

Oxford University Faculty of Theology:
Centre for Theology and Modern European Thought

Heidegger and the Contemporary Religious Situation

*A one-day colloquium on Heidegger's legacy to religious
thought in a global perspective*

Morning session: 9.30-12.45: Western perspectives

***John D. Caputo** (Syracuse), What Comes After Onto-Theology

Thomas Sheehan (Stanford) Nothing, Nonsense and $\text{G}\ddot{o}\text{d}$

Laurence Paul Hemming (London), The Late Heidegger's God

Afternoon Session: 2-5.30: From beyond the West

***Wing-cheuk Chan** (Brock University) Heidegger and Buddhism

***Nader El-Bizri** (Cambridge), Rethinking Avicenna's Ontology from the
Standpoint of Heidegger's Critique of Metaphysics

***Simon Oli** (Paris, UNESCO) A most 'European' Destiny: Heidegger on
Safeguarding $\text{B}\ddot{e}\text{i}\text{n}\text{g}$ from its Fundamentalist Persecution

Closing panel discussion

* Indicates paper included in this file

**Thinking with Faith, Thinking as Faith
or, What Comes After Onto–theology?**

John D. Caputo

In the paper that follows I will argue that the fruit of Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology is a certain “faith” and that, despite Heidegger’s constant claims, thinking is not opposed to faith. On the contrary, faith more radically conceived is the precisely the thinking that has suddenly become possible after onto-theology, in the contemporary or “post-secular” situation, in a space that Heidegger himself has helped to open.

The Strict Meaning of “Onto-theology”

The word “onto-theology,” to my knowledge, is Kant’s, who used it to describe proofs for the existence of God that were a priori in character, or based on mere concepts, as in the various ontological proofs in Anselm or Descartes, as opposed to “cosmo-theology,” which makes use of proofs based on experience, like Aquinas’s proof that from the motion that is visible in the world we may infer a First Mover. When Heidegger took over the word from Kant he made it identical with “metaphysics” itself, which was in turn characterized as the attempt to think Being itself in terms of some entity–like God or the human subject–or regional characteristic of entities–like matter or the will. Heidegger settled on Kant’s word because he thought the etymology of the word brought out a problem that stretched from Aristotle to Hegel and Nietzsche. Heidegger was referring to the long standing debate in Greek and medieval philosophy about an ambiguity in Aristotle. Does metaphysics or first philosophy refer to the science of the First and Highest Being, as in Bk XII of the Met,

or does it refer instead to the science of Being as such, as in Book IV? Thomas Aquinas gave a well known resolution of the problem in the “Introduction” to his *Commentary on the Metaphysics* which consisted in saying that it is both of these things, but in an ordered way: it is the science of being in general in virtue of the fact that it is the science of God, in which all being is exemplarily contained. To know anything about God is know being as such, paradigmatically, in its finest hour (in eternity), as it were, and all that any being, insofar as it is a being, can aspire to.

Heidegger thinks the same problematic shows up in Hegel, where Heidegger gives his best and most powerful formulation of the sense in which he has taken over Kant’s word. “Onto-theologic” is a circle or circulatory system in which Being serves as the ground of entities and entities return the favor and serve in turn as the ground of Being. That is, Being is the common ground of everything that is, what they all have in common, their common base, ground or support, even while the First Entity (God) is the causal ground of other entities, thereby setting in motion the distribution of Being among entities, so that entities may have Being at all. Both Being and entities play crucial but complementary roles within the circulatory system of onto-theology. Without Being, there is nothing for the First Entity to distribute; without the First Entity, nothing will get distributed. Common being (*ens in communi*) requires the First Being to get going; the First Being requires common being to have something to go with.

Now it is important to see that Thomas Aquinas would have rejected this sense of onto-theology. He would have denied that Being serves in any way as a ground of God, and therefore even of entities themselves. Being in general or as a common ground, what he called *ens in communi*, does not in any way precede or ground God, except in the sense of what he called a “being of reason” (*ens rationis*), an artifact of

our thinking, an abstraction we construct for our own convenience. We may say that “being” is what God “has,” as if there were some being before God for God to have, but that is just a feature of our *modus significandi*, the way we speak among ourselves, not of the *modus essendi*, the way things are when we are not around. In reality, Being is what God is. God does not have Being, God is Being, *ipsum esse per se subsistens*. Indeed, in one very important sense God is not “a being” at all, not an individual, since God’s being is not the individuation of a common nature. The sense in which God is an “individual,” Aquinas said, is that his preeminent being is un-divided, not broken up or *communicated* with others—there are no other Gods—although, of course, the analogical likenesses of the divine being are received in a proportionate measure by what we call “creatures.” In that sense, Aquinas, and I wager nearly every medieval theologian before Scotus, was decidedly not an onto-theologian. They did not think that God belongs *inside* a circulatory system between Being and entities but that entities belong inside a circular system of God (some version of *exitus* and *reditus*).

But in modernity a decisive shift takes place, one that is brought out by Heidegger’s exemplary analysis in *Der Satz vom Grund* (*The Principle of Reason*) of the role of “principles” in modern philosophy. The defining feature of modernity is the unprecedented importance of “principles,” which after a long period of incubation finally emerge in Descartes, Leibniz and Kant. Jean-Luc Marion, who depends heavily upon Heidegger’s interpretation of modernity in his account of “modern” Cartesian and post-Cartesian philosophy, illustrates this point in an incisive discussion of the phrase *causa sui*. For Thomas Aquinas *causa sui* was a phrase that made no sense, for in order to be a cause of oneself one has to give oneself what one does not have, lack something and then make up that lack by giving oneself what one lacks, like lifting oneself up by one’s bootstraps or passing on to oneself a bit of information that one does not have.

For Aquinas God is not caused at all, is not an effect of anything, is not even the cause or the effect of Godself. God is all cause and in no part effect. God is the first cause uncaused. Why then would people as sharp witted as Descartes and Leibniz call God a self-cause? Because, as Marion points out, they held to the conceptual priority of metaphysical “principles” to which everything, God included, would be subject, for as Heidegger shows in modernity thinking means finding the principles that govern beings. Whatever is in any way, finite or infinite, ought and must conform to these “principles”—like the Principle of Sufficient Reason or the Principle of Causality, God included. To be sure, God passes the tests that the Principles put to him with flying colors. He come out first in his class, *summa*, nay *maxima cum laude*. God not only has a cause, God is his very own cause, in no need of anything other than himself to cause his being. That is why Descartes redefined the principle of causality. He did not say it was the principle by which act is communicated to a being in potency; he said there is at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect, which is true but does not get to the heart of the causal principle. That sidestep allowed him to say God is the cause of himself, who thus passes muster before the Principle of Causality.

But the very fact that such a test was put to God, that God stood before the court of the Principles, would be rejected by Aquinas and most medieval philosophers. Aquinas would say not that God passes the tests of the Principles, but that the Principles pass the test of God, that the Principles are made in the likeness of God, are reflections of God’s subsistent being, and are but finite and conceptual models constructed in imitation of God’s being. We are prone to deploy a “principle of causality” in our thinking only because God is pure self-sufficient being *a se*. It is with their borrowed subsistence that everything that is not God imitates imperfectly the self-subsistence of God. Everything has and needs a sufficient explanation of its being

because God is self-sufficiency and explanation itself!

Aquinas thus is not an onto-theologian in Kant's sense, because like Kant he too rejects the attempt to prove the existence of God by mere concepts. His proofs are, in Kant's sense, cosmo-theological, which does not get them off Kant's hook, of course. But more importantly, he is not an onto-theologian in Heidegger's sense either, if that means the circulatory system described in the "Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics," for God is in no way a case of or in any way falls under "common being" (Scotus) or "principles." It is rather they which fall under God.

So far we have focused on the primacy of the "onto-" over the "theo-" in "onto-theological" but we have not yet said anything about the "logic," which is why Heidegger will sometimes hyphenate "onto-theo-logic." By "logic," Heidegger means "calculative" thinking, discursive-causal reasoning from effects to causes. On one level, Aquinas and the medievals would plead guilty as charged on this one: they have every intention of offering a rational argument for the existence and attributes of God. They are "scholastics" or "schoolmen," or as we would say "academics." They write books, make arguments, and test their results by submitting them to public critique and cross examination. They are the beginning of the history of our western academic tradition, which shows up in the very discourse of the academy, which to this day is all in Latin—*summa cum laude, doctor philosophiae, magister artis*, and so on. But there is a profound difference between these theologians and the Cartesians and post-Cartesians who came after them (many of whom, curiously enough, were *not* university men), and it is in that sense that even the "logic" in "onto-theo-logic" does not fit the medievals. For the schoolmen were theologians before they were philosophers, and they were believing Christians and men of prayer before they were theologians. They were friars, monks and saints, who started, punctuated and ended their day with prayer, and whose

theology was part of a larger life of liturgy and praise of God. Consequently they were filled with awe before the divine life and they spoke of God in terms that reflected the deepest sense of mystery. While they thought there were many assertions that we could justifiably make about God, this was always to be understood within the context of the mystery of God. So Thomas Aquinas argued that the reason for describing God as *ipsum esse per se subsistens* was not that this captured the essence of God but that it was the least confining, least constrictive thing one could say about God. It is the best way to talk about God if one wants to preserve the *incomprehensibility* of God. One may make certain conceptual and judicative determinations about God while understanding that the divine being is only “approached” by these determinations—whence the word *via* in the *quinque viae* is a term of respect for the distance of God—and not tapped or exhausted or fully conceived. That indeed is why Jean-Luc Marion had later on to eat his words when in *God without Being* he said that Aquinas’s notion of *ipsum esse subsistens* was a conceptual idol. He would later confess that, just like the clever interpretation Marion had given of Anselm, Aquinas was deploying a conceptual icon, not an idol, that is, a concept whose very terms yield to, indeed demand, something inconceivable.

While men like Augustine and Aquinas made every effort to be logical they were never held captive by the hegemonic “logic” that Heidegger is describing, by which Heidegger meant a “calculative” thinking that made human conceptual thinking the measure of all things, which broke out with a fury in modernity. They thought that God provides the measure of all things, not “logic,” which is why there was a tension between them and the “secular masters” of the day—mostly logicians and the closest thing to onto-theo-logy in the middle ages. I believe that Heidegger implicitly concedes as much himself in *The Principle of Reason*, by showing that this “principle”

wakes up and stretches its limbs only in modernity, with Descartes and Leibniz (Heidegger does not mention Spinoza), where it achieves explicit formulation and gets the wakeful attention of the philosophers. That implies it was still asleep in the middle ages, where the focus was on God, not being as such, on God, not principles, and where logical discourse always marched several respectful steps behind in a procession before the mystery of God. Medieval theologians, masterful metaphysicians though they were, are taken more by what Heidegger called the God before whom we can sing and dance, which reminds us that Thomas Aquinas is the author of one of the most beautiful liturgical hymns in the Latin rite.

It is useful then to distinguish between a narrow and a broad sense of onto-theology. In the strictest and most rigorous sense, Augustine and Aquinas, are not onto-theo-logicians. They are theologians, but they are not onto-theo-logicians, for the very good reason that they deny primacy of both the “onto-” and the “-logic” in what they are doing. (1) they do not put being before God or treat the principles of being as in any way having a priority over God (“onto”-logic); (2) while they try their best to reason logically and well, they do not think that conceptual-logical thinking sets the measure for God, that it can ever begin to exhaust the inexhaustible and incomprehensible being of God (onto-“logic”). As they do not sign on to the “onto-“ in what Heidegger calls “onto-theo-logic” neither do they embrace the “-logic.” All that remains in the appellation “onto-theo-logic” for them is theology, *theology*, as Marion puts it, which is first and last about what Karl Rahner describes as the “mystery we call God.”

Decentering and the Widened Scope of the Critique of Onto-theology

But there is a broader and more sweeping sense of “onto-theology” in

Heidegger, which is found when Heidegger uses the term interchangeably with “metaphysics.” Then it becomes clear that the critique of onto-theology is no less a delimitation of the “theo” in “onto-*theo*-logy,” which is the middle or central term in this tripartite expression, which I propose to call here for our purposes the “Center” (capitalized). This is the sense that Derrida and other contemporary continental philosophers have taken up and what they chiefly have in mind when they use the word. The metaphysical theologies of the pre-Cartesian philosophers of the middle ages are not onto-theological in the strict sense of that word. But in a broader sense, where onto-theology means metaphysics itself, be it modern or even premodern, they are indeed included in what is being called onto-theology. That is what I want to turn to now.

It would be misleading to think that because the medieval and other Christian philosophers have nothing to do with the narrow sense of onto-theology they have avoided the wider critique of onto-theology in contemporary continental philosophy. For the critique of onto-theology is not simply or not merely a critical delimitation of our power to know God, an insistence that any such knowledge as we would have about God is limited by the incomprehensible being of God on the one hand and the finitude or even sinfulness of the human mind on the other hand. It is minimally that, at least that, but we were already well instructed in that point by Augustine and Aquinas and in medieval mystical theology and we did not need to wait for Heidegger or Derrida to hear that. If that is what it is, then postmodernism is just pre-modernism under another name, and the critique of onto-theology is old wine in new skins. Then, I think, the word “onto-theology” has been divested of its distinctive sense, divested of the work that it is really doing in these philosophers.

The way I want to bring this out is to say that the critique of onto-theology is a

critique of the Center and of any possible “-centrism,” whether the Center is God or anything else. This critique is not merely a delimitation of our knowledge of *what* the Center is, a confession of our limits and the Center’s excess, but also a delimitation of our very ability to hold or declare a Center at all, of *whether* there *is* a Center. The critique of onto-theology might then well be redescribed as a critique of onto-theologico-centrism, of any attempt to make being (onto-), God (theo-) or “logic” the center. It represents a critical delimitation of our power to say that what it is of which we have limited knowledge is or may be called “God” or “Being.” Beyond that, it is a critical delimitation of our power to say that what we have limited knowledge of is or may be called “Absolute Spirit” or “Matter,” for that matter, or “State” or “History,” or “Life” or “Information,” all of which are replacement candidates for the place formerly held by God, or if I may say so replacement candidates for “the Artist formerly known as God.” In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida said that his critique of the “book” included “the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, and, as I shall specify later, against difference in general.” He could say exactly the same thing about onto-theology. What is being criticized is confidence in the Center itself and the protection it affords, the confidence that there is a Center that holds firm and encompasses all. He is describing a situation in which we are more radically decentered, decentered not because we are merely fallen and finite while the Center Itself is infinite, holy and incomprehensible to our finite minds and wills, but because the Center itself is in question while what we have available is the “aphoristic energy of writing,” that is to say, the non-encyclopedic and rhizomatic inventiveness of thinking otherwise than onto-theologically. That is why Nietzsche said we will not be rid of God until we are rid of grammar, by which he meant to open up a world decentered and divested of the implicit metaphysics

suggested by classical western grammar.

This is a critique of all the various “centrisms” by which we have been visited in metaphysics—logocentrism, phonocentrism, ethnocentrism, anthropocentrism, and so on—just in virtue of their metaphysical—rather than merely strategic--centeredness. Whenever Derrida speaks of the very gesture of theology, the theological operation itself, in *Of Grammatology*, he treats it as a matter of positing a fixed Center. Marx himself, one of the great masters of suspicion, would be an onto-theologian for him, because Marx thinks that he can treat matter and dialectics and pure use-value as ontological realities by means of which he can drive out the very “hauntological” specters (*Specters*) upon which, as Derrida shows, the spirit of a certain Marxism depends. Levy-Strauss’s distinction between a pure nature and a fallen culture is “theological” (139), relying on the theological distinction between the natural purity of what God has made and impurity of what cultural man has corrupted. To the extent that Heidegger himself tends to let “*Sprache*,” “*Ereignis*,” or “*Unter-Schied*” play the role of the Center, play the role formerly played by God, Heidegger himself falls victim to his own critique of onto-theology. That raises a separate and fairly complicated issue that I simply acknowledge here—I am not about to try to resolve the question of Heidegger and God. So when it comes to onto-theology, Derrida says, “we must not think of a ‘theological prejudice’ functioning sporadically” (OG, 71), here or there, in this or that concept of God, or in this or that concept of humanity, truth, ethics, or the nation, but of the theological gesture itself, which is the very gesture of holding on to the Center. Not only can we finite beings not comprehensively understand the Center, we cannot know there is one.

But remember my thesis about thinking and faith. I do not think that this critique of onto-theology drives out every sense of God, faith and religion. This

critique is meant to cut down theological and metaphysical hybris, but it has no business doing so by means of an opposing atheistic counter-hybris. This critique of onto-theology is not some sort of ontological argument *against* God. It is rather an insistence that the name of “God” belongs to a chain of substitutions which can never be stopped. That is why Derrida very acutely says of himself that he “rightly passes” for an atheist: he has no idea whether he *is* one.

So the critique of onto-theology is a Janus-faced argument: on the one side, against metaphysical theology, be it classical or modern, be it onto-theological in the narrow or in the broad sense, it is an argument that the chain cannot be *stopped* at the name of God. On the other side, it also launches an argument against *secularism*, against the secularizing deconstructors, for while the chain cannot be *stopped* at God, the name of God does indeed *belong* to the chain. The name of God touches a nerve in the human heart and suggests something “undeconstructible,” and that is the Augustinian heart at the heart of the critique of onto-theology, the confessing, circum-fessing Augustinian *cor inquietum*, whose counter-part in Derrida is the “desire” or “affirmation of *the impossible*.” It is in Augustine, not Aquinas, and in the *Confessions* not the *City of God*, that the critique of onto-theology in continental philosophy can find an antecedent. It is sheer dogmatism to “reduce” God to a desire for our Mommy, or to an opium of the people, or to the Platonism of the people, or to an expression of our resentment. We should be grateful to the masters of suspicion for the excellent reminders they give to religion to beware degenerating into such a religion. But in virtue of the contemporary critique of metaphysics there is nothing in what the masters of suspicion have shown out to pronounce God as “nothing more than” that. Getting rid of every “nothing other than” and converting over to a posture of openness is a big part—shall I say the “central” part?—of the critique of onto-theology.

The broader and distinctively contemporary critique of onto-theo-logic does not only criticize privileging the “*onto-*” over God, or the excessive rationalism of its “*-logic;*” it also criticizes the privileging of the “*theo-*” in “onto-theologic.” It is only when all three ingredients in the expression are given their due weight that we can come to grips with this critique in its distinctive sense. This is a broad and sweeping critique—probably better described as “overcoming metaphysics” than as “overcoming onto-theology”—that includes a long line or a wide array of philosophical or theological positions. It is a criticism of any effort anywhere to arrest the play under any name, including names like “state,” “nation,” “capital,” “man,” or “God.” Indeed, it would make for an interesting day’s work to see how a long list of such names this is. It would include “ethics” in Levinas’s sense but I wonder if it would not also include “art”—which is where I think a lot of secularizing postmodernism would like to get off the train and stop the chain of substitutions.

But to stop the chain of substitution *anywhere*, with science or ethics, art or theology, is to fix upon a Center, a fulcrum, a point of leverage, an Archimedean point, and that is onto-theological to the core, to the center. To locate a Center is the central move in onto-theology. It matters not how much we insist, after the fact, that our knowledge of the Center is finite, limited, and imperfect, or how contrite we are about the violence of naming the Center, or how humble we are about how much we can claim to know about this deep infinite and absolute Center. Indeed, the very complementarity between our humility and finitude and guilt, on the one hand, and the Center’s glory and infinity and holiness, on the other hand, is not a counter to onto-theology, it is the very structure or architecture of onto-theology, which goes back to a very classic, pre-modern version of onto-theology or metaphysics. In pre-modernity there is a more modest and humble sense of the Center than the ones we have seen in

modernity, where the onto-theo-logicians are feeling their oats and make excessively systematic claims, of the sort we find in Spinoza and Hegel. But it is the Center that is at the center of the trouble with onto-theology in the distinct sense that philosophers like Heidegger and Derrida are concerned about. It is not enough for us to confess being de-centered around the Center, to decenter the finite self and knock it down a peg or two, so that it would re-center upon the True Center not the simulacrum of the center that is the self. Indeed that is a theological formula for re-centering: for the greater the transcendence of God, the less self-centered is the self and the more it re-centers around God. This de-centered self is all the more profoundly God-centered. It is de-centered as autonomous, but re-centered as heteronomous. It is not auto-centric but hetero-centric. Its self-transcendence issues in a transcendent self, a “soul” lifted up into a share of the infinity and glory of God’s life and company. But what if the critique of onto-theology requires the humility to confess that we have been cut adrift, have lost the Center, or as Derrida asks, by rewriting what I will with a full sense of irony call a central passage in the *Confessions*, “What do I love when I love my God?”

Thinking with Faith, Thinking as Faith
or What Comes Next

What then? Where would we go from here? What comes next? What would it be like to lack the Center? Would it be possible to have a certain religion, or even a certain “faith,” beyond any possible centrism, in a God beyond onto-theo-centrism? But Heidegger has resolutely held that thinking cannot coexist with faith, that faith is toxic to thinking, and that to question or to think in the most radical manner one must check one’s faith at the door. My final thesis is that, however much Heidegger was a critic of modernity and its “principles,” this resistance to faith is a lasting vestige of the

Enlightenment in Heidegger and its principle of reason. The truth of the matter is that if we continue Heidegger's critique of onto-theology, if we "repeat" it, we will be led by what he himself said to another way of thinking about faith and about thought, to another faith in thinking and thinking with faith. The results would not be exactly religious or irreligious but, if I may say so, *Ur*-religious, resulting in an archi-confession, in what Derrida calls a "circum-fession," of a certain religious sort, maybe even more confessional or circum-fessional and archi-religious than Augustine's *Confessions*. Contrary to Heidegger's expectation, the results would not be to divest oneself of faith and prayer in the interests of thinking, but to invest in a thinking which is a more searching prayer, a more wounded word.

In other words, the text of Derrida's *Circumfession* is a good example of the sort of thing that would come after onto-theology. We remember the graphics of that text, with Bennington overhead writing the "theological" program called "Derrida," the omniscient onto-theological program, in the future perfect, in which everything that Jacques/Jackie down below has ever said, or ever will have said, will be contained as a case in point or an instance or an example of the program. He is trying to rob me of my event, my future, my name, trying to circumcise me again, Jacques/Jackie complains, trying to suck my blood and put in a vial labeled "Jacques Derrida," to appropriate my secret, trying to rob me of my secret name, of my "salvation," of my "resurrection."

But the difference between *Of Grammatology* and "*Circumfession*" is that the "onto-theological" God up above is not the only God or theology to be found in the book. There is another God down below, down among the bleeding bodies of Jacques and his mother, the one Jacques/Jackie calls "my God," the one about whom he has been asking himself all his life what he loves when he loves his God. Here the name of God is not associated with the onto-theological program up above but with the

questions written in blood, with sick children and dying mothers, questions like, What do I love? What do I desire? What is the name of what I love and desire? In that sense it does not come “after” onto-theology but “under” it. The name of God is not associated with a “program” or a “book” or an “encyclopedia” or with an omniscient providence, but with what in *Of Grammatology* was called the “aphoristic energy” of writing, of writing with one’s blood where the name of God is associated with blood and tears, with the singularity of the “event,” with the unforeseeable future, with a hope and a promise for something I know not what. The name of God is one of the names in the chain—his mother must have known that the constancy of what is called God for him goes under other names as well. The name of God is an important name, but one of many names, for the possibility of the impossible, a possibility for which we lack a fixed and proper name. In other words, the critique of onto-theology issues in a confession of a lack of proper, determinate and fixed names for what we love or desire, in a profession or confession of the open-endedness of our desire, of faith in something and hope and love of something open-ended. It is an exercise of radical humility, and it offers up a “wounded word,” which is Chrétien’s beautiful definition of prayer, a more circumscribed version of Augustine’s prayer and tears.

The most helpful texts of Heidegger in this regard occur in his discussions of the “open,” for in the figure of a completely open-ended open any “center” is undermined or displaced. The Open delimits any possible horizon, any “border” or “limiting” of the open. The Open makes it impossible for any horizontal structure, any projection, any idealization, any being, any determinate centering, to lay claim to ultimacy, to be the last word and so to close down the open. It is the Open as such which overcomes or delimits or breaks open any onto-theo-logical closure, and that notion, or quasi-notion in Heidegger, enters into a significant collaboration with the

structure of the “to come” in Derrida and of the “event” in Deleuze, for both of whom the future is un-determinable, un-programmable, open-ended.

In *Specters of Marx* this desire/hope/promise shows up under the name or the nickname of the pure Messianic. Derrida says that “the effectivity or actuality of any promise”—he is thinking here of the promise lodged in democracy or in Marx—“will always keep within it, and it must do so, this absolutely undetermined messianic hope at its heart, this eschatological relation to the co-come of an event *and* of a singularity, of an alterity that cannot be anticipated...and who or what will not be asked to commit to the domestic contracts of any welcoming power...*just* opening which renounces any right to property...messianic opening to what is coming.” This open-endedness is described here as the “heart” of the determinate forms in which our faith and hope, our desire and expectation, takes shape. The pure messianic is not an overarching form in the manner of a Kantian transcendental structure, of which the concrete messianisms are empirical instances. It is instead the open-ended heart, the pure opening of faith (*foi*) and expectation themselves, of which any determinate belief (*croyance*) or hope is a contraction or determination or partial closing. If Heidegger was right to criticize faith as *croyance* he failed to see the link between thinking and *foi*, and it would be fruitful to explore the link of this *foi* with Heidegger’s own sense of the “promise” (*Versprechen*), as Derrida says in *De l’esprit* (110). The critique of onto-theology is not finally a critique but an affirmation, not finally a closing off but an opening up, not finally a critical cut but a cut that opens, like the circumcised ear or circumcised heart, which opens itself to something I know not what. Heidegger thought that “thinking” could never coexist with “faith.” Derrida rejected that, and said instead that we need to distinguish between the more determinate faiths (*croyance*) and the open-endedness of faith itself (*foi*). We are called upon by the critique of onto-theology to

make a more radical confession of the humility of our condition and to expose ourselves to a more radically unforeseeable future.

Have we then come around full circle to inaugurating a new Center now traveling under the incognito of “faith” in the “pure messianic” or “undeconstructible”? That is an interesting question, and a more interesting objection to deconstruction than the ones by which it is usually visited, and it is one which would require more time than we have here. The short answer is, I do not think this is so, not in any rigorous sense, because centering lies in the very fixing of the proper term of desire, the identification or appropriation of the secret, the settling of the restless heart (*cor inquietum*) on something proper and determinate, something that has been constructed and hence is deconstructible. In “centering” we fix a center in the open instead of remaining open to a coming that may come *in any direction*. There is a difference between the figure of an open, which spreads out in every direction, and the figure of a “center” around which everything is oriented and toward which they are directed. I would say that this messianic faith and expectation has a “heart,” an open heart, that lies at the heart of any determinate promise, but that it does not provide the comforting orientation of the Center. Rather than a centered discourse, we have an earnest but more errant traveler, the faith of a desert traveler, in a more khoral situation, a searcher haunted by the specter or invisible spirits conjured by names like “democracy” and “justice,” “gift” and “God,” one with a heart to keep asking, what do I love when I love justice or democracy, when I love the gift or God? What do I love when I love my God?

"Europe's" Safeguarding of "Being" from its "Fundamentalist Self-Persecution"

Simon Oli

"Do we stand in the very twilight of the most *monstrous transformation* of the whole earth and of the time of the historical space in which it is suspended? Do we stand before the evening of the night of another dawn? Are we setting forth on a journey into the historical land of the earth's evening? Is the land of the Evening only now emerging? *Will this Evening-Land, rising above Occident and Orient and transcending the European, become the place of the coming, more primordially destined history? Are we men of today 'Western' in a sense that first arises out of our passage into the World's night?...* Are we latecomers who we are?"¹

(Martin Heidegger, "Anaximander's Saying")

"*Der Tod, das Gebirg des Seyns, der Schmerz, der Grundriss des Seyns, die Armut, die Befreiung ins Eigentum des Seyns sind Merkmale, an denen die Gefahr merken lässt, dass die Not inmitten der riesigen Nöte ausbleibt, dass die Gefahr nicht die Gefahr ist. Die Gefahr verbirgt sich, indem sie sich durch das Ge-Stell verstellt. Dieses selber wiederum verhüllt sich in dem, was es wesen lässt, in der Technik.*"²

(Martin Heidegger, "Die Gefahr", p.57)

"*Im Althochdeutschen heisst nachstellen: fara. Das in sich gesammelte Stellen als Nachstellen ist die Gefahr. Der Grundzug des Wesens der Gefahr ist das Nachstellen. Insofern des Sein als das Ge-Stell sich selbst mit der Vergessenheit seines Wesens nachstellt, ist das Seyn als Seyn die Gefahr seines eigenen Wesens. Das Seyn ist, aus dem Wesen des Ge-Stells und in der Hinsicht auf Verweigerung von Welt und Verwahrlosung des Dinges gedacht, die Gefahr. Das Seyn ist in sich aus sich für sich die Gefahr schlechthin. Als das Nachstellen, das seinem eigenen Wesen mit der Vergessenheit dieses Wesens nachstellt, ist das Seyn als Seyn die Gefahr.*"³

(Martin Heidegger, "Die Gefahr", p.53-4)

"Entre l'immun et ce qui le menace ou va à son encontre, entre *Heil* et *Unheil*, le rapport n'est ni d'extériorité ni de simple opposition contradictoire."⁴

(Jacques Derrida, "Envoi" p.160)

" L'Occident chrétien a découvert la mort "⁵

(Andre Malraux)

I

1 Martin Heidegger, "*Anaximander's Saying*" in "**Off The Beaten Track**", edited and translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 245-6.

2 Martin Heidegger, "**Einblick in das was ist**", GA 79, Vittorio Klostermann, 1994.

3 ibid

4 Jacques Derrida, "**Voyous**", Editions Gallimard, p.160, 2003.

5 "**Le Musée Imaginaire**", Editions Gallimard, 1996.

Promising "No-thing":

Heidegger and the "Eclipsed Shock" of the "West" :

When reflecting on Heidegger's oft elliptical statements on the so-called eschatological "*History of Being*", it is important, in my view, not to neglect ontology in favour of a "*rational*" critique of what both Heidegger's harshest critics and, ironically enough, Heidegger himself may have referred to as his supposedly "*groundless mysticism, bad mythology and ruinous irrationalism*".⁶ A "*mythology*" which, needless to say, would revolve around the seemingly "*abstract*" question of the "*forgotten meaning of Being*". By ontology here, I mean, of course, the rigorous study of questions that are entwined with and yet irreducible to what Heidegger famously called the "*ontical*" in S/Z7. This may, of course, seem like an obvious "*point*" when dealing with an otherwise complex thinker such as Heidegger.

A "*point*" which one may not, understandably enough, wish to belabour in the controversial manner of (to borrow Hannah Arendt's expression) the "*Hidden King of Philosophy*" who- in a famous 1929 lecture⁸- strived to make a nonplussed academic audience⁹ realise that the positive significance of the "*Nothing*" that does not primarily "*thing*" around it (in its "*proximity*" or what Heidegger would later refer to as "*Die Nähe*") is "*No-thing*" as such.

Be that as it may, my contention is that the philosophically "*shocking*" implications of the irreducible "*difference*" between the "*ontological*" and the "*ontical*", that is to say, in Heidegger's terminology in S/Z, between "*Being*" ("*Sein*" or "*Seyn*") and "*Entities*" ("*Seiendes*") is not as homogeneously and simply "*pointed*" out in the course of Heidegger's later thinking as predominantly "*epistemological*" and oft reductive readings of his treatment of several questions of indisputable philosophical import have hitherto presupposed. Among such questions one

6 "**Allein ist dies nicht alles grundlose Mystik oder gar schlechte Mythologie, in jedem Fall ein verderblicher Irrationalismus, die Verleugnung der Ratio?"**

Martin Heidegger, "**Zur Sache des Denkens**", p.79, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1988.

7 Notably in the chapter entitled "**Der ontische Vorrang des Seinsfrage**" (p.15) in "**Die Einleitung**".

8 "**Was ist Metaphysik**", "**Wegmarken**", GA 9, pp.103-23.

9 The lecture was delivered on July 29th, 1929, and the audience included Husserl.

must include, it goes without saying, those whose distant theological "*origins*" or contemporary theoretical value for Christian philosophers or theologians of different orientations could hardly serve to discourage awareness of their significance for the examination of the relevance of Heidegger's thought to a better understanding of such burning contemporary philosophical and cultural issues as, for example, the rise of various sorts of fundamentalism in the "*West*" and the "*East*" (in particular, in the so-called "*Islamic East*").

As Heidegger himself noted in a 1937-38 text translated as "*My Path Up to Now*":

"And who would want to deny ("*verkenne*") that this entire path up to now ("*diesem ganzen bisherigen Weg*") was accompanied silently ("*verschweigen*") by a confrontation with Christianity—a confrontation that was not and is not a '*problem*' taken up at random but the preservation of the ownmost origin ("*Wahrung der eigenen Herkunft*")—of the family house, of the homeland ("*der Heimat*") and of my youth—and at the same time a painful detachment from it. Only someone who was so deeply rooted in an *actually lived Catholic world* can suspect something of the necessities that affected the path of my questioning up to now like *subterranean seismic tremors* ("*wie unteriridische Erdstösse wirkten*")".¹⁰

Whilst it is generally true that, as Jean Grondin rightly underscores¹¹, Heidegger spoke very little (or not extensively) in public about how such "*subterranean seismic tremors*" influenced his "*path of questioning*"¹², it is indisputable that his questioning of the very possibility of ontology in S/Z reflected and eventually radicalised such "*tremors*" well beyond the "*actually lived Catholic world*" in

10 Martin Heidegger, "**Anhang: Ein Rückblick auf dem Weg, Mein bisherige Weg**", GA 66, p.415.

11 "**Why Reawaken the Question of Being**" in "**Heidegger's Being and Time. Critical Essays**", Lanham/Boulder/New York/ Toronto/Oxford, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, edited by Richard Polt, 15-31, 2005.

12 The influence of Herman Schell, the controversial Catholic theologian and creative reader of Schelling and Maurice Blondel (the author of the infamous "*l'action*" (1893)) whose '*immanentist*' view of the character of man's relation to God incensed many conservative and orthodox theologians in the "*arch-Catholic Freiburg*" (the expression is Husserl's), on Heidegger is well documented in Hugo Ott's two indispensable articles on the character of young Heidegger's education, notably in "**Der junge Martin Heidegger. Gymnasial Konviktzeit und Studium**" (**Freiburger Diözesanarchiv 108, 1984**). Thomas Sheehan has also undertaken an incisive analysis of Heidegger's academic and educational background entitled "**Heidegger's Lehrjahre**" to which I am indebted in undertaking this reading of some of the broader philosophical implications of Heidegger's "*break*" with his Catholic "*origins*" and theological "*grounding*". Sheehan's article can

be found in the collection edited by John Sallis and others in "**Collegium Phenomenologicum**", **Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer, 1988**, pp.77-137.

which Heidegger was born and educated. A provincial "*lifeworld*" which, was "*shaken*" by the "*shock*" of the intellectual movement in Catholic theology known as "*Reformkatholizismus*" as well as the controversies revolving around the notion of "*Modernism*". A "*lifeworld*" in which Heidegger's interest in what he would later call "*the tension between ontology and speculative theology, as the structure of metaphysics, would enter the field of my research*"¹³ through studies with both orthodox and dissident Catholic theologians such as Carl Braig and Herman Schell. Indeed, so radical was the cultural "*shock*" of the publication of S/Z in the intellectual context of the Weimar Republic that one may safely characterize it as an unprecedented "*seismic tremor*" whose philosophical impact was variably assumed by its author (as well as his fervent admirers and stern critics) in a manner that, I would argue, has proved both fruitful and profoundly misleading. My aim here is, of course, not that of undertaking an exhaustive analysis of the philosophical and the historical implications of the publication of S/Z in the turbulent cultural context of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s.

A context which, as I have argued in a recent French article¹⁴ of mine, most contemporary French commentators of Heidegger are not adequately familiar with. Indeed, their ignorance of and supercilious disregard for the complex German intellectual and cultural history of the mentioned period, I should nonetheless like to say in passing, frequently underpin their periodic and unjustified exaggeration or highly questionable underestimation of the importance of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism as the rector of Freiburg University and beyond his resignation from that post in 1934.

Nevertheless, I do wish to emphasize the fact that, as I have mentioned, whilst the distinction that Heidegger makes between "*Being*" and "*Entities*" in S/Z or, in structurally more straightforward terms, between the "*ground*" and that which is "*grounded*" thereupon has acted as a major impetus in the development of the twentieth

¹³ Martin Heidegger, "**Zur Sache des Denkens**", p.82 / **Fruhe Schriften**, xi, GA I/1, 57.

¹⁴ Simon F.O'Liaï, "**Entre l'Ontologie et l'Histoire: Heidegger ni Hitler ni Papa Noël de la Philosophie**", **Recherches Philosophiques**, "**Le Portique**", Décembre 2007.

Century European philosophical thought, it has also misled its author as well as his admirers and critics into viewing it, ultimately, as yet another attempt at solving the ancient philosophical problem of "*grounding Being*" *tout court*. In other words, it has been generally viewed an attempt at determining (beyond the conceptual restrictions imposed by "*Western metaphysics*") the elusive "*ground*" of all "*beings in history*". A "*ground*" which- to borrow Heidegger's paradoxically "*destablising*" terminology in the "Beiträge"- is no less than "*fundamentally abyssal and groundless*" ("*abgründig*").¹⁵

One may, of course, object that the choice of "*Da-sein*" as the ontological locus of the working out of the said distinction (between "*Being*" and "*Entities*") as well as Heidegger's later and radical "*shifting*" of it in such key writings as "The Essence of Truth" ("*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*") would seem to preclude any recourse to a "*grounding Being*" as the principal axis of Heidegger's reflection, at least after 1935. That is to say, according to William Richardson¹⁶, the year in which "*Heidegger II seems to have taken full possession*". Indeed, as Thomas Sheehan has very effectively argued¹⁷, neither before nor after his so-called "*change in thinking*" ("*die Wendung im Denken*") that corresponds to what Richardson terms "*a shift in focus*" Heidegger's topic "*was not 'Being', either in its traditional ontological sense or in a phenomenologically transformed one.*"

Nor was it, I would have to add, that of replacing "*Being*" with another key term in naming, to borrow Heidegger's famous expression, "*the matter itself*" ("*die Sache selbst*"). For even such decisively influential notions as "*Differenz*", "*Anwesen*", "*Austrag*", "*Abbau*" or "*Abgrund*" were never meant to replace "*Being*" as the signifier that would "*point out*" the major concern of Heidegger's so-called "*path of thinking*" after 1935. There is no shortage of textual evidence to buttress such a

15 "*Die Er-gründung des Seyns, seines Grundes, ist das Zwischen des Seyns als Ab-grund. Das abgründige Wissen als Da-sein. Da-sein als er-eigen, grundlos; abgründig.*" "Wie aber die Götter", GA 65, p.509,

16 William Richardson, "Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought", p. 254,

17 Thomas Sheehan, "Kehre und Ereignis, A Prologomenon to Introduction to Metaphysics" in "A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics" edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, pp.3-16 and 263-274.

reading of Heidegger. Thus, for example, in an open letter to Professor Frings who presided a Heidegger seminar in Chicago in 1966, Heidegger wrote:

"I would be very glad if it were possible to orient the discussion at once—in the first moments of the symposium—purely and decisively toward the matter ("*Die Sache*") for thought. In that way, there would develop, instead of a "*Heidegger Symposium*" a *Colloquium on the Question of Being*. For it is this question—and it alone—that determines the way of my thought and its boundaries." 18

Despite Heidegger's explicit reformulation of the problematic of "*Being*" in terms of a radical and metaphysically unthinkable "*difference*" between "*Being*" and "*beings*" 19, this celebrated and frequently misread "*difference*" 20 is meant to evoke no more than the "*historial imprint*" of "*Being*" upon beings in its "*differentiating passage*" 21 as Heidegger underscores in his famous course on Hegel's Logic, "Identity and Difference". Thought of as "*difference*", "*difference*" as pulling apart and moving beyond the "*presence*" of the "*already present*" can name, as far as Heidegger is concerned, no more than the linguistically unthinkable "*grounding dispensation*" of "*Being*" beyond all "*Onto-Theology*". One may then ask if Heidegger's topic, as Sheehan argues, was neither "*Being*" nor, as I have stated, some other key term such as "*difference*" or "*presencing*", "*what*" was it? What sort of new "*ground*" did Heidegger intend to "*cover*", that is to say, ended up

18 "*Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*" GA 16, p.684, 2000. Translated by William J. Richardson in "Heidegger and the Quest For Truth", ed. Manfred Fringes, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1968, p.17.

19 "*Das Differenz zeigt sich als das Sein des Seinden im Allgemeinen und als Sein des Seinden im Höchsten*", Martin Heidegger, "Die Onto-Theo-Logische Verfassung Der Metaphysik", p.63, in "Identität Und Differenz", Verlag Gunther Neske, Elfte Auflage, 1999.

20 This is most notably evident in Jacques Derrida's 1968 essay "*Les Fins de l'Homme*" included in "Marges--de la Philosophie", Editions de Minuit, 1972 In this essay, Derrida seems to conceive of "*Being*" as the ultimately presentable "*Truth*" whose appropriation. by the Nietzsche's "*last man*"

would be the later Heidegger's major concern despite the latter's privileging of "*Differenz*" in his postwar thinking.

21 Given that English or French translations of simple German terms used in an evocative manner by Heidegger in many of his texts are oft incapable of reflecting their "*properly*" and overtly conceptual significance, I have decided to avoid the trap of their frequent misinterpretation or pretentiously misleading appropriation through the use of simple and yet more or less evocative English terms. Hence, Heidegger's use of the expression "*Austrag von Uberkommnis und Ankunft*" has been translated as "*differentiating passage*" even though "*Being*" does not simply pass over "*beings*" so as to differentiate them in the manner of the "*God-Spirit*" of an Idealist metaphysics.

not quite "*dis-covering*" the profound philosophical import thereof through (to echo George Bataille) the "*uncovering*" of its pervasive "*extra-ordinariness*"? Furthermore, one may just as pertinently ask why Heidegger, who continued to use the term "*Being*" up to the very end of his life²², frequently transcribed this new and "*extra-ordinary ground differently*" as "*Seyn*" or even went as far as "*crossing it out*" ("*Kreuzweise Durchstreichung*") in his famous letter to Ernst Jünger published as "*On the Question of Being*" ("*Zur Seinsfrage*") and thus wrote it as "~~Being~~"? Before embarking on a brief exploration of these questions, one must bear in mind that "*what*" is to be found in asking the first question ("*Erfragte*" in Heidegger's S/Z vocabulary) and that which is interrogated ("*Befragte*") in asking the second one, that is to say, Heidegger's varying and seemingly idiosyncratic (if not confusing) manner of transcribing "*Being*" are indeed closely entwined.

My hypothesis- which is not a Hegelian one and yet concerns Heidegger's attempt at gaining an "*adequate*" comprehension of the ontological sense of a "*shock*" (what I call the "*Eclipsed Shock of the West*") in the "*aftershock*" of the Second World War-- is that the pursuit of Heidegger's major topic or what I would call, the "*covering-uncovering*" of the "*extra-ordinary ground*" of his thinking presupposed the eventual "*crossing out*" of "*Being*" in as much as his main concern (specially in the early part of the later period, that is, between 1945-55) is thinking the "*radically finite*" and the "*mortally fragile*" character of all historical existence as such or its "*No-thingness*". That is to say, the ever-destablising "*Nothing*" that constitutes the metaphysically unthinkable and differentiating "*ground*" of "~~Being~~". Moreover, it is indisputably clear that, in the period ranging from 1946 to 1957, the "*historially eclipsed*" and historically misrepresented "*dis-discovery*" of the "*No-thing that no-things*", that is to say, the disordering-destabilising "*ground*" of "~~Being~~" constitutes, as Heidegger demonstrates in such writings as "Anaximander Fragment", the very "*Essence*" of an ontologically "*surpassed*" (but not "*sublated*") "*West*" ("*Abendland*").

²² In the very last open letter written on April 11th, 1976, that is to say, a few weeks before his death on the 26th of May of the same year, Heidegger points out that "*the question with which I greet you, is the only question, even up to the present hour, I seek to inquire into ever more inquiringly. One knows this question under the title of the 'Question of Being'.*", GA 16, 747-8.

I believe it is the 1949 foreword to the third edition of "*On the Essence of Ground*" whose original publication date, as Heidegger mentions therein, was contemporaneous with that of the famously parodied "*Was ist die Metaphysik*" (in 1929) which constitutes the decisive historico-textual juncture at which Heidegger seems to have, finally, equated "*Da-sein's*" constitutive freedom with the above-mentioned "*No-thing*" and both of these with the "*ontological difference*" between "*Being*" and "*beings*":

"The Nothing is the Nothing of the Entities and Being experienced through Entities as such. *The ontological difference is the Nothing between Entities and Being.* Yet, the Nothing pointing to Entities is as little a Nothing in the sense of a *nihil negativum* as the Difference (as the Nothing) between Entities and Being would be a mere product of a distinction worked out by the understanding (*ens rationis*)."²³

In so doing, Heidegger seems to have modified his earlier conception of "*Being*" which "*nihilates as Being*"²⁴. A conception to which he refers in his "*Letter on Humanism*". The "*nihil*" which, as Heidegger "*points out*" in his shorter letter of November 23rd, 1945, to Jean Beaufret, is that which "*nihilism*" is "*essentially unable to think*" and identified with the "*ontological difference*" in 1949.

That is to say, the year in which Heidegger delivered his third and very controversial Bremen Lecture on "*The Danger*" ("*Die Gefahr*") in which the barbaric "*annihilation*" ("*Vernichtung*") of millions (in the sense of the technologised "*liquidation of mere corpses*" in the "*concentration camps*"²⁵) is distinguished from "*Death*" in the proper and dignified sense of the term. Indeed, so dignified is the "*Essence*" of "*Death*", Heidegger argues in this text, that "*Death*" must be "*pulled therein*"²⁶ and recognized as no less than the "*highest mountain chain or the hearth*" ("*das höchste Gebirg der Wahrheit des Seyns*") of the truth of Being itself, the hearth wherein the Concealed Essence of Being is saved through the gathering of its saving as such"²⁷.

²³ "Vom Wesen des Grundes" in "*Holzwege*", GA 9, p. 122, 1976.

²⁴ "*Das Sein nichtet—als das Sein*" Ibid, p.360.

²⁵ "*Sie werden Bestandstücke eines Bestandes der Fabrikation von Leichen. Sterben sie? Sie werden in Vernichtungslagern unauffällig liquidiert.*" GA 79, p.56, 1994.

²⁶ "*Sterben aber heist, den Tod in sein Wesen austragen*" (ibid, p.56)

²⁷ GA 79, p.56.

In order to discuss the significance of this text in a "serene" manner, one must, in my view, avoid two major obstacles. The first bears on the controversy sparked in France (in the aftermath of the publication of the book of Emmanuel Faye²⁸ in 2005) and revolves around Heidegger's putatively "insensitive" references to the victims of Nazi mass extermination during the Second World War as well as his problematic "essentialising" of the "concrete reality" of (what Heidegger himself clearly regarded as) the widespread and abject suffering that prevailed in Europe and Asia in the troubled post-1945 world context. Heidegger's "ontological essentialising" of (to borrow Adorno's expressive terminology) the "micrological" suffering of millions of silent and nameless "victims" through the use of such conceptual tools as the famous "Ge-Stell" or the Nietzsche-inspired "Will to Power", it is frequently argued, tends to minimize its "scandal".

Thereupon, I must underscore the fact that, in my view, Heidegger's use of such tools is indeed questionably inadequate. Yet, it is equally true that those who claim that Heidegger's problematic "ontologising" of the consequences of the emergence of modern technology somehow "negates the Holocaust" or "leaves no room at all for victims in the History of Being's self-showing" either doggedly refuse to read Heidegger or have not read him well enough to know that not only did he talk about poignantly concrete instances of suffering such as "liquidating corpses" in Nazi concentration camps or the "scandalous" famine that ravaged Asia in the same period but, more importantly, attempted to show that what is most "essentially" and destructively at work in modern technology is not so much its character as the restrictive "En-framing" ("Ge-Stell") of "Being" but "Being's" very own "Persecution" ("Nach-stellen") of its own very "Essence" as "Being" via its own "dispensation" as "En-framing".

²⁸ Emmanuel Faye, "**Heidegger: L'Introduction du Nazisme en Philosophie**", Albin Michel, 2005

Simply and somewhat provocatively put, Heidegger's key concept or catchword was not so much "*En-framing*" or "*Ge-Stell*" 29 but "*Being*" or "*Seyn*" as the "*ground*" of its own "*Self-Persecution*", that is to say, its own inevitable "*Nach-stellen*".

A term that might, albeit provisionally and literally, be translated as "*Post-framing*" 30. Indeed, what matters most in grasping the profound concern of Heidegger's thinking (specially from 1946 to 1957) is the quickly sidelined and neglected "*Persecution*" of "*Being*" by "*itself*". On this specific "*point*", Heidegger is unambiguously clear in the 1949 lecture entitled "*The Danger*":

" *Being* ("*Das Seyn*") is simply the danger in itself, for itself and on itself. As the Persecution that persecutes its own very essence with the forgetting of this essence, *Being as Being is the danger*. Being's essential dangerous to itself ("*Gefahrwesen*") is the manner in which, *the Same* ("*das Selbe*"), in as much as it is the World and En-framing- these being the differentiated essence of Being- divests ("*sich seiner selbst entsetzt*") and persecutes itself." 31

The highly technologised self-destruction that "*Being*" inflicted on "*itself*" through the agency of "*mortal beings*" who massacred millions of "*silent*" victims in various Nazi concentration camps as well as Soviet Goulags by denying them the dignity of their "*Death*" is only a most visibly "*scandalous*" instance of "*Being's Self-Persecution*". For, lest it be forgot, Heidegger constantly reminds us that there could be no "*Being*" to "*speak of*" without the "*mortals*" who shaped and submitted to its finite dispensations, that is to say, acted as "*responsible agents of its Self-Persecution*". Identifying the "*Essence*" of Being's "*Self-Persecution*" as "*En-framing*" is therefore not tantamount to silencing or ignoring its victim. Indeed, it would be textually untenable to suggest that such was Heidegger's intention in the framework of the 1949 Bremen Lectures of which "*The Danger*" is the third. Only those who refuse to acknowledge the "*tragic*" and bloody character of all history, be it "*Western*" or

29 Thus, for example, in the appendix to "**The Origin of the Work of Art**", Heidegger notes that his use of the term "*Ge-Stell*" in that particular essay should not be considered as equivalent to its later use as a conceptual tool in analyzing the essence of modern technology. This is so, notes Heidegger, despite the fact at-as "*letting-lie-before experienced in the Greek manner*"- the later use of this term is "*thought out of this earlier use of the word-not from book case ('Büchergestell') or installation*" ("**Off the Beaten Track**", p.54)

30 Heidegger himself evokes the parallel between "*Stellen*" and the Latin verb "*Ponere*" in the aforementioned appendix. "*Ponere*" can be rendered as "*Positing*" or "*Framing*" in English.

31 "*Die Gefahr*" in "**Einblick in das was ist**" GA 79, p.54.

"Eastern", can afford to ridicule Heidegger's characterization of "Being's Essence" as "Self-Persecution" and make the utterly unfounded and "scandalous" claim that Heidegger somehow "denied" the "Holocaust" or simply did not distinguish between "Life" and "Death". Heidegger's analysis of the restrictive access to "Being" that modern technology embodies is not flawed because it "ontologises" or "essentialises" the concrete sufferings of millions of victims.

For, indeed, who, other than anti-intellectual "ideo-logues" of varying sorts, could possibly refuse to analyse the "profound methodological principles" that, for example, guided numerous Nazi experimentations of dirty radiological bombs on war prisoners in the Baltic Coast region between 1944-45 ?

Who, other than modern day specialists of "scandal journalism", could seriously pretend that the victims of these experiments were not simply "liquidated" in the "framework" of a "technical" plan masterminded by the SS High Command and with the knowledge and the approval of Himmler himself? If Heidegger's approach in the mentioned lectures is inadequate, it is for a very concrete and yet intellectually complex reason. To wit, Heidegger does not think the "Self-Persecution" of "Being" in a consistent, rigorous, and sufficiently explicit manner. As theoretically valuable as the elaboration of the notion of "En-framing" might be to a more precise understanding of the ontologically restrictive character of modern technology, it prevents Heidegger as well as his "fundamentalist" admirers in the "East" and "moralizing" critics in the "West" from focusing on the "radically fragile" character of the very "ground" of all life and "Being", that is to say, its "mortality", its "Nothingness". When Heidegger speaks of the "essence" of "motorized food industry" as being the "Same" as that of "manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and the extermination camps", it is to the mentioned "Self-Persecution" of "Being" that he refers. For it is not "En-framing" as such that somehow violates "Being's" integrity. Rather, it is "Being" itself that "Persecutes" itself through its own "En-framing". In formulating the problematic of the suffering that is co-extensive with "Being's" very own dispensation as "En-framing", Heidegger indeed "points" to a concrete and crucial problem that has preoccupied modern European thought from Nietzsche and Freud to

Adorno, Horkheimer, Bataille³², Derrida, Lacan and, particularly, Foucault. A problem which has preoccupied such major currents of modern European thought as psychoanalysis (or various sorts of Nietzsche-inspired socio-political thought such as that of the Frankfurt School's) with the trans-historical paradox that the creation of all stable "*identity*" and the "*ordering*" of an increasingly codified "*life*" entails. To wit, all "*ordering identification*" of life presupposes the unleashing and the questionable harnessing of a certain "*originary violence*". A "*violence*" which, to echo Nietzsche, all greatly "*serious*" thinking must strive to analyse and, eventually, help harness within vigilantly maintained "*limits*" so as to make "*life*" more "*desirably creative*" and less "*manipulatively oppressive*". For reasons that I shall briefly expose below as well as his hopelessly restrictive incomprehension of disciplines such as sociology or psychoanalysis, Heidegger did not attempt to undertake a rigorous analysis of the very concrete theme of the "*Self-Persecution*" of "*Being*".

Instead, he engaged in working out the formal details of a necessary but incomplete "*ontological*" reading of a very concrete phenomenon. A reading which, needless to say, reinforces the misleading impression that the "*essence*" of all "*persecution*" is radically distinct and divorced from its numerous concrete manifestations in history. Manifestations whose complex characters may have been more fruitfully elucidated had Heidegger analyzed and applied the notion of "*Nach-Stellen*" to "*essentially*" related phenomena that are as radically different in character as the above-mentioned ones. Yet, notwithstanding Heidegger's own incomprehension of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic school of "*Daseinanalyse*"³³ elaborated analyses of this sort by using such Heidegger-inspired notions as the phenomenological "*Body*" ("*Der Leib*") of the "*subject-patient*".

In short, I believe that Heidegger must be fairly and strongly critiqued for having repeatedly failed to recognize that the primordial function of the "*un-concealment*" of "*Being's Self-concealing Essence*" is not its "*promise*" of "*grounding*" a new "*order*" of "*Being*" such as the one that the Nazis in Germany or the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia

³² Notably in George Bataille's posthumously published "**Théorie de la Religion**", Gallimard, 1963.

³³ Its two major proponents were the Swiss psychiatrists and friends of Heidegger himself, Ludwig Binswanger and Medard Boss. Medard Boss edited and published "**The Zollikoner Seminar**", discussed herein, in 1987.

sought to violently impose by "*persecuting*" and "*liquidating*" their political opponents, but, rather, the "*protection*" of fragile "*beings*" from "*Being's*" very own "*Essence*" as "*Self-Persecution*". In this respect, a comparative effort involving Heidegger's thinking and various schools of Mahayana Buddhist thought would, I am convinced be, very stimulating for all future philosophical thinking on the question of violence, its historical expressions and its structural "*origins*". Indeed, as Heidegger himself noted in the above-mentioned text from 1949, "*Being*" is "*No-thing*" other than the resolute assumption of "*Da-sein's essential no-thingness*" and, as Mahyana Buddhism teaches, "*Da-sein's* comprehension and assumption of the "*No-thingness*" of all other "*beings*". "*No-thingness*" that radically "*groundless*" men could peacefully and compassionately "*appropriate*" as fragile "*mortals*". Having stated the above, I must also mention that, without being reducible to purely biographical and historical circumstances in which this and the other texts of the three lectures published as "*Einblick in Das Was ist*" were produced, the themes discussed therein (and pursued between 1946-55) are not exactly unrelated to Heidegger's own difficult and well-known life circumstances in a post 1945 world context marked by an intensifying cold war. After all, was Heidegger's much-commented and equally controversial letter to Marcuse not written in this very period³⁴ ? Does it not reflect his growing philosophical concern with themes such as the mass displacement and the extermination of entire populations as well as, to echo the title of a famous study of Joseph Stalin's ruthless and effective consolidation of his power in the former Soviet Union³⁵, the "*technology of power*" symbolized, as Heidegger argues before and after 1945, by the highly calculative "*Will*" to its efficient and "*planetary*" organization?

The second obstacle in reading "*The Danger*" is of a methodological order and bears on what, to paraphrase Jacques Derrida, can be viewed as Heidegger's oft infuriating and reductive "*gathering identification*" ("*Versammlung*") of the "*Essence*" of that which

³⁴Heidegger's letter to Marcuse, dated January 20th, 1948, is translated and included in "**The Heidegger Controversy**", Richard Wolin, ed., Columbia University press, New York, 1991, p.162.

³⁵ "**Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party :A Study in the Technology of Power**", Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, 1960.

is "essentially" subject to inevitably "tragic" dispersion.³⁶ In other words, the obstacle is Heidegger's highly questionable manner of identifying the "Essence" of a phenomenon. Be it Heidegger's own cherished "Heimat" (whose complex connotation in his postwar thinking I do not mean to criticize in a superficially "politicised" fashion) or the supposed "greatness of a rooted language". Phenomena which, as Nietzsche would have ironically remarked, constitute no more than the contingent "artistic" traces of man's trans-historical confrontation with the overwhelming "tragedy" of his/her finite existence.

Nevertheless, it is in this significant postwar text of Heidegger's that "Death" is both recognized as the "hearth of Being in the poem of the world"³⁷ and "eclipsed" by the extensive discussion of the theme of the "Concealed Essence" of "Being". A "Concealed Essence" which "Death" is destined to "harbor" and "safeguard". When I say "eclipsed", I mean to underscore the fact that the analysis of the "destabilizing" impact of "Death" is subordinated to considerations on the "Concealed" possibilities of "Being" to which a technologised world may have thus far blocked our access. Thus, starting with "Anaximander's Saying" in 1946 through "The Danger" (1949) and ending with "The Question of Being" (1955), Heidegger acknowledges the finite and "mortally" character of "Being" more or less explicitly to the point that, in a footnote contained in "Holzwege" dating from 1950, he states that "it would henceforth be inappropriate to designate the difference³⁸ with "Sein" whether it is written with an 'I' or with a 'y' ". Yet, he simultaneously and systematically subordinates reflection on the radical implications of such an acknowledgement to considerations on the conceptual straightjacket of "Being's Concealed Essence" and its "Original Promise" ("Das Frühe" / "Versprechender"). A "promise" whose recognition, as Jacques Derrida justly observes in his reading of Heidegger's interpretation of Georg Trakl's poems "The West" and "The Soul of The

³⁶ Derrida expresses his "admiration contrariée" for Heidegger towards the very end of his interview with the late Dominique Janicaud in "Heidegger en France", pp 89-126, Albin Michel, 2001.

³⁷ "Der Tod ist das Gebirg des Seyns im Gedicht der Welt." (GA 79, p.56)

³⁸ That is to say *Being* as the "difference" between "Being" and "Entities".

Autumn" (*Herbstseele*)³⁹, presupposes that of the "*Primordial Spring*" of the "*West*". That is to say the "*Primordial Spring*" (*Frühling*) that the "*West*" could still be were it to recognize and appropriate its own "*Essence*" as more "*Primordial*" than the Platonic and Christian "*West*" (*Abendland*) represented in a "*European*" manner. A "*Promise*" which is obviously that of "*Being's Concealed Essence*" and which (in his "*foundationalist*" period of the 1930s) Heidegger regarded as that of a new "*Dispensation*" of "*Being*" in which "*Western*" man's relationship to the "*Essence*" of modern technology should have been radically transformed through the installation of an "*Order*" established by National Socialism. In the postwar period, this "*Promise*" is construed as that of an "*economy*" of "*relations*" to "*Being's Concealing Un-concealment*" (*die Unverborgenheit sich bergenden Ankunft* ⁴⁰) that is not "*persecuted*" by the restrictive framework of the dispensation of "*Being's very own Essence*" as "*En-framing*". After 1945, Heidegger seems to think that the "*Promise*" in question is that of a "*Serene*" manner of "*Being*" that may exceed all calculative "*Willing*", "*Ordering*" and "*En-framing*". My thesis is that it is precisely Heidegger's pursuit of "*Serene Reflection*" on the "*Concealment*" of the "*Essence*" of "*Being*" which led him to subordinate and eventually abandon the theme of the "*No-thingness*" of "*Being*", that is to say, its radical "*mortality*" and "*groundlessness*". Indeed, it is the same concern with "*Being's Concealed Essence*" that could also explain Heidegger's predominant use of the earlier transcription of "*Being*" as "*Being*" in his various seminars and publication (notably in the protocols of the Thor and the Zähringen seminars⁴¹) undertaken between 1955 until his death in 1976. It is noteworthy that even when Heidegger occasionally employs "*Being*" in his these later seminars, the "*risky*" "*gathering identification*" (*Versammlung*) is oft privileged in defining the radically de-centered and contingent character of "*Da-sein*"⁴² whilst occasional references to "*Death*" or the "*No-thing*" seem to fulfill no more than the heuristic function of

39 Jacques Derrida, "De l'Esprit, Heidegger et la Question", Champs, Flammarion, pp.112-3.

40 "Identität Und Differenz", p.56

41 Martin Heidegger, "Zollikoner Seminare, Herausgegeben von Medard Boss," Vittorio Klostermann, 1987.

42 "*Die Versammlung des Verweilen ist das "Selbst". Nicht Subjekt-Objekt. Dasein-Welt, sondern Da-sein als Sein.*" Martin Heidegger, "Zollikoner Seminare", Vittorio Klostermann, 1987, p.240.

defining "*man 's finitude*"⁴³ or distinguishing "*Being*" and "*Entities*"⁴⁴ . I would also have to add that, without being reducible thereof, the stability of Heidegger's own improved life circumstances is in all likelihood not irrelevant to such a graphico-analytic reversal.

Of course, I do not mean to say that Heidegger reverted to the earlier transcription of the "*matter*" of his thought because he thought of "*Being*" as some sort a new metaphysical "*ground*". Nonetheless, he seems to have gradually sidelined the "*abyssal nothing-ness*" that separates "*Being*" from "*Entities*" in order to focus on the "*Saving*" ("*Retten*") of its "*Concealed Essence*" by privileging, as Jacques Derrida suggests, the "*Immunity*" ("*Heilen*") of that which is to be safeguarded as "*Salvation*". The question that, I hope, could be fruitfully examined by all Heidegger scholarship in the future is to what extent such a privileging of "*Serene Reflection*" on the "*Concealed Essence of Being*" (and the "*Immunity*" of that which "*Saves*" and "*must be saved*") reflects the lingering influence of Heidegger's intellectual "*beginnings*" as a student of Christian theology in an "*actually lived Catholic world*"? Does Heidegger's late reference to Meister Eckhart's identification of "*God*" with "*No-thing*" reflect his adoption of a mystico-Christian view of the "*Saving Promise*" of the "*historically dispensed Divine*" in the face of "*Death*"?

Does Heidegger's subordination of the "*Proximity of Death*" (as its "*Concealing Harbor*") to the "*Proximity of the Homeland*"- so Rüdiger Safranski⁴⁵ suggests, bespeak the growing visibility and importance of the "*beginnings*" towards the "*encroaching twilight*" of Heidegger's life? I confess that I have no simple answers to these questions. Granted, of course, that there may ever be "*simple answers*" or even answers *tout court* to such questions.

Yet, I am convinced that, contrary to what a distorted and hackneyed image of

43 "*Das Sterben-müssen des Menschen folgt nicht au dem Gebrauchtwerden des Menschen in das Ereignis hinein. Es ist einfach so, dass er sterben muss*" (ibid, p.225)

44 "*Zum Seinsbezug gehört die Differenz vom Sein zum Seienden, und diese Differenz erfahren heist solches erfahren, was nicht das Seiende ist. Die Grunderfahrung dieses "Nicht-das-Seiende" ist der Erfahrung des Nichts, und die Erfahrung dieses "nicht-das-Seiende" ist im Bezug zum Tode gegeben, In der sterblichkeit, weil der Tod der Abschied vom Seienden ist.*" (ibid, p. 230)

45 "*Bei sinkender Dämmerung wird das Frühe sichtbar*", "Ein Meister aus Deutschland, Heidegger und seine Zeit" Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002, p.476.

the post-metaphysical "*thinker*" to whose creation Heidegger himself did indeed contribute, the "*Safeguarding*" of the "*Promise*" of the "*Unconcealed Essence* of "*Being*", that is to say, the "*Truth*" of the "*Ontological Shock*" whose impact has long surpassed the historically obsolete figure of the "*West*" and shall be intensified by the growing relevance of the cultural "*signifier*" to which I have provisionally referred as "*Europe*"⁴⁶ in my various writings, can only be undertaken by "*Being's*-shepherd" who, as Heidegger himself put it,

"has so little to do with bucolic idylls and nature mysticism that he can become the shepherd of Being only if he *remains the place-holder for the Nothing.*"⁴⁷

For, indeed, it is only through the "*safeguarding*" of such a "*historially specific place*" -irreducible to any specific geographico-historical "*site*" - that one can hope to resist all manner of violent "*persecution*" of "*Being's*" open and free horizon, that is to say, "*fundamentalism*" in our troubled and confused contemporary world. A "*mortally fragile*" and "*contingent*" world that shall promise "*No-thing*" to those obsessed by the all too familiar illusion of "*grounding*" a new and fictive "*Order of Life*" on the "*Un-concealed*" ruins of the ever "*Concealed Essence of Being*".

46 "*Europe*" bespeaks (beyond the exhaustion of the historical figure of Europe) the uncircumventable abandonment of all onto-theologically absolutised "*ground*" of history and life by those who understand the radically "*contingent*" character of all finite historical existence. Be they born in Europe or in any other "*historico-geographical*" continent.

47 Martin Heidegger, "Off the Beaten Track", p.262.

Rethinking Avicenna's ontology from the standpoint of Heidegger's critique of the history of metaphysics?

Nader El-Bizri

Exordium: 'Why Avicenna'?

The influence of Martin Heidegger's thought on *philosophical thinking* in theology, within selected European and North American academic circles (in the so-called 'Western' traditions), is evident and well documented. This intellectual phenomenon continues also to be a significant vital topic of scholarly deliberation and academic debate. This is the case despite the fact that most mainstream philosophically oriented theologians are not necessarily explicitly influenced by Heidegger's legacy or inclined to study it seriously. This is particularly evident within certain dominant schools of theology, which customarily favour the Anglo-American 'Analytical' methods of philosophical interpretation instead of endorsing the so-called 'Continental' tradition in philosophy. Yet, it is not uncommon that reflections on religion, or on the exegesis and hermeneutics of textual questions pertaining to 'divinities', lead in some cases to discussions about the 'theological' entailments of Heidegger's thought. While thinking about the Heideggerian tradition is not that unusual in some prominent contemporary schools of theology and philosophy, primarily in European and North American *academia*, reflections on principal Heideggerian notions from the viewpoint of studying Islamic thought are still very rare and timidly ambivalent. Given this state of affairs, the aim behind this paper is to humbly contribute to a potential preparatory 'dialogue' around 'Heidegger and religion' from a perspective that takes into account selected

conceptual leitmotifs that are inspired by the impetus of philosophy in the intellectual history of Islam.⁴⁸ In order to avoid the pitfalls of generalisation, and to give some conceptual focus to this line of inquiry, I will examine some of the principal aspects of the ontology of the celebrated metaphysician Avicenna (Abu ‘Ali Ibn Sina; 980-1037 CE),⁴⁹ while taking into account some of the fundamental elements of Heidegger’s critique of the history of metaphysics.⁵⁰

Avicenna’s philosophical legacy offers us a concretised and solidly established intellectual context to investigate the impetus of metaphysics in the history of ideas in Islam. Avicenna’s ontology constituted one of the most influential legacies of philosophy (*falsafa; hikma*) in the intellectual history of Islamic civilisation. This

48 I have avoided the use of the expression: ‘Islamic philosophy’, given that the philosophers (*falasifa; hukama*) in mediaeval Islamic civilisation were not all Muslim. One would also tend to eschew in this context the use of the appellation: ‘Arabic philosophy’, even though it is only meant to refer to ‘Arabic’ as the *lingua franca* of classical Islamic civilisation. After all, many of the great philosophers in the intellectual history of Islam were not Arabs; Avicenna (Ibn Sina) himself was Persian; born near Bukhara (in modern-times Uzbekistan). Moreover, from a ‘Heideggerian perspective’, the expression: ‘Islamic philosophy’ would be as ‘*philosophically* problematic’ as the appellations: ‘Christian philosophy’ or ‘Jewish philosophy’.

49 I have opted in this paper to use the Latinised version of Abu ‘Ali Ibn Sina’s name, that is: ‘Avicenna’, in view of further highlighting the ecumenical historical reception of the works of this influential metaphysician, and to also accentuate the fact that his legacy was shared by Latin European scholarly circles in the Middle-Ages and throughout the Renaissance, in addition to the various main intellectual traditions in Islamic civilisation that were impacted by his thought. I have also adopted a simplified form of the transliteration of Arabic terms that does not use diacritical marks. I will also focus in this paper on the metaphysics parts of Avicenna’s *Kitab al-shifa* (*Book of Healing*), *Kitab al-najat* (*Book of Deliverance*), *Kitab al-isharat wa-al-tanbihat* (*Book of Directives and Remarks*) and the *Danish Nama* (*Book of Science*).

50 I have investigated related topics in: Nader El-Bizri, *The Phenomenological Quest between Avicenna and Heidegger* (Binghamton, NY: Global Scholarly Publications, 2000); Nader El-Bizri, ‘Avicenna and Essentialism’, *Review of Metaphysics* 54 (2001), pp. 753-778; Nader El-Bizri, ‘Avicenna’s *De Anima* between Aristotle and Husserl’, in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 67-89; Nader El-Bizri, ‘Being and Necessity: A Phenomenological Investigation of Avicenna’s Metaphysics and Cosmology’, in *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006), pp. 243-261.

foundational tradition presents us with fundamental ontological notions that can be effectively assessed through dialectical engagements with Heidegger's thought. The focus on Avicenna's ontology may well assist us in initiating a potential discourse on 'Heidegger and religion' that takes into account the rudiments of classical metaphysical thinking in Islam. This is poignantly the case when ontology is almost absent from modern Islamic schools of philosophical thinking; given that these tend in general to focus on reformist political and ethical discourses, or to contemplate questions pertaining to the exegesis or hermeneutic interpretation of scripture, including the various branches of *Qur'anic* studies and related investigations centring on *Hadith* (the Prophetic tradition in Islam). The philosophical orientations in modern Islamic thought (*al-fikr al-islami*) avoid metaphysics and ontology; and, when they treat central problems in philosophy (*falsafa*), they in the main tend to mimic, with some local variants or relativist cultural determinants, what is encountered in modern European or North American philosophy; or, until recently, echo what was also set in Marxist and Leninist discourses. Moreover, in more traditionalist settings, scholars are generally inclined to reproduce in formulaic ways, which at times lack originality, what has been handed down over in terms of classical intellectual legacies in Islam. In academic circles, some also evoke the works of the scholar Henri Corbin in thinking about tangential dialogues around Heidegger and Islamic thought,⁵¹ while believing that the outcomes of this intellectual endeavour have been already exhausted, or that such mode in thinking has been surpassed in scholarship; or that it is even irrelevant and futile from the perspective of cultural 'relativism' and the 'incommensurability' between the

51 Henri Corbin is one of the pioneers in France who translated Heidegger's work into French. This philosophical interest, which marked the earlier stages in Corbin's career, may have retained some intellectual traces that affected his more mature research in the domain of Islamic classical thought, and mainly in studying the Iranian philosophical traditions in Islam and associated mystical legacies.

so-called ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ traditions in thought. Many historians of ideas also caution that such exercises in thinking result in anachronisms that are methodologically problematic from the standpoint of historiography.

Avicenna’s legacy was ecumenical across the philosophical, theological and mystical traditions in Islam. He differentially influenced luminaries of the calibre of Suhrawardi, Ibn ‘Arabi, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Fakhr al-Din Razi, Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra. He also impacted the tradition of his influential critic al-Ghazali, and left an impress on the legacy of the celebrated philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Moreover, his thought affected the unfolding of the philosophical orientations of the later schools of *Kalam* (dialectical theology), including relatively recent intellectual movements, like those associated for instance with Muhammad Abdu’s 19th century tradition in Egypt. Furthermore, Avicennism is a ‘living tradition’ that is still industriously debated in theological seminaries (mainly in Iran); and Avicenna’s legacy in logic (*al-mantiq*) has been until recently integral to the Azhar traditional academic curriculum in Cairo (namely in terms of the dense commentaries that are grouped under the collective multi-authored epistle: *al-Risala al-shamsiyya*, which was studied up till the first decades of the 20th century).

Thinking about Avicenna’s ontology from the standpoint of Heidegger’s critique of the history of metaphysics is not irrelevant from the perspective of ‘Heideggerian Studies’. This is the case given that Avicennism constituted an important tradition within the European history of philosophy. Historically-informed scholars and mediaevalists affirm that the Latin version of Avicennism was conceptually influential within the history of European ideas, not only in terms of the assimilation of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* (*al-Ilahiyyat*), but also in terms of the adaptive reception and integration of his *Logic* (*al-Mantiq*), *De Anima* (*Kitab al-nafs*), and his

monumental *Canon of Medicine (al-Qanun fi al-tibb)*. Avicenna's thinking did not only impact Thomism and Scotism; it was also widely assimilated within European mediaeval and Renaissance scholarship in a variety of disciplines and doctrines. Moreover, any scholarly inquiry about the prolongation of Greek classical traditions in philosophy within mediaeval schools cannot be complete and probingly thorough unless it takes into account the transmitted contributions of the philosophers of mediaeval Islamic civilisation in general, and Avicenna in particular.⁵² Studies on the interpretation of the legacies of Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus and Galen in the Middle-Ages are 'incomplete' if they do not take Avicennism into account, or at least if they do not consider some of the fundamental aspects of the Latin version of Avicenna's tradition. It would not be an exaggeration to even suggest that inquiries about Heidegger's critique of the history of metaphysics in reference to mediaeval philosophical doctrines would be 'incomplete' if the principal conceptual bearings of Avicennism are not also examined, or if the prolongations of this longstanding tradition in classical ontology are not adequately investigated. Avicenna's legacy has its own European history, even if it is still considered by some philosophers, historians or theologians, as being the tradition of the '*other*' that has been occluded within that history. To satisfy those who like to have conversations about the so-called: 'East/Orient' versus 'West/Occident', we would say that Avicennism is not simply an: 'oriental legacy'; rather, it has also an: 'occidental history'. Avicenna's metaphysics belongs to the history of 'classical ontology' that has been interrogated by Heidegger, even though Avicennism was not explicitly examined within the Heideggerian legacy.

We do not imply in this context that Heidegger was not aware of the adapted

⁵² One could mention here many scholars including celebrated figures among others like: al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Musa ibn Maymun (Maimonides).

assimilation of Avicenna's tradition within European Latin scholarly circles. And yet, he might not have fully acknowledged the extent of the influence that has been exercised by Avicennism in that intellectual historical *milieu*. It might have been the case that Heidegger implicitly assumed that the entailments of Avicenna's metaphysics unquestionably belong to 'classical ontology'; or, perhaps he did not believe that Avicennism was integral to what he grasped as being the history of 'Western' metaphysics. In all cases, such matters are speculative, and it is obvious that Avicenna's legacy has not been explicitly examined in 'Heideggerian studies'.

This paper does not constitute an exercise in comparative philosophy. I rather reflect on the fundamental notions in Avicenna's ontology from the standpoint of critically thinking about the entailments of Heidegger's critique of the history of metaphysics.⁵³ This inquiry is *ontological*, and it is akin in many of its aspects to Heideggerian investigations that have been conducted on classical ontology, including similar studies on mediaeval scholars of the calibre of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus or Meister Eckhart. All of these conceptual elements assist in investigating the extent of the applicability of Heidegger's critique of metaphysics across a variety of classical ontological traditions, while rethinking some of the principal notions in Avicenna's ontology in terms of relevant contemporary topics of philosophical debate. Methodology is of great significance in this context, given that Avicenna's philosophy

⁵³ This inquiry is principally focused on Avicenna's account of *being* (*al-wujud*) in terms of contingency (*imkan*) and necessity (*wujub*). Additional ontological aspects of Avicenna's philosophy relate to his epistemology, and to his conception of the soul (*al-nafs*) and its cognitive faculties, in addition to reflections on the logical, etymological and linguistic properties of his metaphysical thinking, including the consideration of the innovative conceptual elements in his metaphysics that surpassed many of the notions that were associated with the Aristotelian and Platonist traditions. Such facets of his philosophical legacy cannot be investigated in a single paper, and I have already accounted for some of these dimensions in complementary studies published elsewhere; see also note 3 above.

is ‘academically’ entrapped within the field of Islamic and Oriental Studies, or Mediaevalist scholarship. Even though these disciplines focus their academic efforts on establishing commendable and necessary critical editions and annotated translations of primary textual sources in philosophy, they are nonetheless principally motivated by philology and historiography, with an interest in archiving philosophy and its channels of transmission, rather than *philosophising* per se. Un-thought ontological possibilities remain locked within the potential future philosophical unfolding of what is entailed by Avicenna’s thinking; and this may prove to be vital in animating the renewal of philosophy and metaphysics in modern Islamic thought. Dialectical encounters with Heidegger’s thinking may also partly assist in reinforcing some of the significant expressions of this intellectual endeavour, and yet, one must proceed in this context with caution given that our grasp of both thinkers is still faced with great epistemic and textual difficulties in addition to variegated academic ‘quarrels’ (*querelles d’écoles*) and doctrinal obstacles.

Ontological Modalities

Avicenna argued that *being qua being* (*wujud*) reflects the most general encounter in the mind, while definition (*hadd*) and description (*rasm*) do not apply to it. Moreover, he held that *being* is not simply accounted for in terms of quiddity or essence (*mahiyya*), and that it is neither genus (*jins*) nor *differentia* (*fasl*).⁵⁴ *Being* and beings were not conceived by him as different species subsumed under an overarching genus; his ontology is fundamentally an inquiry about *being qua being*. Based on his

⁵⁴ Avicenna (Ibn Sina), *Kitab al-shifa’ (Book of Healing), Ilahiyyat (Metaphysics) II*, ed. G. Anawati, I. Madkour, S. Zayed (Cairo, 1975), pp. 350-355; see also: Avicenne, *La métaphysique du Shifa’, Livres I-X*, trans. G. C. Anawati (Paris: Vrin, 1978-1985).

ontological account of the modalities of necessity, impossibility and contingency:⁵⁵ the necessary (*wajib*) is that which is impossible for it not to be, the impossible (*mumtani*; *muhal*) necessitates privation, in the sense that it is necessarily nonexistent, while the contingent (or ‘possible’; *mumkin*) is that which is *neither necessary nor impossible for it to be or not to be*.⁵⁶

One may perhaps *precipitately* hold that Avicenna’s account of *being* in terms of necessity entails an unmediated theological and monotheistic derivation of a ‘Necessary Existent’ (*wajib al-wujud*) that is posited as: ‘God’. When *being* is accounted for in terms of necessity, as: ‘*what necessarily is*’, it then *ontologically* names: ‘necessary *being*’ or ‘necessary *existing*’, while, arguably, it *ontically* points at the same time to: ‘A Necessary Existent’. The necessity of *being* is self-derived/self-sustained as: *being-due-to-its-self* (*bi-dhatihi*). In radical ontological contrast, the impossible is that which necessarily cannot be. It is nonexistent *due-to-itself* by necessity. As for the contingent (*mumkin*), it is that which exists or does not exist *not due to itself*, but *due to something other-than-itself* (*bi-ghayrihi*).

A contingent is brought into existence by *what is other than itself*, and it would continue to exist, or cease to exist, due to *what is other than itself*. Once a contingent is brought into existence, it is actualised as *a necessary existent due to something other than itself* (*wajib al-wujud bi-ghayrihi*). It is necessitated in a radically different ontological mode than that of ‘*Necessary-being-due-to-Itself*’ (literally: ‘*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*’). The mere contingent is a potentiality *to be or not to be*, given that it is contingent-in-itself and necessary-through-another. It is a potentiality that is actualised by an external *existential* cause (*‘illat wujud*) whose existence is prior to it. The

⁵⁵ Avicenna, *Kitab al-shifa*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁵⁶ Avicenna (Ibn Sina), *Kitab al-najat (Book of Deliverance)*, *Ilahiyyat (Metaphysics) I*, ed. M. Fakhry (Beirut, 1985), p. 255.

metaphysical determination of contingents is that of *borrowed existence*; given that a contingent does not sustain the reasons for its own existence in its own essence.⁵⁷ It is rather *granted* its existence.

Regarding the impossible, a nuance can be established between: logical/analytic impossibility and a physical/experiential impossibility. For instance, a ‘round square’ is an impossible existent that cannot be pictured or represented; it is impossible in the logical (and mathematical) sense. As for a ‘unicorn’, it is a nonexistent that is impossible from a physical sense; after all, it can be pictured, described, or represented while knowing by way of ‘natural science’ (physics; *al-‘ilm al-tabi’i*) that it does not exist. In all cases, the impossible is that which necessarily does not exist and cannot be, even though something else is said besides its privation, namely: that it ‘*is*’ impossible. And yet, the verbal ‘*to be*’ is silent in the Arabic Semitic language, as when saying ‘*al-muhal ghayr mawjud*’ (i.e. ‘the impossible [is] nonexistent’, which literally reads as: ‘the impossible [...] inexistent’). It is perhaps pertinent to tangentially note in this context that ‘*being*’ and ‘existence’ are both designated by a single term in the Arabic language, namely: ‘*wujud*’ — And, most of Avicenna’s principal treatises and epistles were composed in the Arabic language, the *lingua franca* of mediaeval Islamic civilisation. However, in some of the rarer tracts that Avicenna compiled in the Persian language, like his *Danish Nama (Book of Science)*, an etymological and linguistic distinction is made there between the designators ‘*being*’ and ‘existence’, whereby ‘*being*’ is rendered in Persian as: ‘*hasti*’, while ‘existence’ is noted as: ‘*wujud*’.

⁵⁷ Avicenna Latinus, *Liber De Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina I-IV*, ed. S. Van Riet, intro. G. Verbeke (Leiden: Brill, 1977), p. 72*.

Causation

Rethinking Avicenna's ontological modalities of *being* leads us to account for the workings of the principle of causation (*'illiyya*) in his philosophical system. Unlike 'necessary being' *per se*, contingents depend on causation in order *to be*.⁵⁸ Any existing entity, for which existence is not intrinsically *necessary-in-itself*, is *contingent-in-itself*. A conception of contingency (*imkan*) in relation to causality relies on the continual intervention on the part of causes to support their effects. The countering tendencies in thought, which doubt the existence of necessary connections within the causal nexus between cause (*'illa*) and effect (*ma'lul*), might reflect some sort of an 'occasionalist' dependence on the continual intervention of an ever-enduring 'sustaining agent'. And yet, occasionalism,⁵⁹ continual emanation (*fayd; sudur*), or the sustenance of an effect by virtue of the subsistence of its cause, all show that something is always and already dependent on what is other than itself in order for it *to be* or *not to be*. In this regard, Avicenna posited 'The-Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself' (*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*) as the sustaining source of existents.⁶⁰ *To be* is to be related to *wajib al-wujud*; all beings exist because of this relation to *necessary being*. A quiddity

58 Avicenna (Ibn Sina), *Danish Nama (Book of Science), The Metaphysica of Avicenna*, trans. P. Morewedge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 48, 50, 52.

59 Some scholars of Islamic Studies associate 'occasionalism' with the thought of the influential theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE); particularly in terms of the doubts that he raised regarding the existence of 'a *necessary* connection between cause and effect'. Ultimately, the causal nexus is grasped by him as being contingent, given that a belief in its existence as a '*necessary* connection between cause and effect' results conceptually and perceptually from deeply entrenched quotidian customs that lead the mind to associate what by *habit* is said to be a '*cause*' with what *habitually* is posited as its '*effect*'. This line in thinking, which also raises doubts regarding the 'justification of induction', is presented in al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*, which he composed as a critique of philosophy, and of Avicennism in particular; see: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*, trans. M. E. Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press); especially 'Discussion 17' in the *Physics* part of this opus.

60 Avicenna, *Danish Nama, op. cit.*, p. 76.

that is abstracted from its relation with ‘the Necessary’ is ‘non-being’.⁶¹ The quiddity/essence of *beings* has an indeterminate and neuter relation to existence or non-existence; the essence of a contingent is not inclusive of its *being*. Avicenna’s line in thinking in this context is not readily determined within the horizon of the Aristotelian conception of *energeia*,⁶² or of its transmutation into the Latin *actus* or the Arabic *fi’l*; nor is it modulated as such by the parallel transformation of *dunamis* in the Latin conception of *potentia* or the Arabic *quwwa*. Similarly, this applies to *phusis*, as the movement from *dunamis* into *energeia*, which is assimilated in Latin as *natura*, and in Arabic as *tab’* or *tabi’a*; in this sense, *energeia* passes into *being* by way of realising the *phusei onta*. Moreover, with Avicenna, we do not immediately and simply conceive *being* as ‘the Divine’.⁶³ Furthermore, and as Jean Beaufret noted in his interrogation of Thomism (in a critical response to Etienne Gilson),⁶⁴ the saying: ‘*de tout ce que font les êtres, le plus merveilleux est qu’ils sont*’, which grasps *being* as ‘*doing*’ or ‘*making*’, is not also readily applicable to Avicenna’s ontology.

Existence and Essence

Thinking about the subtle ontological entailments of the modality of ‘necessity’ (*wujub*), we observe that the Arabic expression ‘*wajib al-wujud*’ is usually rendered as the ‘Necessary Existent’, and it is occasionally interpreted as: ‘Necessary *Being*’ (‘Necessary Existing’). However, rather than readily pointing to ‘the Divine’, this

61 Avicenna Latinus, *Liber De Philosophia prima, op. cit.*, pp. 73*-74*; A.-M. Goichon, *La philosophie d’Avicenne et son influence en Europe médiévale* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1951), p. 50.

62 Greek terms will be noted in this paper in a simplified transliterated form.

63 Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie: Vom Ereignis* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), sections 251, 279.

64 Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome I: Philosophie grecque* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1973), p. 137.

appellation constitutes a neuter, ambiguous, and uncanny hint at ‘*necessary existing*’ qua ‘*necessary being*’, namely as what is ontologically different from beings. Avicenna’s ‘Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself’ (*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*) is not prior to *being* as such nor is it beyond it. ‘*The Necessary*’ figures in epistemic terms after the notions of ‘*being*’ and ‘*necessity*’, given that it is derived from the elucidation of the question of *being* in terms of *necessity*. This view preserves to *being* its ontological and epistemic priority as what is encountered in the mind with immediacy; hence, ‘*wajib al-wujud*’ *presences* in language and thinking in the course of an ontological inquiry, and not in terms of a religious or theological positing of a monotheistic deity.

From a cosmological perspective, the concept of the world is essentially contained in the conception of the existence of ‘A Necessary Existent’; and yet, in ontological terms, the necessity implied by the actualised existence of the world is not self-derived but is a *necessity-through-another*. Thus, the inexistence of a necessary-due-to-another is conceivable without entailing a contradiction. Although Avicenna is judged by some exegetes as being a deterministic ‘eternalist’, his ontology does nonetheless draw near to the views of the dialectical theologians (the exponents of *Kalam*); particularly when he grasps the world as a ‘contingent-in-itself’ that is in actuality ‘*necessary due to what is other than itself*’, even if it is dialectically posited as being *eternal*. After all, the ‘eternity of the world’ philosophical doctrine (as opposed to the ‘creation from nothingness’ doctrine of the dialectical theologians) resulted historically from conceptions of ‘generation’ by way of ‘emanation’ (*fayd*; *sudur*), following Neo-Platonic philosophical directives that were adaptively assimilated within a monotheistic intellectual context.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ These ontological and cosmological views resulted historically and conceptually from philosophical attempts to reconcile the Neo-Platonist and Aristotelian traditions

Wajib al-wujud is One and Only (*wahid ahad*),⁶⁶ since there cannot be more than one *Necessary Existent due to Itself* without having *differentia (fasl)* that allows them to be distinguished from one another. In case there is more than one Necessary Existent that is *Necessary due to Itself*, then these ‘Necessary Existents’ would be separable by what is external to them as *differentia*. Yet, this entails a contradiction in saying that: *they exist* ‘due to themselves’ and also ‘due to something else other than themselves’. *Necessary Being due to Itself* cannot be accounted for in terms of a talk of genus, species, *differentia*, substance, accident, description, definition or categories.⁶⁷ The ontological truth of the Necessary is that: It is ‘*What Necessarily Exists due to Itself*’, and is not united with anything else (It is perfect and simple, and its *oneness* is presupposed in reality and in conception in the mind: as a unity of *intellect-intelligible-intellection*).⁶⁸

Overcoming ‘Ousiology’

Being ‘that which has no quiddity/essence’ (*la mahiyya lahu*) and ‘is not substance’ (*laysa bi-jawhar*), Avicenna’s ‘*wajib-al-wujud-bi-dhatihi*’ overcomes Aristotle’s *ousia*-based ontology (*ousiology*). If it were the case that existence is external to the essence of the Aristotelian categories, then *wajib al-wujud* is not any category. Based on some dominant modern commentaries on Avicenna’s ontology, it is polemically held that the Existence of the Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself is none other than Its Essence, and

with monotheistic theology, and also as a consequence of efforts aimed at resolving the various intellectual and religious problems that emerged due to such endeavours.

66 Avicenna, *Danish Nama*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

67 Avicenna, *Danish Nama*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

68 Avicenna (Ibn Sina), *Kitab al-isharat wa-al-tanbihat (Book of Directives and Remarks)*, ed. S. Dunia (Cairo, 1960), Vol. III, p. 65; see also: Avicenne, *Livre des directives et remarques (Kitab al-isharat wa'l-tanbihat)*, trans. A.-M. Goichon (Paris: Vrin, 1951).

that Its Essence is Its Existence. Such interpretation tacitly contributes to the construal of Avicenna's metaphysics as being that of 'essentialism', which also implies that his thought reduces *being* into essence. However, a careful reading reveals that *wajib-al-wujud-bi-dhatihi* has no quiddity/essence and that *It is* what *It is* due to *Its-Self*. Based on this, Avicenna's thought about *being* in terms of necessity is not reduced to the order of essentialism.⁶⁹

Avicenna's dealing with 'beings in the primary sense' does not simply lead any inquiry to what 'all other beings are referred back to': namely, '*ousia*'.⁷⁰ Based on Heidegger's reflections on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (IX.1-3), it is said that: everything that *is* (namely, all that is assumed under the categories other than *ousia*) must itself have the saying of *ousia*. This is furthermore accentuated by saying that 'first being' and what '*is*' in the primary sense is '*ousia*' (*Metaphysics*, 1028a13ff). For, substance is said to be primary in definition, knowledge, and time. Nonetheless, Aristotle's doctrine of *being* carries two determinations: '*ti esti*' and '*tode ti*'. Accordingly, it answers the question about the essence of something while also positing that thing as an individual (*Metaphysics*, 1028a 10). Although *being* has many meanings, these do nonetheless relate to *ousia* (*Metaphysics*, 1003a 33), which acts as some sort of *hupokeimenon*; namely as 'what always already lies present at the basis of all the meanings of *being*'. In this, there is some sort of a 'sustaining and guiding basic meaning' upon which the other meanings 'can be said'. In speaking about beings something alongside is said, namely '*being*' itself, whereby the sustaining and leading fundamental meaning of *being*, to which all the other categories are carried back, is:

⁶⁹ I have investigated this question in detail elsewhere, see: El-Bizri, 'Avicenna and Essentialism', *art. cit.*

⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics, IX 1-3*, trans. W. Brogan, P. Warneck (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 2.

'ousia'. The longstanding metaphysical question: 'what is that which *is*?' ('What is *being*?') is reducible to the question: 'what is substance?' (*Metaphysics*, 1028b 2-4).

Based on Heidegger's reflections on the essence and concept of *phusis* in Aristotle's *Physics* (*Beta*, 1),⁷¹ it may be said that the conception of *phusis* depends on an adequate original grasp of the meaning and essence of *ousia*, which is understood as stable *presencing* (*Anwesenung*) of 'what stands there' or 'what lies down', or 'what underlies'. In this regard, the *ousia* of the *phusei onta* is both *hupostasis qua substantia* and *hupokeimenon qua subjectum*. *Ousia*, as 'what stands on its own' and 'what lies present' is equated with '*being*' pure and simple.⁷²

Nature as *phusis* designates *ousia* insofar that it is the *being* of a being, which, as 'what lies present', lets something originate from itself. In this sense, *phusis* is conceived as being the most primary and elemental *formlessness* that sustains and grounds all that is formed. A distinction is drawn between the eternal *phusis* and the temporal *phusei onta* (*Physics*, B, I, 193a 21-28).⁷³

Moreover, in the doctrinal dispute among Plato's contemporaries over '*being*' qua '*on*', which is described as being a battle of giants over the meaning of '*being*': *gigantomakhia peri tês ousias* (*Sophist* 246a4), one already notices the linguistic interchangeability of '*on*' with '*ousia*' as designators of '*being*'; this *transformation* in translation is perhaps also oriented by the temporal grasping of *being* as *parousia*; namely as: that which is always already *there* from the outset along with beings. Consequently, the battle of the giants rages over the meaning of '*presence*'.

⁷¹ Martin Heidegger, 'On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis* in Aristotle's *Physics B, I*', trans. T. Sheehan, in *Pathmarks (Wegmarken)*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 203; Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967).

⁷² Heidegger, 'On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*', *art. cit.*, p. 200.

⁷³ Heidegger, 'On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*', *art. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

Wajib-al-wujud bi-dhatihi is not substance (*jawhar*) nor is it in a subject, and the question of *being* is not reduced by Avicenna to that of *ousia* or *parousia*; his thinking points to the ontological difference between *being* and beings, while also drawing a distinction between existence and essence.

Being and Necessity

Avicenna's '*wajib-al-wujud bi-dhatihi*' is not prior to *being* in terms of *epistemic*, *noetic* or *logoic* considerations, given that this notion is derived from thinking about *being* in terms of necessity. It is also not 'beyond *being*', even though it is that which is 'beyond *ousia*' as entailed by the Greek notion of: *hyperousios*. Avicenna attends to the question of *being* on other ontological grounds that attempt to rethink the question of *being* anew and in an effort to open *philosophising* to the wonders of the 'self-sending' and 'self-withdrawal' of *being*. It is in this sense that we ought to reflect on the profound internal tensions that are tacitly self-announced within his ontology; and this calls for rethinking what is entailed by his elucidation of the question of *being* in terms of his reflections on: '*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*'.

The essence of something can be known without knowing its existence. '*Being* is not a real predicate', in the sense of not being the concept that determines what something is. For, in the mere concept of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found (to hint here at Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, A225/B272). *Being* without quiddity is beyond grasp.

As noted earlier, the expression '*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*' literally means: 'that whose existence or *being* is necessary due to itself'. In a neuter sense, this points to an uncanny necessary *being/existing*. '*Wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*' would be: '*necessary being due to itself*' or '*necessary existing due to itself*', yet, something else

announces itself through what is named by this appellation, namely: *'The Necessary Existent due to Itself'*. In all cases, *'wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi'* is without quiddity; so, all we could utter is that: *'it is'* (*'necessary-being-due-to-itself'*).

By rendering *'wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi'* as *'necessary being due to itself'*, namely as the *openness (fath)* from which the *hypostasis* surges; all we might be able to say about this uncanny *presencing* is that: *'there is'*, *'il y a'*, *'es gibt Sein'*, *'huwa'*, *'hunaliqa'* (*'hu!'*, *'wa!'*, *'w!'*, ... in emulating herein the effacement of utterances as it happens in some of the ritualistic practices of certain Gnostics and Sufis in Islam). With this pathway in thinking, reflections on *'being'* move from the domain of metaphysics to that of a mystical *penchant* in philosophising, which starts to leave the Greek world behind (even if some exegetes of Avicennism resist the explicit and direct association of Avicenna's metaphysics with mysticism).⁷⁴ Accordingly, *'wajib al-wujud'* is not readily *posited* as a determinate onto-theological *'Being'* or *'Existent'* (namely: as the *'positum'* of theology [*ilahiyat*] insofar that this discipline is a positive ontic science); but rather, *'wajib al-wujud'* *presences* in the saying as: *'being-itself'*. Consequently, it is indifferent to the determinateness of *being*.⁷⁵ As a simple self-relation that is posited *a priori*, it is *'necessity'* (*wujub*) *per se*. However, when we render *'wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi'* as: *'The Necessary Existent due to Itself'*, we then move from *'pure being'* to *'a determinateness in being'*. *'The Necessary Existent due to Itself'* is not simply *being-itself* but is rather a self-*posited being-for-itself*, which surges by way of excluding *otherness* as contingent. It maintains *Itself* as the *One* by the exclusion of the many, through an act of repulsion (*'emanation'*), which posits *the*

74 One could evoke here the viewpoints of the classicist-mediaevalist Dmitri Gutas.

75 The Hegelian *parlance* in this context is very helpful and informative; see also: G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, ed. H. D. Lewis (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1996), pp. 95-101.

All as what issues forth from Its *opening-out-of-Itself* into otherness. In this, *The Necessary Existent due to Itself*, remains related to what It excludes (or recedes from), by way of a countering move that gathers beings in attraction (the ‘return’). In the double movement of repulsion and attraction, receding and gathering, emanation (*fayd*; *sudur*) and return (*ma’ad*), the Necessary Existent is revealed as what is always and already ever-presencing in ‘granting *being*’.

‘The Necessary Existent due to Itself’ is: (i) *being-for-self*, as what excludes/repulses the many from the One, and is also (ii) *being-for-other*, as a self-opening of Itself into otherness that re-gathers *the All* in attraction.⁷⁶ We could say that pure *being*, as entailed by the neuter expression ‘necessary *being* due to itself’, becomes ‘a derivative determinate *being*’ qua ‘an existent’, as: ‘*The Necessary Existent due to Itself*’. Even by saying ‘necessary *being*’, we already let *being* appear as ‘determinateness’; and this is perhaps the case even when uttering: ‘*il y a*’, ‘there is’! Avicenna’s consideration of *being* in terms of necessity bears some form of determinateness; for it is not implying that the ‘*there is*’ (*es gibt Sein*) is that of a mode of ‘*exister sans existant*’ ([existing without existent]; to hint here at Emmanuel Levinas’ critique of Heidegger in *Le temps et l’autre*).⁷⁷

What falls under the appellation ‘*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*’, appears as a determinateness of what is rather indeterminate; *being* appears as determinate *being*, even if such determination is not associated with quiddity. *Being*, as what is utterly indeterminate, is posited as: ‘*determinateness in being*’, which is that of ‘*A Necessary Existent due to Itself*’; *Being-itself* appears as: *being-for-self*. Yet, in opening up to otherness as what issues forth from it, it is a self-mediated determinate *being-for-other*.

⁷⁶ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

⁷⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l’autre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), pp. 24-30.

With ‘*The Necessary Existent due to Itself*’, something else is posited, namely what is *other*, as what is excluded by way of a *self-opening* in the *granting of being* that lets beings *be*. *Being-within-self* is an indeterminate *being-for-other* that lets contingents become *necessary existents due to something other than themselves*.

Being (which is without quiddity, definition or description, and is not reducible to essence, substance or idea) *presences* in language as *determinate being*. *Being* appears as ‘*The Necessary Existent due to Itself*’, which is not simply *being-Itself*, or *being-for-self*, but ultimately, and by way of existing beings, is: *being-for-other*. *Being* is posited as ‘*a determinate being*’ in terms of causation and its existential and emanative imports. What is said in reference to *being* as *being-itself*, and with respect to *The Necessary Existent due to Itself* qua *being-within-Itself* (as *being-for-self/being-for-other*), all describe divergent tendencies in Avicenna’s ontology: Unveiling the ontological difference between *being* and beings, as well as concealing it. And yet, Avicenna creditably reveals the paradoxes that confront those who think the question of *being* by way of attending to the un-concealment and concealment of the sending and withdrawing of *being*. Even if one propounds the ‘prejudice’ that: ‘*being* is the most universal, indefinable, and self-evident’, the fundamentality of the question of *being* forced itself upon Avicenna’s thinking, calling him to rethink *being* qua *being* by raising this *question to be thought* anew.

Ontic/Ontological Sciences

Based on Heidegger’s reflections on ‘phenomenology and theology’, the *ontic* ‘positing of a being’ (namely as ‘The-Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself’, which designates a potential theological *positum*) is already illuminated by a certain ontological

understanding of *being*;78 nonetheless, '*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*' presences in the openness/opening of the ontological difference between *being* and beings.79 Avicenna's ontology resists objectifying thinking, it does not posit the Necessary as 'object'; namely as what is thrown before and against our perceiving, imagining, judging, wishing or intuiting, which also presupposes and co-posita a 'subject'. Even though one could assume that the deeper sense of '*obiectum*' differs from the way we account for it as being an: 'object', in the sense that it is: that which is 'subjectively' represented; or, similarly, that '*subiectum*' is already the underlying ground that exists objectively.

Plato's metaphysics endeavoured to offer an ontological explication of *being* over and against the *ontic* description of beings;80 thus showing early on that there exists an ontological difference between *being* and beings. After all, Plato presented a general characterisation of the first ontological attempts to put forward some theses about '*on*' (*being*) in opposition to those who merely say that '*being is many*' or that '*being is one*' (*Sophist*, 242c-243d). He thus initially advanced a position by virtue of which *being*, which is *one* (*hen*), is also said to be *manifold*.81 He then offered a critical consideration of doctrines that hold that beings are *manifold* versus those that hold that beings are *one*, or that *being* is both *many* and *one* (*Sophist*, 243d-245c). Nonetheless, the ontological difference between *being* and beings remained un-thought, given that the *differing* dimension that determines this ontological difference was itself

78 Martin Heidegger, 'Phenomenology and Theology', trans. J. G. Hart and J. C. Maraldo, in *Pathmarks (Wegmarken)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-62; especially p. 43.

79 To echo Heidegger's views in '*Vom Wesen des Grundes*', in *Wegmarken*, *op. cit.*

80 Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), section 63, p. 303; [Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), pp. 438-439].

81 Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, *op. cit.*, section 64, p. 307 (*Platon: Sophistes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-444).

left *un-thought*. However, language speaks as the command of the *difference* between *being* and beings, which challenges us to think about the *differing* of this *difference*; and Avicenna aimed at letting the *presencing* of *being* happen in language and thought through ‘an openness to whatever exists’. This describes: ‘*l’appel de l’être, tel qu’il est porté au langage dans la parole des penseurs*’ (the call of *being* in the manner it is brought over into language by the saying of thinkers).⁸² *Presencing* in this sense is a mode of *coming forth into the unhidden*, in *being placed in the open*.⁸³ A thesis outlines what *presences*; admitting it into a boundary (*peras*), yet, not as where it ends but rather from where it shines.⁸⁴ One could also hold that the essence of *ousia* is that of a stable *presence* that is a mode of *coming forth into the unhidden* (*parousia*);⁸⁵ and yet, *being* is not ‘*ousia*’ nor is *presencing* ‘*parousia*’ *per se*.

Logos originally names the saying that recollects that which withdraws (it also refers to *legô* as what: gathers, speaks, names). We thus hint to remembering in naming, in uttering as knowledge by recollection; in referring to what the Greeks experienced as ‘withdrawal’ before beings, which is that of ‘*letting them be*’ as a mode of *receiving them by way of recollecting*. *Logos*, which belongs to *legein*, also contributes to the gathering into the unhidden as *parousia* by letting beings be unconcealed in their self-showing.⁸⁶ Yet, in already being said, as *legein*, something else is said, namely: ‘*being*’ itself.

82 Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome IV: Chemin de Heidegger* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1985), p. 95.

83 Laurence P. Hemming, *Heidegger's Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), p. 7.

84 Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 208-209; see also the ‘*Addendum*’ to ‘*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*’ in: Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

85 Heidegger, ‘On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*’, *art. cit.*, pp. 206-208; Heidegger, *Beiträge, op. cit.*, section 150.

86 Heidegger, ‘On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis*’, *art. cit.*, pp. 213-215.

In this context, *Ereignis* names the *a priori* that always and already *opens up* (*fath*). Like it is the case with *alêtheia*, this pertains to what is disclosed by *Dasein*, which is nonetheless concealed from *Dasein*. Existing has the sense of *être-là*, or as Gilson affirms in terms of his reading of Avicenna's metaphysics: '*se trouver là*'; namely *being-in-the-world* (*être-dans-le-monde*).⁸⁷ Like what is named by the appellation: '*Dasein*', it is: *être-le-là* (to use Beaufret's rendering of '*Dasein*'), on the condition that '*là*' is grasped as '*Offenheit*'. The notion of *éclosion* (the opening up in self-showing disclosure) is itself *l'ouvert-sans-retrait*⁸⁸ — namely, as the '*open*' in the slipping away of beings; retreating as groundlessness, yet self-shown as *Abgrund*, which *presences* in the sending/withdrawing of *being* (as: *la clairière de l'ouvert sans retrait*; the *Lichtung* as '*openness*' [resonating perhaps with what the mystics in the Islamic tradition name as '*fath*'!]).

The *lêthê* is not *oubli* (oblivion), no more than *alêtheia* is *vérité* (truth). Rather *lêthê* is retreat/withdrawal (*retrait*) in which what *presences* from the hidden unto the unhidden is concealed — Unconcealed while retaining its self-refusal through the withdrawal unto concealment (the marvel of the relation of *being* to *non-being*, of the sending/gifting and withdrawing). *Alêtheia* is a moment that abides in *lêthê*; for, '*nothing is dearer to un-concealment than concealment [as withdrawal]*': '*rien n'est plus cher à l'éclosion que le retrait*'. Oblivion is not negative; it rather belongs to the destiny of *being* (Heraclitus, *fragment 123*:⁸⁹ speaks: *phusis kruptesthai philei*: '*l'éclosion aime le retrait*').⁹⁰

87 Etienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme* (Paris: Vrin, 1944), pp. 58-59.

88 Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome I, op. cit.*, p. 59.

89 Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome IV, op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

90 Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome III: Approche de Heidegger* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974), p. 92.

Avicenna's ontology points to the *Holy* in accounting for *being*. And yet, faith is not *openly* at work in his purely *ontological thinking*.⁹¹ Avicenna's naming of *wajib al-wujud* as 'A Necessary Being' happens in the 'theological region' of his *Metaphysics (ilahiyat)*. *Necessary Being*, as *The Necessary Existent*, is theologically identifiable in *reflective [thinking] faith (la foi réfléchissante)* with 'the Divine'. Ultimately, Avicenna reflects on Divinity in terms of the epochal *destining of being* in his age, by way of dialectical meditations on *God's Essence and Attributes (al-dhat wa-al-sifat)*.⁹² And yet, Avicenna's purely ontological thinking about the granting/gifting of *being* and its self-refusing/withdrawal, signals, outside the metaphysical determinations of theism, the coming of Divinity towards us and its movement away from us.

To restart from 'the (first) *beginning*' again: 'you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression "*being*" ("on" ["*wujud*"/"*hastî*"]). We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed' (Sophist, 244a).

91 Martin Heidegger, 'Der Spruch des Anaximander', *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1952), p. 343.

92 I have considered this question elsewhere in: Nader El-Bizri, 'God: essence and attributes', in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. T. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.121-140.

HEIDEGGER AND CHINESE BUDDHISM

Wing-cheuk Chan

While Taoism might have a decisive influence upon the rise of the later Heidegger's thought, Heidegger's exposure to Buddhism is limited and indirect - mainly through his Japanese students. This does not, however, exclude the possibility of comparing Heidegger with Buddhism. As is well-known, the Kyoto School in Japan has been interested in synthesizing Heidegger with Zen Buddhism. This paper, however, will work out some significant similarities between Heidegger and T'ien T'ai Buddhism - another major school in Chinese Buddhism. As Mou Tsung-san pointed out, T'ien T'ai Buddhism is the philosophical foundation of Hui Neng's Zen Buddhism.¹ In this sense, my work is a step further than the Japanese effort. It will particularly centre on two topics:

- (1) "Being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) and "the mind of a single instance which equips itself with the three thousand worlds."
- (2) "Non-ground" (*Ab-grund*) and "the emergence of all beings from the non-dwelling ground."²

In the Heideggerian scholarship, the problem of the *Kehre* remains unclear. Some scholars such as Thomas Sheehan even deny that there is a distinction between the early and later Heidegger. Although the majority of scholars admit the difference between the early and later Heidegger, there seems to be a lack of a clear understanding of the *Kehre*. In terms of a parallel controversy between the two sects of T'ien T'ai Buddhism, i.e., the Internal Sect (*shan-chia*) and the External Sect (*shan-wei*), we try to

clarify the distinction between the early and the later Heidegger from an oriental perspective.

I.

As Mou pointed out, the thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds was introduced by Chih I (538-597) - the founder of T'ien T'ai Buddhism. This thesis aims at disclosing the essential connection between human beings and the world. It basically serves as the ontological clarification of the Being of human beings. One way to illustrate the significance of this important thesis is to contrast it with Hua Yen Buddhist doctrine. As far as the ontological relationship between human beings and the world is concerned, the Hua Yen School was decisively influenced by the thought of the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)*. From a historical standpoint, the rise of the T'ien T'ai School is prior to that of the Hua Yen. Nevertheless, even before Chih I's founding of the T'ien T'ai School, the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)* was already widely well received. In a sense, the rise of the T'ien T'ai School signifies a reaction to the *Ta-ch'eng chi-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)*. On the other hand, the Hua Yen School later developed its thesis concerning the ontological relationship between human beings and the world out of this text. As a result, the Hua Yen School was also subject to the criticisms raised by the T'ien T'ai School.

In the beginning chapter of the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)*, it is written: "From one and the same mind there arise two realms. . . The first one is the realm of the mind of the *tathata*; the second one is the realm of the transient mind."³ The first realm is identical with the *tathāgata-garbha*, whereas the second realm is identical with the *alayavijñana*. While all mutable beings belong to the "realm

of the transient mind,” the “realm of the mind of the *tathatā*” consists of innumerable virtues. On the one hand, in the “realm of the transient mind” there are only impure beings. On the other hand, the “realm of the mind of the *tathata*” is full of pure beings. In claiming that the “realm of the transient mind” originates from the “realm of the mind of the *tathata*,” the *Ta-ch’eng ch’i-hsing lun* (*The Awakening of Faith*) commits to an idealistic position. Accordingly, it was classified as a doctrine of Mind-only (*Cittamātra*). Since the mind must be understood here in the transcendental sense, its position differs from the School of Consciousness-only (*vijnaptimātra*). In compliance with the distinction between these two realms, the mind of the *tathatā* is a worldless subject. As we will see below, this would have a significant impact on the Hua Yen Buddhist concept of Buddha-nature.

In challenging the *Ta-ch’eng ch’i-hsin lun* (*The Awakening of Faith*), Chih I introduced the thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds. In the *Maha Chih-kuan* (*The Great Treatise on Meditation*) he wrote:

Insofar as a momentary mind equips itself with the ten realms and each realm itself further equips itself with ten realms, it ends up with one hundred realms. Moreover, since each realm equips itself with thirty worlds, it ends up with three thousand worlds.⁴

Here the “ten realms” refer to the realms of the Buddha, the *Bodhisattvas*, the *pratyekabuddha*, the *sravakas*, the heavenly beings, the spirits, human beings, the departed beings, beasts, and the depraved men. According to Chih I, there is an inseparable relationship between human beings and the world. He said:

The mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds as its ontological structure. If the mind does not exist, then there is nothing given. Once the mind exists, even in a single instance, then the three thousand worlds

arise. Therefore, it is meaningless to say that the mind is before (all other beings) and all other beings are after (the mind), or that all other beings are before (the mind) and the mind is after (all other beings).⁵

In short, apart from the world there is no mind; and *vice versa*. Regardless of whether the mind is in the authentic or inauthentic state, the world belongs to it as its essential structure. Particularly, the world is intrinsic to the ontological structure of the Buddha. In opposition to the Hua Yen Buddhist thesis that the Buddha is disconnected from all the other nine realms, the T'ien T'ai School insisted that the Buddha can never abolish the other nine realms in attaining *nirvana*. For the T'ien T'ai School, even for the Buddha, all beings are preserved without change. Only illness is to be removed, all the *dharmas* must remain unchanged after Enlightenment. For the Buddha, each being serves as a means of salvation. Even the impure means of salvation are not to be removed. In this sense, the Buddha does not disconnect himself from devils. Certainly, this does not mean that the Buddha-nature is morally evil. It is only because the evil *dharmas* can serve as the means of the salvation that the Buddha necessarily equips himself with them. As Mou observed,

When the T'ien T'ai School says that the Buddha-nature equips itself with the good as well as the evil means of salvation, it does not imply that the authentic mind has to rid itself of the impure beings which arise from the impure mind, and uniquely equips itself with the pure beings which arise from the pure mind. Rather, it means that the authentic mind, which is nothing but the identity of the *prajna* and the *tathatā*, must equip itself with both the good and the evil means of salvation. Indeed, the authentic mind arises while serving salvation in the manner of non-attachment...The emergence of the authentic mind goes hand in hand with its intrinsic equipment of the three thousand worlds.⁶

From the standpoint of the Buddha, what is to be removed is only our attachment to the world, while all beings remain intact. No matter in the stage of attachment or enlightenment, all the three thousand worlds, including pure and impure beings, do not disappear. But the difference between the mind of a single instance (the mind in its everydayness) and the authentic mind does not block the possibility that they are essentially one and the same mind. This is because both authenticity and inauthenticity are different existential-ontological possibilities of the mind.⁷

In contrast, according to doctrine of the *tathāgata-garbha pratītya-samutpāda* - as expounded by the Hua Yen School, the Buddha, as the pure mind, is purged of any mundane, transient and impure *Dharmas* (beings). That is to say, it is unnecessary for the Buddha to equip himself with the other nine realms as his ontological structure. Consequently, in claiming that the pure mind is the origin of all beings, the Hua Yen School insisted that in attaining Buddhahood, the purified reason must disconnect itself from the other nine realms. Though the Hua Yen School also emphasized the idea of the inter-dependence of all beings, it failed to see that the Buddha must equip itself with the other nine realms as its ontological structure. In short, by sticking to the *Tai-ch'eng chi-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)*, the Hua Yen School assigned the mind of the *tathāgata-garbha* to the constituting dimension, but the transient mind to the constituted dimension. In this way, all the other nine realms are external to the Being of the pure mind. As a result, on the level of praxis, this school stressed that for the sake of purifying the mind, it is necessary to go beyond these nine realms. But according to the T'ien T'ai School, such a position is unacceptable. It is because even the mind of a single instance, which includes authenticity and inauthenticity as its existential-ontological possibilities, must belong to the constituting dimension. Accordingly, all the other realms likewise belong to the very Being of the Buddha – in opposition to

Hua Yen School's exclusion of the other realms from Buddha-nature. The T'ien T'ai School hence charged the Hua Yen School for committing the fallacy of neglecting the world.

As is well-known, in *Being and Time* Heidegger identified "being-in-the-world" as the ontological structure of *Dasein*. The human being is essentially "being-in-the-world." In articulating this thesis, Heidegger explicitly criticized Descartes, while implicitly attacking Husserl. Historically speaking, after the publication of *Ideas I*, Husserl became a transcendental idealist. In contrast to the earlier descriptive approach of *Logical Investigations*, he opted for a transcendental turn. In particular, he made a distinction between the transcendental ego (= absolute ego) and the empirical ego (= factual ego). While the former belongs to the constituting dimension, the latter belongs to the constituted dimension. In challenging Husserl's transcendental-idealism, Heidegger posed the following questions:

First, "What is the mode of Being of this absolute ego?"

Second, "In what sense is it (s.c. the absolute ego) the *same* as the particular factual 'I'; in what sense is it *not* the same?"⁸

As a response to the latter question, Husserl wrote:

My transcendental I is therefore evidently "different" from the natural I, but by no means as a second I which is "separate," in the natural sense of the word, from the natural ego. Nor conversely is it in any way an I which is "bound" (in the natural sense) to the natural ego or intertwined with it. It is precisely the field (taken in full concreteness) of transcendental self-experience which can, at any time, be changed into the psychological self-experience by a mere shift of attitude. In this shift an identity of the I is necessarily produced; in transcendental reflection on the shift, the psychological objectification becomes

visible as self-objectification of the transcendental I, and so it turns out as if it had in every moment of the natural attitude imposed an apperception upon itself.⁹

In brief, for Husserl, in virtue of transcendental reflection one can discover that the “empirical ego” results from self-objectification of the “transcendental ego.” To this extent, there is a relationship of identity between them. But there is also an essential distinction between them. The empirical ego is an “object in the world,” whereas the transcendental ego is a “subject for the world.” As a result, the Husserlian absolute or transcendental ego is worldless. For Husserl, the term “world” primarily means a “totality of objects.” The world as a totality of objects is merely a constituted product of the transcendental ego.

In responding to Husserl’s above answer, Heidegger agreed that there is an ontological difference between the world as a totality of objects and the transcendental ego. Nevertheless, given Husserl’s failure to answer his first question: “What is the mode of Being of the being [s.c. *Dasein*] in which ‘world’ is constituted,” Heidegger charged Husserl for neglecting the essential connection between human beings and the world.¹⁰ It is because “being-in-the-world” is not an accidental human phenomenon, but rather signifies the Being of *Dasein*. Therefore, this position must be differentiated from Husserl’s thesis that the empirical ego is in the world. The Husserlian transcendental ego, as the constituting source of the world, is definitely not in the world. But such a transcendental ego might suffer from self-forgetfulness. That is, it is quite possible that the transcendental ego misidentifies itself as a thing in the world. But with the help of transcendental reflection, the transcendental ego is able to resume its distinction from the objects in the world. In contrast, Heidegger maintained that regardless of whether *Dasein* is in the state of inauthenticity or authenticity, it is

fundamentally “being-in-the-world.” Certainly, the world in the Heideggerian sense is no longer understood as a totality of objects. Heidegger’s concept of the world is ontological rather than ontical. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identified the world as *Bedeutsamkeit* or *Bewandnisganzheit*. Here the world primarily points to the *Spielraum* of human beings. It consists of the set of existential possibilities of Dasein. In explicating the ontological structure of the world, Heidegger already transcended the standpoint of substance as well as the subject-object dichotomy. Basically, he understood the Being of the world in terms of a network of the how (*Wie*) of Dasein. This being the case, man is neither opposed to nor separated from the world. In Husserlian terms, the world in this sense primarily belongs to the constituting dimension. Furthermore, “being-in” here is not a spatial relationship. To say that Dasein is “being-in-the-world” does not mean that Dasein is *contained* in the world as water is in a glass. As an ontological proposition, it rather aims to say that the world as a *Spielraum* is immanent in Dasein as its essential structure. So even in the state of inauthenticity, Dasein is never just a thing.

Despite the distinction between Dasein’s authenticity and inauthenticity, these two are not unrelated. Rather, the inauthentic Dasein is basically a derivative mode of the authentic Dasein. Ontologically, the authentic Dasein is more primordial. But this does not imply that the inauthentic Dasein is excluded from the constituting dimension. Therefore, Heidegger’s distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic Dasein is essentially different from Husserl’s distinction between the empirical and the transcendental ego. In the case of Husserl, while the empirical ego belongs to the constituted dimension, the transcendental ego belongs to the constituting dimension. As a result, while Husserl attributes the world to the constituted dimension, Heidegger identifies the world as belonging to the constituting dimension. Heidegger’s thesis that

Dasein is essentially “being-in-the-world” also concerns the Being of the world. Therefore, it is impossible for us to thematize the Being of the world apart from any ontological reference to Dasein. In sum, the world here is first of all the horizon of the *Vollzugssinn* (sense of enactment) of Dasein, rather than the totality of objects.

At this juncture, one can discover a fundamental similarity between Heidegger’s idea that Dasein is “being-in-the-world” and the T’ien T’ai Buddhist thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds as its essential structure. Historically speaking, Heidegger’s identification of the human being as “being-in-the-world” is a revolutionary advancement in the Western theory of subjectivity. According to Heidegger, it is only when the human being is conceived of as “being-in-the-world” that the mode of the Being of human beings can be thematised in the proper manner. After Descartes’ discovery of the principle of subjectivity, none of the traditional theories of subjectivity conceived of the world as an ontological structure of the subject. When the T’ien T’ai Buddhist thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds is compared with Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein as “being-in-the-world,” one can see that the former also represents a revolutionary doctrine of subjectivity. As a parallel to Heidegger’s thesis that Dasein - no matter whether in inauthenticity or authenticity - is being-in-the-world, the T’ien T’ai School maintained that the mind - whether in the state of ignorance or enlightenment - equips itself with the three thousand worlds. When T’ien T’ai Buddhism spoke of “the three thousand worlds,” it meant the world as a whole. Just as the Heideggerian world is not a “totality of objects,” but rather the gathering of Dasein’s existential possibilities, the T’ien T’ai “three thousand worlds” refers to the possible ways of the Being of the human mind. From the standpoint of subjectivity, all the three thousand worlds constitute its *Spielraum*. Insofar as the background for the

emergence of these theses is concerned, both T'ien T'ai Buddhism and Heidegger aimed at criticizing the traditional theories of subjectivity. Remarkably, their respective opponents, i.e., the doctrine of the *tathāgata-garbha pratītya-samutpāda* represented by the *Tai-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)* - as it is expounded by the Hua Yen School - and Husserl, similarly posit a worldless transcendental ego (or pure mind), which is separate from all the mundane realms. In the same way that Hua Yen Buddhism made a distinction between the transient mind and the pure mind of the *tathāgata-garbha*, Husserl introduced a distinction between the empirical ego and the transcendental ego. Analogical to the Hua Yen Buddhist identification of the pure mind of the *tathāgata-garbha* as the ontological ground of the world, Husserl insisted that the transcendental ego is the constituting source of the world. On the other hand, in criticizing their opponents, Heidegger and T'ien T'ai Buddhism shared the view that the world belongs to the Being of human beings. For both of them, apart from the world, there would be no human beings; and *vice versa*. Neither Heidegger's thesis that Dasein is being-in-the-world nor the T'ien T'ai Buddhist thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds is an empirical, contingent proposition. Rather, these two theses are concerned with the Being of human beings and hence must be understood as ontological propositions. Moreover, the Heideggerian non-spatial "being-in" corresponds to what the T'ien T'ai meant by "being-equipped-with." For both the Heideggerian "being-in" and the T'ien T'ai Buddhist "being-equipped-with" aim at disclosing the essential connection between human beings and the world.

The above comparison should have shown the ontological character of the T'ien T'ai Buddhist thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds. In other words, it is basically a thesis which concerns the Being of

human beings. To this extent, we can understand why the T'ien T'ai insisted that one cannot abolish the world in order to attain *nirvana*. Regardless of whether one is in the state of ignorance or that of enlightenment, the world is always there.

Historically speaking, as Mou pointed out:

As far as its backing in the *Sutra* is concerned, the thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds is derived from the *Vimalakirti-Nirdesa-Sutra*'s thesis that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground.¹¹

Nonetheless, T'ien T'ai Buddhism did not merely repeat the thesis of the *Vimalakirti-Nirdesa-Sutra*. Rather, it was able to concretize this idea in terms of the thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds. Theoretically speaking, this thesis presupposes that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground as its condition of possibility. There is a parallel development in Heidegger's way of thinking. Indeed, *Dasein*-analytic is not his ultimate concern. It is rather a preparation in answering the question: "What is the meaning of Being?" In brief, his analysis of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world merely serves as the starting point for the thematization of the Truth of Being itself.

Then what does it mean to say that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground? What is the meaning of "non-dwelling ground?" How should one understand the term "emergence?" In order to answer these questions, let us start by considering some citations from the relevant texts. In the *Wei-mo-chieh ching lio-chou (A Brief Commentary on the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa-Sutra)* Ch'an Jan (711-782) - another major representative of the T'ien T'ai School - wrote: "The thesis that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground means that all beings- whether they are mundane or non-mundane, created as well as non-created - emerge from the 'non-dwelling ground.'"¹²

In the *Fa-hua wen-jiu chi* (*An Explication of the Saddharmapundarika Sutra*), he explained further:

There is only one form which is the emergence of all beings from the non-dwelling ground. . . . Accordingly, ignorance and Being itself are called “the non-dwelling.” Now “the formless” is used as an opposite to “beings,” while the label “the non-dwelling ground” is exclusively reserved for Being itself. Being itself is not identical with any beings. It is essentially a non-ground. As a consequence, it is called “the non-dwelling ground.”¹³

In order to illustrate Ch’an Jan’s point, it might be helpful to contrast his position with that of Hua Yen Buddhism. According to the latter, it is the pure mind of the *tathāgata-garbha* that constitutes the ultimate ground of the whole world. That is to say, all beings must be ontologically grounded in the transcendental ego. Nonetheless, such a position implies a hostile attitude towards the world. Indeed due to the strict purity of the pure mind, it cannot be allowed - as the transcendental ground - to equip itself with any mundane, impure beings as its essential “moment.” That is to say, the mundane world must be removed when ignorance is removed. As a result, the Buddha is disconnected from the world. In challenging such a transcendental-analytic doctrine, T’ien T’ai Buddhism urged us to abolish the ground-searching approach. Methodologically, the ground-searching approach is responsible for the generation of the Hua Yen Buddhist doctrine of Buddha-nature which ontologically separates the Buddha from the mundane world (i.e., the other nine realms).

But if beings are not grounded in the transcendental pure mind, then how does one explain their ontological origin? The T’ien T’ai’ Buddhist answer is simply that the origin of beings is a non-ground. To say that all beings are grounded in the non-ground is to say that it is not necessary for beings to have an ultimate ground. Such a non-

ground is called by T'ien T'ai Buddhism as the *non-dwelling ground*. Insofar as such a non-ground is beyond the ground-searching approach, it is characterized as “the inconceivable.” As the non-dwelling ground, Suchness (*tathatā*, Being) in the sense of the T'ien T'ai is not a ground in any transcendental sense. That is to say, it does not function as an ontological condition of possibility of the world. How then can beings come into existence? Why is there something rather than nothing? According to the T'ien T'ai Buddhism, “it is unnecessary for us to search for a ground for beings. Even without Suchness as their ground, the three thousand worlds are already there. It seems incredible, but it is the Suchness of all beings.”¹⁴ T'ien T'ai Buddhism also characterized Suchness (Being) as the One. As the One, Suchness (Being) is formless. Nevertheless, being formless, Suchness (Being) is ontologically inseparable from any beings. This is the reason why T'ien T'ai Buddhism maintained that even mundane beings remain intact after the removal of ignorance. Such a position is held because Being, in the sense of Suchness, is ontologically inseparable from beings.¹⁵ For T'ien T'ai Buddhism, this is the genuine meaning of the “middle path,” for it neither eliminates beings in favour of Being itself, nor overlooks Being itself in favour of beings. At this juncture, T'ien T'ai Buddhism introduced the doctrine of the mutual dependence among the *Three Kinds of Truth*. That is, there is a mutual dependence among *sunyata* (Being), all beings, and the middle path. Insofar as Being *qua sunyata* is inseparable from beings, it is co-arising with the world. Along with Being, the three thousand worlds “emerge.” Though Being itself does not function as the ontological ground of the world, it lets beings be. This means that the origination of beings is without any reason. All this indicates that the term “emerging” is primarily understood as “letting things appropriately be.” Furthermore, according to T'ien T'ai Buddhism, among all the kinds of beings, it is only the human being who can *let* beings

appropriately be. Accordingly, in illuminating the essential nature of such an “emergence,” it is necessary for T’ien T’ai Buddhism to analyse the Being of human beings. As a result of such an ontological analysis, the thesis that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds is introduced. More importantly, this thesis is shown to be a consequence of the *Vimalakirti-Nirveda-Sutra*’s position that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground. To be sure, the T’ien T’ai Buddhist analysis of the Being of human beings is not its final position. It rather constitutes the first step in clarifying the origin of all beings. For T’ien T’ai Buddhism, to say that human beings let beings be does not imply that the human being is the creator of all beings. It would be therefore a mistake to claim that T’ien T’ai Buddhism commits itself to a subjectivistic metaphysics. In the consequence of the fundamental thesis that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground, it only claims that it is in responding to the call of the non-dwelling ground that our mind arises.

As a parallel, after the famous *Kehre*, Heidegger introduced the positive concept of the non-ground (*Abgrund*) in characterizing the essence (*Wesen*) of Being. In his eyes, traditional metaphysics, and especially Kant’s transcendental philosophy, identified Being as the “ground” of all beings. In fact, the *first cause*, the *raison d’etre*, and the *transcendental condition of possibility* are different modes of grounding. But Heidegger insisted that Being in the sense of the ground of beings is not Being itself. It is rather the beingness (*Seiendheit*) of beings. On the other hand, Being itself as “gathering” (*Sammlung*) is nothing but the “letting-be” of beings in accordance with Nature (*kata phusin*). In brief, Being itself is not the ground of beings, it is rather a non-ground.

It is interesting to ponder the affinity between the later Heidegger’s doctrine of Being as the *Abgrund* (non-ground) and the T’ien T’ai Buddhist doctrine of the non-

dwelling ground. In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger wrote that “Being, since the beginning of Western thought, has been interpreted as the ground in which every being as such is grounded.”¹⁶ This is reminiscent of the ground-searching approach in Buddhism which gives rise to the Hua Yen understanding of the *tathāgata-garbha pratīya-samutpāda*. When T’ien T’ai Buddhism opposed the latter’s separation of the Buddha from the other nine realms, it urged us to conceive of Being as the non-dwelling ground. To say that Being is the non-dwelling ground is moreover to say that Being itself is baseless. Nevertheless, no beings can be separated from Being. Whenever there is Being, there are beings. Therefore, even though Being is no longer understood as the ground of beings, it is never separate from them. In this sense, there is an identity-and-difference relationship between Being and beings. Similarly, for Heidegger, although Being is conceived of as the *Abgrund*, it is basically the “letting be” of beings. To this extent, T’ien T’ai Buddhism and Heidegger are alike in maintaining that all beings originate from Being as the non-ground. Positively speaking, both identify the essence of human beings in terms of letting-be. Besides, for both of them, in “letting beings appropriately be,” the role of the human being is more than “letting-being-be-seen.” That is to say, human beings are not only capable of making manifest the other beings, but also able to let them be. There is accordingly a shift from seeing to action. This is another sign of the difference between the early and later Heidegger.

This comparison enables us to see in what way T’ien T’ai Buddhism provides us with an ontological account of the “origin” of beings. First, as in the case of Heidegger, here the term “ontology” can no longer be understood in the traditional metaphysical sense. Insofar as the T’ien T’ai Buddhist concept of Suchness belongs to the dimension of Being *qua* Being, it can well be conceived of as a “thinking of Being”

in the Heideggerian sense. In particular, both the thesis that the mind of a single instance is equipped with the three thousand worlds and the thesis that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground are statements about Being itself. If the term “ontology” is understood in the traditional metaphysical sense, then the T’ien T’ai Buddhist doctrine is no longer ontology. However, if this term is understood in the sense of the Heideggerian thinking of Being, then the T’ien T’ai Buddhist doctrine can well be an ontology. As a consequence, such an ontological” interpretation enables T’ien T’ai Buddhism to survive the Heideggerian “overcoming” of metaphysics. To this extent, we can also justify Mou’s thesis that T’ien T’ai Buddhism is superior to Hua Yen Buddhism.¹⁷

On the other hand, the T’ien T’ai thesis of the emergence of all beings from the non-dwelling ground can contribute to developing a response to Michel Henry’s criticism of Heidegger. According to Henry, there is a fundamental ambiguity in Heidegger’s concept of *Nichtigkeit*. Henry wrote:

Nichtigkeit, which refers to the finitude of freedom, namely, to transcendence itself considered in its fundative activity, nevertheless has nothing to do with that which designates the simple suppression of this activity, the impotence of transcendence at founding itself. Thus, the fundamental ambiguity of Heideggerian *Nichtigkeit* can be recognized, according to which it translates the finite mode with which, projecting itself starting from itself toward its possibilities, *Dasein* is determined as the foundation-Being or else it means the “not” which essentially affects it insofar as it is never itself the foundation of its Being.¹⁸

In reality, as Henry further remarked:

The ambiguity of *Nichtigkeit* is not merely that of *Geworfenheit*, it also affects the Heideggerian concept of finitude. Actually, the latter does not simply concern itself with the effective projection of various possibilities, it also affects the act of transcendence considered as a foundation.¹⁹

As a consequence of such a fundamental ambiguity, Henry argued: “the existential themes which pretend to base themselves upon it and more especially the formal existential determination of culpability as the foundation-Being of a *Nichtigkeit*, are also undermined and totally ambiguous.”²⁰ Henry further maintained that “it is the ambiguity of ... *Nichtigkeit* itself which ultimately renders it useless, on the philosophical level, the so-called essential affirmation according to which ‘Care itself in its essence is permeated with *Nichtigkeit* through and through.’”²¹ In Henry’s eyes, this signifies a serious error of Heidegger’s, for his “philosophy of transcendence returns to the presuppositions which are proper to it and upon which it depends in such a way that the essential phenomenon toward which it is drawn by its progress is henceforth lost.”²²

With the help of the T’ien T’ai Buddhist thesis of the emergence of all beings from the non-dwelling ground, it is possible to modify the early Heidegger’s limitation, but without jumping to Henry’s conclusion that “the ontological positivity of *Nichtigkeit* resides in immanence.”²³ For given the analogy between Heidegger’s later concept of *Abgrund* and the T’ien T’ai concept of the non-dwelling ground, one can see the possibility that the impotence of transcendence at founding itself does not rob transcendence of any ontological function. Namely, although transcendence itself is no longer identified as a fundative activity, it can well be re-interpreted as an activity of letting-be. To be sure, it is only through such letting-be that all things can arise out of the non-ground. More importantly, since this letting-be itself is also out of the non-

ground, now it is safe for Heidegger to claim that “Dasein is not itself the basis of its Being.”²⁴

II.

After Heidegger introduced the positive doctrine of the non-ground (*Ab-grund*) in his lecture *The Principle of Identity* which was given on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the University of Freiburg in 1957, its importance has remained relatively neglected.²⁵ With the posthumous publication of Heidegger’s *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, we now have a better textual basis for deepening the dialogue between Heidegger and T’ien T’ai Buddhism along with exploring the concept of the non-ground. The aim of the following section is basically two-fold: First, to pinpoint the finitude of the “momentary mind” in the T’ien T’ai Buddhist sense; and Second, to deepening our understanding of the central role played by *Ab-grund* in Heidegger’s later thinking.

Generally speaking, a major characteristic of Chinese Buddhism lies in its stress on the indispensable role played by the mind. In contrast to Indian Buddhism which mainly identifies the mind as a faculty of desire, Chinese Buddhism primarily understands the mind as the capacity for attaining Buddhahood. Historically, the doctrine of *cittamātra* (Mind-only) or *tathatāgatagarbha* has dominated the whole development of traditional Chinese Buddhism. Even within the less popular school of *vijnaptimātra* (Consciousness-only) in China, it was the idealistic trend represented by Hsuan Tsang, which occupied the orthodox position. In addition, the Northern School of Zen-Buddhism held a doctrine of pure mind. To this extent, there is no wonder that the *Ta-cheng ch’i-hsing lun (The Awakening of Faith)* has been regarded as the first Buddhist text written by the Chinese. According to the orthodox view, the major doctrine of this famous text lies in the thesis that the pure mind is the transcendental ground of the whole world.

In contrast, the “momentary mind” in the sense of T’ien T’ai Buddhism is in reality the “momentary mind of ignorance and *Dharmata*.”²⁶ The structure of such a “momentary mind” is paradoxical, for ignorance is the opposite of *Dharmata*. Both ignorance and *Dharmata* belong to the one and the same mind - a “momentary mind.” That is to say, both ignorance and *Dharmata* constitute the ontological structure of the Buddha. Accordingly, the structure of Buddha-nature is also paradoxical. In contrast to the pure mind, the “momentary mind” is an “impure mind” in its first appearance. Precisely for this reason, Chih I also called it “a mind of conspiracy” or “a mind of defilement.” Despite its dark side, the “momentary mind” represents the autonomous capacity of attaining *Nirvana*.

In order to deepening our understanding of the momentary mind, one can start with raising the following question: In what sense do both ignorance and *Dharmata* belong to the Being of one and the same mind? In order to answer this important question, it is helpful to turn to Heidegger’s Dasein-analytic. In opposition to Husserl’s strict distinction between the transcendental and the empirical subjectivity, Heidegger claimed that both the authentic and the inauthentic modes belong to the Being of *Dasein*. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explicitly wrote, “Not-Being-itself (*Das Nicht-es-selbst-sein*) functions as a ‘positive’ possibility of that entity which, in its essential concern, is absorbed in a world.”²⁷ In particular, “Falling is a definite existential characteristic of *Dasein* itself.”²⁸ As far as its Being is concerned, *Dasein* is not separated from the existential-ontological possibility of “falling.” Nevertheless, in terms of anxiety which is another existential-ontological possibility, *Dasein* can be brought back from its falling. All this indicates in which manner both inauthenticity and authenticity constitute the existential-ontological possibilities of *Dasein*.

To be more precise, there is a respective parallel between “ignorance” and

“*Dharmata*” in the T’ien T’ai Buddhist sense with “inauthenticity” and “authenticity” in the Heideggerian sense. Accordingly, the “momentary mind” is ontologically similar to *Dasein*. But how could Heidegger assign these two incompatible existentials to *Dasein* without giving rise to any self-contradiction? Amazingly Heidegger even labeled his work “*Dasein*-analytic.” The key in solving this problem lies in Heidegger’s thesis that “Higher than actuality stands possibility.”²⁹ As Heidegger pointed out, both falling and anxiety are different possibilities of *Dasein*. As actual states falling and anxiety are mutually exclusive of one another. But their “actual” exclusion does not prevent them from being “different potentialities-for-Being” of one and the same *Dasein*. Analogically, although ignorance and *Dharmata* are “actually” exclusive of one another, they can, *qua* possibilities, belong to the very Being of one and the same mind. Thus in terms of the Heideggerian thesis that possibility is higher than actuality, we can understand in what sense T’ien T’ai Buddhism can claim that both ignorance and *Dharmata* are immanent to the same mind. Besides, as shown in Heidegger’s *Dasein*-analytic, in everydayness, *Dasein* is in the state of inauthenticity. This helps us to understand why T’ien T’ai Buddhism can claim that our mind, in its first appearance, is in the state of defilement. More importantly, we are now in a better position to understand the distinction between such a “momentary mind of ignorance and *Dharmata*” and a “pure mind of the *tathāgatarbha*.” On the one hand, the doctrine of the pure mind the *tathāgatarbha* maintains that all defilement must be regarded as external to the mind. Hence, the mind itself is strictly pure. Even though it might be covered by defilement, this does not affect its original purity. In this sense, the pure mind is totally self-transparent. It does not admit any “inauthentic possibility” intrinsic to its Being. On the other hand, a “momentary mind” in the T’ien T’ai Buddhist sense must consist of both ignorance and *Dharmata* as its inauthentic and authentic existential-ontological possibilities.

Certainly, to claim that man (or mind) has *Dharmata* as his existential-ontological possibility does not imply that he is already a Buddha. This merely signifies that attaining Buddhahood is a possibility immanent to his Being. As a result, while there could be a debate whether the doctrine of the pure mind would give rise to the claim that every sentient being is already a Buddha, with its concept of a momentary mind, T'ien T'ai Buddhism can safely exempt itself from such a controversy.

Chih I further claimed that the “momentary mind” equips itself with the whole world of *dharmas*. This thesis by no means implies any subjectification of the world. He would rather agree with Heidegger in saying that “Generally however here remains no place for the interpretation of man as ‘subject,’ neither in the sense of an individual nor a collective subject. (*Überall jedoch bleibt hier kein Platz fuer die Deutung des Menschen als 'Subjekt' weder im Sinne des ichhaften noch im Sinne des gemeinschaftlichen Subjekts.*)”³⁰ In reality, for Chih I, there is no momentary mind separate from the world, and *vice versa*. Just like Heidegger’s identification of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-World, he would regard the ten realms of *dharmas* as a *Spielraum* for the momentary mind. Meanwhile, the ten realms of *dharmas* also signify a *limit* for the ontological possibilities of the momentary mind. The essence of the momentary mind is accordingly shown in its opening to the ten realms of *dharmas*. It is precisely due to this openness that the momentary mind is to be determined as *finite*. Besides, the momentary mind, being different from the pure mind of the *tathāgatagarbha*, can never be totally transparent. It is because like Enlightenment, defilement equally belongs to the momentary mind as its ontological possibility. In particular, the intrinsic possibility of falling not only differentiates the momentary mind from the pure mind of the *tathaāgatagarbha*, but also prohibits it from being infinite. Finally, for T'ien T'ai Buddhism, the momentary mind is not to be conceived of as the ground for the possibility of the world. When the

momentary mind is said to be equipped with the three thousand worlds, it signifies that all beings have to originate in the process of letting-be. But to say that the momentary mind lets beings be implies that all beings emerge from Being as the non-dwelling ground. For the momentary mind arises in response to Being as the non-dwelling ground. This is also the reason why Ch'an Jan later preferred to say that Being itself is equipped with the three thousand worlds.³¹ Accordingly, T'ien T'ai Buddhism would agree with Heidegger's statement: "The man of such future essence 'is' not primordial as being, in so far as merely Being is. (*Der Mensch solchen und erst künftigen Wesens 'ist' als Seiender nicht ursprünglich, sofern nur das Seyn ist.*)"³² Certainly, the momentary mind is not just a puppet mastered by the Suchness (Being). Rather, in letting beings be, the Suchness needs the cooperation of the momentary mind. Chih Li (960-1028) - who was responsible for the renaissance of the T'ien T'ai School in the Sung Dynasty - declared, "Since all the beings are of the same Being, they are gathered by a momentary mind."³³ That is to say, there is an essential "mutual belonging" between the momentary mind and the Suchness (Being). Insofar as such a "mutual belonging" is intrinsic to the Being of the momentary mind," the human being has to remain finite.

Nonetheless, the finitude of the momentary mind has to be understood as its positive character. For, among all beings, it is only human beings who have such an intimate relationship with the Suchness. To this extent, the T'ien T'ai Buddhist claim that human beings let beings be from the non-dwelling ground well matches the later Heidegger thesis:

Da-sein is the grounding of the non-ground of Being by means of laying claim to man as that being to which the guard for the truth of Being is granted. (*Das Da-sein ist die Gründung des Abgrundes des Seyns durch die Inanspruchnahme des Menschen als desjenigen Seienden, das der Wächterschaft fuer die Wahrheit des*

*Seyns überantwortet wird.)*³⁴

For those who are familiar with Heidegger's early writings, the rise of the positive doctrine of the *Ab-grund* after the turn might be hard to follow. First of all, the concepts of "ground" (*Grund*) and of "grounding" (*Begründung*) play important roles in *Being and Time*. Besides, *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (*The Essence of Reasons*) is the title of his contribution to Husserl's *Festschrift* (1929). However, Heidegger later admitted, "The discussion of ground is given up after having been explicitly worked out."³⁵ As Pöggeler's explained, "The meaning of Being as the 'ground' which remained unthought in metaphysical thinking, can perhaps be thought as an 'abysslike ground,' but in the final analysis it cannot really be thought of as a 'ground' at all."³⁶ To this extent, the turning away from the early doctrine of Being as the ground of beings and the later introduction of the positive doctrine of the *Ab-grund* precisely constitutes an essential feature of the *Kehre* of Heidegger's thinking. Such a shift defines one of the major distinctions between the early and later Heidegger. This can be illustrated in the following points.

First of all, we have seen that for the later Heidegger, "Ab-grund" is basically a positive term. As a matter of fact, the term "Ab-grund" already appeared in *Vom Wesen des Grundes*. In this text, after discerning the three-fold meaning of "grounding (*Gründen*)" as (a) "establishing (*Stiften*);" (b) "obtaining a footing (*Bodennehmen*);" (c) "founding (*Begründen*)" and identifying "justification (*Begründung*)" as "that which makes the question 'Why?' possible (*Ermöglichung der Warumfrage überhaupt*)," Heidegger jumped into the speech of "the freedom of the 'non-ground' of Dasein (*die Freiheit des 'Ab-grunds' des Daseins*)" and "the ungrounded character of Dasein. (*Abgründigkeit des Daseins*)."³⁷ As Tugendhat observed,

[T]hat freedom is for Heidegger the ultimate, to which one can transcendental-philosophically return as a "ground of internal possibility"This is already

prepared for in *ER* [=The Essence of Reasons] by the definition of freedom as a “non-ground.” Freedom is not a ground in the sense of an absolute, of a ground which is self-grounded, nor has it a ground in something else, it is *essentially* “finite” (*dass Freiheit fuer Heidegger das Letzte ist, worauf transzendentalphilosophisch als ‘Grund der inneren Möglichkeit’ zurückgegangen werden kann.....Vorbereitet ist sie schon in WG [Vom Wesens des Grundes] durch die Bestimmung der Freiheit als ‘Abgrund’. Die Freiheit ist Grund nicht im Sinn eines absoluten, eines in sich gegründeten Grundes, sie hat aber auch nicht ihren Grund in einem anderen, sie ist wesentmässig ‘endlich’.*)³⁸

According to the early Heidegger, the *Ab-grund* points to the *Ur-grund* (primal ground) which is not grounded in anything else. Here “*Ab-grund*” remains a “negative concept” or “limiting concept.” In contrast, Heidegger started to develop a positive doctrine of the non-ground in his *Beiträge der Philosophie*.³⁹ In this text, Heidegger energetically asked us, “to think the ungrounded character of the non-ground (*die Abgründigkeit des Abgrundes zu denken*).”⁴⁰ Particularly, in answering the question: “how does the non-ground ground (*wie der Ab-grund gruendet?*),” he worked out the following major characteristics of the non-ground:⁴¹

- (1) “The non-ground is the primordial essencing of the ground (*Der Ab-grund ist die ursprüngliche Wesung des Grundes*).”
- (2) “The non-ground is *the primordial unity* of space and time (*Der Ab-grund ist die ursprüngliche Einheit von Raum und Zeit*).”
- (3) “The non-ground is, however, also the primordial essence of the ground, of its grounding, of the *Essence of Truth* (*Der Ab-grund ist aber auch zwar das ursprüngliche Wesen des Grundes, seines Gründens, des Wesens der Wahrheit*).”
- (4) “Alone, the non-ground as the Essencing of the ground is no mere self-denial

as a simple retreat and departure. For the *non-ground* is the *non-ground* (*Allein, der Ab-grund ist als Wesung des Grundes kein blosses Sichversagen als einfacher Rueckzug und Weggang. Da Ab-grund ist Ab-grund*).”

(5) “The non-ground is the lingering refusal of the ground (*Ab-grund ist die zögernde Versagung des Grundes*).”

(6) “The non-ground is the most primordial *lighting concealment*, the Essencing of Truth (*Der Ab-grund ist die erstwesentliche lichtende Verbergung, die Wesung der Wahrheit*).”

Given this positive characterization of the *Ab-grund*, it is logical for the later Heidegger to declare, “The non-ground is so less *negative*. (*Der Ab-grund ist so wenig ‘negativ.’*)”⁴² For him now the *Ab-grund* is “*the primordial Nothing which belongs to Being itself as well as to Appropriation (das ursprüngliche Nicht, das zum Seyn selbst und somit zum Ereignis gehört)*.”⁴³ Later in *Identity and Difference* he also stated: “*dieser Ab-grund ist weder das leere Nichts noch eine finstere Wirrnis, sondern: das Er-ignis* (this non-ground is neither empty nothingness nor murky confusion, but rather: Appropriation).”⁴⁴ This indicates that simultaneously with the introduction of his doctrine of *Ereignis* that Heidegger was able to appreciate the positive character of the non-ground. Given its identity with *Er-ignis*, it should enjoy a central status in Heidegger’s later thinking. One might wonder what is the internal necessity for Heidegger to turn to a positive conception of *Ab-grund*. Moreover, how should one understand the exact role played by the *Ab-grund* in Heidegger’s *Kehre*?

Regarding the first question, Heidegger himself did not provide an answer. A comparison with T’ien T’ai Buddhism might shed some light on the problem of the internal necessity of Heidegger’s turning to a positive idea of *Ab-grund*. Certainly, we do not thereby claim any factual connection between Heidegger and T’ien T’ai Buddhism.

Historically, T'ien T'ai Buddhism is famous for introducing a distinction between the “distinctive teachings” and the “perfect teachings.” In order to illuminate this important distinction, Chan Jan appealed to a pair of contrasting concepts: “dwelling-upon-itself” and “dwelling-upon-other.” In the *Wei-mo-chieh ching shu-chi (An Exegesis of the Vimalakirti Sutra)* he stated,

That affliction and *Dharmata* are of different Being implies that affliction and *Dharmata* dwell separately. So, each of them is conceived of as dwelling-upon-itself. In other words, there is *Dharmata* in separation from affliction. *Dharmata* is the other of affliction. In this sense, *Dharmata* is said to be self-contained. Or one can say that there is affliction in separation from *Dharmata*. Affliction is the other of *Dharmata*. As a consequence, a doctrine which allows these two to be totally separated from each other cannot be the perfect teachings. For here affliction has to become an obstruction, and the stripping away of any obstruction is the only way to reveal the Truth. On the other hand, in the case of dwelling-upon-other, affliction and *Dharmata* are mutually dependent upon each other. Since they are of the same Being, their inter-dependence can be promoted to be a relationship of identity.⁴⁵

This indicates that although both the distinctive and the perfect teachings employ the same pair concepts of “self” and “other,” their ways of employment are different. Besides, their distinction can be shown in their different ways of answering the question: “Are affliction and *Dharmata* of the same Being?” While a positive answer will point to the perfect teachings, a negative answer will point to the distinctive teachings. As Chih Li stated, “The doctrine of dwelling-upon-itself defines the distinctive teachings, whereas the doctrine of dwelling-upon-other defines the perfect teachings.”⁴⁶ In addition, the distinction between these two types of teachings can be explicated in terms of their

different ways of conceiving of the essence of Buddha-nature. While the distinctive teachings identify the Buddha-nature with the pure mind of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the perfect teachings conceive of the Buddha-nature in terms of the momentary mind. For the former, the Buddha-nature is a world-less subject, whereas for the latter, the Buddha is equipped with the whole world. The perfect teachings of the T'ien T'ai School insists that in order to attain Buddhahood no evil *dharma*s should be stripped away.

Hubert Dreyfus listed five theses that the later Heidegger abandoned after the publication of *Being and Time*. The last of them was stated as follows: "By a double use of the hermeneutic circle, hermeneutic phenomenology strips away our disguises and makes manifest the pre-ontological understanding of Being as *unheimlich* which is hidden in the previous awareness and in our public practices, thus revealing the deep truth of our condition."⁴⁷ In reality, such a thesis of positing a "hidden, deeper truth" is contrary to the ontological structure of Dasein, which includes inauthenticity as its existential possibility. In terms of the distinction between the distinctive and the perfect teachings, this thesis would lead Heidegger to commit to the distinctive teachings. In this context, Dasein would be entirely identified with the pure mind of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the sense of the distinctive teachings. Accordingly, it would imply that inauthenticity and authenticity are not of the same Being. Only authenticity would then belong to the Being of Dasein. As the other of authenticity, inauthenticity would have to be stripped away from the Being of Dasein. To be sure, Heidegger could not accept such a consequence.

In order to correct such a misleading articulation, it is necessary for Heidegger to take seriously the "paradoxical identity" between the authenticity and inauthenticity of Dasein. This gives rise to the following consequences. First, it is meaningless to say that authenticity is "deeper than" inauthenticity. Second, the idea that only authenticity belongs to the truth must be rejected. Finally, the essence of truth is not to be conceived

of as “grounding.” As Heidegger stated,

Therefore, an attempt was necessary to overcome the first formulation of the question of Being in *Being and Time* and its radiation (*The Essence of Reasons* and *Kant-book*)...Therefore, an effort was necessary to cut loose from [the search for] the ‘condition of possibility’ as merely a ‘mathematical’ retrogression and rather to grasp the truth of Being from its *own* essence (Appropriation) (*Deshalb bedurfte es im Versuch der Überwindung des ersten Ansatzes der Seinsfrage in Sein und Zeit und seiner Ausstrahlungen (Vom Wesen des Grundes und Kantbuch) ...Deshalb bedurfte es der Bemühung, von der ‘Bedingung der Möglichkeit’ als eines nur ‘mathematischen’ Rückganges freizukommen und die Wahrheit des Seyns aus dessen eigenem Wesen zu fassen (Ereignis).*)⁴⁸

To abandon the search for the “condition of possibility” means to give up the idea of grounding. Given the identity of the *Ab-grund* and the *Er-eignis*, turning to the *Er-eignis* implies turning to the *Ab-grund*. More importantly, such a positive concept of *Ab-grund* enables Heidegger to reassert the possibility of the “paradoxical identity” between authenticity and inauthenticity. After giving up the thesis that authenticity is a truth deeper than inauthenticity, like the T’ien T’ai Buddhist, Heidegger is able to declare that neither one of them is dwelling-upon-itself. In this sense he must admit that they are *abgründig*. Insofar as authenticity and inauthenticity are *abgründig*, they can be of the same Being. In particular, Heidegger would agree with Chan Jan’s following thesis: “*Dharmata* is identical with ignorance, *Dharmata* is non-dwelling; ignorance is *Dharmata*, ignorance is non-dwelling.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, if Being itself is to be identified as the “ground” of all beings, then it would imply that the whole world of beings and Being itself must be of different Being. Then, since the whole world of beings becomes the other of Being, *Dasein* would degenerate into a world-less subject.

Heidegger, however, cannot accept such a consequence, for this is contrary to his fundamental position announced in *Being and Time*: Dasein is essentially Being-in-the-World.

From the standpoint of T'ien T'ai Buddhism, the development of a positive concept of *Ab-grund* is surely a viable way for Heidegger to avoid such an undesirable consequence (as in the case of the distinctive teachings). Negatively speaking, the introduction of a positive idea of *Ab-grund* can save Heidegger from the danger of absolutizing Dasein and Being itself. Positively speaking, this enables him to assign inauthenticity to the very Being of Dasein without holding that authenticity is a deeper truth. To be sure, Dasein should opt for authenticity. But such a move does not imply any stripping away of inauthenticity from the ontological structure of Dasein. On the contrary, like T'ien T'ai Buddhism, Heidegger has to assert that apart from inauthenticity, there is no authenticity.

Now let us turn to the key question: How does one understand the exact role played by the *Ab-grund* in the shift from the early to the later Heidegger? Even in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Heidegger did not entirely abolish the concept of grounding. Rather, as he said, “the ground (*der Grund*)” is now conceived of as “the self-concealing in the supporting carrying (*das Sichverbergen im tragenden Durchtragen*).”⁵⁰ Correlatively, he redefined “*Ab-grund* as “the non-appearance, as ground in self-concealing, a self-concealing in the manner of a refusal of the ground (*das Ausbleiben, als Grund im Sichverbergen, ein Sichverbergen in der Weise der Versagung des Grundes*).”⁵¹ This reinterpretation also makes possible the cooperation between the *Grund* and the *Ab-grund*:

In self-refusal, the ground points in a distinguished way to the Open, namely, to the originally Opening of *that* Vacuity, which is thus determined. In so far as the

ground also and precisely still grounds in the non-ground, and rather primarily grounds, it stands in the deferring. (*Im Sichversagen bringt der Grund in einer ausgezeichneten Weise in das Offene, nämlich in das erst Offene jener Leere, die somit eine bestimmte ist. Sofern der Grund auch und gerade im Abgrund noch gründet und doch sich eigentlich gründet, steht er in der Zögerung.*)⁵²

Seen from T'ien T'ai Buddhism, what is implied in these statements sounds like something in its own position that "All beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground." In pinpointing the positive character of the *Ab-grund* in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Heidegger emphasized: "The non-ground is not the No to every ground like groundlessness, but rather a Yes to the ground in its concealed farness and distance. (*Ab-grund ist nicht das Nein zu jedem Grund, wie Grundlosigkeit, sondern das Ja zum Grund in seiner verborgenen Weite und Ferne.*)"⁵³ Heidegger concluded:

The non-ground is therefore the in-itself temporal-spatial-against-swinging momentary place of In-between, upon which Da-sein must be grounded. (*Der Abgrund ist so die in sich zeitigend-räumend-gegen-schwingende Augenblicksstätte des Zwischen, als welches das Da-sein gegründet sein muss.*)⁵⁴

This position is reminiscent of Mou's thesis that all beings emerge from the momentary mind. It means that all beings emerge from the non-dwelling ground. "⁵⁵

In sum, with the help of the T'ien T'ai Buddhist characterization of the perfect teachings, one is able to appreciate the positive significance of the idea of *Ab-grund* in Heidegger's later thinking. Generally, the T'ien T'ai Buddhist account of the origin of beings in terms of the non-dwelling ground enables us to understand the reason why the later Heidegger still had to maintain that "there must always be some being in the Open, something that is, in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy."⁵⁶ As is seen before, the early Heidegger insisted that "Being well exists (*welt*) without beings."⁵⁷

But he later rejected this thesis and declared that “Being never exists (*west*) without beings.”⁵⁸ Such an essential change can be regarded as a consequence of his adoption of a positive doctrine of *Ab-grund*. At this juncture, Heidegger might well agree with T’ien T’ai Buddhism’s thesis that it is merely the sickness, but not any being, which should be stripped away. For T’ien T’ai Buddhism, it is only the “attachment to beings,” rather than beings themselves, which should be stripped away. The recovery of the ontological difference should merely point to the overcoming of the “attachment to beings.” But this has no implication of eliminating any beings. In addressing this point, the later Heidegger emphasized that one should “*once* use this distinction for a first clarification, and *then* nevertheless transcend exactly this distinction. (*einmal mit dieser Unterscheidung zur ersten Klärung einzusetzen und dann doch gerade diese Unterscheidung zu überspringen.*)”⁵⁹ Instead of absolutizing the ontological difference, one has to grasp “its origin itself and i.e., its true *Unity* (*ihren Ursprung selbst und d.h. ihre echte Einheit zu fassen*).”⁶⁰

We have learned above that both the momentary mind in the T’ien T’ai Buddhist sense and Dasein enjoy a significant structural affinity. This enables T’ien T’ai Buddhism to enrich itself by adopting Heidegger’s subtle articulation of the finitude of Dasein in terms of *Faktizität* (facticity) and temporality. The fact that both the momentary mind and Dasein share the non-moral character can facilitate such enrichment. Nowadays T’ien T’ai Buddhism is no longer active in China. In terms of the dialogue with Heidegger, it will not only shed some light on understanding the philosophical significance of this Buddhist school, but also introduce new blood to it - so that one could hope for its renaissance in the future.

In virtue of this positive concept of the non-ground, Heidegger is also able to justify his claim for overcoming metaphysics. It is indeed not accidental for him to ask

us to depart “from Being as the ground of beings” and spring “into the non-ground.”⁶¹

For, as he wrote,

Metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of all that accounts for the ground, that is, of All-Highest. The Being of beings is thus thought of in advance as the grounding ground. Therefore all metaphysics is at bottom, and from the ground up, what grounds, what gives account of the ground, what is called to account by the ground, and finally what calls the ground to account.⁶²

Accordingly, the departure from Being as the ground of beings and the springing into the non-ground becomes Heidegger’s new weapon in overcoming metaphysics. This doctrine of the non-ground is positively helpful to reactivate the “post-metaphysical” character of T’ien T’ai Buddhism.

On the other hand, the later Heidegger’s departure from the transcendental approach can well be supported by T’ien T’ai Buddhist doctrine of the non-dwelling ground. Furthermore, the affinity between the T’ien T’ai Buddhist thesis that ignorance and *Dharmata* belong to the ontological structure of sentient beings and Heidegger’s thesis that inauthenticity and authenticity constitute the very Being of Dasein helps us to see that this original insight in *Being and Time* must be preserved even after the turn. This shows us a way in re-appropriating the Dasein-analytic from the perspective of the later Heidegger. Seen from this perspective, one also can understand to what extent there is a distinction between the early and later Heidegger.

Historically, in the Sung Dynasty there was a split within T’ien T’ai Buddhism. The Internal Sect was represented by Chih Li. On the other hand, the External Sect was first represented by Ch’ing Chou and later by Ching Chau. As Mou pointed out,

The External Sect is external [to T'ien T'ai's original position], for it interprets T'ien T'ai Buddhism along the lines of Hua Yen Buddhism. It identifies "the momentary mind" as a pure mind..... Following the *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun* (*The Awakening of Faith*), Hua Yen Buddhism speaks of the True, Eternal Mind. Its approach is analytical.⁶³

Methodologically, the Hua Yen's approach is transcendental-analytical. The rise of the External Sect signifies a falsification of the former by the latter. A similar confusion is found in *Being and Time*. In the first part of the text, as a result of an ontological-hermeneutical application of Kierkegaard's existentialism, Heidegger is able to attribute both authenticity and inauthenticity to the Being of Dasein. This is parallel to the Internal Sect's understanding of the momentary mind which is equipped with both ignorance and *Dharmata* as its ontological possibilities. On the other hand, when Heidegger tries to work out the [theoretical] ontological meaning of the Being of Dasein in the second part, he turns to a transcendental-analytic approach. Although this is the result from a transformational synthesis of Kant's and Husserl's transcendentalism, it is not free from the commitment to the doctrine of a pure mind. To this extent, despite Heidegger's early departure from Husserl's transcendental ego, his position is close to the External Sect. Exactly here lies the cause for the failure of *Being and Time*. This is also the reason why Heidegger says that his early approach is still imprisoned in the metaphysical language. However, if one can recognize such an internal conflict in *Being and Time*, one can save its part on the existential-ontological unfolding of Dasein's Being. To be more precise, his result in the first part which is similar to the Internal Sect can well be saved even after the turn.

Endnotes:

¹ Cf.: Mou Tsung-san, *Fo-hsing yu po-ye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*. Revised edition (Taipei: Hsueh-sheng shu-ch'u, 1979), Vol. 2, p. 1041ff.

² With the recent discovery of the Sanskrit text of the *Vimalakirti-Nirdesa-Sutra*, we learn that this thesis originally runs as follows: *hy apratistha namulapratisthitah sarvadharmah (Vimalakirtinirdesa)*. Ed. Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University (Tokyo: Taisho University Press, 2004), p. 268.)

³ *Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun (The Awakening of Faith)*, *Daizokyo*, Vol. 32, p. 584.

⁴ Chih I, *Maha Chih-kuan (The Great Treatise on Meditation)*, *Daizokyo*, Vol. 46, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Mou Tsung-san, *Chih te chih-chueh yu chung-kuo che-hsueh (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy)* (Taipei: Hsiang-wu, 1971), p. 310.

⁷ Mou, however, maintained: "When T'ien T'ai speaks of 'mind,' ultimately it refers to the authentic mind. Accordingly, though it is said that the mind of a single instance equips itself with the three thousand worlds, in reality, it is the authentic mind, though covered by the defilement, which equips itself with the three thousand worlds." (*Chih te chih-chueh yu chung-kuo che-hsueh (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy)*, p. 302.) For us, such a position is rather closer to the External Sect (see below).

⁸ Martin Heidegger, "The Idea of Phenomenology, with a letter to Edmund Husserl (1927)," trans. Thomas J. Sheehan, *Listening*, Vol. 12 (1977), p. 120.

⁹ Walter Biemel, "Husserl's *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Article and Heidegger's Remark Thereon." *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals*, ed. and trans. Peter McCormick and F. Elliston, Notre Dame: 1977, p. 297. For Husserl, while the transcendental ego is not separated from the empirical ego, the empirical ego, belonging to the constituted dimension, cannot be regarded as an ontological possibility of the transcendental ego. Accordingly, the inseparable relationship between the transcendental ego and the empirical ego is not of ontological necessity. Moreover, Husserl insisted that the transcendental ego is not "interweaved" with the empirical ego.

¹⁰ "The Idea of Phenomenology, with a letter to Edmund Husserl (1927)," p. 119.

¹¹ *Chih te chih-chueh yu chung-kuo che-hsueh (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy)*, p. 215.

¹² Ch'an Jan, *Wei-mo-chieh ching lio-chou (A Brief Commentary on the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa-Sutra)*, *Daizokyo*, Vol. 38, p. 676.

¹³ Ch'an Jan, *Fa-hua wen-jiu chi (An Explication of the Saddharmapundarika Sutra)*, *Daizokyo*, Vol. 34, p. 292.

¹⁴ Cf.: *Chih te chih-chueh yu chung-kuo che-hsueh (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy)*, p. 302ff.

¹⁵ *Sunyata* cannot be confused with the non-existence of being.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*. Trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 32.

¹⁷ Cf.: *Fo-hsing yu po-ye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, Vol. 2, p. 837ff.

¹⁸ Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*. Trans. Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 357-358.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 359.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

²⁴ *Being and Time*, p. 330.

²⁵ One possible exception is Pöggeler. But Pöggeler did not put the concept of *Ab-grund* into a central position of the later Heidegger's thinking. Cf.: Otto Pöggeler, "Being as Appropriation," trans. R.H. Grim, reprinted in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. M. Murray (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 84-115.

²⁶ Cf.: *Fo-hsing yu po-je (Buddha Nature and Prajna)*, Vol. 2.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 220.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1999), p. 488.

³¹ Ch'an Jan, *Fa-hua hsuean-i shih-chien (A Commentary on The Deep Meaning of the Lotus Sutra)*, *Daizokyo*, Vol. 33, p. 919.

³² *Beitrgäe zur Philosophie*, p. 488.

³³ Chih Li, *Shee-pu-erh-men ji-yuah-chiao (A Synopsis of the Ten Non-dual Gates)*, *Daizokyo*. 32, p. 707.

³⁴ *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, p. 490.

³⁵ "Being as Appropriation," p. 127.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), pp. 162-163; p. 172; Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reason*. Trans. Terrence Malick (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 105; p. 113; p. 129.

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- ³⁸ Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsberiff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), p. 378.
- ³⁹ Cf.: *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, p. 512.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 381.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 379-380.
- ⁴² Ibid, p. 388.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ *Identity and Difference*, p. 104; p. 39; with modification.
- ⁴⁵ Ch'an Jan, *Wei-mo-chieh ching shu-chi (An Exegesis of the Vimalakirti Sutra)*, *Manzizokyo* 28, p. 829.
- ⁴⁶ *Shee-pu-erh-men ji-yuah-chiao (A Synopsis of the Ten Non-dual Gates)*, p. 707.
- ⁴⁷ Hubert Dreyfus, "Beyond Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault," *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. G. Shapiro and A. Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), p. 73.
- ⁴⁸ *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, p. 250.
- ⁴⁹ Ch'an Jan, *Fa-hua hsuean-i shih-chien*, p. 920.
- ⁵⁰ *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, p. 379.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid, pp. 379-380.
- ⁵³ Ibid, p. 387.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Cf.: *Fo-hsing yu po-ye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, Vol. 2, p. 679.
- ⁵⁶ Cf.: *Wegmarken*, p. 304.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, p. 251.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 250.
- ⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Translated and edited by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 61.
- ⁶¹ *Identity and Difference*, p. 39.
- ⁶² Ibid, p. 58.
- ⁶³ *Fo-hsing yu po-ye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, Vol. 2, p. 1135.