

expressive freedom through faithful obedience.⁴⁵⁷ Kierkegaard affirms both governance and human freedom: governance should not be confused with either fatalism or predestination which, as we saw above, ‘arose in the tension between human freedom and God’s Governance.’⁴⁵⁸ For Kierkegaard this tension is not resolved. Although God creates ‘free beings over against himself’⁴⁵⁹ (KJN 2, 95), far from limiting or disproving divine omnipotence, this is its unique expression.

This claim is an important one. For, if governance is best understood as God’s specific and personal guidance in an individual’s life which provides circumstances for pedagogy without controlling that life, then we find a kind of reciprocal freedom at play in Kierkegaard’s authorship which is cor-responsive and involves a willing surrender of control and a decision in favour of vulnerability. It also avoids placing either God or the individual in conceptual onto-theo-logical categories of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ but expresses mutuality in which neither God’s nor humanity’s will is exerted in terms of a one-sided control. It allows a creative and fruitful occasion for revelation and the free emergence of hitherto unarticulated truths. This in turn implies a fluid and fluctuating relationship – not because God’s nature or involvement is not steadfast, but because of the existential experience of that relationship on part of the individual and the anarchic and ungrounding nature of the relationship between the Infinite Subjectivity and the finite subject. In the fifth subsection, we will continue to discuss this with regard to rethinking Barthes’ Author-God (suggested

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, p.165.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

by Westphal) in terms of kenosis. Firstly, we must assess whether the authorship supports this claim.

Although Kierkegaard includes the terms ‘shackled’, ‘curbed’, etc., which may sound coercive, Dalrymple argues that the situation is dynamic. He uses the analogy of a master chess player guiding a child through the game: the child is free to move as they choose, but the master shapes the game to the desired conclusion.⁴⁶⁰ He points to Kierkegaard’s religious upbringing, which shaped him to religious obedience and created his unique quirks, but maintains that there is ‘space for freedom of choice within the context Governance has ordained.’⁴⁶¹ Kierkegaard’s response to his circumstances has been free despite the predisposing characteristics of his nature. This backs up Vigilius Haufniensis’s comments on predestination.

When Kierkegaard discusses governance, he also describes it reigning in his poetic nature and preventing him from overstepping. ‘Thus does Governance constantly protect me – and govern’ (KJN 6, 268). He marvels at ‘what a human being’s weakness is capable of with his help’ (PV, 72). Whilst this protective care has been present, Kierkegaard also ‘had to be an acting agent’ (PV, 84). He has been fully conscious of his upbringing through governance (PV, 77). On the other hand, he has been ‘shackled ... so that I did not arrogate anything to myself, since I understood to be in a great debt’; ‘now Governance really had me shackled’; ‘curbed me’ (PV, 86). ‘It was not I who played the master’ (PV, 74). His choice was to follow governance or be crushed under the barrage of abundant thought. Furthermore, he

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, p.175.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

explains that the poet production is ‘taken into custody’ by the religious (PV, 77). ‘Governance took the liberty of arranging the rest of my life in such a way that there could be no misunderstanding ... as to whether it was I who needed Christianity or Christianity that needed me’ (PV, 93). So, when we interrogate PV we find that, whilst he does affirm human freedom, he also shows this freedom comes of being obedient and doing his duty (PV, 90). This is partly due to being aware of his past mistakes (PV, 87). Again, this relates to Anti-Climacus’s understanding of despair as a refusal to be oneself.

Kierkegaard goes on to describe himself as a spy in a higher service, ‘myself hidden in a deception’ (PV, 87). He explains that he is spy who, in surveilling, is himself under strict surveillance. He draws a strange analogy with police who force former criminals to be compliant operatives on their behalf – although governance does this out of compassionate love, edifying and rescuing the individual. Kierkegaard works in absolute obedience to God with a reckless faith: he could do anything except become ‘a free bird’ (PV, 89). As it is, his self has been annihilated in the writing (PV, 89). Sometimes he sounds as though he has indeed been coerced and at other times as though he has been rescued. The self who is annihilated in writing is the false self, the ego of the aesthete. In deciding to be obedient through writing as governance directs him, Kierkegaard chooses to be himself. Whilst he was being brought up by governance and let the aesthetic play out, governance was patient: ‘Just let it run’ (PV, 84). He tells us

My nature has been the possibility of being an author. Governance is what has constantly arranged situations for me in such a way that they practically pressed literary production out of me; and yet nearly all my affairs are characterised by my having freely involved myself in them (KJN 6, 298).

In another journal entry, we are given a clearer explanation of the need for governance in choosing and regulating the self. ‘If I am to bind myself and there is to be no binding force

higher than myself, then where, as the A, who binds, can I find the rigor I do not possess as B, the one who is to be bound, when, after all, A and B are the same self[?]' (KJN 7, 42). Kierkegaard argues that we require a third governing factor, a higher law, in order for the dying-away-from self to be anything but an imaginary construction. The process is not simply the enforced choice of governance: if the individual is unwilling 'it can certainly happen that a hum. being is permitted to live in self-satisfied illusions and fancies and experimentation – this also signifies supreme disfavour' (KJN 7, 42-3). Once this movement into actuality has been decisively made 'existence can take hold of him and Governance can bring him up' (KJN 7, 43). Governance could choose to take a person to task but prefers to be the teacher to whom we turn for upbringing. God does not force people to behave in certain ways: 'he compels no one; he says to a person [“]Dangers lie ahead[”]; he terrifies a person with the help of fearsome imaginings – and he looks at a person and says, [“]Go forth with confidence, my child; but if you're scared, I won't compel you.[”] Ah, in truth, is there any more compelling way[?]' (KJN 4, 326-7). Kierkegaard's emphasis on freedom has not so much to do with the free agent, the autonomous subject, but the free choice to submit oneself in obedience to governance.

Lee Barrett argues that PV, provides resonances with several different models for the relationship between human and divine agencies; between grace and free will.⁴⁶² Kierkegaard, he argues, implies different possible interpretive models in different contexts. There is no single theoretical mode, and it is 'wildly unsystematic.'⁴⁶³ However, each makes

⁴⁶² Lee Barrett, 'Kierkegaard's Authorship and the Paradox of Divine and Human Agencies', in *The Point of View*, International Kierkegaard Commentary 22, edited by Robert Perkins (London: Mercer University Press, 2010), pp.48-77.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, p.50.

sense in the differing contexts.⁴⁶⁴ ‘Precisely where his discussion of the activity of God in his own life would seem to call for some such clarifying theoretic model, Kierkegaard refrains from endorsing any single one of them.’⁴⁶⁵ PV seems to start out with Kierkegaard as the main controlling force of the authorship and governance takes a supporting role, in a seemingly semi-Pelagian fashion which emphasises the author’s agency and the implied reader’s striving in their ‘own intentional existential project.’⁴⁶⁶ Kierkegaard’s personal existing is treated like a public document and the corsair affair as a deliberate self-sacrifice, with governance ‘present in a recessive way.’⁴⁶⁷ As the book progresses, he exhibits some traces of Arminianism in actualising a capacity granted by God.⁴⁶⁸ This develops into Monergism when ‘God’s agency seems to operate clandestinely, unperceived by the human agent, both in external circumstances and in the agent’s own actions’⁴⁶⁹ so much so that ‘his entire authorship [becomes] a meta-act [which] is the fruit of an intentionality beyond his own.’⁴⁷⁰ However, Barrett argues that the context in which Kierkegaard emphasises divine agency is doxological and expresses loving gratitude, ‘for guidance, sustenance, upbringing, and even the gift of intimacy with God.’⁴⁷¹

Kierkegaard’s rhapsodic speech about God’s action in his life does not function to provide the basis for a metaphysical picture of the dynamics of God’s agency and creaturely agencies, but rather to show the reader what the enactment of praise and thankfulness is like.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁴ See *ibid*, 51-56. Barrett runs through the different schools from Calvin to Pelagius.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.56.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.60.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.64.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.67, 69.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.70.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.71.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.75.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*.

As such, although at times Kierkegaard reads as though he is emphasising human agency and at others divine, his work is not incoherent but exhibits the dynamic interaction between human and divine. Whilst there will be elements of struggle and variation throughout existential participation in the relationship, this is the play of reciprocity. Whilst human and divine action may be irreducibly different, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Whereas Dalrymple argues that human freedom is upheld by non-coercive governance despite Kierkegaard's use of coercive language, Barrett argues that differing individual contexts permit differing models for understanding the interplay of divine and human agencies. They concur that the action of one need not deny the other's engagement. The element here of a mutual struggle between divine and human agency need not be resolved in a particular fashion, but may rather be thought of as involving an oscillating movement between human and divine, constantly attempting to rebalance and not quite achieving equilibrium due to the nature of the changing individual.

We may suggest that the diagnosis of the condition of society and his specific perspective on his own relationship with Styrelse implies ways to destabilise the onto-theo-ego-logically imbued subject. In placing the human-divine relationship into a repeated moment of reciprocity and mutuality, Kierkegaard again suggests the removal of the false Subject. In surrendering this self, the individual likewise surrenders a false concept of 'freedom'. One, perhaps, that comes from the tension between the divine and human agencies, which is problematically dualistic and hinders us in the true freedom of devotion to God.

Kierkegaard refuses credit for wider significance in his work. Kierkegaard tells us 'Governance takes what concerns me personally and forms it into something with wider

application' (KJN 5, 363). 'When Governance arranges things so that a person's inner striving is reflected magically in the shadow play of world history: is that his merit?' (CUP1,139-140). Nonetheless, toward the end of PV he says that, whilst he does not know what the immediate future will bring, he does 'know' how the historical will turn out. 'But whatever I know pertaining to this would not comfort me if I were not, although humble and also penitent, yet in faith and confidence, on my way to the future closest at hand and at every moment equally close: eternity' (PV, 95). He goes on to explain that once he has become an absentee, the outcome of history will make little difference to him: it is a statement of eschatological faith and also of the existential irrelevance of speculation.

When discussing those few in a generation who are 'sacrificed', whose suffering is perhaps amplified in their experience of adversity, he implies a broader significance:

The Governance of the World [Verdens Styrelse] is an enormous household, an immense painting. Yet it is the same for him ... as it is for the cook and the artist. He says: "There must be a little dash of cinnamon now; a little bit of red must be introduced." We have no idea why ... but God knows why.

A little dash of cinnamon! This means: here a man must be sacrificed; ... how painful ...to be a little dash of cinnamon! But on the other hand God knows very well who he chooses to be used in this manner, and he knows with the most intimate understanding how to make it blessed for him to be sacrificed so that among the thousands of heterogeneous voices which everywhere express each in his own way the same thing, his voice is also heard, and perhaps his in particular is truly heard *de profundis* (JP, 709).

What this means in terms of our discussion here is that, whilst we cannot know God's overall picture, the Archimedean point of reality (KJN 4, 417), we can faithfully believe that God knows without this being deleterious of our true freedom. If it is the case that one has been used as a dash of cinnamon, it is both for one's own blessing and the enrichment of the whole, even if this seems at odds with experience.

D. Further Elements in Kierkegaard's Discussion of Styrelsen

As we saw in the previous discussion, Styrelse works through specific circumstances, including those of suffering. Relatedly, when consulting the authorship, we find that governance always works in and through one's context. Context can mean the individual situations and circumstances discussed above, but it is also the social and historical context. In *The Book On Adler*, Kierkegaard explains that a modern person, in reflecting age, will be guided by governance in a way that makes sense to that context. 'Ours is a reflecting age; it is inconceivable that Governance itself is not aware of this' (BA, 244). 'Governance knows how to strike a person, knows how to make itself understandable to him' (EUD, 47). This explains why he presents Styrelse in everyday circumstances and not necessarily overt interruptions to the natural order; whilst Kierkegaard would not claim that these are impossible, they would be out of context. Furthermore, it may explain why he emphasises differing situations – even if these cause suffering or require sacrifice – as occasions for governance. 'Therefore everyone (instead of asking which place is the most comfortable for him ...) is first and foremost to place himself in the position where Governance can use him if it so pleases Governance' (WOL, 84-5).

The context of modernity, of course, is that of reflection. Being lost in reflection is 'not really living' because one is not aware of the 'meaning and destiny' of one's possibility (PV, 82). In our context, a deception is needed to reveal the problem that is our context. Since governance makes itself known in the situation and the situation is a deception, the means of revelation and strategy of communication must adapt. A 'direct communication presupposes that the recipient's ability to receive is entirely in order' (PV, 54). Without

wishing to overly pre-empt the final chapter's discussion of authorship and influence, it is helpful to note here that governance communicates through maieutic means because of the individual's decreased receptive ability. For Kierkegaard, it 'is a relationship of reflection, inwardness in reflection since reflection is the predominant quality of my individuality' (PV, 74).

Kierkegaard will not claim an immediate relationship with God. Since his context is reflection, his nature is reflection, and 'reflection is the negation of immediacy' (PV, 77), his relationship with God is also in reflection. For Kierkegaard, then, perhaps another aspect to this contextual governance is that, although it is not impossible that there are those who receive direct revelations, these should be viewed with suspicion. For, 'the old science of arms (apology) serves to betray the cause of Christianity in Christendom' (PV, 53-4). A direct approach is doomed to failure and, since governance would know that, he views claims to direct revelation as potentially false. A brief look at the essay 'The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle' shows that Kierkegaard believes that erroneous exegesis and speculative thought have confused the essentially Christian (BA, 173). He complains that the religious-paradoxical has been pushed back into the sphere of the aesthetic, which removes the distinctive qualitative element of the essentially Christian from the discussion. When this happens, the apostle is no more or less than a genius, 'and then good night to Christianity.' 'Brilliance [Aandrihed] and spirit [Aand], revelation and originality, the call from God and genius, an apostle and a genius – all this ends up being just about one and the same' (BA, 173). The genius and the apostle belong to the aesthetic and religious spheres respectively. When the apostle is lauded for qualities belonging to the sphere of the aesthetic (eloquence, brilliance, etc.) the difference is annihilated and the message loses its authority.

Kierkegaard argues that, whilst a genius may have something new and interesting to bring to the table, it is inessential and transitory. It is to be assimilated in the passing of time. The apostle's message, on the other hand, is of teleological significance and retains the paradoxical element. The apostle does not develop into an apostle or have the potential of apostolic calling at birth: an apostle is called, appointed, sent. This calling does not bestow intelligence, imagination, or discernment: the paradoxical nature of revelation transcends the value of such qualities. The genius is evaluated by aesthetic standards: the apostle only on the grounds that the message is a revelation. When a revelation is evaluated in terms of its form or profundity, God is reduced to a genius: 'In this manner God is actually smuggled away' (BA, 178). The genius does not have authority. Authority is a quality bestowed from the Other, and it essentially sets the apostle apart. Kierkegaard complains that if obedience has been predicated on the aesthetic quality of a command then that is not obedience at all. Both obedience and authority have been abolished by modern theology (BA, 185) which is based on speculative argument and articulate explanation. If an apostle were to attempt to gain some earthly power or esteem, it would negate his cause: 'The honoured public, the power-craving crowd, wants also to nullify an apostle's existence' (BA, 188). This nullifying process is why he says 'the ancient prophets were ordained by Governance, today's prophets lack the endorsement' (TA, 106).

Kierkegaard repeatedly states that he writes without authority. He does not consider his relationship with governance to involve the granting of authority. His revelation from governance is implicit and indirect. It is not clear whether he thinks that any of those claiming divine authority in his social context are genuine: he certainly indicates that Adler's claim is misappropriated. Norman Lillegard explains that for authority to be recognisable it

needs to come from a legitimate Other.⁴⁷³ There are several responses to a claim to authority: firstly, one can obey or disobey, granting standing to the source; secondly, one can refuse to grant standing and deny that there has been a command; thirdly, one can accept the command but judge whether or not to follow it based on the content. He argues that, for Kierkegaard, the third option is confused since the nature of an authoritative command does not correlate to that response. The second option places one outside of the framework, since it refuses to accept an authoritative command on the grounds that it does not have authority. When, as one through whom a command is given one is faced with the third response then to defend the command on aesthetic or philosophical grounds is to negate authority. I argue that the latter two are both relevant for Kierkegaard's critique of modernity: the second refuses to acknowledge the authority which could be a symptom of a being immersed in the crowd, the third misappropriates the message as though it belongs to the aesthetic-philosophical. Also, in a sense, in denying himself the claim to divine authority, Kierkegaard responds to his own work by placing it in the second category: should any reader perceive a command in it, he has pre-emptively denied that standing.

Lillegard argues that the fragmentary nature of the authorship does not seek to destabilise authority as such.⁴⁷⁴ For him, the interpretation of a command depends on grasping the original intention of the commander – the command must be available in some format for this interpretation of intention. As such, he declares that he is at odds with arguments that consider texts as fundamental and discount authors or authorial presence. He complains that

⁴⁷³ Norman Lillegard 'Authority, Speech Acts and Freedom' in Robert Perkins ed., *Without Authority*, International Kierkegaard Commentary 18 (London: Mercer University Press, 2007), pp.11-42.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 32.

arguments which see Kierkegaard's deliberately fragmentary style as a challenge to authority are based on Kierkegaard's authority as an author and not divine authority. However, he posits that if 'very general claims about the possibility of authoritative communication are correct then it follows ... that there is no possibility of divine authority either.'⁴⁷⁵ (We will return to this, for it is the inverse of Westphal's argument discussed below.) He argues that Kierkegaard is not endorsing the forgetfulness of authority in modern society but treating it as a symptom of a disease. However, I contend that it would be more accurate to say that Kierkegaard wants to point out the problematic identification of genuine divine authority in the modern context. In destabilising his own authorial position, he is able to demonstrate that the authority of the age (the speculative and the aesthetic which have reduced the authority of the apostle) is bogus, a false and imposing authority that needs destabilising in order to reinstate or at least recognise that of the divine, and to recognise it as essentially Other to that of the age.

Kierkegaard's method is geared precisely toward showing those in his context that their assumptions regarding authority pertain to the aesthetic rather than the paradoxical-religious. This conflation has rendered the distinction between human and divine authority moot: and in claiming that comments on Kierkegaard's authorial authority necessarily implies the absence of any possible divine authority, so has Lillegard. Further, Lillegard's argument that the divine intention is available for assessment assumes a lot on part of the human receiver(s): indeed, as Kierkegaard said (above), it assumes the receivers' ability to receive – in this case to receive the message, via the apostle, from God – is not impaired.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

Whilst Lillegard is right to claim that Kierkegaard does not seek to destabilise authority *per se*, and certainly not genuine divine authority, he does fragment and destabilise his authorial authority precisely to show that contextual responses to authority misappropriate. He is attempting to disrupt ideas about divine authority that try to reduce it to talent of the individual writer. Kierkegaard wants to maintain divine authority and destabilise human authority – the destabilisation of one does not negate the other. His negation of authorial authority is aimed precisely at showing that divine authoritative guidance in the life of the individual is a possibility that, in order to become actual, must be engaged repeatedly. This involves the surrender of the onto-theo-ego-logical Subject. Human authority (and that of a talented genius) is transitory and revocable. His destabilisation of it is aimed at removing this obstacle to reveal the truth, denying earthly authority to redirect the individual toward the divine.

What has this to do with governance? Aside from governance being a means of talking about divine action, the notion of authority is present throughout PV's (and the authorship's) discussion of governance. As mentioned, Kierkegaard's response of obedience to governance certainly shows that he recognises divine authority. Whilst he sometimes resists what he identifies as governance's request that he move on from the poetic, which is part of his understanding of the relationship as perceivably fluctuating on part of the human being, he nonetheless always recognises the authority of governance. But, he will not claim any part of divine authority for himself. Kierkegaard deliberately eschews authority and disciples: he wants the reader to choose for themselves. When Kierkegaard refuses authority, he also explains that he does not consider himself to be something extraordinary in terms of being chosen to speak with the power of God's revelation. His writing, albeit indirectly communicated by governance, does not come from a privileged immediate relationship with

God: immediacy and reflection are opposed and he describes himself as characteristically reflective. He does not 'dare to say that it is God who directly contributes the thoughts to me' (PV, 74). Although he maintains that governance provides the deeper significance, this does not make him an authority or an apostle. However, he also says 'I also know ... that the extraordinary (verging on genius) was granted to me' (PV, 94). Furthermore, he comments that if governance were to provide an extraordinary in this age of reflection, this person would be a simple way-clearer who may reveal false prophets but not by prophesying themselves.

The communicator is defined in reflection, therefore negatively, not one who claims to be an extraordinary Christian or even claims to have revelations (all of which is commensurate with immediacy and direct communication) but just the opposite, one who even claims not to be Christian – in other words, the communicator is in the background helping negatively, since whether he succeeds in helping someone is indeed something else (PV, 56).

Kierkegaard considers that his task and his writing are the gifts of governance, his obedient sacrifice. His deliberate eschewing of authority is part of that task, a necessary deception in order to facilitate the communicableness of indirect revelation. This relates to the notion of the backward movement. This moves back from earthly authority to point toward pre-existing, genuinely divine authority: 'away from speculative thought, away from the system etc., to becoming a Christian. ... [Although] it is all done without authority there is still something in the tone that is reminiscent of a policeman when he says to a crowd: Move back!' (PV, 78). His indication toward divine authority is undergirded when he explains that there is a difference between writing on a blank sheet of paper and using corrosive chemicals to reveal writing that was already there written beneath the other writing (PV, 53). The aim of the authorship is to get back to that underlying writing. In writing, he wants to point to that other writing, other authority, other textual influence, other source of creativity – but, to be in an appropriate relation to governance, he must not claim it for himself.

E. Governance as Co-Author

Kierkegaard does not want to claim divine authority, but he is also concerned that if he does not mention that the authorship has been co-written the credit will go to him alone, since that is how authority and authorial influence are perceived in his context. He is also concerned that the aesthetic writing ‘concedes too much to consciousness’ (PV, 77). His reliance on divine input is so emphasised that he tells the reader of PV that he often wrote in so unbroken a manner that it was as though ‘I had done nothing other than to copy each day a specific part of a printed book’ (PV, 76).

Kierkegaard explains that he has been brought up (educated) through the authorship. He did not always know how the whole would turn out, but he was not duped. ‘The expression for Governance’s part in the authorship is this: that the author is himself the one who in this way has been brought up, but with a consciousness of it from the very beginning’ (PV, 90). He describes his relationship with governance as like a child who has been given a gift to present to their parents by those parents: the parents smile indulgently at the bashful child and accept the gift in love (PV, 89). The parents knew what the child would present them with, having provided it in the first place, but they nonetheless value the gift and the act of giving. There is a strong sense of cor-responsiveness in this analogy, and this is important for understanding Kierkegaard’s presentation of Styrelsen as co-author.

Arguably, there must be an overarching coherence in the authorship as a whole in order for his explanation in PV and elsewhere to be relevant or to even have a basis. Despite the

seemingly fragmentary character of the authorship, there is an element which collects them. Westfall argues that this cannot simply be the factually actual author for he is written into the authorship and therefore cannot be its single, linear cause.⁴⁷⁶ One of the unifying characteristics, then, is the implicit authorial presence of governance, who is the co-author of (all of the implied) Kierkegaard(s) and Kierkegaardian authors; the implied but not visible co-cause. Westfall argues that if we are to take the pseudonyms as they present themselves, we are required to see the authorship as written by an implied poetically actual author who in turn authors (the polynymous) authors, and who is neither the poetically actual veronym (who is one of the authored authors, even though he writes as if he is the factually actual person) nor the factually actual person (who is only implied by the authorship and about whom we can know nothing of relevance from within the authorship) but rather remains unnamed and unnameable, obscuring the origin of the authorship.⁴⁷⁷ Although Westfall does not provide a theological interpretation, but limits his discussion of governance to an aspect of authorial self-effacement, I argue that we may extend this model to show that the authorship's 'author of the authors' may be exhibiting a guiding but not explicit element that is analogous to the author's description of Styrelse (I will return to this point below). Moreover, the indirect method is geared precisely toward the destabilising of the speculative and the monological as inauthentic displays of authority/authorship which relate to a problematic concept of self and freedom. Yet, the fragmentation of the authorship is not the endpoint of the authorship: it is held together by both the author of the authors and by

⁴⁷⁶ Joseph Westfall, *Kierkegaard and the Ingenious Creature: Authorial Unity and Co-Authorship in On My Work as an Author*, *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2010* (New York: De Gruyter, 2010), p.270.

⁴⁷⁷ See Westfall, 'Who is the author of *The Point of View*?'.

Styrelsen. As argued above, the fragmentation of the authorship points to rather than denies divine authority.

As I mentioned when discussing Lillegard, Westphal offers the argument that the critiques of the 'Author-God' in Barthes, Derrida and Foucault do not prove or require that God does not exist.⁴⁷⁸ Although he directs his critique to those authors, it can also be applied to Lillegard's claim regarding divine and human authority. Westphal explains that, since a text is not to be reduced to the author's meaning but invites participation in meaning production from the reader, the hermeneutic must not be an attempt to reawaken the original author's meaning but to recreate guided by the interpreter's own understanding. He argues that a disruption to the 'sovereignty of origin' or the imposed fixed meaning has been interpreted through the work of Barthes et al as a refusal of God.⁴⁷⁹ However, the refusal of the Author-God in no way disproves God outside of the text, as it is about human authors.

Whilst it is possible to agree with Barthes that if the world is as text, there is no fixed meaning and therefore no God, it is not a logically necessary outcome of the discussion of texts. The suggestion that we have to move from there being no fixed meaning in a text to the non-existence of God is a fallacy: the issue is not God as author of the world but author as God of the text. Additionally, it is not anti-theological to challenge the idea that the author is the God of the text: both Jewish and Christian biblical theologies challenge the idea of author as the origin of the text. It is one thing to say that authors cannot precede their texts and another to say that God cannot precede or transcend the world. Although these writers

⁴⁷⁸ Westphal, 'Anxiety of Authorship'.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, p.11.

do challenge causality in this sense, the ‘cause’ of the text need not imply the non-existence of an Author of existence. For Kierkegaard, I argue, the existential encounter and relationship with governance as unobtrusive guide and guardian is indicative not of a First Cause of onto-theo-logy but of a radically other God who defies the abyss and the infinite qualitative difference as an act of divine love which transgresses onto-theo-logy.⁴⁸⁰ Interestingly, and by way of agreement with the comment about objective ascertainment of the ‘cause’, Westfall offers an interesting point in discussing the nature of authorial causality in Kierkegaard’s perception of his destruction of authorial dominance over the text (particularly in PV). When Kierkegaard describes the ‘ingenious little creature’ whose ‘web’ the reader encounters in the authorship, the spider is not mentioned or seen.⁴⁸¹ This metaphor from natural science shows a tracing back from effect (web) to cause (spider), but the cause is not actually discovered. The observer does not know the particulars about the ingenious little creature whose web it is, only that it is likely to be a spider as is implied by the web’s presence. The spider created the web and removed itself, leaving the structure for inspection. The spider is the non-present (authorial) coherence of the web.

Westphal points out that, whilst the death of the author in Barthes is unavoidable, it is voluntary in the other thinkers. The relevance of this is that the release of the child-text ‘can be reluctant or willing’: Kierkegaard ‘willingly agrees to play a role other than God vis-à-vis text and reader.’⁴⁸² Kierkegaard considers himself a fellow-learner and a reader of his authorship. Westphal further clarifies that this refusal is a religious act: rather than saying

⁴⁸⁰ For a discussion of God’s defiance of the abyss in Kierkegaard, see Simon Podmore, *Kierkegaard and the Self Before God: Anatomy of the Abyss* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp.168-171.

⁴⁸¹ Westfall, ‘Ingenious Creature’, p.285.

⁴⁸² Westphal, ‘Anxiety of Authorship’, p.18.

regarding the nature of authorship that ‘there is no God, so I am not God’ in the manner of Barthes et al, Kierkegaard says ‘there is a God, so I am not God.’⁴⁸³ This ties in with the argument throughout this thesis that Kierkegaard’s is a shattered, and anarchically ungrounded existing subject not the idolatrously elevated Subject of German Idealism. Whilst the authorship is written by an author, he is not its ‘cause’ or origin and he does not determine its meaning even if he leaves indirect hermeneutic clues. The coherence of the authorship is not his doing: ‘all reception is, with respect to ideas, production’ (KJN 2, 50); ‘all receiving is a producing’ (CUP1, 78). Kierkegaard participates in the textual production as all readers participate in the production of the author.

Westphal explains that, for Kierkegaard, God’s creation is kenotic and incarnate. When God creates he does so by giving independence from himself: through his omnipotence he makes humanity free, by withdrawing his control over creation. This is why for Kierkegaard predestination and the debate about freedom and God’s foreknowledge are so problematic. In creating, control is surrendered and the created thing becomes independent. For Barthes et al., the attempt to predetermine the meaning of the text by its originator is indicative of seeing the author as Author-God. For Kierkegaard, Westphal explains, voluntarily surrendering control over the authorial creation by withdrawing and allowing the text independence is God-like. God’s creation and ongoing ‘providence’ is kenotic not imperial.⁴⁸⁴ When the human author withdraws to leave the reader alone with God, he imitates God as creator. Rather than being anxious about controlling the meaning of the text, Kierkegaard is more concerned to avoid intruding.

⁴⁸³ Ibid, p.19.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, p.21.

The argument that Kierkegaard surrenders control over the interpretation of his text as an act mirroring divine kenosis coheres with the arguments above regarding human and divine freedom, for in this kenotic act of mutually surrendering absolute autonomous control both Kierkegaard and his co-author uphold a certain kind of reciprocal freedom as intrinsic to creation. This does not mean that neither attempts pedagogy through gentle and non-coercive guidance. Whilst Westphal challenges any claim that Kierkegaard is providing a hermeneutic for the authorship, I would suggest that he is specifically talking here about the historically actual Kierkegaard relinquishing control over the meaning of the authorship from outside, and not necessarily the author of the authors who works within it. Also, it is possible to argue that there are indirect ways to imply a hermeneutic without attempting to ‘control’ the interpretation.

Oscar Parbero Oubiña, in discussing Kierkegaard’s notion of ‘controlled irony’ in E/O, argues that irony itself is a hermeneutic ground that is a site of autonomous practice.⁴⁸⁵ He critiques the notion that Kierkegaard ‘used’ controlled irony: it is rather governance that uses irony. Kierkegaard, he argues, links irony and governance when he argues that irony is needed to direct (styre) and control (beherske) the spirits which want to charge forward. ‘The verb at styre puts any Kierkegaard reader immediately on the track of one of the most decisive presences in Kierkegaard’s work: Styrelsen (Governance).’⁴⁸⁶ He argues that if governance is the one in control of irony, it can retain its absolute negativity and self-

⁴⁸⁵ Oscar Parbero Oubiña, ‘“Controlled Irony”... Are you Serious? Reading Kierkegaard’s Irony Ironically,’ *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (New York: De Gruyter, 2006), pp.241-260.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.258.

annihilating aspect, as it is not under Kierkegaard's control. This facilitates our discussion: it undergirds my argument that we can retain both the fully indirect nature of the authorship (which challenges and destabilises meaning as part of its destabilisation of onto-theo-logy) and the divine co-authorship, whilst still maintaining that Kierkegaard both surrenders his right to influence the interpretation and allows hermeneutic clues to be left within the ironic indirection. These may be picked up by the single individual to whom Kierkegaard addresses his authorship.

If we can agree with Westphal that Kierkegaard mimics his interpretation of God's kenotic creation in his own authorial creation and with Westfall that the structure of the authorship surrenders the historical author's right to determine the reader's encounter with the text, what does that mean for our discussion the nature of governance, co-authorship and the destabilisation of onto-theo-logy and speculation? Kierkegaard is pulling apart authorial presence, authorial 'influence' and power to destabilise the control that authors try to exert over the reception of their text and its interpreted meaning and simultaneously pointing the reader to the possibility of choosing the truth and meaning of a life lived in free obedience to governance. He uses irony and indirection not simply to deconstruct meaning and leave us without the possibility of genuine meaning but to open up the possibility of an authentic reappropriation of meaning and truth, and of 'self' and 'freedom', which comes along with the choice to become a Christian. Just as he denies his own authority, he denies his authorial right to influence the reader, wanting perhaps to be the simple way-clearer without being lauded as an apostle or person of religious significance and authority. However, he does want to aid the reader in their task toward becoming a Christian, and I argue that he does this through indirectly reflecting the possibility of a freely obedient, yet fluid and existential, relationship to governance in his text and method which operates outside of the tyranny of

onto-theo-(ego)-logy and suggests moving away from the idea of the Author-God controlling the meaning of the text.

As we saw in the first chapter, when Kierkegaard uses the word 'reflection', he sometimes means contemplation and he sometimes implies mirroring. I now return to the point mentioned above about the analogy between the author of the authors and governance. It is possible to read the layers of authorial authority within his authorship as an implied, partial mirror for his understanding of the characteristics of governance and why he distinguishes it from the factually actual origin. Since he resigns his right to interject, the author of the authors remains unnameable. He is nonetheless a necessary aspect of the textual structure, as the prompter and guide of the authors. They may rebel and disagree, but they all freely contribute to the overall outcome, prodded into place by the author of the authors. 'He' is the functional coherence of the authorship as engaged by the authors within it. The unnamed attentive guide, who knows the intimate behaviours of all of his authors, is positioned within the text as a partial mirror to an existential human experience of *Styrelse* in reality.

Whilst Kierkegaard is certainly not a secret neo-Marcionite who separates the creator and governance, as the factually actual Kierkegaard and the author of the authors are separated, we can see that the suggested association of the author of the authors with governance illustrates the personal, specific nature of governance over against the onto-theo-logical and First Cause. In reading creation as *kenosis*, and performing it in his own authorial creation, Kierkegaard establishes the primacy of the intimate and specific relationship with governance without having to deny or downplay creation. Moreover, it denies the Hegelian focus on God as the object of inquiry. God's act of defying the abyss of the infinite

qualitative difference to reach toward humanity in a personal and non-controlling relationship is reflected in Kierkegaard's authorial strategy.

It could be argued that another implication of Kierkegaard's clever separation of his factual self from the authorship goes back to the reduction of God to the level of human genius through assessing the content of revelation as though it were the product of genius. For, since the historically actual Kierkegaard surrendered the control over the authorship and is not available for comment on it, he could be read as implying that – in assessing divine revelation as though it were a work of genius – the assessor assumes the level of the Author, as though the human interpreter were able to ascend to the level of the Author to undertake an interrogation of authorial intention. To try to assess God's revelation as though it were the product of a clever human author reduces and nullifies the nature of revelation. Perhaps we may suggest that those who have reduced the paradoxical nature of divine revelation and accompanying authority, and who have tried to contain the religious in aesthetic categories (such as speculative onto-theo-logical philosophy and theology), have tried to view God as a factual human person might view the historically actual Kierkegaard. That is, as though God is a human author and his intentions available for scrutiny.

If his discussion of Styrelse may be considered a part of his destabilisation of onto-theology, we may further suggest that this consists in part in the destabilisation of authority and the renunciation of control over that which is authored. It also pertains to the focus on the encounter with governance as a mutual, reciprocal relationship which is engaged and which undulates in differing situations and contexts. I argue that we can think of this as a mutual

willingness to be vulnerable or to be ‘undone by each other’ in relationship.⁴⁸⁷ For, when we are willing to place ourselves in a position which may be considered dangerous or risky in order to be open to the possibility of new ways of thinking and living which are existentially engaged, we need also to open ourselves up to vulnerability and precariousness in a positive sense. Even in and through our suffering, we might suggest, God allows Godself to be vulnerable in loving relationship with God’s creation.

To get back to a situation where governance can get hold of us, as he puts it, we need to back out of onto-theo-logical thinking. So, Kierkegaard does not have to be seen as ironically undermining the possibility of meaning altogether or as falling back on the limited meaning of an anthropocentric and onto-theo-logical God. He undermines the authorial position to point beyond it to personal, situational and loving governance awaiting the individual to responsibly choose obedience to governance despite their suffering, and even through the suffering caused at least in part by the enduring grip of the dissociating context of modernity.

II: Heidegger’s ‘Geschick’

Following on from the discussion regarding Kierkegaard’s *Styrelsen*, which was established as a disruption and refocus of the traditional account of providence reflected in Kierkegaard’s authorial practice as an indirect kenotic creation and surrender of the text, I turn now to Heidegger’s *Geschick*. As will be established, Heidegger’s discussion and

⁴⁸⁷ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.19.

idiosyncratic development of *Geschick* likewise works to undermine an excessively linear reading of fate and destiny. This is reflected in his expression of epochal change and destiny as well as his own understanding of authorial practice as a response to *Geschick*. We will also see that *Geschick* is always contextual, and also co-determines the context.

A. Introduction to *Geschick*

Heidegger's arguments on both fate (*Schicksal*) but more importantly destiny (*Geschick*) in his later work are fundamental to his exploration of the relationship between *Da-sein* and *Beyng*, a relationship which shifts polarity during his well-known and previously discussed 'turn'. His earlier focus on *Dasein* is arguably decisionistic, with *Dasein*'s self-determination through considered choice in light of its 'ownmost possibility' (death) being emphasised. His treatment of destiny in the later works selected here show the converse side of the relationship: *Dasein*'s reliance on *Beyng* and time, 'sent' alongside *Beyng*, as destiny.

Heidegger does not provide a "treatise" devoted to the concept of "*Geschick*" ... for if this were otherwise, it would run contrary to a fundamental thesis regarding the character of Being as such.⁴⁸⁸ This fundamental thesis is that Being always both conceals and unconceals itself in different epochs, and thus to attempt to provide a treatise would be a performative denial of the hidden in this epoch. As we will discover, this 'concept' is

⁴⁸⁸ John Loscerbo, *Being and Technology: A Study in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981), p.202.

complicated and at points may lack sufficient coherence. For example: it remains unclear whether that which sends *Geschick* is *beyng* – despite the commonly used expression ‘*Geschick des Seins*’ – because Heidegger goes on to say that both time and *beyng* are ‘sent’ as *Geschick* (as we will see in the discussion below regarding his essay TB); further, it is unclear whether Heidegger sees the history of metaphysics since the ‘first beginning’ of the Greeks as one long epoch or a series of epochs. Nonetheless, *Geschick* is important to understanding the later Heidegger, especially regarding the nature of *techne* and the conjoined critique of onto-theo-logy.

At several points we have encountered Heidegger’s argument that we inherit the social and cultural context into which we are ‘thrown’, including the context in which we are able to think or in which we are granted thought. We are always both limited by and gifted with possibilities through our context, or through our being ‘worlded’. These are givens: we have them whether we choose to or not. As will become clear, our choice is whether to engage with destiny or to be complicit by failure to engage with the loss of our essence and our relationship to Being. For Heidegger, whilst there is no predestination in terms of a preordained plan, there is a strong sense of ‘providence’ – after a fashion. This providence does not originate from an entity, certainly not the God of philosophy or of theology. Rather, it is a ‘sending’ – an aspect of the ‘*Es gibt*’ which was mentioned in his discussion of *Ereignis* (of ‘appropriation’). I will show that, for Heidegger, we are ‘being-led’ (that is, we are led or guided as an intrinsic part of our relation to Being) and we are ‘called’ to participate in our destiny. Although his critique of linear causality means that positing a power arbitrarily as the source of this ‘being-led’ is highly problematic, it is nonetheless the case that for Heidegger we are guided by our mutual engagement with *Geschick* and our recognition of being ‘claimed’ by this call.

This section will explain the interrelation of *Geschick*, *beyng* and time along with the epochal transitions that Heidegger describes. As we will see, he describes these transitions in terms of his discussion of *aletheia*. For him, the play between concealment and unconcealment has implications for the differing models or paradigms for truth in each epoch. For Heidegger argues that each epoch has a particular given self-revelation of Being, but no epoch is granted a full revelation: as we have seen each unconcealment always also conceals in order for beings to come to presence. As such, Heidegger explains that no epoch ever could have a full revelation of Being. We will see below that the truth of Being ‘presences’ differently in each epoch since the way in which beings ‘presence’ is also altered in the differing sending of *Geschick*. Heidegger also expresses *Geschick* as the mutual appropriation that happens within the event.

To achieve this, I address Heidegger’s understanding of destiny, how this plays out in epochal sendings and what this means for our current epoch. Heidegger argues that our epoch is governed by the sending of the technological *Gestell*. He describes the progression of epochs from the First Beginning of the Greeks which has eventuated in modern technological society. As we saw in the first chapter, Heidegger argues that we are in danger of losing ourselves through a corresponding loss of possibilities relating to *Gestell*. Since *Gefahr*, *Gestell*, *Weltbild*, objectness and standing reserve were discussed in depth in the first chapter, I will only touch on them here. Nonetheless, Heidegger’s diagnosis of the problems of modern technological society and its relation to onto-theo-logy are significant in relation to destiny. I also briefly address Heidegger’s assessment of Nietzsche’s understanding of fate and destiny (including his *Amor fati*), the essential nature of nihilism as metaphysical, and his appraisal of Nietzsche’s position in the history of metaphysics. This

involves Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's expression 'God is Dead', which feeds into Heidegger's perspective on divinity. Firstly, I examine the terms *Geschick*, *Schicksal*, *Geschichte*, etc., in order to establish the manifold meanings and implications of Heidegger's terminology.

B. *Geschick* and *Schicksal*

Geschick in Heidegger's work is most often translated 'destiny'. *Schicksal* most often is 'fate'. Both depict both a power that determines events and the events themselves. 'Both come from *schicken*, now "to send", but originally "to arrange, order, prepare, dispatch" and correlative to *geschehen*, "to hurry, run, happen": to *schicken* something is to make it *geschehen*.'⁴⁸⁹ *Geschick* and *Schicksal* are 'happenings' (occurrences) and as such they constitute *Geschichte* (History). *Geschick* also denotes (cap)ability: to be *Geschickt* is to be skilled. '*Sich schicken*' means to be appropriate, proper or fitting ('*chic*' comes from *schicken*). It also converges with '*Schickung*' or 'act of providence'.⁴⁹⁰ 'To send oneself [*sich schicken*, to be fitting, suitable, to reconcile oneself with] means to set out to comply with the indicated directive' (BL, 64). Both *Geschick* and *Schicksal* are occurrences which are given and sent, which are determined by a power that is not under *Dasein*'s control. The sending of destiny determines that which is appropriate to each epoch, and to comport oneself appropriately is to choose to comply with the destiny of the epoch.

⁴⁸⁹ Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, p.67.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.69.

Michael Inwood explains that the earlier Heidegger sometimes links *Schicksal* with ‘grace’ and ‘calling’, drawing on themes from Weber’s reading of Calvin and from Spengler who argued that, whilst causality reigns in nature, fate reigns in history.⁴⁹¹ In BT, ‘*Schicksal*’ is Dasein’s self-chosen destiny; the simplicity of Dasein’s being-toward-death as its certain and individuating fate. ‘*Geschick*’ in BT is the combined destiny of individual fates (BT, 384). ‘In repetition fateful destiny can be explicitly disclosed in its bond with the heritage that has come down to us’ (BT, 386). It is the collective ‘thrownness’ of a group, widened into an epoch: the individual destinies of Dasein that play out together in the collective sending of the epoch. However, Inwood states that this ‘distinction between *Schicksal* and *Geschick* does not survive BT.’⁴⁹² On the other hand, Karl Löwith suggests that Heidegger is ‘continually at pains to distinguish *Geschick* from *Schicksal*.’⁴⁹³ Whether or not the distinction holds up in each instance remains ambiguous: for example, Heidegger discusses both the ‘fate’ of groups and the ‘destiny’ of individuals.

The relationship between *Geschick*, time and being also serves to undermine linear causality in terms of the epochal changes of history, for the source of the sending remains non-calculable and retains a mystical element. In CP, Heidegger explains that causality renders life and lived experience accessible to causal calculation and then posits knowledge within its limited scope (CP, 115).

⁴⁹¹Ibid, p.67.

⁴⁹² Ibid, p.68.

⁴⁹³ Karl Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, trans. Gary Steiner (New York; Columbia University Press, 1995), p.40 n.g.

Daniel O. Dahlstrom points out that Schicksal is Hölderlin's word for historical Being: Heidegger describes it as the uncanny that thwarts and annoys everything small and calculative.⁴⁹⁴ Fate seems blind when we try to calculate it, and is seen as merely the unpredictable: 'for thinking that only calculates, fate must be an impenetrable cause or its effect. In stark contrast to this sort of thinking, Hölderlin names and thinks the essential ground of fate as wholeheartedness, engaged through the event.'⁴⁹⁵ It is possible then that, for Heidegger, it is our way of seeing destiny through the lens of Gestell that paints it as 'fate' with negative connotations. Our attempts to control and predict our destiny lead us to the danger that we may lose our human essence in becoming incapable of finding the trace back to the path out of Gestell.

In discussing the relationship between Being and Dasein, William J. Richardson offers a reading of Geschick as 'mittence'. Since Being (Sein) is conceived as sending itself to its there (Da), it is self-emitting. It terminates in its there as a com-mitting or com-mitment (his expression of 'Schicksal') of Dasein to its 'privileged destiny as the shepherd of Being.'⁴⁹⁶ Moreover, there is an intrinsic negativity to the mittence of Being, since every bestowing also withdraws and conceals itself in the very beings it permits. Because of the intrinsic negativity, 'no single mittence exhausts the power of Being to reveal itself. Hence Being discloses itself to the nature of man by a plurality of mittences, which we shall call "intermittence" (Ge-schick-te), and it is this that constitutes history (Geschichte).'⁴⁹⁷ When

⁴⁹⁴ Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.73.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p.73

⁴⁹⁶ William J. Richardson, *Heidegger, through Phenomenology to Thought*, Fordham Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham UP, 2003), p.21.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

thinking is undertaken in genuine response to mittence, the attitude is one of acquiescence to Being in responding to its appeal, or letting Being be itself.⁴⁹⁸

The interpretation of Schicksal as commitment allows less problematic interpretation of ‘fate’ as a mutual engagement of Being and Dasein with Being granting Dasein its elevated position, rather than a bleak enforcement that denies Dasein’s freedom. However, as Heidegger tells us, ‘The essence of freedom is originally not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing’ (QCT, 230). Freedom, then, is not the drive to autonomy and complete human control over outcomes. As we will see, it is rather the appropriate positioning of Dasein to its destiny: it is the appropriate (and appropriating) relationship between the It that sends Geschick, and Dasein. It is also ‘that before which the entire tradition [of metaphysics] is summoned.’⁴⁹⁹

C. Epochs, History and the Sending-Withholding of Geschick

Heidegger provides a particularly helpful paragraph describing Geschick in ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, worth quoting here at length. After his explanation of Gestell as a ‘challenging-forth’, a version of ‘bringing-forth’ that obscures other possibilities and more to the point obscures the co-responsive essential nature of techne as poiesis, he goes on to discuss Geschick:

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Loscerbo, *Being and Technology*, p.157.

“To start upon a way” means “to send” in our ordinary language. We shall call the sending that gathers [versammelnde Schicken], that first starts man upon a way of revealing, destining [Geschick]. It is from this destining that the essence of all history [Geschichte] is determined. History is neither simply the object of written chronicle nor merely the process of human activity. That activity first becomes history as something destined. ... Enframing, as a challenging-forth into ordering, sends into a way of revealing. Enframing is an ordaining of destining, as is every way of revealing. Bringing-forth, poiesis, is also a destining in this sense. Always the unconcealment of that which is goes upon a way of revealing. Always the destining of revealing holds sway over men. But that destining is never a fate that compels. For man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens, though not one who simply obeys (QT, 230).

The collective fate of the epoch manifests a particular way of encountering the truth of Being, destined for a given epoch. This gathering of individual fates into a given Geschick allows the possibility of coming to the truth of Being. Heidegger identifies a number of characteristics here which are important to bear in mind throughout the following discussion: Geschick is a sending that starts humanity on a particular path; history is not determined by human action nor is it a matter of chronicle, but rather history depends on its being-destined, or to put it another way, destiny is the horizon of the possibility of history; Gestell is itself a Geschick, a mode of revealing that prevails in our technological epoch, as much a destined way of revealing as is poiesis; each epoch has a particular way of revealing that is an ‘unconcealment’; this is not a compelled fate, but a liberation of humanity in which we are elevated to a free belonging to Geschick as those who listen, and so participate, rather than simply obey.

Paul Tillich, who often writes in conversation with Heidegger, identifies the play between human freedom and destiny as an ontological polarity, rather than the usual focus on the relationship between freedom and necessity, because destiny applies to a being that is free

where determinism does not.⁵⁰⁰ Moreover, determinism does not engage with expressing truth since it is merely a matter of mechanical necessity. Freedom, he argues, is not simply a function of the will, but of the complete self – including the aspects of deliberation, decision, and responsibility. When a person is reduced to their will, the parts of the self which deliberate, decide and take responsibility for those decisions are pushed aside. Destiny is, for Tillich, the basis of selfhood from which our decisions arise, are given, shaped by nature, and decided by the whole self not just the epistemological subject. ‘My destiny is the basis of my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.’⁵⁰¹

It is through estrangement, Tillich explains, that we lose the correlative between freedom and destiny and come to see it as contradictory to human freedom. When we place ourselves at the centre, the freedom that is congruous with destiny is lost; when freedom is not directed by the indications of destiny, it appears to be determined by outside causes or internal compulsions rather than the result of considered and responsible decision. ‘Man has used his freedom to waste his freedom; and it is his destiny to lose his destiny.’⁵⁰² For Tillich’s Christian perspective, it is through grace that the bondage of the will may be overcome and the estranged reunited. This reunion may then allow us to make decisions in accordance with our destiny.

Heidegger would object to Tillich’s theological emphasis, but Tillich provides helpful elucidation nonetheless. He explains that destiny is not predetermined outplaying of fate but

⁵⁰⁰ See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p.201-2.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, p.204.

⁵⁰² Ibid, p.73.

a fully cognisant choice which is nonetheless tempered and guided by destiny. This is not fully under the control of the individual, for the individual is guided by destiny not simply by arbitrary choices of a malformed will. He also helps to articulate the problem as a matter of considering destiny as though it is the outplaying of linear causality itself determined by ontotheological and calculative thinking – that is, as though it were fate divorced from the choices of the individual.

For Heidegger, the Dasein who freely belongs to their destiny is not resigned to fate but is actively listening and participating with the direction of their path. Since history is the happening of that which is sent, it could be read as ‘predetermined’ insofar as the possible sending/s would have always been possible within the truth of Being. However, since the sendings do not originate with a conscious entity, a predetermined ‘plan’ is necessarily precluded. That which changes in differing epochs is the manner of beyng’s unconcealment. This is not, however, the progression of a predetermined historical telos, and it is in no way predictable. Instead, it requires an apposite posture of attentive listening and learning to live in the ‘nameless’ whilst we await beyng’s self-disclosure. ‘Before he speaks, man must first let himself be claimed again by Being, taking the risk that under this claim he will seldom have much to say’ (LH, 151).

D. ‘It Gives’: Geschick, Time and Being

We saw in the discussion of the event that whilst in English we usually translate ‘Es gibt’ as ‘there is’ it means also ‘it gives’. Peter Warnek identifies three aspects of Es gibt: being as

a gift, that which gives being, and the giving itself.⁵⁰³ With regard specifically to *Geschick*, although it would simple matter to say “the It that gives is Being and it gives destiny”, Warnek points out that this thinks Being as an objectified ‘It’– Being predicated inappropriately as a being – and this takes Being for granted. Moreover, in every designation of Being as a being, Being itself withdraws. This is where we need a step back from the metaphysical tradition of thinking Being as presence or present. Heidegger, as we have seen, puts all aspects of the giving of ‘Es gibt’ together in the event of giving and avoids the reduction of Being to an ‘it’. The focus is not on the ‘It’ that gives but on the mutual participation in giving/receiving through the event.

As we discussed in the previous chapter, the event is such that we cannot say that it is or that it is given. Heidegger argues, ‘There is a growing danger that when we speak of “It”, we arbitrarily posit an indeterminate power which is supposed to bring about all giving of Being and of time’ (TB, 17). He wants to avoid this and to hold fast to the manifold co-responsive ‘coming to presence’ that may manifest Being. The temporal absences of past and future are inherent to Being’s manifestation as presence, which is the destiny to which it is sent. True temporality is that which ‘opens up’ and ‘extends’ naming the presence of an absence, the no-longer and the not-yet. The appropriation through the event of destiny also holds an expropriation: presence and absence. More than this, it is not entirely accurate to say that the It that sends is Being. Whilst he does say that destiny is a dispensation of Being (BL, 65), we find in Heidegger’s late essay TB that both time and Being are themselves ‘sent’: both are given but they do not supply each other. They are given by the undetermined ‘It’,

⁵⁰³ Peter Warnek, ‘The History of Being’, in Bret Davis ed, *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2013), p.156.

which in essence remains a mystery (TB, 17). We can say, however, that the giving itself is what gives: the 'it' should not be identified as Being or as an agent as such.

William Richardson's explanation of *Geschick* as 'mittence' offers us the understanding of time and being as concomitant. In these terms, it is the mutual relationship between these cor-responsive parts that is worth thinking about. For, these emerge together and correspond, as 'equiprimordial': they are both a part of the providential sending. Further, this relates particularly to the relationship between Being and Dasein. 'Appropriation is non-metaphysical because in the relationship between man and Being as appropriated to each other, the relationship is more fundamental than that which is related.'⁵⁰⁴ Appropriation and *Geschick*, then, are very closely intertwined in Heidegger's discussion of destiny, since the event appropriates Dasein to destiny, and destiny is sent alongside both time and being which coalesce in the event.

Heidegger further explains the nature of the relationship between *Geschick*, time and Being. 'Being proves to be destiny's gift of presence, a gift granted by the giving of time' (TB, 22). The source which sends holds itself back in giving. Since we cannot appropriately identify a causative power, positing an arbitrary cause (especially a *causa sui*) would only serve to obscure further the corresponsive causes and their mutual, participatory character. Similarly, to say that the It which gives is Being posits Being as the cause and obscures the participation of 'true' time and therefore of *Geschick*. When we adopt the true time which pertains to *Geschick* as the 'opening' and 'extending' – rather than a series of 'nows' in linear

⁵⁰⁴Joan Stambaugh, 'Translator's Introduction' in TB, p.x.

temporality – ‘the first source of all the leitmotifs of thinking, it gives voice to a binding of all thinking, providing that thinking submits to the call of what must be thought’ (TB, 24).

In order for destiny to be freely chosen by responsible participants, *Geschick* may be understood as pertaining to a continued choice and invoking a personal aspect. If not, it would resolve into precisely the determinism that Tillich critiques, reducing our engagement to a surrender to arbitrary forces and compulsions. Since in happening, the event appropriates us to our destiny, we experience our *Geschick* in relation to us. The act of participation itself suggests an intimate element, since appropriation in the event brings us back to that which is the nearest of the near. So, although Heidegger does not envisage God as the source of our *Geschick*, we nonetheless find an intimate element in participation, mutual appropriation, and in being obedient, steadfast, compassionate and cor-responsive (as we saw in the previous chapter).

However, Heidegger emphasises that humanity does not decide that Being is characterised as presence, just as it does not decide how this characterisation is to change from one epoch to another. We do not decide the destiny of our epoch through force of will. ‘For this character of Being has long since been decided without our contribution, let alone our merit. Thus, we are bound to the characterisation of Being as presencing’ (TB, 7). Moreover, this determination – the ‘de-cision’ between Being and beings – ‘is never first made and executed by a human being. Rather, its direction and perdurance decide about man and, in a different way, about the god’ (N III, 5).

Every epoch has a characteristic way of revealing as a ‘giving which gives only its gift, but in giving holds itself back and withdraws, such a giving we call sending’ (TB 8). Since in

this context the behaviour of aletheia pertains to epochs, each epoch un/conceals the truth of being in a particular way. As Loscerbo puts it, ‘the structure characteristic of *Geschick* makes itself manifest in the notion of “truth” as “unconcealment”.’⁵⁰⁵ In terms of history, this interrupts and even denies the common concept of linear history and temporality. Since there is always a withholding, ‘each epoch necessarily misnames and misconstrues being by thinking it in terms of beings or, what is the same, failing to come to terms with its withdrawal.’⁵⁰⁶ Whilst there is tradition between epochs, and as such there is epochal inheritance, they do not derive directly from one another so as to present a linear development. Rather, they each spring forth from the ‘Same’ hidden source. ‘Each epoch is a way that presence transmits itself to Western humanity.’⁵⁰⁷ Each sending is given by that which also gives time and Being, all within the event of appropriation.

E. Epochal Erasure of Being

Heidegger explains that the long duration of the epoch of onto-theo-logy has thought Being as presence in various forms, but it has failed to see the withdrawal of Being in favour of focus on beings and to question Being adequately. However, the long epoch which has unfolded into that of modern technology has not enjoyed a significant change in its *Geschick* since the original sending, hence our need to step back and be attentive to the retrieval of possibilities toward the Second Beginning. It seems, then, that whilst Heidegger does differentiate between the historical epochal changes that have happened since ‘the Greeks’,

⁵⁰⁵ Loscerbo, *Being and Technology*, p.199.

⁵⁰⁶ Daniel O. Dahlstrom, ‘A Heidegger Dictionary’, p.64.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

these are not in themselves new sendings, but are rather the Same progressive focus on thinking Being as presence which have led us further away from the source of destiny, which remains a mystery in self-withholding. Again, this is not to imply that we could attain full access to this source, but rather that we have forgotten that something is withheld.

Moreover, when an epoch is named, that name obscures the remainder – that which is hidden – and leaves it as the unthought. This withholding is implied in the Greek ‘epoche’ which Heidegger explains is ‘to hold back’ (TB, 9). These epochs are not a span of time but a holding-back of Being allowing beings to manifest. ‘The sequence of epochs in the destiny of Being is not accidental, nor can it be calculated as necessary. Still, what is appropriate shows itself in the destiny ... in the belonging-together of the epochs’ (TB, 9). The epochs overlap and obscure the original sending. As we noted above, the gradual removal of obscuring covers (traditions, specifically onto-theo-logy) may allow thinking insight into *Geschick*.

Being is always under erasure because every epoch is defined by a singular way of taking being for granted. Being sends its own epochal erasure. ‘As a history, then, it can be said that being shows itself as ground only by hiding itself as a groundless sending from nowhere.’⁵⁰⁸ Heidegger tells us, ‘the destiny of Being makes its way over beings in abrupt epochs of truth; in each phase of metaphysics, a particular piece of that way becomes apparent’ (NWGID,157-8). It is, perhaps, in seeing each epoch as holding something back of a previous epoch, in withdrawing and holding in abeyance a previously unconcealed

⁵⁰⁸ Warnek, *The History of Being*, p.164.

aspect of the truth of being, that Heidegger differs most significantly from Hegel's accumulative understanding of knowledge between epochs. For Heidegger, the epochs are not so much as an accumulation as such, but as an eruption of newness or the renewal of previously unrealised possibility. 'The epochs do not "belong together" except in the step back into the destined withdrawal, in which what becomes evident is the belonging together of the strange in strangeness.'⁵⁰⁹ However, if we try to look at this erasure, we may catch a glimpse of the new beginning, a new destiny.

In LH, Heidegger argues that possibility is granted or opened up in the favouring (Mögen) of Being. In the dominant metaphysical paradigm, possibility and actuality are contrasted as *existentia* and *essentia*. Heidegger critiques this, arguing that possibility is granted and enabled by Being and Being preserves human essence by preserving possibilities. Humanism defines human essence metaphysically rather than as *ek-sistence* – that is, in proper relation to Being, from which *Dasein* is granted destiny. In relation to his own earlier discussion of *Sorge* in BT, he says that as 'ek-sisting, man sustains *Da-sein* in that he takes up the *Da*, the clearing of Being, into "care". But *Da-sein* itself occurs essentially as "thrown". 'It unfolds essentially in the throw of Being as the fateful sending' (LH, 157). He is clear that we are thrown into pre-given ways of thinking which determine our possibilities, as individual fate and collective destiny. Nonetheless, we are most fully *Da-sein* when we do not simply assent to our fates but comport ourselves toward other possibilities by paying vigilant attention to that which has thrown us there.

⁵⁰⁹Ibid, p.164

This being-thrown or being contextualised of course suggests that our thinking is always already conditioned by what has already been thought. For Heidegger, this is not a simple inheritance of a predecessor's thinking. Rather, these ways of thinking are indications to look back to what was not yet expressed, the unthought. This could become an impetus for guiding the destiny of humanity to a point where it thoughtfully attends to the truth of what governs it. However, this should only be done for the honour of Being and the benefit of Dasein, not to legitimise or vindicate human civilisation or culture.

Man does not decide whether and how beings appear, whether and how God and the gods or history and nature come forward into the clearing of Being, come to presence and depart. The advent of beings lies in the destiny of Being. But for the man it is ever a question of finding what is fitting in his essence that corresponds to such destiny, for in accord with this destiny man as ek-sisting has to guard the truth of Being. Man is the shepherd of Being (LH, 159)

Dasein is manifest in ek-sisting, in standing-out. Of course, Heidegger does not see this in terms of a subject standing out from an object. 'Rather, before all this, man in his essence is ek-sistent into the openness of Being, into the open region that clears the "between" within which a "relation" of subject to object can "be".' (LH, 172) Ek-sisting is more primordial than any understanding of subject-object relation or reduction to standing-reserve.

F. Technology, Gestell and Geschick

Turning to discuss the technological Geschick, which is Gestell, we come again to Heidegger's concern that our current situation endangers our essence. When Heidegger borrows from Hölderlin 'there is the saving power also', this power is concomitant with the very nature of our ontotheological destiny as nihilistic, as humanistic, and as technological. As we saw in the first chapter and will only briefly recap here, the four causes which bring

into presence and to which the essence of *techne* relates, ‘let’ something emerge into presence and are responsible for that thing’s ‘presencing’. They do not force it into presence. ‘The principle characteristic of being responsible is this starting something on its way to arrival ... an occasioning or an inducing to go forward [Ver-an-lassen]’ (QCT, 221). The eventual emerging of the induced thing is tantamount to its *Geschick*. ‘These four ways are unifiedly governed by a bringing that brings into appearance’ (QCT, 221). Like time and Being, these causes are concomitant – they are sent together.

Heidegger explains that the *Geschick* of our modern technological epoch is *Ge-Stell* – the mode of revealing that is available and fitting to our epoch. When we respond to it, it is a response to the call of unconcealment, even when it seems contradictory (QCT, 226). Whilst he highlights the danger of *Ge-Stell*, he argues that the space of destining in which we sojourn is not a ‘stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or to rebel helplessly against it and curse it as the work of the devil. Quite to the contrary, when we once open ourselves expressly to the essence of technology we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim’ (QCT, 231). It is a freeing claim precisely because freedom is belonging to the *Geschick*, not the constraint of laws or unfettered possible choices. Moreover, the essence of technology is bound up with the sending which gestures to the ‘*Es Gibt*’ of the source of the sending. ‘Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing shimmers the veil that hides the essential occurrence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any time starts a revealing on its way’ (QCT, 230). It is only when we come to see that there is something veiled, mysterious, and readjust ourselves toward a possible new beginning or new *Geschick*, that we may approach freedom – a freedom that, of course, participates in the appropriation of a new *Geschick*.

Since Gestell itself is a part of the granting from which the first beginning is sent, we continually approach ‘the brink of the possibility of pursuing and promulgating nothing but what is revealed in ordering, and of deriving all [our] standards on this basis’ (QCT, 231). There is always the possibility that we will fail to recognise or misconstrue in our attempts to control and predict Geschick through Gestell. However, Heidegger argues that it is only through coming to recognise that Gestell is a destining that we may become free to recognise our essence as destined. It is the task of thinking to address the primal character of being-sent. This is not ‘the absurd wish to revive what is past, but rather the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of the dawn’ (QCT, 228). Whilst we are still not yet thinking the essence of the destinal as dispensation, sending, compliance (BL, 65), we may come to do so. We cannot expect that a destiny, as a sending and opening up of possibilities, would be completed in the present. Just as Nietzsche is a destiny and has not yet ‘culminated’ metaphysics, nor has Ge-Stell yet resolved to a final fate or ‘a completely oppressive doom’ (BL, 71).

G. Nietzsche, the Love of Fate (Amor Fati) and the Death of The Holy

Heidegger explains that the technological ordering of reality not only endangers the other possible sendings and thus the possibility of a new beginning, it also denies and obscures the holy. When God is reduced to a causa efficiens, when God is ‘killed’, we lose ‘all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance... He then becomes even in theology the God of the philosophers, namely of those who define the unconcealed and the concealed in terms of the causality of making, without ever considering the essential provenience of

this causality' (QCT, 231). Heidegger explains that the loss of the holy, in its being closed off, is a significant danger of our epoch. 'The sole malignancy of this world-epoch may be that the dimension of the hale (das Heile), the holy, is closed' (LH, 172). God is dead and we killed him.

Whilst Heidegger agrees with Nietzsche that metaphysics is a kind of philosophy that needs to be 'overcome', he sees Nietzsche as a metaphysician: the metaphysician to end the reign of onto-theo-logical metaphysics by revealing its inherent nihilism. Nonetheless, he sees Nietzsche as one of the essential thinkers: 'those exceptional human beings who are destined to think one single thought, a thought that is always "about" beings as a whole' (NIII, 4). When he describes Nietzsche as the culmination of metaphysics, he is clear that he does not mean that Nietzsche's work is a final puzzle-piece that completes the image.

Consummation means the unimpeded development of all the essential powers of beings, powers that have been reserved for a long time, to what they demand as a whole. The metaphysical consummation of an age is not the mere tapering off of what is already familiar. It is the unconditioned and complete installation, for the first time and in advance, of what is unexpected and never to be expected (NIII, 7).

By comparison to the previous epochal development, the consummation is novel. Nietzsche's thought stretches back to the beginning of metaphysics (again, implying that the history of metaphysics is one long epoch). Nonetheless, he does not see it as reverting to this first commencement. Rather, Nietzsche apprehended the commencement in the light of a philosophy in decline from it. Nietzsche's work is not 'the new beginning'. The circle into which Nietzsche enters is that of the first beginning, which has become inflexible and within which there are no more possibilities being released for thinking about the guiding question. It must lead to the unfolding of a more original inquiry: such questioning after the reversal of metaphysics must 'be the unfolding of the prior, all-determining, and commanding

question of philosophy, the guiding question, “What is being?” out of itself and out beyond itself’ (N II, 205).

Heidegger explains that Nietzsche’s fundamental metaphysical position is that of amor fati, the love of fate. Love is to be understood here as will ‘that wants what it loves to be in essence’ (NII, 207); fate or necessity here is not a fatality that is implacable and overwhelming but ‘that turning of need which unveils itself in the awestruck moment as an eternity ... pregnant with the becoming of being as a whole’. Amor fati is the ‘transfiguring will to belong to what is most in being and among beings’ (N II, 207). Nietzsche changes the ‘it is’ to ‘I willed it thus’ by rethinking the history of metaphysics as the will to will. This is a choice to will that to which one is fated. Whilst a ‘fatum is unpropitious, disruptive, and devastating to one who merely stands there and lets it whelm him’ (NII, 207), to the one who grasps that he belongs to his own fate, it is sublime.

Heidegger argues that whilst this looks like atheism, it ‘is at bottom the very opposite’ (N II, 208). Whilst the Christian God has lost the power to determine humanity according to Nietzsche (N IV, 4), Nietzsche’s metaphysics is nonetheless a theology. For ‘although it seems far removed from scholastic metaphysics’ his ‘ontology thinks the existencia of beings as such and as a whole theologically as the eternal recurrence of the same.’ It is a negative theology revealed in ‘God is dead’, which ‘is an expression not of atheism but of ontotheology, in that metaphysics in which nihilism proper is fulfilled’ (N IV, 210).

In his 1943 essay, ‘Nietzsche’s Word: God is Dead’, Heidegger again presents Nietzsche as the culmination of the long destiny of metaphysics. He explains that, although Nietzsche’s work is exceptional, it is not his possession or achievement any more than any particular

metaphysics belongs to any particular thinker. Heidegger means here the history of Western metaphysics, which has become 'deprived of its own essential possibility' and reversed by Nietzsche. This inherent nihilism at the centre of metaphysics has become most apparent through Nietzsche's reversing of metaphysics. Nietzsche interprets the course of Western history metaphysically as the advent and development of nihilism, and does not himself escape metaphysics in thinking ontologically. 'All metaphysical thinking is onto-logy, or it is nothing at all' (NWGID, 158). As such, it is a thinking that takes into account beings as a whole and in so doing belongs essentially to metaphysics, which is concerned with ontology. When the whole of Western history is explained by reference to nihilism, this is itself a metaphysical thinking.

Heidegger argues that in order to step back into the essential nature of metaphysics, we need a kind of thinking which creates the scope in which humanity may enter such a relationship. This kind of thinking is inconspicuous and serves neither to replace metaphysics nor to build up the esteem of the thinker. It is, rather, about getting back into the appropriate relationship with that which commenced the first beginning. (This reflects his arguments on retrieval and the new beginning seen in the chapter on repetition. We recall that it cannot be known in advance where and when this new relationship will unfold (NWGID, 159).)

Heidegger explains that, in Nietzsche, 'God is the name for the realm of ideas and the ideal' (NWGID, 162). The Late Greek and the Christian interpretations of Platonic philosophy have posited this supersensory realm as the true, actually real world. This in turn has denied this sensory world its reality and has rendered the changeable world merely apparent. To say that 'God is dead' is to say that the supersensory world of metaphysics – the ontotheological world where God is equated with metaphysical Being of beings – is powerless to effect the

world in which we all live. 'If God – as the supersensory ground and as the goal of everything that is real – is dead, if the supersensory world of ideas is bereft of its binding and above all its inspiring and constructive power, then there is nothing left which man can rely on and by which he can orient himself' (NWGID, 163).

That 'God is dead' is itself a part of the historical movement – the *Geschick* – of Western philosophy. It has been shown that onto-theo-logy is essentially nihilistic through Nietzsche's work: it is not a modern movement, but belongs to Western metaphysical thinking (NWGID, 166). Because of its essentially nihilistic nature, a simple reversal of metaphysics which tries to locate meaning in the self-determining of humanity will remain entangled with it as part of the recurring sameness (NWGID, 173). As such, Nietzsche's 'reversal' is thought metaphysically and not existentially.

It is within this context that we are treated to a rare later Heidegger comment on Kierkegaard (also mentioned in the introduction):

Although he cites Aristotle more often, Kierkegaard is essentially distant from him. For Kierkegaard is not a thinker but a religious writer, and not just one religious writer among others, but the only one who accords with the destiny of his age. His greatness lies in this fact – unless talking in this way is already a misunderstanding. (NWGID 186)

This statement is often regarded as a dressing down of Kierkegaard as merely a religious and ontic writer. For example, Caputo reads this as Heidegger commenting that Kierkegaard only achieved a response to his own society's current thinking and failed to step back to consider destining itself.⁵¹⁰ However, the comment that Kierkegaard is the only religious

⁵¹⁰ Caputo, 'Kierkegaard, Heidegger and the Foundering of Metaphysics', p 202.

writer who writes in accordance with the destiny his age is perhaps much more complimentary than it appears. For, if he writes in accordance with the *Geschick* of his age, then perhaps he is in Heidegger's estimation one of those who is in tune with the sending of Being even if he does 'misinterpret' this as a theological calling. If we look back to the earlier comment that the question for humanity is to find that which is fitting in his essence and which accords to destiny we could possibly suggest that, on Heidegger's reading, Kierkegaard's essence is as a religious writer who writes according to the *Geschick* of his age. When Heidegger then proceeds to comment that Kierkegaard's greatness 'lies in this fact', we can see a great respect for Kierkegaard's writing despite its religious flavour. And, if to speak of a great writer's greatness in terms of writing in accordance with the *Geschick* of his age is a misunderstanding, the misunderstanding is the thought that the writer's greatness stems from his own prowess as an author rather than from the sending of Being itself. (As we discuss in the next section, this resonates with Kierkegaard's own relationship with Styrelse.) In this context, it is high praise to say that Kierkegaard's greatness lies in his accordance with the *Geschick* of his age. So, the comment remains ambiguous rather than derogatory.

Heidegger continues by explaining that, whilst Christian faith will still exist in some forms, it is not Christian love that prevails in our epoch (NWGID, 189). 'God ceases to be a living God as in our continuing attempts to master the real we fail to take his reality seriously beforehand and question it' (NWGID, 190). Due to God's place in the *Geschick* of onto-theo-logy, which has become the technological *Weltbild*, God's effective power in the world has dwindled as the focus on objectness and the subsequent reduction to standing reserve has taken precedence. For Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, it is not that humanity has usurped the place of God since this is not part of humanity's essential realm. 'The place

which, metaphysically thought, is proper to God is the region of causal effectivity and the preservation of beings as created beings' (NWGID, 190). Another region has opened up that is not essential for humanity or God – yet we may enter a distinctive relationship with this region. In modern metaphysics, this region is 'subjectivity'. In rising up into 'subjectivity', humanity has imposed the self/subject over against the world as object. 'Earth shows itself now only as the object of the attack arranged in the willing of man as absolute objectifying' (NWGID, 191). This region limits the ways in which humanity comes into relation with Being and with the world in terms of the subject-object relation. We do not experience the multiplicity of meanings; meanings which other epochs are permitted (NWGID, 193). Nonetheless, this is part of that *Geschick* which Western humanity has been granted.

Thinking has remained oblivious to Being, and this has allowed Being and God to become mere values in the metaphysical system. It is failed to take the essential absence: in thinking Being as presence we have skipped over the negativity or nothingness intrinsic to every sending of Being. Heidegger asks, 'What is it is only in that nothing [of nihilism] that the formerly disguised essence of nihilism announces itself?' (NWGID, 193). This essence of nihilism is the essential negativity (withholding) in the destiny of metaphysics itself.

Heidegger continues

...the harshest blow against God is not that God is held to be unknowable, nor that God's existence is proved to be unprovable, but rather that the God who is taken for real is elevated to the highest value. This blow is the harshest precisely because it does not come from unbelievers standing about, but from the faithful and their theologians, who talk of the beingmost of all beings without ever letting it occur to them to think about Being itself and thereby become aware that this thinking and that talking, from the perspective of the faith, is absolute blasphemy when it is mixed into the theology of the faith (NWGID 194)

Nonetheless, this is the destiny of metaphysics. The history of beings begins with forgetting Being: Being must recede for beings to stand out. 'This strange staying-absent of Being is then the sole responsibility of metaphysics as metaphysics' (NWGID 196-7). Being remains

forgotten and unthought. Heidegger concludes that Nietzsche's deranged man is not an unbeliever because God becomes unworthy of belief, but rather he abandons the possibility of faith and so he is unable to seek God.

John Richardson argues that, in Heidegger's turn from Nietzsche to Hölderlin, he becomes critical of Nietzsche's view that humanity should take the place of the dead god as master of all.⁵¹¹ Richardson suggests that this positive movement explains Heidegger's change in style, where the later work is often more poetic or literary. He also argues that there is a religious element in Heidegger's re-appropriation of Nietzsche. Whereas Nietzsche leaves no space for the gods, Heidegger argues that in order for the step back and new beginning to occur we must have space for the gods or divinity, as one of the fourfold co-operative parts through which we may receive the truth that Being sends. Richardson argues that Heidegger's later work shows that we require the divine for an appropriate relation to the truth of being, although the divine is not for him a first principle but is nonetheless 'intimately related to the ultimate encounter with being itself.'⁵¹² Metaphysics has progressively driven God out of theology, achieved most fully by Nietzsche.⁵¹³

III: Divergence and Convergence

⁵¹¹ John Richardson, *Heidegger*, Routledge Philosophers (London: Routledge, 2012), p.205.

⁵¹²Ibid, p.338.

⁵¹³Ibid, p.347.

For Kierkegaard and for Heidegger, the realisation that humanity is caught up in attempting to control and be the single cause of its own fate is a significant part of the critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. For in placing itself at the centre and privileging the epistemological subject, humanity tries to assume a perspective of reality in which it can control and predict the consequences of its actions. Which, of course, repeatedly fails. In trying to place humanity as the detached overseer of reality, onto-theo-logical thought denies and obscures the truth that the human essence is one which has the character of being-led. Whether we are led through God's patient and unobtrusive guidance as the prompter of our lives, or by the realisation of the destiny which our epoch is granted and the possibility of participating in the realisation of as yet concealed truths of being, human essence is not that of a radically free epistemological subject who wills themselves into realisation of whatever destiny seems the most desirable.

Due to the situation or context in which we find ourselves, it is difficult for us to come to see that destiny is not a matter of mechanical necessity and constraint (determinism). When we view destiny in this way, we fail to understand that it is only as Dasein in comportment toward destiny that we may choose to follow our destiny as an expression of that freedom. Likewise, it is only as individuals committed to a right relationship with God that we might come to recognise and strive for our most complete self with the proddings from Styrelsen. Our destiny is always communicated to us through, or gifted to us by our guide, within our given situation.

We saw in the first chapter that the modern context is that of Kierkegaard's present age (age of reflection) or Heidegger's technological age. These circumstances, wherein the nature of humanity is so obscured by onto-theo-logical thinking and the truth of existence is hidden

beneath what is presented to us as ostensibly true, require indirect communication. There is for each thinker an urgent need to invite and participate in change, as a move toward redemption. Both suggest that becoming vulnerable to the guiding power with which we are cor-responsively engaged may open up possibilities for this change, and that humility and even self-erasure regarding one's own authorial prowess is a necessary part of surrendering and disrupting the linear causality that tries to control in advance what people are permitted to find in one's work. It is not, in either author's view, down to the author to claim credit for that which is of merit in one's writing. It should rather either an act of grateful worship (Kierkegaard) or an action of a quiet thinker who has been called to hear the voice of Being (Heidegger).

For both thinkers, the idea that history is predestined or predetermined in a way which could be predicted or understood by humanity is wrong-footed. For Kierkegaard, whilst God may have an overall plan for the cosmos, that is not for humanity to know. Attempts like the theory of predestination to explain God's plan to ourselves are both hubristic and fearful. For Heidegger, whilst there may be some internal reason to the sendings of destiny and how and why each play out in the order that they do is not within the grasp of human understanding – not because of any lack of intellectual capacity on our part but due to being's self-withholding which is always a part of any destining or revelation. Kierkegaard shows us that revelation in our age has become a blasphemous matter of intellectual assessment; Heidegger explains that our age has only one form of revelation and it is prescribed by Gestell: should we wish to change this we must await the turning of Being and the new *Geschick*. There is a shared element of gratitude.

Whilst for Heidegger there is not a personal God who provides governance and guidance as does Kierkegaard's Styrelsen, there is nonetheless what we may call an intimate element in any participation in an appropriating event. Whilst Kierkegaard's God is not fully knowable and cannot be ascertained in terms of being the Cause, our encounters with God are always personal. Finally, whilst Kierkegaard's reformation of the person towards becoming a Christian in right relationship with God has a moral basis, Heidegger keeps any moral views he may hold about destiny guarded.

We have seen, then, that there are shared structural resonances between Heidegger and Kierkegaard's responses to the problem of onto-theo-logically predetermined destiny or fate. Moreover, each expresses predestination in terms of linear causality as inherently problematic in terms of stultifying human existence. Heidegger expresses the sending of being as a gift of Ereignis, and a movement of poiesis. He complains that in a situation predominated by Ge-Stell, we are all but completely closed off from the holy (which would presence in the Ereignis of the world worlding). Again, structural resonances may be seen but Heidegger is more attuned here to his post-monotheistic project rather than any explicitly Christian articulations.

The most significant findings of this chapter, however, are in Kierkegaard's portrayal of the nature of Governance in his own authorial structure and unconventional method. For, in following Kierkegaard's critique of predestination and overly prescriptive onto-theo-(ego)-logical causality which posits the outcome of history as a predetermined objective state of affairs, we found that Kierkegaard illustrated his critique of that 'sedentary piety' in discussing his creative outpouring. He presented his (fictionalised) life as an artefact of divine creativity, writing his historically actual self out of the authorship in a multi-levelled

fragmentation of authorial authority, relinquishing the Author-God hold over his production. He affected an indirect communication not only of the problems of onto-theo-(ego)-logy but of the problems of viewing the subject as a cause of a thing's coming into existence. More than this, in disrupting the sovereignty of the cause he also showed that causes are obscured and not available for scrutiny, and that beginnings are withdrawn along with the thing's coming about. This relinquishing of control over the authorship in turn showed a kenotic-typed creation at play in his work.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have highlighted the resonances between Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelian speculation and the later Heidegger's critique of onto-theo-(ego)-logy. I have traced points at which Heidegger has presented neopagan content within a structure which is convergent with Kierkegaard's own critique of speculation. We have considered several important areas of confluence, including a shared concern that God has been presented as the preeminent object of ontological inquiry. We also established a shared concern about the subject of German idealism being elevated to a false perspective, and the effect that this has on how the subject relates to both other subjects and to objects. Although Kierkegaard was less concerned about the subject's interaction with objects/things than Heidegger, he was concerned about the reduction of other subject to objects, particularly objects of scrutiny.

Throughout this thesis we have seen linear causality in terms of cause-and-effect thinking as probably the most significant problem, and which has been identified as an area of shared resonance. Although, as we have noted at several points, Kierkegaard does not offer an explicit critique of causality, he has nonetheless clearly critiqued abstracted perspectives and false absolute beginnings. Both thinkers have shown that the emergence of new qualities or new things or new ways of thinking happen through a leap, which is unpredictable, and the possibility of which is granted in the leaping. The leap is not a matter of human willing. They have also each suggested that the leap is tantamount to a gestalt shift in which one comes to recognise the truth of the situation: that our existence is abyssal. Nonetheless, each seems to argue that it is preferable to come to see it as such, even though it may lead to a

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less comfortable life. Each has described the view from the perspective of onto-theo-logy as an illusion and has related this to our view of the world/society.

Significantly, we have come to see that each of these thinkers identifies the human involvement in the creative act as misrepresented when the Creating Subject of German idealism and productionist metaphysics is presented as the locus of meaning for the production. Kierkegaard presents his own work as a co-authorship with Governance and, I argue, deliberately effaces his authorial 'I' in order to show how wrong-footed championing the human part in a creative act may be. Heidegger specifically argues that the efficient cause is not to be understood as the human who participates in a creative act. We might suggest that the Author God/Creating Subject is part of the illusion of productionist metaphysics which each of them identified as harmful.

They have each identified abstractions in beginnings as an area of concern, arguing at several points throughout the thesis that when a new quality emerges, the instant of its emergence is already withdrawn. There is an element of withdrawal in both of their work throughout this thesis. The moment and Ereignis each show that the movement of withdrawal means that both moment and Ereignis are abyssal. This means that, despite Heidegger's argument that Kierkegaard was championing an onto-theo-(ego)-logical concept of eternity, his moment is actually just as abyssal and aletheiological as Heidegger's Ereignis. Significantly, this removes the eternal 'cause' or 'ground' from Kierkegaard's work.

So, both thinkers critique both linear causality and the subject as the cause of a creative production. Since we are talking about a Christian account on one hand and a neopagan account on the other, we may suggest that for each of these thinkers, it is not just an anxiety

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of influence which is at play in both of their refusals to take up the position of creator-God in their own work. It is rather a shared and quite genuine understanding that the creative act itself is in some sense linked with the holy and that inspiration and influence are things which should not be granted singularly and wholly to a creating Subject or to productionist metaphysics. The step back into the unthought to retrieve latent possibilities or the leap into the contentful moment of vision can both be thought of as movements for the thinking and creating individual or Dasein to be taken up into an inspiring relationship and become a corresponding creative participant.

In terms of the aims of the project, I have shown that there are extensive structural resonances between Kierkegaard and the later Heidegger. I have shown that the content often differs insofar as Heidegger is building a neopagan way of critiquing onto-theo-(ego)-logy and the productionist metaphysics that accompany it.

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