

TIME AND BEING
IN
BEING AND TIME

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the relationship between time and being, and in particular, Martin Heidegger's account of that relationship in *Being and Time*. It elaborates two central claims, in both exegetical and substantive terms, each of which challenges a dominant view of Heidegger's work. First, most readers of *Being and Time* have focused upon what it says about being, and taken its claims about time as secondary. I challenge this view, arguing that for Heidegger, time is interrelated to being such that one cannot clarify the sense of the latter without first clarifying the sense of the former. I advance a novel conception of time, which I take to be the one Heidegger was working towards. Second, a prevailing interpretation of *Being and Time* holds that the issue at stake in Heidegger's project is intelligibility. To be, the view goes, is to be intelligible or meaningful. Against this, I argue that the non-intelligible plays a privileged role in Heidegger's account of what one is asking after, in asking after being.

The thesis proceeds in four chapters. In chapter 1, I investigate the connection between time and the traditional conception of being, developing in the process an account of Heidegger's term "presence-at-hand" which shows how concerns about time frame Heidegger's approach to the question of the meaning of being. In chapter 2, I challenge the completeness of the dominant view that for Heidegger being is the intelligibility of what is, arguing that Dasein's fundamental disclosure of being does not procure entities at all, but a "non-intelligible" sheer presence. In chapter 3, I develop the problem with the traditional conception of time in the context of its incompatibility with Dasein's disclosure (using Husserl's phenomenology of time-consciousness to illustrate that the difficulty lies in successfully articulating time's dynamism, or "flow"), as well as discussing how the dominant reading of Heidegger's "primordial temporality" falls short in this regard. Finally, in chapter 4, I provide an interpretation of Heidegger's primordial temporality which resolves that problem, showing how Dasein's "ecstatic" structure is able to articulate time's dynamism, and how as such primordial temporality grounds those other temporal characters constitutive of practical and reflective comportment.

For Michael Dowding

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the relationship between time and being, and in particular, the account of this relationship advanced by Martin Heidegger in 1927's *Being and Time*. In that text, Heidegger advertises his quarry as “the question of the meaning of being.” Most readers of the book have, as such, focused on what it says about *being*, and taken its claims about *time* as auxiliary. Since many commentators have also found what Heidegger says about time to be either impenetrable or implausible, there is resultantly a trend amongst interpreters for excising Heidegger's claims about time from their readings. My objective is to rehabilitate time's role in *Being and Time*.

To do this, I argue for three main claims. First, time and being as we typically understand them are interlinked, because the traditional, dominant sense of being is derived, unwittingly, from time as traditionally conceived. Second, Dasein's fundamental disclosure of being is incompatible with the traditional conception of time, and speaks against the dominant view that for Heidegger being is the intelligibility of what is. Third, Heidegger's account of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) resolves the resultant lacuna, by describing the temporal character belonging to Dasein—a temporal character which I argue is distinct from, and grounds, both the traditional conception of time and that of the dominant reading.

Each of these claims is dually exegetical and substantive. On the one hand, the following enterprise is one of interpretation: I am arguing that Heidegger, in particular the Hei-

degger of *Being and Time*, has had the shape of his argument misconstrued, and his cart (being) put before his horse (time). On the other hand, I am also arguing for the philosophical plausibility of Heidegger's claims; reading him with the greatest charity reasonable and supplementing him in cases of weakness both as regards clarity and substance. The exception to this sympathetic dual purpose regards Heidegger's engagement with Ancient Greek philosophy. For reasons of space and focus I leave aside entirely the question of the exegetical plausibility of Heidegger's reading of Ancient Greek philosophy. Instead, I suggest that we should see the early Heidegger's usage of the Greeks, in particular Plato and Aristotle, as a cypher for a sense of what is philosophically normative within the Western tradition. For this is why he finds the Greeks of interest in the first place: they hold the unique position of being both determinative for the course of Western philosophy, yet also being undetermined by it themselves. As we shall see in chapter 1, Heidegger finds this unique historical positioning within the philosophical dialectic important because it means that while the Greeks are often implicated in what philosophers are most ready to assume, they were also the philosophers least subject to such a set of baseline assumptions in an extant dialectic. Notwithstanding this exception concerning the Greeks, however, what I pursue herein is a task of reconstructive exegesis, which interprets and defends Heidegger in order to reach some substantive philosophical insights. I aim to provide an interpretation with a sensitivity to Heidegger's original intent, but without capitulating to his worse tendencies for neologism and gesture. I hope, therefore, to avoid what Thomas Sheehan and Karl Jaspers labelled *Heideggergegacker*, "Heidegger cackling"—the unfortunate syndrome in which Heidegger's inventive neologism takes hold in his readers so strongly as to make us forget the value of clarity (to articulate the idea in milder terms than Sheehan's.) If I am successful, we will come to both a novel perspective on *Being and Time*, and a position of substantive philosophical interest out of that.

In chapter 1, I begin by assessing the problem Heidegger is pursuing. I investigate his positioning of Plato and Aristotle as having been “stimulated” into doing philosophy by the unarticulated question of the meaning of being, despite in the same stroke coming to obscure that question for the tradition that followed them. Heidegger’s notion of “primordial sources” is introduced as the element obscured for us but more readily accessible for the Greeks, and I develop the claim that what prevents us from accessing these primordial sources is that we maintain our disclosive capacities in modes whose character excludes those primordial sources. To follow up on this and begin making tracks towards a non-exclusionary mode I turn to examine the character of an exclusionary mode, with an eye to identifying why it might obscure the primordial. This leads me to investigate that mode of access which the early Heidegger had the most pejorative attitude towards, which he calls *apophantic logos*, and its accompanying character of discovering entities *present-at-hand*.

I proceed to develop an account of what Heidegger means by judgments in this mode producing “levelled-down” or “free-floating” phenomena as involving a failure of appropriate orientation or comportment towards the subject matter of the judgment. In the extreme case, this failure leads to a “pure synthesis” in which the subject of a judgment is no longer that against which the predicates of an assertion can be judged, but the mere conjunction or synthesis of those predicates alone. I then show why the subject of such a pure synthesis is necessarily present-at-hand. The reason, I argue, is temporal: since the articulated predicates of a pure synthesis necessarily exhaust the subject, it is impossible for the subject of a pure synthesis to be anything other than wholly present.

Crucially, Heidegger identifies this basic structural possibility of comportment with the Greek sense of being as *ousia*, or presence. This sense is circular, Heidegger thinks, because time itself is construed as something which *is*, and therefore as something present.

Heidegger does not give this thought greater precision with respect to the Greeks (i.e., by setting out exactly what is inexhaustive about conceiving time through the structure of the present) so I set aside the question of doing this for the third chapter. I turn instead to making precise the sense of present-at-hand by providing an account of it which maintains the connection to being free-floating, but which is compatible with the observation that judgements only contingently, and perhaps only rarely, result in a free-floating comportment.

We are left with two clues to the “primordial sources” which I set out in search of. First, since assertions can be more or less free-floating, so the subject matter from which the predicates are drawn can be more or less prominent in Dasein’s comportment—and absent altogether in the most extreme case. As this insensitivity to the subject matter is always a possibility of Dasein’s comportment, so it needs guarding against. Paying proper attention to the subject matter, in some sense, is part of what Heidegger thinks we must do. Second, Heidegger has identified the Greek conception of being as the one which he is providing a corrective to, and we know that what is problematic about this conception in his view is the role of the temporal present within it. As such, finding the “primordial sources” must involve escaping from the auspices of this inexhaustive temporal horizon.

In chapter 2, I investigate what the character of the “primordial sources” might be in terms of their content. To do this, I mount an investigation of Heidegger’s notions of the *nothing* and *anxiety*. These provide, I suggest, the fulcrum around which *Being and Time* turns. Specifically, while most of Division I is concerned with the proximal intelligibility of the world and the entities within it, the exceptional case of anxiety and comportment towards the nothing provides a counterexample to the thought that intelligibility is the most basic, or primordial, characteristic of our possible comportment and access to the world. This contrasts somewhat with the dominant view amongst interpreters—which

I dub the “intelligibility-centric” reading—that understands Heidegger’s interest in being as an interest in intelligibility. Not only is intelligibility not the entire breadth of that which Heidegger sets out to account for, I argue, but non-intelligibility also has a certain constitutive role for intelligibility. (In a slogan: non-intelligibility without intelligibility, but no intelligibility without non-intelligibility.) I set out a trio of arguments that challenge the intelligibility-centric view.

First, I argue that intelligibility-centric views involve a misemphasis of the structure of *Being and Time*, and that taking the book’s advertised structure (in its intended and extant forms) seriously speaks against taking intelligibility as the key to Heidegger’s project.

Second, I argue that it is impossible for the intelligible, understood as that which can have some particular meaning but is not tied to any single one, to be grounded in itself.

Third, I argue that Heidegger presents the nothing as an absence of intelligibility which is not privative, but positive: that is, it is not merely the absence of intelligibility. The non-intelligible nothing, I claim, is a prerequisite on the intelligibility which Dasein otherwise maintains itself within—and not the other way round.

Having challenged the intelligibility-centric view, I proceed to argue that while intelligible access is paradigmatic for Dasein, we must understand non-intelligible access as equally paradigmatic—even if it is proximally *rarer* as an experience. I present an account of the experience Heidegger labels as anxiety and its content (the nothing). The nothing, I submit, is in fact *sheer presence*. Since this is a surprising turn of events, given chapter 1’s claim that it is the dominance of the present which is problematic for the sense of being, I press the point exegetically: despite his initial setup of the problem qua the Greek conception of being and the precedence of presence within it, Heidegger nevertheless returns to the Greek notion of truth as sheer presence (and not least, sheer sensory presence) as the locus of “primordially.” I describe the key phenomenological character of

sheer presence in the relevant sense as “utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude.” Its key feature, I suggest, is that—unlike Sartre’s conception of the “melting” chestnut tree—entities themselves become absent (even though there is no “sensory disappearance”). I connect this to Heidegger’s conception of *logos* as *dianoein*, or double-seeing: in theoretical and practical engagement, the hermeneutic or apophantic *logos* “lifts off” the entity’s identity from the subject matter, giving intelligible character to it. By contrast, in the kind of access belonging to anxiety, there is only a singular *noein*, in which nothing is lifted-off, and no distinction between *this* and *that* entity is possible. Significantly, this makes it impossible for comportment in this mode of access to become free-floating. The mode of access involved in encountering the nothing, on the contrary, is the exact opposite of the “pure synthesis” elaborated in chapter 1: it does not allow for even a single degree of drift towards free-floating-ness (because that requires the lifting-off of a predicate). While this seems to give the nothing, and with it anxiety, a promising role in the search for the “primordial sources”, it also leaves us with a puzzle: how can the primordial sources be a form of sheer *presence*, when it is the precedence of presence that is supposedly problematic?

In chapter 3 I pick up this question by asking why Heidegger thinks that allowing the structure of a “now” or moment—the structure of the present in the traditional conception—to be the basis of our conception of time is problematic. Through an examination of Husserl’s framework of vertical and horizontal intentionality in his account of time-consciousness, I reconstruct the fundamental issue for any conception of time which uses the “now” as its basic foundation. Heidegger, I show, targets his discussion of temporality in Division II at this problem, finally providing content for the criticism of the traditional conception with which he opened *Being and Time*. The reason that we cannot accept presence as the basic character of time is because the now-structure is incapable of satisfactorily accounting for the basic *dynamism* of time—that which we metaphorically describe

as “flow.” To provide a full account of time, the thought goes, we *must* account for its dynamism. Thus, even if the now-structure which constitutes a present can be pressed into service as something that constitutes the “past” and the “future” as well, it can never provide an account of the peculiar connection between them. This is the task which Heidegger sets himself: to articulate a sense of time that can account for its essential dynamism, and which can therefore provide the temporal component of a meaning of being which does not render being inexhaustive or circularly compromised.

Since this reading of Heidegger’s project with regards to time is rather unusual, I take the second half of the chapter to engage with two major interpreters—Käufer and Blattner—of Heidegger on temporality. Both views work broadly within the confines of the intelligibility-centric position, and I argue that on these readings Heidegger’s views on time are rather implausible. This, I submit, motivates all the more a pursuit of my alternative reading: since in the status quo, Heidegger’s work on time appears, more than any other part of his corpus perhaps, to be in the end a failure. A thought impressed all the more by his apparent abandonment of the *Being and Time* project.

I turn, finally, in chapter 4 to examine whether we can in fact find in Heidegger a novel account of time’s dynamic character. One which is able to capture time’s dynamism without recourse to either the now-structure or the metaphor of movement. Heidegger’s description of primordial temporality, in its “ecstatic” structure, fulfils these two criteria, I argue. Specifically, the structure of the ecstases *necessitates* time’s dynamism. Furthermore, this ecstatic structure does not reply upon sequentiality, or upon the structure of a “now” or moment; on the contrary, ecstatic structure is wholly incompatible with those structures. I conclude the chapter by examining some of the implications of this structure; for example, with regard to duration, and with regard to Dasein’s relation to its temporal structure.

I submit that, by providing a corrective for the traditional conception of time, Heidegger also reveals the incompleteness of the traditional conception of being. More to the point, he shows that, insofar as that conception does accurately express the being of entities of a certain kind, it is hopelessly inexhaustive with regards to the subject matter from which such entities arise (i.e., are made possible). Any articulation of that subject matter—whether under the heading of *being* or not—should have to take account of his revised sense of time.

CHAPTER I:

HEIDEGGER'S PROBLEM

§1 THE SENSE OF 'FORGOTTEN'

Heidegger opens *Being and Time* with the claim that the meaning of being and the question thereof have been lost to us. As curious as this absence of a question might be, it is Heidegger's manner of presenting its absence which is more puzzling still. For he claims that we are not merely *missing* the question, but that we have in fact *forgotten* it.¹ Forgotten in what sense? Most obviously in a historical one: lost to us in this era. Once, the question was known about, and asked; now, no one asks it—today no one even knows about it. A similarly epochal scale resonates in Heidegger's opening words: 'Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word "being"?'²

However, these same articulations point also to a personal scale: to having oneself forgotten, here and now in one's own time. To talk of 'today' and 'our own time' is as readily a direction to the lived time of the individual as it is to the extra-personal time of philosophical history. The word 'forgotten' itself suggests this. If one has forgotten something, one does not know it. But to have forgotten it also implies that one *has* known it. So to say that the question has been forgotten today is to say not only that we do not know it, but

1. '[T]his question has today been forgotten.' Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), H. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, H. 1.

that we *did* know it—that *we today* knew it.³ It is not only that civilisation’s once-extant knowledge has lapsed from our collective memory, but that each of us is guilty of a lapse in our own case. We and the tradition as a whole are not exempt because the question is not irretrievably ensconced in the distant past. On the contrary, insofar as it sanctions turning away from the question, the tradition gives a theoretical voice to a proximal, everyday tendency of our existence.

The two senses of ‘forgotten’, in engendering the possibility of asking the question ourselves, shift the matter of that question from a historical curiosity (“ancient knowledge forgotten”) to a case of perplexingly effective obscuration in the here-and-now (“we are all missing something”). Indeed, one of Heidegger’s initial complaints is that the question is not merely overlooked, but actively dismissed as uninteresting or un-perplexing: ‘Are we nowadays even perplexed at our inability to understand the expression “Being”? Not at all.’⁴ That we are not concerned about the meaning of being is itself cast as puzzling. Heidegger implicitly contrasts our apparent disinterest with the attitude of the ancient Greek philosophers: ‘[t]he question we are touching upon is not just any question. It is one which provided a stimulus for the researches of Plato and Aristotle.’⁵ But it is the juxtaposition between this original irruption of the question and its fate which is significant for Heidegger: arising ‘only to subside from then on *as a theme for actual investigation*.’⁶ The ‘stimulus’ never escapes its ancient origins in explicit form, the thought goes. Rather, it persists only implicitly in the record—i.e., the texts—of the ancient Greek philosophers.

3. Though this forgetting cannot be the usual kind; we cannot have forgotten the question as if this was an event that takes place in each of our lives, as with the way that one might forget what was said on some earlier occasion. Rather, as we shall come to see, this is forgetting as an “elision”, closer to the way in which one overlooks the brown of the branch in favour of the green of the leaf when characterising the look of vegetation. Similarly, when one forgets in the relevant sense, one is caught in the elision of something that is equally in plain view.
4. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, H. 2.
6. *Ibid.*

This persistence has a double aspect. On the one hand, the stimulus remains implicit in the texts because it is that which they were responding to. On the other hand, if the thinking which produced the texts was a response to the stimulus, and reading philosophical texts involves thinking through the thoughts which they articulate, then to some extent we recreate the thinking which responded to the stimulus when we read these texts, even if we lack an explicit orientation towards that stimulus. Insofar as Greek philosophy has a foundational influence on the tradition as a whole, therefore, the stimulus is implicit throughout the tradition; philosophy is oriented towards it, having sprung from it, even as it loses sight of it. But this passing into being forgotten is not simply passive. Put another way: why should the stimulus be forgotten just because it is not explicitly pointed out in some texts? Rather, to remain forgotten as Heidegger claims, it needs to be maintained in this mere implicitness.

It is tempting to blame the stimulus itself: to say that it is incommunicable, ineffable, or otherwise demands one to articulate it to oneself in ways that defy the bounds of good sense.⁷ But, I want to suggest, Heidegger does not see the question of the meaning of being, or even being itself, as plainly and flatly inarticulable in this way. Hard to articulate, yes. Outside the bounds of ordinary sense, yes. But buried in a noumenon-esque bedrock accessible only through *koan* or poem?⁸ No. As a promissory note, consider: ‘that which the ancient philosophers found continually disturbing as something obscure and hidden

7. Witherspoon, for example, Heidegger to be in an ‘unstable’ position, because the topic about which he claims to think defies the conditions it must fulfil if it is to be the target of thinking. Edward Witherspoon, “Logic and the Inexpressible in Frege and Heidegger,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2002): 89–113.

8. Or the kind of “Black Forest language” which some commentators cannot resist (c.f., Richard Capobianco, *Engaging Heidegger* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 121–122) and which others cannot abide by (c.f., Thomas Sheehan, “What if Heidegger Were a Phenomenologist?,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 381).

has taken on a clarity and self-evidence.⁹ One might easily take this as evidence of the stimulus' quasi-mystic ineffability: an enigma which arrested our forebears—for whom the shroud of intellectual history did not press in—washed out in a false clarity from 'standing on giants' shoulders.' Note that such a reading subtly glosses the reference to 'ancient philosophers' with an air of deference. As if to complain in faux-Nietzschean style that we ought to live up to their standards. This (particular) valorization of our forebears seems unfounded. They are described as *disturbed* by what they encounter—not intellectually arrested by it. Heidegger is not going to valorize the Greeks for their robust investigation but criticise them for failing to engage the stimulus with a certain due seriousness. He will say that the Greeks elided the stimulus out of *fear*, and have in their influence silently encouraged the tradition to continue doing so.¹⁰ The desire to ameliorate our negative reaction to the stimulus—that being is disturbing to us—is entirely orthogonal to clearly grasping it in our descriptions of and reflections upon our encounter with it. On the contrary, Heidegger is committed—I shall show—to the idea that a significant part of the difficulty with being and its question has to do with us and our inclinations, and that while these make being in one sense obscure, it is nevertheless not far-flung beyond us, but rooted firmly in the sphere of the personal and phenomenological.¹¹

9. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 2.

10. I will introduce the specific elision the Greek's make, according to Heidegger, in §5. I discuss the idea that the Greeks were disturbed by or fearful of being in chapter two, and especially §7 and p.114.

11. To borrow an observation from Sheehan: the Heidegger of *Being and Time* 'had left behind the human subject in favor of what he called the *subjectivity* of the subject'. (Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 195.) While *Being and Time* is committed to scouring 'subjectivity' and 'the subject' from the locus of Dasein, Sheehan's point is that this exhortation against the use of certain concepts is distinct from denying that the locus of Dasein is entirely distinct from the locus of the subject. One looks in a similar direction but in a different way. The various exhortations to abandon 'subjectivity', therefore, are not calls against treating Dasein as, for example, an individual or the experiencer of experiences. The existential analytic fills in a gap left by Kant: 'he failed to provide an ontology with Dasein as its theme... to give a preliminary ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject.' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 24.) We might then worry that this will risk collapsing Heidegger's project into Kant's, even if Heidegger takes himself to be a radical: he will be reduced to determining the source, extent and boundaries of the experiencing subject abstracted from given expe-

Heidegger's framing historical claim, then, is that whilst the Greeks were confronted with the question of the meaning of being, and were provoked into doing philosophy as a response to it, their research did not express this question so much as it came to obscure it. As a result the difficulty of this question is constituted in both the 'personal' and the 'historical' senses of forgetting, because the elision of the stimulus in post-Grecian philosophising is in equal parts a repeat of that first encounter and an acceptance of the wisdom set down—and since developed—in response to it. A wisdom which has taken the 'fragmentary and incipient' sense that was 'wrestled from the phenomena' of the encounter and 'long since... trivialised' it.¹² This now-trivialised stimulus is 'the soil from which the basic ontological concepts developed' and so remembering the question of the meaning of being, remembering the stimulus that provokes philosophy and ontology at all, will involve getting ourselves back to such a 'soil.'¹³ Disconnected from the stimulus, ontology is alienated from its own proper purpose, a mere simulacrum of itself:

Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task.¹⁴

Philosophy, the notion goes, is not built soundly upon its originary stimulus or subject matter, but placed endlessly atop itself without returning explicitly to that bedrock on which, strictly speaking, the entire edifice ultimately rests. So, while that founding stimulus can never truly be lost—else, no philosophising—it can become radically implicit,

rience (c.f., 'strive independently of all experience' to reach a 'decision about... [metaphysics]' sources in general.' Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Axii). But this worry fears too much in advance, in assuming that what is problematic about Kant's turn to the subject is that it turns towards the structure of the individual, rather than construing said individual as a subject.

12. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 2.

13. *Ibid.*, H. 3.

14. *Ibid.*, H. 11.

obscure, and dismissable, i.e., *forgotten*; as a bowl of fruit goes ignored by the painter who, already certain of how fruit appears, bothers to glance at it only to check this or that aspect, and never the insurmountable richness of its presentation which as a student—or even just once as a child—they looked to and saw.

Being, however, is not a bowl of fruit, and so it is not possible to simply direct ourselves towards it. The idea of *looking* at being seems baffling; I can look at *beings*, but surely not their being? But from the start, Heidegger seems to think otherwise—that we can, in fact, “look” at being. Trading on the ambiguity of ‘forgotten’, with its equivocation between the historical and phenomenological scale, he introduces the notion that the problem is one of *access*. He says:

Tradition ... blocks our access to those primordial ‘sources’ from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand.¹⁵

Read in the foregoing context, the upshot is that the philosophy which has come down to us provides a quiet incitement to cut ourselves off from the ‘primordial sources’ to which we must, in fact, be related if we are capable of arriving at any sense of ‘being’ and ‘beings’ at all. But as I noted, being is not a bowl of fruit: it ‘is not in fact accessible *as an entity*.’¹⁶ So if being is going to become accessible, if we are to direct ourselves towards the ‘primordial sources’ from which ontology is able to develop at all, then we must look for a *distinct mode of access*. We are looking for a distinct mode of access, and with it a distinctive phenomenon which is revealed in that mode. This phenomenon, furthermore, needs to fulfil this description of a “soil” or “primordial source” out of which ontological

15. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 21.

16. *Ibid.*, H. 94.

concepts—theoretical or pre-theoretical—arise. No doubt this is a tall order. For example, there is already a tension between the singular “soil” and the plural “sources”, which seems to echo the difficulty of finding an original unity of sufficient descriptive or explanatory power to bind together all other, derivatory, senses of being.¹⁷ I shall temper expectations by saying that the reading of *Being and Time* which I sketch renders, for example, neither a commitment to ontological pluralism, nor its disavowal. Rather, I read Heidegger as attempting to clarify our sense of what we are asking about, when we ask after being—without getting to the point where the question of the meaning of being itself is asked. What clarity we arrive at, then, concerns having a clearer sense of what the question of the meaning of being asks after, rather than a clearer sense of what the answer to it might be.

§2 MAINTAINING FORGETFULNESS

We might well ask, however: why take seriously the implicit suggestion that the Grecian elision is hegemonic? The “stimulus” is supposed to be the spark of philosophical curiosity: how could it be so comprehensively and repeatedly subverted? I will not attempt to give a comprehensive historical defense of Heidegger’s claim in that regard—that is beyond my scope here. What I shall do instead is motivate the substantive plausibility of the artifice which he himself uses to articulate in such brief terms his otherwise sweeping historical claim.¹⁸ He tells us that ‘on the basis of the Greeks’ initial contributions ... a dogma has been developed which not only declares the question about the meaning of Being to

17. C.f. Denis McManus, “Ontological Pluralism and the Being and Time Project,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 51, no. 4 (2013): 651–673.

18. It is worth noting that Heidegger’s project does not hang in the balance, in any case, since these historical claims are in a sense ciphers and promissory notes for substantive issues (which perhaps explains why *Being and Time* handles them with such a light touch).

be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect.¹⁹ This raises a further question: what leads to this dogma's acceptance on the enormous scale required? How could a handful of doctrinal presuppositions wield such obscuring influence when *ex hypothesi* what they obscure is not buried away in ancient history, but latently accessible to us here-and-now? In order for Heidegger's artifice of a dogma to be worthwhile, it must provide an explanation for the persistence of the elision it exemplifies. There are two aspects through which it might achieve this. Firstly, it might be that it is intellectually irresistible on its own merits—i.e., that it is sufficiently argumentatively persuasive that no one has been able to deny it. Secondly, it might be that whatever would evidence against the dogma is obscured—whether by the dogma, or in advance of it, or both. And, of course, these two aspects are not mutually exclusive but complementary: argumentative strength could obscure counter-evidence, and obscure counter-evidence would be harder to bring to bear against the dogma, whatever its argumentative strength. In examining the dogma's three doctrines or presuppositions, therefore, I will have two aims: (a) to examine which, if any, of these aspects regarding the dogma's efficaciousness holds up to inspection; and (b) to consider whether there is thereby good reason for the dogma's asserted grip—i.e., to assess its worthiness as a proxy for a more comprehensive historical assessment.

A. UNIVERSALITY

The first of the dogma's presuppositions is that being 'is the "most universal" concept',²⁰ since it is necessary that there is such a conceptual understanding in order for the positing of any given entity to be possible. As Aquinas expresses it: 'For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is "being," the notion of which is included in all things

19. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 2.

20. *Ibid.*, H. 3.

whatsoever a man apprehends.²¹ For there to be any being with which we are acquainted in one way or another, there must already be an understanding of being, for if there were not, we would not know them to be beings.

Heidegger's objection is not that this claim about the universality of the understanding of being is mistaken in and of itself, but that it is mistakenly taken to imply that the "notion" involved is such that it requires no further elucidation. For while it is true that there must be an understanding of being in becoming apprised of any being per se, so it is also true that this does not mean that we there possess anything like a clear understanding of this understanding. It is itself mysterious: 'the darkest of all [concepts].'²² That the universal understanding demands further investigation is shown, Heidegger claims, by the distinctive feature of this "category" (being per se). Namely, that while the categories as a structure themselves are defined by their multiplicity, so the "category" of being is not a genus amongst others, but something fundamentally unitary—i.e. invulnerable to dissolution or contradistinction—which, in a sense yet to be determined, makes its appearance along with the categories, but never is one of them amongst the others. It is not, therefore unitary in the sense of being *one category* to which things belong in virtue of their sharing existence: 'Aristotle himself knew the unity of this transcendental "universal" as a *unity of analogy* in contrast to the multiplicity of the highest generic concepts applicable to things.'²³ His criticism of Aristotle, however, is that to consider existence or being to be in some way universal not via a category but in being above the categories is to have 'failed to clear away the darkness of these categorial interconnections.'²⁴ The darkness being that, while we can make sense per se of the claim that being is not categorial,

21. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1920), I-II, Q. 94, Art. 2.

22. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 3.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

we risk importing over to this “non-categorical” sense of being the structure and character belonging to the categorial, unless we can provide a positive characterisation of what has changed between them. One cannot simply stipulate away the categorial mechanism. The dogma of universality presents, therefore, a two-fold difficulty. First, we must not fail to recognise Aristotle’s distinction between a unity-of-all-categories, and a unity in contradistinction to the multiplicity of the categories. Secondly, we must not fail to recognise that this distinction lacks a well-understood meaning: merely “making” the Aristotelian distinction does not suffice to explain how we should understand this “unity of analogy.”

B. INDEFINABILITY

The second presupposition is that being is ‘indefinable.’²⁵ For something to receive definition in the relevant sense is for it to be understood as differentiable from other things in a specific way. To be this being rather than that being is to differ with respect to the sort of being which each is. Being, however, as that which universally applies to all beings, fails this condition of specificity with regards to “this but not that”, and is thus indefinable. ‘Thus,’ Heidegger concludes, ‘we cannot apply to Being the concept of “definition” as presented in traditional logic.’²⁶

However, indefinability of this sort shows only that being will not suffer being saddled with the character of an entity. For *ex hypothesi* it is only beings—that which is distributed out amongst the categories as belonging to one but not another in any given case—which can be defined or differentiated in this way. This does not mean that being can be dismissed, as if its resistance to this kind of definition offers proof of its vacuity. ‘But does this imply that “Being” no longer offers a problem? Not at all. We can only infer

25. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 4.

26. Ibid.

that “Being” cannot have the character of an entity.²⁷ The issue is not closed by the indefinability of being, but opened by it; it reveals the radical inapplicability of our extant apparatus for dealing with being.

C. SELF-EVIDENCE

The third presupposition is that being is ‘self-evident.’²⁸ For how can one point to a being of one sort or another, or know anything concerning beings in general, if one does not already have some sort of grasp on what it is for them *to be*? The universal employment of such a grasp on being in human discourse demonstrates that this is not an intellectual self-evidence that might be demonstrated by a proof of one sort or another, but rather that our understanding of being is self-evident in the way in which it plays out in our discourse as allowing us to take our articulations qua being as ‘intelligible “without further ado.”’²⁹ Our possession of this “self-evident” understanding then only stands to demonstrate the extent to which it is *prima facie* deficient:

But here we have an average kind of intelligibility, which merely demonstrates that this is unintelligible. It makes manifest that in any way of comporting oneself towards entities as entities—even in any Being towards entities as entities—there lies *a priori* an enigma. The very fact that we already live in an understanding of Being and that the meaning of Being is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again.³⁰

Why ought we to concur with Heidegger that this pejoratively “average” intelligibility in fact constitutes a case of unintelligibility? Firstly, the self-evident character of our understanding is such that it requires a *further* explanation: the “self-evidence” of being in our

27. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 4.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

understanding is not an irruption of apodictic transparency in which being reveals itself in its full and ownmost nature. Instead, we merely *infer* that we have an understanding of being, in virtue of knowing our way around *beings*, and making use of beings status *as being* in our talk about them. But the sense of being and our grasp of it delivered by this inference is an empty one—it says nothing more than that we *must* have an understanding of being. But what is its character and how does it work? Secondly, this inferential self-evidence provides us with this paucity precisely because there is not anything like an apodictic transparency from which the universal practical employment unproblematically arises. That is to say, if there were a sense in which our understanding of being was apodictic, then the inference from our ability to grasp beings to our understanding of being per se would not be empty, because it would circle back to that apodictic understanding. Since there *isn't* an apodictic understanding, the inference is oddly empty. We infer that we know what being is, but we are baffled when we try to articulate this on its own terms. This, I suggest, is what Heidegger means when he says that in the self-evidence of being there is ‘*a priori* an enigma.’³¹ Being is—on the basis of its constant use in our talk—prima facie self-evident, but when we look for what this prima facie evidence ought reasonably to point to—i.e. our understanding of being—we “draw a blank.”

* * *

The ‘veil[]’ is then two-fold.³² For, on the one hand, being is veiled insofar as it resists being adequately alighted upon as a topic of investigation: it is passed over and passed off as universal, indefinable—and never mind that, self-evident. On the other hand, this first veil is rooted in a second: that being’s universality, indefinability, and self-evidence

31. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 4.

32. *Ibid.*

present an ‘a priori enigma.’ Being appears to us already in our constant manifest use of it in our thought, speech, and action. But insofar as it is self-evident, it is revealed only that we know it poorly. Insofar as it is indefinable, it is revealed only that it cannot be understood through the structure and means of interpretation that we have become accustomed to. And insofar as it is universal, it reveals that it does not even belong to the structure through which we have—hitherto in general—theoretically interpreted our situation. Thinking back to those aims with which I approached examining the dogma,³³ we can now see (a) that while the dogma is intellectually robust, it is so because the alternative involves not rejecting its presuppositions, but rejecting them *as* foreclosing the need to investigate further, and (b) that there is, as a result, reason to accept that the dogma would have some grip: the alternative is an ‘a priori enigma’ of some challenge.

§3 ASSERTION AND PRESENCE-AT-HAND

Where have we gotten thus far? I set out in §1 the thought that, on Heidegger’s account, what we are missing such as to find the question of the meaning of being elusive are what he labels “primordial sources.” Crucially, in virtue of the dual sense of “forgotten”, these sources are still in principle available to us; they are not simply “lost to history.” Remembering them will be a phenomenological—not an archaeological—task.³⁴ ‘Our access to those primordial sources’ has been ‘block[ed]’, and getting back to them—and to the question of the meaning of being which they provoke—means recovering that access.³⁵

33. See p.8 above.

34. I say “archaeology” with an eye to its etymological origin in ἀρχαιολογία [ancient history, legend], and not its contemporary sense of studying the past through the recovery of material artefacts. Though, in fact, we can make an interesting play on the etymology of ἀρχαιολογία too. Since it is formed from ἀρχαῖος [primal, ancient] and λόγος [speech, reason], we might well say that, if our job is to uncover and articulate the primordial sources, we are indeed in the business of ἀρχαιολογία as primordial speech.

35. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 21.

In §2 I explored Heidegger's case for why these primordial sources, which *ex hypothesi* are in principle available to all Dasein, have not irrupted (and continue not to irrupt) onto the stage of philosophical history. Heidegger's artifice of a "dogma" in the tradition revealed two aspects behind this occlusion. First, even though it is inferentially self-evident that we have an understanding of being (because we understand beings), this understanding leaves us none the wiser about itself. Evidently, in Heidegger's view, something about the way our understanding of being works makes it opaque to us. Second, the dogma deflects us from pursuing being per se, because it argues that being is already understood, as far as it can be understood, in our understanding entities. In short, being is universal, indefinable and self-evident because it is what one already encounters and knows about in virtue of encountering entities; if one knows about entities, one already knows about being—it's self-evident. These two aspects are interrelated: the dogma's suggestion that being is to be found only in the entities when our understanding of being does render entities transparently encourages us not to consider being per se.

This provides some additional context for Heidegger's objective of recovering access to the primordial sources. First, the access which we recover should, in one sense, resolve the enigmatic character of our understanding of being: we should be able to articulate, against the dogma, what there "is" to the being of entities beyond said entities per se. Second, if the dogma is deflecting us from the primordial sources, this means that whatever it does direct us to cannot be those primordial sources. This gives us a concrete, albeit negative, starting point for our search. The primordial sources are not entities, at least as traditionally conceived. But what reason is there to think that entities are not "primordial" sources? Or, to put it another way, what reason is there to think that the access we have to entities is *not* access to the primordial sources?

To answer this question I propose, on Heidegger's recommendation, to adopt a *via*

negativa strategy. As he puts it, the use of ‘negative assertions... [makes] known what is peculiar to [the] phenomenon, and our characterization is therefore positive in a genuine sense[.]’³⁶ In our case, examining those phenomena which are *not* the “primordial sources” permits us to begin building a sense for the direction in which that phrase gestures. As Schear expounds: ‘Strategically clarifying what something is not can generally help foster a positive appreciation of what something is, but the rule of thumb holds especially well in phenomenology: showing that and how an understanding of some phenomenon is distorting is vital work for coaxing it into view—letting it “show up”—for a more faithful portrayal.’³⁷ Thanks to the exegetical disjunction which Heidegger’s account of the dogma has created between familiar entities and the primordial sources, positive statements about the former amount to negative claims about the latter. As such, we are in a position to clarify Heidegger’s sense of “primordial sources” by examining what he says about the entities which they are not.

I want to examine, therefore, the term under which Heidegger places entities as traditionally conceived: presence-at-hand, or *Vorhandenheit*. ‘[T]he traditional term “*existentia*”... is tantamount to *Being-present-at-hand* [*Vorhandensein*]... [and so] we shall always use... “*presence-at-hand*” [*Vorhandenheit*] for the term “*existentia*.”’³⁸ This simple equivalence between *Vorhandenheit* and *existentia* is very much the tip of an iceberg. Heidegger makes use of the terms *vorhanden* [present-at-hand] and *Vorhandenheit* in an almost hopelessly diverse manner. McManus locates no less than thirty-six different usages.³⁹ From these Golob finds there to be at least three primary senses which cannot be reduced fur-

36. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 58.

37. Joseph Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* VII (2008): 127.

38. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 42.

39. Some of them derived from the secondary literature. Denis McManus, *Heidegger and the Measure of Truth: Themes from his Early Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53–56.

ther.⁴⁰

To help make sense of Heidegger's apparent equivocation—since the diversity of his usage is that great—commentators have found it helpful to bind the terminology of *Vorhandenheit* to the less divergent terminology of assertion and the λόγος.⁴¹ As Schear notes: 'The thesis proposed, in Heidegger's name, is that to judge (or assert) is to comport toward present-at-hand entities.'⁴² As Golob puts it, intending something through means of a proposition—comporting towards something through asserting about it—can bind together the multitudinous senses of presence-at-hand into a single, at least proximally cohesive bundle: '[i]f an entity *E* is intended by a propositional mode of intentionality then *E* is intended' as fulfilling one of those possible meanings of present-at-hand.⁴³ At a bare minimum, the thought therefore goes, assertion can act as a guide to the essential sense of presence-at-hand, because all assertion must deliver us into comportment towards the present-at-hand. There appears to be a strong textual basis for this view, too. In particular, a passage in §33 of *Being and Time* has 'been largely responsible for the widespread interpretive tendency to restrict the scope of judgment, in Heidegger's name, to present-at-hand entities.'⁴⁴ Crucially, the passage appears to unambiguously endorse an equivalence between assertion and comportment towards the present-at-hand:

The entity which is held in our fore-having—for instance, the hammer—is proximally ready-to-hand as equipment. If this entity becomes the 'object' of an assertion, then as soon as we begin this assertion, there is already

40. i. '[a] substance in either an Aristotelian, Cartesian, Leibnizian or Kantian sense'; ii. [a]n entity individuated by reference to its spatio-temporal and causal properties; iii. '[a]n entity in so far as it is "cut off from" the holistic web of instrumental, social and other relations which define the Heideggerian concept of "world"'. Sacha Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16–17.

41. *Ibid.*, 19.

42. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 128. An indicative listing of scholars whom have endorsed this view can be found in *ibid.*, note 4.

43. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 19.

44. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 138.

a change-over in the fore-having. Something *ready-to-hand with which* we have to do or perform something, turns into something '*about which*' the assertion that points it out is made. Our fore-sight is aimed at something present-at-hand in what is ready-to-hand. Both *by* and *for* this way of looking at it [Hin-sicht], the ready-to-hand becomes veiled as ready-to-hand. Within this discovering of presence-at-hand, which is at the same time a covering-up of readiness-to-hand, something present-at-hand which we encounter is given a definite character in its Being-present-at-hand-in-such-and-such-a-manner. Only now are we given any access to *properties* or the like. When an assertion has given a definite character to something present-at-hand, it says something about it *as* a "what"; and this "what" is drawn *from that* which is present-at-hand as such. The as-structure of interpretation has undergone a modification. In its function of appropriating what is understood, the 'as' no longer reaches out into a totality of involvements. As regards its possibilities for Articulating reference-relations, it has been cut off from that significance which, as such, constitutes environmentality. The 'as' gets pushed back into the uniform plane of that which is merely present-at-hand. It dwindles to the structure of just letting one see what is present-at-hand, and letting one see it in a definite way. This levelling of the primordial 'as' of circumspective interpretation to the "as" with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character is the specialty of assertion. Only so does it obtain the possibility of exhibiting something in such a way that we just look at it.⁴⁵

The key phrasing is that 'as soon as we begin [the] assertion, there is already a change-over... The 'as' gets pushed back into the uniform plane of that which is merely present-at-hand. ... This ... is the specialty of assertion.'⁴⁶ To make use of an assertion, the thought goes, is to necessitate an encounter with the present-at-hand.

However, there are a number of good reasons to think that this connection between assertion (or judgment,⁴⁷) and the present-at-hand is dubious. Golob rejects it on the ba-

45. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 157–158.

46. *Ibid.*, H. 158.

47. Schear prefers the term "judgment" over that of "assertion" because, as he notes, there is no 'opposition between an inner act of judgment and an outer act of assertion' for Heidegger (Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 131). Whilst this is certainly the case, I shall retain my use of "assertion" beyond my direct engagement with Schear's contributions, in order to keep forward in mind the propositional and predicative structure which, in Heidegger's view, judgments take.

sis that there is no viable option for making sense of why ‘propositional intentionality is necessarily unable to capture’ or ‘cuts off’ the ‘richer dimension of experience’ formed by those ‘distinctive relations’, ‘instrumental, social and other... which define the Heideggerian concept of “world.”⁴⁸ There would be no reason to think that assertions could only offer access to the present-at-hand. He proceeds to rule out a number of ways in which assertions might be thought to cut out that “richer dimension”:

1. ‘*Thematic or Explicit Self-Awareness*’.⁴⁹ The claim goes that assertion should be equated with the kind of access one has when one becomes explicitly self-aware of oneself in one’s context, as when a broken tool highlights the context in which it was used. However, this is patently false: ‘there is simply no reason to equate the propositional or conceptual with a detached or deliberate or explicit or self-conscious experience.’⁵⁰
2. ‘*Skills*’.⁵¹ ‘[N]o amount of propositions will explain my ability to sit down and have lunch unless I also possess certain capacities... which enable me to work out which of that huge number of propositions’ are relevant.’⁵² However, there is no need to appeal here to the nonpropositional, ‘for the skill need only be cashed out as the capacity to apply one proposition rather than another.’⁵³
3. ‘*Conditions on Truth*’.⁵⁴ In order for entities to ground which propositions are true

It remains worth bearing in mind the key point in Schear’s rationale: assertion for Heidegger is not in any sense an outward act. Golob recognises this too, in saying that making an assertion is to comport via ‘propositional intentionality’. (Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 6).

48. *Ibid.*, 25, 18.

49. *Ibid.*, 28–32.

50. *ibid.*, 30, c.f., Schear’s second sense below, and in Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 144–148.

51. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 33–36.

52. *Ibid.*, 34.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, 36–38.

or false, entities must be available as measures for those propositions' truth values, which seems to imply 'that there must be some mode of intentionality prior to the propositional.'⁵⁵ However, 'the fact that all propositions are measured against something need not imply that there is anything such that all propositions are measured against it', which secures the possibility that that 'against which we "measure" one proposition' could be 'delivered by another.'⁵⁶

4. *'The Practical.'*⁵⁷ Wrathall suggests that the 'prepredicative manifestness of things is articulated along the lines of our practical comportment.'⁵⁸ However, Golob objects, why can this practical comportment not take propositional form? As in: 'I am using *f* in order to...'⁵⁹ This sense of the practical must, therefore, be parasitic on some further notion which prevents it from being propositional in this way.
5. *'The Normative.'*⁶⁰ The richer dimension, on this option, does not conform to the same governing norms as do propositions, for example because it does not conform to binary truth-values.⁶¹ However, Golob objects, 'Dasein's primary level of intentionality surely includes contents like my seeing that the nail is in the plank, and this seems open to literal truth or falsity.'⁶² Furthermore, even if the content was not *directly* open to being true or false, it could still be expressed propositionally, e.g., *x* stands in normative relation *y* with regard to *z*.⁶³

55. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 37.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, 43-44.

58. Mark Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 43.

59. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 44.

60. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

61. *ibid.*, 44, and c.f., Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 217.

62. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 44.

63. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

6. 'Perception'. Golob concludes, finally, that all roads to 'richness' lead to the idea specifically of perceptual richness. However, '[i]f Heidegger's theory... were genuinely based on motor intentionality and nonconceptualism it seems incredible that he would not mention that fact.'⁶⁴

Schear also rejects the supposed 'affinity' between assertion and the present-at-hand.⁶⁵ He enumerates six different senses in which the connection does not hold up to inspection:

1. 'Judgment as Staring'.⁶⁶ The influential passage casts assertion as 'just letting one see',⁶⁷ which when coupled with the claim that 'seiz[ing] hold... and us[ing]' produces an 'unobscured' and 'original... relationship' to the entity,⁶⁸ amounts to 'an argument... that judgment is a move... toward the present-at-hand.'⁶⁹ However, Schear points out, staring is not necessary for making judgments. Judging is not 'holding back' from the purposeful context our dealings have, nor putting 'distance' between us and the entities with which we are concerned.⁷⁰ It is, therefore, 'manifestly false' that judgement involves staring.⁷¹ So if comporting towards the present-at-hand involves staring, judgment does not necessitate encountering the present-at-hand.
2. 'Judgment and Breakdown'.⁷² When something breaks or is otherwise unfit for purpose, it shows up as unready-to-hand, pulling us out of our involved context and

64. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 46.

65. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 142.

66. *Ibid.*, 142–144.

67. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 158.

68. *Ibid.*, H. 69.

69. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 142.

70. *Ibid.*, 143, Schear's emphasis.

71. *Ibid.*, 144.

72. *Ibid.*, 144–148.

accosting us with the broken item which now shows up that involvement context in virtue of not fulfilling its prior role within it.⁷³ However, ‘judgment is not paradigmatically the result of an interruption in our activity: judgment is not an intrusion into... skilful engagement.’⁷⁴ It makes no sense to suggest that one only begins judging when one is shaken out of one’s involved comportment by the failure of something within the context of that comportment. Furthermore: ‘it is not at all clear why we would make, or even be tempted to make, the move from the unready-to-hand to the present-at-hand.’⁷⁵ Even if I only began judging once my hammer fell apart, why should my judgments be about the hammer in one of Golob’s three senses, or even one of McManus’ thirty-six? Rather, judgment permeates our concerned engagement throughout. For example, teachers are constantly called upon to make judgments on the work of their students. This does not—one at least hopes—necessitate that teachers encounter their students as mere substances, mere spatio-temporal occurrents, or as cut-off from significance. Instead, one cannot imagine how a teacher would be able to make the judgments that they do if those judgments weren’t well-embedded in a wider purposeful context.

3. *‘Judgment as Being Theoretical’*.⁷⁶ Judgments, the claim goes, orient us towards looking for the truth about entities, tearing us from our practical engagement. However, ‘the categories of judgment and assertion simply do not imply detachment, contemplation, reflection or theory.’⁷⁷ This would ‘overintellectualise the capacity for

73. Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 145 C.f. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §16, and Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), ch. 4.

74. Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 146.

75. *Ibid.*, 147.

76. *Ibid.*, 148–149.

77. *Ibid.*, 149.

judgement.⁷⁸ We judge and make assertions from within our involved contexts, and doing so does not produce any radical transformations in the entities with which we are engaged.

4. '*Judgment and the Portability of Language*'.⁷⁹ Language is portable and shareable, Haugeland suggested to Schear,⁸⁰ and *as a result* it can be decontextualised. This decontextualisation, in virtue of stripping away the necessarily contextual relations of involvement, results in the entities referred to becoming present-at-hand (i.e., in what would be Golob's third sense). However, this fails 'to distinguish the decontextualizing of our relation to a ready-to-hand entity from a tendency to decontextualize the entity itself.'⁸¹ Meaning: it is one thing for an entity to present with a missing, incomplete, or obviously deficient contextual involvement, but another thing altogether for it to present with *no* contextual involvement. That is to say, just because I do not have the context associated with a particular sort of workshop to which I know talk about a particular tool belongs, does not mean that said tool presents to me as present-at-hand. Rather, the tool presents to me as a tool—the paradigm case in opposition to presence-at-hand—whose purposes and functions simply lie outside the explicit locus of my context. But the tool is still, therefore, contextually situated, because my explicit context is related to this other context, such that the tools still show up as *for-something*. Or, as Schear emphasises, the portability of language beyond its original context can open a window *into* that context—'*the levies* were not stripped of their role in and around New Orleans,' instead they 'made it possible' for those who were '*not there* to know about some-

78. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 149.

79. *Ibid.*, 149–150.

80. In a personal communication, quoted by Schear at *ibid.*, 150.

81. *Ibid.*

thing that manifestly *remains in context*.’⁸²

5. ‘*Judgement as Singling Out*’.⁸³ Judgment is selective: it ‘picks entities out from a background’.⁸⁴ The implication that picking an entity out from its context means cutting it off from that context, as if to literally pick it up *and out* of that context, is however false. ‘To single an entity out is not to cut an entity off from its relations to other entities, and thereby to “push” toward being grasped or treated as a present-at-hand entity.’⁸⁵ Rather, singling out puts the entity ‘explicitly where it belongs, squarely within that web.’⁸⁶ Moreover, since such singling out is ‘hardly *unique*’ to judgment, it fails to ‘*exemplify* a tendency toward the present-at-hand’ unique to judgment—which is what the putative affinity demands.⁸⁷
6. ‘*Subject-Predicate/Substance-Accident*’.⁸⁸ The subject-predicate form of assertion encourages us to encounter the present-at-hand because it correlates with the substance-accident conception of being. There is, Schear suggests, a ‘genuine invitation’ here, but ‘one can easily refuse’ it, since accepting ‘[i]t illicitly credits the bare sentential form... with the magical ability to comport towards entities’ even though ‘[w]e are’ only ‘able to do so... *thanks to* our ... diversified ontological understanding’ which ‘is *expressed*, not homogenized, through... our capacity for judgment.’⁸⁹ Accepting the invitation, therefore, ‘is to cover over, or simply deny, the very understanding... that makes it possible for our judgements to have their respective topics in the first place.’⁹⁰ Moreover, it is not clear why subject-predicate form should

82. Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 150.

83. *Ibid.*, 150–152.

84. *Ibid.*, 151.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*, 152.

88. *Ibid.*, 152–154.

89. *Ibid.*, 153–154.

90. *Ibid.*, 154.

tempt us into taking up this option: ‘If there is indeed some kind of constitutive temptation toward this denial built into the kind of entity that we are, subject-predicate form would hardly explain that temptation.’⁹¹

Schear concludes that ‘no phenomenologically sound reason has been given to support the claim that the “specialty” of judgment is a constitutive orientation toward present-at-hand entities.’⁹² There is, it would seem, simply no reason to think that assertions and the present-at-hand go hand-in-hand together. Thus McManus asks: ‘Why...think that Heidegger believes that assertions *as such* reveal the *Vorhanden*?’⁹³

This leaves us with the problem of how to interpret Heidegger’s claim about the “specialty” of assertion. (That assertion ‘pushe[s] back into the uniform plane of that which is merely present-at-hand’ and ‘level[s] down... to the “as” with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character.’⁹⁴) Was the Heidegger of the influential passage simply mistaken about this connection? Schear effectively reaches this conclusion:

Those interested in the reconstruction of the Heideggerian philosophy, I submit, should therefore excise the link between judgment and the present-at-hand from Heidegger’s theoretical commitments.⁹⁵

Golob opts for a similar response, in which he effectively elaborates the ‘(highly) conditional invitation’ delivered by ‘subject-predicate form’ that Schear leaves aside.⁹⁶ The specialty, on Golob’s view, is dependent on the additional constraint that the ‘propositional mode of intentionality... is subject to a certain method of philosophical analysis.’⁹⁷

91. Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 154.

92. *Ibid.*, 155.

93. McManus, *Heidegger and the Measure of Truth: Themes from his Early Philosophy*, 61.

94. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 158.

95. Schear, “Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” 155.

96. *C.f.*, *ibid.*, 154.

97. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 49.

What ‘begins as a perfectly natural, albeit optional, act of focusing on a particular feature of some entity... gradually develops’ and evolves into a ‘meta-linguistic analysis,’⁹⁸ which levels-down and cuts-off since ‘the methodological focus is no longer on questions such as why was this assertion made, ... what was its context, but rather on its syntactic, semantic and inferential structure.’⁹⁹ It is never, therefore, assertions per se which are responsible for the specialty but rather a complex of assertions *about* them. If we are ‘to free linguistic practice from ... the framework that privileges notions such as reference’ then it is not actually the specialty *of assertion*, but the specialty of a particular theoretical framework through which we might think about assertion.¹⁰⁰

However, Heidegger does not say that assertion in the relevant sense is assertion under certain analyses or frameworks. Neither the influential passage nor the discussions of assertion and discourse in §33 or §34 of *Being and Time* give any hint to that effect. There is no *direct* exegetical reason to read the specialty as belonging to anything other than assertion per se. Thus Golob implicitly takes up Scheer’s direction of travel. As does McManus in saying:

[T]he most that can be said, it seems to me, is that a certain thoughtless engagement with the assertion *may* allow one to succumb to the impression that one does appreciate the ‘totality’ and the ‘life’ that makes the object of one’s assertion what it is, when in fact one does not.¹⁰¹

The specialty is not, therefore, of the assertion but of our capacity for ‘thoughtless engagement.’ It is not clear that such thoughtless engagement could not impart its adverse influence upon phenomena other than assertions. Without an exclusive link between assertion and the specialty the latter simply isn’t the specialty *of* assertion. Nevertheless,

98. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 54.

99. *Ibid.*, 52.

100. *Ibid.*, 63.

101. McManus, *Heidegger and the Measure of Truth: Themes from his Early Philosophy*, 62.

there is clearly a compelling substantive case for why assertion cannot have this kind of affinity with presence-at-hand. We are led back to Schear's recommendation that we excise their connection for Heidegger's own good.

Where does this leave us with regard to presence-at-hand? If assertion is not tied to the present-at-hand as the influential passage suggests, we are left without a clear guide rope for navigating amongst panoply of senses belonging to presence-at-hand. We are also forced into excising what seems to be a strongly held commitment of *Being and Time*. In order to resolve this exegetical impasse, and to recover assertion as a useful tool in ascertaining the sense of presence-at-hand, we need an account of the "specialty of assertion" which recovers the weight of the "of"—i.e., which does not make the specialty the result of an accidental, adjunct thoughtlessness in the handling of the assertion, but something still *intrinsic* to assertion. At the same time, the account will need to avoid the pitfall of having assertion *necessitate* comportment towards the present at hand (in order to avoid the objections developed by Schear and Golob).

I turn next, in §4, to providing such an account through elaborating Heidegger's notion of "free-floating assertion" and his distinction between the "apophantic" and "hermeneutic" λόγος [*logos*, speech, reason]. Having established an account of the specialty as duly intrinsic to assertion, §5 turns to re-examine its connection with the present-at-hand. I develop a definition of the present-at-hand, and in so doing reveal a connection between the traditional conception being, qua presence-at-hand, and time.

§4 'FREE-FLOATING' ASSERTION

Let me begin by taking stock of how we arrived at this juncture. In §1 I framed Heidegger's project with his claim that we have forgotten the question of the meaning of being.

From the ambiguous scope of Heidegger's use of this term I inferred that the elision of the question he had in mind was not merely confined to the past, as something passive, but was instead repeated constantly in our lived experience. As Heidegger characterises this forgetting as a loss of 'access' to 'primordial sources', I glossed his objective as seeking to recover the mode of access in which we can indeed comport towards such sources.¹⁰²

§2 examined Heidegger's initial sketch of why such primordial sources are occluded. Our self-evident understanding of being, he thinks, is opaque with regards to itself, even as it provides access to entities, and the tradition reinforces this by recommending that being is nought but the entities so accessible. Finding the primordial sources will mean looking beyond our self-evident understanding, the entities it delivers, and the sense of being as nought but the indefinable and universal entity-hood of those entities. As §3 began by articulating, this ruling out of entities provides us with a starting point for illuminating what Heidegger means by "primordial sources." To begin the task of recovering access to those sources, I proposed to adopt a *via negativa* approach: by examining what Heidegger tells us about that which is *not* primordial, we can begin unearthing what the sense of "primordial" is. I turned as such to the term *Vorhandenheit*, which Heidegger provides as an equivalence for *existentia*. But we immediately hit upon the deep ambiguity in Heidegger's usage of this term, and its complex entanglement with assertion, or judgment. Turning to the recent literature, we reached an impasse between substantive and exegetical demands: the only way to make good sense of Heidegger was to deny an apparently forthright claim of his, namely, that comporting oneself through judgment or assertion necessitates comporting towards the present-at-hand. This provoked the purpose of the current section: to resolve this impasse by providing an account of how assertion's "specialty" involves a turn towards the present-at-hand, without having assertion *necessi-*

102. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 21.

tate such a turn.

In developing a response to this problem through Heidegger's notion of 'free-floating' assertion, and in elaborating his problematisation of a certain conception of time in the next section (§5), I am equally engaged in deepening the conception of our forgetting the question of the meaning of being. If I am right to gloss Heidegger's project as, in significant part at least, a search for a particular and elusive mode of access, then getting oneself stuck in the "wrong" modes (i.e., the modes which *prima facie* leave us with the 'a priori enigma') is going to be problematic. Worse still would be a tendency to drift, unwittingly, into such a mode. A tendency of this sort, I intend to show, is a feature of assertive comportment. However, this is a very general claim: moving unwittingly—which is a turn of phrase away from 'smoothly'—between modes of access cannot possibly be an excoriable offence. There is something about the *vorhanden* on the other hand to which Heidegger takes such exception. To complete the portrait, then, I must show why the present-at-hand is an irritation to Heidegger, and ground assertion's contribution to our forgetfulness by clarifying fully its connection with this character. These two issues—the tendency of assertion to become 'free-floating' and the character of the *vorhanden* such that it is counterproductive to Heidegger's project—encapsulate, I shall come to conclude, two of the primary mechanisms through which we forget the question of the meaning of being.

Firstly, therefore, to the topic of this section: what is it for an assertion to be 'free-floating'? *Being and Time* tells us:

Whenever a phenomenological concept is drawn from primordial sources there is a possibility that it may degenerate if communicated in the form of an assertion. It gets understood in an empty way and is thus passed on, losing its indigenous character, and becoming a free-floating thesis.¹⁰³

103. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 36.

This degeneration is a possible—not necessary—outcome of predicative (broadly construed) talk (“assertion” is Heidegger’s term for ‘predication’).¹⁰⁴ A successful assertion lets ‘someone see with us what we have pointed out by giving it a definite character.’¹⁰⁵ That is to say, if I inform you that, “my laptop is silver with black keys”, you not only direct yourself to my laptop, but you do so in the way that I, in my assertion, also directed myself. We both come to grasp—even though one of us has immediate, indeed tactile, access to the object and the other does not—the laptop *as* being silver and possessed of black keys. Even though I may know, through direct sensory apprehension, the exact shade of silver and the degree to which it is matte or glossy, but you do not, we have through the assertion both come to appreciate the entity (the laptop) as being a certain way (silver, with black keys) and to the extent that I am “better acquainted” with this silver-and-black than you, this is not a better acquaintance with the *assertion* but only with that which the assertion is about (i.e., the subject)—ergo, viz. the assertion per se I am no better off than you qua that predication which makes the assertion an assertion. It would be false, for example, to say that when I understand the assertion, the predicate “silver” has a richer sense to it (in virtue of my sensory proximity to the entity spoken about). It is rather that my sensory proximity to the entity spoken about provides the entity to me such that I can tell that the use of the predicate “silver” is quite appropriate. The predicate itself has no more, and no less, specificity for me than it does for you, qua this distinction that I have a proximity to the subject which you lack. Only by, in effect, ignoring the predicate and going back to the subject in its sensory proximity to me, can I obtain a more specific kind of grasp. For example, suppose I say that “the curtains are blue.” The curtains I am looking at have a curious colour: it is, by one measure, blue. But by another it is grey. And by

104. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 154.

105. *Ibid.*, H. 154–155.

another green. Now, if I think of these curtains in passing—say, because I am discussing a problem with the curtain rail—it is quite plausible that I will think of the curtains as being blue; when I am asked, “which curtains are these, again?”, I reply, “the blue ones.” Perhaps my predicative comportment towards them is a bit more complex: “the blue-ish-green-ish-grey ones.” Neither of these options captures the subject, even if one is more complicated than the other—there’s no means by which I might specify or encapsulate in perfect detail and fullness the subject which my assertions are about. Assertion enables me to be oriented towards the subject, but in virtue of how it does so it distracts me from it as well, because now these two parts of the assertion pull my comportment in different directions. “The room is tidy”, for example, comports us towards the room quite effectively. However, whether we are there in the room, or talking about it from some remote locale, makes little difference: in both cases the room is not fully *captured* by the predicate—the predicate only *fits* the room. The predicate does not exhaust the subject. Not even in the restricted aspect of the subject which the predicate picks out. It is the subject in its specific way of being which sanctions the predicate, and not the other way round. Clearly, in the remote case our comportment towards the room is dominated by what is asserted about it (doubly so, if our memories are poor, or we have never been in the room in question). That we can be so oriented towards the room reveals that, even when we are in the room at the time of the assertion, we can always be comported by such a mechanism: the predicate can in some sense “dominate” our comportment towards the room, even if we are in a position where we need not *rely* on the predicate to help constitute what we are talking about.

This is not to ignore the way in which assertion relies upon the participants in such communication. Returning to my example of the laptop, if I were to tell you that my laptop’s keyboard is of the butterfly mechanism variety, the sense you acquire of my lap-

top's keyboard is of course dependent on how *you* understand "butterfly mechanism". But whether or not you have a sense of what "butterfly mechanism" means, we both orient towards the keyboard by means of it. Even if you have never heard of a "butterfly mechanism" before, you still take it to be the mechanism by which my laptop's keyboard operates (or, if you have no sense of mechanism either, you still take it to be *some aspect* of my laptop's keyboard). This is so even if, it later turns out, I made the term up altogether. Even though the sense of what is predicated of the subject may range greatly, and range greatly between those communicating, it still predicates: the keyboard still comes out *as* that which is named in the assertion. In both cases—"silver with black keys", and "butterfly mechanism"—we are oriented towards the subject in virtue of the predicates. Heidegger insists that this orientation needs to be construed as being towards an entity, and not just a "representation" of an entity:

Even if this entity is not close enough to be grasped and 'seen', the pointing-out has in view the entity itself and not, let us say, a mere "representation" of it—neither something "merely represented" nor the psychical condition in which the person who makes the assertion "represents" it.¹⁰⁶

Assertions are about entities, then, because what an assertion does is give voice to Dasein's understanding of some entity: "That which is "shared" is our *Being towards* what has been pointed out [the subject]—a Being in which we see it in common."¹⁰⁷ That our predications can be shared makes it possible for us to instruct each other, and not only ourselves, to comport this way or that. Assertion is, as such, "*a pointing-out which gives something [an entity] a definite character and which communicates*".¹⁰⁸

The observation that assertion can fall into a state where the predicates dominate over

106. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 154.

107. *Ibid.*, H. 155.

108. *Ibid.*, H. 156.

the subject is not to promote an infatuation with the sensory qualities of things—through which, one might claim, we can have non-predicative access to them. Firstly, one must always recall that assertion has *loose* moorings, and not *no* moorings. Predicates direct us towards the subject, on the whole; they do not necessarily usurp it. So it makes no sense to think that the turn from a non-predicative sensory beholding to a predicative articulation makes the difference between an assertion being well-moored to its subject and its being cut free-floating. Secondly, Heidegger is as clear as he can be that appropriate comportment is not reliant upon sensory awareness, or proximity of that sort, to the entity. One need not be in the room, nor looking at the curtains, nor have ever had any direct contact with my laptop, to avoid the issue of free-floating assertion: ‘The idea of grasping and explicating phenomena in a way which is “original” and “intuitive” is directly opposed to the *naïveté* of a haphazard, “immediate”, and unreflective “beholding.”’¹⁰⁹ Conceiving assertion’s potential to fail as the loss of appropriate attention or respect for the immediate sensory apprehension of things, resplendent as that might be, is misguided—or, at least, so Heidegger thinks.

From what, then, are assertions cut loose so as to become “free-floating”? Heidegger elaborates in a number of places the idea that the underlying engine of discourse in the widest sense is λόγος, by which he means ‘the act of indicatively showing the thing being spoken about,’¹¹⁰ or ‘to make manifest what one is “talking about” in one’s discourse.’¹¹¹ Λόγος, as discourse, has the ‘structural form of a σύνθεσις [synthesis].’¹¹² This synthesis is the character of Dasein’s speech and thought in our grasping *of* things *as* such-and-such: ‘letting something be seen in its *togetherness* with something—letting it be seen *as* some-

109. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 37.

110. Martin Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, trans. Thomas Sheehan (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 120.

111. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 32.

112. *Ibid.*, H. 33.

thing.’¹¹³ In the explicit case of linguistic determination, therefore, what is “together” is the logical subject and the predicate (i.e., in assertion).

Heidegger argues, however, that this kind of ούνθεσις is not exhaustive of λόγος. Ούνθεσις is not, he contends, a mere bringing-together. To conceive it so would be, he thinks, to obscure beyond redemption an explanation of how we find things intelligible at all: ‘If we think that synthesis, taken formally, is the structural meaning of the λόγος in general, we preclude any possibility of understanding sense-making, understanding, explication, and, more generally, even language.’¹¹⁴ Pure synthesis, then, is not sufficient for λόγος. There is more to the λόγος, and as such more to assertion.

In the lectures on *Logic* Heidegger distinguishes between two senses of the “as”, or two sense of λόγος, which he calls the ‘hermeneutic’ and the ‘apophantic’ respectively.¹¹⁵ The “hermeneutic as” discovers entities as ready for some purpose: blackboards, chairs, doors, keyboards, party streamers, streams rolling down the hillside (i.e., drinking water, washing clothes, cooling off). One of Heidegger’s central phenomenological claims is that we find things through this “as” of purposefulness: ‘the thing we encounter is uncovered in terms of the end-for-which of its serviceability. It is already posited in meaning—it already makes sense.’¹¹⁶ Heidegger is quick to warn that this is not an ascription of usefulness onto what is otherwise a *tabula rasa*. Rather, he insists that ‘what is first of all “given”—and we still have to determine what that word means—is the “for-writing,” the “for-entering-and-exiting,” the “for-illuminating,” the “for-sitting.”’¹¹⁷ Heidegger’s claim is that we first have access to entities—which might then be taken up as the logical subject of an assertion—through, so to speak, a teleological lens. Even the most resplendently

113. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 33.

114. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135.

115. *Ibid.*, §12.a. and §12.b.

116. *Ibid.*, 121.

117. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 121.

theoretical objects, one might contend on his behalf, are encountered in this way: for surely researchers know their experiments, their books, and their concepts at least partially, and—I think it is plausible to claim—proximally as exactly these teleological, or “equipmental”, things—as the instruments and paraphernalia of their scholarly pursuit. Only inside a practical context of theorising do the objects of study come into the theoretical. The “theoretical” activity of assertion is parasitic on “practical” context:

When we analyse this [apophantic] as-structured comportment of sense-making, we see that, in it, something is always already understood. What is understood therein is the thing’s “what-as,” i.e., that in terms of which I understand whatever object or thing I meet—say, this *door* here. This what-as is already understood from the outset, and only in terms of it does the thing that I encounter and deal with become understandable as such.¹¹⁸

One cannot arrive at, for example, “the door is brown” if one does not first have “the door”, which is proximally available through its being woven into a larger context. This is the same point that Heidegger insists upon in Division I of *Being and Time* when he says, for example:

Ink-stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room. These “Things” never show themselves proximally as they are for themselves, so as to add up to a sum of *realia* and fill up a room. What we encounter as closest to us (thought not as something taken as a theme) is the room; and we encounter it not as something “between four walls” in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing. Out of this the “arrangement” emerges, and it is in this that any “individual” item of equipment shows itself.¹¹⁹

It is, then, clear that Heidegger takes there to be a descriptive case for the usual or proximal dominance of ready-to-handedness in our encounters with entities. That is to say:

118. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 123, emphasis added.

119. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 68–9.

we disclose things in the first instance through the hermeneutic λόγος. What is more interesting, however, is that Heidegger locates in this proximal and usual access a feature of our situation which will play a vital role in enabling the other, apophantical, as-structure. To wit, ‘in order for something like a predicative highlighting and determining to be possible, the subject matter must have already become accessible.’¹²⁰ This is related to what was said earlier about assertion: in an assertion (recall, if you will, my silver laptop) we get to know an entity through something which it is *as* (e.g., silver), but for this to be possible at all in the first place we must first have a grasp on some subject about which something will be said. One cannot “highlight” some aspect of an entity without first having an entity some aspect of which one will highlight. And, since any such predicative assertion requires picking out such a subject, it is impossible to first define a subject through predicative assertion.¹²¹ Instead, Heidegger is proposing, what makes entities accessible for apophantic-synthetic interpretation *as-this-or-that* (silver, possessed of a butterfly mechanism) is their always-already-accessibility in their being purposeful, broadly construed. Thus, when I first told you that my laptop is silver with black keys, what we did not consider at the time was *how* you got a hold on *what* it was that was silver-and-black—the laptop, *as* for writing with, etc. It is through equipmental situatedness that I, proximally, am able to encounter “the laptop.” This thought is all the more plausible if one considers that, had this text accidentally found its way into the hands of a professor of computer science their grasp of the subject in my assertion would surely have been *not* dissimilar to yours: i.e., they would have thought of a laptop—*fit for writing, research, etc.* Their knowl-

120. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 120.

121. The counter-example of an item held up in one’s hands and accompanied by the word “this thing” or equivalent directions has an equally obvious and compelling objection: that an object sufficiently mysterious to be held or gesturally pointed at in this way, but which lacks any sense of purposeful integration into one’s broader orientation towards the world, would surely irrupt into one’s awareness as purposeful precisely for figuring out what it is purposeful for (i.e., how it fits into that world which it does not for the present time fit into).

edge of how a laptop works, how it is made, and so on, only has secondary relevance: it only comes out—and the laptop only comes out according to it—when and if it's relevant *to purposes*, e.g., if we were discussing the laptop's workings.

What is then distinctive about the apophantic “as” is that ‘the what-it-is is now *not* taken from the thing’s *end-for-which* but from the very thing about which the statement is made.’¹²² “The laptop” becomes “this silver thing here with the black rectangles” (to continue with the example). Or, it becomes such-and-such a model of laptop, with a particular serial number, and a part list, and so on and so forth. In both cases, what-it-is that gets spoken about ‘is *not* taken from any practical function,’ but from ‘the very thing that is spoken about,’ such that the orientation which the communicants come to share is ‘*concentrated* on *what* the talk is about.’¹²³ (One should note, though, that this does not preclude what is said from involving practical matters or things other than the primary object of the discussion: if I say that “the laptop is for writing”, this is *apophantic* if what it primarily expresses is something *about the laptop*—i.e., if “for writing” is understood in terms of the laptop, not vice versa, as when a salesman comments on how well-designed the keyboard is for such a purpose.) Heidegger illustrates the apophantic “as” with the example of the chalk in his lecture theatre, which has from the start of the lecture been accessible to him as an implement for writing on the blackboard with, and accessible to the students as an implement for Heidegger to write on the blackboard with (notwithstanding if they are invited up to write therewith). Fundamentally, the chalk has turned up in the midst of a purposively-arranged environment, and is related to that environment—that is how, in the first place, Heidegger and his students come across it. And, it would be no different should an anthropology lecturer have accidentally left some object at the front of the the-

122. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 131.

123. *Ibid.*

atre at the end of the previous lecture: for that artefact would have been encountered by Heidegger and his students as something left behind. It did not, in the first place, impose itself on them in a purity of its possessing such-and-such a predicable character (e.g., Indonesian, religious, yellow, or so on). Only when they turn to the artefact, or the chalk, and discuss it—saying: “this artefact is Indonesian”, or “the chalk is white”—do they settle themselves towards the subject so as to restrict the subject down into what it is in its pure, mere presence. In such discussion they ‘indicat[e] and uncover[] something that is just there (e.g., the chalk), bringing it closer and into focus in terms of what it is as just *being there* (its whiteness)’.¹²⁴

These two senses of λόγος, hermeneutic and apophantic, provide an important clue as to what Heidegger means by “free-floating.” One might be tempted to read the apophantic “as” as being necessarily free-floating. Heidegger tells us in the *Logic* that in the apophantic λόγος our orientation towards the subject is ‘now restricted to the status of “there”: the chalk is just *there*’;¹²⁵ ‘the “as” of the primary [hermeneutic] understanding is simultaneously flattened out into the pure and simple determination of a thing’;¹²⁶ and ‘[t]he chalk’s particular way of being—as an implement—is now levelled down to this average state of mere there-ness, where it is no different from any other thing.’¹²⁷ These comments have an uncanny resemblance to that influential passage in *Being and Time*.¹²⁸ For example: ‘[t]he “as” gets pushed back into the uniform plane of that which is merely present-at-hand.’¹²⁹ And Heidegger seems to bring to inevitability the conclusion that assertion and the present-at-hand are joined at the hip when articulating the ‘specialty’ of

124. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 131.

125. *Ibid.*, 132.

126. *Ibid.*, 129.

127. *Ibid.*, 133.

128. C.f. p.16 above.

129. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 158.

assertion: ‘This levelling of the primordial “as” of circumspective interpretation to the “as” with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character is the specialty of assertion.’¹³⁰ The seemingly obvious implication is that it is the collapse of the hermeneutic λόγος into the apophantic λόγος which produces the change-over from the rich tapestry of significant, ready-to-hand entities to the washed-out, free-floating realm of the present-at-hand.

However, I suggest, we have reason to pause before accepting this conclusion. Notice that in describing the specialty, he refers to two senses of the “as”: that of ‘circumspective interpretation’, which is clearly that of the hermeneutic λόγος, and that “as” ‘with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character.’ The obvious connection to draw is that this latter “as” is that of the apophantic λόγος, *tout court*. The influential passage itself introduces assertion as necessitating a switch over to the present-at-hand from the ready-to-hand, the thought goes. The articulation of a predicate to a subject, even if one tries to capture in this articulation something circumspective, will result in the collapse of any hermeneutic grasp and surrender the subject in question over to being a ‘mere thing.’

To the contrary, however: the influential passage specifies that a switch-over occurs as and when, if and only if, an ‘entity becomes the “object” [*Gegenstand*] of an assertion.’¹³¹ Why should Heidegger enclose *Gegenstand* in quotation marks as he does? A statement must have an object, we might say; but must all statements have an “object”? Clearly not, I think: Heidegger has instead to this point described assertions as having a *Subjekt*.¹³² The influential passage, therefore, has a restricted scope: only for those assertions in which there is an *object* and not a *subject*—*Subjekt* makes no appearance in the influential passage—does one find a collapse towards the present-at-hand. Though in what this difference consists, we have yet to determine.

130. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 158.

131. *Ibid.*, H. 157–158.

132. E.g., *ibid.*, 154–155.

There is nothing to indicate that assertions are exclusively of this “objective” sort. To the contrary, Heidegger says it is the ‘primordial’ sense of ‘αποφανσις’ [*apophansis*] which is on display in assertions like ‘[t]he hammer is too heavy’, and that such assertions as these reveal ‘an entity in the way that it is *ready-to-hand*.’¹³³ So the apophantic λόγος is perfectly able to articulate an entity in its circumspectively-constituted character, as first made available by the hermeneutic λόγος. Heidegger does not think that the apophantic λόγος precludes our articulating judgments about the entities we encounter which highlight those entities in terms of our involvement with them and the web of significance relations in which we encounter them. When one shouts out that the tea is too hot to drink, warning the others with whom one is drinking, one gives an apophantic assertion, but one does not turn the tea into a mere thing or otherwise pull it out of its context. Heidegger has no quarrel with this observation: he does not say, in the influential passage, that any apophantic assertion will produce this result. For a phenomenological concept to become free-floating is for it to not only be communicated in the mode of assertion, but for that assertion in turn to undergo one further transformation.

To become free-floating, the assertion must take on the character of formality: i.e., our appreciation of that which is spoken about needs to become subsumed under the general framework of synthetic togetherness, such that “the chalk is white” ceases to be about *the* chalk in its post-levelled state, and is instead understood as “*the ‘chalk’ is ‘white’*,” in which the newly typographically-enclosed terms lose their distinct connection to the subject matter. As Heidegger puts it:

[The] synthetic factor presses to the fore ahead of the “analytic” moment. This synthetic relation [of determining, or assertion] can be isolated over against the primary function of the λόγος, which is to show-something-as.

133. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 154, emphasis added.

Then, when λόγος *gets cut loose*, so to speak, from the specific relation of the subject matter (the about-which) and the predicate (the as-what), it gets passed off as the relation of anything to anything, equivalent to formal synthesising as such.¹³⁴

A free-floating assertion, I propose, is one in which the synthetic character of the “as” overtakes in prominence the actual character of both the subject and the predicates drawn from that subject. The subject is no longer given a ‘definite character’ through being highlighted by the predicate.¹³⁵ The predicates are no longer a response to, or fit in virtue of, the subject. They get joined together not by their joint appropriateness qua the subject, but by synthetic form alone. There is no “analytic” aspect, as Heidegger puts it, in which the predicates are lifted off of the subject. As such, because the predicates are not held to account against—not drawn from—the subject, there is nothing against relating anything (any predicate) to any other thing (any other predicate). ‘[T]he relation of anything to anything[.]’¹³⁶ Cut loose of the connection between subject and predicate, the assertion no longer orients us towards the former in virtue of the latter, instead delivering an empty binding together of the predicates: the “object”, rather than the subject, of the assertion. For example, while working in a library, a reader requests me to obtain a book with a particular call number from the stack, and mentions to me the book’s title. Even though I do indeed write down the number, and proceed to head off to the stack, there is no need—at the very least, not at that point—for me to actually have in mind anything like a book, much less a book with that title or call number. The title and the call number do not bring the book to mind, in the sense that I do not orient myself towards the book. Of course, I remain in many ways oriented: towards the reader, towards the stacks, etc. But on my way down there, scrap of paper in hand, the book is at best a rel-

134. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135, emphasis added.

135. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 154.

136. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135.

atively remote part of my world—and the book, in this sense, has not yet been “joined” with the call number. The book by its title (subject) and the call number which it possesses (predicate—or vice-versa, depending on how the reader spoke) are held together in a synthesis, they belong together (and I know that they do), but in this synthesis there is no orientation towards an entity, no orientation towards an entity *as* that call number, or an entity *as* that title. Another example: a management consultant presents to a company board an analysis of the optimal numbers of employees to retain during a restructuring. “These people,” the consultant says at one point, “are best let go.” It is quite possible, though again it is contingent and not necessary, that the board members do not, in listening to this assertion, become oriented towards an entity or collective entities whom are grasped as best being let go. They do, of course, understand the sentence: they are aware of what action to take if they follow the recommendation, and they are aware that, in the analyst’s opinion, that would be the optimal course of action to take. But in coming to realise this, and indeed perhaps realising a great deal more besides, they never come to a grasp of *these people*, i.e., the subject of the analyst’s assertion, much less what those people *are* as being best-let-go-of. One final example. An undergraduate studying Heidegger comes across the term *readiness-to-hand* for the first time. They read, from both primary and secondary sources, a variety of statements about what the term means. For example: “readiness-to-hand *is* equipmentality”, or “readiness-to-hand *is* the way in which entities usually show up”, and so on. And, in their exam, they successfully marshal these assertions in describing readiness-to-hand as the way in which entities tend to show up, namely as equipment. But in the course of all this, the student has never moved beyond an empty synthesis—readiness-to-hand is X, readiness-to-hand is Y, etc.—which provides them with something like a schematic sense of how Heidegger’s ideas work. Concepts—phenomenological concepts—are joined together but never, as it were, fulfilled; instead,

they are left hollow. The synthesis itself has become what is important for the student, i.e., that readiness-to-hand *is* such-and-such, and the subject and predicate that are, in that synthesis, meant to be bound up in an as-structure which grasps the subject *as* the predicate, drops out. This is why Heidegger cautions that ‘we have not understood the phenomena of making a statement—*qua* showing-as, determining-as, etc.—as long as we simply characterise them as synthesis.’¹³⁷ And Heidegger repeats this caution of the importance of the apophantic “as” being distinct from synthesis per se in *Being and Time* also: ‘only *because* the function of the λόγος as ἀπόφανοις lies in letting something be seen by pointing it out’—i.e., in pointing out, or to, the subject by means of a predicate—‘can the λόγος have the structural form of σύνθεσις.’¹³⁸ Synthesis might well be an apt structural description of the “as” in both its hermeneutic and apophantic varieties, but this does not mean that formal synthesis, concatenation with the copula, constitutes an exhaustive investigation of the as-structure. To put it in the *Logic*’s terms, there is more to synthesis than this mere synthesis. As such, when assertion in practice degenerates into this absence of proper orientation, it becomes free-floating.¹³⁹

137. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135.

138. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 33.

139. One might raise an objection here that, at least prima facie, Heidegger uses the term “free-floating” in *Being and Time* to refer to what we might describe as phenomenological confusions. For example, taking seriously the thesis that ‘time is endless’ is ‘possible only on the basis of an orientation *towards* a free-floating... course of “nows” which is present-at-hand’ (ibid., H. 424). This passage might be read as indicating that what is free-floating is precisely present-at-hand nows (accessible, being present-at-hand, in assertion), and that the aptness of their description as free-floating is that they are, in being present-at-hand, unmoored from the ecstatic unity of the care structure, and by extension the otherwise interlocked—contra free-floating—world. On the contrary, the very fact that this is, in Heidegger’s view, a phenomenologically spurious account of time stands to justify his accusation that it is free-floating: it is free-floating precisely because, in being phenomenologically spurious, the assertion necessarily cannot be anything *but* empty in the aforementioned manner. For, if the subject under discussion was to be, as assertion is meant to, focus the talk on what is spoken about, it would be realised that the assertions being made were not ultimately drawn from the subject matter. So the sense in which one is thereby oriented towards something free-floating, is that one insists upon the viability of the position schematically lighted upon, even though one’s orientation does not in fact thus orient oneself towards some subject matter that one draws one’s talk from.

One further clue can be found in Heidegger's unpublished article, *The Concept of Time* (which Kisiel identifies as 'the very first draft' of what would become *Being and Time*).¹⁴⁰ Here, Heidegger construes idle talk as free-floating: 'In idle talk interpretation becomes free-floating: it belongs to everyone and *comes from nobody*. In idle talk interpretation hardens into interpretedness.'¹⁴¹ There are two points of note, here. First, in saying that idle talk 'hardens into interpretedness,' Heidegger suggests that free-floating assertions are those in which Dasein has "given up" interpretation (in giving it over to trust in *das Man*), i.e., has given up on "exercising" its hermeneutic and apophantic as-structure in a proactive manner. That is to say, in free-floating assertion, Dasein does not "bother" to see as to whether the predicates have indeed been lifted off appropriately from the subject matter. It can just accept—as the undergraduate does qua readiness-to-hand, and as the company board does qua the best-let-go-of of certain employees—that these terms are to be taken, synthetically, together. Secondly, in saying that idle talk 'belongs to everyone' while it yet 'comes from nobody,' Heidegger is saying that it is free from, or has been freed from, the determinative origin of any particular Dasein. If an assertion belongs to nobody, there is no particular Dasein who can relate to the subject matter of the assertion, and in virtue of whom as such the assertion can 'express something *as* something' by taking 'that-in-terms-of-which a thing is' understood 'expressly from the thing spoken about.'¹⁴² Idle talk becomes, therefore, free-floating because its assertions do not lift off their predicates from the subject. Both of these points express the same underlying issue as the prior discussion arrived at: assertions can become free-floating just as and when Dasein, in communicating, fails to properly comport itself towards entities—i.e., fails to

140. Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 323.

141. Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, trans. Ingo Farin and Alex Skinner (London: Continuum, 2011), H. 34/27.

142. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 131.

interpret them in accordance with the assertion, and instead gives blind assent to whatever happens to be asserted about them. Absolutely idle talk, then, is as much a pure synthesis as a completely free-floating assertion by any other route, because it involves the elision of the subject matter in favour of whatever is predicated about that subject matter. Idle talk is this way not simply because it ‘belongs to everyone’, or is about “what one does” rather than what *I* do or so on,¹⁴³ but because idle talk ‘belongs to nobody’, i.e., is *de dicto* talk which has been set loose from being held to account by the structure which makes genuine apophantic assertion possible. As *Being and Time* puts it, Dasein engaged in idle talk ‘does not bring himself... towards what the discourse is about’, because ‘[w]e already are listening only to what is said-in-the-talk as such’ and so ‘[w]e have *the same thing* in view, because it is in *the same* averageness that we have a common understanding of what is said.’¹⁴⁴ Rather than relating ourselves to specific subject matters, against which we can be responsive to the appropriateness of our assertions, idle talk comports us towards “averageness”, towards the general sense we have of this or that, i.e., towards what we might predicate of it absent any particular subject matter, any particular case.

In summary, then, what does free-floating assertion involve? Dasein reads, Dasein hears, but Dasein does not orient itself towards a subject on the basis of what it reads and hears—it simply assents, and agree to the conjunction of certain predicates with others, comporting itself towards a simulacrum of a genuine subject matter, an “object of an assertion.” Such a schematic orientation does not prevent Dasein from acting and manipulating on its basis: I retrieve the book from the stacks; the company board fires economically superfluous employees; and, the undergraduate writes a first-class Finals script.

143. For example, one can have a perfectly well-grounded discussion of manners or societal norms, or perfectly well-grounded talk which makes use of or relates to manners or norms, or so on; talking about such things, or involving them in our discussion of other matters, does not render our talk idle in and of itself.

144. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 168.

But in each case Dasein's comportment (qua the assertion) elides—fails to attend to—the assertion's subject. One instead orients towards the synthesis of the predicates—the “object”—ungrounded in their fit for the subject. Being a free-floating assertion, as such, is an intrinsic possibility of all assertions, because it hinges on Dasein's comportment in terms of the assertion, rather than the terms of the assertion itself. One cannot produce, or guarantee not to produce, a free-floating assertion simply by choosing one's words more or less carefully. Not even Plato and Aristotle's powers of philosophical clarity, therefore, can instil into their texts guardianship against free-floating assertion. Neither can Heidegger's explicit discussion, nor my gloss on it here, defend reliably against it. To what extent assertions are free-floating or not is down to Dasein itself.

What is the relation of this ‘free-floating,’ ‘pure’ or ‘formal’ synthesis of assertion to the present-at-hand? The influential passage's central claim was that these assertions, which take an “object” rather than a “subject,” necessitate their object/subject's degradation into being present-at-hand. In order to show that such assertions (those which have an object, rather than a subject) do indeed necessitate this transformation into the present-at-hand, I will need to explain why a pure synthesis *necessitates* that its object is present-at-hand.

§5 TEMPORAL PRESENCE AND PRESENCE-AT-HAND

What is the “specialty” of assertion, such that it is firmly *of* assertion, and yet does not necessitate the binding together of assertion and the present-at-hand? In the previous section I argued that Heidegger distinguishes between assertions having a subject [*Subjekt*] and having an object [*Gegenstand*]. The object (*gegen-*, against, and *Stand*, stand or position) stands over against the genuine subject (*Subjekt*, from *subjectus*, thrown under,

i.e., lying beneath the assertion) when the ‘synthetic function’ of the λόγος overpowers its ‘analytic moment.’¹⁴⁵ It is this cutting of the connection between the predicates and the subject which results in the assertion becoming “free-floating”: if the predicates are not being drawn from the subject—not being alighted upon in virtue of fitting the subject—the assertion is no longer about what it purports to be about. The subject gives way to the object—an empty synthesis of predicates alone. Without the subject to sanction them, any predicates can be admitted of the object—as Heidegger puts it, a synthesis of ‘anything to anything.’¹⁴⁶ This does not mean, though, that only “unfit” cases of synthesis are free-floating. Assertions are universally at risk of this transformation. Just because an assertion’s predicates do fit its subject does not guarantee that Dasein will attend to the subject in taking up the assertion.¹⁴⁷ It is only that unfit predications would never stand up to scrutiny in an assertion which was genuine—i.e., which did sanction its predicates through its subject.

That assertions can be, but are not always, free-floating is, I propose, the “mechanism” of the specialty of assertion, in the sense that it is why some assertions force a change-over in our comportment towards the present-at-hand, but also why this change-over is potential within *all* assertions. If this is right, and it is free-floating assertion which executes the specialty of assertion, then these assertions must comport us towards the present-at-hand. In other words, the “object” of the free-floating assertion is necessarily present-at-hand. But is this right? To show that it is indeed the case, I propose to investigate more closely the distinction between the object and subject of assertion. We know that objects are pure syntheses of predicates. We also know that, in principle, they are present-at-hand

145. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135.

146. Ibid.

147. Even if “the apple is green and round”, there is no *need* for Dasein, in virtue of this assertion, to actually get itself into comportment towards said apple. It can just accept, at face value of the throwing together of these predicates, that the apple is indeed green and round.

(whereas subjects can, at least, be either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand). It follows that something about objects of assertion prevents them from being ready-to-hand, as much as it forces them to be present-at-hand. In addition, we know that what makes this difference cannot be whether the assertion is free-floating or not. (“The table is four-legged and brown” likely comports us towards a present-at-hand table, and yet this need not be a free-floating assertion.) Why, then, is the object of an assertion necessarily present-at-hand?

Our proximal access to entities through the hermeneutic “as” has the distinctive feature that it permits these entities to remain accessible to us even in their absence. For example, the door of the seminar room remains accessible even when one does not look at it, and even though one does not think about it during the seminar, since if the fire alarm were to go off, one would surely make use of it to escape. However, we misconstrue the relevant sense of absence if we take it that what the door is maintained in in its sensory- and intentionally thematic-absence is its “for-escaping-through”. The door is just as much for-getting-to-lunch. Or for-letting-in-a-breeze. Or so on. This illustrates how the apophantic λόγος remains an indispensable tool in navigating our circumspective concerns: all of these assertions I have just made about the usefulness of the door are apophantic, because in each case I have spoken about the door in highlighting something about it. No *particular* assertion exhausts the door which I encounter through the hermeneutic λόγος, but only ever highlights it in some way.¹⁴⁸ As Heidegger puts it: ‘Whatever gets opened up in this way can be held on to, even when the worldly thing in question is not itself present.’¹⁴⁹ This character of the hermeneutic λόγος alone shows that it has an extra-presential character—that it is not limited to the present. Rather, it has for example a posi-

148. The question as to whether the ready-to-hand is best thought of as still in some sense propositional, or whether it is still conceptual or non-conceptual, lies beyond my scope here.

149. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 126.

tively futural character, since one has ‘*always already gone further ahead* than the thing that is given “directly” to me ... only *from* this end-for-which ... do I return to the thing that I encounter.’¹⁵⁰ Entities as encountered through the hermeneutic λόγος are accessible in their future-directed utility, i.e., for some end. This, Heidegger thinks, gives us a clue to the nature of the hermeneutic *as* itself, beyond the formal character—as with the apophantic λόγος—of synthesis: ‘Here we can already see an immanent structure of direct understanding *qua* as-structured comportment, and on closer analysis it turns out to be *time*.’¹⁵¹

Contrasting with this cross-temporal character (past context, future purpose) of the hermeneutic λόγος, Heidegger presents early in *Being and Time* a second temporal character. This is the character of ουσία [ousía, substance], in which ‘entities are grasped in their being as “presence”; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time—the “Present.”’¹⁵² The senses of ‘present’ as *temporally* present and as *accessibly* present (“present-here”) are conjoined in Heidegger’s use of the terms *Gegenwart* and *Gegenwärtigen*, the latter having the sense of ‘bringing vividly to mind’ or ‘making-present.’¹⁵³ What one brings to mind, or makes-present, becomes present in both senses: here *and* now. This notion of making-present as a bringing-to-mind mirrors the formal structure of apophantic λόγος as synthesis: ‘the being of a synthetic being’ is constituted in ‘[a]n act of relating’ which is ‘presentative insofar as it means “rendering present” or, as we say in German, *Gegenwärtigen*: “making-something-present.” By making-present, the act of relating lets a present thing encounter us.’¹⁵⁴ The thought is: when one, in an apophantic assertion, relates something to something else, then at a bare-minimum one

150. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 124.

151. *Ibid.*

152. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 25.

153. Macquarrie and Robinson tell us, in one of their notes: *ibid.*, H. 26/48, and n.2, emphasis added.

154. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 161–162.

brings to mind the first something and the second something, and holds them together. One ‘makes-present’ as and when one comports oneself towards something *as* something: to the chalk as white; to the laptop as silver; to the passage of Tchaikovsky’s 4th symphony as crescendoing.

A free-floating assertion, we have noted, *fails* strictly speaking to bring to mind a subject [*Subjekt*]: it instead synthesises—merely synthesises—its object [*Gegenstand*] out of the predicates. This means that there is nothing more—and nothing richer—than the predicates in the locus of such an assertive comportment. As such, it is guaranteed that in the act of a free-floating assertion *there is nothing which is not made-present*: ‘pure making-present or presenting is of such a nature that, in it there is nothing about the thing-to-be-uncovered that is not now-present.’¹⁵⁵ A pure synthesis is, as such, a pure making-present.¹⁵⁶ Pure synthesis has a certain kind of perfection to it: it leaves nothing out, because there is nothing to it other than the synthesised predicates.

Entities with such a pure synthetic character, i.e., those encountered through a pure synthesis, are characterised by their ‘pure unchanged and unchangeable presence-now [*Gegenwart*] of what is present.’¹⁵⁷ It is only possible for “the chalk” *to be* “white”, i.e., for the chalk to be white *unrestrictedly* (meaning: without possible qualification), insofar as it is taken and considered in the freeing limit of a single “now.” For *that* moment the *x* is *y*, and for it *not* to be so is for the moment in question to be different. This is what gives the “white” of the “chalk” an unrestricted character: to say that the chalk is also “striped with grey”, or even to add that it is “cylindrical”, is to have created a valid distinction between one moment and another—one possible object and another. In a given moment, as in

155. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 162.

156. It does not follow, however, that a pure making-present is a pure synthesis; there could be other routes to pure making-present.

157. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 162.

a given set, things are as they are, and a change in how things are amounts to having a different set, or a different moment. By contrast, the thought seems to go, the more we permit the *subject* of an assertion to ground that assertion, the weaker our ability to hold that which we are comported towards in such a fixed character.¹⁵⁸

It is this kind of presence, ‘present presence [*anwesende Anwesenheit*],¹⁵⁹ which gets taken up *as being itself*, Heidegger thinks, by the Greeks: ‘the ancient way of interpreting the Being of entities... [is] παρουσία or ουσία, which signifies... “presence” [*Anwesenheit*].’¹⁶⁰ According to Heidegger’s analysis in *Basic Concepts*, the presential character of ουσία becomes apparent in the manner in which it characterises entities as available (their ‘*being-available*’) and *there* at all (‘*being-there*’).¹⁶¹ It characterises them as *there completely*, as not having anything outstanding, left over, or outside of themselves: ‘being-there means ... 1. primarily *presence, present*, 2. *being-complete, completedness*—the two characters of the there for the Greeks.’¹⁶² Again, the thought goes that what is made-present, strictly, is thus *all there*, i.e., in that present, and that anything not in the present is simply *not there* (insofar, at least, as the present is to the standard for being-there). Within that present, everything present is exactly what it is—no more and no less:

[I]t [an entity in its presence, or there-ness] has come to its end, to its *completedness*, just as the house is complete in its εἶδος [*eidos*, appearance, form] as ποιούμενον [*poioumenon*, product, i.e., of an endeavour]. The ὑποκείμενον [*hupokeimenon*, the underlying] is already complete; I need not produce it. [For example] [t]he body has its completedness through the surface.¹⁶³

158. There is always “more to” the subject matter than what is highlighted by any given predication. In chapter 2, I argue for the plausibility of this claim on an atemporal basis. In chapters 3 and 4, I go on to argue for the plausibility of this claim from a temporal basis.

159. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 162.

160. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 25.

161. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009), 19.

162. *Ibid.*, 26.

163. *Ibid.*

The notion of presence is here drawn back to the character which we have seen in pure synthesis: the ὑποκείμενον to which the εἶδος would be related is *already* complete in a *pure* synthesis because there is no distinction between the εἶδος and the ὑποκείμενον; therefore, the ποιούμενον can be arrived at with no effort or strife at all. Contrast with genuine assertion: here, there is an interplay in which the subject (c.f., ὑποκείμενον¹⁶⁴) and the predicates (c.f., εἶδος) arrive at the subject as brought out by those predicates—the product (c.f., ποιούμενον) of the assertion.

Heidegger finds this insight of the connection between *presence* and the *formal structure* of the λόγος in Aristotle, saying in the *Logic*:

Aristotle...introduced the idea that the being of a synthetic being means presence-unto: the presence-together of something with something in the *unity* of a present being. This unity, this primary presence that precedes and grounds presence-together, must be understood as *presence, presenting* [Anwesenheit, Präsenz].¹⁶⁵

It is presence in the sense of sheer *t/here-ness* which dominates this conception: ‘presence-unto’, as opposed to a temporal sense of the present. Synthesis is grounded in something accessible in its sheer *there-ness*: things in their sensory immanence. *Basic Concepts* thus comments: ‘beings which are accessible through αἴσθησις have the character of οὐσία.’¹⁶⁶ And *Being and Time* reiterates: ‘Αἴσθησις, the sheer sensory perception of something, is “true” in the Greek sense.’¹⁶⁷ Entities under the sense of οὐσία “are” insofar as they are complete in their presence in presenting to us through our senses—the sheer qualitative presence of entities is ‘more primordial[.]’ for the Greeks ‘than the λόγος.’¹⁶⁸

164. ‘ὑποκείμενον, not in the sense of metaphysical ontology [i.e., underlying *substance*], but ὑποκείμενον [as] that which becomes visible in assertion [i.e., the subject as highlighted by the assertion]’ (Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 211).

165. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 161.

166. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 21–22.

167. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 33.

168. Ibid.

However, Heidegger complains in the *Logic*, this means that the the connection between the *accessibly* present and the *temporal* present goes unnoticed by the Greeks:

[I]t is necessary to emphasise that, yes, the Greeks (Plato and Aristotle) do determine being as ουσία, but they were very far from understanding what is really entailed in defining being as presence [*Anwesenheit*] and presence-now [*Gegenwart*]. Presence-now is a *characteristic of time*.¹⁶⁹

The access which one gets for oneself through the apophantic λόγος is not neutral with regards to time. ‘[T]he *unexpressed* basis of’ this mode through which we make ‘statements’ is that ‘specific temporality which is oriented primarily to making-present.’¹⁷⁰ The “as” of the apophantic λόγος does not have the cross-temporal character of the hermeneutic λόγος, but is ‘the index of the basic function of a statement’, i.e., it indexes the statement as concerning a now, and this function is ‘making-present as a *pure* making-present.’¹⁷¹ The idea goes, then, that the synthetic structure of a predicative assertion is parasitic upon a now-structure. To the extent that the subject is construed in terms of the predicates, the subject is thought of in terms of how it is “now”, in the cohesion of a given moment. This is exemplified in free-floating assertion: in the pure synthesis of predicates to point out an object, rather than a subject with which the predicates would have to fit, no aspect of what is asserted about is left out of the assertion, and so nothing leads out of the single, internally coherent state of the assertion’s object—the object really does fit perfectly within a single, static moment. The greater the extent to which the subject is comported towards in terms of the predicates, i.e., the closer towards usurping the subject the predicates come, the greater the extent to which one’s comportment makes-present.

In alighting upon ουσία in the sense of presence [*Anwesenheit*] qua presence-unto, but

169. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 163.

170. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 343.

171. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 342–343.

eliding that such being-present is bound up with a *temporal* sense of ‘present’, Heidegger contests that the Greeks have gotten themselves into a spot:

Yet the Greeks have managed to interpret Being in this way without any... acquaintance with the fundamental ontological function of time or even any understanding of it, and without any insight into the reason why this function is possible. On the contrary, they take time itself as one entity [albeit a pervasive one] among other entities, and try to grasp it in the structure of its Being, though that way of understanding Being which they have taken as their horizon [for any Being at all] is one which is itself naïvely and inexplicitly oriented towards time.¹⁷²

Three issues are at large here. Firstly, there is Heidegger’s reference to the ‘fundamental ontological function’ of time. It is not yet clear what this might refer to, though we can take as a promissory note the fact that the two forms of *λόγος*, each a mode of access to entities, are distinguishable in terms of their temporal characters. Secondly, there is—implicitly—the issue that the *variety* of temporal characters has been elided. In focusing upon presence, and in so doing focusing upon apophantic access, the broader and more complex temporal character of the hermeneutic *λόγος* has been passed over. Thirdly, in interpreting time itself through the framework of being as presence, a particular and inexhaustive temporal character has wound up applied to time *itself*. In interpreting time via this conception of being, the Greeks have not explained or enriched our understanding of time, but covered it over with their ultimately circular conception.

It is this limited conception of time, and the limited conception of being which accompanies it, that Heidegger is setting out to correct:

But should more radical temporal possibilities be found in the temporality of human existence, these would necessarily set an essential limit to traditional logic and ontology. Whether philosophical research can be intense

172. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 26.

enough and firm enough to make this limit a lived fact is a question that concerns the very fate of philosophy.¹⁷³

He is in no doubt of the novelty of this task: '[e]very subsequent [post-Grecian] account of time, including Bergson's, has been essentially determined by [the Greek conception]'.¹⁷⁴ Husserl's account also, the implication goes, suffers from this undeclared indebtedness to the present.

The task in question, to overturn this covert precedence of presence, comes with two parts. Firstly, there is a *descriptive* component. These "radical" possibilities will need to be found, articulated, and the case for their plausibility made. We have already seen Heidegger's first move with this task: the introduction of the hermeneutic λόγος. A mode of access to entities with a temporal character distinct from presence. However, this discovery casts the second task into clear relief. That second component is to provide a unified and plausible concept of time, which can bind together disparate "temporal characters" of our comportment. Having established that the temporal character of the present is inexhaustive through exhibiting the futurally-oriented character of the hermeneutic λόγος, Heidegger has created the problem of how the apophantic and hermeneutic temporal characters are *related* to each other. His solution will involve a third, primary character of temporality which will ground the other two. I provide an account of this character in chapter 4 (having first set out in substantive terms the problem with a "presential" character in chapter 3).

For now, I want to return to the initial purpose which brought us to this discussion of making-present and pure synthesis: determining the meaning of *Vorhandenheit*. Let me begin by recalling Golob's articulation of the—closest thing to a—standard formu-

173. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 343.

174. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 26.

lation of what the 'present-at-hand' is, against the backdrop of the myriad senses which McManus catalogued:

*Present-at-hand** = If an entity *E* is intended by a propositional mode of intentionality then *E* is intended as [one of the catalogue of senses].¹⁷⁵

The trouble with this formulation was that it necessitates assertions' collapsing our compartment towards the present-at-hand. Both Schear and Golob provided us with ample reason to think that this simply was not plausible. Schear opted to excise assertion's connection to presence-at-hand. Golob, recall, attempted to replace *Present-at-hand** with an alternative:

Present-at-hand# = If an entity *E* is intended by a propositional mode of intentionality *I* and *I* is subject to a certain method of philosophical analysis *M* then *E* is intended as [one or more of the catalogue senses].¹⁷⁶

However, I noted, this alternative ultimately upholds Schear's option, because *strictly speaking* the specialty of assertion no longer belongs to assertion. As Golob himself notes: 'the connection between the proposition and the present-at-hand is now conditional on the adoption of the relevant philosophical methodology.'¹⁷⁷ Which surely makes the specialty of those certain philosophical methodologies. Taking this option does, therefore, mean abandoning the commitment in the influential passage. The objective I set myself was a formulation which could avoid, unlike *Present-at-hand**, assertion's necessitating access to the present-at-hand, without succumbing, as *Present-at-hand#* does, to giving up the influential passage. In pursuing this goal, I shall start with the following formulation:

175. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 19.

176. *Ibid.*, 49.

177. *Ibid.*

*Present-at-hand*_{FREE-FLOATING} = If an entity *E* is accessed by a pure synthesis then *E* is present-at-hand.

This simply means, following the foregoing discussions of free-floating assertion: any *object* [*Gegenstand*] of an assertion is present-at-hand. The mere synthesis of *x* to *y* overtakes the interplay between the subject *from which* the predicates are otherwise drawn, and to which they are responsible. The justification for saying that *this* kind of entity—the kind of entity that one comports towards in making a free-floating assertion—is present-at-hand is that only a synthetic entity of this sort is entirely and completely *present*. Since there is no subject of such an assertion, there is nothing for the predicates to leave out—nothing which they *fail* to bring to mind or make-present. As such, the object of a free-floating assertion is present-at-hand in a peculiar and unusual manner: it is barely there at all, since there is so little to it.¹⁷⁸ What makes the object of an assertion present-at-hand is not that it is “empty” or “hollow” but that in this empty hollowness it is entirely present. This leads us to:

*Present-at-hand*_{PRESENT} = If an entity *E* is accessed such that it is entirely present then *E* is present-at-hand.

This formulation decouples presence-at-hand from assertions, because although all free-floating assertions provide access which will fulfil *Present-at-hand*_{PRESENT}, there is no *prima facie* reason to suspect that *only* the apophantic λόγος in this extreme form will provide access fulfilling its condition. There is nothing to *Present-at-hand*_{PRESENT} which necessitates that assertions will lead to encountering something present-at-hand. Furthermore, whilst

178. We can distinguish between free-floating assertion and cases like this following: if I were to take ‘sphere’ and ‘red’ and imagine myself a red sphere, I would not have a free-floating assertion, but an assertion that had an imaginary sphere as its subject. There is nothing free-floating about imagination. Or rather, it is just as possible for assertions about *imaginary* things to become free-floating.

decoupling assertion and presence-at-hand in this way, it also manages to secure the specialty as belonging intrinsically to assertion: it is assertions which can be free-floating, which can *either* bring us to comport towards a richer, hermeneutic understanding *or* at the opposite extreme fall into an empty holding-together. It takes a declarative orientation, in which predicates—and nothing else, no subject—are synthesised, to be free-floating. That a free-floating assertion necessitates comportment towards the present-at-hand, and that only assertions can be free-floating, provides the justification for Heidegger's claim that the specialty of assertion is to push the topic of an assertion into being present-at-hand. It is not that comporting us to the present-at-hand is unique to assertion, but that assertion has, intrinsically, a unique mechanism by which we might so comport.

This is not to claim that presence-at-hand is a phantom. Rather, we can see that assertion is, more broadly, capable of a *related* but distinct kind of making-present from the translucent emptiness of a free-floating assertion. I previously characterised the relevant sense of *present* as 'the freeing limit of a single now.'¹⁷⁹ The structure of the assertion shed some light on what this means: the idea went that to be present is to be determinative of the now implicit in the assertion, as what Heidegger called the 'index of the basic function' of an assertion.¹⁸⁰ The basic function of an assertion is visible in its formal structure: it binds together x (subject/object) as y (predicates). Although in free-floating assertion this results in a presence which is both perfect and empty, in *genuine* assertion this function is still at work. The assertion highlights the subject by pointing it out in terms of the predicates. This produces a sliding scale of authority between the subject and the predicates.¹⁸¹ Pure hermeneutic access gives absolute privilege to the subject: it gives the sub-

179. C.f., p.49, above.

180. C.f. 52, above.

181. Heidegger himself admits of this very scale which ranges between the apophantic and hermeneutic λόγος. As *Being and Time* expresses it: 'Between the kind of interpretation which is still wholly wrapped up in concerned understanding and the extreme opposite case of a theoretical assertion about something

ject in its pre-assertive accessibility. Free-floating assertion gives absolute privilege to the predicates: the subject is lost altogether and an object derived solely from the predicates takes its place. Between the two lies genuine apophantic assertion: where the assertion brings the subject clearly to mind in terms of the predicates, and maintains the former in this access through the latter's fit thereto. The subject is *in a limited, inexhaustive manner made-present*. This gives us a final formulation of the sense of presence-at-hand:

*Present-at-hand*_{MAKING-PRESENT} = An entity *E* is present-at-hand to the extent that it is made-present.

Put in the inverse, the greater the extent to which the subject retains its non-apophantic character, while still being comported towards, the *lesser* the extent to which it is present-at-hand (and, insofar as the subject is proximally encountered through the hermeneutic λόγος, the greater the extent to which it is ready-to-hand). This gives us a means of accounting for the kind of involved judgments that Schear considers, for example: 'As I am salting the soup, I taste it and pass judgment about whether or not it needs more salt.'¹⁸² As the extent of making-present *approaches* the limit of there being no apophantic access *at all*, one finds a continuum of ever-more-fleeting assertive glances, in which the assertion merely flickers into life long enough to direct us back into our hermeneutic understanding. This gives us a means to account for those cases—such as, for example, my non-linguistic judgment that I should add more salt to the soup—where what could in principle be construed as an assertive comportment—"the soup is not salty enough"—passes by too quickly for it to become spoken, or even mentally voiced (i.e., I taste the

present-at-hand, there are many intermediate gradations: assertions about the happenings in the environment, accounts of the ready-to-hand, "reports on the Situation", the recording and fixing of the "facts of the case", the description of a state of affairs, the narration of something that has befallen.' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 158)

182. Schear, "Judgment and Ontology in Heidegger's Phenomenology," 143.

soup, and add salt; there is no opportunity to say so, or even to really *think* so, but nevertheless there is the flicker of a judgment, of an assertion, in my engagement with the soup).

* * *

It is time to take stock again. Back in §1 I claimed that Heidegger wanted to recover our access to ‘primordial sources.’¹⁸³ I went on to elaborate, in §2, that these primordial sources are occluded both by traditional ontology, and in our self-evident understanding of being; that we understand being at all, according to Heidegger, is ‘*a priori* an enigma.’¹⁸⁴ Recovering access to the primordial sources will take us back to the spring from which ontological orthodoxy, as Heidegger sees it, came as a response: that from which such ontology has ‘been in part quite genuinely drawn.’¹⁸⁵ A search for the primordial sources, in other words, is a kind of prolegomenon to the task of clarifying the meaning of being, to the task of ‘fundamental ontology.’¹⁸⁶ But this is not only a case of giving up on certain entreaties of our philosophical heritage. Heidegger’s claim that we have “forgotten” the question of the meaning of being implies that it is not just “lost to history”, but something *Dasein* has forgotten; i.e., something we today, ourselves, forget.¹⁸⁷ Peeling back any orthodoxy about being, as such, is not a task of philosophical archaeology, but phenomenology: the primordial sources are not remote and obscure, but so close to us that we skip over them.

How to begin uncovering them, then? I proposed in §3 to proceed with a *via negativa* strategy, following Heidegger’s advice that negative assertions can be as revealing of phe-

183. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 21 and c.f. p.6 above.

184. *Ibid.*, H. 4.

185. *Ibid.*, H. 21.

186. *Ibid.*, H. 11.

187. C.f. p.1ff.

nomena as positive ones. In particular, thanks to Heidegger's having ruled out entities both self-evident and traditionally conceived from being the primordial sources, positive claims about what Heidegger calls the present-at-hand (which included, amongst its many senses, that of *existentia*) amount to negative claims about the primordial sources. The problem we encountered was that Heidegger says too much about the *vorhanden*: its sense seems to be almost hopelessly diversified. To add to this difficulty, commentators' traditional route to providing a unified sense out of this diversity had in recent work been substantively quashed. Assertion, the case went, was not tied up with the present-at-hand in the way that Heidegger's "specialty" passage suggested.

However, rather than abandon this claim of a special connection between assertion and presence-at-hand, I proposed to provide a reading of assertion which would maintain a sufficiently close connection, without necessitating that assertion leads Dasein to encounter the present-at-hand. In §4 I made the case for a distinct kind of assertion, "free-floating" assertion, in which the 'analytic moment' by which the subject sanctions the predicates is overtaken by the 'synthetic function' of the assertion.¹⁸⁸ The predicates are joined through together, but not in virtue of the subject—an empty synthesis of 'anything to anything'.¹⁸⁹ Any assertion can fall into this occlusion of its subject, in which the synthetic "object" of the predicates alone comes to dominate. (Furthermore, reliant as the "object" is on the predicates for its synthesis, it is assertions to which this mechanism belongs.) If, therefore, the objects of such free-floating assertions are present-at-hand, we could make sense of the claim that comportment to the present-at-hand is the "specialty of assertion" without falling foul of the objection that there is nothing intrinsic to assertion that necessitates comportment towards the present-at-hand.

188. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 135.

189. *Ibid.*

I went on to argue, in §5, that the objects of free-floating assertions are indeed present-at-hand. They are so, I claimed, because in the empty, formal synthesis of the predicates, there is nothing further to the object than the predicates whose synthesis constitutes it. The entire object, as such, is right there in the synthesis: a discrete, cohesive entity with nothing further to it. To “add” anything further to it is rather to synthesise a distinct object. As such, the object of an assertion is an exemplar of being present: it is *entirely* present to Dasein, because there simply cannot be anything more to the object than what Dasein has synthesised. This distinguishes such objects from the ready-to-hand: equipmental entities are necessarily situated within a broader temporal framework than mere things. Occurrent entities can occur with the framework of only a single moment, but equipmental entities cannot—a teleological context “takes more time” than mere occurrence. The object has an “unchangeable presence”: changing the object amounts to synthesising a different object.

Heidegger connects such “unchangeable presence” with the Greek conception of being as *οὐσία*.¹⁹⁰ This is the sense of being, Heidegger thinks, that has underpinned the traditional response—the “dogma” discussed in §2—to the question of the meaning of being. It is the sense of being, as such, at stake with ‘the traditional term “*existentia*”, and as such with presence-at-hand.¹⁹¹ The object of a free-floating assertion must indeed, therefore, be present-at-hand.

I concluded §5 by showing how this sense of present-at-hand thereby admits of a sliding scale in the character of assertion, with the pure synthesis of free-floating assertion,

190. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 25 and also Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 162. In *Logic*, we are told that entities encountered in pure synthesis are encountered in terms of ‘pure... unchangeable presence-now of what is present.’ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger reiterates this, saying that the traditional conception casts entities in terms of their ‘present presence’, which means understanding them in terms of a temporality governed by the present. In both cases he uses the same term, *Gegenwart*, for the momentary present in which the entities are present-now.

191. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 42.

which produces “perfect” present-at-hand objects, at one end and a limit at the other, tending ever-closer to a purely hermeneutic, and non-assertive, engagement. The “specialty of assertion”, as such, can be the “levelling down” of circumspective concern, reliant on that broad teleological-temporal framework, into the mere moment of what is just present-at-hand; while, at the same time, precluding the result that *all* assertion effects this transformation.

Where does this leave us with regards to the primordial sources that §1 sent us out in search of? The investigation so far gives us two significant clues. First, we know that free-floating assertion does not lead to the primordial sources, because we know that the objects of such assertions are present-at-hand, and Heidegger has ruled out the present-at-hand from being the primordial sources. Second, we know that Heidegger’s issue with presence-at-hand, his issue with *ovσία* as the meaning of being, is rooted specifically in its temporal dimension. ‘Presence-now is *a characteristic of time*.’¹⁹² Indubitably, Heidegger is convinced that time is the key to being:

Time must be brought to light—and genuinely conceived—as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it. In order for us to discern this, *time* needs to be *explicated primordially as the horizon for the understanding of Being, and in terms of temporality as the Being of Dasein, which understands Being*.¹⁹³

But in the connection between presence-at-hand and the temporal present, alongside the connection between the pure synthesis of free-floating assertion and presence-at-hand, we can begin to make out a silhouette of Heidegger’s underlying issue with time. There is something about the traditional conception of time which leaves it better suited to the synthetic objects of free-floating assertion than the genuine subject of an assertive com-

192. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 163.

193. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 17.

portment. The primordial sources, in not being present-at-hand, we now know are incompatible with both the momentary structure of presence-at-hand and the disconnect from the subject in free-floating assertion.

In chapter 2 I proceed to develop an initial and atemporal sense of the primordial sources, following from the clue that access to them must not be “disconnected” from the subject. The candidate which I arrive at—sheer presence—sits, however, in prima facie tension with our other clue: that the temporal character of the primordial sources is not the one which defines presence-at-hand. In chapters 3 and 4, therefore, I challenge this prima facie observation. Chapter 3 elaborates the traditional concept of time (i.e., that which underpins the sense of presence-at-hand) and the problem from which it suffers. Chapter 4 then provides an interpretation of Heidegger’s proposed alternative, “primordial temporality.” Understanding chapter 2’s notion of sheer presence in terms of this primordial temporality resolves that prima facie tension.

CHAPTER II: NON-INTELLIGIBILITY

In chapter 1 I proposed that Heidegger aims at recovering access to what he calls the primordial sources. These “sources” are that to which philosophy, and in particular ontology, strictly speaking responds. But we have become, Heidegger thinks, distracted from them. We forget them, not simply in a collective historical sense, but in an active phenomenological one: the sources are right there, in some sense, for Dasein—and yet Dasein misses them, or passes over them. Our access is not “lost” in the sense of being left somewhere remote from us, but is “blocked”: it does not get properly realised, or taken up into Dasein’s comportment. ‘[T]he necessity of going back to these sources’ is, as such, an ontological variant of the familiar phenomenological refrain to return to the things themselves.¹ To prevent our ontology from being ‘blind and perverted’ we must ‘reawaken’ the question of the meaning of being, and doing so requires recovering our access to the ‘stimulus’ which provokes that question.² The investigation I mounted in chapter 1 sought to clarify what Heidegger might mean by “primordial sources” through negative assertion: by determining what the primordial sources are not, we could gain some initial sense of what they are. This yielded two significant clues. First, in considering the phenomenon of the “free-floating” assertion, we found that Heidegger had a special concern for Dasein’s main-

1. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 21.

2. *Ibid.*, H. 11, H. 1, H. 2.

taining its relation to, its access to, what he called the subject of the assertion—and a special aversion for the opposite case, in which the subject is occluded by a mere “object” formed from the empty synthesis of predicates alone. Second, in examining the interrelation between assertion and the present-at-hand, we found that Heidegger’s indisposition towards the latter has its basis in the thought that our understanding of being qua such entities ‘naïvely and inexplicitly’ misunderstands time, by skipping over its ‘fundamental ontological function.’³ The temporal character of being-present, wrapped up in the structure of being present-at-hand, somehow renders that sense of being inexhaustive at best, or simply inappropriate at worst. Access to the primordial sources, then, has neither this temporal character, nor can it fail to be grounded in the ‘subject matter.’⁴

This chapter aims to provide an initial positive characterisation of these “primordial sources.” As it is, the phrase remains opaque; in what direction does it gesture? My objective is to develop a concrete sense for it—albeit, one which will be incomplete. To this end, I postpone pursuing chapter 1’s temporal clue (until chapter 3). I focus, instead, upon the first clue: that Dasein certainly occludes the primordial sources when it winds up disconnected from the subjects of its assertions.

Reading the *Logic*, one would be forgiven for thinking that Heidegger has in mind by the “subject” of an assertion an entity ready-to-hand. ‘In its character as the subject matter of [a] statement’ an entity ‘is uncovered in terms of the end-for-which of its serviceability’, and ‘[e]very act of having things before our eyes, every act of perceiving them, is held within this disclosure.’⁵ Understanding being as being-present-at-hand, then, would occlude the proximal, primordial nexus of equipmental entities discovered through our

3. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 26.

4. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 120, 131. C.f. Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. Joan Stambaugh and David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), 437–441.

5. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 121.

circumspective concern. Could the context of significance that forms Heidegger's novel conception of "world",⁶ or the entities within that significance, be the primordial sources? I argue not. The primordial sources, I will claim, have a non-synthetic character, where entities ready-to-hand and present-at-hand—entities as delivered through hermeneutic and apophantic comportment—have a synthetic character.

We can find in the *Logic* some advance evidence. At face value, passages such as the following suggest that prior access to the subject of an assertion is made possible through circumspective concern: 'Within [the] basic comportment of uncovering', within this 'prior intending and having of the subject matter ... in fact, dominated and guided by it—there is the showing of the subject matter in terms of something else.'⁷ (The synthesis involved cannot, of course, be that of the apophantic λόγος, because we are looking for a prior condition on the possibility of access to the subject of an assertive comportment.) Notably, however, while our prior access to a subject is 'dominated and guided' by hermeneutic synthesis, it is therefore *not identical to it*. Now, the hermeneutic λόγος may not be predicative but it is still in its own manner synthetic—it still shows the subject matter in terms of an end, distinct from the subject matter per se—and so, like the apophantic λόγος, it retains the 'possibility of passing something off as something else.'⁸ Circumspective concern is, in other words, fallible. It is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition on this possibility (of producing an inappropriate, or "false", hermeneutic synthesis) that 'beforehand I have already have something given to me.'⁹ 'Always already', prior to the circumspective understanding of the entity through the hermeneutic λόγος, 'there is *a priori* disclosure of world.'¹⁰ *Ex hypothesi*, if one's pre-assertive access to the subject is dominated, *but not ex-*

6. See, e.g., Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 86–7

7. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 158.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

hausted, by access with a synthetic (and as such fallible) character, the remainder of that access must, in order to be distinct from synthetic access, be *non-synthetic*. Heidegger entertains the possibility of this kind of encounter even in the *Logic*. Translating Aristotle, he says:

[{W}]here the being of the entity is not determined by σύνθεσις} ... uncoveredness is simply a matter of apprehending being.

There is no covered-over-ness at all, not even deception.

There is only not-apprehending ἄγνοια.

But that is not to be understood as a form of blindness, because in the arena of apprehension acts of understanding and determining in thought, what would correspond to blindness would be an utter inability to apprehend at all.¹¹

Here, there is an initial thought of '[t]he being of things not determined by synthesis.'¹² This sort of thing—which cannot be true or false so much as touched upon or not¹³—in its non-synthetic character could fulfil the role of that non-dominating aspect of our prior access to the subject matter. In what follows, I shall argue that we should, indeed, understand our prior access to the subject as having its basis in a non-synthetic subject matter. In being non-synthetic, this prior constituent of our proximal, circumspective encountering is strictly speaking *non-intelligible*. It has no “as” of either hermeneutic or apophantic character—nor can it have one—because it ‘offers no possibility of showing [itself] in terms of something else.’¹⁴

The primordial sources, I submit, are not Heidegger’s novel class of ready-to-hand entities, nor the contexts of significance in which they are maintained. They are, rather,

11. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1052a1–4 translated in Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 159

12. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 151.

13. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 152.

14. *Ibid.*

a non-synthetic basis out of which those former items—and, indeed, entities present-at-hand—can be encountered. To support this claim, the chapter proceeds as follows.

I begin in §6 with a brief discussion of the dominant view amongst commentators that Heidegger is interested primarily in intelligibility, to the extent that by “being” he meant something like “the sense beings have.” In the long run, while I will challenge the completeness or exhaustiveness of this view, I am not in principle set against it *wholesale* (as are some detractors, against whom I briefly contrast it). Nevertheless, insofar as it drives us towards the topic of intelligibility per se, I argue that the view occludes, rather than reveals, *crucial* aspects of Heidegger’s view. Having sketched out the dialectical context, I proceed to offer three worries that I have about the substantive and exegetical plausibility of reading Heidegger—and especially *Being and Time*—through the lens of the intelligibility-centric view. The first (§6.A) is that the scope of the extant *Being and Time* is only preparatory in nature qua the question of the meaning of being. Insofar, therefore, as the text has intelligibility as its topic, it does not follow that intelligibility is the matter at stake in the question of the meaning of being. The second (§6.B) is that the intelligibility-centric view elides the role which non-intelligibility has in making intelligibility possible. To explain this concern, I distinguish between being meaningful and being intelligible, and show that if something cannot strictly be meaningful, it cannot be considered intelligible, either. As such, insofar as being meaningful is not a universal possibility, it is the case that intelligibility is not universal. Leaving out the strictly non-intelligible, then, leaves out a genuine phenomenon. The third (§6.C) is that Heidegger himself articulates that Dasein is, as revealed in anxiety, rooted in the non-intelligible, and that such non-intelligibility is not merely a privation or breakdown of proximal intelligibility, but rather a more basic, fundamental, or primordial aspect of Dasein.

I proceed in §7 to provide a positive phenomenological account of what we encounter,

non-intelligibly, in anxiety. I argue, both exegetically and on my own terms, that this phenomenon is *sheer presence*. I elaborate the sense in which such sheer presence can plausibly fulfil the characterisations that Heidegger ascribes to the nothing in anxiety. The nothing, "...", or the sheer presence by which Dasein is always already encircled, is the non-synthetic basis in our disclosiveness; this, I submit, is what Heidegger gestured to with the phrase "primordial sources." This claim, however, forces me to confront the question: how, even if it is substantively and exegetically plausible that the nothing which gets encountered in anxiety is sheer presence, can it be that this sheer presence constitutes the "primordial sources" when we know that these sources are incompatible with the temporal character of presence?

§6 INTELLIGIBILITY AS PARADIGMATIC OF ACCESS

Heidegger exhorts us, on the very first page of *Being and Time*, to 'raise anew the *question of the meaning of Being*'.¹⁵ There is no shortage of philosophers who have arrived at the thought that it is the 'meaning' in this exhortation, and not the 'being' per se, which takes the crown of significance in Heidegger's project. For them, the key of the Heideggerian symphony is firmly the notion of *intelligibility*. This, they say, is what Heidegger is really interested in when he talks about being. As such, if following the Husserlian command in a Heideggerian mode, to go 'to the things themselves!' is to be inexorably drawn towards that which makes sense; for it is only insofar as things are intelligible that they *are* at all.¹⁶

For example:

"Being" is always a matter of the synthetic-differential relation between things and human interests: it is about the sense that things have in the light of

15. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.1.

16. Though this does not make Heidegger an idealist: linking being and intelligibility is not to pass on the apparent fragility, say, of mental representation to beings themselves.

those interests. So yes, “being” is the “presence” of things, but that presence is always the current *sense* that things have in relation to, and within the world of, human concerns.¹⁷

This privileging of intelligibility is widespread. We can find it, for example, in Guignon’s reflexivization of Heidegger’s question, in which the question of the meaning of being becomes the question of the meaning in which beings are found: ‘the question of Being will ask about the meaning or intelligibility of being rather than Being itself.’¹⁸ One finds this move, in which the project becomes “making sense of making sense”, in Dreyfus’ reading too: ‘the question of being—to make sense of our ability *to make sense of things*.’¹⁹ Wrathall and Murphey make a similar claim in saying that ‘we explain the sense of being ... when we know our way around entities *as entities*.’²⁰ To understand being is to understand beings qua their intelligibility. Schear also focuses us upon intelligibility as the locus of appropriate investigation: ‘being is the intelligibility of what is; there can be little doubt that this is the notion of being that interests Heidegger.’²¹ As does Carman: ‘what it is that makes those entities (intelligible *as*) the entities they are ... is “ontological” in Heidegger’s sense.’²² Or: ‘being is simply what we *understand* when we understand *what* and *that* things are.’²³ If we are after an ontological investigation, therefore, we are after an investigation of intelligibility.²⁴ Such a spectrum of interpreters is joined through by just

17. Thomas Sheehan, “A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 34 (2001): 191.

18. Charles Guignon, “Authenticity and the Question of Being,” in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and the Self*, ed. Denis McManus (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2015), 9.

19. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 10, emphasis added.

20. Mark Wrathall and Max Murphey, “An Overview of *Being and Time*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2, emphasis added.

21. Joseph Schear, “Historical Finitude,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 361.

22. Taylor Carman, “The Question of Being,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 94, emphasis added.

23. Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic*, 4, first emphasis added.

24. As Carman formulates it elsewhere: ‘an inquiry into the conditions of anything *making sense to us as anything*’ (ibid., 12–13, emphasis added).

this common privileging of intelligibility. The being of the table *is* that the table shows up *as* the table, rather than being amorphous and only later acquiring the sense of “the table.” When considering being and our access to it one is considering intelligibility. On intelligibility-centric views the question of the meaning of being becomes: how is it that entities make sense?

However, the intelligibility-centric view is not universally subscribed to. Richard Capobianco, for example, sets out to ‘recall and restate the originality’ of Heidegger’s view of being as ‘radiant manifestation’, in a direct ‘rejoinder to certain more recent readings, and especially those that propose a reduction of Being to “sense” or “meaning”’.²⁵ That Capobianco characterises intelligibility-centricism as a reductionism indicates the kind of irreducible status that ‘Being qua manifestation’ receives in his reading.²⁶ Although Capobianco is most vocal in his direct and immediate opposition to intelligibility-centric readings, it is not difficult to find others who also skirt cautiously around their edges. Daniel Dahlstrom, as an example of this, connects the ‘Christian theolog[ical]’ emphasis on ‘revelation’ with Heidegger’s direction to the ‘authentic transformation of *Dasein*’.²⁷ Theology, the analogy goes, does not aim to *encapsulate* God or His revelations to us, but to better direct us towards and connect us with Him and His revelation. Heidegger is similarly engaged in an activity of *directing* us towards a revelatory source. Since communicability and portability are hallmarks of intelligibility, this revelation through authenticity is not well-suited to elaboration or investigation through that lens. Intelligibility-centricism is, therefore, more likely to occlude the direction such revelations point in than to reveal—much less encapsulate—it.

25. Richard Capobianco, “Reaffirming “The Truth of Being”” *Continental Philosophy Review* 47, nos. 3–4 (2014): 275.

26. *Ibid.*, 10.

27. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indications,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 47, no. 4 (1994): 795.

A further example: Edward Witherspoon claims that Heidegger, while addressing ‘genuine’ philosophical ‘needs’ in his pursuit of being,²⁸ puts himself in the ‘inherently unstable position’ of saying both that he is ‘in possession of thoughts’ about it, but that these ‘are not subject to the laws that are at least partially constitutive of thinking.’²⁹ Only when we are caught in this paradox of un-thought-like thought do we have thoughts about being. This is a far cry from the intelligibility-centric claim that thoughts about being might involve, for example, explaining the character of the “as” by which a table is already delivered over to us as a table. The kind of intelligibility to which intelligibility-centrism first of all directs itself is far removed from the un-thought-like thinking which Witherspoon understands Heidegger as embracing.³⁰

The emphasis that views such as Capobianco’s place upon the *limitations* of intelligibility creates a particular problem for them: how to remain intelligible when committing to the idea that it is what is *not* intelligible which needs discussing? On the occasions that this challenge is not met, the rhetoric from the opposing camp can become quite severe: ‘Paid up Heideggerians—call them Heideggeroids—are addicted to speaking in the idiosyncratic code... *Heideggergegacker*; “Heidegger cackling.”³¹ As a result, the accusation goes, ‘the discussion of Heidegger’s philosophy runs the risk of becoming ever more cultic.’³² One can also find less combative admonishments of pursuing Heidegger’s insights at whatever cost:

28. Witherspoon, “Logic and the Inexpressible in Frege and Heidegger,” 113, and *passim*.

29. *Ibid.*, 112.

30. Witherspoon might well be in good company, since it is plausible that Wittgenstein too held a view like this about the difficulties one runs into when discussing being in the way Heidegger wants us to. See: Michael Murray, “A Note on Wittgenstein and Heidegger,” *The Philosophical Review* 83 (4 1974): 501–503.

31. Sheehan, “What if Heidegger Were a Phenomenologist?” 381.

32. *Ibid.*, 382.

For some reason, most translators and many commentators are hyper-sensitive about Heidegger's use of *Wesen* (essence) ... These commentators have *really* taken to heart Heidegger's warning that he does not mean to use *Wesen* in the traditional sense—so much so that they seem to translate the word randomly (as, e.g., perdurance or presence or, my favourite example from the translation of the *Beitrag*, essential swaying).³³

Wrathall's comment illustrates a situation which mirrors the aforementioned difficulty that appears in diverging from the intelligibility paradigm: how to remain intelligible when talking about non-intelligibility?³⁴

The kind of talk one finds in Sheehan, however, risks overstating the contextual case for alighting upon the intelligibility-centric view as paradigmatic for reading Heidegger. It is false to suggest, as he gets close to doing, that one either accepts intelligibility-centricism, or condemns oneself to *Heideggergegacker*-ing. Perhaps there is some truth in the claim that rejecting the paradigm has led some commentators to succumb to the temptation of cultic tendencies.³⁵ It would be premature, however, to suggest that making sense of Heidegger's underlying concern relies upon Heidegger's underlying concern being that of sense and sense-making. Specifically, I have three worries about the intelligibility-centric view which, I suggest, should give us serious pause before accepting a version of it.

A. FIRST WORRY: THE QUESTION AT STAKE

The first worry that I have concerns the structure of *Being and Time* and, by extension, how we should cash out the aims of the extant treatise. *Being and Time's* opening page

33. Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History*, 27.

34. Wrathall rightly commits himself to avoiding such excesses in translation, and instead retain the usual term while trying to illustrate in what way its sense is different in Heidegger's usage of it: 'All such choices [e.g., essential swaying] avoid any metaphysical baggage, but at the cost of confusion or incomprehensibility. I think it is better to translate *Wesen* in the straightforward way as essence but then explain how Heidegger thinks of essences (as hard as that might be).' *ibid.*

35. For example, one might fear that something like this has happened in passages such as: Capobianco, *Engaging Heidegger*, 121–2.

suggests two intertwined but nevertheless separate questions. Heidegger's first expression of his question is: 'we should raise anew *the question of the meaning of Being*.'³⁶ But he immediately goes on to suggest that in order to ask that question, we shall first have to answer what that question is—the question of the question, if you will: 'First of all we must reawaken an understanding for the meaning of this question.'³⁷

If intelligibility-centricism is right, and being is a matter of the intelligibility of things, then given that *Being and Time*—and in particular Division I—has the intelligibility of things as the topic (in no small part) of its discussion, it would be natural to conclude that the majority of *Being and Time* is engaged with the first of those two questions—i.e., with the question of the meaning of being. The point can be put in reverse, also: since *Being and Time* is about the question of the meaning of being, and since it furthermore seems to focus upon the sense that beings make to us, so it seems that the meaning of 'being' is the sense that beings have for us. This is all the more plausible given Heidegger's apparent expressions of the question's target in the Introduction. For example: 'The question of Being aims ... at ascertaining the *a priori* conditions ... for the possibility of those ontologies which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundation.'³⁸ Or: 'the question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of ... the pre-ontological understanding of Being.'³⁹ And also: 'in the exposition of the problematic of Temporality the question of the meaning of Being will first be concretely answered.'⁴⁰

However, all these articulations reveal the question in no better light than do his opening expressions. To say that the question aims at 'ascertaining the *a priori* conditions' of ontology is unilluminating, if one assumes that being and access to it is an essential con-

36. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.1.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., H. 11.

39. Ibid., H. 15.

40. Ibid., H. 19.

dition on their being anything like ontology. To say that the question is a radicalization of our pre-ontological understanding only reiterates the point that in our pre-ontological grasp we run up against an enigma which requires some further approach in order to come to grips with. To say that the problematic of temporality will first answer the question of the meaning of being is only to promise that the project will come to fulfil the task it has set itself: it does nothing to illuminate in advance what is meant by being, such that temporality will be the key to providing us with an answer as to its meaning. In other words, such articulations provide us with a working out of the claim that we are looking for ‘primordial sources’, insofar as they indicate the subject matter of the question to be a “deeper” or more “basic” locus out of which certain (now revealed as derivative) forms of endeavour and engagement—ontology, the pre-ontological understanding—come to grow. We are not moved forward, then, from the question of the question by these articulations, but rather find the question of the question rearticulated to us. As Heidegger says: ‘if we are to formulate our question *explicitly and transparently*, we must first give a proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regard to its Being.’⁴¹ Just such a proper explication of Dasein is surely provided by the first and second divisions of the treatise. But then the explicit and transparent formulation of the question of being is accomplished through those divisions—it is their aim, not their starting point.

We can press this point. Heidegger’s explicit announcement of *Being and Time*’s objective, on its first page, reads: ‘Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of being and to do so concretely.’⁴² On the view that the book pursues answering the question of being’s meaning, this is taken to mean that the task of the treatise is indeed to answer the question of being: one works out—i.e. *figures out*—the answer, as in

41. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 7, emphasis added.

42. *Ibid.*, H.1.

the sense of ‘one solves the problem.’ This is not, however, the sole manner in which the sentence can be sensibly read. For to say that one must “work out” a question, does not unambiguously mean that one must answer it but can, with equal plausibility, mean that one needs to decide upon *what the question is*. This becomes very clear if we temporarily abridge the sentence: ‘Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question ... and to do so concretely.’⁴³ One can suggest, then, that the temporarily omitted phrase, ‘of the meaning of Being,’ is a qualification that reiterates and makes unambiguous which question it is that we are meant to be seeking an understanding of, and by extension, which question—namely the latter, the question of the question—the text intends primarily to pursue. A request to work out a question is not a request to answer it. ‘Die konkrete Ausarbeitung der Frage nach dem Sinn von »Sein« ist die Absicht der folgenden Abhandlung.’⁴⁴ “Ausarbeitung”, meaning “work out”, is elaborating, preparing, formulating; i.e., not answering, but preparing to answer. And, to avoid any doubt, Heidegger explicitly makes this an elaboration of *the question*—‘*Die konkrete Ausarbeitung der Frage*’. Not the elaboration of an answer. All this suggests, at the very least, that the task of the treatise is grounded more strongly in the question of the question than it is typically taken to be.⁴⁵

This conclusion is corroborated by the contrast which Heidegger draws between the intended aims of investigating temporality, on the one hand, and time, on the other. Of temporality, he says: ‘We shall point to *temporality* as the meaning of Being of that entity which we call “Dasein”.’⁴⁶ Temporality, then, would seem part of the investigation into providing a ‘transparent formulation’ of the question of being, insofar as investigating

43. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.1.

44. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967), 1.

45. John Haugeland seemed to be aware of this point, once saying in an address that: ‘[t]he declared, official aim of *Being and Time* is to reawaken the question of the sense of being—everything in the book should be read as bearing on this aim and this question.’ John Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed: John Haugeland’s Heidegger* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 221.

46. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 17.

temporality is to investigate Dasein. Temporality is part of the attempt to work out the question, rather than answer it. Time, on the other hand, is billed with a far greater objective: ‘Time must be brought to light ... as the horizon for all understanding of Being.’⁴⁷ It is fairly unambiguously the case, then, that investigating time is part and parcel of giving the answer to the worked-out question:

In thus interpreting Dasein as temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*], however, we shall not give the answer to our leading question as to the meaning of Being in general. But the ground will have been prepared for obtaining such an answer.⁴⁸

The upshot of this, when placed in the context of the advertised structure of the treatise, is that Heidegger never gets—in the *extant* text—to discussing (in the sense of developing an answer) the question of the meaning of being at all:

Part one has three divisions:

1. the preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein;
2. Dasein and temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*];
3. time [*Zeit*] and Being.⁴⁹

If the investigation of temporality is not in direct pursuit of, but merely ‘prepare[s] the ground for’, answering the question of the meaning of being, then the first two divisions are merely preparatory qua that question.⁵⁰ And, since Division III was never written, it

47. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 17.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., H.39.

50. One must not be confused between the two “temporalities” in Macquarrie and Robinson’s translation. On the one hand, there is *Zeitlichkeit*, translated as “temporality” with a lower-case “t”, and there is *Temporalität*, translated as “Temporality” with an upper-case “T”. *Temporalität* is reserved for the context of the character of time, especially in the context of the history of ontology (which, our investigation in chapter one might suggest, is therefore related to the systematic *mischaracterisation* of time in the tradition). It appears only on pp. 19 (defining it as the time-character of being), 23–26 (explicating the “wrong turns” in the history of philosophy regarding time, and culminating in describing *οὐσία* as an “ontologico-Temporal” term), and 39–40 (describing the treatise’s structure, in which it is reserved for

would therefore appear that *Being and Time* might not, as it exists, get beyond the problem of clarifying the meaning of the question in the first place. In the book's final section, in its very penultimate paragraph, Heidegger seems to reconfirm this: 'The conflict as to the Interpretation of Being cannot be allayed, *because it has not yet been enkindled ... Towards this alone the foregoing investigation is on the way*'.⁵¹ By Heidegger's telling, then, in Division I and II *being per se* has yet to arrive on the scene at all; the question of the meaning of being has not been broached, because so far the investigation has been in aid of finding a means of directing ourselves to the proper subject matter of that question. Towards making it so much as *possible* for us to *try* working out the question of being *qua* answering it has been all that the entire extant treatise attempted.⁵²

My first worry, then, is that intelligibility-centric views mistakenly emphasise the connection between sense and being on account of *Being and Time's* content, when the text itself suggests that its discussions are only *preparatory* for a direct investigation of being.

Part Two) of *Being and Time*. (Significantly, therefore, it appears nowhere in the extant Part I, nor in the description of Division III thereof.) *Zeitlichkeit*, by contrast, is the "timely" character of *Dasein* (and appears *passim*). Thus, *Zeitlichkeit* forms part of the preparatory investigation into *Dasein*, whilst *Temporalität* is reserved for the business of characterising time in which the ever-present (both in character, and thus far in historical transmission) Grecian response to the stimulus will be fully explicated along the length of philosophical history and then overturned. As such, when Heidegger says that, '[i]n the exposition of the problematic of Temporality [*Temporalität*] the question of the meaning of Being will first be concretely answered', he is not referring to *Zeitlichkeit*, and so it is not in the extant text's discussion of this notion that such a concrete answer should be expected.

51. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.437.

52. Heidegger pursues laying this ground through the existential analytic, need we be reminded, because he thinks that human beings are, or rather *Dasein* is, so heavily implicated in being—prima facie so, in that it is *Dasein* for whom being (not *least* its own being) is an issue—that understanding this entity is our best chance for getting a stronger hold on the question of the meaning of being *per se*. Heidegger's reasoned decision to select *Dasein* as a "proxy" with which to lay this ground is accurately summarised by Mulhall: 'Human beings can encounter other entities in their Being and are fated to confront their own Being as an issue, so they are doubly related to Being in everything that they do; and, since any investigation of the meaning of Being is itself a possible mode of human existence, a proper understanding of its limits and potentialities requires a prior grasp of the nature of human existence as such. This ontico-ontological priority of *Dasein*, as Heidegger calls it, means that an investigation of human existence is not just a convenient starting point from which to address the question of the meaning of Being in general—it is indispensable.' (Stephen Mulhall, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 208; c.f. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 12–14)

Being and Time never gets around to the question of the meaning of being directly, and so we must guard against assuming that the focal points of its investigation are direct clues as to the locus of subject matter of the question of the meaning of being. That the existential analytic, as writ, spends a good deal of its time engaged with the issue of the intelligibility of our situation, does not stand to indicate that the question of the meaning of being is the question of why or how beings have the sense or meaning that they do.

B. SECOND WORRY: THE REFLEXIVITY OF INTELLIGIBILITY

The second worry that I have about the intelligibility-centric view concerns the way in which the impersonal aspect of existence becomes meaningful. First of all, let me cash out the sense of “impersonal” a little more concretely. We can, I suggest, recognise a certain shared concern when we compare Heidegger’s “being-in-the-world” with the tradition’s “subject-object”. Both highlight a certain underlying aspect of our situation: the opposition between “here” and “there”. There are as it were two phenomenological poles, the personal and the impersonal. This is not to say that these are clearly delineated: is a proposition articulated in the mind’s inner voice personal, or impersonal? Is the answer different depending on whether the proposition is imaginatively articulated as spoken? Notwithstanding that the boundaries between these two poles are of curiously ambiguous character, one cannot imagine a phenomenologist who would deny that there is a meaningful distinction here—even if it is embryonic, or even—strictly—inchoate.

Bearing in mind this first distinction, allow me to draw a second: that between “being meaningful” on the one hand and “being intelligible” on the other. As I write, the lamp on the library desk illuminates my papers and books. Prior to my sudden reflection upon it, the lamp has been there all along providing light, and it has been meaningful to me as the

source of the light by which I work. Now, consider a possible world in which, while the library exists, there are no Dasein to make use of it—let us suppose, for example, that the library’s construction was the result of an exceptionally unlikely natural process prior to any life coming about it. The “lamps” in this second library are not meaningful (and so are not lamps, strictly speaking). It would take library-goers and library staff—i.e., Dasein—for that to be the case. What happens if Dasein do irrupt into this alternate world? Clearly, there would be at least some variants of that possible world in which they came to enjoy using the “lamps” on the library desks as lamps to light their work, and in which those lamps had the same meaning for them as the lamp I am working by now has for me. It is the dormant capacity for being meaningful which is wrapped up in the idea of something being intelligible: that it *can* come to be meaningful. To be intelligible is to be *possibly* meaningful.

Now, with both of these distinctions to hand, consider the following trilemma:

1. the impersonal fixes a meaning;
2. or, the impersonal does not fix a meaning;
3. or, the impersonal fixes a range of meanings.

The first option is untenable because, *prima facie*, the personal pole has a substantive role in the determination of entities. One person sees cutlery, another impromptu drumsticks; the impersonal contributes to the intelligibility of entities—it does not solely determine them. The second option is equally untenable, because it casts us as masters of the factic. As much as we might wish this to be the case, it isn’t. This leaves us option three, which seems more promising, articulating as it does the sense in which those “lamps” in the “library” are not mere *tabula rasa* for the Dasein who find them, even as those Dasein in turn are constitutive for the meaningfulness of the “lamps” as lamps.

But this third alternative brings with it an interesting further problem. If the impersonal fixes a range of possible meanings, it delimits a range of possible entities. As such, in order not to contravene the transitivity of identity, the impersonal cannot itself *be* any of those entities. (If the relation the impersonal had to those entities was one of identity, they too would be identical to each other, but this is *ex hypothesi* false—they are different entities.) On the third alternative, therefore, the impersonal itself still cannot be meaningful.

If the impersonal cannot be meaningful, meaning is not a possibility for it. But if meaning is not a possibility for it, then it is not *itself* intelligible, either. (“To be intelligible is to be *possibly* meaningful.”) As such, insofar as the impersonal features in our investigations, our investigations cannot conceive of their scope as limited to the intelligible and meaningful alone.

My second worry, then, is that insofar as investigating the being of entities touches upon the impersonal, this runs against the maxim that in speaking of being, we are speaking only of meaning or intelligibility.

C. THIRD WORRY: THE NOTHING IN ANXIETY

The third worry I have concerns how the intelligibility-centric view tends to interpret anxiety, and in particular, the character of that “in the face of which” we are anxious. Before examining anxiety itself, and in Heidegger’s juxtaposition of it to fear, let us examine what a mood or state-of-mind—of which both anxiety and fear are varieties—consists in as a characteristic of Dasein.

According to §29 of *Being and Time*, a state-of-mind is not just a contingent circumstance that one might find oneself in (as when one becomes angry, or despondent, or

elated). That would be the “ontic” understanding of mood. Nevertheless, these two have their senses intertwined: ‘What we indicate *ontologically* by the term “state-of-mind” is *ontically* the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned.’⁵³ We typically reserve use of the word “mood” to indicate notable over-arching dispositions. A person is angry, or sad, or notably genial (a ‘good mood’), or the reverse (a ‘bad mood’). These states are marked out by their *needing* to be marked out; we only consider and assign them when the general dispositions of an individual need to be brought up for discussion. As a result, the ontic, everyday understanding of “mood” is of something occasional. An accidental accessory to persons. By contrast, “mood” in the ontological sense of state-of-mind could not be further from being accidental. Dasein may slip from one mood into another, but this only goes to reveal the sense in which it never slips out of mood altogether: “The fact that moods can deteriorate and change over means simply that in every case Dasein always has some mood.”⁵⁴ Dasein, then, has being-in-a-mood as a basic constitutive feature of its being. Mood, as such a basic constituting state of Dasein, possesses according to Heidegger a three-fold structure:

A state-of-mind not only [1.] discloses Dasein in its thrownness and [2.] its submission to that world which is already disclosed with its own being; it is itself the existential kind of Being in which [3.] Dasein constantly surrenders itself to the ‘world’ and lets the ‘world’ “matter” to it in such a way *that Dasein evades its very self*. The existential constitution of such evasion will become clear in the phenomenon of falling.⁵⁵

So we are (1) disclosed as thrown into our existence, (2) in submission to the world that is in that thrownness always-already disclosed, and (3) as such evade or are distracted from our own character.

53. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.134.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*, H.139.

Let us begin with the idea of being “thrown.” A mood is something that we are always in, and which we are always *already* in, for we are never without it.⁵⁶ As such, Dasein is “thrown” into the way it is: it finds itself existent in the manner that it is and the situation it is in without any say on its part. As Heidegger puts it: “The expression “thrownness” is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over.*”⁵⁷ One is tossed into one’s mood, into the way that one is, and by extension “into” a world which already is in such-and-such a way.⁵⁸

What about our “submission” to the world? One’s mood is determinative for the world that one is thrown into. Thrown into a contemplative mood, we are apprised of a very different world than that of which we are apprised when thrown into a tempestuous one. *‘The mood has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible for one to direct oneself towards something.’*⁵⁹ That world which we have access to is always determined by our mood. And as we are thrown into this mood, so we are submitted to the world it determines.

The corollary of this submission, the thought goes, is that we become absorbed in that which each of us is not. Meaning: not that we simply become fixated on the world, but that one understands oneself through this mood—reflected, if you will, in the world as it matters to one. For example, if I am elated, then what is disclosed is that in the face of which I am elated, but equally what is disclosed is myself in my elation. Since my mood

56. Heidegger warns us again mistaking Dasein’s state-of-mind for something which we freely choose to move in and out of, or between: ‘Mood is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself *prior* to all cognition and volition.’ (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.136)

57. *Ibid.*, H.135.

58. For we must not forget that if Dasein is thrown, it is *being-in-the-world* which is thrown, and so we must guard against reading ‘thrown into a world’ as suggesting that there is some universally fixed arena into which Dasein is thrown. Dasein, as being-in-the-world, simply finds itself in its entire constitution already in such-and-such a manner, and this means that both mood and the world disclosed therein are that which Dasein finds itself always already in.

59. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.137.

and the world it reveals thus disclose me in this contingent manner, I am distracted from myself per se; for it cannot be the case that I *am* an elated thing.

These features of mood are given an exemplar in Heidegger's subsequent analysis of fear. Fear, in its specificity, also possesses a three-fold structure: '(1) that in the face of which we fear, (2) fearing, and (3) that about which we fear.'⁶⁰ The first of these, '*that in the face of which we fear ...*' is in every case something which we encounter within-the-world.⁶¹ The "threat"—which by no means need be an immediate one—is always some entity in the world. This leads to the second feature of fear, fearing. The mood of fear discloses the world in such a way as to make apparent that which one is fearful about: 'Circumspection sees the fearsome because it has fear as its state-of-mind.'⁶² It is only since we are fearing, since we are in the mood of fear and that mood is constitutive of the world we are apprised of, that the appearance of the fearsome is possible.⁶³ The third aspect, that which is feared about, is Dasein itself. '*That which fear fears about*' is that very entity which is afraid—Dasein.⁶⁴ It is because Dasein has its own being as an issue for it, that fear is possible at all. Likewise, for other moods: we may be elated in the face of a fantastic concert, but it is only through our elation that the concert, the conductor, the

60. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.140.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., H.141.

63. It is worth noting that Heidegger does have an explanation for the obvious retort that one need not be actively fearful in order for that which one fears to become apparent (and, potentially, for one to move into the mood of fear as a result). He says that, first of all, specific moods are amongst the possibilities Dasein has, and that as these possibilities they disclose the world in the first instance as that out of which the entities apparent in all of the various moods may come: 'Fearing, as a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world in a state-of-mind (we call this possibility 'fearfulness') has already disclosed the world in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close.' (ibid.) The idea of "coming close", which captures the notion that entities which do not "belong" to one's current mood may just *irrupt* into one's situation, is drawn from the basic notion of spatiality: 'The potentiality for coming close is itself freed by the essential existential spatiality of Being-in-the-world.' (ibid.) (On the idea of Dasein's spatiality, see ibid., H.102–113.)

64. Ibid., H.141.

musicians, and the music, show up to us in the manner in which they do.⁶⁵

The general structure of mood and the specific structure of the fear can, as such, be seen in light of each other:

1. That in the face of which we fear, which is always an entity in the world, points to Dasein's thrownness. One is already always in a mood, but by extension, in a world, and as a result, always in the midst of entities revealed in accordance with that mood. This "always already" of Dasein picks out the sense in which the world disclosed by mood, and all those entities which are present in that world, is not something flexible and malleable to Dasein's volition: we find ourselves in the middle of the world, and it is not just amorphous or malleable to us.

2. Fearing itself, that what we are fearful in the face of can only come about if we are in the mood of fear, points to the submission of Dasein to the world. It is only through fearing—that is, through being in this or that mood—that the fearsome 'is freed and allowed to matter to us.'⁶⁶ Dasein's concern about entities-within-the-world is only made possible in virtue of being in a given mood. When I am fearing, my being in that mood orders my concerns for me, revealing entities as having a particular signification. I submit to the world my mood reveals.

3. That which we fear about, Dasein itself, is that which we evade. Having been thrown into my situation, found myself in a mood, thereby amidst entities, and allowed this to matter to me, I have been distracted from myself. My attention and concern has been absorbed into that which my mood is directing me towards, and what self-awareness I have is now in terms of the mood which I am in—and not in terms of whatever I am such

65. No concert, no matter how excellent, will have the same character if one is in the mood of a deep grief, for example. For an explanation of how Heidegger accounts for the way in which going to a concert *could* rouse one from, e.g., grief to elation, see note 63 above.

66. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.141.

that I can be in that, or any, mood in the first place. Dasein's relation to itself is now one entirely of "fearing about". Dasein has been reduced to a *telos* for its mood. Fear, elation, or despondency: all bring Dasein to itself not as it is, but ever through a lens which must occlude as much as it reveals.

Heidegger's analysis of fear as an exemplar case of mood or state-of-mind indicates that what one is aware of (e.g., fearful in the face of) in being in a mood is something within-the-world: an entity, be it ready-to-hand, present-at-hand, or another Dasein (as he puts it, a "Dasein-with"). *'That in the face of which we fear, the "fearsome", is in every case something which we encounter within-the-world and which may have either readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, or Dasein-with as its kind of Being.'*⁶⁷ It is interesting, therefore, that in his analysis of anxiety—the other mood which he takes the time to describe in *Being and Time*—Heidegger says the exact opposite: that what we are anxious in the face of is never an entity. *'That in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world ... Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious.'*⁶⁸ He instead says that what we are anxious in the face of is the world *itself*: *'The world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety.'*⁶⁹

One might be tempted to say that "this world consists, typically, of ready-to-hand entities." That would seem, after all, to be the upshot of Heidegger's description of everydayness. But Heidegger has divested the term world of this usual meaning. Any discussion or description of entities, be it ontic *or* ontological, will fail to get to the idea of world that Heidegger intends to talk about: *'Neither the ontical depiction of entities within-the-world nor the ontological Interpretation of their Being is such as to reach the phenomenon of*

67. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.140.

68. *Ibid.*, H.186.

69. *Ibid.*, H.187.

the ‘world’”.⁷⁰ World, in Heidegger’s sense, is always particular to Dasein: ‘3. “World” can be understood...as that “wherein” a factual Dasein as such can be said to “live”’.⁷¹ This is, he says, the sense which his use of the term “world” will always have: ‘We shall reserve the expression “world” as a term for our third signification.’⁷² That the world is always the wherein of a Dasein leads to the adoption of the phrase “worldhood of the world” to refer to the nature of such a wherein: ‘Worldhood...embraces in itself the *a priori* character of worldhood in general.’⁷³ (It is worth noting that Heidegger’s usage of *a priori* is idiosyncratic: ‘In the interpretation of Dasein, [being-in-the-world] is something “*a priori*”; it is not pieced together, but is primordially and constantly a whole.’⁷⁴ The character of the world, then, is *a priori* in that it is an intrinsic constancy of Dasein.) The upshot of this is that, when Heidegger talks of world, he refers, firstly, to something that is specific for Dasein in its own case, and secondly, to something which is not itself an entity, nor constituted of them.

This latter characteristic makes anxiety distinctive amongst moods.⁷⁵ Here, rather than being constitutive of Dasein’s relation to entities, what we are brought to face with in anxiety is precisely not an entity: ‘the world in its worldhood is *all* that still obtrudes itself.’⁷⁶ Anxiety not only discloses the world as such, it also elides entities to the point of their total and absolute exclusion.

Taylor Carman, by way of contrast, claims that ‘anxiety constitutes a primitive ele-

70. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.64.

71. *Ibid.*, H.65.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*, H.41.

75. Although not *exclusively* distinctive. For example, his discussion of profound boredom in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* perhaps has something similar in mind: ‘even taking time or having no time are without any significance here.’ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 144. I discuss the *Fundamental Concepts* further in chapter three.

76. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.187, emphasis added.

ment in our understanding of being, revealing *entities* as radically indifferent to us and our practices.⁷⁷ I suggest that it is not, however, that the entities previously meaningful now break down into an oppressive mass of “raw things.”⁷⁸ Nor that those raw things might join together into their own, radically oppressive totality of meaninglessness. Either of these would imply that what comes to lack significance in anxiety are entities in their own right. But entities, which would thereby be stripped of their interlocking patterns of meaning, are clearly specified as being referred to *only* when the term “world” appears *in single quotation marks*: ‘1. “World”... signifies the totality of entities-within-the-world. ... If we should sometimes use [world] in the first of these senses, *we shall mark this with single quotation marks*.’⁷⁹ The world that one is anxious in the face of, however, lacks any such typographical encapsulation.⁸⁰ That which completely lacks significance, then, cannot be entities in their totality, as little as it can be this or that entity.

It seems to me, therefore, that Heidegger intends to indicate that the world as such, the world in its own character or worldhood, is *non-intelligible*. Or, rather, that insofar as entities are intelligible—i.e., whether through the apophantic *or* hermeneutic λόγος—this kind of intelligibility does not apply to the world. One might think that this is no different from Carman’s view, when he says: ‘Nature as such ... stands beyond the bounds of the mundane hermeneutic conditions it is the task of the analytic of Dasein to elucidate.’⁸¹ But on Carman’s view, this totality called nature is constituted in the ‘brute fact that occurrent entities are *something* and not *nothing*.’⁸² There may well be a sense in which that

77. Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic*, 193, emphasis added.

78. This is also Sartre’s mistake, which I discuss on p.109.

79. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.64–5, and c.f. *ibid.*, H.187.

80. The punctuation-enclosed ‘world’ is that which Dasein is absorbed into in its other moods, and which it flees into to escape anxiety. The typographically plain *world* always appears in reference to that in the face of which we are anxious. See *ibid.*, H.185.ff.

81. Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic*, 195.

82. *Ibid.*, 194.

which is revealed in anxiety has the character of being ‘radically, stubbornly, awesomely independent of us’,⁸³ but Heidegger’s point remains overlooked if one takes this independent meaninglessness as belonging to entities—as *belonging* to a “something”. The reverse is true. What anxiety is anxious in the face of is not an entity at all.

One might make a broader retort against the idea that anxiety reveals something fundamentally non-intelligible. World, the reply goes, is a constancy for Dasein. It includes, therefore, that “wherein” within which everyday Dasein resides. Like the breakdown of significance that can occur when one’s hammer, up to this point ready-to-hand on the workshop bench, falls apart from overuse, so too what occurs in anxiety is a *breakdown* of what is normally perfectly intelligible (the structural world, the “wherein”, within which all those ready-to-hand pieces of equipment are ready-to-hand).⁸⁴ As such, the world discovered in anxiety is simply a special case of the intelligible situation. I have two replies.

1. The retort is motivated by the idea that the failure of intelligibility in anxiety constitutes a modification of the world. It is not clear to me that this is correct. The basis for there being such a modification is that the world is ordinarily significant and meaningful. There are two reasons to think that this might be mistaken.

Firstly, it is not clear that the world ever is significant in this way. According to the discussion of world in §18 of *Being and Time*, it is only the complete totality of signifying, not particular significances themselves, which constitute significance: “The relational totality of this signifying we call “significance””.⁸⁵ This significance ‘is what makes up the structure of the world—the structure of that wherein Dasein already is.’⁸⁶ This implies that significance itself—the world itself—is not, in fact, significant. For to be significant

83. Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic*, 195.

84. Dreyfus emphasises “disturbance” of this sort as a means of access to the world, see: Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 99–100.

85. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.87.

86. *Ibid.*

requires having been signified, and *de dicto* on Heidegger's account this is to be *in* a relation: 'The relational character which these relationships of assigning possess, we take as one of *signifying*.'⁸⁷ It is not clear, however, how the totality of these relations could itself be *in* such a relation. Not only is the totality of such relations not of the kind amongst which the relation holds, but it is also unclear *to what* the totality would be related. This is why Heidegger describes anxiety as revealing that 'the world has the character of completely lacking significance.'⁸⁸

Secondly, given that anxiety is picked out as a special case of mood (in virtue of its disclosing that which is not an entity), and given that fear as an exemplar of moods in general is picked out with just the opposite observation (i.e. that it is always an entity which is fearsome), it is not obvious why we should consider the world to be *explicitly* disclosed anywhere *except* in anxiety. Since in moods unlike anxiety we are brought to face entities, so it is only the totality of entities within-the-world—the 'world'—which we come across in such moods; only in the exceptional mood of anxiety—or other moods which share with it this character of eliding entities—do we explicitly come across the world *as world*. As a result, it's false to say that the world breaks down in anxiety. The opposite is true: the world is what has not broken down. All that breaks down is the 'world', and in so doing it makes visible the typographically unencapsulated *world*, the *a priori*—in Heidegger's idiosyncratic sense—constancy, on which it is reliant.

2. Heidegger seems to present the very opposite view to the privatory-breakdown account in I.6, telling us that it is not anxiety which is privatory, but those more usual and proximal moods:

From an existentiell point of view, the authenticity of Being-one's-Self has

87. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.87.

88. *Ibid.*, H.186.

of course been closed off and thrust aside in falling; but to be thus closed off is merely the *privation* of a disclosedness which manifests itself phenomenally in the fact that Dasein's fleeing is a fleeing *in the face of itself*.⁸⁹

Dasein's fleeing in the face of itself is a privation insofar as it deprives Dasein of one mode of access (a '*privation* of a disclosedness') and replaces it with another (hermeneutic absorption). Fleeing's character as privatory is reinforced by the fact that it is only in being confronted (in anxiety) with itself that Dasein can turn and flee into the world. Similarly, when Division II describes Dasein as a 'null basis' and a 'nullity of itself',⁹⁰ it insists that this null character of Dasein is not privatory: 'Existential nullity has *by no means the character of a privation*.'⁹¹ The motif is clear: that in the face of which we are anxious—Dasein itself—has in its negative character a *positive* sense of *not* a 'this' or a 'that'.

My third worry, then, is this: that intelligibility-centric views mistake the nature of the world, of the "nothing", in the face of which we are anxious, in saying that it is a modification or privation of that which ordinarily shows up (that is, the intelligible). The world as such is the structure that makes the 'world'—the totality of entities—possible; on this, we can agree. It is false to suggest, however, that we can and should talk only of intelligibility, meaningfulness, and so on, when we talk of this, because that without which there would be no intelligibility *is not itself intelligible*. (Or, if we wish to say that it is intelligible, its intelligibility is *sui generis*.) As a result, non-intelligibility has a positive role to play in the story about being. If intelligibility itself is only possible thanks to the non-intelligible then claims along the line that being is a matter of intelligibility no longer suffice to adequately express Heidegger's position.

89. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 184.

90. *Ibid.*, H. 287, 284.

91. *Ibid.*, H. 285, emphasis added.

These three worries constitute, I suggest, good reason to doubt that Heidegger's interest in being can be cashed out in terms of an interest in intelligibility. To summarise them:

1. In taking intelligibility to be the matter at stake in the question of the meaning of being, intelligibility-centric views mistakenly identify the objective of the extant *Being and Time* as directly pursuing this question, when on a closer reading it is more plausibly the case that it is only the clarification of this question which Heidegger pursues. As a result, the claim that being is really intelligibility, as evidenced by *Being and Time's* central discussions thereabout, appears increasingly dubitable. Both hermeneutic intelligibility and anxiety-revealed non-intelligibility are components in Heidegger's preparatory investigation to concretely formulate the question of the meaning of being.

2. Intelligibility-centric views, in claiming that the matter at stake in being is that of intelligibility, elide the sense in which intelligibility is not reflexive. That which makes possible intelligibility as the possibility of particular meaning is not itself vulnerable to being meaningful and, as such, is not itself intelligible but non-intelligible. Intelligibility is not, therefore, exhaustively characteristic of *how* entities can be encountered intelligibly.

3. This substantive concern has an exegetical counterpart. The "nothing" encountered in the mood of anxiety is devoid of significance, but furthermore, this character is not a mere mode (i.e., as it would be were anxiety a breakdown) but a permanent characteristic of the world (i.e., it remains non-intelligible, but is eclipsed by those entities intelligible within it).⁹² It is misleading, therefore, to label Heidegger's concern about being a concern about intelligibility, when he will alight upon a case of non-intelligibility in this way.

These three points do not imply that Heidegger is uninterested in intelligibility, or

92. This structure makes the world a good fit, therefore, for being the locus of the non-intelligible ground of intelligible entities—i.e., the possibly meaningful.

that intelligibility has no role to play qua pursuing the question of the meaning of being. Rather, we must change our understanding of the function of his discussions of intelligibility. It remains the case that Heidegger is looking into the conditions and situation of intelligibility. This must be true, insofar as intelligibility is one of the defining features of everyday Dasein, and insofar as in investigating Dasein he must therefore be interested in how it comes to pass that Dasein is for the most part this nexus of the intelligible. Nevertheless, this entity which typically does business in the currency of intelligibility cannot, in the final analysis, be thoroughly explicated as fundamentally and transparently constituted by this intelligibility: because at the root of that meaningful, intelligible world of everyday Dasein, and indeed of Dasein when it thinks theoretically, there is a radical non-intelligibility. Radical because this absence is not a contingent privation, but a positive characterisation of our constitution as beings which are related to being, which have access to beings as beings. Being-in-the-world itself is not intelligible.⁹³ The intelligibility of *both* the hermeneutic *and* the apophantic “as” fail us when, in anxiety, Dasein comes to itself—to the world, typographically unenclosed.

Heidegger does say that (a) the nothing in anxiety is ‘the possibility of the ready-to-hand in general’, and he does also say that (b) ‘our everyday circumspective discourse understands’ it.⁹⁴ These might appear in the first instance to go against the grain of what I have said. On the contrary, (a) is not saying that the nothing is the ready-to-hand “prior” to its actualisation, as if it were a field of could-be significations held in superposition, waiting for Dasein’s understanding to project them out of their indeterminateness and into actuality. It is rather, in adding the qualified ‘in general’, specifying that the nothing is a condition on there being anything like ready-to-hand entities. Without the noth-

93. At least, not in the senses of “intelligible” provided by apophantic and hermeneutic access. Nor in a sense which conforms to the general schema of synthesis to which those two modes owe their structure.

94. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 187.

ing, no entities; indeed, this is an important characteristic of the nothing for the view I am advancing as a whole. In (b)'s case, Heidegger is referring quite specifically to the way in which, post-anxiety and having fallen back into significance's web, circumspective discourse—i.e., discourse powered by the hermeneutic as—is able to say of that which was encountered in anxiety, “it was really nothing”.⁹⁵ That is to say, it is not that in anxiety, one can somehow say: “Heavens! The nothing!” That, after all, would be a kind of intelligibility; rather, it is only when anxiety has subsided that one can then attempt to classify it—and even then, one is still reduced to saying, “it was, well, nothing.” In anxiety, despite this nothing ‘still obtrud[ing]’ in anxiety,⁹⁶ our capacity to *intelligibly* encounter anything gives out; ergo, not all access is intelligible.

If Dasein “encounters” nothing in anxiety, but does not understand it, then what sense does this word “encounter” have here? In what sense alternative to “understand” does Dasein “apprehend” or “encounter” this nothing? Isn't intelligibility itself—and indeed, is this not a firmly Heideggerian claim?—a precondition of any encountering? I turn now to clarify “what” it is we “encounter” in anxiety. What does this non-intelligible access give us access to?

I propose *sheer presence*; i.e., the sheer presence by which I am, and you are, and any Dasein is, irrepressibly embraced and ensconced by. To what am I gesturing with this phrase? Let me start by enlisting Merleau-Ponty for assistance:

The “visual quale” gives me, and is alone in doing so, the presence of what is not me, of what *is* simply and fully. It does so because, as a texture, it is the concretion of a universal visibility, of one sole Space that separates and reunites, that sustains every cohesion (and even that of past and future, since there would be no such cohesion if they were not essentially parts of the

95. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 187.

96. *Ibid.*, 187.

same space). Every visual something, as individual as it is, functions also as a dimension, because it is given as the result of a dehiscence of Being.⁹⁷

There are two aspects of Merleau-Ponty's characterisation of the "visual quale" that interest me, here. First, there is the notion of "separating and reuniting" within "one sole Space": that on the one hand the pure impression of vision is a single, unified texture, but that on the other hand it is this very texture which comes to split apart first one way and then another, becoming discernible and distinguishable aspects of visual quality (this orange, that red, this contour), or distinct entities (the orange, the rose petal, the crack in the ice). Second, there is the thought that these distinguished visual items, the aspects and entities that show up in the space of the visual texture, come about from a "dehiscence of Being." In some sense the texture bursts or gapes open, as might a seed pod or a wound, to birth these distinguishable items. But these rupturings are not like holes slashed in a canvas, revealing the blank wall behind them: rather, the resultant visual item itself still has the "dimensional" character of the texture as a whole; it too is just as vulnerable to having further items irrupt out of it. These notions together—the separation and reunion within a singular texture, and the "bursting" of items from it—paint the "visual quale" as dynamic, something which 'vibrate[s]'.⁹⁸ It is out of this unified, yet somehow shifting or unstable, texture that items such as particular aspects and entities emerge:

[T]he *world* is a mass without gaps, a system of colors across which the receding perspective, the outlines, angles, and curves are inscribed like lines of force; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed.⁹⁹

97. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. Michael Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 147.

98. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. Michael Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 62, c.f. 65.

99. *Ibid.*, 65, emphasis added.

I would surrender the task of giving a sense to “sheer presence” to Merleau-Ponty entirely, if not for the fact that in these passages he limits his description to the visual quale alone. Sheer presence as I have it in mind is not limited to the vision our eyes give us, even though this is surely one dimension of it which synthetic assertion can lift out and highlight. The dimension of sound which wraps around me, just as much as the texture of vision, is sheer presence. So too, the flashes of muffled and unformed thought that spark in my mind as I look for words. Sheer presence is not the particular modal character of one sense or another, as if the “visual quale” shifts and distends in an entirely different space to the one in which the trumpets’ fanfare unfurls. There is more to the notion of “touch” than just the “quale” of this or that entity which one reaches out to (i.e., more than just the distinctive qualitative character of this or that touch in particular). The “quale” of a touch, or of a sound, sits too close to those distinguishable visual items which “burst” from Merleau-Ponty’s “sole Space.” Sound too has its sole space: there is no such thing as a note without silence and the gradation between that silence and the peak intensity of the note. The attack, decay, sustain and release of any sound bleeds into the soundscape in which it is set. When I run my hand over the walking stick, the thought that the surface is “rough” or “smooth” such that I have a singular “touch” of it, is an illusion. Sound and touch, like vision, have their separating and reunifying texture. Sheer presence is not “either” visual or auditory or tactile; it is what these modes reveal in common, in being presentative modes. Consider this passage from Heidegger’s *Logic*:

Imagine a walking stick leaning against the door or wall. One might say that the one touches the other. But on closer reflection we should not speak of “touching”—and not because we could show that there is ultimately some space between the two. Rather, on principle the walking-stick does not and never can touch the wall, even if there were absolutely no distance between it and the wall. For that to happen, the wall would have to be able to encounter, and be encountered by, the walking-stick as a thing in the world.

One thing can touch another only if it is a being that—as such, intrinsically, and of its ownmost being—has its world. Only in that way can it touch another being, and become accessible in its being as something there. So we see that in saying “Two things touch,” we are taking existence’s way of being unto the world and transferring it to a thing that appears within the world and therefore, in itself, is worldless.¹⁰⁰

It is quite implausible to think that “existence’s way of being”, which makes the difference between two things truly touching or not, is the presence of something like a *quale* construed as belonging to a distinct sensory mode. Seeing the walking stick, touching it, or hearing it tap along the floor, all belong to “existence’s way of being” such as to make it impossible for the wall to touch the walking stick, for the camera to see it, or for the recording system to hear it. Nor do I think it is plausible that Dasein’s ability to “touch”, over against the wall’s inability to do so, is rooted in its occupation of a world viz. a context of significance. While it is the case that touching the walking stick requires such a world (else no walking stick), one can see, hear and touch even without such intelligibility. In anxiety, one does not go deaf and blind, even if one can no longer see entities, such as walking sticks. As Merleau-Ponty points out:

We live in the midst of man-made objects, among tools, in houses, streets, cities, and most of the time we see them only through the human actions which put them to use. We become used to thinking that all of this exists necessarily and unshakably. Cézanne’s painting suspends these habits of thought and reveals *the base* of inhuman nature *upon which man has installed himself*. This is why Cézanne’s people are strange, as if viewed by a creature of another species. Nature itself is stripped of the attributes which make it *ready* for animistic communions... the frozen objects hesitate as at the beginning of the world. It is an unfamiliar world in which one is uncomfortable and which forbids all human effusiveness. If one looks at the work of other painters after seeing Cézanne’s paintings, one feels somehow relaxed, just as conversations resumed after a period of mourning mask the absolute

100. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 180.

change and restore to the survivors their solidity. But indeed *only a human being* is capable of such a vision, which penetrates right to the root of things beneath the imposed order of humanity.¹⁰¹

Beneath, as it were, the familiar world of our circumspective concern, is that texture out of which that world can erupt. To report on this foundation is difficult, because in the very report, in naming it and lifting out this or that about it, one destroys it in effecting the transformation into the distinct and intelligible. Merleau-Ponty finds this in Cézanne's artworks:

One can invent pleasurable objects by linking old ideas in a new way and by presenting forms that have been seen before. This way of painting or speaking "second hand" is what is generally meant by culture. Cézanne's or Balzac's artist is not satisfied to be a cultured animal but takes up culture from its inception and finds it anew: he speaks as the first man spoke and paints as if no one had ever painted before. What he expresses cannot, therefore, be the translation of a clearly defined thought, since such clear thoughts are those that have already been said within ourselves or by others... Before expression, there is nothing but a vague fever, and only the work [of art] itself, completed and understood, will prove that there was *something* rather than *nothing* to be found there. Because he returned to the source of silent and solitary experience on which culture and the exchange of ideas have been built... the artist launches his work just as a man once launched the first word, not knowing whether it will be more than a shout... The meaning of what the artist is going to say *does not exist* anywhere—not in things, which as yet have no meaning, nor in the artist himself, in his unformulated life. [Art] summons one away from the already constituted reason in which "cultured men" are content to shut themselves, toward a reason which would embrace its own origins.¹⁰²

That 'mass without gaps',¹⁰³ the 'sole Space' of texture,¹⁰⁴ is what Cézanne's art captures: the 'basis' at the 'beginning of the world'.¹⁰⁵ This gapless mass, though visible not just

101. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," 66–7, emphases added.

102. *Ibid.*, 69.

103. *Ibid.*, 65.

104. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 147.

105. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," 66.

through the eyes, is what I have in mind—if we will permit, *for the moment*, the gestural tone of this characterisation—by “sheer presence.”

“But,” the reply comes in thinking back to the previous chapter, “wasn’t presence precisely the clue to the meaning of being which Heidegger rejected?”¹⁰⁶ Indeed it was. In various places Heidegger seems to rule out presence, not least the broadly sensory presence in which the previous characterisation dealt, as the focal point of his interest. For example, he discourages us from relying on the ‘immediate’ access which we obtain merely by ‘beholding’ things:

The idea of grasping explicating phenomena in a way which is ‘original’ and ‘intuitive’ is directly opposed to the *naïveté* of a haphazard, ‘immediate’, and unreflective ‘beholding’.¹⁰⁷

Later, in I.3, he connects the notion of ‘beholding’ with that of a singular *voeĩv* or direct unarticulated grasp of a thing, describing *diavoẽĩv* or an articulated grasp (as in assertion) as an extension of such:

Under the unbroken ascendance of the traditional ontology, the way to get a genuine grasp of what really is has been decided in advance: it lies in *voeĩv*—‘beholding’ in the widest sense; *diavoẽĩv* or ‘thinking’ is just a more fully achieved form of *voeĩv* and is founded upon it.¹⁰⁸

This seems to shed some light upon his comments earlier in the Introduction, when he accuses *voeĩv* or mere awareness of being an express-lane to taking presence-at-hand as determinate of being, and thus to *oũsia* as the meaning of being with its covert and ultimately circular precedence of presence:

106. C.f. §5 and esp. p.53.

107. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 37.

108. *Ibid.*, H. 96.

λέγειν itself—or rather νοεῖν, that simple awareness of something present-at-hand in its pure presence-at-hand, which Parmenides had already taken to guide him in his own interpretation of Being—has the Temporal structure of a pure ‘making-present’ of something. Those entities which show themselves in this and for it, and which are understood as entities in the most authentic sense, thus get interpreted with regard to the Present; that is, they are conceived as presence (οὐσία).¹⁰⁹

Heidegger appears, therefore, firmly set against notions of presence—let alone sheer, pure presence—as the appropriate fulcrum point on which to hang the investigation.

However, I submit, Heidegger’s apparent rejection of “presence” is not at all simple or uniform. In I.6 §44(b), Heidegger makes what might at first glance seem to be an extraordinary about turn. He first tells us, not yet surprisingly, that ‘the roots of the truth of assertion reach back to the disclosedness of understanding.’¹¹⁰ ‘Truth as disclosedness’, therefore, ‘has become truth as agreement’, and as such, ‘[t]he primordial phenomenon of truth has been covered up by’ the sense of being ‘which is proximally the one that prevails.’¹¹¹ So far, so understandable: a covert precedence of presence, which goes hand-in-hand with the apophantic λόγος and the assertions we articulate through it, encourages us to conceive of truth as correspondence, to the detriment of our explicit awareness of, e.g., all that everyday hermeneutic comportment. But Heidegger then says that, *despite this*, ‘we must not overlook the fact that while this way of understanding being... is one which the Greeks were first to develop... the primordial truth *was simultaneously alive among them*.’¹¹² Now, this comment is not without *any* precedence: for if we recall—as I discussed all the way back in §1—the “stimulus” which provokes philosophising, and out of

109. I have modified Macquarrie and Robinson’s translation. In this passage they translate ‘*puren*’ as ‘sheer’, despite translating it as ‘pure’ throughout the rest of the text. As such I have adjusted their text ‘sheer presence-at-hand’ to ‘pure presence-at-hand’. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 25–26.

110. Ibid., H. 223.

111. Ibid., H. 225.

112. Ibid.

which ontological thought supposedly blooms, was that to which the Greek conception of being as οὐσία was a response. What is, however, entirely unexpected is Heidegger's sudden turn to *accept* the Greeks' insight, stating *unqualifiedly* that: 'The truth of αἴσθησις', of sheer sensory perception, 'is the primordial kind of uncovering.'¹¹³ It is 'only because [this] νόησις primarily uncovers' that 'the λόγος as διανοεῖν also ha[s] uncovering as its function.' And since 'assertion is', *therefore*, 'grounded in Dasein's uncovering, or rather in its *disclosedness*,'¹¹⁴ it seems inescapable to conclude that what Dasein *primordially* discloses is, after all, sheer sensory presence. But then what of all those warnings *against* the Greeks' conception, and apparently *against* elevating sheer sensory perception? How is this not a collapse into the mere beholding which he was set against?

Recall that—as I discussed in §5—Heidegger took issue with οὐσία as the meaning of being *because* in elevating sheer sensory presence, 'presence-unto', the Greeks silently took up, i.e., without explicitly realising that they were doing so, a concomitant temporal character (of *temporal* presence). He did not take issue with sensory quality per se. Rather, it was the sense in which sensory qualities were "complete" in themselves which attracted his suspicion. This should first alert us to the possibility, I suggest, that it is *only* sheer sensory presence filtered through a particular mode of access—one to which it nevertheless might have an affinity—that Heidegger is keen to avoid.¹¹⁵ What the Greeks were mistaken about, in Heidegger's view, was not sheer presence, but sheer presence's being *present*(-at-hand). They mistake, in short, sheer presence to be *of* entities.

It is in conflating this distinction that my suggested candidate can appear *prima facie* ill-fitting. We all too easily construe sheer presence to be *of* the things around us: cups of

113. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226.

114. *Ibid.*, H. 226, Heidegger's emphasis.

115. One might equally put this point by noting that in tasting soup to judge whether it needs more salt, surely a paradigmatic case of circumspective access, one cannot imagine what use one would be if one did not have certain sheer sensory qualities accessible to one.

tea and chestnut trees are rather different entities, but they share, surely, sheer presence. In suggesting sheer presence as a candidate for the nothing in anxiety, it cannot be the case that I mean by this *entities* in *their* sheer presence, on pain of simply repeating the mistakes which Heidegger is trying to avoid. The initial characterisation which I offered, with Merleau-Ponty's assistance, gave some inkling of this, in speaking of a "gapless mass." But there is a tension between Merleau-Ponty's fascination with the *visual* in particular, in those passages from which I drew, and the broader remit of Heidegger's interest in *αἴσθησις* as an access in general. Sheer presence is not something that can be properly captured, as such, through positive characterisations of this or that sensory mode: doing so already does synthetic violence, highlighting sheer presence *as* in that mode, rather than in its own character. For this reason, in trying to bring greater clarity to what sheer presence "is", I will again adopt a broadly negative approach. Specifically, I want to draw attention to the sense in which Heidegger thinks that the nothing is revealed by the *paring down* of our proximal access—not by the addition of anything, but by the taking away of something. By following through on this thought, and directing ourselves to what remains in such a pared-down state-of-mind, I hope to point out sheer presence more effectively.

When I do not flee into the midst of meaningful entities, I permit in a certain sense the significance in the 'world' to drain away.¹¹⁶ With it go entities ready-to-hand. And at the same time, with this draining of significance, I am no longer engaged in contemplation or theoretical work; I am disengaged from all such thinking, and with that all entities present-at-hand have also drifted away. I am alone. Yet, even so, there remains that which will just not go away: brute, sheer presence. When I stand in an empty lecture

116. The single quotation marks around world indicate, in keeping with Heidegger's usage, that "world" here means all the entities *in* the world.

theatre, and anxiety in this sense overtakes me, there are no chairs to sit on and no red-felted chairs whose redness I might direct students' attention to—indeed, there are no students, and no lecture, even if I had been lecturing. And yet in a certain sense there has been no change. The entities did not fold themselves up, stack atop one another by the wall, and climb out of the window, leaving me alone. They just “dropped out.” No thing has changed—everything has merely “disappeared.” Nor has nothing changed—for even though the entities leave there is no great and terrible discontinuity, no shattering of my existence or rupture in its smoothness. When I cease to be anxious and the ‘world’ rushes back into existence and the room is filled with hundreds of places to sit, there is no movement. Even when in anxiety the ‘world’ goes, so there remains sheer, brute presence; even though it is “of” nothing at all—it is the sheer presence of nothing.¹¹⁷

There are two requirements that any candidate description of the nothing has to meet. First of all, it must constitute a description of the “world in its worldhood”—that world which provides the framework in which the intelligibility of the typographically-enclosed ‘world’, or totality of entities, is possible. It must fit the description of world in this sense as being that “wherein” Dasein is—that in which everyday Dasein with its everyday ‘world’ of meaningful entities can be said to be. Secondly, it must be non-intelligible—its character must resist accessibility “as” an entity. Does sheer presence as I have been describing it fulfil the requirements which it needs to, in order to play the role that Heidegger describes the world, and therefore the nothing, as having?

The first requirement is that it should be that “wherein” Dasein is; that within which

117. As much as Merleau-Ponty's “gapless mass” manages to point, as such, in the direction of such a situation, the valorisation of visual sensation—the turning towards a particular sense—is as destructive to the sheer presence of the nothing as an obsession with an entity's presentation in this or that sense (i.e., rather than the whole of its multi-sensory presentation) is to that entity. Perhaps Merleau-Ponty had an incipient thought of this when he said, in spite of the focus he places upon color, that ‘there is clearly no one master key of the visible, and color alone is no closer to being such a key than space is.’ (Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 141)

the 'world' of meaningful entities is. It seems to me that this is indeed the character of the brute presence I have described. For, as I briefly indicated, when my mood alters and I am no longer anxious, it is not as if the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand entities *fly* back into the room. They did not move house to accommodate my mood. They simply "materialise" back, absorbing the brute presence into themselves, just as, when I became anxious, they simply "dissolved" away, retreating entirely. The entities were gone, and now they are back, but in a certain sense nothing has changed. Most of all, *the nothing* has not changed. For if I were to characterise what had failed to change in the dissolution and reinstatement of entities as "the lights never went out", then it is also true that the lights had always been on already. The world, brute presence, is always already there—entities or no.¹¹⁸ Anxiety makes nothing apparent, and makes it apparent as distinct from "the sheer presence of the entities", exactly in virtue of its persistence in the face of all meaning's failure. The possibility of the intelligible entities that make up my 'world' is rooted in that brute presence which persists even in the absence of any meaning. For if the lights do go out, there will not only be no entities, but that which does not recede with them in anxiety would also disappear. So it does seem to me appropriate to say that it is this irrepressible brute presence wherein one is, and wherein there is a 'world', and without which there would not be the possibility of meaning.

The second requirement on my candidate of sheer presence is that it must be non-intelligible. And this is the impression I have of this presence. It does not show itself as being meaningful, and it seems to me that there is no manner in which I can ascribe to it a meaning. Why not? Because any such meaning immediately destroys it, replac-

118. This finds corroboration in Heidegger's re-description of the nothing in 1929's *What Is Metaphysics?* when he says that 'the nothing nihilates incessantly without our really knowing of this occurrence in our everyday knowledge'. Martin Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," in *Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993), 104.

ing it with something else—the entity with that meaning. How so? Because it seems to me that this presence has the simultaneous character—and this is, therefore, necessarily metaphorical—of *utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude*. It is neither “uniform” nor “chaotic”, or rather it is both of these absolutely, but in any case its variance is not the distinction of one unity from another, nor is its unitariness the indissolubility of a simple whole. It is as if there were such richness to it that no distinction would be fine enough, nor any commonality sufficiently inclusive, to reveal, rather than conceal, its character. Distinction would only obscure it, like a whiteboard marker tracing the lines of a masterwork painting; as would the drawing of similitude—as if a single stick-figure of a tree could encapsulate, not merely point to, every constituent of every forest. Even the ascription of “utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude” does not provide meaning: it is not that I am confronted by something which *is* entirely unitary and entirely self-dissimilar (were this conjunction even intelligible in the usual ways) but that, in attempting to imaginatively communicate to you something like my recollected impressions of being anxious, I reach for these words because they seem least likely to offer over a false impression. But in writing them, I neither place myself into anxiety, nor do I bring you with me. The language is bent out of shape; but that should hardly be surprising—I am trying to communicate to you something which in my own case, if Heidegger is right, became accessible to me through neither the hermeneutic nor the apophantic “as”. To give something akin to an intelligible description of that which was not intelligible is going to have its casualties. Of course, my purpose in giving this impossible description is to avoid a mere reliance upon insisting that I did encounter something which was not intelligible. And for that purpose, the koan-like conjunction of unitariness and dissimilitude will have to suffice. The upshot of that conjunction is that—to try and tease out something like a structural explanation here—sheer presence resists, or rather cannot survive, dissolution (or unifi-

cation) into this, that, or the other. And this inability to survive the structural transformation through which intelligibility arises is the reason for which sheer presence is a suitable candidate for world, qua the requirement that it is non-intelligible.

The ‘utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude’ by which I characterise the nothing can be elaborated, I think, in examining a separate exegetical case in which Heidegger seems to describe the character of sheer sensory presence. In the discussion in question, Heidegger calls this phenomenon ‘earth.’¹¹⁹ Heidegger draws a distinction between *world* on the one hand, and this *earth* on the other. Artworks, he claims, ‘set up a world.’¹²⁰ That is, when one encounters art, one’s world is vulnerable to alteration from the artwork—art reconfigures one’s nexus of significance (sometimes for a very short time, sometimes permanently). This is the sense in which art can be transportive: ‘In the nearness of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be.’¹²¹ Thus, in Van Gogh’s paintings of shoes, ‘[t]he equipmental quality of equipment [is] discovered,’¹²² despite the fact that:

There is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes in or to which they might belong—only an undefined space. There are not even clods of soil from the field or the field-path sticking to them, which would at least hint at their use. A pair of peasant shoes and nothing more. And yet.

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by raw wind.¹²³

119. Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. Albert Hofstadter, (London), 1993, *passim*.

120. *Ibid.*, 170.

121. *Ibid.*, 161.

122. *Ibid.*

123. *Ibid.*, 159.

It should be no surprise that an artwork which reveals something hermeneutically rather than apophantically need not include any explicit signs as to the nature of that which the art portrays; for, it is the essential nature of the ready-to-hand that it 'points beyond itself to a larger world, to the other Dasein who buy the shoes, and to those who supply the leather.'¹²⁴ But the incisive point is that what is revealed, in the revealing of the shoes as not mere things but *as those shoes*, is a world *other than* the world which the viewer of the art had existed within.¹²⁵

Art's setting up of a world is contrasted with its 'setting forth of the earth.'¹²⁶ This earth shares much in common, *prima facie*, with the idea of raw or sheer presence. In the earth's being set forth, 'metals come to glitter and shimmer, colours to glow, tones to sing.'¹²⁷ Heidegger describes earth as having a tendency to shelter, or conceal, itself which prevents it from being analysed:

Colour shines and wants only to shine. When we analyse it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate it.¹²⁸

In describing colour as being itself only when it remains undisclosed, Heidegger is not saying that colour resists attempts to access it, but rather that it resists attempts to disclose it *as colour*. The words "colour" and "red" are just as insufficient at disclosing it as wavelength values. The earth is only intelligibly the earth insofar as it is that which 'appears openly... as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is essen-

124. Michael J. Inwood, *Heidegger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 27.

125. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss whether this revelation of an "other" world in the artwork is really a modification of one's world, or a special kind of incorporation of an other's world into our own, in which the significance's originating in the artwork's world remain accessed or integrated in a special way (i.e., one in which equipment discovered not through art never is accessed in).

126. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 173.

127. *Ibid.*, 171.

128. *Ibid.*, 172.

tially undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and keeps itself constantly closed up.’¹²⁹ So the earth, insofar as it is intelligible in this way, is really concealed, since it is not the case that in this articulation of earth one discloses what we point—and can only merely point—to as the quality of a tone. As with the nothing described in I.6, here is something which gets deformed in being alighted upon with the tools of intelligibility—the “as” structures of the λόγος—that reveal entities to us.

An exegetical difficulty presents itself here, in that Heidegger appears to distinguish between the earth and the nothing: ‘the clearing centre itself encircles all that is, *as does the nothing*.’¹³⁰ On the prima facie assumption that the earth itself “is”, e.g., that colours *are*, it cannot then be the case that the earth is the nothing, since it would be included amongst that which the nothing ‘encircles.’ This seems corroborated in Heidegger’s descriptions of earth as being divided in an intelligible manner (i.e., *not* infinitely so, nor an utter unity). For example, earth is ‘the massiveness and heaviness *of* stone.’¹³¹ It possesses, therefore, the right degree of dissimilitude for clear distinctions to be drawn; e.g., between the weight of stone and the lightness of air. ‘[E]arth juts through world’, on this account, because it is always *of* those entities which the world circumspects and discloses.¹³²

However, there is good reason to reject the apparent cashing out of the earth as *of* entities, and to instead take his expressions thereof, such as ‘the clang of tone’,¹³³ as strictly running up against the bounds of our articulacy. We are told that ‘we scarcely know’ the nothing.¹³⁴ We are *also* told, quite similarly, that the earth ‘shrinks from every disclo-

129. Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 172.

130. *Ibid.*, 178, emphasis added.

131. *Ibid.*, 171.

132. *Ibid.*, 174.

133. *Ibid.*, 171.

134. *Ibid.*, 178.

sure',¹³⁵ and is entirely 'self-secluding'.¹³⁶ This echoes very closely the thrust of Heidegger's conception of the nothing in anxiety: here, just as in anxiety, we are presented with something which we undoubtedly can have access to, but which in some sense nevertheless *resists* Dasein's disclosing it—i.e., resists the usual tools by which Dasein is able to encounter (entities). Both the nothing and the earth in *Origin* are, therefore, characterised in similar terms to the nothing belonging to anxiety in *Being and Time*. Each presents an insurmountable challenge to our usual modes of intelligible access. Even if we bring such tools to bear on them, doing so somehow makes them fall *out* of our grasp, as much as get them into it.

The sense of sheer presence which I have attempted to articulate can be further clarified, I think, in contrast with the kind of sheer presence which provokes anxious terror in Sartre's *Nausea*:

Or rather the root, the park gates, the bench, the patches of grass, all that had vanished: the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous lumps, in disorder—naked, with a frightful and obscene nakedness.¹³⁷

While at first glance this sounds much like sheer presence as I have described it, Sartre's view is very different with regard to what I take to be the most illuminating characteristic of the nothing. For he says, 'lumps'; and, soon after: 'All these *objects*—how can I put it? They made me uncomfortable.'¹³⁸ Sartre's description of the world having melted therefore impresses itself as a *breakdown* of the normal order in which the independence of the entities, despite the destruction of their respective meanings, nevertheless maintains itself. The existential potency of the situation, for Sartre, is in its capacity to bring out the

135. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 172.

136. *Ibid.*, 173.

137. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 2000).

138. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

confounding actuality of the objects that have thereby broken down. So it is that we are told that: ‘I would have liked them to exist less forcefully, more dryly, more abstractly, with more reserve. The chestnut tree pressed itself against my eyes.’¹³⁹ For Heidegger, however, it is not the chestnut tree which presses in—in anxiety, even such peaceable entities as the trees retreat away—but rather the world, sheer presence, alone. How can the things in their diversity vanish, and then *the chestnut tree* press against one’s eyes? It simply cannot be the chestnut tree which is pressing in, if the things have indeed melted away. And the veneer melts, as Sartre says—that is the common thread for Heidegger, Sartre, and myself—but in so doing it reveals, contra Sartre, not the raw existence of the entities in the totality of their monstrous lumpiness, but the brute, paradoxically unitary and variant world in which those entities *can* be. One is confronted with the raw material, so to speak, out of which one encounters (proximally and for the most part) those meaningful entities—which *includes* those ‘soft, molten lumps’, grasped *as* such.

Let me return to the issue I touched on in presenting the exegetical cues for my identifying sheer presence with the nothing: the distinction between νοεῖν and διανοεῖν, and its connection to Heidegger’s initial rejections of sheer presence, and his sudden later acceptance thereof. Heidegger identified in Aristotle, distinct from the two modes of λόγος and their character of σύνθεσις, a *non*-synthetic mode of apprehension or encounter. He comments, in translating Aristotle: ‘{where the being of the entity is not determined by σύνθεσις}, uncoveredness does not entail the unity of synthesis {it is not a matter of διανοεῖν} ...uncoveredness is simply a matter of apprehending being.’¹⁴⁰ Heidegger, in glossing this passage, proceeds to argue that ‘[i]f a being in and of itself cannot possibly be synthetic ... then the corresponding act of uncovering ... likewise cannot be syn-

139. Sartre, *Nausea*.

140. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 149; c.f. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1052a1–4. The winged brackets indicate Heidegger’s insertions.

thetic.¹⁴¹ This is because a being which ‘is not composed offers no possibility of seeing anything else...other than the being’s own self.’¹⁴² The presence of such a being is only ‘“as” itself’.¹⁴³ The kind of access one can have to such a non-synthetic being, in Heidegger’s account of Aristotle, is that of ‘θιγεῖν [touching]’.¹⁴⁴ But this ‘does not at all mean that [such] uncovering is an act of actual touching.’¹⁴⁵ This notion that θιγεῖν is not an actual, or ontic, touching seems to be at work in the connection Heidegger sees in Aristotle between ‘ἄφή [touch]’ as ‘αἴσθησις [sensation, perception]’ and ‘νοεῖν’ as *also* αἴσθησις, even though the [physical, bodily] senses play no role in it [νοεῖν].¹⁴⁶ Αἴσθησις is not *merely* that collection of sensory modalities with which we are familiar, on account of being *homo sapiens* (rather than, say, bats). Rather, what is ‘decisive’ about αἴσθησις is that ‘whatever is uncovered’ by it ‘is had directly in itself.’¹⁴⁷ That is to say: non-synthetically. Or as Heidegger’s insertions in the aforementioned translation of *Metaphysics* 1052a1 put it, in the absence of διανοεῖν—the double-seeing of the intellect. As *Being and Time* reiterates in §44, ‘λόγος is that... *double possibility*’ such that one can ‘*either uncover or cover up*.’¹⁴⁸ (Meaning: the predicate can be drawn appropriately from the subject matter or it cannot.¹⁴⁹) As I noted in introducing the exegetical basis for taking sheer presence as the character of the nothing, this truth-or-falsity provided by synthetic ‘λόγος as διανοεῖν’ is possible ‘only because νόησις’, singular ‘pure νοεῖν’, ‘primarily uncovers.’¹⁵⁰ But Aristotle ‘was never in the situation to “broaden” [his synthetic] conception of truth’, because he

141. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 152.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid., 153.

146. Ibid.

147. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 153.

148. Ibid., H. 226.

149. C.f. my discussion of assertion in §4.

150. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226.

‘never’ in the first place ‘defends the thesis’ that σύνθεσις is the locus of truth—i.e., by exploring the character of sheer presence as that which synthetic judgment is grounded against.¹⁵¹ He instead takes σύνθεσις as the locus of truth, and puts the mode of access to the non-synthetic aside as ‘not-apprehending ἄγνοια.’¹⁵² Heidegger does not, therefore, accuse Aristotle of a *complete* failure to grasp the connection between λόγος and the αἴσθησις in which ‘the ἀσύνθετα are encountered.’¹⁵³ Instead, he claims that Aristotle failed to fully elaborate non-synthetic access in distinction from synthetic access. It remains open to Heidegger, therefore, to claim that he contributes this missing piece, i.e.: that ‘pure νοεῖν... is the *primordial* kind of uncovering.’¹⁵⁴

Earlier in his career, Heidegger did in fact attribute something like this kind of view to Aristotle.¹⁵⁵ In a December 1924 seminar, Heidegger made the claim that for Aristotle ‘[t]he νοῦς of the human being is διανοεῖν, and it has the character of δια because... the very way human beings are, namely λόγος, [is] the addressing of something as something.’¹⁵⁶ Once again, this is then contrasted with an explication of a non-synthetic mode of access: when ‘something that I can no longer address in terms of something else’ shows up—that is, in the terminology of *Being and Time*, when in anxiety there “is” nothing—then, ‘at that point... λόγος, in addressing something as something, would fail.’¹⁵⁷ Heidegger already here seeks to privilege this kind of non-synthetic grasp, saying that it is when

151. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226.

152. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 149.

153. *Ibid.*, 153.

154. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226, emphasis added.

155. Although I will not defend it here, there does seem to me to be a pattern in the progression of Heidegger’s early thought whereby he first develops an idiosyncratic reading of Aristotle, which leads him to this or that view, and then eventually abandons the moniker of its being an interpretation of Aristotle, instead claiming—perhaps rightly—the insight as his own, and accusing (explicitly or otherwise) Aristotle of having somehow missed the further insights his thought points towards.

156. Martin Heidegger, “Being-There and Being-True According to Aristotle,” in *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910–1927*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 226.

157. *Ibid.*, 229.

λόγος fails in this way that ‘philosophical research ... really is research.’¹⁵⁸ There is even a precursory hint of the view that this apprehension does not concern entities per se, because it is a ‘[singular, not δια-]νοεῖν’, ‘a pure and simple apprehension of the matters ἄνευ λόγος, without speech.’¹⁵⁹ Heidegger calls this ‘σοφία [sophiā] : pure understanding.’¹⁶⁰ It ‘is the fundamental and highest form of discovering possible for Dasein.’¹⁶¹

Σοφία also appears explicitly in *The Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Here, Heidegger presents the development of οὐσία as the meaning of being as partially grounded in a philosophical search for ἀρχαί, or origins. Thus, ‘insofar as beings are posited in the respects from which they determined’, i.e., through apophantic and hermeneutic λόγος, we are ‘bound to set forth’ the ἀρχαί [pl. inception, origin] ... the basic respects in which concrete being-there is seen in itself and made explicit.’¹⁶² That is to say, insofar as there are beings, there is implicitly being thereof—and, ergo, we are vulnerable to wanting to know the sense of this being of the already-positing entities. But, in asking this question, we are fundamentally looking not only at the beings themselves, as they are, but in how it is possible that they are, or how beings “come to be”—their origin, or ἀρχή. And it is in discussing the ἀρχή that we once again find Heidegger using the word σοφία: ‘the “science” that has to do with the ἀρχαί is πρώτη φιλοσοφία [first philosophy], or more concisely: σοφία [skill, wisdom].’¹⁶³ Σοφία, then, does not investigate entities, but the *being* of entities: ‘A distinctive research that does not scrutinise beings as to their concrete determinations but rather sets forth the basic respects [i.e., the origins], is guided by the question: τί τὸ ὄν?’ I shall take up the term σοφία, following Heidegger’s usage, as a la-

158. Heidegger, “Being-There and Being-True According to Aristotle,” 230.

159. *ibid.* The “matters”, of course, are familiar in the *Logic* lectures as the subject matters from which predicates can be drawn, and when drawn therefrom partially uncover, rather than cover over, the subject.

160. *Ibid.*, 226.

161. *Ibid.*, 230.

162. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 192.

163. *Ibid.*, 193.

bel for the sort of comportment, or mode of access, which we enter into in anxiety and through which we are non-synthetically aware of sheer presence, or the nothing. Σοφία: a direct apprehension of the infinite dissimilitude and utter unitariness in which we are ensconced, and from which—under proximal conditions—entities emerge through the synthetic double-apprehension of hermeneutic or apophantic λόγος.

Heidegger joins together his quasi-historical engagement with Greek thought, and his phenomenology, by implicating the Greek response to the stimulus as one case (comparable to the account of fleeing in *Being and Time*) of Dasein's turning away from its uncanny existence, ensconced in the nothing.¹⁶⁴ Greek thought rushed into 'setting forth definite ἀρχαί at any price', in order that 'the fear that [the matters themselves] could disappear' would be 'eliminated' on account of 'being-there [being] conveyed in a determinate familiarity'.¹⁶⁵ This "determinate familiarity" is the determination of the subject matters through the assertion, in which the subject of the assertion can be brought ever-closer to the perfectly momentary structure of a pure synthesis; one can crystallise the subject in the single coherent moment of a predicative synthesis.¹⁶⁶ Not only is the colour of the sky at 12:47pm such-and-such a colour, but even without a temporal specification, it is possible to hold the sky *as*, say, blue. The nothing can be beaten back, so to speak, through the λόγος. If οὐσία is the meaning of being—if we turn to the λόγος and refuse a more decisive inspection of the subject matters—then '[w]hat is genuinely threatening to being-there is thereby abolished'.¹⁶⁷ The φόβος [fear] of the ancients' is 'the ability-to-disappear, change, run its course, possibly stop'.¹⁶⁸ Οὐσία works up and protects the 'present, held fast', against this possibility: a 'being-belief' which can ward off what is fear-

164. C.f. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 184.

165. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 196.

166. See §5 p. 49 above.

167. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 196.

168. *Ibid.*, 248.

some about the subject matter.¹⁶⁹ The notes culminate with a sketch of something like Dasein's falling care in Greek philosophical thought: 'The trusted as the familiar: to bring into the familiar, to protect, to care for, in the familiar, to drive fear out, διαγωγή [way of passing time].'¹⁷⁰ The idea and the "implementation" of οὐσία itself, in other words, is as much a fleeing in the face of the nothing as is the flight into hermeneutic everydayness that *Being and Time* describes.

* * *

The primordial sources, then, are those accessible through a non-synthetic comportment; not entities present-at-hand, nor entities ready-to-hand—not *entities* at all, since an entity must *be as* something, even if it is *sui generis*. In anxiety, and other such states of mind in which non-synthetic access is left after synthetic access has been pared away, the "nothing" of this non-intelligible basis is visible all the more impressively. But, by the same stroke, "nothing" is not alien to us either, because what is found *non-synthetically* in anxiety, remains a constituent component of synthetic access in our other states of mind. Rather, we are tempted not to look too closely, to allow the significances of the hermeneutic λόγος and the predications of the apophantic λόγος to dominate in our synthetic comportment, because there is something *disturbing* to the nothing. The διανοεῖν of the λόγος saves us from confronting this, because the second νοεῖν can come to dominate the first, ouroboros-like. In the extreme case of free-floating assertion, Dasein turns itself away entirely from the subject, which becomes perfectly clasped in the temporal amber of a "now",¹⁷¹ and which is immune as such to churning infinite dissimilitude and utter unitariness—to the nothing.

169. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 248.

170. *Ibid.*

171. See §5 p. 49 above.

But what is this “churning” in sheer presence? And how can the nothing, which presses the Greeks into the ἀρχή of οὐσία at any cost, be *sheer presence* if, as was already clear from chapter 1, the temporal character of *presence* has been *ruled out* as that belonging to the primordial sources?

CHAPTER III:

THE PROBLEM OF TEMPORALITY

Heidegger is looking for the primordial sources, I claimed at the outset of chapter 1. The candidate I have proposed is the nothing, or "...", as unobscuredly accessible in—for example—the state of mind of anxiety. The primordial sources are revealed in anxiety because, on the description Heidegger and I attest to, in this state of mind the significance which proximally characterises Dasein's world collapses away (revealing itself, in the process, to be accidental—rather than essential—to Dasein). I characterised the nothing as *sheer presence*. Crucially, not sheer presence of this or that, but an "infinite dissimilitude and utter unitariness" that always exceeds whatever sense one could, were one's sense-making capacities engaged, make of it.

However, there is an obvious problem with this candidate: its temporal character. The second clue which the *via negativa* investigation of chapter 1 arrived at was that the primordial sources cannot have the temporal character of being-present; the temporal character belonging to entities present-at-hand. While the hermeneutic λόγος necessarily involves a temporal character reaching beyond any particular "now" (e.g., to a futural for-which), the apophantic λόγος can comport us towards what is there "now." This is exemplified in the extreme case of free-floating assertion: when assertive comportment engages with its predicates alone, and not its subject, there is nothing which gets left over beyond what is

said in the assertion. This “object” of the assertion can be, as such, entirely present—no aspect of it has been left out. This sense of completeness, of being completely present in the coherence of a consistent moment, was connected by Heidegger dually to the senses of time and being in the tradition. The traditional concept of being as *existentia* or ουσία, Heidegger claimed, was being-present, or in his terminology present-at-hand. According to Heidegger, the Greeks missed a connection in their notion of being-present, qua the sense of presentation (e.g., through the senses), with the sense of being *temporally* present. I subsequently cashed out being present-at-hand in terms of free-floating assertion, making use of the exemplary presence of the “object” of such assertions as a measure for the occlusion of whatever it is about the subject matter of assertions which defies the traditional conception of being (i.e., which stands against the thought, which is implicit in what we have seen said by Heidegger thus far, that being really could be being-present). In doing so, I put aside the question of what is really “at fault” with the idea that being is being-present—and, as such, what is inexhaustive or inaccurate about the temporal character involved in such a conception.

Taking up that question is the task with which this chapter sets out. We know that the primordial sources are occluded by “being-present”, which speaks against my suggestion that those sources are the sheer presence that gets revealed unveiledly in anxiety. Am I not just leading us back down the path to the valorisation of present-ness that Heidegger is attempting to disabuse us of?¹ *But what is Heidegger’s problem with “the present”?*

1. One clue as to how I am not doing so is in Heidegger’s “turn-about” on the issue of αἴσθησις, which I presented in chapter 2. To make sense of his first rejecting αἴσθησις as promoting a collapse towards presence-at-hand, and then later accepting it as the ‘primordial kind of uncovering’, I argued that we should understand the relevant difference to be whether sheer presence is *of* entities, or not. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226 Taking my cue from Heidegger’s description of anxiety as a mode in which no entities remain, and no significance at all resides, I read the ‘nothing’ which we encounter in anxiety as sheer presence, yet not *of anything*. I justified the phenomenological plausibility of this by directing our attention towards what I called the “infinite dissimilitude and utter unitariness” of such sheer presence: that there was no adequate way of dissecting it so as to render a meaningful entity (be that “part” of it

We might recall here Heidegger’s concern—which I discussed back in §2—about the Aristotelian “unity of analogy” regarding being.² Heidegger warned against carrying over the mechanism of categorial thought to the stipulation of a non-categorial thinking. As I put it earlier, ‘one cannot simply “assert away” the categorial mechanism’, by gesturing to being as *in some way* ‘above the categories.’ Similarly, sheer presence must also avoid a covert appropriation of that from which it is meant to be distinct (i.e., the sheer presence of entities). Elsewise it will be a mere cipher for *ουσία*, and mislead us from the ‘more radical temporal possibilit[y]’ for which Heidegger is searching.³ If sheer presence is to survive as a serious candidate for what is revealed—or, at least, part of what is revealed—in access to the primordial sources, we need a demonstration of how the temporal character of sheer presence is not, against all odds, *presence*. Only showing, positively, the alternate temporal character of this sheer presence, distinct from that of the sheer presence of entities in which we typically deal, can decisively disambiguate the former from the kind of sheer presence which Heidegger clearly rejects. In the end, I need a novel temporal character. To prepare the ground for developing it (which I do in chapter 4), we first need to know what it is wrong with the traditional conception of time.

In §8, therefore, I begin by fulfilling my promise from chapter one to recapitulate Heidegger’s problem with temporal presence in substantive terms. I do so by first examining Husserl’s model of temporal experience, identifying a tricky lacuna with which Husserl grappled in his theory of vertical, and then horizontal, intentionality. The problem with the temporality of presence, I will argue, is expressible as the problem of sequentiality qua temporality: how can we ever come to find a sequence of times to be *timely*? I cash out

or its “unity”) without inavoidably doing violence to its character. The sense of sheer presence I have in mind, therefore, cannot strictly be identical with the presence involved in *ουσία*, since in that latter case it is the sheer presence of entities; entities in *their* sheer presence.

2. c.f., p.10 above.

3. Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, 343.

Heidegger's engagement with temporality as an attempt to, in his own words, elaborate this 'transitory character' of the now-structure, which lies at the heart of the difficulty with sequentiality.⁴ In order to clear the ground for showing how Heidegger addresses this problem, I proceed in §9 to a discussion of the dominant reading of Heidegger on primordial or originary temporality, as exemplified in the work of William Blattner and Stephan Käufer. (I reserve "primordial temporality" to refer to Heidegger's account as I understand it, and use "originary temporality" when discussing the dominant account of that same notion, following its proponents' use of "originary" over "primordial" for Heidegger's phrase "*ursprüngliche Zeitlichkeit*".) I argue that the dominant interpretation misconstrues the extent to which originary temporality is not just explanatory of time in its various forms, but *descriptive* of it—i.e., the extent to which primordial temporality attempts to capture the character of our time-experience. While Blattner rightly notes that originary temporality is non-sequential, I argue that it is mistaken to take this to mean that—as he would argue—it cannot therefore "be" time; i.e., that it does not directly describe time or timeliness. Having arrived at this interpretive disjunction between originary temporality as time-like or not, chapter 4 sets out to provide a positive articulation of how Heidegger's account of ecstatic primordial temporality constitutes a description of time's dynamic character, for us, that nevertheless avoids the difficulties illuminated in §8.

4. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), 257.

What is the problem with time, as traditionally understood, for Heidegger? To get to the substance of the problem, I first want to examine Husserl's attempt to grapple with time (or rather, with *timeliness*—the distinctive character of time as we experience it). Once I have established, through this engagement, what the difficulty with time is, I will return to Heidegger and show that it is indeed this problem which he sets out to resolve.

Husserl thought of temporal objects as those which themselves contain temporal extension, such as notes or even complex melodies.⁵ These are temporal objects 'in the specific sense',⁶ because they seem to necessitate construing them as temporal thanks to their duration. An image, by contrast, can (supposedly) be grasped without reference to time. The mystery about objects with temporal extension, from the Husserlian perspective, is how we are able to grasp them (as those temporally extended objects). Brentano's conception of time-consciousness, Husserl thought, elides the possibility of experiencing the temporally extended in restricting our consciousness—that is, our access—to the "primal" present (that is, the current "now"), and pushing past moments immediately into abstraction.⁷ Such a conception leaves, in his view, the question of 'how time-consciousness is possible and how it is to be understood ... unanswered.'⁸

Husserl recognises that there is something like a current "phase" of a note, or a tone within a melody, which is what is heard in the immediate present. However, rather than follow Brentano and exile the preceding "phase" of the tone to memory, Husserl suggests

5. Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, trans. John Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 24.

6. Ibid.

7. Husserl seemed to think that Brentano's notion of *proteraesthesia* was such as to cast the just-past moments as in some important sense abstract—i.e., as a special kind of memory, or intentional directedness towards a non-immediate content. Thus, according to him, Brentano's theory limits immediate conscious access to the primal present alone.

8. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 11–20.

that those immediately-past phases are held in ‘retention.’⁹ Even during the duration of a single held note, Husserl argues, there is an ever-evolving continuum of retentions which trail off behind whatever phase of the note is now primally present. ‘Each time point is fixed, but it flies into the distance for consciousness.’¹⁰ He elaborates:

But when the consciousness of the tone-now, the primal impression, passes over into retention, this retention itself is ... something actually existing ... Accordingly, a fixed continuum of retention arises in such a way that each later point is retention for every earlier point. And each retention is already a continuum. The tone begins and “it” steadily continues ... Thus a continuity of retentional modifications attaches itself to each of these retentions ... Thus a pushing back into the past continually occurs.¹¹

As each moment flows past, consciousness alters such that that moment is added to the stack of the retention. Assuming a sufficiently high sampling rate, the shifting-away of the retentions provides the “smooth” alteration through different phases of a note, or a melody, with moments pressed ever backwards down the stack of retentions. Figure 1 adapts a diagram from Daniel Zahavi picturing this model.¹² The row of the diagram featuring single capitals represents the succession of *primal impressions*. Those letters preceded by marks represent *protentions*. Capitals followed by lowercase letters represent *retentions*. Columns going down the y-axis represent continuums of retention. The z-axis charts the path of a given temporal object through these continua. Zahavi characterises what is described by this model as ‘a consciousness of the present object’s temporal horizon.’¹³ Consciousness of some phenomenon is not only a primal impression; it is a complete continuum of retention-protention-primal-impression. A single act of consciousness is a complete column of the diagram. As Husserl puts it, each primal present is part

9. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 25–27.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, 31–32.

12. Daniel Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 66.

13. *Ibid.*

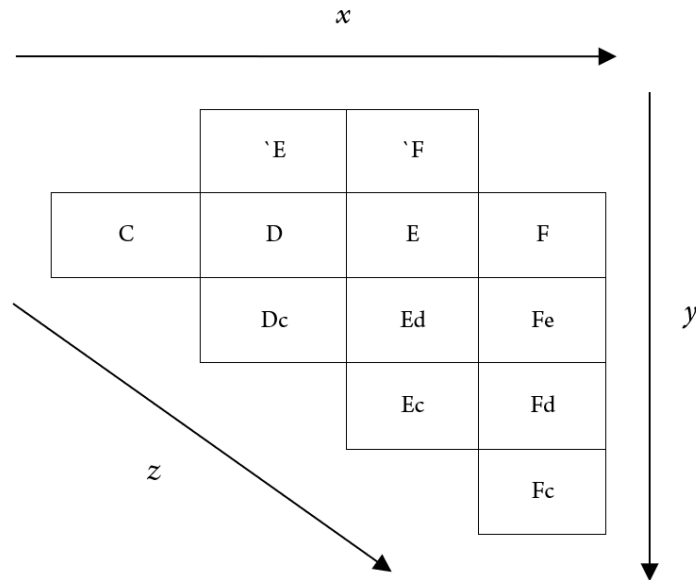


Figure 1: Husserlian model of retention, protention and primal impression.

of a 'fixed continuum' in which a trailing sequence of retentions presents the object as an immediate phase with an ever-dimming trail of its past bound in with it.¹⁴

This model reveals, however, that Husserl—at this point—remains indebted to analogy, for he must still draw on the idea that the *modification* of the continuum requires further the thought that it 'moves, as it were, over ... objective time in the same way as the visual field moves over objective space.'¹⁵ Since any given primal impression is possessed of a *fixed* continuum of retentions and protentions, the retention-primal-impression-protention stack alone does not account for the constant modification of the primal impression and its continuum. So in a certain sense, although Husserl has in one way overcome the problem of momentariness for time-consciousness, he has at the same time only pushed the problem back; the continua which the columns formed might not be *simple* moments,

14. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 32.

15. *Ibid.*

but they are still *moments*—just of a more complex internal structure. In this sense, as De Warren notes, ‘Husserl unwittingly succumbs to the dogma of momentary consciousness’ which motivated the development of the above model.¹⁶

What is missing is ‘not the extension of the sensed or perceived content of consciousness, but the temporal distension of the act of consciousness itself.’¹⁷ The paradox of our consciousness, qua time, is that since *ex hypothesi* its contents are not strictly simultaneous, there is no way to understand it in terms of the moment. As Stern put it, capturing what Husserl’s model leaves out involves realising that temporal experience ‘form[s] a unified and complex act of consciousness regardless of the non-simultaneity of individual parts [thereof].’¹⁸ Consciousness is “distended”, both ‘unified’ yet ‘complex’, because its grasp of the non-simultaneous is not simply explicable in terms of a duration (i.e., a set of moments). De Warren attempts to elucidate such non-simultaneous unity by developing a notion of the ‘doubling of consciousness’ under certain conditions. Imagination, for example, involves the following “doubling”: there is both a ‘consciousness *that* I am imagining and the imagined act of consciousness.’¹⁹ DeWarren’s strategy is to leverage this structure of disjunctive doubling for making sense of consciousness’ “distended” non-simultaneous unity:

The character of consciousness as experiencing itself as actually (absolute time-constituting consciousness) imagining is incompatible with the unreal, yet lived, character of “hearing” (i.e., the quasiperception as constituted immanent time-object). In this manner, double-consciousness is contemporaneous, without being simultaneous, with itself.²⁰

16. Nicolas de Warren, *Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 135.

17. *Ibid.*, 93.

18. L. William Stern, “Mental Presence-Time,” in *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Nicolas de Warren, vol. 5 (Seattle: Noesis Press, 2005), 313.

19. Warren, *Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology*, 156.

20. *Ibid.*, 158.

The thought goes that consciousness' being spread over non-simultaneous moments, yet being itself a unity (and a temporal unity at that), is analogous to the way in which an act of imagining and the imagined act are both unified and disunified. To deepen the analogy, DeWarren also leverages it in attempting to capture the *quality* of the "distension": 'The source-point of temporality' is 'suspended or neutralized' in the *imagined* act, such that it 'is... *headless*, bereft of an ever-renewing stabilizing axis of temporalization.'²¹ What does it mean to say that temporality is "suspended" in the imagined act? If I imagine seeing a horse running across a field, I can control the temporal flow of the imagined act involved. I can speed the flow of time up, or down, or pause it all together. Unlike a genuine, first-order act of seeing, I can prolong the imagined act relative to my first-order act (e.g., relative to the act of my *imagining*). As such, the first-order act is "distended" relative to the imagined acts. This is possible in virtue of the imagined act not being subject to the 'stabilizing axis of temporalization' that governs my first-order acts, and which—in a manner analogous to the case of imagining and imagined—allows acts of consciousness to be unified relative to non-simultaneous content of other sorts (i.e., other than imagined acts). The analogical relation between the imagining-imagined case, and the general first-order case is, however, quite problematic. In particular, the imagining-imagined case "distends" the first-order act in virtue of a difference in metric or measure between the first-order and imagined act. But there is no analogical measure in the general case of first-order acts. The distension of consciousness in general is not the same distension as that exhibited in the comparison between first-order and imagined acts. After all, the imagining-imagined distension provides no reason against construing it as the ability for a single, momentary first-order act to imagine more than one momentary act. But ruling out first-order acts from being momentary was the aim: 'the temporal distension of the act of consciousness

21. Warren, *Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology*, 159.

itself.’²² Just as with Husserl’s retentional model, De Warren’s distinction shows that the content of moments of consciousness can be temporally complex, rather than showing that such consciousness is itself not momentary. The juxtaposition between the “headless” temporality of the imagined act and the “ever-renewing” temporality of the imagining act only seems all the more mysterious. ‘While at the head, the living process receives new, original life, at the feet, everything that is, as it were, in the final acquisition of the retentional synthesis, becomes steadily sedimented.’²³ In lying ‘at the feet of the head’, the complex temporal character of the content of first-order acts does not properly address—cannot properly address—the problem of providing an alternative to the idea that time-experience is centred on momentariness, through its centredness on the immediate present.

The difficulty that any model faces is not one of how to explain a further structure internal to a primal impression, but the sense of how one primal impression or immediate present ‘turns into’ another. How does the “head” “renew”? Figure 2 adds to our previous diagram arrows which indicate the locus of this problem—the evolution of a present ‘into’ another present. The “problem of the arrows” in its simplest form is this: what is it to say that we “move” along the x-axis in this diagram? What is the temporal counterpart to movement in Husserl’s analogy to the movement of the visual field over objective space? Call a column of the table a *y-bundle*. A sequence of *y-bundles* from left to right constitutes the content of lived experience. In a limited sense, Dasein “is” the x-line.

Could *y-bundles* alone constitute the x-line? No. This solution is back-to-front: as a matter of principle, there is no *guarantee* of unity between any *y-bundle* and any other. We are missing a reason to think that that the *y-bundle* with, say, primary impression E

22. Warren, *Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology*, 93.

23. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 227.

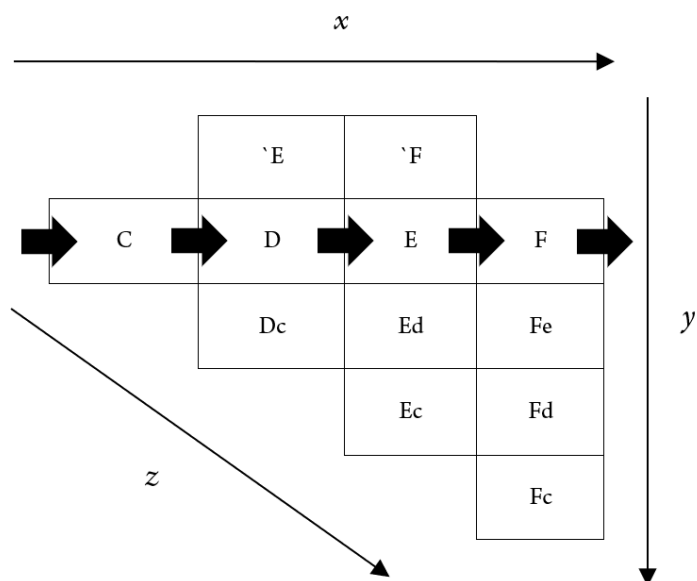


Figure 2: The problem of absolute flow in the Husserlian model.

should *necessarily* “turn into” the y-bundle with primary impression F. Having a primary impression E is no guarantee in itself of having any other primary impressions, F or otherwise. Each y-bundle is strictly speaking self-standing and does not rely on the others for its constitution.²⁴ Each is its own piece of temporal amber: a frozen moment, albeit a complex one. And yet the y-bundles being along the x-line is a constitutive part of making sense of them as representative of lived experience. We have to place them “in a sequence”. The “movement” along the x-line has a constitutive role in making the y-bundles a plausible representation of our experience. Since the x-line cannot be guaranteed in virtue of the y-bundles alone, we need a further explanation of it.

Husserl was not unaware of this issue. He points out that insofar as the x-axis is either

24. Because the temporal character of the content of the y-bundle can be complex—e.g., as with DeWarren’s imagining-imagined distinction or Husserl’s retention and protention—it is still possible for a y-bundle to be temporally related to other y-bundles *in terms of its content* without actually forming a first-order temporal sequence in which it is in fact related to them.

representative of, or at least in some way parallel to, objective time, the fact that there is movement ‘along’ it seems to indicate that this movement in itself does not belong ‘in’ or ‘to’ objective time per se: ‘[F]low is something we speak of *in conformity with what is constituted*, but it is not “something in objective time.”’²⁵ *A sequence of times—time as an objective sequence—never ‘includes’ flow, even though it is to this notion of ‘a flow of time’ that the objective sequencing itself speaks.* One’s conceptual grasp of the time that makes up the sequence can be very rich (as Husserl’s surely is) but still never get flow into itself; rather, it will always be stuck ‘gesturing’ at flow—being in conformity with it. Moving along the x-axis can be designated only ‘*metaphorically* as “flow”’, since this is not the sort of flow that we are familiar with—i.e., the flow that things in objective time (say, rivers) may possess.²⁶ This expresses precisely what is difficult and somewhat mysterious about time. We all know what ‘flow’ is (much as we all know what ‘being’ is) and yet we are baffled if we are asked to explain what we apparently know. To some extent, Husserl resigns himself to this quandary, saying: ‘For all this, we lack names.’²⁷ Though, this did not stop him applying to it the title: ‘absolute time-constituting flow.’²⁸

However, his remarks in this regard have not always inspired confidence in readers. Hoerl notes that they have a ‘reputation for being complex, occasionally to the point of approaching impenetrability.’²⁹ Hoerl reads Husserl as committed to two claims about absolute flow. Firstly, a ‘*non-temporality claim*’ according to which ‘the absolute flow is to be thought of as something to which temporal categories such as succession or simultaneity

25. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 79.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 84.

29. Christoph Hoerl, “Husserl, the Absolute Flow, and Temporal Experience,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 86, no. 2 (2013): 376 Hoerl points out that Husserl apparently agrees, describing them as ‘shocking (when not initially even absurd)’. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 84.

don't apply.'³⁰ Hoerl identifies that such differentiation in the applicability of the 'default' temporal categories *must* specifically apply to absolute flow itself (i.e., to the mechanism of the evolution of one γ -bundle into another) if it is to fulfil its purpose in Husserl's system. Secondly, a '*self-appearance claim*' which guarantees that not only is 'flow...the form that my awareness of temporal phenomena ultimately takes' but that there is a further 'sense in which it [flow] includes an awareness of itself.'³¹ It is easier to cash out the meaning of the self-appearance claim than it is to cash out the meaning of the non-temporality claim. Primarily because the notion of self-appearance applies in all sorts of other, better-understood cases. By contrast, the non-temporality claim—nevertheless applied to something which is essential to characterising time—is hard to make any sense of.

Hoerl cashes out the Husserlian model in terms of “constitutive relations.” Not only are the contents of single retentional continuums internally related in a non-temporal way, but so also complete γ -bundles are related to each other in terms of non-temporal relations which order them. As he puts it:

[T]emporal experience must of necessity involve a multiplicity of different contents. ... [T]he relevant contents ... [stand] in relations of constitutive dependence to each other. The idea of the absolute flow, thus, is the idea of a multiplicity of such contents, interconnected by constitutive relations.³²

This would be all well and good, if it were not for the fact that such a system is *prima facie* compatible with McTaggart's B-series. For, of course, a B-series is just a multiplicity of different contents (times, with the states at those times) standing in constitutive relations to one another (before and after). But, even if one prefers the B-series qua physical time, it

30. Hoerl, "Husserl, the Absolute Flow, and Temporal Experience," 378.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, 395.

is quite unintuitive to suggest that flow is capturable in the idea of a B-series; this is exactly what the B-series is at a disadvantage with. Hoerl makes his peace with this outcome, ascribing to Husserl a form of temporal idealism placed to eliminate any requirement to capture the “real” flow of time:

What an idealism about time... adds... is the idea that, in as far as experience itself is made up of [content-independent] phases, the relationship between them, at its most basic, is also not to be thought of as a temporal one. Rather, the order of such phases is constituted by relations between their contents as encapsulated in the idea of horizontal intentionality. Thus, again the thought here is that the absolute flow... has to be understood, at its most basic, as a particular type of representational structure, and that both the temporal unfolding of the contents of my experience, and the temporal unfolding of the experience itself, as a possible object of self-conscious reflection, have this (non-temporal) representational structure as their common source.³³

The problem with this kind of “temporal idealism” is that it is not clear in what way the ‘(non-temporal) representational structure’ ultimately *necessitates* “real” time—i.e., the experience of time’s “unfolding”, as Hoerl prefers to express it. Hoerl makes no attempt to defend Husserl against this problem, nor read him in a way which minimises it, instead recommending an extensional alternative to Husserl’s view, in which ‘the subject stands in ... relation ... to the relevant events as *they* unfold’.³⁴ It is not clear, however, that Hoerl is right to think that Husserl abandons *describing* absolute flow: that absolute flow involves non-temporal relations need not mean that it does not describe absolute flow, but that absolute flow—time in its unfolding character—is not built out of the relations which we invoke in other time-related descriptions (such as the ordering of physical events, or the internal ordering of content in a retentive continuum).

33. Hoerl, “Husserl, the Absolute Flow, and Temporal Experience,” 399.

34. *Ibid.*, 404, emphasis added.

This is not to say that Husserl succeeds outright, if indeed he had ambitions of that sort for his elaboration of absolute flow. For example, in Brough's excellent exegesis of Husserl's remarks on absolute flow, we can see the same problem of B-sequence sequentiality that I noted in connection with Hoerl's "constitutive relations" view. Brough tells us:

Each of these "absolute" phases possesses intentional reference to some *phase of an immanent object*, or phases of several immanent objects insofar as one may simultaneously experience a plurality of acts, feelings, etc. But each phase of the flow in addition is intentionally related to *other phases of the flow*.³⁵

This gives a distinction between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' intentionality, where the former is the temporal extension of content in the sense of a single y-bundle, and the latter is a sense in which each y-bundle *intends* (or in Hoerl's preferred language, is *constitutive of*) the other bundles. (Equivalent to, in Hoerl's version, the distinction between representational contents and phases of flow abstracted from that content.) Since an 'elapsed phase' is not 'lost to consciousness' (in an analogical sense to the way in which primary impressions "become" retentions), flow is self-appearing.³⁶ And since this self-appearing is established through the intending (or constituting) of flow's phases by each other, 'horizontal intentionality' preserves 'in proper sequence the elapsed phases of absolute flow'.³⁷

However, while this solves the problem of how Husserl can account for the ordering of y-bundles along an x-line, it still does nothing to help us grasp the sense of Husserl's analogy with spatial movement. There are a few ambiguous moments in Brough's discussion where this problem nearly breaks the surface, as when he says that: "Through the

35. John Brough, "The emergency of an absolute consciousness in Husserl's early writings on time-consciousness," *Man and World* 5, no. 3 (1972): 318.

36. *Ibid.*, 319.

37. *Ibid.*, 320.

horizontal intentionality, the flow itself becomes “apprehensible in the flowing”.³⁸ There is a gesture here, to Husserl’s part, on the still-enigmatic character of flow which, even having been distinguished clearly from the content which is presented “within” it, nevertheless still requires making it into a verb: the *flowing*. Horizontal intentionality shows that there is a flow distinct from the sequence of the content, but what it still cannot capture is that the flow *flows*. Phases of absolute flow, distinct from the contents of *y*-bundles, are grasped in their ordered relation with each other. But an order alone is not enough to explain the “movement” which is *implied* but not *encapsulated* by the ordering of the phases relative to one another (even if one were to insist that, rooted in a ‘head’, this is an A-series and *not* a mere B-series).³⁹

In chapter one, §5, I characterised the problem of *ovσία*’s temporal character as the ‘covert precedence of presence’, cashed out through the idea that ‘the synthetic structure of a predicative assertion is parasitic upon a now-structure.’⁴⁰ The relevant sense of “now” was that of something unchanging and internally consistent: ‘For *that* moment the *x* is *y*, and for it *not* to be so is not for the *x* to not be *y* but for a different moment to have taken [its] place.’⁴¹ Heidegger took issue with the application—unwitting, he believed—of this kind of temporal character to being in general: even though ‘time itself’ is taken ‘as one entity among other entities’ and thus falls under the aegis of the meaning of being in general (of *ovσία*), ‘that way of understanding Being... is one which is itself naïvely

38. Brough, “The emergency of an absolute consciousness in Husserl’s early writings on time-consciousness,” 320. Citing Edmund Husserl, “Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917),” ed. Rudolf Boehm, vol. *Husserliana X* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 381.

39. The B-series eliminates exactly the kind of ‘real’ change we are out to explain. The A-series is contradictory unless we can explain the primitive mechanism of the tense on which it relies. But this explanation is exactly what is still missing from horizontal intentionality. We have a schema for how to unlink A-series relations from *y*-bundles, and instead have them for the ‘pure’ times of the *x*-line alone, but we do not understand how movement along the *x*-line—the condition on the primitive modification of tense—works.

40. C.f., p. 52–53 above.

41. C.f., p. 49 above.

and inexplicitly oriented towards time.⁴² The same problematic character is at the root of the difficulty we have been discussing, of how to make sense of the “flowing” of a sequence of times. Such sequences are made up of moments, of “nows”. Since such “nows” are complete in themselves, they never essentially necessitate their relations to others in the sequence; the component parts of the sequence do not demand that they become meshed into that sequence. Each can exist perfectly well on its own, independent of any particular sequence—independent of sequentiality at all. There is nothing intrinsically transitional about moments, and so there is nothing about the components of a putatively temporal sequence which gives us the transitional, flowing character of temporal experience. This leaves sequentiality itself to explain the character of flow, and moreover to explain how the character of flow can arise from a collection of internally-complete, unrelated moments. This is a task to which it surely cannot live up: sequences of times are contingent, not necessary, because the idea of a sequence is not enough to impose a particular sequence—or any sequence at all. That is why Husserl grapples with a variety of relations between contents in flow and the absolute phases of flow as well: the relations are needed in order to impose sequentiality upon otherwise independent moments. But since the moments which are thus ordered remain, essentially, complete in themselves, we never arrive at an answer as to why, having placed them next to each other, we move along the sequence. Being in one moment does not explain why one should move to the next.⁴³

42. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 26.

43. Looked at another way, we can see that any putative sequence can be construed as a B-sequence. In such a case, the entire sequence itself has the character of a single moment when taken as a whole: it is complete in itself. To get to the sense of change and dynamism so essential to our pre-theoretical sense of time, we have to turn to the A-series. But the A-series is precisely marked by a certain incommensurability: how does one move from one moment of the A-series to the next? One must appeal to *yet another* sequence in order to account for the incommensurable alteration in the sequence-structure as one moment goes to the next.

After all, there are surely continuums of retention (*y*-bundles) and phases of absolute flow which retend their past phases and protend their futural phases, which are either not preceded or not succeeded—i.e., a subject’s first and last. Indeed, it is not clear why a subject might not exist for only a single immediate present, in which is constituted or intended relations to other *y*-bundles and other phases of absolute flow which simply never will ‘come to be’. Equally, there is nothing about the notion of a physical time which precludes the possibility of worlds whose physical time is but a single moment, but which are otherwise identical to worlds whose times precede and proceed to a greater limit. Sequences are derivatory of the moments that make them up, in other words, but these moments are structurally such that they do not have an essentially transitional character, but the opposite—they are precisely the limits of what is fixed and unchanging. In a single moment, nothing changes; to reach change, one must compare with a second, distinct moment.

Husserl is, I think, at least halfway to recognising this in the previously mentioned observation that ‘flow is something we speak of *in conformity with what is constituted*’.⁴⁴ Horizontal and vertical intentionality might manage to sketch a picture of flow, but they cannot but help as such to give us a *static snapshot* of it. Its dynamism, the flowing which makes *flow* an appropriate metaphor for it, gets elided. Flow is left out as something that is merely gestured to in conformity with the structure picked out as time-consciousness. Heidegger echoes Husserl’s talk of this ‘conformity’ with flow when he says that a ‘pure sequence of “nows”... levelled off’ is only possible on the prior basis of ‘a definite kind of temporalising, *in conformity* with which temporality temporalises... the kind of “time” we have just mentioned.’⁴⁵ Here, Heidegger seems to add something to Husserl’s point: that

44. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, 79.

45. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 329, emphasis added.

flow in its *flowing* is some sort of prerequisite upon the possibility of conceptualising or accessing time as an 'entity' in these other ways.

Being and Time articulates the problem in the following way. First, the traditional conception of time is identified as involving sequentiality, and with that the metaphor of that sequence as flowing or river-like:

[F]or the ordinary understanding of time, time shows itself as a sequence of "nows" which are constantly 'present-at-hand', simultaneously passing away and coming along. Time is understood as a succession, as a 'flowing stream' of "nows", as the 'course of time.'⁴⁶

In trying to identify timeliness with the sequence of nows, the ordinary conception elides the genuine source of this character. Rather than looking for a temporality which makes possible both hermeneutic and apophantic access, the traditional conception settles for the inchoate assertion that the sequence of nows itself flows:

The "nows" *pass away*, and those which have passed away make up the past. The "nows" *come along*, and those which are coming along make up the 'future'. The ordinary interpretation of world-time as now-time never avails itself of the horizon by which such things... can be made accessible.⁴⁷

This produces a tension in the traditional conception of time. On the one hand, the sequence of nows is meant to be fundamentally dynamic, but on the other hand, thinking of such a sequence leads us towards a static conception of the complete, unchanging timeline:

The sequence of "nows" is taken as something that is somehow present-at-hand, for it even moves 'into time'... Thus even Plato... had to call time [of this sort] "the image of eternity".⁴⁸

46. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 422.

47. *Ibid.*, H. 423.

48. *Ibid.*

Heidegger seeks to overturn this mistaken reliance upon time as a succession of moments by sourcing the dynamism of time in the fundamental structure of Dasein, the fundamental structure of access, which in turn will provide the conditions for the kind of access in which the traditional conception is implicated:

The fact that in every “now”, no matter how momentary, it is *in each case already* now, must be conceived in terms of something which is ‘earlier’ *still* and from which every “now” stems: that is to say, it must be conceived in terms of the ecstatic stretching-along of that temporality which is alien to any Continuity of something present-at-hand but which, for its part, present the condition for the possibility of access to anything continuous that is present-at-hand.⁴⁹

So in some yet-to-be-determined sense this ‘ecstatic stretching-along’ of Dasein will be revealed as the source of the flowing, already-there yet already-gone character of the moments which make up the traditional conception of time. If he can do this, and provide a mode of temporality from which the others gain their character as times at all, then he has a candidate for replacing the traditional conception of time, and with it the ontology of οὐσία.⁵⁰

We can also find Heidegger articulating the problem with sequentiality in *Basic Problems*. In his discussion there of Aristotle, Heidegger notes that time in the former’s sense is connected to motion insofar as we measure motion by counting time; but, in the same stroke, the time that we thereby count is ‘bound neither to the intrinsic content nor the mode of being of the moving thing nor to the motion as such.’⁵¹ (Else it would not be a *measure* of that content, the thought goes.) Nevertheless, since motion is an intratemporal phenomenon (i.e., one which is inadequately captured *just* in the idea of a moment

49. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 424.

50. c.f. p.53 above.

51. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 250.

with its own definite character) it must be '[b]ecause the now is transition' that 'it is capable of making motion accessible *as motion*'.⁵² The appropriate sense in which a countable sequence of nows makes motion accessible is that of a limit: 'Time as number fixes the limits of a specific movement.'⁵³ This creates an *ex hypothesi* disjunction with the kind of motion in which the nows are characterisable as a transition: '[t]ime is number *not* limit' and thereby the means for the measuring of limit, i.e., as with the case of motion.⁵⁴ To characterise the transitional nature of the nows, the idea goes, we cannot rely on the motion whose limits are determined by the numerical count constituted in those nows' passage. As such, metaphors of flow, or other articulations which ultimately rest on motion as observed in intratemporal objects, will always fail us when we attempt to characterise time's dynamism. Heidegger then signs himself up to the unwieldy task of characterising dynamism through a novel means: 'we have to make clear how the *now qua now has transitional character*'.⁵⁵

In chapter 4, I will provide a reading of how Heidegger's "primordial temporality" achieves this. Before that, in the remainder of this chapter, I want to turn to two prominent readings of primordial temporality in the literature. In doing so, my intent is to clear the ground by showing how they are able—or not able, as the case may be—to make good on the purposes they construe Heidegger as setting primordial temporality up to fulfil. I conclude—in one case, in agreement with the interpreter in question—that primordial temporality does not fulfil the function it is meant to. This provides some context for our investigation in chapter 4: can reading primordial temporality as a response to the problem of characterising time's dynamism rescue its plausibility?

52. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 251.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, 250.

55. *Ibid.*, 257.

Whilst not hegemonic, a widely-held view of Division II's discussion of temporality, and in particular primordial or originary [*ursprüngliche*] time or temporality,⁵⁶ is that primordial time *explains* so-called 'ordinary' and 'world' time—the Heideggerese for quantified, momentary, or 'clock' times, and times such as breakfast, lecturing, and commuting, respectively. Blattner's influential exposition and subsequent critique of temporality takes this route:

Heidegger's basic strategy is to represent originary temporality as the "explanatory core" of ordinary time (or more precisely world-time, on which in turn depends ordinary time).⁵⁷

The idea that primordial temporality is an "explanatory core" for other senses of the word "time" tends to play out in interconnection with the idea that temporality and care are either one and the same thing, or so deeply wound up in one another to be as good as such; an idea motivated by such statements of Heidegger's as that '[t]emporality... [is] the meaning of authentic care',⁵⁸ and that '[t]he primordial unity of the structure of care lies in temporality.'⁵⁹ This binding tends to lead interpreters towards the idea that what is distinctive about primordial temporality, if nothing else, is that it has something to do with the fact that Dasein understands itself in such-and-such a way: i.e., that Dasein has a for-the-sake-of-which in terms of which it construes itself. Primordial temporality unifies, constitutes, or otherwise is the condition on the possibility of Dasein's intelligible grasp of itself as a lecturer, student, or rock star. Primordial time is meant to explain how

56. Heidegger applies *ursprüngliche* to both *Zeit* (e.g., Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 329) and *Zeitlichkeit* (e.g., *ibid.*, 408).

57. William Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 90.

58. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 326.

59. *Ibid.*, H. 327.

it is that Dasein can order its life, i.e., the time that it has for itself, qua these various understandings. For example, as Käufer puts it:

The transcendental claim is that *any* comportment towards particular, factual possibilities [e.g., lecturing, rock star-ing] ... presupposes the general ability ... to disclose possibilities as possibilities ... and disclose them as possibly mine. This general ability is originary temporality.⁶⁰

Glossing originary temporality as a transcendental condition on disclosing possibilities produces a tendency, I submit, towards fixing our sense of originary temporality through that which it is the condition on the possibility of, rather than through a sense of its own positive character. Sartre's contention that one should not 'make into a reality' the 'conditions ... for the possibility of experience' is here reversed: rather than promulgating 'fact' where only 'validity' should stand (i.e., supposing that there "is" a transcendental subject, rather than construing it as a set of condition), the 'validity' of temporality (as a condition on the possibility of this or that aspect of Dasein) can overtake the 'fact' of it (temporality as a positive phenomenological description of Dasein).⁶¹ Blattner, I contend, embraces this move in introducing the notion of primordial temporality as an "explanatory core", whose power is in what it can do for us in coming to understand things other than 'itself' (namely, other senses of time). He glosses Heidegger's use of *ursprüngliche Zeit* accordingly:

Heidegger's strategy will be to argue that we can explain time as ordinarily conceived in terms of originary temporality. ... *The sense in which it is originary of time here is explanatory*: originary temporality explains time.⁶²

60. Stephan Käufer, "Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 351.

61. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Hill / Wang, 1991), 32–33.

62. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 94, emphasis added.

Reading primordial temporality as strictly explanatory of or a condition for real time leads to treating it as not itself *timely*. That is to say, it only earns its name as a ‘temporality’ in virtue of its explanatory role qua time proper, and not because it itself has a given character (temporal or otherwise). This *Zeitlichkeit* is *ursprüngliche* because it happens to be that from which *Zeitlichkeit* springs, *not* because it is a *Zeitlichkeit* from which spring *derivatory variants* of timeliness. Blattner justifies this reading partly through Heidegger’s claim that ‘we are justified ... *a potiori fit denominatio*, in labelling *temporality ... originary time*’⁶³ as meaning that primordial time is the “explanatory core” of time generally, ‘because originary temporality explains world-time’s essential features,’⁶⁴ and this idea of primordial time as explaining our more familiar understanding is ‘encapsulated in the slogan’ expressed by the Latin phrase.⁶⁵ In other words, “time” is *fit* for application in the term “primordial time”, ‘because originary temporality is the explanatory core of time’, and it is *only because* it can explain it that ‘it is a form of time.’⁶⁶ Blattner excises “timeliness” from *Zeitlichkeit*, and places the suitability of this appellation on its capacity to help us understand time proper—i.e., the comparatively familiar times of the clock (ordinary time), and of the times in which we are purposively engaged (world time). ‘[O]riginary time explains why world-time *is what it is*, namely, time,’⁶⁷ and *mutatis mutandis* it is not primordial time which is time(ly). We find Käufer making the same point:

*It is clear that originary temporality is not time. Heidegger calls it “temporality” because he claims that time “as it is accessible to the intelligibility of Dasein” arises from it.*⁶⁸

63. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 329.

64. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*, 167.

65. *Ibid.*, 279.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*, 178.

68. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 356, emphasis added; quoting from Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 329.

Temporality, on Blattner and Käufer's view, only earns its name because it is the condition on the possibility of Dasein being familiar with, or having access to, time. It is not, in and of itself, to do with time. This, I suggest, is a misinterpretation. On the contrary, I submit, "*ursprüngliche Zeitlichkeit*" is the term under which Heidegger provides his account of the distinctive character of time. It is not merely a condition on the possibility of Dasein's relation to time: it *is* time, qua Dasein. In §9.A I argue, against Blattner, that Heidegger's use of *a potiori fit denominatio* suggests that the relation between originary time and world time is not simply explanatory, but involves an inheritance or sourcing of character—a deeper relation, in a certain sense, than that of explanation alone. In §9.B I engage Käufer's account of originary temporality as explanatory, arguing that his gloss on Heidegger's notion of "ecstatic" temporality fails to provide the explanatory leverage he suggests. What is missing in general, I claim, is a sense of originary temporality as discrete from what it is meant to explain—and, since those items are explicable without originary temporality (i.e., with more familiar temporal concepts), it is not clear what originary temporality adds. I proceed, in 9.C to examine Blattner's account of originary temporality. Following Blattner himself, I explicate how originary temporality—on his reading—in the end does not, in fact, explain what it is meant to explain (namely, world-time and clock-time). While Blattner rejects Heidegger's account on this basis, I propose that reading *ursprüngliche Zeitlichkeit* as Heidegger's description of timeliness can revive his account. Chapter 4 then turns to provide my account of primordial temporality, and a resolution to the problem of temporal dynamism identified in §8.

A. “A POTIORI FIT DENOMINATIO”

Let us look again at Blattner’s reading of *a potiori fit denominatio*. He takes it to mean that originary temporality is so-called because it can explain time in the proper sense. In particular, it can explain world-time, the time to which “breakfast-time” belongs. *A potiori*, i.e., from the “stronger” or “more significant” relatum (world-time), originary temporality derives its name, *fit denominatio*. Originary temporality only earns its name because it explains world-time; if it did not explain world-time, it would not retain the name—its own character per se would not prima facie sustain its right to it.

I am not sure this is the right way to read Heidegger’s use of that Latin phrase. Heidegger says that the justification which enables him to make use of *a potiori fit denominatio* is that world-time ‘arises’ [*entspringend*] out of temporality.⁶⁹ If *a* arises or springs out of *b*, this is more than *a*’s explaining *b*. There is a sense of “source” or “origin” which goes beyond, though needn’t exclude, an explanatory relation. Certainly, it is hard to see how *b* is the “more significant” item in this relation, from which we might draw the name of *a*. If world-time arises from originary temporality then what is more important or powerful is originary temporality, not world-time. World-time earns its name from originary temporality, not vice versa. Saying that ‘world time is what it is, namely, time’ therefore puts the cart before the horse:⁷⁰ Heidegger means the opposite: the “-time” in “world-time” is rightfully so-called in virtue of its relation to originary temporality.

The relation expressed by *a potiori fit denominatio* is not obviously the same relationship as explanation per se. An explanatory relation does not demand that there is any sort of uniformity or similarity of character between the *explanans* and the *explanandum*. One could be a proposition, the other an explosion (“light the fuse”). Heidegger’s use of

69. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 329. emphasis added.

70. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*, 178.

a potiori fit denominatio implies a more restrictive relation. Use of a name is justified on the basis that the named relatum shares a character with that to which the name properly belongs. For example, “the explosion” does *not* get its name *a potiori fit denominatio* from “the command” (“light the fuse”). (Nor, indeed, does “the command” get its name from “the explosion”.) Even so, “the command” does explain “the explosion”. By contrast, “the mouse” (as in a computer mouse) does get its name *a potiori fit denominatio* from “the mouse” (as in a rodent). The former’s name is “drawn” from the latter because of a shared character (it vaguely resembles a mouse). We can even say that “Japanese food” earns its name *a potiori fit denominatio* from “food”. That this and many other potential uses of the relation are obviously trivial helps to explain why Heidegger might have felt the need to spell it out in this case. If, as Blattner’s reading attests to, world-time is considered *prima facie* to be time, it is not trivial to say that its status as “-time” depends upon a more original meaning from which it draws. If it were generally attested that Japanese food *was* food, such that “food” was only so-called in virtue of being related to Japanese food, we would be equally justified in drawing attention to the cart being before the horse. I do not mean to say that originary time and world-time are related as computer mice are to members of the genus *mus*, nor as food is related to Japanese food. The relata of *a potiori fit denominatio* can be otherwise related as well (just as in those two examples the relata hold in various relations to each other). What Heidegger’s use of this relation does tell us is that originary time is meant to be “time proper”, and that these other senses of time have their timely character in virtue of the timely character of originary time. This relation therefore specifies more about the character of originary time than a relation of explanation would.

B. KÄUFER'S ACCOUNT

For Käufer as much as Blattner, temporality's role within *Being and Time* is to explain how it is that Dasein can be constituted by care, interpreted as the capacity to understand one's various possible ways of being (e.g., lecturer) and respond to the entities disclosed by this way of being (e.g., chalk for writing on the blackboard with). 'The temporal ecstases ... first constitute you as a discloser in such a way that the possibilities can be yours [lecturer] and the solicitations have a grip on you [chalk].'⁷¹ Originary temporality is the 'general ability' to know one's way about one's possibilities.⁷²

He suggests that there are two features of originary temporality which together constitute it in its role as this general ability. The first is that:

[Y]ou must be able to "maintain" or "hold out" this possibility [e.g., lecturing] as a possibility. By this, Heidegger means that you disclose the world through abilities and competence.⁷³

At first glance, this seems sensible enough: my possibility as a tutor is indeed maintained, and the world in its related significance shows up, when I act as a tutor. For example, it is when I go to mark that pile of essays that I disclose those essays as well as myself as a tutor. Were I merely to gather them up, place them in a manila envelope, and place them in a pigeonhole, we might suspect that I am instead an invigilator, and that I disclose the essays in a manner that both constitutes and maintains me in the role of invigilator. It is only through having certain abilities and competencies that I can encounter and navigate the essays in the ways that I do, and it is in my having manifold competencies and abilities that I possess possibilities *plural*. According to Käufer 'any comportment ... presupposes

71. Käufer, "Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care," 352.

72. *Ibid.*, 351.

73. *Ibid.*

the general ability...to disclose possibilities' and this general ability itself 'is originary temporality.'⁷⁴

However, to say that one must be able to disclose the world through one's specific abilities and competencies, is not to give a substantive description of the general ability to disclose possibilities (nor is it to describe the general ability to maintain oneself through one's abilities and competencies). It is simply to indicate that I have, in practice, a variety of abilities and competencies via which I maintain myself, my possession of which might well invite some further explanation as to how I am able to hold these in their multiplicity and navigate between them. That is to say, primordial temporality has not been described: it has only been pointed to as whatever it is about us that permits us to have abilities, competencies, and the possibilities that come with them. How does the idea of 'originary temporality' help us to understand how or why we are the sort of entities that can do this? We still need a positive description of originary temporality that substantiates claims of its 'explaining' ordinary- and world-time, else we will have only arrived at an empty conceptual ground. Käufer's first feature of originary temporality does not, therefore, describe originary temporality's character so much as fix its explanatory function.

The second feature of originary temporality, on Käufer's account, is that:

[Y]ou must "let yourself come toward yourself" as this possibility. This means you must be able to press into lecturing as *your* possibility, that is, that you must do so for your own sake. Disclosing possibilities by itself is not enough. You must be able to disclose them as pertaining to you.⁷⁵

Maintaining oneself as a lecturer demands that it is I who am maintained as this lecturer.

Equally, all those possibilities which my abilities and competencies permit for me but

74. Käufer, "Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care," 351.

75. Ibid., 352.

which I do not factually maintain must also show up as mine. But how does originary temporality help me to disclose possibilities as mine? Käufer offers us two arguments.

The first argument claims that the originary future and the originary past presuppose each other, and that the present presupposes them both insofar as they ‘release’ the present.⁷⁶ Drawing on Heidegger’s characterisation of primordial futurity as a ‘coming’ of Dasein towards itself,⁷⁷ Käufer notes that such a dynamic would require an identification of the individual which is coming (from) with the Dasein which is coming (to). ‘This self-identification is given insofar as the Dasein that you are *coming toward* is the one that you *already are*.’⁷⁸ The idea is that, with an expression of an ability (e.g., lecturing), one both is for the sake of being something (a lecturer), and at the same moment one already therefore discloses the world in a manner appropriate to the Dasein (i.e., a lecturer) towards which you are going. Finding that the lecture hall clock is located inconveniently for you is a function of ‘both your ability to lecture (for the sake of being a professor) and your disposedness (finding things mattering the way they matter to professors).’⁷⁹ It is in virtue of this meeting between the ‘past’ of one’s disposedness and the ‘future’ of one’s ability that the present—i.e., the clock on the wall—is ‘released’ (i.e., as inconveniently located *for you*). It is in this sense that the future and past are intertwined such that they presuppose each other and the present: ‘Without this unity—if one person skillfully lectures while another is affected by the solicitations of the clock—the clock would not show up as inconvenient.’⁸⁰

However, it is not clear that these observations about ability, disposedness, and revealing, in their interconnection with one another, amount to observations about a fu-

76. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 352.

77. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 326.

78. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 353.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

ture, past and present—originary or otherwise. If I engage my ability to lecture, and am aware of a clock, then I shall find the clock in some way—inconveniently located, perhaps. To motivate the idea that there is a distinction between my ability and my disposedness, we need a further sense that separates them—one in which they nevertheless presuppose each other. The relevant sense, the thought goes, is that my ability is always something that is on-its-way, and my disposedness something that always-already-is. The distinction is in some sense temporal. Yet my ability and my disposedness are just as readily construed as present constituents of a given time, in the same way that the clock and the act of my lecturing are present at a given time. It is not *prima facie* the case that the act of lecturing and the clock which is encountered as inconvenient are present, while the ability to lecture and the disposedness to find the clock inconveniently located are not. It seems perfectly sensible to say that my ability to lecture, my disposedness to encounter the clock as inconveniently located, the act of my lecturing, and the clock on the wall, are all co-constituents of a given, present moment. This is not to say that we should reject outright the thesis that my abilities are in some sense futural and my disposedness in some sense past. It is just to point out that this claim requires an elaboration of the relevant sense of future and past, such that the futurity of my ability and the pastness of my disposedness might stand over against the present. When we claim that the ability to lecture is futural, and that the disposedness towards the clock is past, it is clear that the sense of future and past involved is not the one which directly contrasts with the ordinary notion of the present. But since my ability and my disposedness can be cashed out as present in this ordinary way, and since this sense of time is not differentiable from the ordinary present in the way that the ordinary future and the ordinary past are, we need an elaboration of why the involved sense of time in fact rules out my ability and my disposedness from being merely present in the ordinary sense. Why should we not understand the “fu-

turality” of my ability as the condition that in order to be an x I must either be as an x or have the power to have been so counterfactually? Why should we not understand the “pastness” of my disposedness as the condition that in order to be disposed in manner y I must encounter z in such-and-such a way, or would do so had a z been around? How does the notion of originary temporality takes us beyond the notions of my ability and my disposedness, which need not be articulated using a special temporal sense?

Nor is it clear how originary temporality, construed in terms of the interconnection between ability, disposedness and revealing, helps to explain why possibilities are disclosed as my possibilities. If ability, disposedness and revealing are the loci of the originary future, past and present, then the latter inherit the former’s presupposition of being “mine”. We can see that the three are indeed bound together: disposedness and ability and the revealing of things must come together, such that the particular disposedness matches the particular ability and the revealing matches them. So also primordial temporality is then bound together. But why is this unity of disposedness, ability and revealing *mine*? This unity does not explain mineness; rather, it seems to presuppose it.

Käufer’s second argument is as follows. The unity of the ecstases provides a unity of the self because the ecstases are a deepened characterisation of the notion of care; thus, since the ecstases are unified, originary temporality reveals that care is unified. Care, especially in its now-unified guise of originary temporality, secures the self in its unity. To make the case for this, Käufer identifies three criteria of selfhood fulfilled by ecstatic temporality.

The first is that the self should ‘hold existence together’ and form ‘the unity of events over time.’⁸¹ This, we are told, is what Heidegger argues Dasein qua ecstatic temporality does in chapter five of the second division in *Being and Time*. While that is true, the ex-

81. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 354.

tent to which it supports Käufer's gloss on ecstatic temporality depends on the extent to which Heidegger's account in II.5 necessarily implies that gloss. Moreover, whether ecstatic temporality fulfils this criterion is dependent upon that account—which Käufer leaves undiscussed. I'll bracket following up on this question of Dasein's unity "from beginning to end" until chapter four.

The second criterion of the self is that it should provide 'the possibility of owning one's experiences.'⁸² Käufer insists that this is 'clearly a central aspect of ecstatic temporality' because '[t]he originary future ... and the originary past ... determine the disclosure of possibilities that Dasein can be.'⁸³ Meaning that '[t]hey do not disclose independent possibilities to which a Dasein then somehow' needs to relate itself, but that they disclose them as 'already permeated by self-relating existence.'⁸⁴

However, that the ecstases necessarily presuppose each other—i.e., that they "self-relate"—does not show that they are "mine" (or anyone's). The idea goes that a given ecstasis (e.g., the originary future) can only reveal (e.g., possibilities) in coordination with at least one of the other ecstases (e.g., the originary past). That the possibilities in which the originary future trades are necessarily conditioned by the factic circumstances of the originary past shows only that the ecstases do indeed rely upon each other. One needs a further claim to show that these interrelated ecstases necessitate that there is a self for whom the possibilities and circumstances are "mine". Why can't the circumstances and possibilities be the moon's, or the river's? If it is just *prima facie* that possibilities belong to a self in a way which precludes them belonging to the moon, it is not clear how the self-relating unity of the ecstases contributes to explaining why that is the case.

82. Käufer, "Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care," 354.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

The third criterion is ‘self-identification.’⁸⁵ ‘Self-identification’, Käufer claims, ‘is Dasein’s ability to “understand” itself.’⁸⁶ Understanding oneself, in turn, is the ‘ability to *be* yourself’, which means ‘being ... in terms of care’, and since ‘Heidegger shows that care is fundamentally temporal ... self-identification is the ability to exist temporally.’⁸⁷ The claim, then, is that originary temporality permits self-identification, because the former is the basis of various aspects of Dasein which eventually amount to the latter. But Käufer’s sequence of identifications does not show this to be the case. Rather, self-identification is presupposed in the notion of ‘understanding yourself’. As I noted in responding to the second criterion, Käufer’s appeal to the ‘unity of the originary future and past’ does not explain that prior self-identification, but seems parasitic upon it insofar as it provides a parallel kind of unity (i.e., the unity of the ecstases amongst themselves).⁸⁸ Furthermore, in the passage from which Käufer elaborates this interpretation of self-identification, Heidegger seems to have in mind not self-identification in general, but a self-identification in which Dasein specifically grasps itself in its ‘futural-having-been’, i.e., in its being originary temporal.⁸⁹ The implication is that Heidegger is not describing the conditions on self-identification in the general sense, but the conditions on a distinctive type of self-identification, an ‘existential concept of self-identification’, ‘the *real* concept ... of self-identification’, which can be distinguished, in principle, from self-identification *per se*.⁹⁰ This seems to suggest that Heidegger does take originary temporality to provide a distinctive form of self-identification (one which might have an explanatory role on ordinary self-identification), which only more forcefully raises the question of what he took that

85. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 354.

86. *Ibid.*, 355, emphasis added.

87. *Ibid.*, 355.

88. *Ibid.*

89. Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 395.

90. *Ibid.*, 395, emphasis added.

to be—of *why* the ecstases might enable self-identification. We arrive back at the question: why should the self-relating unity of ability and circumstance involve a self?

Käufer's second overarching claim was that originary temporality would explain possibilities' disclosure to one *as one's* possibilities, but the concept of ecstatic temporality on which he relies to cash out this claim relies fundamentally on the interconnectedness of the ecstases—that the ecstases are bound together in a unity because they are “ecstatic”. The role of “temporal” here is left unclear, even though Heidegger clearly introduces the notion of the ecstatic as a means of characterising primordial temporality.⁹¹ Any trio of things ecstatic, said to form a unity as a result, are an ecstatic unity because each member of the unity stands outside of itself in the others. As such, abilities (such as lecturing) and dispositions (such as those of a lecturer) are ecstatically interbound.

However, it does not follow from this generic structure of “ecstatic” interconnectedness that one has clarified originary temporality. In exegetical terms, we know that originary temporality's equivalents of the past, present and future are intertwined such that their relation and character fulfils the character of being ecstatic. Käufer's candidate loci for originary temporality *are* revealed as having an ecstatic character. But since their interconnectedness is not bound up with any special or particular gloss on their temporal character it is not clear why we should take this evidence of their “ecstaticness” to be evidence of their being the loci of originary temporality. It is just as plausible that these are only the loci of care, and that a further sense of temporality—with its own, distinct sense of ecstatic interconnectedness—is meant to ground their possibility. ‘It is clear’ to Käufer ‘that originary temporality is not time’ per se.⁹² Whether or not he is right, his attempt to leverage an “ecstatic unity” falls short on providing an explanatory basis for those as-

91. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 329.

92. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 356.

pects of existence that originary temporality is claimed to explain. The ecstatic unity to which he appeals simply winds up belonging to the *prima facie* aspects themselves, and thus provides not an explanatory basis for their relations, but simply characterises those relations. The ecstatic relations in question hold between aspects of Dasein that do not demand any distinctive temporal character over above the ordinary sense of the present. It is hard to see, therefore, what construing this ecstatic unity as originary temporality adds. Certainly, the *prima facie* aspects, which are ecstatically unified, have temporal inflections (we can say that abilities are “futural”, and that disposedness is “past”) but these inflections do not show that the aspects are not, in the end and as with everything, just present in being true of the moment.

C. BLATTNER’S ACCOUNT

I have argued that Käufer’s equation of primordial time with the general ability to be one’s possibilities fails to offer an explication of what originary *temporality* adds to our understanding of such a general ability. Separated from the notion of the general ability *per se*, originary temporality seems like a conceptual *tabula rasa*, leaving claims of the sort that it ‘brings forth’ possibilities mysterious.⁹³ I now turn to argue that Blattner’s exposition of originary temporality leaves us in a similar position. Blattner tells us that:

The feature of the originary future on which will turn its explanation of the world-time future is *purposiveness* or *teleology*. The originary future is purposive in that it is the way in which Dasein presses ahead into its possibilities.⁹⁴

The same lacuna as before appears again here in that the sense of Blattner’s “presses ahead” is never clarified in a manner that is not ultimately circular. To press ahead, we are told,

93. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 356.

94. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*, 107.

is ‘to have and exercise the ability to be one [way or another].’⁹⁵ We can surely agree that to be a student, say, requires that I spend time reading, writing, and thinking—and these activities involve exercising my ability to be in the manner of a student (they are perhaps even constitutive of it). Nevertheless, this *still* leaves almost entirely in the dark the sense of “press ahead”. Why is the term “press ahead” appropriate for my exercise of my ability to be in the manner of a student? Might I not just as easily languish in studentship, rather than press ahead into being a successful researcher? The closest Blattner brings us to an answer as to what “press ahead” means and why it does not problematically contrast with languishing (i.e., as being merely contingent or occasional), is in his saying that ‘Dasein is *aiming* for something’ which ‘gives it *direction*’, while ‘not simply intending a goal.’⁹⁶ Goals, such as passing one’s exam, can be attained, but the possibilities into which one presses—such as being a lecturer—are not attainable, but only *maintainable*, and in such a way that in a certain sense they are *unattainable*, because one has never finished with them. One can, therefore, attain a lectureship (a goal completed) but never be a lecturer *except by* pressing ahead into being one (i.e., by going and lecturing, etc.). One must press ahead into one’s possibilities because they are not the sort of thing one can attain. One cannot “languish” in a possibility: rather, to languish in a certain state is itself a possibility that has to be maintained. Why can one not “languish” in one’s possibilities, however? After all, I can and do attain studentship—in a way that does not require maintenance—when I do successfully act as a student at a given time. At that time, I am indeed a student—no maintenance required. The sense in which my studentship requires maintenance is bound up with the sense that the present in some way does not guarantee the future: I might live up to being a student one second, and in the next become distracted and procrastinate.

95. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 40.

96. *Ibid.*, 110.

I must press ahead, the thought goes, because I must maintain myself in some possibility. But this maintenance requirement is a result of some aspect of time—that which separates a single moment from a sequence of moments (since at a given moment, I do not need to maintain myself—I am what I am at that moment). It is not clear, therefore, how pressing ahead is constitutive or explanatory of the time in question. Rather, one must press ahead into one's possibilities *because of* this aspect of time. The appropriateness of the phrase “pressing ahead” comes not from its being constitutive of time, but because it expresses the demands that time places upon us.

In what sense does “press ahead” express this demand? First, we can note that it carries a sense of motion (as when walking: “we should press on”). Secondly, it carries a sense of risk or vulnerability (as when walking: “or it shall get dark before we get back”). Combined we have the sense of a need to move on or perish: that one must go on acting, in order that one might maintain one's state. Cessation is temporal; what does it require? Two times, at least. One in which x is, and one in which x is not; that captures the cessation of x . Or not quite: one also needs the idea that these two times are connected (and in a given order). The wrong order gives us x arising. No connection gives us something like the relation between different worlds, possibilities or timelines—times which never join up. In either case, there is intuitively no cessation of x . Getting the two times involved in the cessation to join up in the right way seems to involve the first sense of “press ahead”. There needs to be a “movement”, or a “flow”, from the time in which x is, to the time in which x is not. So the sense of vulnerability in “press ahead” involves a sense of cessation, which in turn relies on a sense of temporal “motion”. “Pressing ahead” belongs, it follows, to the same class of analogies as Husserl's “flow”. The question we are led to, then, is: how can originary temporality, if construed as pressing ahead into one's possibilities, be explanatory of time when it appeals to the analogy of motion? The analogy just leads us

back to that problem of what this transitional character by which we “move” along the x-axis in the Husserlian diagram is. The problem which, I argued in §8, Heidegger set out to answer and with which Husserl grappled. We need, therefore, either to supplement “press ahead” with a further explanation, or shed this temporal sense which it appears to have. As is, it is circular, relying on an analogy which in turn is grounded in the ordinary conception of time as a sequence of moments.

Blattner takes it that “press ahead”, and thereby originary temporality, do indeed shed—fully and properly, so to speak—their temporal connection. We saw this in our discussion of his gloss on *a potiori fit denominatio*: originary temporality is a “temporality” because it explains proper times (such as world-time). Like Käufer (*‘originary temporality is not time’*;⁹⁷ Blattner excises from primordial temporality anything like an intrinsic timeliness. Originary temporality will “only” be explanatory of time proper. How will it explain it, according to Blattner? His first step is to identify originary temporality’s most distinctive feature. ‘In *Logic* Heidegger does not explain in just what way Dasein’s originary temporality differs from Now-time, but in *Being and Time* he does.’⁹⁸ The difference that Blattner seizes upon in *Being and Time* is that originary temporality is not a succession—the originary past, present, and future do not come “before” or “after” each other. On Blattner’s reading, this non-sequential temporality explains sequential time insofar as it provides the purposiveness which can order (that is, sequence) world-time (and by extension ordinary- or clock-time): ‘The feature of the originary future on which will turn its explanation of the world-time future is *purposiveness* or *telology*.’⁹⁹ ‘[S]equentiality’, Blattner writes, ‘is to be explained by the for-the-sake-of-which [e.g., for-the-sake-of-being-a-

97. Käufer, “Temporality as the Ontological Sense of Care,” 329.

98. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*, 106–107.

99. *Ibid.*, 107.

lecturer] generating a sequence of tasks.¹⁰⁰ This is the sense in which primordial temporality is meant to explain time without being time-like. It does not have a ‘before’ and an ‘after’, but rather iterates over meaningful ways of being: e.g., being a lecturer for the sake of being an educator. This iteration explains world-time in that it explains why world-time is ordered (during the lecture, I pick up the chalk, in order to write on the blackboard) the way it is. That is to say, ‘originary temporality’ provides the instructions according to which world-time (made up of those times of significance—times *for* this or that) is sequenced: when temporality is ‘modified by way of the *imposition* of sequentiality... the conceptual yield is a sequence of world-time Nows.’¹⁰¹

Blattner rejects temporality as he thus describes it because he takes it to be unreliable in performing the role of generating the world-time sequence. He has two primary objections as to temporality’s fitness for purpose in this regard. First of all, he argues that there is a lack of connection between the iteration of ways of being and the iteration of concrete tasks that fulfil or express those ways of being. Temporality-relations do not define task-relations when sequentialised:

[T]he iterated and transitive structure of the originary future (*x* for the sake of *y*, which in turn is for the sake of *z*) does not necessarily impose any iteration at the level of tasks... [T]here is a futural then relative to [someone’s] current then, but *not* because there is a for-the-sake-of-which superordinate to [their] proximate for-the-sake-of-which, *not* because being a teacher is for the sake of being an educator.¹⁰²

Blattner is thus sensitive to the need for temporality’s own character to be explanatory, because he identifies that it is problematic if there is no *structural* connection between

100. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism*, 175.

101. *ibid.*, 177, emphasis added. Such a “Now” being ‘a time, when a certain event happens or a piece of equipment is used.’ (*ibid.*, 169.)

102. *Ibid.*, 182.

temporality and world-time, even if there remains a loose connection in terms of motivating reason (i.e., future lessons are in virtue of being a teacher, but the temporal iteration of educator to teacher is orthogonal to the iteration of tomorrow's lesson on *b* from today's lesson on *a*). That is to say, he identifies—correctly—that the iterative teleological ordering provided by one's overarching contextual purposes does not produce the right sort of sequence. This is identifiable in the first instance because originary temporality in Blattner's sense does not always produce the right order of *times* (i.e., 'there is a futural then ... but *not* because' of originary temporality).¹⁰³ Though we can further see that underlying Blattner's talk of the 'imposition of sequentiality',¹⁰⁴ and with it the 'futural then relative to' now,¹⁰⁵ is an appeal to the notion of sequentiality itself; it is the failure of originary temporality, on Blattner's reading, to address this sequentiality in its own character which provokes its rejection.

Blattner's second objection is that ways of being have a decisively restricted control over the time-sequence, in that they do not define it *ex nihilo* but must work within certain pre-set constraints. That there are pre-set constraints external to the for-the-sake-of-which demonstrates that the world-time order is never simply a product of temporality's iteration of ways of being, but is affected by external factors:

[Certain] sequence[s] of world-time times (e.g., lecture before movies) [are] not imposed by any for-the-sake-of-which. [They are] only a result of having to fit several tasks into a given time sequence. But, of course, it is precisely the sequentiality of time that we are trying to explain.¹⁰⁶

At best, therefore, 'originary' temporality is only partially originary of time. Worse, the sense in which it makes possible world-time fails to be explanatory of the *feature* thereof

103. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 182.

104. *Ibid.*, 177.

105. *Ibid.*, 182.

106. *Ibid.*, 181–182.

that needs explaining: namely, sequentiality. Although it might *contribute* to the sequence, that this contribution is as it were merely informatory, suggests that the sequentiality per se has its explanation elsewhere.

We ought to reject Heideggerian temporality, Blattner thereby concludes. Indeed, if Blattner's exposition of originary temporality is right, then his conclusion seems right also: a *matroska*-like iteration of one's manner of being doesn't *mutatis mutandis* form a structurally-identical task-sequence, and the sequence called for by one's manner of being needn't be identical to the sequence that is ultimately executed. As Blattner notes, we do not have an explanation of sequentiality; rather, originary temporality appears to still be dependent on an independent temporal sequence. And this is the case even without reintroducing the concern which I raised earlier: that talking of "pressing ahead" involves a circular reliance upon a conception of time as a sequence. Is it possible to rescue Heidegger's conception of temporality from these issues?

Blattner's decision to strip primordial temporality back into a mere explanation is motivated by the entirely justified observation that 'in *Being and Time* ... he [Heidegger] denies that originary temporality is successive.'¹⁰⁷ Indeed, *Being and Time* says exactly that.¹⁰⁸ Blattner infers from this denial of successiveness the claim that primordial temporality is not temporal or time-like *at all*—i.e., it is instead *merely* explanatory. Successiveness is assumed to be a firm marker of something *as duly time-like or temporal in character*. This is why Blattner must gloss *a potiori fit denominatio* as indicating that originary temporality only gets labelled as such in virtue of its function as an "explanatory core" for world- and clock-time. He assumes that, unlike originary temporality, these times are duly time-like—not least because they *are* successive. But what if Blattner is wrong to

107. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 107.

108. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 327.

assume that successiveness is what makes “time” timely? That would undermine the basis for taking originary temporality as just and merely explanatory. It would open the door to considering in what sense or to what extent Heidegger’s discussion of primordial temporality might attempt to shed light on the “timeliness” [*Zeitlichkeit*] from which, *a potiori fit denominatio*, the use of “-time” might be justified. Furthermore, if Heidegger’s non-sequentiality claim is not a denial of primordial temporality’s timeliness, but an assertion that timeliness is non-sequential, then he has already taken a radical step in response to the problem which we identified, and to which we saw he set himself, in §8: to explain the distinctive dynamism of time without recourse to the structure of a now-sequence, or metaphors of motion. Can we—and does Heidegger—describe time in a way that will capture the character of timeliness without recourse to the metaphor of motion or the mechanism of “movement along” a sequence of nows?

CHAPTER IV:

PRIMORDIAL TEMPORALITY

The question with which chapter 3 opened was: what is Heidegger's problem with the present? §8 replied: that the present, as a moment or "now", does not and cannot capture time's dynamism. '[W]e have to make clear how the now... has transitional character.'¹ The failure of the traditional concept of time to do so was not the only motivating factor in Heidegger's pursuing this problem. For Heidegger, the sense of being as substance, *ουσία*, is bound up with the idea of what can be present—what can be in a "now." In showing, as chapter 2 examined, that Dasein's access is—when pared down as far as it can be to its bare essential character—access to something that Dasein cannot properly grasp in the structure of a coherent now (because there is always more that could be said about it), he provided a phenomenological basis for the thought that a sense of being rooted in the structure of a moment, or present, has gone astray. Developing a sense of time which fits what is revealed in that pared down access, then, serves an ontological function: it helps to clarify what the sense of being needs to make sense of.

With this task of developing a novel temporal character in hand, the second part of chapter 3 (§9) argued that reading primordial temporality as *not* fundamentally temporal—i.e., as merely explanatory of time, and not in itself timely—results in Heidegger's claims

1. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 257.

about time collapsing. On such readings, I argued, primordial temporality fails to be constitutive or explanatory of either timeliness or other senses of time (e.g., clock-time). For this very reason, Blattner rejected—per his own reading of Heidegger—originary temporality. We could rescue Heidegger’s discussions of time, I suggested, if we could provide a reading of them by which they are able to resolve the problem set up in the first part of chapter 3 (§8). To this task I now turn.

The chapter is split into two parts. In the first part (§10), I sketch an interpretation of what Heidegger means by Dasein’s “understanding.” The reason I provide such a sketch is twofold.

First, it serves to press the case, which first became explicit in chapter 2, that we should not allow “intelligibility” to become the master key for making sense of what Heidegger says (in *Being and Time* in particular). Making too much of intelligibility obscures, I argued, the role of the non-intelligible in Heidegger’s account of Dasein. Chapter 2 made the case for this being phenomenologically inattentive: in states of mind like anxiety our apophantic and hermeneutic access drops away, and the world is stripped of the significance that proximally constitutes it. Far from obliterating the world, this reveals that—all along, as it were—the world has not been something which must be significant, but is rather something which only *can* be significant. The nothing revealed in anxiety is a “constant companion”, because although we do not comport towards it non-synthetically—as we do in anxiety—in our proximal states of mind, it remains a constituent element in our synthetic access—the subject matter which ultimately sanctions hermeneutic and apophantic judgments as appropriate or not. The dominant readings of Dasein’s understanding, however, occlude any such foundational role of what is non-intelligible in their accounts. It would stand against the exegetical plausibility of chapter 2 if there was no sensible reading of understanding in light of my claims about the role of the non-intelligible.

As such, an examination of the understanding seems appropriate. I proceed to raise some questions about key existing readings, and sketch an alternative reading compatible with the claims of chapter 2, which nevertheless does not reject the thrust of existing readings outright.

Second, in the course of sketching an alternative reading of understanding, I will broach the topic of sheer presence's—my reading of the nothing's—temporal dimensions. Besides deepening the sense of what the temporal character of the nothing is, this also reveals a connection between primordial temporality and the understanding. A connection which sheds a brief light, though not a hopeful one, on Heidegger's pursuit of time within the wider ontological context in which he situates *Being and Time*.

The chapter's second part (§11) then proceeds to resolve the question with which I ended chapter 3. Heidegger's account of Dasein's primordial temporality does, I argue, constitute a novel means of characterising time's dynamism.

§10 UNDERSTANDING

First, then, to Dasein's "understanding." To obtain an initial sense of what understanding means, for Heidegger, I open (§10.A) with a brief discussion of two major views within the literature. Having thereby established some context, §10.B draws a distinction between the possibility of the understanding itself, and the possibilities which it understands. This helps to clarify the topic under discussion in §10.C, which argues against Dreyfus' and Wrathall's accounts of what the possibilities of understanding are. This opens the question of what currency the understanding does trade in, if not the one those views have in mind. §10.D sets out to sketch an answer. In the end, the sense of understanding at which I arrive is not entirely incompatible with Wrathall's—it recontextualises, rather

than denies outright, what the understanding involves on his view.

A. TWO MODELS OF UNDERSTANDING

What is “understanding”? Understanding is, Heidegger tells us, ‘competence over... Being as existing.’² The dominant interpretation of this claim is that Dasein has such competence because it is able to enter into and move between differing contexts of significance, ‘the holistic web of instrumental, social and other relations which define the Heideggerian concept of “world”.’³ In having such a context of significance, Dasein maintains itself in an understanding of itself—a possible way for it to be, or a “stand” it takes on its existence.⁴

A major point of interpretive division has been whether to construe this “existential” competence as distinct from competent engagement more generally. For example, Dahlstrom glosses the understanding as a competency over being in general, analogous to but not identical with the competency involved in encountering and engaging with entities. Existential understanding is comparable to, but not identical with, our coping with entities:

Just as the French speaker or chess player discloses her capability and situation by projecting various possibilities ... existential understanding ... is always projecting possibilities and, in the projecting, disclosing what it means to be for itself and others.⁵

Any given way of being involves knowing one’s way around, or disclosing, a manifold of ontic possibilities—a manifold of the possibly-actual. Analogously, Dasein’s existen-

2. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 143.

3. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 17.

4. C.f. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 15

5. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), ‘understanding’.

tial competency involves knowing one's way around those ways of being. The possibilities involved in the existential competency are therefore distinct from the "mundane" sense of possibly-actual. When one plays chess, one comports towards various possible (in the sense of not-actual) states of affairs and employs one's know-how to arrive at moves that will better lead to one's desired final state. In contrast, the understanding does not set up various states of affairs in a comparison. To illustrate this, consider the more complex case of the French speaker. Although the French speaker does not navigate their linguistic options in the explicit manner we might imagine the chess player doing, they remain involved in a process of deliberating—however implicitly—between a manifold of concrete options—the words they could articulate. French (or English) speaking and chess playing both involve finding one's way around possible-actuals: ways things could, but need not, turn out. The understanding, on the other hand, does not deal with possible-actuals in the same sense. As Wrathall and Murphey express it, the understanding's '[p]ossibilities ... are orders of meaning, whole coherent ways of organising what is actual and possibly-actual.'⁶ The possibilities of the understanding are, therefore, one step removed from the possibly-actual. Competency over the understanding's possibilities means being able to construe one's situation in the light of a variable field of such coherent means of organisation. We are not locked inside an order, forced to escape it step-by-step through our actual engagement with the entities, but stand within a superposition of such orders of meaning, able to fluidly construe our situation one way *or* another. The understanding is not constituted in our activity, but comes before it. It is our ability to navigate in advance of such engagement the contexts in which the entities have been made sense of when we do engage.⁷

6. Wrathall and Murphey, "An Overview of *Being and Time*," 15.

7. Mark Wrathall, "Heidegger on Human Understanding," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*, ed. Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 189, 197.

By contrast, on the influential Dreyfusian view, the understanding is not distinct from our engagement with entities. Our activity itself is the manifest “stand” that we take on ourselves and the world:

Human beings ... are special kinds of beings in that their way of being embodies an understanding of what it is to be ... Dasein's *activity*—its way of being—manifests a stand it is taking on what it is to be Dasein.⁸

As with Dahlstrom and Wrathall, the thought goes that Dasein is able to navigate the variety of ways it can, in general, grasp itself and the other entities it encounters. Dreyfus' view differs, however, in saying that this ability to navigate different takes on what it is to be is no different from the activity of navigating our practical engagements: ‘finding one's way about’ in this most general sense ‘is just more coping.’⁹ Because the stand one takes on one's being is not something one first chooses (‘self-interpretation ... has to be worked out as we go along’¹⁰) but something already-expressed in the possibilities that show up through the understanding (‘in terms of the possibilities opened by a Dasein as it takes a stand on itself by pressing into its future’¹¹) navigating between the possibilities of different stands is managed through the same functions that handle intra-worldly understanding—which in turn is an expression of one's stand. Since the possibilities of my intra-worldly coping materially affect which further possibilities make sense to me, and since the stand I take is expressed in the activity I pursue from amongst these possibilities, such possibilities provide a route for the evolution of my stand on my being—navigating between such stands is just a product of navigating my intra-worldly possibilities.

8. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 14–15.

9. *Ibid.*, 107.

10. *Ibid.*, 189.

11. *Ibid.*

Even in the case of an authentic understanding, Dasein understands insofar as it expresses itself in its coping activity, for Dreyfus:

Dasein ... achieves individuality by realising it can never find meaning by identifying with a role [i.e., because '[b]eing essentially self-interpreting, Dasein has no nature'¹²]. Dasein then "chooses" the social possibilities available to it in such a way as to manifest *in the style of its activity* its understanding of the groundlessness [i.e., self-interpreting nature] of its own existence.¹³

Understanding on the Dreyfusian view is then a matter of pragmatic intelligibility. I understand insofar as I am able to navigate—meaning both identify and take up—various courses of action. Entering into activity is what expresses my understanding, or my “stand”, on my being. In effect, it *is* my stand—there is nothing *save* my coping, which *is* my activity.

Dreyfus contrasts the case of a carpenter deciding on lunch and a student contemplating suicide. The carpenter considering lunch, in his mood of ‘professional seriousness’ and his understanding of his role and the work to be done, only deliberates between ‘knackwurst and bratwurst’, even though other senses of possibility would reveal rocks (logical possibility) and acorns (physical possibility) as potential lunch items.¹⁴ Meanwhile, an ‘American student who’ ‘plunged a knife into their guts’ whilst navigating an intra-worldly possibility for themselves, cannot have managed (even with ‘exactly the right motion’) an act of ‘hara-kiri’, because ‘understanding at the world level’ is ‘limited to the possibilities that make sense in a given culture.’¹⁵ (Which might also be intended to explain why the carpenter does not consider ramen or flatbreads.) For the student to

12. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 25.

13. *Ibid.*, 27.

14. *Ibid.*, 190.

15. *Ibid.*, 190–192.

be able to commit hara-kiri the required transformation in cultural context would have to be achieved by an elaborate series of intra-worldly choices which, in the fullness of time, would lead them such that they were able to take a duly “Japanese” stand on their being, and thus commit hara-kiri rather than mere suicide. The explanation for the carpenter’s omission of ramen, and the student’s failure to commit hara-kiri, is rooted in the same structural feature of understanding: that one cannot just freely transplant oneself into a new context, but must in effect expend effort on the transformation. In contrast, on a Wrathallian account, it is the ability to navigate the orders of meaning, or contexts, which provide the means for navigating the possibly-actuals—i.e., for coping.

Dreyfusian and Wrathallian understanding, therefore, differ in their mechanism of delivery, but not in what they deliver. For Dreyfus, our involved coping itself is that in which the sense of the entities is maintained. For Wrathall, the understanding is prior to such coping: it is Dasein’s capability to make sense of entities in ways which its expressed coping activity does not. Dasein comes out as more “flexible”, as such, on Wrathall’s account. Nevertheless, for both Dreyfus and Wrathall, the currency of the understanding is the sense of entities.

B. MÖGLICHKEIT AND MÖGLICHSEIN

Before I turn to examine the thought that the possibilities of the understanding are the ways in which entities can make sense, I want to sidestep briefly into a discussion of the differing senses of “possibility” that are involved in the structure of projective understanding. Doing so will help us keep separate the understanding itself and the currency in which the understanding trades.

There is a tension in all talk about Dasein’s possibilities [*Möglichkeit*], plural: Heideg-

ger regularly says that Dasein is its *possibility* [*Möglichkeiten*], singular. On both a Dreyfusian and Wrathallian reading Dasein is caught in this tension because it always understands its possibilities in light of one of them. In short, the possibility into which Dasein has been thrown is determinative for the possibility-space onto which it projects itself. The manifold of ‘my possibilities open[s] up’ in accordance with ‘the facticity into which I am thrown, and who I have chosen to be.’¹⁶ This applies to both ontic, intra-worldly possibilities and the possibilities of the contexts of significance, though it does so in different ways for the Dreyfusian and Wrathallian views. In Dreyfus’ case, there is nought but intra-worldly navigation, which slowly provides, in aggregate, alterations to the stand one takes and the world that one inhabits—understanding the context emerges from, and is nothing more than, one’s engaged coping. By Wrathall’s account, understanding opens up a variety of different contexts directly, in the light of which the array of possible interpretations of entities affords itself to us—coping emerges from understanding the context. But which contexts open up is still the product of the circumstances I find myself in and the evolving string of interpretive choices I have made up to now.¹⁷ On both accounts, Dasein is its possibilities and its possibility because the possibility it is thrown into is determinative for which possibilities are open for it.

There is a further distinction, however, which Heidegger makes, and which for clarity’s sake it is worth us familiarising ourselves with. Not only can Dasein take up a possibility, and from that possibility project itself into others, but it also ‘is its possibility’ and ‘always [determines] itself in the light of a possibility which it is itself and which, in its very Being, it somehow understands.’¹⁸ Possibilities in the sense of the range of ways one can be cannot be the possibility which Dasein *is*, I argue, because Heidegger says that it is

16. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 192.

17. Ibid.

18. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 143, H. 43.

in these possibilities that Dasein *loses* itself: '[A]s understanding is *accompanied by* state-of-mind and as such is existentially surrendered to thrownness, Dasein has in every case already gone astray and failed to recognise itself.'¹⁹ Heidegger rejects construing Dasein in terms of its possibilities in this sense: when Dasein 'seizes upon' a definite possibility of itself, or the manifold thereof, it 'makes mistakes' or 'goes astray'.²⁰ Dasein must instead 'let such possibilities pass by'.²¹ It must not get distracted into them, if it is to grasp itself—the possibility which it is itself. It is only in 'constantly waiving the possibilities of its Being' that Dasein avoids being mistaken in this sense.²²

How can Dasein avoid losing sight of itself in this way, if it so loses that sight by understanding itself in terms of the possibility it finds itself thrown into, or in terms of the possibilities which it projects itself into? Heidegger says: 'In its potentiality-for-Being it is...delivered over to the possibility of first finding itself again in its possibilities.'²³ Heidegger is not saying that Dasein realises its unfixity just in virtue of recognising that it has multiple possibilities open to it. That would be false: were Dasein to find itself in a possibility, and also realised that there were other possibilities, this would not show that Dasein could get itself into such other possibilities. It needs further to be the case that those possibilities are possibilities *for* Dasein. Dasein must be flexible enough to take up different possibilities (to "move" between them), yet still concrete enough in itself (as that "movement") that the possibilities can be bound up together as belonging to it. When Heidegger says that Dasein might find itself again in its potentiality-for-being, he is not saying that it finds itself in a given possibility, or in the whole manifold thereof.

19. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 144.

20. *ibid.*, c.f., Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), H. 144.

21. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 144.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

Rather, Heidegger thinks, in revealing these possibilities *as its own* (i.e., as belonging to it in its “movement” between them), Dasein lets on that it must always be something over above such possibilities. It discloses itself as such, distinct from its possibilities, even as it discloses them:

*Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of.*²⁴

My understanding, through self-disclosing, discloses me in my capability or capacity for encountering my possibilities. “The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being [*Sein-können*] ... is primarily Being-possible [*primär Möglichsein*]. Dasein is ever that [*Dasein ist je das*], what it can be and how it is its possibility [*was es sein kann und wie es seine Möglichkeit ist*].²⁵ There is a clear distinction here between the possibility which Dasein ends up thrown into (*Möglichkeit*) and its being such that it can get into such possibilities, “how” it gets into them, which Heidegger labels *Sein-können* and *Möglichsein*. Dasein has its *Möglichkeit* because it is *Möglichsein*, *Sein-können*. It is only because Dasein is the possibility of possibilities that it can get itself into specific situations, that it can project itself upon and get thrown into specific ways of being.²⁶ The understanding is this basis for access to, or getting into being, possibilities: ‘*Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being* [*Verstehen ist das existenziale Sein des*

24. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 144.

25. *Ibid.*, H. 143, translation modified.

26. It should be noted that the passage on p.43 of *Being and Time* which talks about the possibility in which Dasein is illuminated uses the word “*Möglichkeit*” for “possibility.” This choice on Heidegger’s part speaks *against* my gloss that this possibility is not one of Dasein’s possible ways of being. There is no avoiding this exegetical weakness: I can only appeal to the thought that the expression on p.43 comes sufficiently early in the text that Heidegger thought the use of *Möglichkeit* to be preferable over *Möglichsein* for reasons of comprehension. The latter does not appear until p.143, when the discussion of how Dasein is *not* its possibilities has gotten underway. If one does insist that Heidegger did strictly mean *Möglichkeit* on p.43, I maintain that this stands in quite considerable tension with his rejection of such possibilities as causing Dasein to ‘lose’ itself (*ibid.*, H. 143).

eigenen Seinkönnens des Daseins selbst].²⁷ It discloses ‘in itself’ what it is itself ‘capable of’: Dasein discloses itself *as able* to be thrown and to project.²⁸ Heidegger goes on to specify a particular kind of access, which he calls Dasein’s *transparency*: ‘The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence we call “transparency” [*Durchsichtigkeit*, “through-cleared-ness”].²⁹ Dasein does not only have sight of possibilities (ways things, including itself, can be) but also, in having such access, it has access to itself *in* its capacity for such access. Access is accessible. This makes transparency both a special case and not: it is a special case in that it is not possibilities which are accessible in transparency, but it is not so in that this transparency is part-and-parcel of access to possibilities, access in general. Transparency is easily obscured in the obtrusion of those *existentiell* possibilities, and even in those ways of being in which there is an explicit orientation towards one’s transparency this *existentiell* is never identical to transparency.

This helps to shed light on the cryptic comment that accompanies the basic dictum that Dasein is that entity for which ‘in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it’, namely that this is not only ‘a relationship towards [its] Being’ but ‘*a relationship which itself is one of Being*.’³⁰ Why should Dasein’s relationship to its being, in which that being is an issue for it, be a relationship *of* being? What does “a relationship *of* being” mean? We can now say: because in the relation by which its being is an issue for it, Dasein also relates itself reflexively to that very being which makes it possible for its being to be an issue. Dasein ‘is primarily Being-possible’, ‘it is its possibility’, because it is its potentiality-for-being, distinct from those possibilities revealed thereby.³¹ It is the possibility which Dasein is, so long as it is: the possibility of there being possibilities for Dasein—the general abil-

27. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 144.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, H. 146.

30. *Ibid.*, H. 12.

31. *Ibid.*, H. 143.

ity of such possibilities being accessible is accessible to itself. Placing this self-disclosing of the understanding alongside its disclosing of possibilities explains why Heidegger describes the understanding as having a certain structural tension. The singular capability of '[b]eing-towards-possibilities', i.e., the understanding itself in its self-disclosedness, is in a superposition with those 'possibilities, as disclosed' by it.³² The latter 'exert their counter-thrust' against the understanding's self-disclosedness in making it possible for Dasein to appear to be one of them (or the whole manifold of them).³³ In other words, the possibilities which one's understanding discloses can occlude the understanding itself as the singular possibility of any such disclosedness of possibilities. We need to keep in mind, therefore, this distinction between the singular potentiality-for-being which is the projective understanding itself, and the possibilities which this projective understanding throws us into. They are Dasein's capacity or ability for access [*Sein-können/Möglichkeitsein*], and that which is accessible [*Möglichkeit/Möglichkeiten*], respectively.

C. MÖGLICHKEITEN, UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION

What are the possibilities [*Möglichkeiten*] which Dasein's projective understanding grants it access to? What is the currency in which the understanding trades? One reading has already been gestured to in §10.A's portrayal of Dreyfusian account of understanding—the "stand" one takes—but we can sharpen it using Dreyfus' and Blattner's account of interpretation as the the understanding's becoming explicit. This transformation happens in particular, on their account, in cases where Dasein's circumstances break in upon it. For example, if a soup spoon breaks while one is making use of it, one will shift into "seeing

32. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 148.

33. *Ibid.*

thematically” that it is (un-)ready-to-hand *as* a spoon.³⁴ Breakdowns force Dasein into an explicit practical reconsideration in which it must weigh up, explicitly, the purposes and functions of the equipment to hand. He later adds:

Reckoning up (or calculating, as in settling a bill), planning, making provisions (looking out for the future), preventing (or averting) – these are all forms of interpretation. When Brown is absorbed in smooth, ongoing work, she does not do this. It is only when “felt difficulty” arises, when breakdown occurs, or when action does not achieve its goals, when it has problems, that she does these sorts of things.³⁵

The difference between understanding and interpretation, then, is that understanding involves an absorption or smooth engagement with what one understands. When this understanding is interrupted (e.g., by the failure of a tool) Dasein is forced into explicit interpretation, where the hermeneutic “as” comes to mind explicitly. Dreyfus, too, treats interpretation in this way, as a failure of absorbed coping. ‘When we are no longer able simply to cope, understanding may develop a new form...When things are not functioning smoothly we have to pay attention to them and act deliberately.’³⁶ Specifically: ‘We have already been using something as something (using doorknobs as doorknobs), but now we *see it* as something for something (see the doorknob *as* something for opening doors).’³⁷ Neither Dreyfus nor Blattner provide textual evidence for the point that interpretation is a response to ruptures in our engrossment or absorbed activity. Notwithstanding this, we can hold in mind the point that, in their view, what the understanding understands is “how to cope.” The relevant sense of possibility and possibilities, therefore, is that of the sense we can make by engaging in those roles and activities which our skillful engagement leaves open to us.

34. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 138.

35. *Ibid.*, 150.

36. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 196.

37. *Ibid.*

I characterised Wrathall's view of the understanding as involving awareness of whole orders of meaning against which entities might be interpreted. The possibilities involved in understanding are those contained in 'the pattern of possibilities in terms of which the projector can incorporate' what is being understood 'into the world, thus making sense of it. For projection, the world shows up as a possibility space[.]'³⁸ If the possibilities that the understanding understands are 'orders of meaning, whole coherent ways of organising' everything, then the possibilities which go into making up the pattern are entire contexts of significance.³⁹ The world is the possibility space *of* such contexts of significance, and the "pattern" of possibilities is the way in which these contexts interlink to form a broader tapestry of ways the context of significance can be (i.e., it is *all* of the possible contexts *in toto*). But Wrathall also treats the "patterns" and the "possibility space" as pertaining to individual entities. The 'possibilities in terms of which' one can 'incorporate' something into the world are the various interpretations-that-could-be, the concrete interpretations of an entity in their variety. This seems to be the sense Wrathall has in mind in the following passage:

Projection has a recursive structure, meaning that to understand the *y*-term ['the pattern of possibilities in terms of which the projector can incorporate' what is understood], it must itself be projected onto something else... For example, we understand a baseball bat by projecting it onto the rules of baseball, which govern the possibilities that determine what can and cannot be done with the bat during the game. But we only understand the rules of baseball by projecting them in turn onto (among other things) bats and balls and bases and pitches and swings. And ultimately, Heidegger argues, the possibilities must be projected onto time. The game of baseball affords a certain patterning of the temporal structure of life.⁴⁰

38. Wrathall, "Heidegger on Human Understanding," 190.

39. *Ibid.*, 15.

40. *Ibid.*, 191.

Dasein understands, in the illustrated case, by seeing the various concrete ways that the bat can be in virtue of a single coherent framework which determines *the possibilities of those concrete ways*. The possibilities, therefore, belong properly to the bat—they are the ways it can be. The claim that understanding is recursive adds to this that what one understands is not a bat in isolation, as revealed by the rules of baseball, but also the possibilities of baseball, as revealed by (amongst other things) the bat, and so on (all the way, following Heidegger, to time). What one has, then, is a sprawling accumulation of possibilities of particular things (bats, the rules of baseball, time—and so on).

However, there is a significant difference between the idea that what is understood are the concrete ways in which a thing could be, no matter how fleetingly glimpsed in an iterative process, and the notion that what we understand are the relational contexts in which things can be. Not least because this changes what is said to be projected: the things themselves, or the relational contexts in which they can be. That Heidegger held that time is not a thing, and that Wrathall recalls this in noting time as that upon which the recursive projection finally terminates, only makes this point more pressing: is it not incompatible to claim that entities are projected and yet the terminal projection is of that which is not an entity? More generally, we can ask: Is it entities that are projected, or contexts of significance?

One way to resolve the difficulty is to read Wrathall as claiming that these alternatives hold simultaneously, because to project entities in their multitudinous affordances is the same thing as projecting contexts of significance. This is what the talk of recursion perhaps aims towards: I understand entities in their affordances (the possibilities from which I can make concrete an interpretation) but I can do so only because they are related to other entities (which in turn are related to yet other entities). I project entities, and the sum of such projections are a context of significance, yet to have an entity to project, I

must have already had it projected in a certain way; any projection of an entity per se is always already dependent on some context of significance which itself is a product of the projection of entities. Therefore, there is a sense in which the projected possibilities are contexts of significances, even though what is projected are entities.

Since the recursion can double back on itself (e.g., from bat to rules, then from rules to bat) the recursion generates a shifting, interlocked web of possibilities for the entities, some of which are mutually exclusive of others. For example: *rules*₁ illuminates *bat*₁, *bat*₁ illuminates *rules*₂, *rules*₂ illuminates *bat*₂, *bat*₂ illuminates *rules*₃, but now *rules*₃ illuminates *bat*₃, which is incoherent alongside *bat*₁, since they do not share a relation to a given case of *rules*. We can distinguish, therefore, Wrathall's possibilities from Dreyfus' in the following way. Wrathall's possibilities, in virtue of this recursive structure, necessarily cannot be made explicit as a whole, or considered collectively, because that whole *is not coherent*. As one navigates them, one changes the relational context such that, at that juncture, some concrete possibilities that could, in principle, become explicit are occluded from view. Dreyfus' possibilities, by contrast, do not admit of this collective property; either there is a possibility, or there isn't. This is why for Dreyfus, one's possibilities *express* one's stand, whereas for Wrathall, the possibilities amount collectively to 'an indeterminate number of possible stands' that one might take.⁴¹

However, one point on which Dreyfus and Wrathall both therefore agree is that the possibilities of the understanding amount to possible ways of making sense of entities. The way in which these possible senses of entities are packaged and delivered might differ—as an aspect of one's skilful engagement in one case, and through the general faculty of iterative projection in the other—but they both deliver, in the end, a similar sense of "possibilities": the ways in which entities can make sense for us. This is what, for both the

41. Wrathall, "Heidegger on Human Understanding," 198.

Dreyfusian and Wrathallian view, understanding delivers. Indeed, it is a claim generally supported by intelligibility-centric views.

I disagree with this reading of what understanding delivers to us. The possibilities of projective understanding are not, I argue, ways in which entities can make sense to us. To show this, the remainder of this section argues that the possibilities involved in the acts of involved coping described by Dreyfus, and the iterative projection of entities described by Wrathall, belong strictly to interpretation. I then proceed, in §10.D, to provide a positive alternative.

Let me start by countering the Dreyfusian notion that interpretation is marked out as involving explicit characterisation of an entity (as in the case of broken equipment). I object that the “seeing” which belongs to interpretation is not distinct from absorbed use: ‘In dealing with what is environmentally ready-to-hand by interpreting it circumspectively, we ‘see’ it *as* a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge; but what we have thus interpreted need not necessarily be also taken apart by making an assertion which definitely characterises it.’⁴² Here, Heidegger associates circumspensive coping with interpretation, and denies that interpretation involves a reflective or explicit “taking apart” in which we come to explicitly characterise the *x* as *y*. When I use the hammer as a hammer, I *see* it as a hammer: it is accessible to me in its usefulness as a hammer. (Heidegger equates “sight” with access: ‘[W]e may formalize “sight” and “seeing” enough to obtain therewith a universal term for characterising any access to entities or to Being, as access in general.’⁴³) If I had no access to the hammer as usable in the way that a hammer is usable, how could I manage to use it, much less use it as a hammer? In order for me to use the hammer, I must “see” or have access to a hammer, and the “seeing” of circumspensive absorption

42. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 149.

43. *Ibid.*, H. 147.

is ‘circumspective interpretation.’⁴⁴ There is no absorbed coping without interpreting, I therefore submit.

If having access to a hammer in absorbed coping involves interpretation, this entails that before any such interpretation there cannot be a hammer; in the understanding alone, one never has access to a hammer. This might sound quite unlike Heidegger at first glance: do we not understand the ready-to-hand? In a sense yes—but not the one as yet suggested. Rather than understanding “the ready-to-hand” in the sense of entities ready-to-hand, we understand the possibility of ready-to-handedness itself. Heidegger says that in the understanding: ‘That which is ready-to-hand is discovered as such in its *serviceability*, its *usability*, and its *detrimentality*. The totality of involvements is revealed as the categorical whole of a *possible* interconnection of the ready-to-hand.’⁴⁵ What I understand is *not* the hammer, nor the possibility of the hammer, but the possibility of ready-to-handedness: that which *can be* a hammer. What can be a hammer is not the same thing as a possible hammer (a “maybe-hammer” or a “hammer-yet-to-be-here”). In principle, what “can be a hammer” *can be* in the total absence of the sense of “a hammer” (i.e., even if Dasein had never developed the sense of “a hammer”). Understanding reveals that the context of significance (the ‘totality of involvements’) is *merely contingent* (‘a *possible* interconnection’) because it reveals that which *can be* interconnected but is *not necessarily so*.⁴⁶ The interconnection of the ready-to-hand is possible because it *need not obtain*.

It might be objected that the sense in which the interconnection (between entities ready-to-hand) is contingent is that it has no coherent fixed arrangement (as illustrated by Wrathall’s recursive model), rather than that its holding at all is contingent. This relies on the idea that in the understanding itself there is a contingency born of internal variation.

44. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 149.

45. *Ibid.*, H. 144, lattermost emphasis added—the original German includes the former three emphases.

46. *Ibid.*, H. 144.

The thought goes that the various possibilities of an entity are lifted off out of it, and that the manifold variety of such possibilities is what is accessible through understanding: the understanding sees the whole bundle of possible ways in which something is as-y or as-z or so on. Something along these lines might be garnered from such claims as this from Heidegger:

That which is disclosed in understanding—that which is understood—is already accessible in such a way that its ‘as which’ can be made to stand out [*abgehoben*, lifted-off] explicitly.⁴⁷

However, there is good reason, I suggest, not to take this passage in translation at face value. First, Heidegger elsewhere says that the “as” is not the understanding made explicit, but rather the structure which constitutes the interpretation of what is understood: “The “as” makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood. It constitutes the interpretation.”⁴⁸ This suggests that becoming explicit *through being “as”-structured* amounts to interpretation. When something is “understood” *as* something one has already achieved an *interpretive* grasp of it. If that is so, it cannot be the case that the understanding itself involves an “as”, on pain of collapsing understanding into interpretation. The original wording of the passage is helpful in making clear this point: ‘Das im Verstehen Erschlossene, das Verstandene ist immer schon so zugänglich, daß an ihm sein »als was« ausdrücklich abgehoben werden kann.’⁴⁹ Note the placement of the commas, which sets off the point that in the understanding alone there is always access (*zugänglich*). The implication is that it is in virtue of this access that it is possible to lift off an “as”. When Macquarrie and Robinson translate this as making the “as” stand out, this suggests that

47. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 149.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 149.

something like an implicit as-structure is wrought into what is accessible to the understanding. But Heidegger's use of *abgehoben* (having lifted-off, in the sense of setting apart, leading to something distinct) suggests that what is lifted off is not the as-structure, but the "content" of the "as" (e.g., the "y-term" in "*x* as *y*"). It does not make sense to think of what is understood being "set against" an entire as-structure; rather, the "setting against" *creates* the as-structure—it sets one aspect, *y*, against the whole from which it was drawn, *x*. One lifts from the subject-matter (*x*) that in terms of which one interprets it (*y*). The as-structure is the *relating* of what is lifted to what it was lifted off of. The as-structure is not included in the subject matter. Rather, *if* we lift off some aspect of what is accessible, and set it up over against the subject matter, we can highlight the subject matter's character through—i.e., as—whatever was lifted off. Only because there is first of all access to a subject-matter is there any possibility of *any* as-structures.

Let me give one more argument in support of the view that coming to an "understanding" of an entity is interpretation, and not understanding. For Heidegger, 'projective...understanding' is 'Dasein's "*sight*."⁵⁰ "Sight", as briefly noted before, is 'a universal term for characterising any access' at all.⁵¹ It follows that interpretation, as the understanding's 'developing itself', is a developed kind of access.⁵² Dreyfusian views take this "development" as coming to be explicit; as when the implicit-hammer in my involvement with the workshop becomes explicit as a hammer in my articulating an assertion about it. Wrathall takes the "development" as a coming into 'expressness',⁵³ in that the iterative projection of the understanding comes to a halt, settling on some particular projection. Interpretation is, as such, still a case of becoming explicit (the key feature of such "settling"

50. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 146.

51. *Ibid.*, H. 147.

52. *Ibid.*, H. 148.

53. Wrathall, "Heidegger on Human Understanding," 196.

is that it settles upon a specific projection of x in terms of y), but “explicit” has a considerably wider sense than Dreyfus (e.g., it includes simply thinking of x as y —making interpretation ‘pervasive,’ in Wrathall’s own words).⁵⁴ Despite having differing senses of “interpretation”, both the Wrathallian and Dreyfusian accounts construe it as having the same fundamental structure as understanding. For Wrathall, the iterative projection of understanding comes to a settled halt; for Dreyfus, the implicit circumspective grasp gets an explicit articulation. In both cases, interpretation shares its structure with understanding. This fails to capture, it seems to me, Heidegger’s claim that the shift from understanding to interpretation involves a development of *the understanding*. It seems to me that this indicates that the shift involves a *change in structure*, not just a change in the structural context (i.e., from implicitness to explicitness, or from iteration to being settled). What kind of structural development might sensibly constitute the shift from understanding to interpretation? If this shift involves “lifting-off” [*abgehoben*] as I have described it—as the creation of the as-structure through the setting of one aspect of what is understood against itself—then this would constitute a genuine structural development.⁵⁵

I have argued that the possible ways in which one can make sense of entities are not the kind of possibility which the understanding delivers us, and that they are rather the domain of interpretation. First, I argued—against Dreyfus—that Heidegger does not associate interpretation exclusively with coming to an “explicit” grasp of an entity, but that

54. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 197.

55. Indeed, this transformation appears identical in structure to the transformation between non-synthetic and synthetic access; from a singular νοεῖν to a διανοεῖν. One first of all understands x , meaning that one has access to x alone, and this makes possible interpretation, such that one accesses x as y , creating a “double access.” The prior singular access to x is the ‘primordial kind of uncovering’ in which one accesses the subject-matter itself alone, a ‘pure νοεῖν’ which amounts to ‘a pure and simple apprehension of the matters ἄνευ λόγου’, in the absence of λόγος. (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 226, and Heidegger, “Being-There and Being-True According to Aristotle,” 230.) There is a suggestion here, as such, of a structural similarity between Heidegger’s distinction between understanding and interpretation, and his distinction between synthetic and non-synthetic access. (C.f. p.66ff., p.99ff., and p.110ff. above.)

involved coping in general amounts to interpretation. (In this regard, I am in agreement with Wrathall.⁵⁶) Second, I argued that the understanding does not reveal entities ready-to-hand, but the general possibility of the ready-to-hand; it reveals that which can be, but need not be, ready-to-hand. Third, in support of the prior argument, I argued that Heidegger does not claim there to be an “as” to the understanding, but that the interpretation is precisely the generation of an as-structure qua what is accessible through the understanding. Finally, I argued that since Heidegger describes interpretation as understanding “developing itself”, we should expect to see a positive structural difference between interpretation and understanding. Over against the Dreyfusian and Wrathallian models of understanding, the distinction between as-structured interpretation and non-as-structured understanding which the previous arguments outlined did fulfil this criterion. Taken collectively, these arguments offer some initial motivation for the idea that Heidegger did not have in mind possible ways of making sense of entities, when thinking of the possibilities of the understanding. But if these are not the possibilities of the understanding, then what are?

D. PROJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING

If the possibilities projected upon by the understanding are not the manifold, however structured, of ways in which one could interpret x as y , then what are? In pursuing this question, I shall come to sketch a reading of what Heidegger has in mind, at root, by Dasein’s “understanding.” Understanding, I shall argue, means *access* in general. Projection, I shall argue in turn, is a tripartite relational structure that captures a general feature of our access. Namely, to say that x is projected upon y means: z being accessible in virtue

56. C.f. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 185–188, 196.

of x being given by, or being accessible through, y . This formal structure of projection permits modelling not only Dasein's ability to make sense of entities in a varied way, but also the way in which Dasein's access itself is not uniform. Broadly, I will sketch projective understanding as having both a horizontal and vertical structure, in which the horizontal dimension is equivalent to the iterative projection of Wrathall's model, while the vertical dimension models the way in which a given projection is reliant upon prior projections. Projections turn out to be cumulative, as it were. This allows for projection to have a "root": a primary projection upon which all other projections are reliant.

Before turning directly to the question of what the possibilities projected by the understanding are, I want to highlight a certain terminological equivalence in Heidegger's description of Dasein's existential structure. He describes Dasein as 'thrown projective Being-in-the-World.'⁵⁷ Even in English, there is a resonance between the verbs "throw" and "project", such as in a projector throwing what it projects upon a screen. In the German, however, there is not just this vague resonance, but a much stronger one: 'thrown projective' is 'geworfen-entwerfenden.'⁵⁸ These come from the same root: *werfen*, to throw. Heidegger's joining them with a hyphen emphasises this resonance (again, in the English translation, this gets missed out). It is unambiguously the case that *geworfen* means *thrown*, since it comes from *werfen* (to throw) and the prefix *ge-* forms past participles. By contrast, *entwerfen* is more complicated. While the proximal sense of *entwerfen* is to *design*, its etymology reveals a different sense. The prefix *ent-* carries the senses of something *beginning*, or something *being removed*. While *geworfen* indicates that Dasein *has been* thrown, then, *entwerfen* carries the sense that Dasein "will" be thrown: that it is going to be "thrown off" from itself (to draw on the sense of *ent-* as "separating"). There is another reason, too, to

57. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 148.

58. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, H. 148.

think that the ordinary sense of *entwerfen* is not responsible for Heidegger's use of this term. He appears to rule it out. 'Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out, and in accordance with which Dasein arranges its being.'⁵⁹ A design, it seems to me, is certainly a plan according to which things are arranged. It makes the most sense, I submit, that Heidegger is specifically ruling out the proximal sense of *entwerfen*, and asking us to consider it in the sense which its etymological construction reveals. They are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin.

This etymological connection has implications for what the possibilities which Dasein projects itself upon are, because we have already reached some substantive clarity on the possibilities into which Dasein has been thrown. In chapter 2, I argued that a prior constituent to the meaningful possibilities in which one always already finds oneself is a non-intelligible sheer presence. The possibility one finds oneself in is never just some hermeneutic or apophantic possibility; e.g., never just "driving to work" or "in a car." One's specific situation always has more to it. 'Expressing what *exists* is an endless task.'⁶⁰ In anxiety entities recede, the apophantic and hermeneutic λόγος are pared away, and Dasein is left inavoidably "face-to-face" with what is still left over in their absence: a 'gapless mass',⁶¹ or as I described it, "utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude."⁶² Heidegger calls this sheer presence the nothing, or "...", because we cannot understand it *as* this or that. Any such synthetic determination captures less than sheer presence itself. It cuts a piece from what is really a whole (utter unitariness), and it simplifies what there is always more to (infinite dissimilitude). Synthetic access, comportment towards an entity,⁶³ is always 'the result of a dehiscence': they burst from sheer presence as seeds from

59. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 145.

60. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," 66.

61. *Ibid.*, 65.

62. See p.105 above.

63. Including entities which are nothing more than particular qualitative presentations: "this orange" or "that

a pod, but by that same stroke, this bursting is a wounding of that sheer presence.⁶⁴

The possibility into which one is thrown, as such, is not exhausted by the apophantic and hermeneutic sense that has already been made, but includes as well this richer dimension of sheer presence. While Dasein is thrown into sheer presence *alone* when it is thrown into certain states of mind (such as anxiety), these states of mind do not reveal a *sui generis* world unto itself (they do not suddenly uncover a “sheer presence” which is completely novel to Dasein), but rather show that the world Dasein inhabits “has been all along” constituted by that which can survive losing all significance; i.e., at root, Dasein’s being-in-the-world is not its being ensconced in a hermeneutic context, but is its ‘[b]eing held out into the nothing.’⁶⁵

The possibilities of the understanding, by contrast, are typically interpreted to be less specific than this. For example, Wrathall describes the possibilities that Dasein projects upon as ‘the pattern of possibilities in terms of which the projector can incorporate the *x* into the world, thus making sense of it.’⁶⁶ Projection’s possibilities are those possible ways in which entities can make sense. Even though both Dreyfus and Wrathall think that the as-structure by which the sense of an entity is determined does not become “explicit”, “express” or fully “laid-out” until Dasein shifts into an interpretation (over and above understanding), the understanding still trades in the possibilities of the as-structure, which can become explicit (for Dreyfus) or settled upon (for Wrathall) in interpretation. There is no explicit space in their models for nothing’s specificity. This means, though, that the possibilities understanding projects into are not those into which it is thrown. The possibilities upon which projection throws are always the *y* in “*x* as *y*.” By contrast, the possibil-

shimmering noise”, etc.

64. Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 147.

65. Heidegger, “What Is Metaphysics?,” 106.

66. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 190.

ities into which Dasein gets thrown are sometimes just “*x*” (the nothing, non-synthetic sheer presence). Even in Dasein’s proximal states of mind, one is thrown into a complete “*x* as *y*” in which sheer presence remains a constituent, despite being obscured by one’s synthetic comportment.

What sort of possibilities could Dasein project into, such that it *would* have the same specificity as the possibilities into which it is thrown? The simple solution is to say that it is the *same* sort—that since being thrown and projecting are two sides of the same coin, so their possibilities are also the two sides of one coin. Even before we ask, however, what projection construed as such would amount to phenomenologically,⁶⁷ we can notice that this equivalence brings its own tension. Dasein projects into possibilities,⁶⁸ but does it make sense to say that Dasein is thrown into possibilities? It might be more plausible to say that Dasein finds itself thrown into some possibility—some situation. Dasein can barely keep an intelligible hold on the possibility that it has already been thrown into, on the view I have espoused. It certainly could not hold onto a whole manifold of them. So to maintain the idea that the projective possibilities are as the thrown possibility in kind, we must drop the idea that projection involves a *manifold* of possibilities. But what else could the plural “possibilities” refer to?

Let me start with an example. When one flips a coin, one is open to the possibilities of it landing either heads or tails. One understands that these are ways that the world can be, even though one has relatively little control over the actualisation of them. (This lack of control does not mean that “heads” or “tails” are possibilities not belonging to Dasein. It is the coin which lands heads or tails, but the coin’s landing heads or tails are possibilities of Dasein since they are possibilities of Dasein’s thrown existence.) But then suppose

67. Viz. as a characteristic of Dasein’s existence.

68. ‘As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities.’
(Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 145)

that, much to your surprise, the coin lands neither heads nor tails, but rather perfectly on its side. Let me put it to you that when you set up this scenario in your imagination—or if, indeed, you had actually gone to toss a coin—your sense of futural possibilities for the coin is focused upon, or we might even say restricted to, the dichotomy of heads versus tails. But then what happened when in fact the coin landed perfectly on its side? You *do* support, are compatible with, the coin landing so. You did not “have it in mind”, but this did not mean that this possibility was an *impossibility for you*. The lack of “on its side” amongst the manifold interpretive possibilities you circumspectively navigated did not prevent the coin from landing on its side, and therefore *ex hypothesi* it did not in fact curtail the possibilities you were projecting into either. The possibilities to which you were open were in fact myriad: the coin could have been snapped up by a passing magpie, a meteorite may have struck it mid-toss and vaporised it, you or a companion may have suffered a heart attack and the coin would lie forgotten, or indeed a possibly limitless number of scenarios could have come about. All of these scenarios were possible for you—even though you were never aware of them as possibilities. In projecting, the possibility of the coin landing on its side was accessible such that you were thrown into it, even though the possibility of the coin landing on its side never prefigured its doing so for you. Even if we extend the degree to which such possibilities in the latter sense are implicit, we can always match it with a yet further unexpected situation, which *ex hypothesi* you did not have any sense of as a possibility. For example, to press the example in an extreme way, the coin might transform mid-flip into a lizard, tell a joke, and then promptly disappear. I am *not* suggesting this to be physically possible: I am suggesting that there is nothing about Dasein’s understanding which prevents it (or any other strange circumstance) from happening.⁶⁹ In other words, if existence doesn’t feature such bizarre

69. ‘We might have been Cartesian souls and found ourselves inhabiting a chaotic universe.’ Jonathan Weis-

events it is not because we are not compatible with their happening. When the coin lands on its side, or when it gets struck by a meteor, or so on, there is no great calamity in your existence. You might interpret the situation as bizarre, or nonsensical. You might be very surprised. But this just goes to show that the relative intelligibility of a possibility has no bearing on whether one could project upon it. There is no failure of existence in such cases. Dasein projects upon possibilities because it projects upon the openness or radical indeterminateness of the future. It is compatible with any possibility that it might come to be thrown into. And it is compatible completely irrespective of its relative abilities *qua* contemplating, imagining, or directing its activity towards that future circumstance.

It might be countered that Heidegger says that the understanding understands entities, and so it must in some sense reveal them in the multiplicity of ways in which they could be interpreted. I am not claiming, however, that the understanding has nothing to do at all with encountering entities. Heidegger does indeed tell us, quite clearly, that it is thanks to the understanding that we are able to encounter entities as entities: ‘In the projecting of the understanding, entities are disclosed in their possibility... that which is understood ... [is] the entity.’⁷⁰ Typically, this is taken to mean that projective understanding discloses a projected entity *x* “in terms of” what it is projected upon, *y*. As such, projection gives us *x* “as something”, where the “something” either is, or is derived in relation to, the *sense* of *y*. To use an example of Wrathall’s, a baseball bat is understood as such by being projected upon the rules of baseball.⁷¹

I submit, however, that this subtly misinterprets the structure of projection. Heidegger says that ‘the “upon-which” of a projection’ is that ‘*out of which* something becomes

berg, “Firing Squads and Fine-Tuning: Sober on the Design Argument,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 56 (2005): 819.

70. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 151.

71. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 191.

intelligible as something.’⁷² This does *not* say that the projected x is made sense of in terms of y . It says only that y makes possible grasping x as something. That is a less specific function than “making sense in terms of.” Rather, projecting x upon y results in z , where z is x “as given by” or “as accessible through” y . These phrases, “as given by” and “as accessible through”, combine the transformational function alluded to by Heidegger’s “become” with his claim that understanding is, fundamentally, Dasein’s ‘sight’ in the sense of ‘access’ in general.⁷³ The upon-which of a projection, therefore, is not necessarily the manifold of possible ways in which an entity could be made sense of as, or the relational context in which it could have such a panoply of senses.

There is a further sense in which the remit of the understanding goes beyond the notion of “making sense in terms of.” Cryptically, Heidegger also suggests that the understanding is able to understand not just ‘the entity’, but also ‘Being.’⁷⁴ What the understanding does *not* understand, strictly speaking, is the ‘meaning’ involved in the projection (the upon-which of the projection).⁷⁵ There are a good number of ways in which Heidegger echoes this cryptic suggestion. Famously, understanding is competence over ‘Being as existing’, competence over Dasein’s being (as distinct from the being of entities ready-to-hand and present-at-hand).⁷⁶ Dasein also understands its ability to get into possibilities, ‘what its potentiality-for-being [*Seinkönnen*] is capable of.’⁷⁷ And the ‘understanding *always* pertains to the *whole* basic state of Being-in-the-world.’⁷⁸ ‘[T]he understanding projects *Dasein’s Being*.’⁷⁹ Even in describing the understanding of inauthentic

72. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 151, emphasis altered.

73. *Ibid.*, H. 147.

74. *Ibid.*, H. 151.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*, H. 143.

77. *Ibid.*, H. 144.

78. *Ibid.*, H. 144, emphasis added.

79. *Ibid.*, H. 145, emphasis added.

Dasein, Heidegger wraps Dasein's own being into the world-directedness of inauthentic comportment”

Understanding *can* devote itself primarily to the disclosedness of the world; that is, Dasein can, proximally and for the most part, *understand itself* in terms of its world. Or else understanding throws itself primarily into the “for-the-sake-of-which”; that is, Dasein exists as itself.⁸⁰

How to make sense of the understanding's increasingly broad scope? Tantalisingly, in Division II, Heidegger introduces—all too briefly—the notion that not all projections are born equal. He introduces the idea of a “primary projection”:

Taken strictly, “meaning” signifies the “upon-which” of the primary projection of the understanding of Being. When Being-in-the-world has been disclosed to itself and understands the Being of that entity which itself is, it understands equiprimordially the Being of entities discovered within-the-world... All ontical experience of entities... is based upon projections of the Being of the corresponding entities—projections which in every case are more or less transparent. But in these projections there lies hidden the “upon-which” of the projection.⁸¹

This allows us to make some sense of the equivocation between understanding entities and understanding being. Understanding entities is recursively dependent on understanding being. One projects an entity, *e* upon its being, *b*. This “being”, however, just as much as entities, is subject to projection.⁸² So *b* will also be projected, and this too demands a further projection, and so on, *until some terminus is reached*.

On Wrathall's account, projection's recursive character is non-linear: it might double-back, flip around, and so on, as one first projects the bat upon baseball and then baseball upon the bat. Whilst accurate, this observation on its own elides Heidegger's implication,

80. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 146, emphasis altered.

81. *Ibid.*, H. 324.

82. C.f. *ibid.*, H. 143, H. 151

in introducing the idea of a *primary* projection, that there is a root from which other projections spring. Understanding bats in terms of baseball is one projection. One can then get led back-and-forth amongst the various projections: from bat to baseball and back again, or by turning aside into balls, or so on. In principle, however, this means that the recursion which leads to the ever more fundamental projections need not become explicit (i.e., one need not take up those projections as the x of the next projection, in the iterative structure that Wrathall outlines). What makes a projection “more fundamental”? The closer it is to the “primary” projection, which is so-called because it is the condition on the others. In what sense is it a condition? Because it is that ‘*wherein*’ accessibility in the most general sense is maintained.⁸³ In other words, if one were to draw a tree diagram of projective relations for any x , the primary projection would *always* feature in the diagram, and in all those modifications of the diagram produced by recursion (i.e., by substituting a given y for x as the starting point of the diagram). The primary projection of the understanding is the common denominator of all recursive projection. Wrathall gestures to the exegetical demand for this common denominator—but leaves it aside—when he said that ‘ultimately...the possibilities must be projected onto time.’⁸⁴

How can we model this recursive projection? I previously suggested that projection should not be thought of as “making sense in terms of.” Rather, we should think of projection in somewhat more generic terms: “as given by” or “as accessible through.” Heidegger’s formal definition of the upon-which of a projection supports this: “To lay bare the “upon-which” of a projection, amounts to disclosing that which makes possible what has been projected,’⁸⁵ it is ‘to disclose what makes what is projected possible.’⁸⁶ Rather than

83. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 151, cf. *ibid.*, H. 324.

84. Wrathall, “Heidegger on Human Understanding,” 191.

85. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 324.

86. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 324.

saying that x makes sense in terms of y , then, y simply makes x possible.

From a certain perspective, this can look rather strange. Suppose that I have a bat in my hand. Following Wrathall, we can agree that I could project the bat upon the rules of baseball. But do the rules of baseball make possible the bat in my hand? They are certainly not a sufficient condition on it. Are they a necessary condition on it? Clearly, I need not project the bat onto such rules; I could instead project it onto gang violence. The link between the bat in my hand and the rules of baseball, then, needs to be that the bat is something which I *can*, but *need not*, project upon those rules.

Now, if I do in fact proceed to project that bat upon the rules of baseball, the product z of my projection is the bat in terms of (or as I would have it, “as given by”) the rules of baseball. The relationship between this bat and the rules of baseball is rather different than that between the bat, qua x . The “baseball bat”, z , does not have the luxury of *not* being projected upon baseball. Having been projected upon the rules of baseball is a condition on being z . In short, z and x are distinct. That x was available for me to project upon y relied upon me having access to x prior to y .

How does Dasein get access, in general? Through the understanding, and therefore through projection. As such, my projection of the bat upon the rules of baseball is reliant on a prior projection which provides my access to the bat that could, but need not, be projected upon those rules. What projections of the Wrathallian sort rely on, as such, is a prior projection of a precursor x (call it x_2), where this projection can give us as its z the x of the Wrathallian projection—i.e., the bat which can, but need not, be projected upon y . A sensible candidate for the y (call it y_2) of this precursor projection, would be a context of significance, or relational totality. Projected upon the relational totality, the precursor x_2 is projected as having *possible* interconnections, possible involvements. In other words, x_2 's projection onto y_2 lets us understand x_2 as x , because it adds to x_2 the possibility of

being projected upon y .

The precursor x_2 in turn needs to be accessible prior to its projection upon y_2 while also having y_2 as a condition on its possibility. Following the strategy from x 's case, we can cash y_2 's being a condition on x_2 by saying that x_2 must have a relation to y_2 prior to its actually being projected upon it. x_2 must already be accessible, in other words, as something that can, but need not, be projected upon y_2 . We can get this next layer of projection (call it the primitive projection, of x_3) simply by taking away from x_2 the possibility of being projected upon y_2 , just as we found x_2 by stripping x of the possibility of being projected upon y .

Working subtractively, primitive x_3 lacks the possibility of being projected upon a particular context of significance. Heidegger provides a phenomenological candidate fitting this description: the nothing, or as I have glossed it in chapter 2, sheer presence. What about sheer presence is it that precludes it from being projected upon a context of significance? Its illimitable character, or "utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude." There is always more to it that any particular order of sense-making, any particular context of significance, can encapsulate. Upon what could the nothing, x_3 , be projected, such that it will produce x_2 , which *can* be projected into a particular relational totality? It requires *individuation*. Its illimitable character must be cut down to size. So, upon what could the nothing, sheer presence, be projected in order to individuate it? Some schema of what it is to be an individual entity: e.g., being an item in a relational totality, the character of being ready-to-hand in general—Heideggerian worldhood. The structure of Heideggerian worldhood can, but need not, shatter sheer presence into a web of possibly related items; that's just the implication of Heidegger's claims that we can be, but are not always, anxious, and that the lack of significance in anxiety is not privative. The nothing, x_3 , projected upon worldhood (y_3) produces x_2 : what can be, but is not yet, an entity—an individuated,

isolated, piece of Merleau-Ponty's 'texture.'⁸⁷ In turn, x_2 can be projected upon a particular Heideggerian world, and produce x —that which can be projected this way or that (e.g., onto the rules of baseball) to be understood as this or that (e.g., as a baseball bat).

If worldhood is that upon-which the nothing is projected, in what sense is the nothing, x_3 , made possible by worldhood? At first glance, that it is so at all seems set against my characterisation of the nothing, in chapter 2, as that which is non-intelligible. To dispel the confusion, there is one further distinction to draw. In order for something to be projected upon worldhood, there still needs to be a certain degree of well-ordered structure to it. Specifically, because Heideggerian worldhood relies upon teleological relations broadly construed, whatever is projected upon it must in principle be temporally sequentialisable. The nothing, in the sense of x_3 , must already be available as that which can be temporally-teleologically structured. That is to say, it is not already structured qua worldhood, but it is such that it can be so structured. Working subtractively once again, we can determine what prior projection provides access to the nothing (qua x_3). We know that x_3 must be temporally sequential, in order to be projected upon worldhood. Subtracting this possibility from x_3 gives us x_4 : a *non-sequentialisable* sheer presence. This in turn needs to be projected upon some y_4 , to add to it a sequentialisable character, and thereby be x_3 . Upon what is non-sequentialisable sheer presence projected? What could make non-sequential presence possible, at the same time as producing sequential sheer presence?

To answer this question, it is important to remember that “non-sequentialisable” does not mean “static.” On the contrary, it means that it does not seem possible for it to be broken up into temporal pieces. Just as sheer presence (qua x_3) being broken up—made intelligible as this aspect or as that entity—does violence to it, so being broken up into

87. Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 147, and c.f. p.94ff. above.

temporal pieces does violence to it (qua x_4). Sheer presence, at root, is as infinitely dissimilar and utterly unitary *time-wise* as it is “space-wise.” In the sounding of a perfect cadence, the “V” may come before the “I”, but the temporal dividing line between those sounds is as impossible to fix absolutely as the contour that separates the apple from the air around it.⁸⁸ It is still quite impossible, though, to characterise temporal dynamism positively without recourse to something like the phrase “first, but then.” This, presumably, is why sequentiality is such a natural fit for giving intelligible structure to our temporal experience. Nevertheless, the dynamism to which “first, but then” gestures is, as chapter 3 tried to show, is not sequentiality. Any particular order one articulates is always lacking compared to the flow itself: just as the aspects which burst open in ‘dehiscence’ from the spatio-visual ‘texture’ do violence to that very fabric from which they are drawn—and even as they maintain in themselves the character of that texture as a ‘dimension.’⁸⁹ Perhaps this can be expressed more calmly by saying that the “first, but then” gives both the lie to and the justification for the thought that our experience forms a sequence. It justifies it, because *first* the nothing is one way, and *then* another. But it gives the lie to it, because the nothing never is *just one way*: every carving out one makes of it, arbitrary or not, still has within it the dynamism of this almost inexpressible: “first, but then”.

Back to the question, then, of what non-sequentialisable sheer presence could be projected upon to give sequentialisable sheer presence. Let us start with the point that y_4 must make non-sequential sheer presence possible. At a minimum, this means that y_4 must make the “churn” of sheer presence, that sheer presence is dynamic and not static, possible. What, for Heidegger, is the source of, or explains, time’s dynamism? As I ar-

88. ‘[T]hat gripping discovery... that there are no lines visible in themselves, that neither the contour of the apple nor the border between field and meadow is in *this* place or that, that they are always on the near or the far side of the point we look at.’ (Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 143)

89. *ibid.*, 147, and c.f. p.94 above.

gued in chapter 3, *primordial temporality*. Of course, I have not yet shown that primordial temporality is the source of, or explains, time's dynamism. Let us suppose for a moment, though, that primordial temporality *does* make possible time's dynamism.

The second criterion that y_4 needs to fulfil is that the nothing, as accessible through it, is transformed into the "sequentialisable" nothing, x_3 . Now it seems to me that the difficulty which I just before demonstrated, of articulating the non-sequentialisable nothing (x_4), well represents the way in which it is at the very limit of one's access to "catch a glimpse" of the nothing's flowing or "churn", *without* it appearing fit for ordering into some sequence—i.e., as fit for being projected upon worldhood. In the unfolding of time's dynamism, the "first, but then" is not a sequence but the unfolding itself—the character for which everyone falls back to the movement metaphor, unsuitable and circular as it may strictly be. Even so, since this unfolding is a "first, but then", it is impossible *not* to grasp what unfolds as a sequence. That broken metaphor of motion aside, the point remains that time's dynamism, as inappropriate as sequences are for capturing it, almost irresistibly presents the world as sequentialisable.

What prior projection makes accessible the nothing, such that it can be projected upon—accessed through, given by—primordial temporality (which, for now, is only a name for time's dynamism)? Well, here the phenomenological track runs out, because there is no such phenomenon as the nothing without time's dynamism. For Dasein, experience is axiomatically ensconced in time's dynamism. There is simply no access for Dasein to the perspective of an *ex tempore* entity. We are temporal through and through, in this sense. As such, *for Dasein*, there cannot be a prior projection of a genuinely atemporal state of affairs upon some y that will shake that projected item into enigmatically unfolding in the way that x_4 does. In every previous case, it has been possible to subtract from x its possibly being projected upon y , to give a prior x . Here, that is not possible: for

Dasein, there's no way to "stop time."

In each of the steps I have described down the vertical chain of projections, each projection has met the criterion of having the upon-which as the condition on the possibility of access to the x that is projected upon it. Clearly, however, the phenomenological locus of projection varies quite widely depending on what is being projected. On the one hand, if understanding is Dasein's access in general, then this wide variation ought arguably to be expected. Still, there is a significant divide between projecting sheer presence upon worldhood and projecting a bat upon baseball. One way to characterise this divide is that, the further one gets towards having concretely grasped the bat in terms of baseball, by projecting the former upon the latter, the closer one is to having an interpretation, and the further away one is from the understanding as the prerequisite of interpretation. There is a great deal of "horizontal" projection happening at the upper levels: bats onto baseball onto gloves and so on. But this horizontal projection is made possible by the vertical structure of projection which underpins it—the "within-which" of those uppermost projections. The particular model of vertical projection I have presented is surely just one way of cashing out what the layers between interpretative projection (projection as Wrathall describes it, the "top" layer of projection in my model) and the primary projection might be. The vertical structure is perhaps just as variable and contingent in its details as the horizontal structure. Primordial temporality can terminate the vertical chain because the projective structure involved is not contingent, but necessary. One cannot "suspend" time's dynamism, so there is no such thing as pre-temporal access to the nothing, and so no projection prior to that upon primordial temporality. One can, but need not, project the sequentialisable nothing onto worldhood; one can, but need not, project an entity onto significance; and one can, but need not, project an entity onto this or that other entity. Conversely, one cannot prevent the future from coming—one

cannot access sheer presence without time's dynamism.

This turns out to be the great weakness in Heidegger's strategy, and *Being and Time* ends with two questions that illustrate it.⁹⁰ They read:

Is there a way which leads from primordial *time* to the meaning of *Being*?
Does *time* itself manifest as the horizon of *Being*?⁹¹

These questions, I suggest, point as much to different possible outcomes of Heidegger's project, as they do threads of a unified line of enquiry. The first acknowledges precisely the difficulty that I have just outlined. Time's dynamism forms an impassable barrier to phenomenology. Could there be *ex tempore* Being? For phenomenology, at least, this is an impossible question to answer. The question is, as such: is there *any* way at all, that *Dasein* can peer beyond this limit? The second question then asks: should we instead look to justify our limit as *the* limit? In *Basic Problems*, Heidegger at one juncture mentions, but then sets aside, the question of whether projection 'does not open up a progressus in infinitum.'⁹² Later, he points to time as the limit of our phenomenological investigation's reach, but gestures at the finitude of time as a route for working around it: 'The series... of projections... has its end at... ecstatic temporality', but '[w]e cannot establish this here in a more primordial way; to do that we would have to go into the problem of the finiteness of time.'⁹³ And then, in a later passage again, he entertains the notion that time does form the limit, not for us alone but in general: 'time temporalizes itself as the absolutely earliest. Time is earlier than any possible earlier.'⁹⁴ As McManus notes, however,

90. Technically, it ends with three. But the first one is simply an acknowledgment of the need for the sketch of primordial temporality given in Division II to be more fully worked out: 'How is... the temporalizing temporality to be Interpreted?' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 437) For example, the book says barely anything about the "horizons" which give to primordial temporality a more detailed, differentiated structural character.

91. *Ibid.*

92. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 280.

93. *Ibid.*, 308.

94. *Ibid.*, 325.

Heidegger ‘[b]y 1929... seems to have lost faith in’ pursuing such questions.⁹⁵ Perhaps this is because, as much as sheer presence cannot do without time’s dynamism, time’s dynamism alone hardly seems to be a *sufficient* condition on sheer presence. Heidegger might provide us, yet, with a novel means of conceptualising time’s dynamism, but fixing the temporal mischaracterisation that he identified in *ουσία* as the sense of being does not, in the end, supply us with a revelation in the sense of “to be.” What sheer presence, what being held out into the nothing in anxiety, perhaps brings our attention to, roughly, is instead how there can be such “presence”—of whatever temporal character—at all. ‘Does the title for the task of thinking then read, instead of *Being and Time: Clearing and Presence?*’⁹⁶ Nevertheless, although the recursive structure of projection might bottom out in time’s dynamism, and although this is a major problem for *Being and Time*’s pursuit of fundamental *ontology*, it is, I submit, as an exercise in phenomenology rather instructive. After all, before fundamental ontology can fulfil its task and answer the question of the meaning of being,⁹⁷ it must first of all have a grasp on what this question asks about.⁹⁸ If, as Heidegger says, phenomenology’s value to ontology and philosophy as a whole is in its making ‘fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*’, if ‘to the things themselves!’ is a maxim worth taking up, then *Being and Time* contributes an important clarification about what the sources that philosophy “arises” and “returns” to are—*if, that is, it does provide us with a novel means of characterising time’s dynamism.*

95. McManus, “Ontological Pluralism and the Being and Time Project,” 666-668.

96. Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” 449.

97. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 11.

98. *ibid.*, H. 1, and cf. §6.A above.

Does Heidegger provide a novel means of characterising time's dynamism? Does he, as such, provide a temporal character which fits the pared down access to the nothing that we have in, for example, anxiety? And does he therefore provide us with a clarification of what the question of the meaning of being is rooted in: those "primordial sources" from which philosophy "arises" and to which it "returns"?

Heidegger does, I argue, provide us with a novel means of characterising time's dynamism; under the heading of primordial temporality. I proceed in §11.A to articulate the structure of primordial temporality, and demonstrate that this structure necessitates that time's distinctive character cannot not obtain. In the course of doing this, I will show that primordial temporality escapes a reliance upon sequentiality or metaphors of flow. Indeed, primordial temporality's non-sequentiality and its necessitation of timeliness will turn out closely intertwined.

Decoupling sequentiality from timeliness results in the inapplicability of temporal concepts which rely on the former, such as duration, to primordial temporality. As a result, one question that opens for us is that of Dasein's persistence or "stretch" in primordial terms. Dasein exists "from" birth "to" death, a characteristic which intuitively involves a great deal of time (for Dasein). With duration unavailable, and the ordinary notion of persistence over time unavailable, Heidegger needs to provide an alternative means for characterising the lifetime belonging to Dasein. I reconstruct his reflections in §11.B, examining in the process how the traditional conception of time runs up against its own difficulties when trying to characterise the duration of experiences or experiencing.

In examining Heidegger's reframing of Dasein's "stretch", we encounter Heidegger differentiating between "authentic" and "inauthentic" forms of primordial temporality.

As such, I turn in §11.C to examine in greater detail the ways in which primordial time can be differentiated in Dasein, and perhaps more importantly what such differentiation consists in. In so doing, I highlight some ways in which primordial temporality “interacts” with the more familiar temporalities (e.g., of hermeneutic and apophantic access).

Finally, in §11.D I briefly draw together the threads of chapters 3 and 4, and conclude with a reflection on whether Heidegger’s account of time has helped to clarify the “primordial sources” whose obscuration we set out, at the start of chapter 1, with the aim of dispersing.

A. ECSTATIC NON-SEQUENTIALITY

The key feature of primordial temporality, according to Heidegger, is that it is “ecstatic”: ‘temporality manifest[s] as the *έκστατικόν* pure and simple.’⁹⁹ This being-outside-of-itself is intended to shine some light on the suggestion that ‘[t]emporality is not ... an entity’, but rather ‘a process of temporalizing in the unity of the ecstases.’¹⁰⁰ Yet the idea that there is a “process” of “temporalizing”, and what that would have to do with the “ecstases”, appears to be left hanging by Heidegger. We know only that this ecstatic temporalizing is critical to the novel account of time Heidegger is working towards, because it is this ‘ecstatic character’ which is ‘levelled off’ in all ‘ordinary’ consideration of time.¹⁰¹ As to “what” it is, and why it might help with either Dasein’s unity or its grasp of being, has been seen to remain mysterious.

This absence of substance at the fulcrum of Heidegger’s project has been a source of irritation for his readers. Sacha Golob, searching for the missing explanation in the *Basic*

99. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 329.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

Problems, writes: ‘over 300 pages into a text that is intended to supplement a text which was itself over 400 pages long ... Heidegger finally delivers a specific example’ supposedly illuminative of ecstatic temporality, ‘[b]ut from a philosophical perspective, what [he] has delivered is colossally disappointing ... so unspecified as to be more a label for the gap in [his] argument than the completion of it.’¹⁰²

One aspect of why Heidegger’s deliverances turn out to be such a “colossal disappointment” concerns what is at stake with primordial temporality on many commentators’ readings: a unified horizon of being. In Golob’s gloss, temporality ought as such to provide a basic or fundamental case of what he calls a *prototype*—a conceptual but non-propositional exemplar of the relations by which an entity can be made of sense of, i.e., a source of prior familiarity with those relations by which Dasein is able to encounter the entity that it encounters.¹⁰³ Such a unified horizon for being is a hard ask, no matter the gloss. The putative temporal horizon would need to convince us that it is indeed the common denominator for all being. Not as it were, versus other rival candidates, so much as against the thought that there is simply no such unified horizon—no single, absolute common sense of being from which all others draw. As McManus notes, ‘if there is no subject-matter—no common issue on the basis of which we talk when we use ontological talk—then how entities are with respect to that matter can no more be shown than it can be said.’¹⁰⁴ Heidegger is not oblivious to the height of these stakes or the difficulty in living up to them, both Golob and McManus agree. For Golob, Heidegger is ‘completely open’ as to the extant *Being and Time*’s failure to close the issue of a unified horizon.¹⁰⁵ For McManus, ‘whether philosophy ought to “aim at the whole” was—at least briefly—a live

102. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 143–4.

103. *Ibid.*, 108ff.

104. McManus, “Ontological Pluralism and the Being and Time Project,” 670.

105. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 141.

issue' for the younger Heidegger, and *Being and Time's* pursuit of a unified horizon 'represents a conservative response' to that thought, 'an attempt to make good on the glimpsed possibility that such radicalism might prove unnecessary.'¹⁰⁶

Such negative assessments of Heidegger's work on time stem in part, I suggest, from the quiet assumption that the novelty in Heidegger's position will come through an account of how time provides just such a unifying horizon for being. That is to say, Heidegger's account of time will be philosophically interesting because it will show that horizon. To be clear, this is not at all an unreasonable assumption, since Heidegger has advertised from the start that it is because time will be a horizon for being that he will pursue it. As Golob notes in claiming that Heidegger is aware of his shortcomings, the text ends with the disclaimer, expressed as a question, that the horizon of being has yet to be brought into view: 'Does time itself manifest as the horizon of being?'¹⁰⁷ This thought sits easily with the common view, which I explored in chapter 3, that Division II is not really discussing time or timeliness when it discusses Dasein's primordial temporality. As Golob puts it, the discussions of Division II should be understood as a discussion of the temporal aspects of being human, *Zeitlichkeit*, and the implications of this for the character of time and timeliness are best separated under the heading of *Temporalität*, which is primarily left aside for the (never written) later divisions:

[A]t crucial moments, Heidegger begins but then abandons the *Temporalität* argument. For example, SZ: 365 states that it will explain how time qua horizon enables our familiarity with the world, that is, how '[t]he existential-temporal condition for the possibility of world lies in the fact that temporality... has something like a horizon. (SZ: 365)' But what we then get is not a temporal analysis of world at all, but simply a reiteration of the nontemporal structures for which we need temporal prototypes.¹⁰⁸

106. McManus, "Ontological Pluralism and the Being and Time Project," 671.

107. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H.437.

108. Golob, *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*, 141.

The missing explanation of the “horizontality” of primordial temporality towards which Heidegger gestures in Division II is alighted upon, then, as a missing explanation of primordial temporality qua time and timeliness. But while it is not unfair to say that this topic suffers from something of a lacuna in Division II, I submit that it is not true to say that we are left empty-handed with regard to the distinctive character of time that Heidegger has set out to provide. In other words, while we might not get as clear an answer as we should as to how time is horizontal for being, we are given an orientation in what Heidegger’s novel sense of time is—the sense of time which, in principle, would then later be shown to be horizontal for being. In dissociating Division II’s discussions of primordial temporality from time, this connection is lost, and we are forced to turn to other texts alone to fill the gap. This is problematic if, in fact, key aspects of Heidegger’s account of time are in Division II after all. It’s worth noting, for this reason, that the division of labour between *Zeitlichkeit* and *Temporalität* made by many readers is not as clear-cut as is sometimes assumed. Heidegger’s plan of the text locates *Temporalität* only in Part Two of the treatise, *after* the end of his discussion of time and being in Division III of Part One. Notably, Division III would have dealt directly with *Zeit* (and *Sein*). We might, as such, best understand “the problem of *Temporalität*” as the application of Heidegger’s novel sense of *Zeit*, delivered on the basis of his observations of our *Zeitlichkeit*, to the history of philosophy which had unknowingly achieved a problematic misconstrual of the sense of being.

I noted before that primordial temporality appears to remain mysterious in Division II because Heidegger does not seem able to move us beyond the vague articulation that temporality “temporalizes.” While I will not defend the quality of Heidegger’s presentation on this matter, I do want to argue that despite initial appearances, Division II *does* contain an explanation of what this “temporalizing” is.

First, there is an important sense in which the “verb-ing” of temporality is not meant itself to be revelatory, but rather, plausible *prima facie*. This is because it is intended, in part, to signpost that the phenomenon under consideration is time in its distinctive experienced character—i.e., that it is dynamic, or “flows”. Of course, the purpose of the exercise is to move us beyond the metaphor of motion—but this does not mean that we cannot lean on the metaphor when identifying the phenomenon after which we are asking. Furthermore, since—as we are about to see—the path out beyond the metaphor involves some structural talk, this signposting of temporality’s dynamism serves to discourage us from allowing our judgments about it to become free-floating. Pointing out temporality as not merely “being” or “having” a certain structure, but “temporalizing itself” in virtue of its structure, is one way of saying that its structure has directly to do with timeliness—with time’s dynamism.¹⁰⁹

Second, “temporalizing” appears undeveloped because it is easy to miss that the foregoing *prima facie* sense is *necessitated* by the ecstatic structure of primordial temporality. In other words, rather than revealing some deeper, hidden or revelatory sense in which time could be said to be dynamic, Heidegger will instead provide the structural framework by which we can intelligibly articulate the fact that it is *prima facie* dynamic. It is this intelligible articulation or structural explanation of time’s dynamism which was the problem, after all—not the question of whether or not time *is*, for Dasein, dynamic. In short, the strategy Heidegger employs is to provide a structural account of Dasein’s temporality which entails time’s distinctive character. Here we have the basic strategy for moving beyond the flow metaphor. We can articulate time’s character through providing a structure for it which makes it impossible to ignore or occlude this phenomenon. How does the structure of primordial temporality, then, entail temporalizing?

109. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 328.

The key to answering this question is in the implications of Heidegger's proposal that primordial temporality is "ecstatic."¹¹⁰ That the primordial past, present and future are ecstatic means that they are not self-contained, but rather outside of themselves (ἔκστασις, displacement, being besides oneself; literally, out- [ἐκ-] place [στάσις]). As Heidegger puts it, for example, 'the "ahead" includes the notion of the "before" ',¹¹¹ and the ecstasis of the present is 'included in the future and in having been.'¹¹² Since they are all equally intermingled in the others, there is no ecstasis which can be alighted upon as primary. None constitutes the others without being constituted by them in return; they sit in 'equiprimordially' with each other.¹¹³ This interdependence makes them inseparable: they come together, or not at all. As *Basic Problems* describes it, in an echo of *Being and Time's* talk of their being the ἐκστατικόν:

Within itself, original time is outside of itself; that is the nature of its temporalizing. That is to say, it is not something that first might be extant as a thing and thereafter outside itself, so that it would be leaving itself behind itself. Instead, within its own self, intrinsically, it is nothing but the outside-itself pure and simple.¹¹⁴

Each ecstasis inexorably demands the others, as if they were intrinsic to it, even though they are distinct. This gives the ecstases both a *unity* and a *structural instability*. They are a unity not because they can be genuinely made into one, but because one without the others is impossible. They are "structurally unstable" because the essential character of each ecstasis is to lead to the others—as if the essential nature of a thing was "to be something other than that thing". A lone ecstasis is nonsense—be that one on its own, or all three

110. Whilst these implications, which we are about to work through, are set out in Division II, I argue, it is inarguably a fair observation that Heidegger does a poor job of structuring their presentation and making clear the force of the connection between the initial claim and its implications.

111. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 328.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., H. 329.

114. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 267.

in a complete and indistinguishable union—because they are in equal measure entirely interdependent and yet distinct.

This intertwining of the past, present and future in primordial temporality is only a preliminary, however. Crucially, Heidegger deepens the sense in which the ecstases are intertwined by further claiming that they are non-sequential with respect to each other:

Temporalizing does not signify that ecstases come in a ‘succession’. The future is *not later* than having been, and having been is *not earlier* than the Present.¹¹⁵

That the ecstases are not sequential goes hand-in-hand with the claim that they are intertwined: it entails that their entwinement goes “every which way”, and not only in the usual cyclic order. This means that we shouldn’t understand their overstepping into each other as the “flow” of one moment to the next by another name: it is not that, in being ecstases, one “flows” into another. The well-ordered boundaries that lend themselves to the very notion of “flowing” from past times into future times by means of present times are eliminated.

Crucially, in virtue of this lack of internal sequence amongst the ecstases, they also lack the limits that this sequence would provide. If sequenced as past-present-future, we should expect the past as one limit and the future as another: units of a repeating phenomenon in which whatever is present is bookended by past and future. But since the ecstases are not sequenced, it is not true that they “begin” with the past ecstasis and “end” with the futural ecstasis. Insofar as one ecstasis “leads” to another, it connects equiprimordially to both of the others. There is, therefore, no sense in which the familiar “past-present-future” triplet is constitutive of a single “case” of the ecstases, which could be

115. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 350.

contrasted with other such cases: ‘temporality does not first arise through a cumulative sequence of the ecstasies.’¹¹⁶

If primordial temporality is not a sequence—of the ecstases or otherwise—then in what way can it capture our experience of dynamism? Structurally: it is impossible for the ecstases to be construed as static, given what has been stipulated about them. To make this clear, let us recall the discussion of the “now” in chapter 1.¹¹⁷ A traditional “now” is static because, even though our experience tells us that it should have a transitionary or dynamic character, it shares with, e.g., the pure synthesis of a perfectly present-at-hand comportment, a momentary structure: that whatever is within the moment is unqualifiedly the case within it. When one comports in a pure synthesis, e.g., “the table is white”, one leaves nothing out: “the table” being “white” is the be all and end all of the pure synthesis. Compare with a comportment that is better grounded in the subject matter: one attends to the table, and says, “the table is white”, yet if prompted as to whether this truly exhausts the table’s colour-character, one adds: “Yes, white; apart from the greys of the shadows, and the black mark of a rogue pen, and what might be the pallid red of a food stain.” In other words, genuine phenomena are difficult to capture in their entirety—difficult to exhaust. Objects of pure synthesis, by comparison, are by nature exhausted in our judgments about them, because the judgment by which they are comported towards exhausts them. Temporal moments, of course, are not produced by our judgments. But, they are in principle exhaustible in the same way that the object of a pure synthesis is exhausted by our judgment about it. It might be that only God’s epistemic apparatus would be potent enough to reach such a judgment while being accurate, but nevertheless, the nature of the “now” makes it possible to exhaustively inventory what is within it. That

116. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 329.

117. See p.49 above.

which is in the now *is*—that is the essence of how Heidegger construes being qua ουσία. And, since there is nothing about the structure of a “now” which entails the transitionary character which we experience qua time, the “now” is in its own way eternal: in itself it is totally and utterly unchanging. For what is within one “now” to change and be different is simply for a different “now” to have, by some means, come along in the first one’s place. Each “now” is static in and of itself, because it consists—as a pure synthesis does—of some set which exhausts it (the set can be of facts, or judgments, or so on—one could apply the moment-structure to different domains, in principle).

The ecstases therefore provide an alternative structural character to that of the moment. The exhaustion characteristic of the moment is impossible within the structure of the ecstases: any given ecstasis leads out of itself, so no ecstasis can be construed on its own as a momentary structure; but more significantly, since the ecstases are not sequential, *there is no beginning or end by which one might mark out a single “case” of them*, and thus no way to subsume that case under the momentary structure. An “ecstatic moment” as such is impossible.

The impossibility of an ecstatic moment means that the ecstases necessitate that anything structured by them is not static, i.e., is dynamic: it is the structural essence of the ecstases to step outside of themselves into each other—i.e., if Dasein is ecstatic, then it is impossible for it, temporally, to become stuck within the grasp of a single moment. This internal instability provides the mechanism, as it were, for the radical openness which characterises Dasein’s futurity: Dasein is open because it cannot be closed, because it cannot exist merely “in” a certain time. Primordial temporality does not toss Dasein, flowing, down the timeline’s river; it instead captures the impossibility of Dasein becoming stuck in a closed, fixed moment. It necessitates dynamism.

The ecstatic structure goes some way to capturing, I submit, the difficult-to-express

character of lived temporal experience. For example, it goes some way to capture the “fuzzy-edged” span of our window onto the world, in its temporal dimension: if Dasein’s access in general is temporally ecstatic, it would not have a “duration”—and thus a clearly defined limit—in the way one might expect of, say, a specious present (§11.b discusses this point further). Access would not consist in a single moment, nor in any countable (or uncountable) number thereof—i.e., not in a duration. Rather, the temporal structure of access mirrors the difficulty of pinning down what the boundary of the specious present is. For example, suppose I hear an oscillating harp glissando, played *presto*. For a certain subset of the oscillation—say, every four semiquavers or thereabouts—the notes pass by so quickly as to make picking them out independently almost impossible. Were the four played in isolation, they might come across as a “gesture” more than a phrase (e.g., they might be employed to create an accent, in place of a single *marcato* note). Yet, of course, the ongoing oscillation is very much a phrase: an ongoing, undulating bed of sound. Carving up this flickering texture into constituent parts seems almost impossible as a descriptive exercise; at least, doing so without obliterating the proximal effect seems so. Ecstatic temporality helps capture this, by emphasising that what is most notable about our time experience is the sense of instability: no matter whether one starts with a single note, a fraction of that note, a four-note subphrase, or the entire texture, the ecstatic structure directs us to the fact that, time-wise, the character of what we have alighted on is bound up with an instability: that it will give way to a different character, no matter how or which way we choose to try and carve up the phenomenon into discrete moments.

Dasein’s primordial temporality, then, is not about how its future goals and past context combine to contextualise and release what is presented to it as meaningful in a certain way. It is, rather, an attempt to express structurally the openness and indeterminacy of our temporal experience. That we always already are in a particular way (the ecstatic

past), combines with the radical instability in which we are necessarily open rather than fixed (the ecstatic future), to release our dynamic experience: the ecstatic present, or as Heidegger calls it, the *moment of vision*. This is why Heidegger insists that the primordial present is misunderstood if construed in terms of the “now”:

This term must be understood in the active sense as an ecstasis. ... [A] phenomenon which *in principle* can *not* be clarified in terms of the “now”.... ‘In the moment of vision’ nothing can occur; but ... [it] permits us *to encounter for the first time* what can be ‘in a time’ as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand.¹¹⁸

It is because the primordial present is an ecstasis that it cannot be understood in terms of the traditional “now.” This is both a structural and a phenomenological claim: ecstatic structure is a *rival* to the traditional structure, but this is underwritten by the fact that the traditional structure struggles to articulate phenomenologically our experience of time, where comparatively the ecstatic structure entails that distinctive and difficult character.

B. REPETITION AND DASEIN’S “STRETCH”

To further answer the question of why ecstatic structure is a good fit for capturing the character of timeliness, let me turn to the way that Heidegger talks about Dasein’s “duration”, and with it how primordial temporality can elude some difficulties that we would face with a more traditional conception of time—namely, difficulties in characterising the duration and dynamism of what is often called the specious present.

When Heidegger describes the ecstases in their unity as constituting a ‘repetition’,¹¹⁹ he does not indicate their division into “copies” of themselves. Rather, as we saw, the ecstases’ lack of bounds denies that their unity be limited to any single moment, or duration

118. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 338.

119. *Ibid.*, H. 385.

of moments, temporal or otherwise. There is no structural boundary by which one might delineate a single case of such an ecstatic unity, where what follows and precedes that case are further such cases. But if so, what sense can there be to saying that the ecstases form a “repetition”?

To answer this question, I am first going to take a brief detour away from Heidegger and into some recent literature concerning the duration of experiences and the specious present. Against the difficulties exhibited in this discussion, the benefits of Heidegger’s alternative approach—which does not solve those difficulties, but rather avoids them altogether—will hopefully become visible. Let us begin with the observation that there is, in virtue of the ecstases’ lack of bounds, nothing on which to pin the start and the end of a clock-time duration by which the scope of an ecstatic unity might be measured. We can make a comparison here to the difficulty with the question of how long an experience is. As Michael Tye puts it:

[There is a] general difficulty we face in individuating experiences through time. Consider an ordinary visual experience and suppose that it is exclusively visual. When did it begin? When will it end?¹²⁰

Tye’s response is to deny that there are individuable experiences distinct from what he calls streams of consciousness: ‘a temporally extended experience that represents a flow of things in the world.’¹²¹ When one wakes up, one begins to experience, and one continues experiencing until one falls asleep or otherwise loses consciousness, and this whole stream—delimited only by the loss of content in unconsciousness—is one single experience. ‘It has not shorter experiences as parts.’¹²² Christoph Hoerl denies this one-experience

120. Michael Tye, *Consciousness and Persons: Unity and Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 98.

121. *Ibid.*, 107–108.

122. *Ibid.*, 108.

claim, contesting that there is a way in which we can distinguish experiences within the scope of a Tyeian stream:

[T]here is in fact a feature of the phenomenology of experience (and indeed an introspectible feature) that we can point to in support of a particular way of individuating experiences (or at least the maximum length that any one experience can span) that is very different from that envisaged by the one-experience view. That feature is that we can directly perceive some instances of movement or change, but not others.¹²³

His argument begins with a passage from C. D. Broad:

[L]ook at the second-hand of a watch or look at a flickering flame. These are experiences of a quite unique kind; we could no more describe what we sense in them to a man who had never had such experiences than we could describe a red colour to a man born blind. It is also clear that to see a second-hand moving is a quite different thing from ‘seeing’ that an hour-hand has moved.

‘But what’, Hoerl asks, ‘explains why the movement of the second-hand is visible, whereas that of the hour-hand is invisible?’¹²⁴ According to Broad, it is their interaction with the specious present: ‘two qualitatively distinguishable sections of a single long event are too far separated to be sensed together.’¹²⁵ And Russell says also: ‘The difference is that, in the quick movement, the whole falls within the specious present, so that the entire process is sensible.’¹²⁶ This is what Hoerl calls the individuation argument:

[W]hat explains why you can see the second-hand moving but not the hour-hand is just this: the period of time that individual perceptual experiences

123. Christoph Hoerl, “A Succession of Feelings, in and of Itself, is Not a Feeling of Succession,” *Mind* 122, no. 486 (2013): 397.

124. *Ibid.*, 386–7.

125. Charlie Dunbar Broad, *Scientific Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1923), 352.

126. Bertrand Russell, *An Outline of Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1927), 205.

can span is limited, with the term ‘the specious present’ denoting the maximal interval that an individual experience can span. The second-hand traverses enough space within that maximum interval for you to be able to visually discriminate several of the positions it occupies within that interval. Thus, when you look at the second-hand, you see it moving.¹²⁷

The individuation argument, as Hoerl has it, rests on the idea that some flowing changes occur at too small a rate to perceptibly fit inside the minimum individual experience, and thus don’t present with the distinctive quality of motion. We see the second hand move, but we only see the hour hand occupying different discrete locations on the clockface. This seems to leave open the possibility that, in the case of a smoothly-moving second hand, its visible motion should nevertheless be made up of ‘changes in position too small for us to perceive.’¹²⁸ So Hoerl introduces the constraint that what makes the difference is whether the position of an object at ‘the beginning of *the interval covered by one specious present* and its position at the end’ are visually discriminable.¹²⁹

Hoerl’s position has, then, two observations central to it. First, the observation which he finds in Broad and Russell, that *any change which is only perceptible over times longer than the specious present will not appear as motion*. Second, the observation that *any perceptible changes which fit inside the specious present will present as motion*. In his words:

I can make out that the movement of the second-hand on the watch I am wearing right now is not entirely uniform. And this is so because the second-hand does undergo visually discernible changes in position already at intervals that are shorter than the specious present. Moreover, because it does so, my experience would have that level of fine-grainedness even if the second-hand in fact appeared to be moving uniformly—the experience would make it apparent to me that the movement was uniform down to a certain time scale.¹³⁰

127. Hoerl, “A Succession of Feelings, in and of Itself, is Not a Feeling of Succession,” 388.

128. *Ibid.*, 390.

129. *Ibid.*

130. *Ibid.*, 392.

There is a tension here. Hoerl initially appears to see motion as constituted by changes measured against the *limits* of the specious present. That is to say, one detects motion if and only if the object's location is perceptibly different at the end, *relative to the beginning*, of the specious present. But this is false: one also detects motion (and, presumably, the cessation of motion) so long as it *fits within* the specious present. For example, if some entity *a* moves from point *x* to point *y*, *and then back again*, it is conceivable that one will perceive this motion even if the entire process takes place within the duration of the specious present (making *a*'s position identical at the beginning and end of the specious present). So Hoerl's position, ultimately, has to be that one will perceive intra-temporal change (e.g., motion) if and only if the *change is perceptible over a period of time equal to or less than the duration of the specious present*.

However, this idea brings with it the problem of *interpolation*. If we treat the specious present as a duration (Hoerl suggests one second), then for any longer duration there will be a discrete number of such specious presents. This causes interpolation errors: a movement over 10ms which is perceptible, but which is imperceptible over 5ms, might begin towards the end of one specious present and end at the beginning of another, and so only one—or possibly neither!—of the specious presents would then feature movement.

The interpolation problem can be solved by saying that the specious present does not form a sequence of discrete, fixed durations into which content must fit, but rather places a constraint on what content will show up in what manner. Thus any content which is shorter than the constraining duration will show as moving; with no issues of interpolation.

Hoerl is at least committed to the idea that the duration of the specious present is the limiting factor, if not a *mere* limit, on the binding of content into a single experience: '*do-re-mi* sound in succession... and these experiences can make up one overall experience

simply because the three tones fall within the scope of one specious present.’¹³¹ This still causes interpolation issues if the specious present is not a mere constraint, however. If specious presents are discrete and contiguous—that is, their durations are fixed in clock-time and one begins when the previous one ends—then *do-re-mi* will form one experience, and *fa-so-la* another. But this is not right: we hear *do-re-mi*, and we hear *re-mi-fa*, and we hear *mi-fa-so*, and then *fa-so-la*. (Indeed, even this characterisation seems insufficient: for what one hears is not each of these modifications, but a single scale which ascends.) We do not experience a ‘break’, in any case, between *mi* and *fa*. Nor is it the case that when we hear *mi* and *fa* connected, the spread of experience shortens: we hear *re-mi-fa*, or *mi-fa-so*. Unless, therefore, the specious present is never something actual, but only ever a kind of logical constraint, then either specious presents overlap each other, or there are no discrete specious presents (i.e., they must somehow form “on demand”). Nevertheless, Hoerl often seems to think that specious presents are discrete. For example:

I could hear each of the three tones in isolation [rather than as part of the same experience] ... if I had three successive experiences, each of specious-present length, in which I heard one of the tones, but in which the rest of the specious present is filled with silence.¹³²

If specious presents were instead *not* discrete and contiguous, such a case would only render isolated tone-experiences *some* of the time; specifically, any specious present beginning *after* the start but before the end of a tone would overlap with the next tone. (Imagine a specious present as a bar of music in 3/4 time. If the tone falls on the second beat only one hears the tones in isolation. But this means the specious present, like the bar lines, must be discrete and contiguous. Elsewise, the non-contiguous bar-length which begins on the second beat will also reach to include the next tone, and the two .) Similarly, in a

131. Hoerl, “A Succession of Feelings, in and of Itself, is Not a Feeling of Succession,” 412.

132. Ibid.

case where *do-re-mi* fits inside our specious present, Hoerl says we could only be aware of discrete tones *if* our specious present was shorter: ‘we can conceive of ... the same succession of tones ... hear[d] ... in isolation ... doing so would involve conceiving of a situation in which my specious present is shorter than it actually is.’¹³³ If specious presents were not discrete and contiguous, every specious present but three (those which exactly align with the objective duration of each tone) would overlap with the next tone. One would never get the complete *do-re-mi*, but one would get *do-re* or *re-mi* for the majority of the time. Hoerl does therefore have in mind discrete, contiguous specious presents, which would render these tones in isolation. But, of course, Hoerl’s view therefore suffers greatly from the interpolation problem, because whether one hears isolated or connected tones depends on whether the discrete specious presents line up, or not, with the tone-events.

Elsewhere, Hoerl does seem to entertain the specious present as a constraint: ‘the specious present ... denote[s] the maximum length of time experience *can* span.’¹³⁴ It seems to me that the most promising way of reading this claim is that movement is perceived just when a perceptible change occurs for which the last perception against which that change is perceptible was less than the maximal interval—of the specious present—ago. This is compatible with a lower limit too. As the hand moves, I am constantly comparing my perception with my previous perceptions. I only perceive movement in cases where the elapsed time between the perceptions has allowed for enough change for the difference to be perceptible. Though, curiously, this does leave us with some rather odd indeterminacies. For example, if I am watching the second hand of my watch when it stops on account of mechanical failure, it will be further ahead than my final perception of it suggests. This is because, unless the hand stopped instantaneously, its movement rate will pass below

133. Hoerl, “A Succession of Feelings, in and of Itself, is Not a Feeling of Succession,” 412.

134. *Ibid.*, 395, emphasis added.

the visible threshold before it stops completely. This produces the strange result that either I see the hand in the correct position, but without seeing it move there; or, I see the hand in the wrong position. But in any case, and crucially, construing the specious present as a mere constraint leaves us with a difficult question: what implements the constraint? In other words, if we turn the specious present into nothing more than a logical constraint on which perceptual cases are going to involve motion or other intra-temporal phenomena, we wind up losing whatever explanatory power, qua those phenomena, we hoped the specious present might have.

For Hoerl, this is a non-issue, because he firmly pushes away any explanation of the ‘unfold[ing]’ of time from the phenomenological sphere.¹³⁵ In his view, as ‘experiencing is itself conceived of as something that unfolds over time’, there is no need for the phenomenological broadly construed—including, as such, the specious present—to assist with the question of what this “unfolding” of time consists in (which, in turn, is what the perceived motion is itself constituted in).¹³⁶ The problem with this approach is that in forcing the character of the unfolding of time “one step back”—out of phenomenology and into a metaphysics of “external” time—Hoerl misses that what is problematic about time’s unfolding and the intra-temporal phenomena it constitutes is how to understand the structure of such unfolding without obliterating what phenomenological observation reveals about it. For example, we can see through the interpolation problem that a discrete specious present is incompatible with phenomenological observation. Does turning the specious present into a constraint solve this? No, because the specious present no longer claims to express a structure of experience, but only a constraint that that structure must fulfil—the actual unfolding of intra-temporal motion is no longer the domain of a

135. Hoerl, “A Succession of Feelings, in and of Itself, is Not a Feeling of Succession,” 375.

136. *Ibid.*, 380.

specious present, but of whatever external notion explains the unfolding of time in general. This is deeply problematic from the Heideggerian viewpoint, because the concepts which we use in thinking about that external world are themselves infected with the particular temporal character of the present. As was argued in §8, any attempt at characterising the unfolding of time within such a framework is doomed from the start, because the framework of momentariness makes it impossible, in the final analysis, to provide a satisfactory explanation of the step from one such moment to another. As such, turning the specious present into a constraint and pushing back its explanatory role qua unfolding onto the external is no help.

Tye's conception, by contrast to Hoerl, doesn't attempt to carve experience up into blocks of the specious present, but in so focusing upon the apparent indivisibility of experience it collapses back into the familiar metaphor: experience is a 'stream' which is 'sometimes calm and smooth' and sometimes 'rough and turbulent.'¹³⁷ Like '[s]trems of water' experience 'flow[s]'.¹³⁸ Not only does Tye's concept of a 'stream' rely so heavily on the metaphors which we have already noted as problematic, Tye's characterisation also has a murky relationship with sequentiality. For, even if a stream of experience from morning to night is not constituted out of parts (e.g., moments), it is not clear in what terms its length is delimited. Presumably, if experiences are individuated by periods of unconsciousness, they are the sort of thing which might be held up in comparison to one another—including in terms of their length. But if a stream of experience has a length, then *prima facie* it is subject to a metric—i.e., to being measured through the counting of the nows, through the ticking of the clock.

Unlike Tye's streams or Hoerl's specious present (whether discrete or a mere con-

137. Tye, *Consciousness and Persons: Unity and Identity*, 108.

138. *Ibid.*

straint) which have—in virtue of, if nothing else, their commensurability to each other—lengths, Dasein’s stretch is *uncountable*. It is uncountable because there is no delineable boundary which goes to define a single, countable unity of the ecstases. For both Tye and Hoerl, *length* is a central issue in trying to characterise experience. But it is one that causes them great difficulty. As we have seen, attributing an actual, discrete length to the specious present—to an “episode” of experience—is difficult because it produces interpolation errors. Moreover, as made particularly clear when using longer intervals as Tye does, such lengths fall prey to the usual metaphors when attempting to characterise them. One encounters the same problem by a different route when attributing length as a mere constraint, because one is led inexorably to ask in what way the constraint is implemented; a question which too readily turns back to the metaphors, or at least pushes the question out onto the general time-structure from which the metaphors and the problem of dynamism arise. But when we try to fix our window of experience, or the specious present, in mind, is it really at all obvious that there is anything like a *clear* boundary to it? Is asking after its length a sensible enterprise in the first place? Is it right to construe the metaphorical movement of the specious present as the progress of a bounded extension—a duration—over an infinite sequence of moments? To the contrary, it seems to me that the experience of the moving, voluminous present is not exactly or precisely bounded at all.

Heidegger characterises Dasein’s stretch—our sense of temporal elongation, if you will—by saying that Dasein ‘*hands itself down to itself*’,¹³⁹ in such a way as to constitute a ‘*repetition of a possibility of existence*’.¹⁴⁰ If my gloss on projection and primordial temporality is right, then what Heidegger has in mind by this “handing down” is not a sourcing

139. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 384.

140. *Ibid.*, H. 385.

of Dasein's way of being from its prior self or other prior sources, but an expression of its ecstatic structure. Namely, what is handed down and repeated is not a possibly-actual way of being, nor even a context of significance, but Dasein's ownmost existential structure—i.e., the ecstases “hand down” themselves.

The German is, I think, revealing here. Macquarrie and Robinson's ‘handing down’ is *Überlieferung*. Typically, this means handing down (*überliefern*) in the sense by which a tradition provides deliverance (e.g., in the way that a body of lore, myth or wisdom might deliver one over to a certain understanding—and, broadly construed, save or assist one therethrough). The etymology of *liefern* (supplied, provided with, delivered to), however, leads us back through the equivalent Old French *livrer*, to the Latin *liberare*: to free or liberate, to release or deliver over. Quite different, then, to the image of a prior, superior source providing direction for a subordinate—Dasein's being handed down to is its being freed: a release from fixedness. Placing this in the context of ecstatic-temporal projection, we can make sense of the *über-*, which provides the sense that this is not a passing-down from sender to receiver, but a bridging-over. Dasein hands itself down to itself. In a slightly less Heideggerian idiom: existence bridges over to *itself*, in virtue of its ecstatic character. It is not that Dasein hands down a way of being from its past incarnation to its future incarnation, but that its ecstatic structure spins itself out. Dasein's being “stretched” is a direct upshot of its *not* being capturable within a single moment.

We can make further sense of this if we turn to Heidegger's use of “repetition.” ‘Repetition’ [*Wiederholung*] also reveals an enlightening etymological connection, since *holen* is interconnected with the Greek *καλεῖν*, meaning to ‘call’ or ‘summon.’¹⁴¹ Macquarrie and Robinson's translation should be taken more literally, therefore: repetition is a *re-petition*

141. Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Trier Center for Digital Humanities, 1998), ‘holen.’

of Dasein. In a sequence of notes, a repetition indicates the quantitative appearance of a pattern several times. A reappearance of a particular qualitative character. But in Dasein's re-petitioning of itself there is not a discrete recapitulation of a prior pattern by a new instance, but a connecting of the petitioned and petitioning, a reaching-over of Dasein into itself.

Repetition in this sense is something explicit [*ausdrückliche*]: 'Repeating is handing down explicitly'.¹⁴² At first glance, this could be a problem for the general view I have been expressing: if repetition is part of a novel characterisation of time's dynamism, then it cannot be something which Dasein only encounters in certain ways of being, since time's "flow" goes on inexorably. The difficulty is, however, only apparent. Heidegger tells us that, unlike the 'steadiness of existence' found in repetition (i.e., if authentic), 'inauthentic historicity' is '[b]ind... it cannot repeat [*wiederholen*] what has been, but only retains and receives the "actual" that is left over'.¹⁴³ What Heidegger does *not* say is that inauthentic historicity does not involve *Überlieferung*. Furthermore, he says that *Überlieferung* and *Wiederholung* are distinct: 'the *phenomena* of handing down and repeating'.¹⁴⁴ The implication is that authentic Dasein *explicitly* hands down—that is, in every case (i.e., to be authentic it is necessary that) its handing down involves an explicit transparency (which could be distinct from a theoretical appreciation) with regard to its ecstatic temporal constitution. Inauthentic Dasein, meanwhile, merely gets itself handed down *without knowing about it*. Rather than re-petitioning its ecstatic structure, transparently locating itself within its dynamic, open unfixity, it finds itself caught up in whatever it encounters through its ecstatic constitution, and construes everything—including itself, and time—through the lens of its access to those entities which present to it: thus,

142. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 385.

143. *Ibid.*, H. 391.

144. *Ibid.*, H. 386.

for example, inauthentic Dasein ‘understands the “past” in terms of the “Present”’¹⁴⁵

Where does the foregoing leave us, in summary, with regards to Dasein’s “stretch”? Crucially, Dasein does not have a “stretch” at all *insofar as* this is synonymous with having a duration or extension. Whatever the sense of limit in Dasein’s primordial temporality, it is *not* the kind that can be delimited along a dimension. Rather, Dasein has a “stretch” in some sense because it does not conform to the opposite: it is not momentary—it could not fit inside an instant, or a single “now”, and be Dasein. The use of “handing down” to characterise its non-momentariness, and in particular the prefixing of such handing down with the sense of “over” (*über*), provides the sense of Dasein’s bridging over to itself: that its non-momentariness is something originated by its own constitution, not something imposed upon it from some exterior principle. (Dasein is temporally self-perpetuating, one might say.) Construing Dasein’s “stretchedness” as an upshot of its ecstatic structure, rather than through an analysis of a “specious present” or similar, dissolves the various issues that such questions raise. How “long” is the specious present? Does it overlap with itself? Is it just a constraint, and if so how is it implemented? Or, put another way, it frees such questions from the millstone of our experience’s “flowing.” We might still ask after, as such, which circumstances will involve intratemporal phenomena such as motion. But we can see these as technical questions of perception—as many already do—and divorce them from questions about the unfolding of time in experience. In a certain sense, therefore, in terms of such questions the Heideggerian position comes oddly close to Hoerl’s. Questions about intratemporal phenomena do not directly bear on the question of Dasein’s stretchedness. However, rather than handing the issues of stretch and dynamism over to external clock-time, they are explained as upshots of our ecstatic structure.

145. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 391.

C. PRIMORDIAL TEMPORALITY AND OTHER TEMPORALITIES

The discussion of Dasein's "stretch", as handing down and as repetition, touched faintly on the issue of Dasein's relation to its own primordial temporality. While Dasein always hands itself down, it can do so "explicitly" and thereby achieve "repetition", over and above handing down. But what is at stake in the difference between achieving this or not? To providing a sketch of the variation possible in Dasein's relation to its own primordial temporality, I now turn.

Primordial temporality is an "undifferentiated" feature of Dasein. That is to say, Dasein is always ecstatic primary projection. But, importantly for Heidegger, Dasein's comportment can be more or less aligned with this fundamental structure. That is, its comportment can more or less modify or retain the character imparted by "raw" comportment through the primary projection alone. Since non-aligned characters are posterior, *ex hypothesi*, to the prior basic character constituted by the primary projection, maintaining an authentic comportment—i.e., one which is aligned to the primary projection—has a certain philosophical value: namely, it better reveals being-in-the-world's fundamental character.

For each of the ecstases, Heidegger provides a label for authentic or inauthentic comportment—i.e., for comportments which do, or do not, preserve rather than obscure the relevant ecstatic character of Dasein's primordial temporality. The future is either anticipated or awaited. The past is either repeated or forgotten. The present is a moment of vision, or a making-present. In each case, the authentic mode preserves in Dasein's access the temporal character which is primarily constitutive for existence—i.e, ecstatic primordial temporality—while the inauthentic mode is an obscuration thereof.

Let us examine the inauthentic case first. Inauthentic comportment discovers enti-

ties which do not have Dasein's fundamental temporal character. This includes entities present-at-hand and ready-to-hand. For example, Dasein's temporal character is obscured in engagement with ready-to-hand entities, because the future is understood in terms of a towards-which or derivative for-the-sake-of-which, the past is understood in terms of what is involved in the pursuit of that towards-which, and the present is released as the manipulative possibility of that past with regard to that future. In Heidegger's terms, Dasein *awaits* the future, not because it is ontically passive, but because it understands the future as the arrival of (or at) the towards-which:

The understanding of the "towards-which"—that is, the understanding of what the equipment is involved in—has the temporal structure of awaiting. In awaiting the "towards-which", concern can at the same time come back by itself to the sort of thing in which it is involved. The *awaiting* of what it is involved in, and—together with this awaiting—the *retaining* of that which is thus involved, make possible in its ecstatical unity the specifically manipulative way in which equipment is made present.¹⁴⁶

Just as Dasein gets "distracted" by the towards-which qua the future, it gets "distracted" by the materials (i.e., equipment) amongst which it already finds itself. (Distracted meaning: pay attention to ..., at the cost of not paying attention to) This distraction results in Dasein losing sight of—forgetting—the richness of thrown existence, because it is already caught up with equipmental possibilities:

A specific kind of *forgetting* is essential for the temporality that is constitutive for letting something be involved. The Self must forget itself if, lost in the world of equipment, it is to be able 'actually' to go to work and manipulate something.¹⁴⁷

The result is that in circumspective concern Dasein leans towards making present what it encounters—i.e., in understanding itself as surrounded by equipmental, teleologically

146. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 353.

147. *Ibid.*, H. 354.

significant entities, it construes those entities in their being through certain judgments.

As he puts it:

Bringing the environment closer in circumspective deliberation has the existential meaning of *making present*[.]¹⁴⁸

The discussion of fear's temporality is useful in clarifying what this distraction into what is alongside us amounts to. To wit, in the distraction of inauthenticity Dasein fails to comport itself properly towards the *specific* situation which primordial temporality gives it access to:

When concern is afraid it leaps from next to next, because it forgets itself and therefore does not *take hold of* any *definite* possibility.¹⁴⁹

In fear specifically, and in some other modes (such as curiosity), the failure to comport towards the actual, or definite, situation becomes compounded by an iteration through all those myriad possibilities which Dasein can interpretively project. This variant kind of distraction Heidegger calls "leaping":

Through the awaiting which leaps after... the making present is abandoned more and more to itself... It thus entangles itself in itself, so that the distracted not-tarrying becomes *never-dwelling-anywhere*. This... is the counter-phenomenon at the opposite extreme from the *moment of vision* [the authentic present].¹⁵⁰

In other words, Dasein *loses sight* of the situation it is in, almost entirely, and becomes absorbed in the constellation of all it has made-present. In the extreme case, all that is left is what has been made-present from the situation, rather than the situation from which the

148. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 359.

149. *Ibid.*, H. 342.

150. *Ibid.*, H. 347.

making-present originally drew. At this juncture, further making-present can draw purely from the existing nexus of what has already been made present. Dasein need no longer be responsive to, i.e., access, the situation at all. In this way, it is possible for Dasein to progressively degrade towards acts of pure synthesis (i.e., towards free-floating assertion or judgment). To avoid this kind of degradation towards pure synthesis, Dasein need not be *authentic*, but merely avoid becoming so deeply absorbed away from the situation from which it at first makes-present. We can see this, though expressed inversely, in Heidegger's description of how curiosity can lead to "leaping":

Curiosity gets constituted by a making-present which is not held on to, but which, in merely making present, thereby seeks constantly to run away from the awaiting in which it is nevertheless 'held', though not held on to.¹⁵¹

There are two key thoughts here. First, making-present degrades when it is parted from a proper comportment towards the future (i.e., the towards-which, or inauthentic future). Dasein fails to hold onto its making-present because it increasingly dislocates it from anything other than itself (i.e., it increasingly makes-present only from what has already been made-present). Second, the inauthentic future is still (a form of) the primordial future. We can partially see this in the effect the inauthentic future has on whether Dasein's comportment degrades or not. Since appropriate comportment towards the inauthentic future guards against dislocation from the situation, this must be because the inauthentic future still delivers access to the situation. When Dasein "awaits" its towards-which, this still involves dynamism. We can also see that making-present is, in a further sense of "held", "held in" the inauthentic future. In what sense does the inauthentic future "hold" the inauthentic present?

151. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 347.

Even when [Dasein] makes present in the most extreme manner, it remains temporal—that is, awaiting and forgetful. In making present, moreover, Dasein still understands itself, though it has been alienated from its ownmost potentiality-for-Being ... But in so far as making-present is always offering something ‘new’, it does not let Dasein come back to itself and is constantly tranquilizing it anew.¹⁵²

The idea, then, is that even though the inauthentic modes of Dasein’s temporality *obscure* Dasein’s (undifferentiated) temporal character, Dasein remains constituted by its primordial temporality (which it sees as per inauthentic temporality). The inauthentic future “holds” the inauthentic present because the primordial future is constitutive for the primordial present. The extent of Dasein’s inauthenticity is in a certain sense relative, as such, to the degree that its inauthentic temporal structure (i.e., its “perceived” temporal structure) mirrors its primordial structure. But this is all inauthenticity (or authenticity) is, at least qua temporality: a measure, if you will, of the distance between Dasein as it experiences itself in a given comportment, and Dasein per se.

Talking uniformly of “inauthenticity” is not to collapse the temporality of readiness-to-hand into that of presence-at-hand or vice versa: ‘Being which Objectifies and which is alongside the present-at-hand within-the-world, is characterised by a *distinctive kind of making-present* ... [which] awaits solely the discoveredness of the present-at-hand.’¹⁵³ There is, as such, a transformation of temporal character between inauthentic ready-to-hand temporality and inauthentic present-at-hand temporality, even though these are both inauthentic temporalities insofar as they distract Dasein from its primordial temporality. What differs between ready-to-hand and present-at-hand temporality is the character of what is awaited, and as such the character of what Dasein is already in and what it is alongside:

152. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 348.

153. *Ibid.*, H. 363.

[The present-at-hand] is no longer... within the horizon of awaiting and retaining an equipmental totality and its involvement relationships.... Not because we are keeping our distance from manipulation, nor because we are just looking *away* from the equipmental character of this entity, but rather because we are looking *at* the ready-to-hand thing which we encounter... ‘in a new way’ as something present-at-hand. *The understanding of Being* by which our concerned dealings with entities within-the-world have been guided *has changed over*.¹⁵⁴

But what is the “change over” in the understanding of being, if the temporality of the encounter is still of the “inauthentic” variety? It is still an inauthentic temporality because it still misdirects Dasein away from its own primordial temporality, and as such from dynamism—upon which the inauthentic temporality relies. But it is a distinct inauthentic temporality, because the character of the inauthentic future which Dasein waits upon is different than in the equipmental case. In circumspective concern, the future is a towards-which by which the situation into which Dasein is thrown can be ordered to release a present (i.e., the tools alongside Dasein which it can employ towards the towards-which). In the encounter with the present-at-hand, the future is not a towards-which, but simply an alternate case of presence-at-hand: in short, a distinct moment from the one which is “now”. This, in other words, is the kind of time which the traditional conception articulates. A sequence—mysterious in constitution and mechanism—of “nows”. By contrast, the temporality of the encounter with the ready-to-hand is one step closer to reflecting ecstatic-primordial temporality: it interlinks the present, past and future on a structural level, in a way that present-at-hand temporality (and the traditional concept of time) do not. The encounter with the present-at-hand, as such, is all the more obscuring of the ecstatic structure constitutive of time’s dynamism, because it flattens away this interconnection in the ready-to-hand encounter:

154. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 361.

[W]e *overlook* not only the tool-character of the entity we encounter, but also something that belongs to any ready-to-hand equipment: its place. ... [I]ts place becomes a spatio-temporal position, a 'world-point', which is in no way distinguished from any other ... a pure multiplicity of positions. ... [T]he entities of the environment are altogether *released from such* [environmental] *confinement*.¹⁵⁵

The intertwinedness of past, present and future in the encounter with the ready-to-hand is not a sequentialisation of moments in the way that presence-at-hand involves, because the temporal order of the ready-to-hand is always derived from the character of what is being ordered. Meaning: what is distinctive about present-at-hand sequences is that they are a manifold of equals, in principle arrangeable as required—any which way. What is notable about a manifold of “nows” is that they are, in principle, extremely responsive to our whims: so responsive, in fact, that we have no problem imaginatively placing them in perfect reverse order. Indeed, not only can we do so imaginatively, we also have little difficulty *making sense of* such reversed orders, as when a film is played in reverse. As such, the temporality of the present-at-hand is perhaps the most flexible of all.

If the temporality of the present-at-hand represents an extreme form of inauthenticity, then the temporality of anxiety represents inauthenticity's *lower* limit. Strikingly, anxiety's temporality is *not* an authentic temporality; it is one stop short, in and of itself, of an authentic alignment. Specifically, anxiety stops short of full authenticity because, even though Dasein is accosted with blindingly rich specificity, it is possible for Dasein to mis-temporalise this specificity:

Anxiety is anxious in the face of the “nothing” of the world; but this does not mean that in anxiety we experience something like the absence of what is present-at-hand within-the-world. The present-at-hand must be encoun-

155. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 361–2.

tered in just *such* a way that it does *not* have *involvement whatsoever*, but can show itself in an empty mercilessness.¹⁵⁶

It is possible, that is to say, for Dasein to misconstrue the raw specificity of the situation it is thrown into as under the aegis of the moment-structure. It is possible to construe the nothing as quasi-present-at-hand. I say *quasi* because Heidegger's primary intent in talking of the "present-at-hand" here is to guard against the same misconstrual that my illustration of the lecture room in chapter 2 guarded against (namely, that there is not some great or strange rupture in experience—in anxiety, even though the entities are no longer there, it is not the case that the chairs folded themselves up and climbed out of the window). The "total" lack of involvement, to be distinguished from the ordinary case of the present-at-hand, must refer to the absence of intelligible distinguishability in terms of predicates: in short, one gets just and only the '...', but yet manages as such to hold it in front of one *as* "...". Confronted with the unencapsulable richness of the '...', Dasein manages still to wrap a meagre sense of unity around it—the unity of what has presented itself, the unity of *this sheer presence*. As such, anxiety can lead us astray, distracting us with intra-momentary complexity that, being intra-momentary, is nevertheless silently partitioned into a single, coherent—if indescribable—snapshot. This distraction into a "moment" of sheer presence is precisely a distraction because such momentary delimitation is not drawn from sheer presence itself. Sheer presence, as the end of chapter 2 put it, has a "churn": it is never still, but as for any and all, is governed by time's dynamism. In short, the "utter unitariness and infinite dissimilitude" of the nothing holds not only over the "spatial" but also the "temporal" aspect of our access. When I am stood in the lecture room, and significance then fades as anxiety encroaches, it is not that the entities fade and leave me with an implacable and unchanging brute there-ness, but an implacably

156. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 343.

churning brute there-ness. This is all the more striking if I imagine anxiety descending on me as I sit upon the top of a seaside cliff, or in a concert hall: it is not that the sea's waves will still themselves, or that the sound of a Beethoven symphony will politely hold back while I suffer my existential anomaly—to the contrary, though there “is” no symphony nor any waves, what otherwise *would* be these *things* presses in all the more brightly and startlingly. A slice of ‘...’ locked inside a single moment is simply an illusion, but one which can produce a powerful hold on us:

[Anxiety] brings one back to the pure “that-it-is” of one’s ownmost individualised thrownness. This bringing-back has neither the character of an evasive forgetting nor that of a remembering. ... [A]nxiety brings one back to one’s thrownness as something *possible* which *can be repeated*. And in this way it *also* reveals the possibility of an authentic potentiality-for-Being—a potentiality which must, in repeating, come back to its thrown “there”, but come back as something future which comes towards. *The character of having been is constitutive for the state-of-mind of anxiety; and bringing one face to face with repeatability is the special ecstatic mode of this character.*¹⁵⁷

In short, because anxiety is primarily a confrontation with the way we are already thrown into specificity, it risks a myopic obsession with *that* specificity which invites encapsulating it within a moment structure:

The temporality of anxiety is peculiar; for anxiety is grounded primordially in having been, and only out of this do the future and the Present temporalize themselves; in this peculiar temporality is demonstrated the possibility of that power which is distinctive for the mood of anxiety. In this, Dasein is taken all the way back to its naked uncanniness, and becomes fascinated by it. This fascination, however, not only *takes* Dasein back from its ‘*worldly*’ possibilities, but at the same time *gives* it the possibility of an *authentic* potentiality-for-Being.¹⁵⁸

157. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 343.

158. *Ibid.*, H. 344.

As such, while anxiety can mislead us into passively observing mere moments of complex sheer presence, it also provides us with all the “tools” Dasein needs to bring itself to an authentic alignment with its primordial temporality, because it *does* confront Dasein, strictly, with the raw, non-intelligible complexity of being-in-the-world’s dynamism: with a subject-matter that is impossible to articulate, and which in its unearthed isolation reveals itself as the underlying constituent of the more familiar modes of access (i.e., it is the same subject-matter that is always drawn from, when drawing from the subject-matter in the course of hermeneutic or apophantic judgment).

D. PRIMORDIAL TEMPORALITY AND SHEER PRESENCE

I set out with the intent to show how primordial temporality provides us with a phenomenological description of time’s dynamism. Over the course of this chapter and the last, I have set out the case for reading primordial temporality in this way: as offering a description of the character of time, as experienced by and constitutive for Dasein, by providing an alternative structure to the traditional conception of the “now” and of sequentiality. Primordial temporality necessitates the experienced dynamism of time, because its structure precludes static, complete-in-themselves moments or “nows”. These are, otherwise, the basic foundations of the traditional conception, and the source of the disjunction between our experience of time as dynamic and our inability to adequately capture that aspect of time conceptually. In so doing, I have argued against the dominant reading of primordial temporality as “pressing ahead” into one’s possibilities, as a form of existential self-maintenance. Since criticisms of Heidegger on that reading abound, I hope that this alternative reading of primordial temporality goes some way towards rescuing Heidegger’s work on time, in and of itself.

Furthermore, I think I have characterised primordial temporality in such a way as to make believable the claim that it is both distinct from and a ground of the temporal characters found in hermeneutic and apophantic access. Primordial temporality is distinct because, unlike the “nows” involved in apophantic access, it does not involve a moment-structure. It is unlike time in hermeneutic access, because its structure does not rely on significance (whereas the temporal relations of hermeneutic access are teleological). The temporal characters of apophantic and hermeneutic access are reliant upon primordial temporality, insofar as for us to hold on to them—for us to comport ourselves in a way that involves these temporal characters—requires that time’s dynamism still holds for us. The projective compartments in which apophantic and hermeneutic temporal characters manifest are always reliant upon primordial temporality’s primary projection. Blattner rejected primordial temporality under his own reading, on the grounds that hermeneutic temporalities in fact depend on clock-time, and not vice-versa. Prima facie, in other words, the dynamic time which we cannot resist, which always implacably “flows on” taking us and the world with it, has to be the kind of time from which we derive any other temporalities. In relating this kind of time with the traditional, clock-time concept, Blattner makes the move that Heidegger, on the view I have proposed, sets out to avoid. Yes, it is the implacably dynamic character of time from which any kind of “time” must derive; but the momentary-sequential conception of time, with the “now” as its basis, is fundamentally ill-suited to capturing “real” time as such. Insofar as clock-time and world-time are dependent on, but not explanatory of, timeliness as such, primordial temporality earns its name as Heidegger says *a potiori fit denominatio*, as the source of those temporalities’ timeliness.

I also advertised, at the outset of chapter 3, that I would find a temporal character appropriate for non-synthetic access to the nothing, characterised as a singular *voeiv* in

contrast to the *διανοεῖν* of both apophantic and hermeneutic access. When Dasein becomes anxious, or otherwise comports in this way, the temporal character of its comportment aligns with the underlying primary projection of primordial temporality. In other words, there are no longer any derivative temporal characters modifying Dasein's basic access to the '...'. Dasein is pared back all the way to its primary projection. On the one hand, this makes such experience non-intelligible, because all of those various projections which normally constitute sense-making are *ex hypothesi* suspended (or to put it in a way that avoids talking of projection, our faculties of hermeneutic and apophantic access is suspended). Even in such states of mind, Dasein still "understands" because it is still comporting, still *accessing*. '[F]undamental[ly]', Dasein's understanding is *at base*—i.e., in its most basic and unmodified form, though also therefore one which is rarely a *proximal* form—just 'access.'¹⁵⁹ Stripping away every existential structure that can be so stripped away, Dasein at base is just its access to the most general subject matter of all. In the description of access to the nothing in anxiety, and in the description of primordial temporality in which that kind of access is maintained, we have a description of such basic, pared down access, and what is as such revealed as left over when all Dasein's contingent structures fall away. When Heidegger describes ready-to-hand and present-at-hand temporalities as inauthentic, he does not mean that when dealing with the ready-to-hand Dasein's primary projection somehow stops; rather, he simply means that Dasein—in particular, Dasein which has an interest in its own being and structure—gets misled if it does not see that these forms of temporality, these varieties of projection, have their basis in the more basic, primary projection of sheer presence upon primordial temporality. We can, I think, *see* this constitutive primacy of primordial temporality and primary projection directly: as in the way that the collapse into insignificance when entering anxiety

159. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 146–7.

“changes nothing”—i.e., because it does not take away the subject-matter from which our other modes were, in fact, lifting off their judgments; and as in the way that the temporal characters of apophantic and hermeneutic access are maintained in and against time’s dynamism—i.e., in the way, for example, that one “holds” a concept or an object in mind.

At a bare minimum, the conception of time which Heidegger has developed is a thought-provoking example of how even the seemingly most fundamental, intractable, and perhaps intransigent concepts in our vocabulary can be revised and radically reimagined.

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