

The manifold senses of being off the beaten track

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This collection of essays aims to provide insight into Heidegger's thought by offering a smorgasbord of themes related to the chief ideas foreshadowing the later works. However, it does not purport an ultimate reading of the philosophical core running throughout Heidegger's writings but examines the multifarious topics which Heidegger's reflection engages in by duly scrutinizing enduring features and fleeting suggestions of this widespread thought. The essays of the first section ("Language, *Logos*, and Rhythm"), focused on language as saying of Being, acknowledge that it is unlikely to devise a metaphorical stage, hinged upon symbolizing tropes, of the later Heideggerian thinking: firstly, the metaphor per se, if we recall its meaning, namely "transfer", involves thinking *tout court* and is distinctive of language itself; secondly, the poetic language – as *poiesis* – is the place wherein language speaks itself; thirdly, the topological approach to language does not bring something forth or represent via image but bears upon self-referentiality as saying of Being, in conformity with Heidegger's remark on the verb *légein* as "saying" and "gathering". According to these tenets, which concern the book in its entirety, self-referentiality implies a sense of literality "that demands our attentiveness to language itself" (30) and to

the relationship between the word and the thing whereby the first can afford the figurative way of saying the placing of being by taking the measure of “that dimension into which human being is gathered and in which it belongs (in and to which it is ‘appropriated’).” (21)

By means of the speech act theory, Jeff Malpas ponders upon the self-referentiality of language, whereby the foundation of any sign in the poetic work can be attained through the appropriation of its illocutionary force, according to which the poet’s poem is the reader’s appropriation of the poet’s poem, i.e. the deputized discourse of the poet’s work. Hence, the dialogue (*Zwiesprache*) with the poet’s poem comes to the fore through the hermeneutical reciprocity of the consideration (*Erörterung*) of the site of the poem and the elucidation (*Erläuterung*) of its word texture. Taking as example Heidegger’s reading of Trakl’s poetic work, Markus Wild states that the core of the poem, as “‘gathering power’ of the poetry” (51), is the apartness of the poet, who is lost to Earth, and of the reader’s appropriation of the word pattern; the two sides of the dialogue thus experience their univocality by recognizing one another. The same ground applies to the relationship, scrutinized by Diego D’Angelo, between the poet and the gods exemplified by Hölderlin’s work, whose poem signifies the greeting of the heavenly to earthly beings.

The poet shapes language by virtue of the hints of the gods sent through the history of Being (*Ge-schick*) and grasps through remembrance (*Andenken*) the apartness of the poetic activity from the inceptive greeting which establishes history as the differentiating measure of things, even though poetry itself is the place of greeting. As a result, the ontological dynamic between the greeter and the greeted occurs as the opportunity for one to appear through the presence of the other, since the greeting of the poet makes sure that the greeted is contemplated by poetry, thereby instituting the ontological bond of past and future. The poet is greeted by the world insofar as they share a common past related to future fulfilment: the holy is the essence of nature and lets things be through the beginning differentiation, which is the sending of the holy in accordance with the measure specified by the greeting unfolding the differentiation of things over past and

future in their relationship to the ideal meaning which the presencing past is endowed with. Wherefore, history, as the opening up within the holy, is the place wherein language evinces the rhythm shaping experience as the place of language, thus setting up a factual ideal, an ontical way of thinking existence, freed from the subjectivism of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* and envisaging the human as *Da-sein* living in the speaking of language. This standpoint, remarked by Tristan Moyle, leads up to a sort of anti-humanist naturalism that upholds the aesthetic appropriation of the event (*Er-eignis*), wherein the being of *Da-sein* is enhanced by the aesthetic faith, that is the outcome of the naturalization of metaphysics through the concern with ordinary existence provided by the cognitive powers relying on language. Owing to “aesthetic-practical grounds” (97), this framework rounds out the belief in the existence of the gods or God. To reflect on Being is to retrieve the *Ereignis* experience occurring through the greeting of the holy, namely the aesthetic ground of the appropriation of the event. In this regard, the human being is the preserver and steward of the truth of Being without being compelled to endorse a humanist outlook.

The second section (“Heidegger’s *Physis*”) copes with *physis* and its proper meaning. It stands for the linkage between the analytic of *Dasein* and the subsequent metontology, which is the reverse ontology relying on the sense of being immanent to beings. Therefore, “φύσις means [...] a framing of essence or a setting to that essence spanning backwards into the past and forward into the future.” (115) *Physis* is the being-ness (*ousia*) of beings that manifests itself in the being actual of things, as the moving principle that determines beings in generative associations and is integrated into their substance. From Greek philosophy onwards, the not-present-at-hand self-concealing gathering background is a keynote core for thinking and represent the linchpin of the temporalization of *Dasein* – the intertwining between projection and withdrawal – which Heidegger ponders since *Being and Time* until the mid-thirties. This matter, as Thomas Buchheim suggests, introduces the subsequent reflection on the overcome of metaphysics and the withdrawing unconcealment of

Being, which turns out to be the hallmark of the later writings, even though Heidegger's use of the word *physis* drops off steadily.

Further, the unconcealed concealment of *physis* is appropriately attributed by Guang Yang to the strife between movement and rest, world and earth, in the self-subsistence of the work of art, envisaged as the resting potentiality and gathering force which is the "self-secluding of earth refraining from any attempt to disclose it" (133), and, at the same time, as the "movedness" of the opening world envisaged as a unity of oppositive powers. Moreover, Nikola Mircovič also, in the third section ("Phenomenology, the Thing, and the Fourfold"), unriddles Heidegger's conception of art and maintains that the truth disclosed by the artwork exposes beauty as shining-forth in the earthly element of the concretion by expressing the embedded cultural and social values via sensible qualities: it stands apart in the concealment of matter and arises from the sensible concretion, thus endowing human being with an ethical stance on what has been concealed, that is the contextual meaning entrenched in the work of art. As beauty may provide the reason for *physis* to be stable presence, truth and clearing tally.

Since *physis* as conflictual unity and artwork as strife share a common framework, *physis* may represent the linchpin around which the end of metaphysics revolves, from which the new inception stems. It eschews the equation of philosophy with scientific procedures and interprets *physis* as nous, in the Aristotelian sense of openness to the proximity of things, i.e. wakefulness, and its relatedness with experience as the hendiadys of what has not yet been unfolded, the *Ur-sache* in the midst of the auroral beginning of philosophy. As Claudia Baracchi says, "the end of philosophy points to the fragile and yet undeniable advancing of beings, the disarming and yet ineliminable acknowledgement *that they are*" (154), thereby instituting the likeness of the aesthetic faith and the Greek *pistis*, which characterizes end as the place of the unconcealment of the origin by means of the phenomenological inspection of phenomenality (clearing), wherein the receptivity to the sensible turns u As we have seen, *physis* manifests itself as emergence and withdrawing, as "presencing" (*Anwesung*), as

Damir Barbariĉ terms it, tied to self-closure, as “movedness” within the steadiness of emergence, which outlines the limits of manifestation and outshines, like beauty, in the threshold of wonder. As a result, as long as *physis*, in conformity to its actuality, turns itself into the stability of *ousia* as *Anwesenheit*, beauty allows reframing the end of philosophy as the inception of the other beginning.

The third section (“Phenomenology, the Thing, and the Fourfold”) considers various issues dealing with the relationship between language and phenomenology, Being and its manifestness, Being and the subject. The clearing, as the ground of seeing, yields the *tautóphasis* of naming, as saying of the appearing, and revealing the presencing through phenomenality, whereas the opening clearing sets up the Same of thinking and being, thus echoing, as Günter Figal stresses, the path of Parmenides, namely unconcealment as disclosure. The clearing qualifies as *phenomenóphasis*, the saying of appearing. Furthermore, the reading of *tautóphasis* as the saying of presencing suggests that the truth as disclosure results in singularity, in which what has been (*das Ge-wesene*) reveals itself in the onefold (in-stant) of the meaningful presence, thus reverberating its inceptive kernel. The meaningfulness is retained along with the functional context of the fourfold, which Andrew J. Mitchell traces back to the Aristotelian four kinds of causes, which are ways of “allowing (*lassen*) something to come to (*an*) appearance and to presence there (*an-wesen*)” (229). As a result, Jussi Backmann demonstrates that the presencing occurs in the contextual singularity of beings within the spatiotemporal situatedness of *Da-sein* as responsiveness to Being. Besides, the intertwinement of singularity and situatedness prods Heidegger to rethink the conception of the thing, which spans over the reflection on relationality and the metaphysics of presence.

The critique of *Being and Time* fulfils its aim by revealing that the philosophical history of the thing, which ends in its objectification and enclosedness in modern philosophy, comes up again in the existential analytic of *Dasein*, which cannot help but endorsing the present-at-hand as a tool for an end and simple presence. The fourfold paves the way to the

other inception by retrieving the ancient conception of the thing as the relational core related to the surroundings and the subject without, though, discarding the modern trend, which nonetheless allows accounting for the singularity of things. The fourfold may stand for the place wherein the metaphysical nature of the thing and the relational gathering of things approaching human being merge, thereby establishing the relationship to the manifestness of things as the world in which human beings live (“the between”). This expression primarily refers to the fundamental ambiguity of the thing, which Mitchell compares remarkably with Husserl’s phenomenological account; the thing is, at the same time, graspable in compliance with the definite possibilities of perception depending on posited actualities and does not fully manifest itself at once but in infinite progression, thus shaping the world inasmuch as the perception entails both the thing and its surroundings. The guidelines of this conception are retrievable in the thinking of the fourfold, which, on the one hand, accounts for the singularity of the thing and, on the other hand, retrieves the meaningful context of its occurrence. It is noteworthy that the thing and the subject are not entangled with each other by a back-and-forth movement but, as the inquiry into the abysmal being of the ground bears out, unfold in the intertwinement of self-concealment opening and responsiveness to being as such.

The last constellation (“Ground, Non-ground, and Abyss”) tackles the problem of the ground, that is the reason for a thing to appear, and its relation to the abyss. As has just been remarked, the dimension of the between encompasses the world, which human beings cannot conceive per se, as the word *Erklüftung* testifies the entanglement of projection and grounding: the historical appropriation of the event develops in the onefold, which discloses an individualized meaningful time-space (projection) while going through its self-enclosing (grounding). As Tobias Keiling points out, Heidegger reckons that the appropriation of the event (the being of *Da-sein*) takes place in the sundering (*Erklüftung*), like a rift inside a stone (being as fissure, *Zerklüftung*), of the “turning midst” (291) occurring within the concealed ground. Being consequently reveals itself as “the conditioned necessary condition of the

possibility of beings, or, in paradox terms, the ‘first necessity’ and also the ‘highest possibility’” (290). Although Heidegger relinquishes the use of *Erklüftung* and considers the prior openness of *Da-sein* for the ground to abide, Being nevertheless harbours the intertwinement of possibility and necessity, as the possibility of beings is grounded by the unfolding of Being within the openness of the *Urgrund* (in topological terms, the void, i.e. the indeterminate openness, delimits the place as it is shaped through it; as self-disclosing presencing, it results in its outline (*Umriß*), thereby engraining beings with a specific figure (*Gestalt*).

In the light of the Leibnizian principle of sufficient ground, examined by Hans Ruin according to the different readings that Heidegger gives to its purport, Being, like *physis*, is groundless and arises per se as *Ab-grund* since a peculiar reading of the same principle says: “*nothing* is without reason/ground” (252). If, for Heidegger, the Leibnizian thought ranges from being committed to a metaphysical interpretation of truth as the identity of existence and thought in God, to which Heidegger replies by means of the temporalization of *Dasein* improved by the existential analytic, to being the cradle of both rationalistic and meditative thinking, it is yet striking that it does not only parallel the development of the Heideggerian thinking of the event but also spells out the shift from the ecstatic transcendental temporalization of being to the event as opening up and marks the difference between human transcendence as freedom and clearing as the domain for the appearing of beings. Furthermore, the principle of ground pushes the scope of rationality beyond its limits, thereby bringing forth an emancipating attitude towards reason within its activity, about which Ruin properly mentions *Gelassenheit* (257). As a result, whereas the transcendence of *Dasein* entails projecting upon the indeterminate possibility, thereby envisaging freedom as “projecting continuously reaffirming itself” (286), the possibility of the human being grounded by *Da-sein*, that is the space of possibility granted by the opening up of the event, up-ends the metaphysical subjectification because the appropriation of the event “must signal and preserve the

concealing inherent in the unconcealing that constitutes the truth of being.” (271)

Hence, *Da-sein* (the open space of the “there”) qualifies as the place wherein human beings can resist the oblivion of the ground – Heidegger’s understanding of the Schellingian non-ground, as Sylvaine Gourdain argues – while being aware of its non-transparency, that is the irreducible remainder, the withdrawing movement of being which associates Heidegger’s and Schelling’s grounding insofar as it represents the negative core of the ground and the presence of emergence in the appearing, which may let the presencing and the disclosure unseen. The thinking of the event complies with the strife between earth and world since the clearing blends with withdrawal; furthermore, the event lets things be because phenomenality originates in an undefined ground, thus developing the second strife, namely the concealed unconcealment which makes up phenomenality. *Da-sein* is grounded by what exceeds it, the primordial ground of *Seyn* (as Heidegger terms this struggle inspired by Schelling’s *Seynsfuge*) welcomed in its dithering through the fathoming, that is the letting-be of the grounding as the juncture of *Seyn*. The fathoming is entailed by the “steadfastness” (*Inständigkeit*) of the human being within the grounding of the “there”, thus allowing the self-concealing primordial ground of the event. Thereupon, the conjuncture of beyng respectively affords “the grounding (*Gründung*) of the human being as *Da-sein*, the fathoming (*Ergründung*) of the truth of beyng, and the letting-be of the ground(ing) (*Grund*) that is the primordial ground (*Ur-grund*) of the event (*Ereignis*).” (273)

Finally, the twofoldness, i.e. Janus facet, of the appropriation of the event comes up as the feature encompassing all the essays: the intimacy of the greeter and the greeted; the intimacy of the past and ‘what has been’ (*das Gewesene*), signified by the becoming-ideal of what was real in the past; the intimacy of world and earth; the relationship between the human being (*Da-sein*; the singularization of *Seyn* harks back to the situatedness of the onefold) and *Seyn* (singularity as the taking place within an individualized meaningful time-space); the intimacy of the saying of the presencing and the

topological thought; the intimacy of the holy and *physis*, the intimacy of movement and rest in *physis* and Being. Moreover, the remark on the situatedness, which brings forth the aforementioned aesthetic faith, may be traced back to ephemeral experiences and place-establishing things, the concern of which raises as from 1945, as some essays show up (cf. e.g., p 158, 219-221, 293-294). It is easy to fathom this regard if we recollect what the leitmotiv of the essays as a whole is, that is the reappraisal of the later stage of Heideggerian philosophy by focusing on discarded features or shedding light on unexpected interpretative keys. These include the inspection of the several ways of conceiving of the event, the ensuing scrutiny of the different keywords that managed to describe it, and the spread heed of aesthetic issues. They can be yet complemented by *Gelassenheit*, which may denote the pathway whereby the new inception of philosophy arises through wonder, the fundamental attunement to Being, thereby restating the withdrawing and unfolding movement of Being.

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