

Heideggerian Concealment: On Katherine Withy's *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing*

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1 | A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEIDEGGER ON THE CONCEALMENT OF BEING

The project of *Being and Time* was premised on the idea that being could be grasped in its truth. Heidegger maintained that “being can be something unconceptualized, but it never completely fails to be understood” (SZ 183). “Even if being may perhaps be hidden in its primordial grounds,” he maintained, nonetheless “there is a necessary connection between being and understanding” (SZ 183). Thus Heidegger pursued ontology through an inquiry into the conditions under which being could be manifest or disclosed to the understanding (SZ 183).

But if Heidegger was confident that being could be grasped or made intelligible through a phenomenological ontology (see SZ §44), the uncompleted second part of *Being and Time* was premised on the idea that it might be quite difficult to bring being to manifestness – that a historical deconstruction was required to expose the concealments and confusions behind which the meaning of being has lain hidden throughout the history of metaphysics.

In *Being and Time*, and for several years after its publication, Heidegger focused on temporality as the primary horizon within which being could be made manifest. And so Heidegger took his project to involve making “temporality visible as the transcendental original structure,” thereby illuminating the “concealed projection of being on time as the innermost event in the understanding of being in ancient and subsequent metaphysics” (GA3: 241–2).

In the subsequent decade or so, Heidegger developed in his lecture courses and unpublished manuscripts a conception of ontological concealment as something more pervasive and essential than he had previously supposed. For instance, in his 1931 lecture *On the Essence of Truth*, Heidegger writes that “the entity in its being” has an “authentic, inner drive to remain concealed and, even if it has become unconcealed, a drive to go back into concealment again” (GA34: 14). And in 1942, with the publication of his essay “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger declares publicly that concealment “permeates the essence of being” (GA9: 223). He argues that the pre-Platonic philosophers were the first to have an inkling of the essentially concealed nature of being, and he saw this insight as implicit in the

Most quotations of Heidegger's works are my own translation. For convenience of reference, I have listed information on English translations of Heidegger's work. When using English translations, the translation has generally been modified.

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Greek word for truth itself – *alētheia*. The alpha in *a-lētheia*, Heidegger emphasizes, is an alpha privative, so that truth is literally a privation of concealment. Consequently, Heidegger argues that for the Greek thinkers, it was concealment (*lēthe*), not truth (*a-lētheia*), that was the prior and most fundamental condition of being. Heidegger concludes the essay on Plato by insisting on the necessity of returning to the early Greek “appreciation of the ‘positive’ in the ‘privative’ essence of *alētheia*. The positive [i.e., concealment] must first be experienced as the basic characteristic of being itself” (GA9: 144). This is a striking claim: to understand being itself, we have to experience concealedness as being’s basic character.

Jaspers wrote (but never sent) a letter to Heidegger in the immediate aftermath of the publication of “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth.” In that letter, Jaspers fixates on Heidegger’s meditations on the concealment of being in the closing lines of the essay. “That’s when I realized,” Jaspers wrote, “that I probably can’t assess what you actually want to do here. But that’s because I do not yet understand truth as unconcealment in the sense you mean... The whole thing comes across to me as a constant tension without resolution, and like a promise that is betrayed at the end. I could almost say that I feel cheated at the end of the reading, because there was always talk of unconcealment, without saying what that actually is” (Heidegger & Jaspers 1990, 164).

I think it’s fair to say that Jaspers is not alone in his perplexity. Heidegger’s account of concealedness as a fundamental character of being is simultaneously one of the most essential but also the most mystifying aspects of his work. In what sense is being essentially affected with concealment? How are we to assess this claim?

These are the central questions of Katherine Withy’s book, *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing*. Withy promises to sort through the confusion by establishing both what the self-concealing of being is not, and what it is. In doing so, she builds on my own modest efforts to bring some clarity to Heidegger’s thought on unconcealment or truth (See Wrathall 2011, especially chapter 1). But she also takes issue with several aspects of my account of concealment and unconcealment in Heidegger’s work.

1.1 | Heidegger and Unconcealment

As I documented in *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, Heidegger identifies at least four different types of unconcealment. At the time, I referred to these different types of unconcealment as “planks” that together constitute a “platform” for thinking about truth. In calling this a “platform,” I was trying to emphasize the mutually-reinforcing character of the different varieties of truth. In the years since the publication of *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, my understanding of these varieties of unconcealment has changed somewhat. I’d now characterize the varieties of unconcealment in the following way:

1. “Propositional truth” – the unconcealment involved in plain old ordinary assertions and beliefs, i.e. the unconcealment of facts;
2. “ontic truth” – the unconcealment of entities in their proper significance;
3. “ontological truth” – the unconcealment of kinds of being (e.g., the available, the occurrent, Dasein), or the unconcealment of the existential or categorial structures of those kinds of being;
4. “beyng-historical truth” or “truth as clearing”¹ – the unconcealment of historical worlds or historical understandings of being (e.g., the medieval Christian style of being, the modern style of being, the technological style of being);
5. “truth as *Ereignis*” – the unconcealment of adaptation (*Ereignis*) as the “gentle law,” which is “the ur-ground” allowing the emergence of styles of being. (See GA12: 247; GA65: 380)

¹See, e.g., GA67: 5.

In *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing*, Withy builds on my attempt to categorize Heidegger's various types of truth. But there are significant differences between the way that she and I understand these planks. I want to focus here on three substantive differences between us. I think that these differences indicate alternative approaches to the interpretation of Heidegger's account of the concealment of being.

First, Withy's approach to Heidegger on concealment and unconcealment is self-consciously driven by the taxonomy she extracts from the plank-structure of Heidegger's approach to truth. My own approach is more phenomenological than taxonomical. That is, I think the phenomenology of unconcealment, not the taxonomy, should drive the account.

Second, Withy and I have fundamentally different understandings of what *concealment* amounts to. For Withy, concealment is the privation or lack *tout court* of that which is subsequently revealed. For me, to say that something is concealed means that it subsists, but is in a sense withdrawn from us. As a consequence of the differences in our understandings of concealment, we offer substantively different accounts of unconcealment in general.

Third, Withy has a self-consciously vertical understanding of the relationship between the planks. She reconceptualizes them as *levels*, and argues that a very specific form of grounding relationships must obtain between the different forms of unconcealment. My own approach was and still is self-consciously horizontal – that is, I see the different kinds of unconcealment as mutually supporting, but in a variety of different ways. Indeed, I adopted the metaphor of a *platform* with the express purpose of avoiding the suggestion that the planks necessarily stand in a vertical grounding relationship to one another. My account, in addition, is open to a variety of different types of grounding. Withy restricts unconcealment to a single type of grounding.

2 | TAXONOMY VS PHENOMENOLOGY

Withy observes: “My method is ... less narrative than is usual in philosophical monographs and more taxonomical: I sort the various things that Heidegger says about concealing and concealment, cataloguing, and categorising them” (Withy 2022, 3). To the degree that Withy's taxonomic impulse aims at identifying the criteria and categories that organize the various forms of unconcealment into different type-classes, I am very sympathetic to her approach – as my own identification of distinct planks of unconcealment attests. I think it is clear that Heidegger's method depends on describing the phenomena of interest in such a way that they could be sorted and classified – for instance when he deploys his description of everyday existence to identify multiple distinct kinds of being. It is worthwhile trying to delineate clearly the web of concepts that Heidegger employs when offering an account of the various species of truth, concealment, and unconcealment.

The taxonomy that Withy offers us, however, goes beyond the task of conceptual definition and clarification; it aspires to be exhaustive – to fix everything into a determinate place in an all-encompassing system by establishing in advance a rigid order of ranks and differentia within those ranks. In these respects, Withy's book offers a taxonomical *tour de force*, concluding with five pages of tables meant to precisely delimit every conceivable variety of concealment and unconcealment using just a few taxonomical categories.

I think Withy's approach yields some genuine insights into Heidegger's account of being and the truth of being. But there are real dangers to a taxonomical approach to any field. A taxonomy, once established, tends to pre-determine our understanding of the phenomena in question. For this reason, the imposition of a rigid taxonomical structure is inimical to a phenomenological method. Phenomenology works by bracketing what we think we know in advance – and that means also bracketing our preexisting categories and concepts in order to return to the things themselves. The phenomenological encounter with a phenomenon is not constrained by any given set of categories. To the contrary, the categories used to classify things should emerge from the phenomenological encounter, and not the other way around. As Heidegger himself warned us, if our methodology is not responsive to the phenomena, we might well discover features that are in some sense characteristic of distinct types of phenomena. But we will grasp, not the true essence, but only an “indifferent” or “unessential essence” (GA5: 37 / PLT 49 / OTBT 27–8). And if the categories that are used to structure the taxonomy are not based in a sound phenomenological understanding of

the field, the result can be misleading or even comical (think of Plato's taxonomical definition of man as a featherless biped, *Statesman* 266e).

In assessing Withy's taxonomy, then, we need to attend closely to the question whether she correctly defines the categories that organize Heidegger's account of unconcealment. We should ask both whether she has defined the categories in the way that Heidegger has, and also whether her categories successfully latch onto what is essential about unconcealment as a phenomenon. I'll primarily focus here on the former question. I hope Withy's fine book will encourage more attention to the latter.

2.1 | Withy's Taxonomy

Withy builds her taxonomical table on two axes; the vertical or *y*-axis is made up of the planks of unconcealment; the horizontal or *x*-axis lays out a three-fold distinction between types of concealment which Withy dubs using Greek terms: *lēthē*, *kruptein*, and *kruptesthai*, respectively. "Thus the taxonomical project," Withy explains, "tracks phenomena of *lēthē*, *kruptesthai*, and *kruptein* on each of Wrathall's four planks." (Withy 2022, 14).

Withy equates the Greek word *lēthē* with the German *Verborgenheit*, concealment. Withy claims that *lēthē* and *Verborgenheit* name "a *prior* concealment," which she understands as the simple absence of a thing. Truth – i.e., unconcealment or *alētheia* – is understood as "overcom[ing] or negat[ing] the prior concealment, *lēthē*, in an act of unconcealing" (Withy 2022, 10). This means that, for Withy, truth or unconcealment always and necessarily involves the "suspension or cancellation" of a prior absence – i.e., bringing into existence something that was not there before.

Withy next argues that this *prior* state of concealment must be sharply distinguished from what she calls "simultaneous concealing" – that is, "concealings that are simultaneous with unconcealing" (Withy 2022, 13). In simultaneous concealings, she argues, "revealing and concealing take place in a single gesture" (Withy 2022, 13).

Withy further subdivides "simultaneous concealings" into two distinct types. She designates the first of these simultaneous concealings *kruptein*, the second *kruptesthai*. As Withy explains,

The difference between *kruptein* and *kruptesthai* lies in *what* is concealed. *Kruptesthai* is self-concealing, which means that the unconcealing in question conceals itself, or at least some aspect of itself...In contrast, *kruptein* involves concealing something other than the unconcealing itself.

(Withy 2022, 14)

Kruptein, as Withy reads it, is an active, non-reflexive, transitive act of concealing or hiding *something else*. Heidegger generally translates *kruptein*, she notes, with the German verb *verbergen*, to conceal or hide. *Kruptesthai*, as Withy reads it, is an active, reflexive, transitive act of concealing or hiding *oneself*. Heidegger generally translates *kruptesthai* with the reflexive German verb *sich verbergen*.

To illustrate the distinctions as Withy draws them, one might imagine a magician turning a \$50 bill into an egg. In making an egg appear where there was none before, the magician performs an "unconcealing" (*Unverbergen*) that overcomes the *lēthē* / *Verborgenheit* – i.e., the prior concealment or absence – of the egg. At the same time, the magician conceals the \$50 bill; this is a "simultaneous other-concealing" or *kruptein*. The magician also, through misdirection, conceals her own sleight of hand in producing the egg; this is a "simultaneous self-concealing" or *kruptesthai* / *Sichverbergen*.

To my mind, the greatest contribution made by Withy's book is insisting on the distinction between, on the one hand, an intrinsic affectedness with or tendency toward concealing, and, on the other hand, a concealment that is incident upon an event of unconcealing. Here are three importantly different claims (I formulate them somewhat differently than Withy would):

1. Some *A* is intrinsically affected with concealment;
2. Some *B* is brought out of concealment in virtue of *A* withdrawing into concealment.
3. Some *B* is brought out of concealment in virtue of *A* concealing *C*.

Withy is right to insist that instances of intrinsic concealedness are phenomenologically distinct from instances of withdrawal into concealment. And Withy's distinction between prior and simultaneous concealings helps us to see that instances of type (2) and (3) cannot explain or justify claims about type (1) concealment. She is thus right to criticize scholars who purport to explain type (1) cases of concealment by discussing instances of type (2) or type (3).

But I have my doubts about the way that Withy tries to connect these distinctions to Heidegger's text. And I also disagree with the way that Withy understands type (1) cases of intrinsic concealment.

Withy thinks that type (1) concealments are designated by Heidegger using the Greek *lēthē* and the German *Verborgenheit*, and that type (2) "self"-concealments are designated using the Greek *kruptesthai* or the German *sich verbergen*. As we will see, Heidegger does not in fact use these terms in the way that Withy thinks he should. As a result, she accuses Heidegger of inconsistency, or of committing a "substantial error," because he does not use the terminology in the way that her taxonomy dictates he should. "Despite having access to the vocabulary of *krupstein* and *kruptesthai*," Withy writes, "Heidegger does not always distinguish these from *lēthē*, and in fact he has a tendency to collapse all phenomena of concealing and concealment into phenomena of *lēthē*" (Withy 2022, 14). And so, Withy explains, "much of what drives my argument in this book is my attempt to understand and correct what I take to be [this] rather substantial error on Heidegger's part" (Withy 2022, 5). Withy also accuses me of falling into the same error: "[t]hus we must go beyond Wrathall to distinguish simultaneous concealing (*Verbergung*, *Verbergen*) from *lēthē*, prior concealment (*Verborgenheit*)" (Withy 2022, 12).

Withy thus bemoans the fact that Heidegger's "sloppiness precludes him from using these terms to track the distinction [she is] insisting on" (Withy 2022, 12). Withy is absolutely right that Heidegger does not use these German and Greek terms in the way that she would dictate. I will argue that, rather than seeing this as evidence of "sloppiness" on Heidegger's part, it is rather an indication that Withy's taxonomy blinds us to Heidegger's phenomenology of unconcealment.

2.2 | A Closer Look at *Kruptesthai* / *Sichverbergen*

Withy offers three grounds for her reading of *kruptesthai* as an action of *direct* self-concealing:

1. Withy points to one specific passage where Heidegger discusses *kruptesthai*, and concludes from this passage that Heidegger understands it as hiding oneself (Withy 2022, 13).
2. Withy points to Greek grammar: "'*Krupstein*' means to *hide, cover, cloak*," Withy notes; and, she claims, "its passive or middle voiced form, '*kruptesthai*', means to *hide oneself*" (Withy 2022, 13).
3. Withy points to the fact that Heidegger (often) translates *kruptesthai* as the (apparently) reflexive German verb *sich verbergen*. This, she argues, indicates that Heidegger understands *kruptesthai* as an act of self-concealing – albeit with frequent lapses. (See, e.g., Withy 2022, 26 & n.31)

Let's look at each ground in turn.

2.2.1 | Heidegger's proffered definition

In support of her claim that Heidegger understands *kruptesthai* as self-concealing, Withy points to a passage from Heidegger's *Parmenides* lectures. Heidegger writes:

"*Kruptesthai* means: to take back into oneself, to hide back [*bergen*] and conceal [*verbergen*] in oneself."

(GA54: 209; see Withy 2022, 13)

On the face of it, however, Wither's reliance on this passage is clearly off the mark. Heidegger does not define *kruptesthai* here as an action of hiding *oneself* at all. Instead, there is some grammatical object that is being taken into or concealed in oneself. The context of the passage makes this even clearer. In the passage in question, Heidegger is exploring the phenomenon of concealment by considering a line from Sophocles' *Ajax* in which "time ... conceals within itself that which has appeared"² (GA54: 211). What time conceals within itself, in particular, are "the appearing things" or "entities"³ (GA54: 211).

Clearly, Heidegger takes the middle voice here to signify (in Wither's terminology) an "other-concealing" rather than a "self-concealing." This passage serves rather to refute than support Wither's claim that Heidegger understands *kruptesthai* as active self-concealing.

2.2.2 | The Greek Passive-Middle Voice

Wither's second piece of evidence for her reading of *kruptesthai* is an appeal to Greek grammar. Wither claims that the distinction between *kruptein* and *kruptesthai* "lies in what is concealed" (Wither 2022, 14). She explains: "'*Kruptein*' means to *hide, cover, cloak*, and its passive or middle voiced form, '*kruptesthai*', means to *hide oneself*" (Wither 2022, 13). But this is a misleading oversimplification both of the meaning of the Greek passive-middle voice, as well as Heidegger's understanding of the Greek passive-middle.

To be fair, having invoked the semantics of the middle voice, Wither immediately disowns any further reliance on the original Greek: "I make no claim about the meaning of the Greek terms themselves" (Wither 2022, 13). But if the aim was to understand Heidegger's use of these terms, she *should* have examined the meaning of the Greek terms because Heidegger was certainly very much aware of them.

Sentences in an *active* voice present the syntactic subject of the sentence as an agent – as the performer of the action described by the verb. In a *passive* voice, the sentence presents the syntactic subject of the sentence as a patient – as the recipient of the action described by the verb. In the Greek *middle-passive* voice, however, the sentence can either have a passive sense, or it can present the action as originating from a subject *qua* agent, but also returning again to affect the same subject in some way or other. There is a variety of different types of middle-voiced reflexivity. Wither is right that the middle voice *can* be directly reflexive, so that it "represents the subject as acting directly on himself" (Smyth 1984, ¶1717, p. 390). But the middle voice also expresses other, indirect forms of self-reference – for instance, "represent[ing] the subject as acting *for himself, with reference to himself, or with something belonging to himself*" (Smyth 1984, ¶1719, p. 390).

In his discussions of the Greek middle voice, Heidegger emphasizes at least two forms of *indirect* reflexivity:

1. The middle voice can mean that the grammatical subject "has a special interest in the state of affairs in which he is involved; frequently he is the Beneficiary of that state of affairs" (Rijksbaron 2002, §44.1, 147). As Heidegger puts it, "the 'for itself' is expressed in the middle voice" (GA8: 160; see also GA17: 28). For instance, he argues that the middle-voiced verb *dialegesthai* – to engage in dialogue or dialectic – involves a gathering of thoughts or representations "for the sake of the I" (GA9: 430).
2. Heidegger also attends to the middle voice's "receptive" sense, "according to which the subject takes into itself the expression of an activity directed at it by another, it receives the action, ... or allows it to have an effect upon itself so that it appears as an affected object" (Kühner 1898, §376, p. 113). Heidegger is well aware of this sense. For instance, regarding the Greek middle-voiced verb *lanthanesthai* (to forget) – the verb from which the noun *lēthē* (forgetting, forgetfulness) is derived – Heidegger notes:

²*hapanth' ho makros kanarithmētos chronos / phuei t' adela kai phanenta kruptetai.*

³"But time can *kruptesthai*, hide back into itself, only that which has appeared: *phanenta* – the appearing things. Entities, the things that presence, which are concealed by being 'swept away' into absence by time, are here understood in terms of appearance" (GA54: 211).

The wisdom of language provides us with an important testimony to the fact that the remaining-concealed and being-unconcealed of things and human beings (to themselves and to others) was experienced by the Greeks as a happening of entities themselves ... [The active form] *lanthanō hēkōn*: I stay concealed as one who arrives; we say: I arrive unnoticed. Thus the meaning of the middle-voice: *lanthanomai*, I let something be concealed from me, i.e., I let it slip away, be gone, let it escape me and be omitted, I let oblivion (being gone) come over something.

(GA34: 142)

“The wisdom of language,” then, consists in the middle-voice’s ability to express the idea that my “act” of forgetting is neither something I actively do to myself nor something that happens independently of me. It involves me being affected in such a way that something slips away from me. It is to be affected with oblivion. In a later discussion of *lanthanesthai*, Heidegger explains that

[t]he elucidation of the word offers us a ... pointer, especially if we pay attention to the Greek and Latin words; they are *medial* (between *activum* and *passivum*), that is, that which is named contains within itself the relation to the recipient and the executor, and yet it is not completely within its ‘power’. (GA46: 39).

Notice that on Heidegger’s account of this instance of the middle voice, the grammatical subject is both agent / “executor” and patient / “recipient” of the action. That which is named – the forgetting – is related to the subject both as what the subject suffers from, but also what the subject “does.” But the doing is not completely within the subject’s power, because it involves essentially this element of receptivity. I cannot forget something simply by deciding to forget it. The forgetting is something that comes over me – I receive it. Thus, as Heidegger glosses the middle-voiced verb, to be in a state of concealment (*lēthē*) is to be affected with oblivion.

2.2.3 | The German Reflexive Verb

Withy’s final piece of evidence for her interpretation of *kruptesthai* emphasizes the fact that Heidegger translates the Greek verb using the syntactically reflexive German verb *sich verbergen*. But a sentence can be *syntactically reflexive* in that it uses a reflexive pronoun – “itself / herself / himself” in English; *sich* or *selbst* in German – without being *semantically directly reflexive* (i.e., without the grammatical subject being both agent and patient of the action). German sentences are often syntactically reflexive but not semantically reflexive. For example, “*Die Tür öffnete sich*” does not mean “The door opened itself”; it means “The door opened.”⁴ In German, the use of the reflexive pronoun with a transitive verb can also mean, in a way not unlike the Greek middle/passive voice, that the grammatical subject is not an agent, but rather the recipient of a condition (i.e., that it is not performing an action on him- or herself, but is rather affected in some way or other). For example, the transitive verb *ärgern* (to anger, to annoy), when used with the reflexive pronoun means ‘to be annoyed,’ or ‘to be affected with anger’. ‘*Lars ärgert sich*’ does *not* mean ‘Lars annoys himself’; it means, ‘Lars is annoyed’ – ‘Lars is affected with anger or annoyance’.⁵

⁴Conversely, many languages have sentences that are semantically reflexive but not syntactically reflexive. For instance, the English “He shaved” is semantically but not syntactically reflexive. The German equivalent – “*Er hat sich rasiert*” – is both semantically and syntactically reflexive.

⁵In addition, the reflexive pronoun *sich* sometimes functions (like the Greek middle) to indicate that an action is done for the agent’s sake. So for instance, one compares

Die Kinder stehlen das Essen,

with

Die Kinder stehlen sich das Essen,

both would correctly be translated ‘The children steal the food.’ But the latter, syntactically reflexive, form emphasizes that the children stole the food for their own sake. It is obviously *not* a direct reflexive – the children did *not* steal themselves.

So Withy is absolutely right that transitive verbs like *verbergen* (to hide or to conceal), when used with the reflexive pronoun, can have a direct reflexive sense – they can mean that the agent is the patient, and is performing the action on itself. And it is true that, in many contexts, *sich verbergen* means simply ‘to hide or conceal oneself.’ But there are a range of other possibilities – like the Greek middle-voiced *kruptesthai*, the German ‘*X verbirgt sich*’ is semantically vague, with prototypical uses and then more marginal, related ones. Depending on context, *kruptesthai* / *sich verbergen* could mean:

(Active or middle direct reflexive) ‘X hides itself’

(Passive) ‘X is hidden’

(Middle indirect reflexive) ‘X is affected with hiddenness’

It is not possible to conclude from the syntactically reflexive grammatical structure of the verb alone that *sichverbergen* means an active, direct self-concealing. But if we take seriously the thought that Heidegger understands *kruptesthai* and *sichverbergen* in a medio-passive way – and I think we should – then I would argue that for Heidegger, the core meaning of ‘*X verbirgt sich*’ should not be ‘X conceals itself’, but rather ‘X is affected with concealment’ or ‘X sustains a state of concealment’, with a suggestion that X does this for its own sake. This would make being’s concealment something that it is in its nature to receive, permit, and sustain.

2.3 | A Closer Look at *Lēthē* / *Verborgenheit*

If Heidegger understands *kruptesthai* / *sich verbergen* as participating in characteristics both of a passive condition and of an action, then this also explains why Heidegger draws no systematic distinction between *lēthē* and *kruptesthai*, or between *Verborgenheit* and *sich Verbergung*. He tends to use all of these terms interchangeably. Moreover, he defines *lēthē* not as a prior state, but as an ongoing process: “the withdrawing concealing” (see, e.g., GA54: 177, 186–7), or “the objective occurrence of entities slipping away and withdrawing” (GA34: 139). He elaborates:

Lēthē is, in a genuinely Greek sense, not an experience, but rather a *fateful happening* that irrupts over human beings, – but a happening that goes on with all entities: they fall into concealment, they are withdrawn, the entities are simply gone.⁶

(GA34: 140; emphasis supplied)

But there is another, perhaps more important, sense in which Heidegger’s account of *lēthē* diverges from Withy’s. For Withy, *lēthē* is the sheer “absence of disclosing”, the complete “non-intelligibility that obtains in the absence of disclosing,” “the darkness that obtains when disclosing does not [obtain]” (Withy 2022, 88 & 137).

For instance, on Withy’s view, when it comes to “third plank” *lēthē* – the concealment of being –, either there is unconcealment of being, or there is the complete absence of being. There can be no ongoing relationship between the unconcealing (*alētheia*) and the concealment (*lēthē*) of being. *Lēthē* amounts to “the non-operating of Dasein’s disclosing, or the non-worlding of the world: the non-being of entities as such and as a whole” (Withy 2022, 86). “Left to itself,” Withy elaborates,

third-plank *lēthē* allows no illuminating, no disclosing, no worlding of the world. The understanding of being is not operative. “[E]verything disappears.”

(Withy 2022, 89; quoting P: 119/GA54: 176)

⁶See also GA33: 186: “through forgetting, *lēthē*,... that which was previously possessed sinks into concealment.”

“[L]ēthē is what is prior to and wholly other than being,” Withy explains, so “it cannot be a condition that being puts itself into, for it is not a condition of being at all” (Withy 2022, 90). When we ask “‘why’ entities as such and as a whole are ... rather than nothing,” “lēthē is that nothing” (Withy 2022, 114). If, counterfactually, *lēthē* were to obtain, then “no understanding of being” would be “operative” (Withy 2022, 161).

Heidegger, of course, writes constantly about the interplay between unconcealing and concealment. Withy's taxonomy forces her to model this interplay in terms of a sequence of steps: (a) a prior *lēthē*₁ is suspended in an unconcealing (*aletheuein*₁); (b) this “unconcealing conceals itself or something other and produces a [new and different] concealment (*lēthē*₂);” (c) this new “prior” concealment “is then suspended in a further unconcealing (*aletheuein*₂),” perhaps in the process concealing something else and producing a *lēthē*₃. But there can be no on-going relationship between a *lēthē* and an *alētheuein* at any stage in the process. Once *alētheuein*₁ occurs, then *lēthē*₁ is “overcome[] and vanquish[ed]” (Withy 2022, 114). *Lēthē* is thus “essentially repelling” of any disclosure (Withy 2022, 153).

This taxonomy-driven insistence on a prior concealment that wholly excludes unconcealment, and that is cancelled or overcome in unconcealment, sits uneasily with Heidegger's phenomenological account of the interplay between concealment and unconcealment. Heidegger maintains, for example, that

A-lētheia, unconcealment of what is present as such, comes into its essence *only when and only so long* as concealment, *Lēthē*, occurs. For *Alētheia* does not eliminate the *Lēthē*. Unconcealment does not consume concealment, but rather unconcealment always requires concealment and thus confirms it in this way as the essential source of *Alētheia*. *Alētheia* adheres to *Lēthē* and abides within it.⁷

(GA79: 49; emphasis supplied)

The phenomenon Heidegger is describing is not a sequence of different concealments that get progressively eliminated. He is describing instead a “prior” ongoing affectedness with concealment that sustains unconcealment even while resisting it.

The concealment (*Verborgenheit*) is for Heidegger always to be understood as a preserving and sheltering (*Bergung*) that is an intimate part of unconcealing. And *lēthē* always bears an ongoing relationship to *alētheia*: “[b]ecause *lēthē* belongs to the essence of *alētheia*, it follows that unconcealment itself cannot be simply the elimination of concealment” (GA54: 183–4). For instance, a “prior” concealment – “the concealment of entities as a whole, the authentic un-truth, [that] is older than every openedness of this or that entity” (GA9: 193–4) – persists and sustains the disclosure of entities. It is simply not the case that for Heidegger *lēthē* – the “prior” concealment of being – is a sheer absence of being, or a state or condition of the non-being of entities. Another example: “[h]uman beings are afflicted by *lēthē*, by that concealment of being which creates the appearance that there is no such thing as being” (GA6.1: 197). But this is a mere appearance. Heidegger elaborates: “Most people sink into oblivion of being, even though – or precisely because – they are constantly only looking around at the things that are in their immediate vicinity” (GA6.1: 197). The *lēthē* or “prior concealment” of *being*, in other words, is entirely compatible with the unconcealment of *entities*. Indeed, there seems to be an inverse relationship between the concealment of being and the unconcealment of entities: “the complete concealment of being” occurs “in the midst of the completed securing of entities” (GA6.2: 351).

Now, Withy might insist that in such passages, Heidegger is falling into substantial error by treating *lēthē*, not as the prior, complete absence of being, but rather as being's subsequent falling back into hiddenness. But I see things differently. Heidegger is rather offering a phenomenological account of the way that “the complete concealment of being,” is a condition in which we have an *understanding* of entities as a whole. At the same time, we don't *know* being *as such*, because it is not the kind of thing which can be *known*: “this ‘as a whole’ appears to be incalculable

⁷See also GA27: 213: “concealment always necessarily goes together with unconcealment.” Recognizing that the alpha-privativum is “ambiguous,” Heidegger concedes that it *could* mean that “concealment is eliminated.” But “[f]or a different way of thinking, it says that concealment is not yet experienced as such; that the *Lēthē* in it, in the concealment and sheltering, is forgotten” (GA97: 415).

and incomprehensible” (GA9: 193). We understand it nonetheless, an understanding that takes the form of an attunement to entities. The concealment of being means that it is not known *as such*, but it is operative because it is “constantly attuning everything, although it nevertheless remains the indeterminate, indeterminable... This attuning is not nothing, but rather a concealing of entities as a whole” (GA9: 193). Wthy's insistence on a distinction between “concealment” and “simultaneous concealing” is useful here, and it helps us tease apart the condition of being's concealment, and the way that concealment also conceals (something else). But the point is that the condition of concealment is not a sheer absence – it acts on us. So whereas Wthy takes such passages as evidence of sloppiness on Heidegger's part, to me it is instead clear evidence that Wthy's taxonomical categories simply do not map on to Heidegger's phenomenology. The “prior concealment” (*Unverborgenheit* / *lēthē*) of being is simply not for Heidegger a condition in which “no understanding of being is operative” (Wthy 2022, 161).

In this respect, Heidegger's approach to *lēthē* accords with the ordinary meaning of concealment. For any *X* to be in a state of concealment, *X* must ‘be’ or *subsist* in some sense. We wouldn't say that a non-existing thing is concealed – for instance, it would be a kind of joke to say that a barren tract of land is the concealment of a house, and that we ‘cancel’ this concealment by building a house. Concealment is instead a notion in which an ongoing tension is maintained between being revealed and being hidden:

Revealing needs concealment. *A-lētheia* reposes in *lēthē*, drawing from it and laying before us what ever remains deposited by means of *lēthē*... Unconcealment needs concealment, *Lēthē*, as its reservoir from out of which revealing can draw, so to speak.

(GA7: 225–6)

The ongoing subsistence of that which is concealed is indeed crucial to Heidegger's understanding of the concealment (*Verborgenheit*) of being, because that concealment is a condition that allows being to “preserve” or “shelter” (*bergen*) itself. Indeed, Heidegger routinely equates *lēthē* and *Verborgenheit* with sheltering (*Bergen*, *Bergung*). (See, e.g., GA55: 382; GA73.1: 22 & 44; GA75: 232; GA97: 415; GA100: 284).

What Wthy's conception of level-3 *lēthē* loses sight of is that Heideggerian concealment or hiding is not a mere absence, it is the sheltering of something from us. In doing justice to Heidegger's claim that *lēthē* enjoys a certain priority over *alētheia*, we need to keep a hold on the idea that hiddenness *to us*, concealment *from us* is integral to *lēthē*.

So a phenomenological approach would not try to force being's (self-)concealing into a predetermined pigeon hole. It would instead meditate on the possible unity or coherence implicit in these multiple different shades of sense. When doing that, the sharp distinction that Wthy wants to draw between a “prior concealment” and a “simultaneous concealing” is also undermined. Being's ongoing affectedness with concealing, its ongoing receiving of concealing is the prior condition to being's disclosure.

3 | TWO ACCOUNTS OF UNCONCEALMENT

Let's trace out the consequences of Wthy's account of *lēthē* for thinking about unconcealment. Wthy and I agree that, for Heidegger, a specific type of unconcealment can only be properly understood when we first grasp the kind of concealment (*lēthē*, *Verborgenheit*) that is undone in unconcealment (*alētheia*, *Un-verborgenheit*). This is what it means to claim that the ‘positive’ condition is a state of concealment, and that unconcealment always involves wresting manifestness from this “prior” state. But Wthy and I have quite different conceptions of this prior state – let's call it *Condition C* (for prior concealedness).

Wthy's Condition C: *Y* is concealed when there is an absolute lack or absence of *Y*.

As I read Heidegger, by contrast, Condition C looks more like this:

Wrathall's Condition C: Y is concealed to the degree that Y cannot *as such* figure in the sphere of human activity.

This acknowledges that concealment comes in degrees. When concealment prevails completely, humans are affected in such a way that comportment toward Y is not an option, or achieved only with the greatest of effort – an effort that fundamentally transforms our way of being in the world.

These different characterizations of Condition C lead to different characterizations of truth as unconcealment.

Withy's Definition of Unconcealment in general: X is an unconcealing only if X effects the cancellation/suspension of C.

Given Withy's understanding of Condition C, we can restate her view of unconcealment in this way:

X is an unconcealing only if X cancels out the absence of Y.

By contrast, my account of Condition C orients the question of unconcealment toward introducing something into the sphere of human activity as such – toward making it “possibly encounterable within-the-world” (SZ 265):

Wrathall's Definition of Unconcealment in general: X is an unconcealment only if:

- i. Because of X, Y is able to figure as such in human activity; and
- ii. X is not (experienced as) producing Y, but only as allowing Y to figure as such in the sphere of human activity.

We can put these competing accounts to the test by asking how well they account for Heidegger's various types of truth.

Consider, for instance, Heidegger's account of “plank one” unconcealment – the unconcealing effected by assertions (and other propositional states and acts). Heidegger claims that “the old traditional definition of truth ... is indeed correct in its approach” (GA29/30: 497). And he insists that his account of propositional truth – plank one unconcealment – is “no *casting off* of the tradition, but rather its originary *appropriation*” (SZ 220). Heidegger takes it as essential to his account of unconcealment to demonstrate that “truth, understood as correspondence, has its origins in disclosedness” (SZ 223). Thus, an account of Heidegger's theory of propositional truth should explain the sense in which an assertion is true in virtue of some sort of agreement between an assertion and that about which the assertion is made.

But Withy's taxonomy locks her into the idea that propositional uncovering must eradicate a prior *lēthē* by bringing into existence something that is absent before the assertion is made. But what absence could be cancelled out through an assertion? Withy posits that it must be the interlocutor's lack of awareness or recognition of some particular aspect of an entity. So an assertion is true or unconceals – it cancels out a prior *lēthē* – only if the assertion removes the hearer's lack of knowledge of a fact: “the *lēthē* that precedes the speaking's uncovering belongs to the entity in relation to *the hearer* rather than the speaker... [Y]ou the interlocutor need to be, in some respect, in the dark... in order for the speaker's speaking to succeed in communicating to you” (Withy 2022, 66). So on Withy's account,

An assertion is an unconcealing only if the assertion cancels out the absence of knowledge on the part of the interlocutor.

But note that this utterly fails to vindicate our ordinary conception of truth. There are true assertions that do not remove a hearer's lack of awareness of an aspect of things. For instance, my assertion that "My chair is yellow" is no less true if you already know that my chair is yellow.

On my account, by contrast, the Condition C that gives content to propositional truth is this:

Plank One Condition C: **a fact** is concealed to the degree that **that fact** cannot as such figure in the sphere of human activity.

An assertion unconceals when.

- i. because of an **assertion**, **a fact** is able to figure as such in human activity; and
- ii. the **assertion** is not (experienced as) producing **the fact**, but only as allowing **that fact** to figure as such in the sphere of human activity.

The "speciality of assertion," one might say, is the uncovering of facts – that is, unveiling something occurrent as having a "definite character" (SZ 158). And we can say that an assertion is true only if the assertion points us to a fact – and in articulating the world into fact-sized chunks, it gives us the ability to form judgments, draw inferences, and discover justificatory relationships between facts. This approach vindicates Heidegger's claim that uncovering is the ground of the traditional understanding of truth as correctness or truth as correspondence – it appropriates rather than casts aside the traditional account. It also does justice to Heidegger's insistence that the difference between level-one and level-two unconcealment is tied to the difference between a propositionally structured and predicatively articulated uncovering (i.e., "propositional truth), and a pre-predicative making manifest of entities:

For it to be possible, predication must be able to take up residence in a making-manifest that does not have a predicative character. Propositional truth is rooted in a more originary truth (unconcealment), in the pre-predicative manifestness of entities, which may be called ontic truth. (GA9: 130).

4 | VERTICAL VS HORIZONTAL ACCOUNTS OF UNCONCEALMENT

In section 3, we looked at one axis of Wither's taxonomic table – the axis differentiated into (1) prior concealments, (2) simultaneous self-concealings, and (3) simultaneous other concealings. Now let's look at the other axis, made up of three different kinds of "things" that are unconcealed:

First plank: "some particular aspect of [an] entity that was not in view for [an interlocutor] before" (Wither 2022, 66);

Second plank: "entities in their being" (Wither 2022, 9);

Third plank: "the being of entities as such and as a whole" (Wither 2022, 9).

Here again, the commitment to taxonomy seems to me to obscure the phenomenology. In order to provide the kind of discrete categories that will sustain a taxonomic approach to being, Wither insists that a strict hierarchy of grounding relationships must exist between the planks. The unconcealment that obtains at each level, Wither asserts, provides the ground for that which is concealed at the next lower level. So the unconcealment of *being* at level three grounds the *entities* that are (initially) concealed at level two. The unconcealment of those entities in turn grounds

the facts that are (initially) concealed to an interlocutor at level one. Finally, to round off the taxonomy, Withy posits that there can be no higher-level that grounds being at level three. Being, she insists, must be a “regress-stopper” beyond which no further grounding relationship is possible.

Moreover, Withy holds that a very specific kind of grounding relationship must obtain between the levels in her hierarchy. “The ground in question,” Withy explains, must be “a condition of the possibility” (Withy 2022, 135). I'll refer to grounds which are the condition of the possibility of that which they ground as ‘CP-grounds’. Although Withy does not clearly define the kind of grounding relationship that she has in mind here, it seems she intends something like this:

CP-Grounding: [A] is a CP-ground of [B] only if, necessarily, if not [A] then not [B]

For instance, it is necessarily the case (at level 1) that if entities have not already been uncovered (at level 2), then a speaker cannot point out features of those entities to an interlocutor. And (at level 2), it is a necessary prior condition of the possibility of entities that “one must have already grasped what it is to be at all, rather than not, and one must already have some sense for what kinds of entities there can be” (Withy 2022, 8). Absent the unconcealment of being at level 3, there are no intelligible entities to be uncovered.

We'll return in a moment to the question of specifying what might count as the grounds of being itself. At this point, however, I note that Withy will only accept something into her taxonomy as a kind of unconcealing if “a genuine phenomenon of unconcealing is identified that is the condition of possibility of” that which is unconcealed at the lower level (Withy 2022, 134). As before, it seems to me, Withy's taxonomical impulse is driving the analysis – indeed, she acknowledges as much herself: “the plank structure will force me to interrogate the relationships between each of the levels by asking how one makes the other possible, or how the other is grounded in the one” (Withy 2022, 9).

Withy's focus on CP-grounds, however, leads to a reductive account of grounding in Heidegger's thought. Heidegger's phenomenology develops an open-ended, diverse, and reciprocal account of grounding. As Heidegger puts it in “On the Essence of Grounds,” “grounding is strewn in a variety of ways” (GA9: 166). He discusses in that essay three distinct kinds of grounding which occur simultaneously (“gleichzeitig”) (GA9: 166). One such type of grounding – grounding as taking up a footing in the midst of entities [*Bodennehmen*] – consists in Dasein being “captured by entities in such a way that, in its belonging to entities, it is thoroughly attuned by them” (GA9: 166). The phenomenon Heidegger is describing is the way that our existence adapts itself to the entities we encounter in our immediate environment. This adaptive response attunes us in such a way that we find ourselves disposed to disclose some specific set of possibilities as the definitive ones for our existence. But, at the same time, the entities that attune my projection of possibilities are themselves grounded in the way that the possibilities onto which I project myself – my “for the sake of” – discloses entities as having significance relative to my way of inhabiting the world. Heidegger calls this world-disclosive grounding “grounding as endowing [*Stiften*]” or “the projection of world as grounding” (GA9: 165). So both ontological possibilities and entities “must remain concealed” absent the attunement that Dasein receives from the very entities it discovers (GA9: 166).

On Heidegger's account, then, the grounding involved in unconcealment involves multifarious and reciprocal forms of grounding. This is perhaps why the later Heidegger suggested on numerous occasions that, properly understood, the “truth [i.e., unconcealment] of being” requires an “effort to come free of the ‘condition of the possibility’” (GA65: 250). The relationship of being to entities for the later Heidegger is “no longer that of ... a ‘condition of possibility’” (GA65: 250; GA65: 183; see also GA66: 321).

Finally, even if we are to focus on CP-grounding as a way of designating “levels” of unconcealment, Withy's desire for a neat and closed taxonomy leads her to ignore what Heidegger actually says about CP-grounding. It is simply not the case that, as Withy insists, Heidegger treats being as a “regress-stopper” – as the ultimate, highest-order condition of the possibility in a hierarchy of grounding relationships. To the contrary, Heidegger explores a variety of grounds of being, and a variety of different species of grounding. The working thesis of the published

portions of *Being and Time*, after all, is that “the being of Dasein is completely grounded in temporality” (SZ 364; see also 379, 382, 437). The aim of the treatise as a whole, moreover, was to show that temporality is a CP-ground of being as such: “temporality,” he explains, “is the condition of the possibility for the fact that there is being (not entities)” (GA21: 410). Later, retrospectively describing the “the difference between the metaphysical question” about being and his own “question about the truth of being,” Heidegger notes:

metaphysics asks about the conditions of the possibility of entities as entities, and in this sense about being. *Being and Time* asks about the condition of the possibility of being as being, and this shows itself as time.

(GA55: 816)

After abandoning the project of *Being and Time*, Heidegger maintains that “time–space” – e.g., temporality,⁸ – is “in turn grounded in ‘Ereignis’” (GA66: 424).

To be fair, Withy does consider time and *Ereignis* as potential sources of the grounding of being, but she rejects them as CP-grounds because they are not “independent.” Withy, however, offers no clear account of what counts as the right kind of ‘independence’, so it is hard to assess her arguments here. Heidegger himself seems to regard being and time as independent of one another in some sense: “[b]eing and time determine each other reciprocally, but in such a manner that neither can the former – being – be addressed as something temporal nor can the latter – time – be addressed as being” (GA14: 7). And, as noted above, Heidegger consistently holds that temporality is the condition of the possibility of being (GA21: 410; GA55: 816). Without a clearer account of what kind of independence is required for the right kind of grounding relationship, Withy’s reasons for denying that time is a CP-ground of being feel *ad hoc*, driven by her taxonomy rather than arising out of phenomenological considerations.

Consider, finally, Withy’s argument against accepting Heidegger’s *clearing* as a plank of unconcealment. In Heidegger’s later work, the problem of understanding the historical character of unconcealment was perhaps the central question. The distinctive kind of unconcealment brought about by the clearing was central to Heidegger’s account of this historical dimension of being. The clearing, Heidegger says, “opens up beyng as history” (GA65: 422–3). “[T]he clearing of beyng accomplishes the essence of history,” Heidegger explains, because it allows for a decision about what entities as such and as a whole are, “and with this decision it ... grounds ‘epochs’” (GA71: 19). What being “means in each case has already been decided in terms of the epochal clearing of being” (GA10: 84). There can be little question that Heidegger regards the clearing as a necessary and distinctively historical kind of unconcealment, one that grounds whole ages or styles of being.

In *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, I described the kind of unconcealment made possible by the clearing in terms of allowing some possibilities to stand out as actual or live possibilities, while ruling out other possibilities:

The clearing makes it possible for a certain understanding of being – a particular mode of presence – to come to prevail among entities. For possibilities to be live possibilities, however, it requires a space from which other incompatible possibilities are excluded. The clearing maintains a world by keeping back (concealing) possibilities that are incompatible with the essence that is currently operative. In order for some possibilities to shape our experience of the world, any other possibilities cannot be live possibilities, they cannot be possible for us, they must be kept from us.

(Wrathall 2011, 34)

This echoes closely Heidegger’s own description of the clearing as that which “first allows entities to be what they can be out of the ‘number’ of their hidden possibilities; here human history arises” (GA95: 130).

⁸See GA65: 18.

Heidegger himself describes the clearing as affected with *lēthē* / *Verborgenheit*,⁹ and treats the clearing as producing a “truth” or unconcealment (See GA69: 162). Why then does Withy refuse to the clearing the status Heidegger gives it as a distinct kind or (in my terms) “plank” of unconcealment? She offers two, closely related arguments, which I’ll dub the “explanatory heuristic” argument and the “no prior *lēthē*” argument respectively.

The “explanatory heuristic” argument goes like this:

Positing the space of possibilities is a way of making sense of the fact that when one world obtains, others do not and cannot. We make sense of this fact by imagining a library space housing all those alternative possibilities – and a librarian of being who ‘allows’ one world to be while ‘withholding’ the others [Citing Wrathall 2011, 33]. But this is merely an explanatory heuristic; there is no real sense in which there is such a space or agent. The clearing that Wrathall has in mind is not a genuine phenomenon.

(Withy 2022, 128)

An immediate problem with this argument is that I explicitly rejected the “explanatory heuristic” that Withy attributes to me. Immediately following the passage that Withy cites, I wrote:

This might make it sound like the clearing is a gallery of possibilities – that it keeps different determinate ways of being in the world locked in the back room while exhibiting one at a time. But this would be to think about it incorrectly – it would be to treat ways of being as if they were themselves in being. But ways of being *are* not unless entities are constituted by them. So the clearing is not a hiding of other modes of being, any more than a clearing in the forest is a hiding of trees. The forest clearing does not work by keeping some particular trees or shrubs on hand but out of the way. Rather, the forest clearing is nothing but the condition that there are no trees or shrubs growing.

(Wrathall 2011, 34)

There is a “real sense” in which a forest clearing is an open space. We do not have to imagine that there are trees withheld and placed in storage somewhere to create the clearing; we just have to recognize that there are no trees in the clearing. Similarly, we can understand the “clearing of being” as making space for a specific historical style of being by excluding alternative possibilities.¹⁰ Haugeland puts this point in the following way: “every constituted domain requires an excluded zone – a non-zero extension of the conceivable beyond the possible – that is *in fact* empty” (Haugeland 1998, 333). We can understand and experience the emptiness of the “excluded zone” without imagining that there is a library or librarian that stores the alternative, merely conceivable possibilities.

Ironically, and by-the-by, Withy’s own account of level-three concealment seems to fall prey to the “explanatory heuristic” argument. After all, on Withy’s account of the *lēthē* of being, positing the absolute non-obtaining of intelligibility is a way of making sense of the “the strangeness of the fact of the world and its worlding” (Withy 2022, 139). We make sense of this by imagining that we can make sense of the idea of an agent existing in a space where nothing is intelligible, where there ‘is’ sheer non-being. But this is merely an explanatory heuristic; there is no real sense in which there is such a space or agent. Where “there is no manifestness of being,” Heidegger explains, “there also is no non-being and not even the nothing and emptiness” (GA16: 330; also GA39: 62, GA80.2: 584). And there is certainly no agent if there is no intelligibility. So the *lēthē* that Withy has in mind is not a genuine phenomenon and thus, according to Withy’s ‘explanatory heuristic argument’, we ought to collapse the third level into the second level.

⁹“*alētheia* as clearing remains concealed,” Heidegger suggests, “because affectedness with concealing, concealment, *Lēthē* belongs to *A-lētheia*, not just as a mere addition, not like the shadow to the light, but as the heart of *alētheia*” (GA15: 395).

¹⁰Provided, that is, that we can conceive of the idea of alternative historical styles for opening up possibilities. Heidegger’s descriptions of different epochs in the history of being is meant to give some content to this thought.

According to the “no prior *lēthē*” argument, we can only give the clearing “plank” status if we can identify some prior absence that gets overcome through the clearing. According to Wither, I have neither identified a prior *lēthē* that is overcome by the clearing, nor have I “identified a further phenomenon that overcomes *lēthē*” in order to provide the CP-ground of being (Wither 2022, 127–8).

Now, this argument presupposes Wither’s taxonomy by assuming that the *lēthē* at the heart of an unconcealment must be a complete absence or lack that is “overcome” or “vanquished” by the unconcealing. This is why she thinks that the clearing only counts as an unconcealment if we can identify such a *lēthē*.

As I’ve explained, however, I reject this presupposition. Heidegger’s inquiry into the clearing is driven by a phenomenological sensitivity to the interplay between concealment and unconcealing. As a result, Heidegger’s question is not: what absence is vanquished by the clearing? His question is rather, what is intrinsically affected with concealment in such a way that it enables and sustains an unconcealment. And I offered Heidegger’s answer to that question: what is concealed is the modal character of being, the contingency of any given style of being. When the clearing is not experienced as such, we get a metaphysical account of being as beingness: “metaphysics must think being as beingness ... All this means that being remains without clearing” (GA66: 393). The unconcealment sustained by this concealment is the emergence of distinct periods in the history of being: “times of history” – epochs – “arise in each case only from out of the clearing of being and are themselves only the way in which this clearing disposes of its spatio-temporal field” (GA95: 251). When Wither collapses the “truth of the clearing” into her “level three”, she obliterates the historical dimension of Heidegger’s thought.¹¹

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APPENDIX

GA3	<i>Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991). Translated as: <i>Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics</i> , Richard Taft (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997).
GA5	<i>Holzwege</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977). Translated as: <i>Off the Beaten Track</i> , trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
GA6.1	<i>Nietzsche I</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996).
GA6.2	<i>Nietzsche II</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997).
GA7	<i>Vorträge und Aufsätze</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000).
GA8	<i>Was heißt Denken?</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002). Translated as: <i>What is Called Thinking?</i> Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (trans.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).
GA9	<i>Wegmarken</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996). Translated as: <i>Pathmarks</i> , William McNeill (ed.) (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
GA10	<i>Der Satz vom Grund</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997). Translated as: <i>The Principle of Reason</i> , Reginald Lilly (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).
GA12	<i>Unterwegs zur Sprache</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1985).
GA14	<i>Zur Sache des Denkens</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2007).
GA15	<i>Seminare</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1986).
GA16	<i>Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000).
GA17	<i>Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994). Translated as: <i>Introduction to Phenomenological Research</i> , trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
GA21	<i>Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976). Translated as: <i>Logic: The Question of Truth</i> , trans. Thomas Sheehan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).
GA27	<i>Einleitung in die Philosophie</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996).
GA29/30	<i>Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983). Translated as: <i>The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude</i> , trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
GA33	<i>Aristoteles, Metaphysics Θ 1–3: Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981). Translated as <i>Aristotle' Metaphysics Θ 1–3</i> , Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).
GA34	<i>Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1988). Translated as: <i>The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus</i> , trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002).
GA39	<i>Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980) <i>Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine"</i> , William McNeill and Julia Ireland (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014).
GA46	<i>Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemäßer Betrachtung</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2003). Translated as: <i>Interpretation of Nietzsche' Second Untimely Meditation</i> , Ullrich Haase and Mark Sinclair (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016).
GA54	<i>Parmenides</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982). Translated as: <i>Parmenides</i> , André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).
GA55	<i>Heraklit: Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens. Logik: Heraklits Lehre vom Logos</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1979).
GA65	<i>Beiträge zur Philosophie, vom Ereignis</i> (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989). Translated as: <i>Contributions to Philosophy, of the Event</i> , Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012).

(Continues)

- GA66 *Besinnung* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997). Translated as: *Mindfulness*, Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (trans.) (London: Continuum, 2006).
- GA67 *Metaphysik und Nihilismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1999). Translated as: *Metaphysics and Nihilism*, Arun Iyer (trans.) (Cambridge: Polity, 2022).
- GA69 *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998). Translated as: *The History of Beyng*, William McNeill and Jeffrey Powell (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015).
- GA71 *Das Ereignis* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009). Translated as: *The Event*, Richard Rojcewicz (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).
- GA73 *Zum Ereignis-Denken* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2013).
- GA79 *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1994). Translated as: *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: "Insight Into That Which Is" and "Basic Principles of Thinking."* Andrew J. Mitchell (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012).
- GA80.2 *Vorträge. Teil 2: 1935–1967* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2020).
- GA95 *Überlegungen VII–XI* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2014). Translated as: *Ponderings VII–XI: Black Notebooks 1938–1939*, Richard Rojcewicz (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017).
- GA97 *Anmerkungen II–V, 1942–48* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2015).
- GA100 *Vigiliae und Notturmo, 1952/53 to 1957* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2020).
- PLT *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (trans.) (New York: HarperCollins, 1971).
- OTBT *Off the Beaten Track*, Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (trans.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- SZ *Sein und Zeit*, 7th edition (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953). Translated as *Being and Time*, J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (trans.) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962). Page numbers for the 7th German Edition of *Being and Time* are found in the margin of both the *Gesamtausgabe* edition and the English translations of *Being and Time*, and so it is standard to refer to passages using the 7th edition's pagination.
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