

Opened Grounds: Studies on Foundation and Truth in Phenomenology

Author: Tobias Keiling

Persistent link: <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/bc-ir:104078>

This work is posted on [eScholarship@BC](#),
Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2013

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.

Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Philosophy

OPENED GROUNDS.

STUDIES ON FOUNDATION AND TRUTH IN PHENOMENOLOGY

a dissertation

by

Tobias Keiling

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013

© copyright by TOBIAS KEILING

2013

Opened Grounds. Studies on foundation and truth in Phenomenology

a dissertation by Tobias Keiling

Doctoral Supervisor: Prof. John Sallis

Abstract: This dissertation gathers four studies on related topics in the phenomenological tradition and Martin Heidegger's philosophy in particular. Methodologically, it addresses the question as to how a reading of a philosophical text can offer access to the phenomena relevant for philosophy. Beginning with a reading of one his latest lectures on the end of philosophy and the the potential of phenomenology (*The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*), the first chapter questions Heidegger's dismissal of the notion of ground in this lecture, arguing that an innovative reading of a passage from *Contributions to Philosophy* can address a problem left unresolved in the lecture. Instead of reducing it to its alleged function in metaphysics, I propose to explore the semantic and descriptive potential of 'ground' and related notions outside of the ontological and metaphysical discourse.

The second chapter inquires about the particular position of *On the Origin of the Work of Art* in the context of Heidegger's theory of truth. In contrast to an interpretation highlighting the function of art in the so-called history of Being, the artwork essay is shown to display a specific form of transcendental argument aiming to disclose the 'clearing' as the condition of possibility of phenomena. Particular attention is paid to Heidegger's discussion of untruth as concealment because the distinction between a denial (*Versagen*) and a restraint (*Verstellen*) of truth elaborates an important difference in discussing phenomena of negativity.

The third chapter explores the notion of 'earth.' The attempt is made to distinguish four phenomenal traits specific to earth by not only relying on Heidegger's discussion and the examples he gives in *On the Origin of the Work of Art* but by also connecting these to discourses on earth both in one of Husserl's later manuscripts (*Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature*) and the philosophy of nature in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The discussion is oriented by an interpretation of two sculptures by Andy Goldsworthy; I reflect both on their methodological role for describing phenomena associated with earth and on the status of Heidegger's own examples. The chapter aims in particular to establish an explanatory priority of phenomena associated with earth over the lived body, showing that experiences featuring the phenomenal trait of earth are irreducible to eminently sensible experiences as experiences for my bodily being.

The fourth chapter takes its departure from the German word *Erklüftung* that Heidegger mentions in *Contributions of Philosophy*. In discussing its particular position in Heidegger's discourse on both projection (*Entwurf*) and ground (*Grund*) in *Being and Time*, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *The Origin of the Work of Art* and *Art and Space*, I show why *Erklüftung*, although it can be established as the description of a specific phenomenon by referring to other occurrences of the word (such as in Goethe's writings on geology), I maintain that it is not apt for the purpose to which Heidegger submits the word. The failure of *Erklüftung* thus makes an important contribution to the understanding of Heidegger's discourse on ground.

The conclusion offers a reading of the second half of Heidegger's last lecture course *The Principle of Reason* (*Der Satz vom Grund*) in order to situate the four studies vis-à-vis Heidegger's late comprehensive treatment of ground. His attempt to determine the meaning of ground and its equivalents in Latin *ratio* and Greek *λόγος* is distinguished from the regress to the beginning of the history of Being that the lecture develops. In contrast to this ontological way to determine ground, I defend the view that the semantic explorations and descriptions Heidegger gives offer more adequate access to the phenomena of ground.

x

Overhang of grass and seedling birch
On the quarry face. Rock-hob where you watched
All that cargoed brightness travelling

Above and beyond and sumptously across
The water in its clear deep dangerous holes
On the quarry floor. Ultimate

Fathomableness, ultimate
Stony up-againstness: could you reconcile
What was diaphanous there with what was massive?

Were you equal to or were you opposite
To build-ups so promiscuous and weightless?
Shield your eyes, look up and face the music.

from Seamus Heaney, *Lightenings*

Wir mögen es wissen oder nicht, wir mögen auf das Gewußte besonders achten oder nicht, überall ist unser Aufenthalt in der Welt, ist unser Gang über die Erde unterwegs zu Gründen und zum Grund. Was uns begegnet, wird ergründet, oft nur recht vordergründig, bisweilen wagen wir uns auch an das Hintergründige und selten genug bis an den Rand der Abgründe des Denkens.

from Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. <i>Grundfrage</i>	
Thinking ground	10
3. <i>Das Werk und die Wahrheit</i>	
Ground and clearing in <i>On the Origin of the Work of Art</i>	28
4. <i>Heimat des Geistes</i>	
Heidegger, Husserl and Hegel on ‘earth’	70
5. <i>Erklüftung</i>	
Heidegger’s thinking of projection	105
6. Conclusion	143

Plates

1. Andy Goldsworthy, *Raining / yellow leaves /stripped away from central vein / lying flat / following contours of rock*, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 3 October 1999 (p. 79).
2. Andy Goldsworthy, *Leaves laid on a river boulder / held with water / green to yellow / dark to light*, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 9 October 1999 (p 97).
3. *Ruin marble*, Florentine workshop, polished and framed in the first quarter of the 17th century (p. 111).
4. Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Contributions to Philosophy)*, section 190, illustrative sketch (p. 129).
5. Eduardo Chillida, *Die Kunst und der Raum*, no. 2, 1969. Lithocollage, (p. 140).

Abbreviations

- GA 2 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1977.
- GA 5 Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (1935-1946), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 5, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1977.
- GA 6.2 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche II* (1939-1946), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6.2, ed. Brigitte Schillbach, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1997.
- GA 7 Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1936-1953), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2000.
- GA 9 Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (1919-1961), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1976.
- GA 11 Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (1955-1957), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 11, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2006.
- GA 10 Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol 10, ed. Petra Jaeger, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1997.
- GA 12 Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1950-1959), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 12, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1985.
- GA 14 Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (1962-1964), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 14, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2007.
- GA 24 Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1927), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 24, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1975.

- GA 34 Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet* (1931-1932), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 34, ed. Hermann Mörchen, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1988.
- GA 36/37 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit* (1933-1934), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 36/37, ed. Hartmut Tietjen, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2001.
- GA 41 Martin Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen* (1935-1936), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 41, ed. Petra Jaeger, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1984.
- GA 54 Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* (1942-1943), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 54, ed. Manfred S. Frings, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1982.
- GA 65 Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1936-1938), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1989.
- GA 70 Martin Heidegger, *Über den Anfang* (1941), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 70, ed. Paola-Ludovika Coriando, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2005.
- GA 71 Martin Heidegger, *Das Ereignis* (1941-1942), *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 71, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2009.

Acknowledgments

Writing this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and institutions. I owe thanks to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Philosophy Department of Boston College for allowing me to take part in the school's program and for a most generous support of my studies. Thanks also to *Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes* for additional financial support during my stay in Boston. Dean Candace Hetzner, Prof. Jeffrey Bloechl and Fr. Arthur Madigan, together with the Philosophy Department's staff, Rosemarie DeLeo and Nancy Fedrow, were of invaluable help in all organizational matters.

Many of the ideas in this dissertation were sparked in a reading group on Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*, initiated by Nikola Mirković. I wish to thank all who participated, Will Britt, Peter Hanly and Timo Helenius in particular, for their challenging interpretations and rewarding discussions. On several occasions, I had the opportunity to present and discuss parts of the research gathered here and wish to thank all those who commented on and challenged my ideas. Henrike Gätjens and Jerome Veith have been a great help in editing the final manuscript. I am also very much indebted to Vittorio E. Klostermann for allowing me to translate and reuse material for the chapter on truth in the present study.

Prof. Dr. Günter Figal of Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany, has been supportive since the very beginning of my studies in philosophy, for which I am thankful. Since attending Prof. John Sallis' course at the *Collegium Phaenomenologicum* in 2007, I have learned innumerable things from his academic teaching and published research. It was his thinking that allowed me to see the middle ground, as it were, between my fascination with deconstruction and the more traditional phenomenological discourse of Husserl and Heidegger. It should be manifest to the reader how his thought has influenced this work.

1. Introduction

Three moments in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger unite the four studies gathered here. Because they will surface again in all of the texts, it will be a helpful introduction to examine these moments more closely.

The first moment is the observation of a phenomenon that may appear trivial: while there are objects that, if broken apart, break into pieces that can again form a whole, some objects remain complete even if destroyed. Contrast a broken jug with a stone smashed into pieces: while the jug may be repaired, and it is essential for its being a jug that it is of a certain form and shape, the pieces of the stone are simply stone again. The difference between stone and *a* stone is not essential to what makes (a) stone stone, its numerable identity is not relevant to delimit what stone is.¹ Heidegger uses the example of a rock and a piece of chalk to illustrate that some objects display this peculiar repetitive or iterative

¹ On the aesthetics of stone derived from this phenomenon, see John Sallis, *Stone*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: IUP 1994.

moment, making each one of them singular but also of the same elemental phenomenality. In this, so Heidegger believes, objects show that they are *things* in the eminent sense, objects that have no inner side but are always outer. (see GA 41, 18-19) In a word typical for Heidegger's discourse, this phenomenon is how things show that they are of the *earth*. (see GA 5, 33) Although something similar can be said of the adumbration and horizontal appearance Husserl takes to be typical for real objects,² Heidegger generalizes the idea: for Heidegger, such phenomena make clear that the appearance of things in general possesses both the things' accessibility and a peculiar form of withdrawal, or, in his terms, *clearing* and *concealment*. (see GA 5, 35) The rock smashed into pieces becomes the paradigm of phenomenal presence and absence, and as such, it establishes the phenomenological relevance of elemental or iterative appearances.

The second moment is a question of priority raised by the phenomena of presence-absence. If both presence and a moment of withdrawal or negativity intrinsically belongs to all appearing, is there a priority of one of the two moments? Is there a priority, in Heidegger's terms, of either clearing or concealment? In Derridean terms: what is Heidegger's alternative to phenomenology as an (alleged) metaphysics of presence?³—Two answers Heidegger gives to this question can be distinguished.

² See for example: Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch*, Husserliana vol. III/1, ed. Karl Schuhmann, The Hague: Nijhoff 1976, 85 and 91.

³ On the topic of a metaphysics of presence, see Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène: introduction au problème de signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl*, Paris: PUF 1967, esp. chapter VII. As a recent

Heidegger gives the first answer in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in his discussion of the so-called “strife” (GA 5, 35) of clearing and concealing or of truth and *untruth*. As manifested by works of art in particular, the appearance of a thing must not be reduced to either its function within the world nor its elemental character, its belonging to the earth. Instead of establishing a priority of one of the two, Heidegger takes both to be of equal rank. This answer emphasizes the peculiar ambivalent, if not paradoxical nature of the appearance of things, if presence and absence are indeed both original traits of phenomenality. In particular, it attends to the absent-present appearance of works of art and of those “mere things” (GA 5, 7) that have become paradigmatic for Heidegger’s phenomenology.

In the second answer, which Heidegger gives in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, he decides for a priority of the clearing. The clearing, as the definition of phenomenality as such and the condition of phenomena,⁴ is the condition even of the manifestness of the absent: “even the absent [*das Abwesende*] cannot be as such if not by being present [*als anwesend*] in the free open [*das Freie*] of the clearing.” (GA 14, 82) By giving this answer, Heidegger interprets the phenomenon of the smashed rock or the crumbled piece of chalk in view of what makes them accessible to us, and indeed, without

restatement of the argument that the primacy of presence is a phenomenological finding, see Andrea Staiti, “The primacy of the present: Metaphysical Ballast or Phenomenological Finding?,” *Research in Phenomenology* 40 (2010), here 34-54.

⁴ See Günter Figal, “Heidegger und die Phänomenologie,” in: *Zu Heidegger. Antworten und Fragen*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2009, 43-54.

a phenomenal space prior to them, allowing both to show themselves at all, there would be neither presence nor absence of these phenomena.

Over the course of his writings, there are other answers to the above question, although none as explicit as the two above. There are, in particular, attempts to think a priority of the concealed, a priority of the absent, attempts to argue for the claim that everything that appears does so only because it is fundamentally wrested from an originary withdrawal and absence. These attempts never developed into cohesive arguments and texts so comprehensive that Heidegger decided to publish them, although most prominent among his attempts to think a primacy of absence are those made in *Contributions to Philosophy* and surrounding texts on the history of Being (GA 70 and GA 71 in particular) related to the figure of an eminent *abandonment of Being* (*Seinsverlassenheit*). Yet the particular weakness of this figure and the difficulty of establishing a priority of withdrawal, of absence over presence is that it is likely to remain speculative, that the claims it make will have to be attested to and be confirmed by phenomena that are apparent to philosophy, that do become manifest and can in some way or the other and in some degree become the subject of philosophical description. The claim to a primacy of absence seems at odds with the phenomenological ethos of philosophy.

The third moment is a concern with how to relate to phenomena of presence and absence such as the ones described above, a concern with the proper way of speaking

about them, with what language and which registers a discourse on these phenomena can draw from. Though Heidegger indeed develops a particular interest in phenomena that display a manifest absence, the means of understanding and addressing these are very different. The ontological discourse about both the abandonment and the *sending of Being* (*Seinsgeschick*) is one of the means of establishing the relevance of these phenomena.⁵ Also, the orientation of philosophy towards art and poetry in particular, dominant in the artwork essay, can be understood as the attempt to make philosophy sensible to these phenomena. The same can be said of the role Heidegger attributes to language as both disclosure and displacement.⁶ Also in Heidegger's consideration of the ontological import of time, presence is repeatedly discussed. (see GA 24, 429-451; GA 14, 3-30)

The most important way, however, in which Heidegger attempts to account for negativity is located in his discourse on truth. Already in *Being and Time*, the confrontation with the idea of truth as correspondence leads Heidegger to the discovery of *disclosedness* of Dasein as condition of truth as correspondence. In this context, the negativity of phenomena is accounted for by the claim that Dasein is "originarily in both truth and untruth," (GA 2, 295) preparing the later discourse on ἀλήθεια as unconcealment. Yet while in *Contributions* Heidegger holds that the "essence of truth is

⁵ See Werner Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1971.

⁶ The phrase is borrowed from Gert-Jan van der Heiden, *The truth (and untruth) of language. Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida on disclosure and displacement*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2010. See part one in particular.

un-truth,” (GA 65, 356)⁷ with *The End of Philosophy*, presence-absence, truth-untruth or unconcealment will be eventually reconfigured and “ἀλήθεια, unconcealment” determined as “the clearing of presence.” (GA 14, 86) Even though it begins with the equiprimordiality of truth and untruth or clearing and concealment, it is the discourse on truth as the medium of presence and absence that will lead Heidegger to the primacy of the clearing by asking what it is that makes their so closely interlinked appearance possible.

Yet what happens, then, with the idea of an originary strife of presence and absence, or with the even more radical idea that everything that appears does so only in contrast to an originary absence? Is it proven wrong by the primacy attributed to the clearing over concealment and even over ἀλήθεια as unconcealment? It may well be that the question “how there can be presence at all,” is only to be answered by turning to how “clearing appears [*Lichtung waltet*].” (GA 14, 87). But does the primacy attributed to the clearing do justice to the phenomena of presence-absence, can it describe what is peculiar about the rock smashed into pieces or the piece of chalk crumbled smaller and smaller? What about those phenomena in which absence, negativity or withdrawal appear as something originary? What are those phenomena if not simply illusions?

In the following, these three moments will be interrelated in how Heidegger discusses phenomena that are of the same present-absent nature. These phenomena will be

⁷ See John Sallis, “Interrupting Truth,” in: *Double Truth*, New York: SUNY Press 1995, 71-83.

gathered under the connection of ground and truth as the theory of apperance relating to all three moments. Although the discussion of these phenomena will not be framed in an ontological (attempting to determine the meaning of Being in view of these phenomena) or metaphysical setting (attempting to determine the ἀρχαί of these phenomena), the attempt will be not only to describe how these phenomena shape our practices, our practices of justification in particular, but more radically to determine these phenomena in their essence.⁸

Beginning with a reading of one his latest lectures on the end of philosophy and the potential of phenomenology, the first chapter (2.) questions Heidegger's dismissal of the notion of ground in this lecture, arguing that an innovative reading of a passage from *Contributions* can address a problem left unresolved in the lecture. Although the question of ground is intricately linked to the question of Being, the attempt is made to explore how Heidegger distances ground from the ontological discourse. Rather than reducing it to its alleged function in metaphysics, I propose to begin to explore the semantics and descriptive potential of 'ground' and related notions outside the ontological and metaphysical discourse. *Ground* is one of the terms that gathers the three interrelated

⁸ This phenomenological dimension is missed in the recent work by Lee Braver, impressive in its comprehensive account of both Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Although it is correct that the discussion of presence-absence phenomena will lead to the insight of "Original Finitude" (so the title of the concluding chapter of his book), the present study is interested not in anthropology but in phenomenology. That there is an original finitude to being human is precisely the result of *On the Essence of Ground* (see GA 9, 175), yet it would seem implausible to reduce Heidegger's complex discourse to this claim. See Lee Braver, *Groundless Grounds. A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger*, Cambridge: MIT Press 2012. Braver concludes his book with the remark: "Ultimately, the later Heidegger and Wittgenstein are alike trying to let us live and think as humans, at last." (239)

moments discussed above: the image of ground in philosophy, providing foundation while withdrawing from sight, denying access, is an eminent phenomenon of both presence and absence very close to the two examples discussed above; the notion of ground eminently contributes to the question what the metaphysical implications of such phenomena are; the discourse on ground, so Heidegger holds, is intrinsically related to the question of Being and its history.

The second chapter (3.) asks for the particular position of *On the Origin of the Work of Art* in the context of Heidegger's theory of truth. In my interpretation, the artwork essay displays a specific form of transcendental argument aiming to disclose the clearing as the condition of possibility of phenomena while Heidegger's discussion of untruth as concealment elaborates an important clarification in discussing phenomena of negativity through the distinction of a denial (*Versagen*) of truth (or presence) from a restraint (*Verstellen*) of truth. The discourse on truth is not only to eventually establish the primacy of the clearing but it also holds a most challenging insight into the constitution of absence.

Another notion closely linked to the phenomena of presence-absence and ground but given another name by Heidegger is explored in the third chapter (4.). Focussing not on ground but on the notion of *earth*, the attempt is made to distinguish five phenomenal traits specific of earth, relying not only on Heidegger's discussion and the examples he gives in *On the Origin of the Work of Art* but also aiming to connect these to discourses

on earth both in one of Husserl's later manuscripts (*Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature*) and the philosophy of nature in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The discussion is oriented by an interpretation of two works of art, sculptures by Andy Goldsworthy, which are eminent examples of the presence-absence-structure initiating Heidegger's questioning into the matter.

The fourth chapter (5.) is devoted to one of the most daring and strange attempts made by Heidegger to think the implications of phenomena of presence-absence, taking the word *Erklüftung* (translatable as 'sundering') as hermeneutical access to Heidegger's discussion of both projection (*Entwurf*) and ground in *Being and Time*, *Contributions*, the artwork essay and *Art and Space*. Although it can be established as description of the presence-absence phenomena, *Erklüftung* is incompatible with the idea of projection and thus not apt for the purpose to which Heidegger submits the word. In order to find yet another example of the peculiar jointure of presence and absence, the use of the word in Goethe's writings on geology is taken into account.

2. *Grundfrage* Thinking ground

The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking may be considered Heidegger's philosophical bequest. The lecture claims that philosophy has come to an end and calls for a new way of thinking in contrast to philosophy, a way of thinking Heidegger simply calls *thinking* (*Denken*) in an eminent sense. The whole of the lecture, the whole of Heidegger's philosophical bequest turns around this distinction: philosophy as it has come to an end; philosophy as thinking, as it is to begin. Heidegger opens his lecture by determining philosophy as it has come to an end as metaphysics. The central idea determining metaphysical thinking as such is that the meaning of Being is established by explaining it in relation to ground:

Philosophy is Metaphysics. Metaphysics thinks beings as a whole—the world, humans, God—in view of Being, in view of the unity [*Zusammengehörigkeit*] of beings in Being. Metaphysics thinks beings as beings by reasoning and grounding representation [*in der Weise des begründenden Vorstellens*]. The Being of beings has

shown itself since the beginning of philosophy as the ground (ἀρχή, αἴτιον, principle [*Prinzip*]). The ground is that from which all beings as beings are what they are in their becoming, their decay and stay, in being knowable, treatable, workable. It is as the ground of beings that Being brings beings into their respective presence. The ground becomes the empirical science of man and of everything that can become an object of the technical way man lives in the world, working in it to transform it in the manifold ways of making and producing. All this happens on the ground of and according to the scientific discovery of the different regions of beings. (GA 14, 69-70)⁹

Throughout the history of philosophy then, philosophy as metaphysics was concerned with a philosophy of ground, with what as their ground determined beings as beings. According to this claim, in metaphysics, notions of ground are the relevant explanations of Beings, and the discourse on ground is congruent with the discourse on Being. But with these words, does Heidegger let go of any thinking of ground? Would it be just outdated to think about the notion of ground? Would it be just to miss what Heidegger takes to be the most relevant insight of his entire philosophical life to still think about ground?—Answers to these questions depend on whether one believes it possible that there be a *thinking* of ground in the eminent sense, if there can be a philosophy of ground that is no longer metaphysical.

⁹ If not otherwise indicated, quotations from Heidegger are from the *Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 1975- [GA]). All translations are my own, although I have consulted English translations if they were available. In translating Heidegger, the classical translations by David F. Krell (*Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition, New York: Harper Collins 1993), by Joan Stambaugh (*Being and Time. A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, New York: SUNY Press 1996) as well as the recent work of Jerome Veith (*The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, Bloomington and Indianapolis: IUP 2009), Bret W. Davis (*Country Path Conversations*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: IUP 2010), Andrew J. Mitchell (*Bremen and Freiburg Lectures. Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: IUP 2012), Daniela Vallega-Neu and Richard Rojcewicz (*Contributions to Philosophy. Of the Event*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: IUP 2013) have been both extremely helpful and inspiring.

For Heidegger, the alternative to an ontological thinking of ground in metaphysics is a thinking that begins by asking what is the matter of thinking, a philosophical thinking that does not take for granted that Being as ground is the matter of thinking. The “task” of such thinking, as Heidegger says in the closing words of his lecture, would then be “to relinquish former thinking for the question of the determination of the matter of thinking.” (GA 14, 90). Yet although Heidegger’s lecture culminates in such a formal definition of thinking, a determination achieved not through determining the object of thinking but through defining its task, referring thinking back to asking what it should begin with, there is a way to determine what the particular matter of thinking is, a way that Heidegger follows throughout the course of his lecture: in order to determine what may be the matter of thinking replacing ground and the ontological discourse, one would have to show that in two prominent determinations of the *Sache* of thinking (in Hegel and Husserl), it was the condition of phenomena Heidegger names the clearing that was passed over. In the appeal to the things themselves, it was the clearing that remained “unthought.” (GA 14, 79) But if this is the case, the definition of the task of thinking taken over from phenomenology is not as formal as it may appear on first sight.

Clearing without ground

Heidegger's argument can be formally taken as a transcendental argument because it proceeds by showing what is the condition of possibility of a given phenomenon,¹⁰ it proceeds by referring a phenomenon back to what one would be tempted to call its ground: both the "ultimate evidence [*letztgültige Evidenz*]" achieved by Husserlian phenomenology and the "speculative dialectic" of Hegel's thought can be determined as "a way in which the matter of philosophy comes to appear from out of itself for itself and thus becomes presence." Yet

such appearance necessarily takes place in a brightness [*in einer Helle*]. Only through brightness can that which appears show itself, i.e. shine [*scheinen*]. But brightness in turn rests upon [*beruht [...] in*] an open, a free open, that it may lighten up here or there, then and when. Brightness is at play in the open and there it strives with darkness. Everywhere something present meets with another thing present or only encounters it; but also where, as Hegel says, something is mirrored in something else, in all these places, there is openness, there is a play of the open region. [...] We call this openness that allows for a potential shining and showing the clearing [*Lichtung*]. (GA 14, 79-80)

At the end of the lecture, just before giving the formal definition of thinking through its task, Heidegger refers to this determination of the clearing, asking "But from where and how is the clearing given? And what speaks in this giving [*Woher aber und wie gibt es die Lichtung? Was spricht im Es gibt?*]" (GA 14, 90) What seems to take the place of Being as metaphysical ground, then, is the clearing and the primacy of the *es gibt* over

¹⁰ My use of the term 'transcendental' is thus more formal than Kant's. See his definition in Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 25.

what is given.¹¹ It is in the clearing that things present rest (*beruhen*), it is the openness of the possible givenness that philosophy is to concern itself with if it is to free itself from the bonds of metaphysical thinking and is to accomplish the task of thinking. Even if one were to argue that the clearing cannot itself be the matter of thinking if it is what makes possible their appearance, Heidegger's argument would still hold: even the question as to what makes it possible for thinking to determine a matter with which it would be concerned with is only possible in the openness of the clearing. As Hegel's dialectics and Husserl's evidence, every matter of thinking would have to show itself in the open of the clearing and show itself somehow conditioned by it. If it were not to contradict Heidegger's efforts to twist thinking free from the metaphysical and ontological discourse, one could say that the clearing functions as the ground of any matter of thinking, precisely by making it thinkable. It is the philosophical imagery Heidegger uses—the shining in the open clearing, the mirroring of dialectical opposites—that most emphatically, albeit implicitly, distances the discourse of the clearing from the discourse of ground as the fundamental and the concealing.

Yet this cannot be all there is, for the argument as to the transcendental or quasi-transcendental function of the clearing cannot explain at least one idea of Heidegger's lecture, namely the claim that the task of philosophy, whether it is to determine the clearing as the definitive matter of thinking or to determine what the matter of thinking is

¹¹ This determination is explored in detail by Jean-Luc Marion. See Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation. Recherches sur Husserl, Heidegger et la phénoménologie*, Paris: PUF 1986, chapter VI in particular.

within the openness of the clearing, was “hidden” by philosophy as metaphysics throughout the history of philosophy. At the crucial juncture of the lecture, after Heidegger has explained that with the end of philosophy comes its “dissolution into the technized sciences [*Auflösung in die technisierten Wissenschaften*],” he proposes that there is a “*first possibility*” of philosophy “from which thinking had to start but that was not to be experienced as such by philosophy and not taken over into it”. (GA 14, 73)

Heidegger continues:

If that is the case, then in the history of philosophy since its beginning unto its end there would have been held in reserve [*vorbehalten*] a hidden task of thinking that would not be accessible to philosophy as metaphysics nor to the sciences created by it. We thus ask: *What task has been held in reserve for thinking at the end of philosophy?* (GA 14, 73-74)

Given what it will eventually reveal, this question should come as a surprise, for if Heidegger claims that there is a primordial openness to be called clearing, an openness and light even preceding the different possible matters of thinking, then where was the task hidden? If it is the task of thinking to explore the clearing as what has always been the condition of presence, how can it be possible that this task and what it refers to have never been discovered before? How come the clearing never showed itself as the eminent matter of thinking before the end of philosophy?—Answers to these questions cannot make reference to the clearing only. There must be, even within the clearing, some negativity, somewhere to hide if not the clearing itself then at least the task of making it a matter of thinking. And if indeed philosophy as metaphysics is a peculiar (namely

ontological) way to think ground, then the failure of thinking to recognize its true task at the beginning of philosophy (and thus the reason it becomes metaphysics), must have something to do with how ground was misconceived by integrating it into the ontological questioning. That the task of thinking was hidden must have something to do with that it was never asked if there is another way to think of ground than the ontological way of metaphysics. Even if ground connotes not only foundation but also phenomena of absence, of concealment, Heidegger holds that the clearing is the condition even of these phenomena (see GA 14, 82). Even if it only is what hides and conceals, which makes the clearing absent to itself, a thinking of the clearing would have to turn to how this absence can show itself in the clearing. But would it not be more adequate, then, to understand ground not as the being of beings but as something that also shows itself in the clearing while also withdrawing from it? Would it not be adequate to make ground a matter of thinking and to see where the true task of thinking hid? And if it was phenomenology as a discipline that first called philosophy to the things themselves, would a thinking of ground in the eminent sense, a non-metaphysical thinking of ground, not be an eminently phenomenological enterprise?

The guiding question and the question of ground

Heidegger diverges from the ontological discourse of metaphysics already in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Here it is precisely a discourse on ground that seems to make possible such a divergence. In § 34, Heidegger most directly renews the demand for the

questionability of the meaning of Being. He no longer intends to eventually provide an answer to that question by determining the meaning of Being, the determination defining the aim of *Being and Time*. Rather than its questionability being resolved, the questionability of Being doubles:¹² the question what the meaning of Being is fails to attend to the appearance of the self-showing of truth, of phenomenality, to that which Heidegger—in an attempt to stabilize a discourse, an attempt that displays the very instability it is supposed to correct—calls not Being but *Beyng*, and a question that will eventually lead to the discovery of the clearing. How the truth of Being (i.e. *Beyng*) lets Being appear is a question that can no longer be reduced to the question of what the meaning of Being is. Yet if that is the case, the appearance of truth is not determined historically, as the meaning of Being is. The appearance of truth rather allows for a meaning of Being to establish itself historically. Truth is a condition, not a medium of history.¹³

Heidegger formulates this more radical argument as the mentioned doubling of the question of Being. The first mode of questioning can be described by the question that he believes was binding for the ontological discourse beginning with Aristotle, or, in

¹² Derrida has convincingly shown that his treatment of the question provides both a comprehensive and critical access to the whole of Heidegger's thinking. However, Derrida believes that Heidegger's emphasis on the question of Being aims at finally suppressing true questionability. In contrast to Derrida's reading, I believe the doubling of questioning in *Contributions* (and the discourse on ground to which it belongs) is precisely how Heidegger breaks from a questioning that is ontologically bound, that is bound to the one meaning of Being. See Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, Paris: Flammarion 1990.

¹³ This is explored in detail in the second chapter.

Heidegger's terms, the question that has *guided* the history of philosophy as history of Being. It is the guiding question (*Leitfrage*) of philosophy:

An essential distinction and clarification can be introduced into the question of Being. Such distinction and clarification are never the answer to the question of Being but are merely the formation of the questioning [...]. Anyone who asks about beings as beings (ὄν ἢ ὅν), and thereby, with this *approach* and directionality, asks about the Being of beings, is standing in the realm of the very question that guided the beginning of Western philosophy and its history up to its end in Nietzsche. We therefore name *this* question of Being (the question of the Being of beings) the guiding question [*Leitfrage*]. Its most general form was given to it by Aristotle: τί τὸ ὄν; (What are beings?). Which is to say, for Aristotle: what is οὐσία as the beingness of beings? Here Being means *beingness* [*Seiendheit*]. Expressed at once therein is this: despite the denial that Being has the character of a genus, nevertheless Being (as beingness) is always and only meant as the κοινόν, the common and thus what is common to every being. [...] For the guiding question, the *Being* of beings [*Sein* des Seienden], the determination of beingness (i.e. naming the 'categories' for οὐσία) is the *answer*. The different regions of being are of changing relevance for post-Greek philosophy, the number and the type of categories and their 'system' vary, but the approach [*Ansatz*] remains essentially the same, may it begin immediately with λόγος (as proposition) or, after some modification, with consciousness or with absolute spirit. From the Greeks to Nietzsche, the *guiding question* [*Leitfrage*] determines the same mode of asking about 'Being.' The most remarkable and greatest example of this unity of the tradition is Hegel's 'Logic.' (GA 65, 75/76)

In such a way, Heidegger explicitly dismisses what *Being and Time* never achieved: to *answer* the question of Being. Heidegger's analysis instead attempts to locate his past project within his philosophy of history: as all philosophy, *Being and Time* cannot but be oriented towards Being. Yet unachieved as it may stand, *Being and Time* implicitly provided at least a tentative answer to the question of Being by indicating how the meaning of Being could be understood with respect to Dasein and to its temporality in particular. But if this was insufficient insofar as it attempted to understand Being by turning to a particular being, namely to Dasein, to understand Being from being human,

this is only one conceivable misconception of Being as Being of beings, it is only one possible way of determining the matter of thinking. But there will eventually be other matters of thinking than the relation of Being to Dasein.¹⁴

Although Heidegger here is far from recognizing such an essential difference in matters of thinking, in the passage just quoted, he already refers to another constellation providing an answer to the question of Being, to another way of thinking Being or to another possible matter of thinking: Aristotle has given a no less distorted account of Being by addressing only the ground of beings. But the orientation towards substance as the primary or paradigmatic being leads Aristotle to explore a quite different meaning of Being and an answer to the question of Being very different from the one *Being and Time* gives. Instead of dismissing the conception of Being as the “beingness” of beings, or the question of Being altogether, Heidegger refuses to replace the questionability of Being by any other determinative discourse. Rather, as its guiding question, the question of Being still provides unmatched access to the history of philosophy, but this time, it is not limited by having in view an answer. Its role can thus become more akin to that of a hermeneutical tool in the interpretation of texts and indeed, from *Contributions* on, Heidegger again and again construes the history of Being as the history of answers to the guiding question as epochs of the history of Being. In *The End of Philosophy and the Task*

¹⁴ I have defended this interpretation in *Seinsgeschichte und phänomenologischer Realismus. Eine Interpretation von Heideggers Spätphilosophie*, part one, chapters 3 and 4 (manuscript).

of *Thinking*, the clearing will eventually prove to be the condition also of these epochs.
(also see GA 11, 60)

In *Contributions*, Heidegger is not yet willing to allow for an ahistorical clearing to let all epochs become manifest at once. Although Dasein has lost its paradigmatic function for the questionability of Being itself, Heidegger still considers a coherent “transition” from the question of Being to the project of *Being and Time*. Rereading his own work, Heidegger acknowledges that *Being and Time* not only offers some understanding of Being as beingness but also transgresses this restriction by way of leaping, even if unsuccessfully, into a different questioning. To the extent *Being and Time* exceeds the guiding question, it also exceeds the ontological discourse as it is delimited by this question. It is the *Grundfrage*,¹⁵ a questioning for the truth as ground of Being that promises to locate ontology and the history of Being as a whole:

If one asks for Beyng, on the other hand, the starting point is not beings, i.e. this or that being, nor is it beings as such and as a whole [*das Seiende als solches im Ganzen*]; rather, one leaps into the *truth* (clearing and concealing) of Beyng itself. What is asked for here, and also experienced, is that which essentially occurs in advance (but lies hidden in the guiding question), namely openness for the *essential occurrence* as such, i.e. *truth*. Inasmuch as Beyng is experienced as the ground of beings, the question of the holding sway of Beyng, asked in *this* way, is the *question of ground* [*Grundfrage*]. There is never an immediate, straightforward progression from the guiding question to the question of ground, a progression that would simply be a new application (to Beyng) of the guiding question [i.e., ‘what is the meaning of Beyng?’, T.K.]; instead, there is only a leap, i.e., the necessity of another beginning. Yet on the contrary, through the gradual overcoming of the posing of the guiding

¹⁵ To emphasize the semantics of ground, I do not render *Grundfrage* as “basic question,” as Rojcewicz and Vallega-Neu in their translation of *Contributions*. I concur that this will be a more idiomatic translation and more easily readable, but it loses what is essential in the context of my interpretation.

question with its answers as such, there can and must be created a *transition* which prepares the other beginning, makes it visible at all, and allows a presentiment of it. *Being and Time* serves to prepare this transition; i.e., it already does properly stand in the question of ground, though it does not bring that question to a pure self-unfolding in an inceptual way. (GA 65, 76)

After *Contributions*, Heidegger neither succeeded in establishing this transition nor the envisaged overcoming of the guiding question (nor, for that matter, did he effectuate an other beginning or recognize it having happened). When Heidegger gives his lecture on the *End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, the other beginning rather still lies ahead. Here, the questioning outside the framework of the ontological discourse is gathered into an explicit return to phenomenology, for although not without criticism, Heidegger takes up emphatically the phenomenological project of Hegel and Husserl. Both phenomenologists, by calling philosophy to the things themselves, were already close to finding the clearing as the hidden task of philosophy, even if their questioning was too metaphysical and still not radical enough, even if their questioning was still not able to reveal the clearing.

Phenomenology of ground

But what about the question of ground raised in *Contributions*? Does it suffice to say that the doubling of the question of Being was just a preliminary step on the way Heidegger's philosophy was to take? Is one allowed to look back from *The End of Philosophy* on Heidegger's oeuvre and say that the question of ground raised in *Contributions* was simply not radical enough and still too metaphysical, too tightly bound

to the ontological discourse?—From the point of view of a thinking beyond metaphysics, the charge levelled against the question of ground would be that it is metaphysical precisely because it still asks for a ground and that it does so in terms that are still too similar to the question of Being. If the discourse on truth is eventually to take a form so radical that it was able to let the clearing appear, the discourse on ground will reveal itself precisely as that which prevented the break-through, the way into the clearing, as it were. It was precisely the identification of truth and ground that was misleading philosophy, keeping it from the discovery of the clearing.¹⁶

Yet one should not be too hasty in dismissing the question of ground and the relation of ground and truth it projects. It is true: Heidegger—at least in its initial formulation in *Contributions*—also takes the question of ground as a question of Being, and it is difficult to say what precise shift is expressed by the different spelling (*Seyn*) or if a different writing of Being is a means of modifying a philosophical question at all. But the relevance of the question of ground as a question does not hinge on the force of Heidegger's revisions of the ontological discourse. In interpreting the question of ground, one will have to recognize that it was Heidegger's intent to take distance from the history of

¹⁶ John Sallis has discussed Heidegger's notion of understanding in *Being and Time* as exceeding the limits set by the ontological discourse and as precursor to the clearing, for it reveals, already in the frame of fundamental ontology, a "play of presence and absence" that will be eventually determined as clearing. See John Sallis, "Into the clearing," in: *Delimitations. Philosophy and the End of Metaphysics*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, second and expanded edition 1995, 119-127, here 127. In his interpretation, the achievement of *Being and Time* in view of the later philosophy of the clearing is that *sight* (as the experience of presence) is revealed as "grounded [*gegründet*]" in understanding, which because it understands both presence and absence is to be understood as the experience of the clearing within the frame of fundamental ontology. Understanding, then, would be, as the proto-clearing, the foundation of other forms of experience.

philosophy as metaphysics precisely by reformulating its guiding question, posing it more radically, as a more radical “reworking [*Ausarbeitung*]” (GA 2, 21) of the question of Being than achieved in *Being and Time*. Asking the question of ground is Heidegger’s attempt to twist free from philosophy as metaphysics without letting go of the ontological discourse, rather searching for a means to put it into perspective and to search if not for a “progression” but for a “transition” into the “other beginning.” It is true: *The End of Philosophy* locates this transition elsewhere, namely in the phenomenological discourse on the task of thinking, in the tradition of adhering to the things themselves and in Heidegger’s more radical attempt to call into question what these things are at all. But the particular weakness of this attempt to achieve a transition into a different thinking is that it does not explain how and why the task of thinking was concealed since the beginning of philosophy. Instead Heidegger’s rhetoric urges one to leave behind metaphysical thinking and to “relinquish former thinking.” But this is hardly a transition into, nor even a coherent explanation of a different beginning of philosophy.

Though it may be true that even the question of ground will eventually prove to be too closely linked to the metaphysical history of philosophy, it does attempt both to make metaphysics legible and to surpass it, and in this attempt, the question of ground may lead to an answer to how it was possible for the task of thinking to be hidden throughout the history of philosophy. Already by putting not only the meaning of Being but also the meaning of ground into question, by calling into question that which the metaphysics as

explanation of Being as ground of beings takes for granted, the question of ground is more radical than the thinking of ground. The question of ground no longer adheres to the metaphysical thinking of ground, establishing Being as a ground—or as “ἀρχή, αἴτιον, principle.” In the section of *Contributions*, Heidegger does not attempt to link more closely the guiding question and the question of ground, and what he does instead can best be described as the attempt to unfold the rich semantics of ground:

The guiding question, unfolded in its structure, always allows the recognition of a *fundamental position* [*Grundstellung*] towards beings as such, i.e., a position of the questioner (human being) on a ground which cannot be fathomed [*er-gründen*] by means of the guiding question and that cannot be known at all but that can be brought into the open through the question of *ground*. Though there is never a progression from the guiding question to the question of ground, there is, conversely, the unfolding of the question of ground, providing a ground to take up the whole of the history of the history of the guiding question into a more originary possession rather than simply repudiating it as something past. (GA 65, 77)

The question of ground, though it will not provide an answer to the question of Being, as least not in its traditional form, still promises to leave behind questioning not by giving an answer but by reaching a ground. It is remarkable how Heidegger refuses to accept that the question of Being may remain an open question and still attempts to think not a transition but something like a transition from the history of philosophy to his philosophical project in *Being and Time* and from there to *Contributions*. The alternative to using the guiding question, if it cannot be answered, as a hermeneutical tool, to modify this question or to explore the answer(s) given to this question, lies in an exploration of the ground of things not as ground of beings, without the mediation of the ontological

discourse, without the mediation of the different formations of the metaphysics of Being and of ground from the history of philosophy.

In the remainder of the section of *Contributions*, it is the language of ground itself that replaces both question(s) and answer(s) in an unheard-of discourse on *Grund*; this is why the question of ground may be called a questioning for the semantics of ground, or, in more Heideggerian terms, as a listening to language's saying of ground:

For the question of ground however, Being is not answer nor the field of answer [*Antwortbereich*], but it is the most question-worthy [*das Fragwürdigste*]. To the most question-worthy is destined an anticipating [*vorspringend*] and unique appreciation; it is to have open sovereignty [*Herrschaft eröffnen*] and thus set out in the open as what cannot be mastered and can never be mastered. Beyng as the ground [*Grund*] in which all beings first come to their truths (sheltering, instituting, objectivity); the ground in which beings are submerged (abyss [*Abgrund*]); the ground in which beings also claim to be *indifferent* and *self-evident* (non-ground [*Ungrund*]). That Beyng does essentially occur in this manner of grounding [*grundig wesen*] shows its uniqueness and sovereignty. And that again is merely an intimation of the event [*Ereignis*] in which we have to seek the essential occurrence of being in its greatest concealment. Beyng as the most question-worthy does not in itself know any question. (GA 65, 77)

What if, in reading such passages, one would one—in good phenomenological habit—bracket the ontological import of these determinations? What if one would take the stance of ἐποχή vis-à-vis the metaphysical import of ground? What if one would—as Heidegger will do explicitly nearly twenty years later (see GA 9, 411-412)—cross out Being and the whole ontological discourse and attempt to begin a “topology” (GA 9, 412) of ground? It could turn out that not only *to be* and *being* but *ground*, too, is a “fundamental word [*Grundwort*]” (GA 9, 409) philosophy cannot let go of. Already this

short passage from *Contributions* indicates the potential of exploring the semantics of ground (*Grund*, *Abgrund*, *Ungrund*, *grundig*).

What an exploration of the discourse of ground could achieve, then, is indeed something else than the reconstruction of the history of philosophy as the history of answers to the guiding question, something else than a reconstruction of metaphysics as different forms of thinking Being as the ground of beings. To bring together both *Grund* and words grammatically or etymologically related to it and such phenomena named by words (such as earth) only semantically related is more akin to a semantical or hermeneutical phenomenology of ground. It would not mean, of course, to take ground as the definitive matter of thinking, but one would bracket, if need be, the metaphysical implications of the word and its philosophical predecessors (ἀρχή, αἴτιον, principle, reason). The question of ground, if it does not integrate into the ontological and metaphysical discourse, may rather unfold its own discourse, a discourse now informed by the phenomenon itself and the ways we speak about it, albeit we have done and still do so in very different ways.

Such a phenomenology of ground, beginning by bracketing the ontological question as to the being of ground, would begin by turning from the center to the margins of philosophy as metaphysics. It would leave aside the history of Being and the ontological discourse as a whole, it would not look directly at how even Heidegger determines the principle of reason or the essence of ground in the texts dedicated to these notions (*On*

the Essence of Ground (GA 9, 123-176) and *The Principle of Reason* (*Der Satz vom Grund*) (GA 10) but rather only prepare a confrontation with them. Thus a phenomenology of ground as an exploration of the discourse on the phenomenon of ground and how we speak about it would not be limited to Heidegger either, but it would regard all texts about the phenomenon of ground regardless of who wrote them. A thinking of ground informed by the critique of metaphysics as ontological thinking of ground would begin to gather what in Heidegger's discussions of truth or already in his fundamental ontology or in his discourse on earth relates to the question of ground. From the margins of metaphysics, it would begin to twist free from metaphysics one of the most metaphysical notions by exploring what its words speaks about.

3. *Das Werk und die Wahrheit*

Ground and clearing in *On the Origin of the Work of Art*

Heidegger introduces the subject of truth at the end of the first part of *The Origin of the Work of Art*. In the description of Van Gogh's painting, there occurs for the first time the axiomatic definition that will repeatedly recur: art is "*Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*," the "setting-into-a-work of truth." (GA 5, 21; cf. 25, 44, 59, 62, 63, 65, esp. 70)

Heidegger begins the redetermination of art and truth by describing the aesthetic quality of the painting. The painting is no mere depiction of shoes, but "Van Gogh's painting is the opening of that which these ready-at-hand things [*Zeug*], this pair of peasant shoes, *are* in truth. This being [*Seiendes*] comes into the unconcealment [*Unverborgenheit*] of its being [*Sein*]." (GA 5, 21) What it means that a "being" like the pair of shoes comes into the "unconcealment," which is the "unconcealment" of *this* being in its being, will only become fully manifest at the very end of the essay. Then it should also become clear how truth as *Unverborgenheit* is to be understood here in

contrast to truth as *Übereinstimmung*: according to an understanding of truth as correspondence or adaequation, a work of art such as Vang Gogh's painting would be something which could be true or false (as a proposition), because it corresponds (or does not correspond) to what is the case. The painting would, if it were to be 'true' in the sense of correspondence, depict reality just as a true proposition correctly represents a state of affairs.

Truth and history

According to Heidegger, such a seemingly self-evident conception of truth as correspondence or adaequation has been dominant in the history of philosophy in a unique continuity: "in the Middle Ages, it was called adaequatio; already Aristotle calls it ὁμοίωσις. Correspondence with that which is [*mit dem Seienden*] counts as the essence of truth since long ago." (GA 5, 22). This conviction is typical for Heidegger's thought: what appears to be self-evident is a product of history, and it is relevant to understanding an important aspect of Heidegger's thinking of truth in *The Origin of the Work of Art*: to understand truth as correspondence, as we supposedly do in our every day lives, is only possible because truth could also be understood differently, and this different understanding has been reached in Greek philosophy, in the understanding of truth as ἀλήθεια, as *Unverborgenheit* or unconcealment in Heidegger's translation. What is meant by this understanding of truth can be explicated with reference to the paragraphs of *Being and Time* dedicated to truth. There, one finds a concise definition of truth as

unconcealment: supposedly, ἀλήθεια for Aristotle still meant “the ‘things themselves,’ that which shows itself, *being in the how of its being discovered* [‘die Sachen selbst’, das, was sich zeigt, *das Seiende im Wie seiner Entdecktheit*].” (GA 2, 290) Yet today, so Heidegger says, philosophy has become used to understanding truth as the property of true propositions. Propositions have become the “locus” (GA 2, 284) of truth. Already in *Being and Time*, Heidegger draws a specific consequence from this interpretation of the history of philosophy: philosophy is to return to that “originary phenomenon of truth” (GA 2, 290) that the Greeks had experienced and grasped as ἀλήθεια. Heidegger’s concept of truth in *Being and Time* is thus a description of the phenomenal,¹⁷ of “that which shows itself in and as itself [*Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigenden*].” (GA 2, 42) In short, truth as unconcealment is the self-showing of phenomena.

In *The Origin of the Work of Art* however, about seven years after *Being and Time*, Heidegger is convinced that Aristotle, too, has already understood truth as correspondence (ὁμοίωσις) and not as the self-showing of phenomena. His interpretation of ancient philosophy thus changes. Yet the passage from *Being and Time* as well as the contrast between truth as correspondence and truth as unconcealment in *The Origin of the Work of Art* are good examples for a type of argument one could call the *historical*

¹⁷ An important mediator also for the theory of truth is Franz Brentano. Not only Heidegger’s interest in the meaning of Being, also his discovery of the Aristotelian problematic concerning truth can be traced back to Brentano’s dissertation. See David Farrel Krell, “The Manifold Meaning of Aletheia,” in: *Intimations of Mortality*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1986, 67-79.

mode of transcendental argument.¹⁸ The intent to use history to find the conditions of possibility of phenomena is dominant in Heidegger's various attempts at writing the history of philosophy and one finds one theme varied: ancient philosophy describes relevant phenomena in a way no longer accessible to us moderns, i.e. in their origins and without presuppositions. As can be seen by contrasting our modern and alleged ancient experiences of truth, the conditions for our understanding of truth are eminently historical and call for a study of the history of philosophy.

Yet in *Being and Time* Heidegger uses this argument in a way that already a few pages later is no longer congruent with the argument from transcendental history, when he refers ἀλήθεια, the self-showing of phenomena, to Dasein. The “discoveredness” (*Entdecktheit*) of beings is relative to the understanding of Dasein, all that is true thus being of “the mode of being of Dasein [*von daseinsmäßiger Seinsart*]” and “relative to the being of Dasein“. (GA 2, 300) It now becomes clear that the original experience of truth, as it was described by Aristotle as ἀλήθεια, is indeed still accessible through an appropriation of Greek philosophy as Heidegger undertakes it in *Being and Time*.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger frames his argument from the transcendental history in the analytic of Dasein and the question of the meaning of being. This is a good

¹⁸ Heidegger as transcendental philosopher is discussed—though not in relation to the philosophy of history—in the essays collected in: Steven Crowell/Jeff Malpas (eds.), *Transcendental Heidegger*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2007. More recently, Søren Olesen has argued along similar lines with reference to Husserl, Heidegger, and Foucault. See Søren Gosvig Olesen, *Transzendente Geschichte*, translated from the Danish by Monika Wesemann, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2012.

example of how different modes or figures of reasoning interlock in Heidegger's thought, structures that interpreters would do well to disentangle. Such interlocking of arguments is also present in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, indeed in a very similar way to *Being and Time*: the historical mode of argument is present but not dominant. Yet it is typical for the artwork essay that its historical thinking is no longer integrated by the analysis of human Dasein and thus subordinate to the conditions under which Dasein understands the meaning of being. The argument from the philosophy of history is no longer part of questioning for the *one* sense of Being, the idea of a historical transformation of the concept of truth instead being related to the question what works of art are.

This underlines an indeed unique continuity in Heidegger's theory of truth: truth in the artwork essay is still understood as the self-showing of phenomena. Yet in difference to other attempts to use the argument from transcendental history, the subordination of the question of truth to the question of the essence of art is specific to *The Origin of the Work of Art* because it is not the meaning or the truth of Being but the truth of individual works of art and what they show that Heidegger is concerned with. The argument is accordingly reduced to the distinction of truth as correspondence and truth as unconcealment into which the contrast of ancient and modern truth is absorbed. This is all the more evident when one sees how much work Heidegger has put into developing the idea of the historicity of truth in his lectures, which does not feature in the artwork essay. Up until *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger's inquiry into truth as *ἀποκάλυψις*

and adequatio and into the history of philosophical theories of truth is led by his interpretation of the image of the cave in Plato's *Republic*. Thus Heidegger develops his theory of truth in reference to his historical paradigm. In lecture courses from the fall terms 1931/32 and 1933/34, condensed in the essay *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, Heidegger also develops his own conception of truth using the image of the cave: Plato describes all beings (i.e. the shadows and figures inside the cave) only in reference to the ideas of these things, and so for Plato "the ideas are the being of each being." (GA 9, 228) Yet the ideas are not dependent on the immediate experience we have from these things but from the conditions of their cognition (the sun outside the cave). The experience of truth in ἀλήθεια, i.e. the self-showing of phenomena, is thus forced „under the yoke of ἰδέα“. (GA 9, 230) Since Plato, truth is supposedly understood as the possibility of ideal cognition, as correspondence of our cognizing acts with the idea of something which holds what that something is in truth. There is thus a historical "transformation in the essence of 'truth' [*Wesenswandel der ‚Wahrheit‘*]" (GA 9, 218) from unconcealment to correspondence, and this transformation is to be understood. The argument from transcendental history refers to this transformation in order to explain our changing understanding of phenomena.

Until the artwork essay, Heidegger's interpretation of Plato was so firmly interwoven with the argument from transcendental history that he cannot integrate this argument and its results into another set of questions. While the development of the transcendental

argument only in its historical form suggests a return to a moment in history *before* the historical transformation of truth, Heidegger explicitly distances himself from that claim at the end of the second part of the essay (see GA 5, 37). Truth as unconcealment is thus no experience that has only been possible in ancient Greece, although it can be discovered through the interpretation of ancient texts. Unconcealment is not a possibility that is past but that is constantly present. Truth as unconcealment—this is Heidegger’s new beginning in *The Origin of the Work of Art*—is rather always experienced when we experience a work of art. Thus Heidegger now subordinates the argument from the philosophy of history to the search for the origin of the work of art, approaching this question from the *experience* of art. In this way, the results of Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato bear fruit in view of concrete, present-day phenomena.

One can see this even in the details of the text’s creation: in the first version of the essay, Heidegger has traced the distinction of the sensible and the ideal explicitly back to Plato,¹⁹ a reference missing in the final version. The difference of the sensible and the ideal is rather exposed as the condition of a variation of the claim that art is depiction (and not an experience of unconcealment). In order to refute this claim, Heidegger proceeds from Van Gogh’s shoes to the poem by C.F. Meyer: the artwork corresponds neither to a particular being, as one might expect according to the notion of truth as correspondence in its first form, nor can it be a “rendering [*Wiedergabe*] of the general

¹⁹ See Martin Heidegger, “Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks (Erste Ausarbeitung),” in: *Heidegger Lesebuch*, ed. Günter Figal, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2007, 149-170, here 160.

essence of things.” (GA 5, 22) The problem with this variation of the correspondence theory of truth is evident: “where and how can such essences be found for works of art to correspond to them?” (GA 5, 22)

Heidegger’s second example, the poem *The Roman fountain*, is to make manifest that it is impossible to separate an ideal meaning from the sensible in the experience of art. The problem of a theory of truth as correspondence—that in experiences such as that of an artwork the two elements that are to correspond *ex post facto* always already appear as one—remains even if one understands correspondence as a correspondence of ideal and sensible. This criticism also applies to Hegel’s definition of the beautiful as the “sensible shining of the idea”²⁰ in difference to philosophical thinking where the truth of an idea is sublated into a concept. While the example of the peasant shoes was to show that art can disclose more than truth as correspondence of two empirical givens, as the contingent correspondence of a state of affairs and its representation, the Meyer poem shows a limit to the knowledge gained through art: the truth of art can only be experienced in experiencing the work, for only the flowing, surging and burbling of words grasps what a fountain is. The experience of the ideal and the sensible, which according to the connected claims that art is reproduction and truth is correspondence correspond only *ex post facto*, are already integral parts of the artwork and its truth. The truth of art as unconcealment is not its ideal content in contrast to its sensible form.

²⁰ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, Werke, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1970, vol. 13, 151.

Truth as correctness and openness

In the artwork essay, it is not the history of the transformation of the essence of truth but the experience of art, both sensible and ideal, that is decisive for the determination of truth as unconcealment and thus for the determination of the phenomenal. Heidegger argues for his determination of truth as unconcealment through a recourse to the experience of art, the interpretation of ancient philosophy being but a support of his argument. Yet the experience of art, as Heidegger describes it, is the experience of *works* of art. To determine Heidegger's concept of truth, one has to address the relation that serves as the title of the second section of the artwork essay: *The Work and the Truth*.

At the beginning of this section, Heidegger gives a third example that is again directed against the claim that art is reproduction or representatiton (of either the real or the ideal): "a building, a Greek temple, does not depict [*bildet* [...] *ab*] anything". (GA 5, 27) This example is the starting point for Heidegger's own descriptive determination of how truth takes place in the work of art: only through the temple standing *there* and opening up a world does it become possible to experience *something*, because "only the temple, in its standing there [*Dastehen*], gives a look [*Gesicht*] to things and grants humans a view on themselves [*Aussicht auf sich selbst*]." (GA 5, 29) To generalize this description: works of art are the condition of intentionality in relation to the world and to myself.

The claim that our experience is structured and even made possible by the unconcealment of art will not be immediately convincing. But this is so—Heidegger

would have answered—because we hold a seemingly self-evident concept of truth that only remains at the surface of the experience of art. This does not mean that there was an ancient experience of truth that we can no longer have, rather it means that the genuine truth of the artwork is buried: the idea that truth is correspondence covers over truth as unconcealment as it happens in the work. For that reason, Heidegger will describe the correspondence theory of truth as a restraint (*Verstellen*) of truth (GA 5, 40). We restrain unconcealment, cover it up through a false theory of truth, if we do not attend to the phenomenal character of beings so that all “things” seem to us “present [*vorhanden*] as unchanging objects and known.” (GA 5, 28).

This formulation holds a terminological distinction that is decisive for the constitution of objectivity and thus for the central problem of ontology: something appears as a *thing* (*Ding*) if its experience is determined by what a work of art achieves; it appears as *object* (*Gegenstand*) if we take it as unchanging and, as Heidegger says with *Being and Time*, as plainly *present* (*vorhanden*). Even though Heidegger there worries about “art commerce,”²¹ the distinction of things and objects as well as the discussion of three concepts of ‘thing’ are not yet included in the 1935 version of the artwork essay. They are rather the result of Heidegger’s engagement with Kant between the two main versions of the essay, especially in the lecture course *What is a thing?* (*Die Frage nach dem Ding*) on Kant’s first *Critique*. In the introduction to that lecture course (GA 41, 1-54),

²¹ Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks (Erste Ausarbeitung),” 150.

Heidegger holds that modern and Critical Philosophy interpret all that exists as a representation of our practical and theoretical reason. All beings are therefore relevant to the sciences only in an mathematical abstraction; beings are taken to be but objects for our consciousness and are thus only *represented* (*vorge stellt*, literally *set before*) but do not become manifest themselves as themselves. The modern concept of Being can thus be determined as mathematizable objectivity, the modern epoch accordingly being the age of of representation in which all that is is determined as a representation in accord with reason, while reality in itself remains unknown to us. Heidegger develops this account of modern representationalism in *The Age of the World Picture*, the essay in the *Holzwege* collection. (GA 5, 75-114)

Heidegger's own phenomenal concept of thing differs radically from the representationalist account, for it attempts to begin not from the (mathematical) representation of things but with what the representationalist excluded, the manifestness of things. As being manifest, the true experience of things is eminently related to unconcealment as mode of experience. From this idea, the claim that art is the condition of intentionality is better understood: truth as unconcealment as it happens in art modifies our experience in general because it makes possible the experience of things in the eminent sense. How works of art appear transforms our idea of what, phenomenally, constitutes objectivity and thus pertains to and transforms all experience. In experiencing

art, we understand that there is something ‘behind’ our scientific and every day representations of beings and learn to attend to it.

In the artwork essay, Heidegger, discussing the reversal that happens when something is understood not as object but as thing, takes this new look at things to be an essential characteristic of the experience of an artwork. Against the representationalist conception, Heidegger maintains: “we get closer to that which *is* if we think everything reversed.” (GA 5, 29) In the word ‘reversal’ (*Umkehr*) one has to hear *περιαγωγή*, the term Plato used in the image of the cave to describe the moment in which the prisoners in the cave recognize the shadows as mere representations. (see GA 9, 222) Here, too, Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato is present. But Heidegger’s description is closest to the phenomenology of his philosophical teacher, for by urging us to leave the “natural attitude”,²² Husserl argues for a similar reversal, for attention to be paid to the manner in which things are given. Or to say it with Heidegger: “to have an eye for how everything turns to us differently [*den Blick dafür zu haben, wie sich alles anders uns zukehrt*].” (GA 5, 29) The experience of art is such that it “changes our common relations to world and earth,” so that “from now on we hold back our usual doing and valuing, knowing and seeing from.” This is not, however, the willful change of attitude or an act of reflection but the possibility “to abide in the truth happening in the work.” (GA5, 54) Thus Heidegger describes the access to phenomenological experience as access to the transcendental as

²² Husserl, *Ideen I*, Husserliana III/1, 56.

Husserl does, as an access to that which makes possible our intentional experience. Yet this transcendental is no other region of Being, as Husserl sometimes claims, but an experience of truth in the eminent sense of unconcealment. Phenomena can be experienced as the unconcealment of things if we pay attention to how that becomes possible which we took to be self-evident: our concept of truth as correspondence, the shadows of the cave or our knowledge without critical reflection. It is this experience that happens through art.

Thus again Heidegger makes use of his interpretations of the history of philosophy, relating to Plato, Kant and Husserl to describe the experience of transcendental truth. But Heidegger does not submit to the philosophical history of truth but rather integrates it critically into his own thinking: against Plato, Heidegger argues that he assimilates the being of things to the ideal, confusing ideal beings with Being itself; for Kant, the transcendental is *a priori* and cannot be experienced but has to be deduced, precluding an experience of truth as unconcealment; Husserl is in danger of speaking of acts of consciousness and modes of givenness correlative to things but not of the things themselves as it is the proclaimed task of phenomenology. To enter the phenomenological attitude, Heidegger sustains, is to no avail if it does not get involved with that which *is*: “mere reversing, for its own sake, gives us nothing.” (GA 5, 29)

Heidegger integrates his critical reception of the history of philosophy and phenomenological method into the theory of truth by criticizing the conception of truth as

correctness (*Richtigkeit*). Such an experience of truth amounts to nothing more than taking propositions to be correct or false. But this is an eminent reduction because the assertion of propositional truth does not recognize how a proposition becomes true by corresponding to a state of affairs. Unconcealment, the condition of possibility of correspondence and correctness, remains unnoticed in its transcendental function. The ontological description of the constitution of objectivity rather follows blindly the theory of truth (as correspondence and correctness). Instead of understanding and describing how the correctness of propositions becomes possible through the self-showing of phenomena, the conception of truth as correctness is quick to analogize, enforcing the conception of truth as correspondence: the theory of truth as correctness uncritically assumes that things are structured like propositions. In Heidegger's words: "the construction of the simple proposition (the connection of subject and predicate) [is] the mirror image of the construction of a thing (of the unity of substance and accidentals)." (GA 5, 8) Modern philosophy as well, reducing the thing to "that which is cognizable in sensations" and to the "unity in the manifold of the sensible given," (GA 5, 10) is oriented by the proposition and its understanding of truth as correctness: according to the representationalist conception of things, rather than substance and accidentals corresponding when the subject and its predicate are linked in a proposition, the representing subject and its conceptually determined representation relate.

Thus in the two epochs of the history of philosophy on which Heidegger comments, the analogy between propositions and things remains unquestioned. Ancient and modern philosophy thus make the same mistake, a mistake at once logical and ontological. Heidegger takes up this idea from the essay *On the Essence of Truth* (1930): “The representing proposition [*vorstellende Aussage*] says what it says of the represented thing *such as* it is as this thing. The ‘such as’ concerns both the representing and what it represents. To represent here means [...] to let the thing stand over and against as an object [*Entgegenstehenlassen des Dinges als Gegenstand*].” (GA 9, 184) Thus ontology and logic exactly mirror each other in the different epochs of the philosophical, yet what most fundamentally relates both—the experience of truth as unconcealment—is overlooked such that the reason why and the way how ontology and logic are thus connected must remain unknown. Heidegger’s transcendental argument in the theory of truth aims to ground this analogy and to describe what makes it possible. Both ancient and modern logic and ontology are preceded by unconcealment as a condition of their possibility that the regress to subjective conditions of knowledge effected in transcendental philosophy has not yet discovered. In this respect, the theory of truth radicalizes the project of transcendental philosophy. In this radicalization, however, it is not the judging subject but the “appearance of a thing” (GA 9. 184) that is paradigmatic; it is a model that, if described without prejudice, first lets the conception of truth as correctness and of Being as objectivity become understandable and questionable, for it lets become manifest that the appearance of things takes place “within an open [*in einem Offenen*], the openness of

which is not produced by representing but is only taken over by representing as a region of possible reference [*Bezugsbereich*].” (GA 9, 184) This openness can be experienced and described and makes possible the appearance of the thing as thing and its true (and not only correct) experience.²³

A similar claim is made in the artwork essay for unconcealment which Heidegger takes as making correctness possible: the “essence of truth that we know, the correctness of representing, relies on [*steht und fällt mit*] the unconcealment of beings.” (GA 5, 38) Unconcealment, “as something unexperienced and unthought, provides the ground of the essence of truth in the sense of correctness.” (GA 5, 38) While the analogy of the construction of things and the construction of propositions and the parallelism of subjectivity and thing-in-itself cannot provide a foundation for its own possibility, in truth as unconcealment the possibility of knowledge as such can be experienced: unconcealment has not only been neglected by philosophy so far, it also remains unnoticed, covered over by false evidence of Being and truth.

Heidegger can relate to Husserl’s phenomenology because it is concerned not with a deduction but with a description of the experience of truth in its transcendental function,

²³ Heidegger’s notion of phenomenology can thus be determined as *phenomenological realism*: Heidegger shares the transcendental ambition of phenomenology as well as the claim that the transcendental can be experienced (and in this, he is a phenomenologist vis à vis Kantian Critical philosophy). Yet he also gives phenomenology a specific orientation by taking not the flow of conscious experiences (as Husserl does) but the manifestness of things as paradigmatic. I have developed this idea in detail in part two of *Seinsgeschichte und Phänomenologischer Realismus. Eine Interpretation von Heideggers Spätphilosophie* (manuscript).

and Heidegger identifies precisely this experience in the experience of art. One may formulate thus the phenomenological core of the theory of truth: the truth conditions of a correct proposition necessarily relate to a truth that shows itself,²⁴ and this relation can itself be experienced and described: the true (correct) reference to an object by a subject not only presupposes a true (unconcealed) state of affairs, as the statement ‘This is gold’ presupposes a piece of gold and intentions letting this piece of gold become manifest in its being golden. (see GA 9, 179 and 183) Rather, the truth value of propositions is also dependent on truth conditions that exceed those inherent in the intentional reference to a given state of affairs; it may, for example, be implicitly already decided what is relevant to determine the correctness of a proposition, when one refers to, say, common sense or intuitions. These implicit truth conditions can also be the factual possibilities and the normative criteria to recognize, in our example, gold as such or, in general, something as something. Every responsible reference to something true must thus understand the situation of reference as a whole and give a determination of the phenomenal doing justice to the particular state of affairs. This happens in that the reference to truth in itself presupposes the phenomenological experience of the transcendental possibility of true propositions. In Heidegger’s words: “Not only *that which* directs knowledge [*wonach eine Erkenntnis sich richtet*] must be somehow unconcealed but also the whole *domain* [*Bereich*] in which this ‘directing’ happens and also that *for which* the measuring of a

²⁴ Vgl. John Sallis, “The Truth That Is Not of Knowledge,” in: *Double Truth*, New York: SUNY Press 1995, 57-70.

proposition to the thing becomes manifest must as a whole take place in the unconcealed.” (GA 5, 39) A single, categorially determined state of affairs to which the conditions of a correct proposition refer can thus not be used for sufficient verification according to criteria that remain foreign to it. But a single state of affairs can disclose its manifest unconcealment as that which makes possible all verification. Yet this presupposes a certain attention being paid to the thingness of that which appears (in difference to its objectivity) and it is precisely this phenomenological reversal that happens in Van Gogh’s painting: the painting discloses itself as the presentation of shoes and at the same time opens up the domain in which all reference to something like shoes becomes possible. The painting bringing with it, as it were, its own sufficient truth conditions. True being, i.e. being appearing as thing, referenced by propositions through their truth conditions, remains the paradigm of the analysis. But such being is itself dependent on the self-showing of the domain of truth as unconcealment that is opened up by the work. Something true cannot be fully described without relating to experiences in which the possibility of truth conditions and thus of correctness can itself be experienced. In other words: something cannot be referenced as being true without referencing its ground. A reference not including a reference to the transcendental ground of appearing things can only be correct but not true.

For this experience of truth beyond intentional correctness, so Heidegger holds in the artwork essay, the experience of art is paradigmatic. Husserl’s phenomenology would

concur in claiming that there can be an experience of the transcendental but would not look for it in art, and not surprisingly, Heidegger will in the course of the artwork essay also say of other domains that they hold the experience of unconcealment. But against Husserl, Heidegger makes clear that the evident fulfillment of the truth conditions of a proposition and related intentions is not in itself the event of truth as unconcealment relevant for phenomenology: the work of art not even presupposes the intentionality of consciousness according to which intentions are fulfilled but, reversely, its unconcealment grounds a region of the possibility of intentional reference. To show how this happens, Heidegger chooses the domain of individuals that can be grasped either as objects or as things. Already for Husserl's analyses of consciousness, the ontological region of individuals was binding for the constitution of objectivity. Heidegger transforms these analyses when (in *Being and Time*) he positions truth as disclosedness in the place consciousness held, and later attributes to openness (in *On the Essence of Truth*) and unconcealment (in *The Origin of the Work of Art*) the very same position: our referencing the world becomes possible only through unconcealment, disclosing the domain of the objective, that region "in which this 'directing' happens", i.e. the correctness or falsity of intentionally grasped states of affairs. And thus only in unconcealment is there constituted "that *for which* the measuring of a proposition to the thing becomes manifest," in the language of modern metaphysics: the subject.

In *On the Essence of Truth*, Heidegger had claimed that unconcealment was disclosed to all human comportment as the “openness of humans [*Offenständigkeit des Menschen*]” (GA 9, 184) for something true. Human freedom is “*being free* to the openness of something open [*Freisein zum Offenbaren eines Offenen*]” and this being free was the ground of the “possibility of correctness.” (GA 9, 186) Thus Heidegger still follows *Being and Time* where truth, intentionality and the experience of ἀλήθεια are referred back to human Dasein and are understood as disclosedness of Dasein. Similarly to the first version of the artwork essay, in which the work of art opens up to humans their Dasein: the “there [*Da*]” of Dasein is the “center of the open,” and the “truth as openness” thus “always openness of the there.”²⁵ Yet in the last version of the artwork essay, Heidegger no longer centers the open, i.e. the possibility of a true states of affairs and correct propositions, in Dasein:²⁶ rather, as “clearing [*Lichtung*],” the openness has itself become the “open center [*offene Mitte*].” (GA 5, 40) Following disclosedness and openness, *clearing* thus becomes the ultimate name of that pre-intentional phenomenality preceeding every particular being and revealing itself as its possibility. The clearing is “farther beyond beings, not away from them but rather before them.” “Seen from beings”, the clearing is “more being than beings [*seiender als das Seiende*],” (GA 5, 39), thus letting become manifest the being of every being: “beings can only be as beings if they stand out

²⁵ Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks (Erste Ausarbeitung),” 162 and 166.

²⁶ Jacques Taminiaux accordingly situates Heidegger’s *Kehre* between the two major versions of the artwork essay. See Jacques Taminiaux, “The Origin of ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’,” in: John Sallis (ed.), *Reading Heidegger. Commemorations*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1993, 392-404.

and stand into the cleared region of this clearing [*das Gelichtete dieser Lichtung*].“ (GA 5, 40)

Truth as unconcealment thus not only makes possible correctness and correspondence as derivative forms of truth and thus of appearing, of the self-showing of phenomena. As clearing of beings, unconcealment can be disclosed starting from every single being if one does not represent it as object, adjusting its appearance according to a given ontology but letting the thing appear in its Being. In the later lecture *The Thing* (1959, GA 7, 165-188), the central piece of the *Bremen Lectures*, Heidegger will explicitly draw this conclusion. Yet in this lecture the experience of thingness is not bound to the experience of art as it is in the artwork essay. Rather, Heidegger generalizes something that he determined in the artwork essay as something peculiar to the experience of art: something appearing unconcealed means for it to appear as a true state of affairs to be taken as a measure by propositions directing their truth conditions to the experience of this state of affairs. Determined as that which appears in the clearing, beings appear as unconcealed and self-showing, in other words: beings appear phenomenologically.

Truth, untruth and the clearing

With his thinking of the clearing, Heidegger brings his transcendental argument to its most radical form: neither the philosophical experience of the ancients nor the subjective conditions of experience are transcendental conditions of philosophy but the openness of the clearing is, making intentionality and the derivative truth of correctness possible, the

openness experienced as the truth of unconcealment in art, the openness concealed by the conception of truth as mere correspondence. Until one of his latest lectures, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* (1964) “clearing” remains the decisive determination of the possibility of phenomena.²⁷ Heidegger thus remains convinced that the clearing is that which happens prior to beings. Yet this idea leads him in that late lecture to no longer identify the clearing with truth but to think it as the possibility of the appearance of truth: it is the “free open [*das Freie*]” (GA 14, 82) of the clearing that “grants unconcealment.” (GA 14, 84) Not the event of unconcealment but the clearing as the “place of silence [*Ort der Stille*]” (GA 14, 83) is now to be considered as the “originary phenomenon [*Urphänomen*]”(GA 14, 81) that has demanded too much from philosophy, calling for thinking in Heidegger’s terminological sense of the word.

Heidegger’s determination of the clearing as transcendental condition of truth as unconcealment, a claim with which the later works move beyond the artwork essay, is motivated by Heidegger’s attempt to do justice to an absence constitutive for phenomenality, an absence to which phenomenology has to attend—in contrast to the philosophical tradition, which has supposedly ignored the experience of the withdrawn and reduced Being to presence. Yet the absent can only become manifest, so Heidegger holds now, thanks to the openness of the clearing: “even the absent cannot be as such if not by being present in the free open [*das Freie*] of the clearing.” (GA 14, 82)

²⁷ See Figal, “Heidegger und die Phänomenologie,” 43-54.

That the clearing is “before” beings does not mean then that it would become an a priori inaccessible to experience. On the contrary, it is imperative to delineate and describe the experience of the transcendental and this is not done adequately if one sees the clearing as something that was simply *before* our epoch of history. Thus Heidegger criticizes, even more explicitly than in the artwork essay, the historical form of transcendental argument: “the claim to an essential change in the essence of truth, i.e. from unconcealment to correctness, does not hold.” (GA 14,87) Unconcealment and correspondence as forms of truth and thingness and objectivity as corresponding ontological concepts do not follow one another historically but are rather simultaneous for phenomenology. Yet this is possible only in the clearing that is no historical formation but the condition, the transcendental ground of truth and is therefore independent of the way in which truth reveals itself differently throughout history. An experience is thus transcendental if and only if it discloses this presuppositionless, unprejudiced experience of the clearing.²⁸

In the artwork essay, Heidegger speaks differently of the withdrawal of fulfilling presence in the theory of truth, namely by claiming that truth is identical to *untruth* (*Unwahrheit*). Within the systematic framework of the artwork essay, the clearing does not “grant” the phenomenological truth of unconcealment but rather belongs to

²⁸ Jeff Malpas has described this redetermination as the turn from the transcendental to the topological. See Jeff Malpas, “From the transcendental to the topological. Heidegger on ground, unity and limit,” in: Jeff Malpas (ed.), *From Kant to Davidson. Philosophy and the idea of the transcendental*, London/New York: Routledge 2003, 75-99.

unconcealment as the opposite of concealment. Consequently, Heidegger later criticizes the artwork essay in a handwritten marginal note to his copy of the Reclam-edition (published in 1960): “the attempt (1935/37) insufficient because of the unduly use of the name ‘truth’ for the clearing, which was still held back, and for that which it clears.” (GA 5, 1)

Even though Heidegger addresses the clearing first in order to describe how “unconcealment itself” (GA 5, 39) happens, to truth as unconcealment essentially belongs a moment of absence: that works of art are things and belong to the earth in its strife with the world, defining an essential delimitation of what can be experienced, contrasts with the experience of unconcealment as the positive condition of possibility of intentional experience and logical truth. Thus works of art make possible an experience of the transcendental, but this experience is neither unlimited nor pure. For if the experience of truth as unconcealment were to be separated from what it makes possible, Heidegger would himself be prone to his own critique of truth as correspondence. Instead of separating experience into two layers, as it were, into the transcendental and the empirical layer and thus to reaffirm Kant’s division of human knowledge into two separate roots, Heidegger claims a unity of experience accessible to phenomenology.

Phenomenological experience is thus given when one makes the experience of a limit of experience and an experience of absence, the experience Heidegger describes using the concept of earth. This experience of absence relates to the possibility of knowledge

through the idea that there belongs to unconcealment not only the openness of the clearing but also a concealing (*Verbergen*): if something really is to be *unconcealed*, then it is not simply there in the clearing but it has been hidden or could always also be hidden, there belongs to it at least the possibility to fully withdraw. In this consideration, Heidegger takes up another idea from his interpretation of the history of philosophy: the interpretation of ἀλήθεια as ἀ-λήθεια, as unconcealment. ἀλήθεια is to be understood as a privation of λήθη, the Greek word for concealing or forgetting, indicated by the privative alpha.²⁹ As λήθη precedes ἀλήθεια, concealing proceeds unconcealment.

In the artwork essay, this idea is expressed by the relation of clearing and concealment, which is to be understood as *strife* (*Streit*). The strife of clearing and concealment is the “original strife [*Urstreit*]” (GA 5, 42) in relation to the more often cited strife of world and earth: as truth and untruth, clearing and concealing are an indivisible yet dynamic unity, and as forms of this more fundamental strife, world and earth also struggle and appear only in contrast to one another. The idea here is already the same as in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, although still integrated into the theory of truth: for not only the positive (transcendental) conditions of experience but also the limit of experience to be itself a possible experience, the condition of phenomena must also hold the condition for the concealing to appear as such. While the condition of appearing shows itself as the clearing, an experience of the condition of concealment happens,

²⁹ As a philological overview see Holger Helting, “ἀ-λήθεια-Etymologien vor Heidegger im Vergleich mit einigen Phasen der ἀ-λήθεια-Auslegung bei Heidegger,” *Heidegger Studies* 13 (1997), 93-108.

terminologically, in a refusal (*Verweigern*) of truth: “the essence of truth, i.e. of unconcealment, is mingled with [*durchwalten*] a refusal of truth. Yet this refusal is no deficiency and no flaw, as if truth were pure unconcealment rid of all concealed matters. If truth could deliver itself from the concealed, it would not be itself. There belongs to the essence of truth as unconcealment this refusal in the form of a twofold concealment. Truth is in its essence untruth.” (GA 5, 41)

To determine this concealment belonging to the essence of truth, Heidegger begins with the phenomenally positive, with the “openness of the clearing,” to show how it relates to concealing in the matter of the strife. The clearing shows “an essential trait we already named. To the open belongs a world and the earth. Yet the world is not simply the open corresponding to the clearing, and the earth is not the closed corresponding to concealment.” (GA 5, 42) Thus the conceptual couple of world and earth connects the description of the work of art with the theory of truth, yet both aspects of the dynamic phenomenality of the appearance of art, namely the “setting up” (*Aufstellen*) of a world and the “setting forth” (*Herstellen*) of the earth, are not simply identical to the two elements of unconcealment, to truth and untruth. The concealing is no originary experience of the limit of truth, a limit that can be experienced as such but can also be experienced in a manner that is itself untrue: truth as unconcealment must in particular also allow for the possibility to be deceived about truth, i.e. to believe something to be true that is not true in the sense of truth as unconcealment.

Such a deception is due inter alia to the problematic notions of objectivity Heidegger discusses, in particular those ignoring that things belong to the earth. (see GA 5, 57) Thus Heidegger's phenomenological notion of thing is decisive in order to separate phenomena of truth and untruth, and it explains the difference Heidegger sees in the "twofold concealment."³⁰ The first form of concealment, the benign form as it were, although powerful in the history of philosophy, is the restraint (*Verstellen*) of truth happening "within the cleared region [*innerhalb des Gelichteten*]" (GA 5, 40) and thus not advancing to its limit: "beings do appear but they do so differently than they are. This concealment is the restraint." (GA 5, 40) The restraint of truth explains the possibility of self-deception and mistakes, i.e. that we recognize something of do not recognize it as that which it is in its manifest truth.³¹

An example for such a restraint of truth is the confusion of gold and fake gold: fake gold is no gold but it deceptively appears to be gold. The properties it has in common with gold block access to, as it were, and disguise what the alleged gold truly is, namely fake gold, so that one is deceived. We formulate correct or false propositions referencing the properties of a certain state of affairs through their truth conditions. But such

³⁰ This difference, too, goes back to Heidegger's interpretation of Plato: In the *Theaitetos*, Plato distinguishes a false and deceptive belief (*ψευδὴς δόξα*) from the withdrawal of forgetting (*λήθη*). Only his discourse on earth allows Heidegger to give phenomenal evidence for the claim that the denial of truth in *λήθη* is an "objective event [*objektives Geschehen*]." (GA 34, 141). In that lecture, Heidegger's interpretation of *αἴσθησις* already hints at the sensible character of earth. See GA 34, 131-144, 220, 246-322; GA 36/37, 224-229, 246-262).

³¹ Recently, Tilo Wesche has taken up this idea in his work on moral truth. See Tilo Wesche, *Wahrheit und Werturteile. Eine Theorie der praktischen Rationalität*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2011.

verificatory reference to gold as fake gold already happens within the framework of certain more or less explicit ontological and epistemological convictions—it happens within a world and the preconditions it sets for experience: we have certain beliefs about gold in difference to fake gold and may correspondingly use them to determine something in its being. The truth of gold in that case is only “the correspondence with what we already and always ‘actually’ [*eigentlich*] mean by gold.” (GA 9, 179) This truth of gold has not been won from its phenomenality, from its self-showing.

The idea of a restraint of truth is essential to fit Heidegger’s critique of correctness and correspondence in the systematic of the artwork essay because it gives a name and a description of relevant experiences: correctness and correspondence, in all of the forms to be found in the history of philosophy, are to be understood as restraints of the essence of truth in truth and untruth that ignore the self-showing of the absent and thus, untruth: the connection of a proposition to a state affairs via truth conditions and the possibilities of verification might have been differently determined throughout the history of philosophy, but the conviction that truth is the correspondence of proposition and state of affairs, does not become questionable in itself. It thus effectively restrains the manifestness of things as themselves such that untruth passes as truth.

Untruth in a more radical sense is at issue for philosophy only when we experience the denial (*Versagen*) of truth: the categorial determinacy of beings is no longer taken for granted. We experience *that* something is but we cannot tell what it is: “beings deny

themselves to us except for that one and seemingly slightest fact that we describe best when we say from beings simply that they are.” (GA 54, 40) Whether something is, for example, gold or fake gold can then no longer be said. Our usual net of references has become questionable as a whole, and the possibility of reference is reduced to mere pointing at something.³² This not only constitutes the “each time specific [*jedesmalig*] limit to knowledge,” (GA 5, 40) because knowledge in contrast to deictic reference presupposes categorial determinations: beings can be known but all categories recoil from that which we can only point at. Yet this something showing itself, the something at which we point, is manifest phenomenally, it is experienced in a “concealment as denial [*Verbergung als Versagen*],” (GA 5, 40) as a self-denial of truth. In this experience, all beings have become questionable and have been bracketed, as it were, in their theoretical and life-worldly meaning and determinacy: not only a particular being is restrained from showing itself as itself but all beings are closed off from our knowing reference and thus in their determinacy. Still, they are there, defying a reference capable of truth.

In such a situation it may become clear that in the search for verifiable truth conditions, we are making suppositions that are not met by the appearing thing itself. In the experience of a denial of truth, there lies an experience of the possibility and of the medium of intentionality, namely, an experience of the openness of the clearing in its strife with concealment. It shows itself that something can show itself at all. This is

³² See GA 41, 24. Also Günter Figal, “Zeigen und Sichzeigen,” in: *Verstehensfragen. Studien zur hermeneutisch-phänomenologischen Phänomenologie*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2009, 200-210.

presupposed in every particular appearing within the clearing but in the denial of truth, concealing shows itself unrestrained. Concealment thus shows itself as a condition of experience of a particular equal to the clearing, as something that is not only derived from and only a privation of truth as phenomenality but is itself an originary phenomenon. Yet if the denial is an experience of the limit of experience letting all prior determinations become questionable, this experience of truth also marks the “beginning of the cleared region of what is cleared [*Anfang der Lichtung des Gelichteten*].” (GA 5, 40) This beginning is effectuated by a “decision” about what Being is and about what the categories mean, short: by a decision about the world as a meaningful whole. Such a decision, establishing a world, does not come out of nothing but begins out of the experience of denial, it “is founded on something that has not been coped with, something hidden, something confusing; if it would not be, it would never be a decision.” (GA 5, 42) In other words: the decision about the beginning, the decision what we make of the experience of the denial of truth and untruth, is grounded in phenomena that have the self-concealing nature of the earth as ground of our world. Because it confronts these phenomena, such an inceptual decision opens up a world in which the capacities of our intentional reference is secured, in which beings have been determined as beings and have thus become objects of knowledge.

The restraint happening within a world without putting it into question is a privation of the clearing, and adumbration, as it were: everything is present as part of the world,

even the concealed has become accessible although as something that it is not, causing self-deceptions and fallacies. Yet in the denial of truth that which within the clearing appeared to be graspable by our intentions and categorial determinations proves itself to be wrested from a concealment that is of the same origin as the condition of its knowability is; everything proves to be only on the verge of presence. It is the withdrawing character of the denial of truth that allows Heidegger to make a connection of untruth to the concepts of world and earth, representing, respectively, the worldly meaning and the sensible experience of nature in the artwork: that which is cleared belongs to a world, but through its “enduring origin [*ständige Herkunft*]” (GA 5, 41) in concealment, the clearing shows itself as belonging to the earth, “denying [*versagen*] all intrusion.” (GA 5, 33) As when a rock is smashed (see GA 5, 33), the essence of the earth is a self-showing of the hiding of something hiding itself—but that this is the case can only be experienced in phenomena that openly show themselves to be phenomena of concealment: “the earth is not simply the closed off but that which opens up as that which closes itself off.” (GA 5, 42) Yet to show itself as something absent can again only happen in the openness of the clearing taking shape as a world. But this means that the experience of a denial of truth has become susceptible to deceit and that it is well possible, to put it in Heidegger’s terms, that we believe a restraint of truth to be a denial of truth and that we take a denial of truth to be a trivial restraint of truth, to be a limited deception or contingent fallacy. The best example for this can be seen in our difficulties to do justice epistemically to nature in the humanities and the sciences: here, a representationalist

abstraction all too easily bars our view on the limited givenness of the phenomenon of nature itself.

The restraint can thus be best determined in Heidegger's terms as something belonging to the world that blocks off the experience of something that would have the self-enclosing character of the earth if one would allow it to show itself as it is and not force it into the categorial determinacy of the world. Thus a proposition that is correct according to all criteria available still conceals something in its unconcealed being, in its presence and absence. How that happens is clear from Heidegger's transformation of the phenomenological method and the phenomenological determination of objectivity: our merely implicit or even explicit ontology disguises the self-enclosing nature of earth if we represent it as being an object and not take it as a thing. Yet if we do this, the earth will appear within the world as something that is its ground and its possibility and is foreign and uncanny precisely because of that. The earth is thus not disguised by what seemed self-evident but it can conceal *itself* freely and in doing so, it openly display its true nature. This experience must be a denial of truth, for it cannot be grasped with the categories of a world. Both world and earth are true in that they both conceal and let be unconcealed; the restraint of truth is a concealment through the world, the denial of truth being the natural concealment, as it were, of the earth.

The experience of works of art is a fitting example for this, and it is thus no surprise that Heidegger uses art as its paradigm: propositions about works of art can only be

verified or falsified if they do not take their ontological and categorial presuppositions from the artwork itself. But then it is not the truth of the work itself but only the correctness of propositions about the work that is decided, according to criteria foreign to the work, as in the case where one finds out what size or what weight an artwork has, from which material it is made or to what historical epochs and social conditions it belongs. Yet in determining the correctness of such propositions, we ignore the experience of the work of art as a work of art and even restrain it, block it off. The sensible, categorially indeterminate experience we have of the artwork as something of the character of the earth becomes inaccessible; what is foreign to the world is overlooked and neither truth nor untruth of the artwork are experienced. If the task is to describe the artwork as a work of art, such a description would have to attend to the structured, albeit never fully graspable experience of the artwork itself. Instead of measuring with norms of knowledge and experience that do not come from the work but from the world surrounding it, we are thrown back upon our experience, and for this experience, not everything is evident and precisely because of that we know that the work shows itself as itself. This is why it is a decision to speak about such an experience of withdrawal, to speak about what the work 'does' with oneself and the world.

Because the denial of truth can be experienced in what Heidegger calls the earth, it takes a certain precedence over the world for the theory of truth: as soon as we experience unconcealment as truth *and* untruth in the work of art, a given world reveals itself as

susceptible to fallacy and as restraining certain phenomena. The categories of a world and the related meaning of Being become questionable such that “through the work of art everything usual and everything past becomes a nonbeing,” (GA 5, 60) and thus happens precisely what was to be set free by the phenomenological ἐποχή. Yet the earth, even though its nature is its concealing, gains in phenomenality such that one experiences concealment as essentially belonging to truth: “the work lets the earth be an earth.” (GA 5, 32)³³

Even Heidegger’s critique of ancient and modern ontology can be understood from the idea that truth and untruth as clearing and concealing have their common origin in unconcealment, for if a correct proposition represents a being as an object, the same can be said of Platonic ideas: “ideas destroy concealment.” (GA 34, 70) But this limitation of ancient and modern philosophy—that it only describes presence, an idea that Heidegger will use to describe the “history of being” (GA 6.2, 363) in *Nietzsche II* (published in 1961)—is for the theory of truth nothing but a case of the restraint of truth: a being blocks the view of another being, an ideal being or a conscious and reasonable representation pretend to be something else than they are in truth. To be free in view of the history of Being thus does not so much mean returning to a historical beginning than to interpret

³³ This critical move against an ontological determination of art marks the difference to the way in which Gadamer links art and truth: Gadamer describes the effect of art on *all* phenomena, also those of the world, as “increase in Being [*Zuwachs an Sein*],” while Heidegger holds that some beings become non-being. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Gesammelte Werke vol. I, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1986, 145.

propositions and ideas as phenomena of unconcealment that can never simply be present. Ideas and beliefs corresponding to them are then neither fully certain nor fully graspable in propositions, rather they bear within themselves a limit to knowledge.

But not only such a reading of the history of philosophy that the theory of truth in *On the Origin of the Work of Art* allows, also the connection Heidegger makes between the strife of world and earth and the strife of clearing and concealment in determining phenomenological truth goes far beyond the central theme of the artwork essay: the phenomenal characteristics of world and earth Heidegger uses to describe artworks can also be found outside art and thus allow for an enlargement of the thinking of truth as unconcealment beyond the domain of art. What shows itself in the work as the withdrawal of worldly and self-evident presence is maybe the paradigmatic but not the only possibility to experience unconcealment as the strife of clearing and concealment. It is in view of art that Heidegger gains the insight that everything that shows itself has been wrestled from originary concealment. It shows itself as that which shows itself only in this way, and if one allows it, also in its denial of truth. That something can at the same time show itself and withdraw itself and in this, it is experienced as true, may be most intuitive to admit in confronting art, but it may be generalized. Already in the artwork essay, Heidegger can thus describe art, religion, politics, and philosophy as the different forms of “how truth appears [*wesen*].” (GA 5, 49) World and earth, clearing and concealing, as well as restraint and denial exist also in other domains if some presupposition does not

conceal this originary experience—as is the case in sciences that do not reflect their most fundamental categories. (see GA 5, 49-50) The sciences, albeit susceptible of fallacy, are thus not irrelevant to phenomenology, nor is art the only possible object of a philosophy that tries to describe the phenomenality of unconcealment.

In the artwork essay, Heidegger only explains indirectly the distinctions between the different forms of truth, namely by sketching the nature of truth in art. For one, truth in art is beautiful: “*beauty is a way in which truth is unconcealment appears.*” (GA 5, 43) Thus Heidegger positions himself vis-à-vis Kantian aesthetics in which the judgment of the beautiful is determined as a reference to “knowledge in general [*Erkenntnis überhaupt*].”³⁴ Through the theory of truth as Heidegger has developed it so far, it is evident that Kant's analysis falls short of the experience of truth as unconcealment: unconcealment cannot be grasped by the analysis of judgments, its experience is not propositional. Yet Kant sees that beauty cannot be a conceptually or schematically determined experience and still is extremely relevant to knowledge, both reaffirming and calling into question the human capacity to know. As an experience, as Heidegger would say, beauty grants access to what precedes the categorial determinacy of beings in the world, to its ground in earth.

For Kant, nature as such can also be beautiful. Heidegger comments on the truth of natural beauty only indirectly because he believes that beauty does not provide a specific

³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, B 28.

difference for the truth of art. Thus Heidegger distances himself from Kant: for Heidegger, only the beauty in art, the beautiful made by men, configures clearing and concealing as a strife of world and earth *in the work*. Only the artwork can be that “in which openness takes its enduring position.” (GA 5, 48) Not in the beauty of nature, only in the positioning of art in the work the strife of clearing and concealing becomes manifest in the way specific of art. It is thus not clear whether Heidegger believes (phenomena of) nature to be beautiful and thus true, or if nature has its own truth. But the experience of truth as unconcealment in the strife of clearing and concealing can certainly also take place outside the beautiful, which Kant would deny. The work, specifically the truth of art, is something steady, a place in which truth and untruth appear together and the two forms of concealment can be distinguished. In other realms in which truth as unconcealment also happens but without being bound to things, in the political for example, denial and restraint of truth are more difficult to distinguish. Yet there, too, unconcealment happens.

Event

After the publication of the artwork essay, Heidegger summarizes the originary experience of phenomenology, of truth and untruth in a single word he notes on a number of pages of his copy: *Ereignis*. To his own question: “what is truth itself such that it can take place [*sich ereignen*] as art?”, Heidegger can now give a very brief answer: “truth from out of the event [*Wahrheit aus Ereignis*]!” (GA 5, 25) In his marginal notes,

Heidegger declares “unconcealment as such in relation to beings as a whole,” (GA 5, 43) that which is “beyond Being” and “before” it (GA 5, 39) to be identical with the event. Also, the “originary strife” of clearing and concealing, “by which the open center is freed for beings to stand in it at out of which they withdraw into themselves” (GA 5, 42) is now named event. These later additions make clear that unconcealment is no “rigid stage,” with neither an open nor closed curtain but, as Heidegger already says in the published version, an “incident” or “happening” (*Geschehnis*, GA 5, 41, see GA 5, 24, 27, 45, 48, 58-62), or in Heidegger’s later terminology, an “event.” (*Ereignis*, GA 5, 41) Heidegger’s additions underline that *work* has a double meaning that can be described through the theory of art in the artwork essay: the work of art is the place for the event of truth being “at work [*am Werk*]” (GA 5, 27, 43, 44, 48, 57) of truth, but it is not itself this event. Both aspects of the work, “being a work” (*Werksein*, GA 5, 20 and passim, especially 30-36) and being “at work,” can be distinguished phenomenologically, although as the place and the occurrence of truth, they cannot be separated. (see GA 5, 56-59)

Thus art, examined along the lines of a relation of thing and work, guides Heidegger beyond the bipolar (even if not dualistic) conception of truth as strife of clearing and concealing, as can be seen in the way he rewrites the artwork essay by including the notion of the event. Instead of being its simple opposite, “eventing [*Ereignen*]” has become a synonym for “clearing [*Lichten*],” (GA 5, 39), even if the two do not form a unity in principle. There is rather the absolutely singular, the “singleness [*Einzigkeit*]”

(GA 5, 53) of the event standing out of concealment, yet being irreducible to either one or two principles or being determinable as the condition of phenomena that the clearing is.³⁵ The event is rather that which shows itself without being in advance determined by the necessary conditions bound to its appearing in the clearing. What has the character of an event (*ereignishaft*) in art, is not only that the work has been created and stands before us as the double strife of clearing and concealing, earth and world, but that every work “is as this work” and thus “Being, concealing itself, has been cleared.” (GA 5, 43) In art, this happens in such a way that every work of art lets become manifest beings as such in its original phenomenal being out of originary concealment. Something singular in this sense does not only happen in art—yet in the work of art it can be easily localized. This is why unconcealment as an event can be best described as an event at work in the work. The notion of event does not replace the determination of art as setting into a work of truth but emphasizes its double meaning: events, the being at work of truth, can also take place without works of—but in view of works of art they can be treated by phenomenology. In this lies the affinity of phenomenology to art.

Because world and earth, clearing and concealing, restraint and denial of truth can be distinguished in the experience of an individual work of art but can never be separated,

³⁵ Reiner Schürmann is most prominent in underlining singularity as anarchical principle in Heidegger. See Reiner Schürmann, *Le principe d'anarchie. Heidegger et la question de l'agir*, Paris: Seuil 1982. More recently, Jussi Backman has restated this argument drawing on newly edited text and focussing of Heidegger's interpretation of ancient philosophy. See Jussi Backman, *Complicated Presence. The Unity of Being in Parmenides and Heidegger*, Tampere 2009.

there are limits constituted by a thinking of the event for every conception of *the* truth or any uniform theory of appearing—only the negativity of the denial of truth can be universally determined as something as an abysmal phenomenality,³⁶ over and against there is the singularity of the experience of the event. Only through such an experience both confirming and limiting the openness of the clearing, hiding its connection of art and truth is more than a mere experience of negativity. If concealing, according to Heidegger, must not be determined as the dialectical opposite of a universal appearing (see GA 5, 41), phenomenality cannot be described as a dualistic truth (unconcealment, ἀλήθεια) but can only be described as originary in its singularity, as having the character of an event. This explains why Heidegger eventually abandons the attempt to think phenomenality as truth and untruth but held on to the claim that the clearing makes truth possible: in its dynamic character, the truth possible in the clearing can only be described by reference to singular events. As something clearing a space of appearance, the event is phenomenal abundance even if this abundance cannot be determined by a general principle nor abstractly defined. One must have made its experience to understand truth as singular unconcealment.

³⁶ William Richardson has emphasized this in his discussion of negativity in Heidegger. See William Richardson, *Heidegger. Through phenomenology to thought*, The Hague: Nijhoff 1963, 1-24. The idea is renewed (without reference to Richardson) by Andrea Kern. See Andrea Kern, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks’. Kunst und Wahrheit zwischen Stiftung und Streit,” in: Dieter Thomä (ed.), *Heidegger Handbuch. Leben-Werk-Wirkung*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler 2003, 162-173.

There is, then, no general phenomenological givenness but simply the things themselves and, in art, the works and the event at work in them. Thus Heidegger's skepticism about phenomenological method grows. One of the marginal notes formulates it thus: "to reverse [*Umkehren*] - where to?" (GA 5, 29), and in the *Addition* to the artwork essay, Heidegger writes that art belongs "(in)to the event [*in das Ereignis*]," it is being conditioned by what shows itself as an event, and from this, Heidegger even draws conclusions for his own meditation of art: the determinations of art in the artwork essay cannot be ultimate but shall be understood only as "guides [*Hinweise*] for questioning." (GA 5, 73) Still,—and this is the decisive guide of the artwork essay— one can describe that truth takes place in the work that in its double character as place and event is a singular origin: art is the setting into a work of truth. A questioning for the truth of art that follows Heidegger's guide must thus always be a questioning for truth of the work as that very specific work.

The theory of truth shows the artwork essay to be both a center and a breakpoint in Heidegger's work: the theory of art, because it is linked with truth and the self showing of phenomena, decisively interrupts his prior meditation and his further thought on the essence of truth and phenomenality. Yet until his latest thought, Heidegger is concerned with following what he takes to be the guide of the artwork essay: to understand by concentrating on works of art how despite of a denial of truth there can be clearing and event, how the appearing of phenomena can both be made possible by the clearing and

happen only from out of concealment, happen only as an event. The questioning of art as well as the questioning of truth can thus be not only oriented by Heidegger's guide but must also turn to individual works of art in order to open thinking to the event and to a questioning beginning from the event. In the so-called Athens lecture, *The Origin of Art and the Future of Thinking* (1967), one of his latest texts on the matter, Heidegger asks: "must not the work as a work point to that which is not available to man, to that which conceals itself, so that the work can say more than what one knows and does already?"³⁷

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, "Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens," in: *Denkerfahrungen*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 1983, 135-149, here 148.—An earlier version of this chapter has been published in German as "Kunst, Werk, Wahrheit. Heideggers Wahrheitstheorie in *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*," in: David Espinet/Tobias Keiling (eds.), *Heideggers Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*. Ein kooperativer Kommentar, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2011, 66-95. I have translated and reused the material here with the kind permission of Vittorio E. Klostermann.

4. *Heimat des Geistes*

Heidegger, Husserl and Hegel on 'earth'

There are different approaches to understanding a philosophical text. Heidegger's discourse on earth is particularly difficult to interpret, and it is thus no surprise to find that its interpretations take different directions, especially when it comes to the relation of the concept of earth to the central claim of *The Origin of the Work of Art*: that all art is in its essence poetry and that because of that, poetic art is paradigmatic for all art.

Instead of following the word 'earth' to its origin in Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, one could attempt to relate the concept to our sensual and bodily experience, taking 'earth' to refer to something essentially sensual. In such an approach, one would most likely turn to the following passage of the artwork essay:

The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to say [sound, speak]. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the brightening and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word. (GA 5, 32)

Heidegger here gives a vivid description of what, in the experience of artworks, appears to the senses, of what is natural in a work; the rich semantics of his words echo this sensibility of art. Note the double account of the audible: in the work, “tones” come to “sing” and “the word” comes to “say.” To this characteristic of saying, to the characteristic of the sensibility of poetry, Heidegger later adds “to sound” (*Verlauten*) and “to speak” (*Sprechen*).³⁸ One can take this later addition, as well as the fact that poetry is, together with music, listed as a primarily audible art, as emphasizing the bodily presence of the sensible in the experience of poetry and even attempt to reduce the description of the ‘earthly’ character of the experience of art to its eminently sensual givenness Heidegger evokes.³⁹

And indeed, the most remarkable feature in the only poem Heidegger quotes at length to exemplify his claims is precisely this essential audibility. One seems to hear the movement of the water in the movement of sounds. What lyrical art—the paradigm for

³⁸ See Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks,” GA 5, p. 32.

³⁹ Most explicitly in Frank Schalow’s *The Incarnality of Being*, which closes thus: “the practices by which we return to the earth, such as ecology, then provide a *logos* to express the incarnality of Being, its mergence through the conjunction of time and space (*Zeit-Raum*). For only by heeding being’s incarnality can we appreciate our position as inhabitants of the earth and pay homage to the remarkable diversity of life.” (Schalow, *The Incarnality of Being. The Earth, Animals, and the Body in Heidegger’s Thought*, Alabany: SUNY Press 2006, 184) This tendency is also particularly dominant in aesthetics and cultural studies, see for example Georg W. Bertram, *Kunst. Eine philosophische Einführung*, Stuttgart: Reclam 2005, 228: “We can translate Heidegger’s concepts into those introduced earlier. Thus earth means the material accessible to the senses;” also Dieter Mersch, *Was sich zeigt. Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis*, Munich: Fink 2002.

all art, so Heidegger claims—would achieve then is to re-establish a certain primordial sameness of meaning and sound, sensible form and ideal content:⁴⁰

Der römische Brunnen

Aufsteigt der Strahl und fallend gießt
Er voll der Marmorschale Rund,
Die, sich verschleiern, überfließt
In einer zweiten Schale Grund;
Die zweite gibt, sie wird zu reich,
Der dritten wallend ihre Flut,
Und jede nimmt und gibt zugleich
Und strömt und ruht.

Roman Fountain

The jet ascends and falling fills
The marble basin circling round;
This, veiling itself over, spills
Into a second basin's ground.
The second in such plenty lives,
Its bubbling flood a third invests,
And each at once receives and gives
And streams and rests.

In my brief indications of how one might pursue an interpretation along the lines of the sensible, one of the arguments referred to a later addition to Heidegger's text, looking at this text as an historiographer of philosophy would. This is only a minuscule example of how two opposite approaches to interpretation—appeal to the sensible given as an experience now present to my bodily being; research in historical meaning—, when actually facing a given text, constantly relate and interact, even if unwillingly or unreflectedly so. That the simple appeal to the immediacy of the sensible is in fact very restrictive and ultimately insufficient for understanding the experience of art as

⁴⁰ The original text of the poem and its translation are taken from the respective editions of *The Origin of the Work of Art* (German: GA 5, 23; English: Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in: *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, San Francisco: Harper 1993, 163).

Heidegger describes it becomes even more evident when one turns to the context of the passage from *The Origin of the Work of Art* just cited, embedding the description in its context. The paragraph from which the quotation is taken begins thus: “to work-being there belongs the setting-up of a world.” (GA 5, 32) What Heidegger has so vividly described, then, were not phenomena of the earth as the pure sensible but rather phenomena of the earth as they appear to the senses *within the world* opened up by the work of art. If this is so, then Heidegger seems to make a different claim: what one might like to take as an appeal to the immediacy of an eminently sensible experience, as an appeal to the immediacy of our bodily lives is in fact already mediated, given only in the relational, horizontal structure of the world. Taking Heidegger’s notion of earth as referring to the immediacy of the sensible does not do justice to this mediation in which the earth is bound to appear. Also, it does not explain what makes the sound of a poem different from any other speech. Despite the vivid description of sensual experiences, these do not indicate that a particular status has to be attributed to our bodily lives in order to account for the experiences of the earth, and it is thus incoherent to attempt to reduce Heidegger’s descriptions to descriptions of sensuality, to a particular set of lived experiences. Yet this does not make ‘earth’ a concept to be solely determined by its position in the history of the ideas either, or an idea reducible to, say, the semantics of German *Erde* in the 1930s.

If we attempt to answer the methodological question of how to interpret Heidegger's use of the notion of earth then, it becomes all the more evident that one cannot simply decide which line of interpretation one wishes to follow. It is particularly inadequate in the given case because the discourse on earth is precisely Heidegger's attempt to avoid the aporia of reducing phenomena to either history (meanings are constituted in historical processes) or nature (meanings are the immediate experience of what is). It would be no less in accord with the phenomenon to describe earth through research in the history of the concept without taking notice of all the sensible experiences Heidegger's text evokes. Rather, a middle ground must be found that can account for both dimensions of the phenomenon.

A possible alternative to the impasse of letting history and nature part ways, is, as it were, to stay in place. One would then aim to unfold a philosophical notion like the notion of earth as phenomenological description without either reducing it to the allegedly immediate sensual or referring it to its inheritance of an intellectual history from which the idea of earth would, as primarily historical, receive its meaning. One would remain with the experience of a given text, with what it yields to understanding and imagination, and attempt to develop this text as holding itself an experience of the phenomenon, as letting oneself imagine what is said in the text, setting aside methodological directives forcing one to misinterpret Heidegger's discourse on earth in the one direction or the other. Such attempt is, of course, in terms of the history of

philosophy, both a very phenomenological and a very Heideggerian idea: following a path that leads nowhere but is itself the philosophical experience to look out for; remaining with given phenomena, the manner in which experiences are given; taking philosophy to be essentially descriptive; yet not to reduce phenomena to present conscious givenness but to search for the historical determinations they embody. Such an interpretation one may—with Heidegger, (see GA 9, 447-448)—*topological*, and it is certainly different from a ‘classical’ phenomenology of consciousness. Rather, as might most easily be understood in the case of art, it is the phenomenon, as being itself part of language and of history, that enables us to describe it and to interpret its descriptions, and that thus opens up what may be best describe as its proper place.⁴¹

Dwelling on a philosophical notion to develop its descriptive capacities is thus not to be stuck with, staring at, a specific concept or a specific passage in a given text. A phenomenological interpretation of Heidegger’s discourse on ‘earth’ would rather attempt to discern certain traits of the phenomenon the text describes and then try to recognize these and other traits in other texts. It would create a web of to texts from the history of philosophy in particular, and precisely in such a way would it let interpretation become more meaningful as descriptions of specific traits of a phenomenon. In such an attempt to develop the descriptive force of a given passage, it is not in itself relevant if

⁴¹ Jeff Malpas has developed Heidegger’s thought as a whole as a “philosophical topology.” See Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology. Being, Place, Word*, Cambridge/London: MIT Press 2006; *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place. Explorations in the Topology of Being*, Cambridge/Londong: MIT Press 2012. Malpas does not situate this topology in the context of phenomenology, though.

Heidegger has actually read a particular author or has paid close attention to the passages one takes to refer to the same phenomenon; it is of no importance either if authors use the same words or even the same language to describe the same phenomenon, though to some extent and within the limits set by the need for translation, this is very likely to be the case. In order neither to neglect nor to overstress the (idiomatic) differences of descriptions, descriptive texts must gain their eventual unity by what they describe and they must gather in their words a unity of meaning that is the unity of a phenomenon.⁴²

Yet if *phenomenological* or *topological interpretation* in this sense cannot hope to form a definite concept, it is nonetheless reasonable to expect and to create a certain continuity in the use of words that an interpretation can rely on and to form a coherent semantics of earth. It is to expect, as Heidegger says, that a word or a question itself will open up a place of experience particular to a phenomenon, and what philosophy can achieve, then, is to find a way to this place or to make the way philosophy takes become a

⁴² Derrida has given an example of this operation in developing his notion of *différance*. The interpretation of a philosophical text can proceed analogous to his attempt to give meaning to this new word by gathering contexts to passages and in particular, to the word, interpreted. Derrida explains his aim to “gather in a *bundle* [*rassembler en faisceau*] the different directions in which I can use the word or in which I was rather forced to use it [...]. I am using the word *bundle* for two reasons: on the one hand, this not about writing a history (as I could also have), not about telling the stages of this history, text by text, context by context and to show at each of these stages what economy would caused such unruly writing [*dérèglement graphique*]; rather, this is about the *general system of this economy*. On the other hand, the word *bundle* seems more apt to mark that the gathering proposed here has the structure of an entanglement [*intrication*], of a weaving [*tissage*], of an overcrossing [*croisement*] that will also let go of the different threads and the different lines of sens or of force, because it will be ready to tie in others.” (Jacques Derrida, *Marges. De la philosophie*, Paris: Minuit 1972, 3-4) In the interpretation presented here, a similar attempt is made for ‘earth,’ although I am allowing myself to understand the discourse thus created as a *description* of the *phenomenon* of earth, putting aside for the moment the difficulties Derrida sees in these notions. Also, in difference to *différance*, which is a neographism and a neologism, *earth* has indeed become again and ageing the subject of philosophical inquiry, most prominently since Nietzsche.

place. (see GA 12, 33; GA 11, 9) This can be done only because the phenomenal traits used to select a different context for the explanation of a notion are *phenomenological*; they already represent an interaction of language and phenomenal givenness. We can thus not only also choose other appearances of the phenomenon described to illustrate its phenomenological characteristics but also attempt to disclose more of its traits by taking a second look at references or examples given in the text we interpret, a look now informed by the further descriptions consulted.

We will thus come back to the *Roman Fountain* later and see if we find more in it than a particularly auditory poem.

Beyond the sensible

A first of the phenomenological traits of the earth we have already discerned: the intense sensuality of the experience of phenomena associated with the earth: “the rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to say [sound, speak].” Yet these appearances are, as we have seen, not in themselves experiences of the earth but only through the work of art setting up a historical world and thus establishing a contrast to the appearance of the earth. The glowing color of, say, an autumn leaf, its shiny green, yellow, red, or brown is not in itself an experience of the earth, although anyone inclined to interpret Heidegger’s words by reducing them (albeit only implicitly) to immediate sensibility will very likely misunderstand him thus. Rather, only because the work of art incorporates nature in our

historical world do such phenomena we associate with nature show themselves as phenomena *of the earth*. Or to use Heidegger's words: only in the "strife [*Streit*]" (GA 5, 35) of world and earth do phenomena of the earth appear: "*The work lets the earth be an earth [Das Werk läßt die Erde eine Erde sein].*" (GA 5, 32)

Take the example of Andy Goldsworthy's minimalistic sculptures of leaves (plate 1).



Plate 1: Andy Goldsworthy, *Raining* / yellow leaves /stripped away from central vein / lying flat / following contours of rock, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 3 October 1999. © Andy Goldsworthy 2000.⁴³

⁴³ Image taken from: Andy Goldsworthy, *Time. Chronology* by Terry Friedman, New York: Harry N. Abrams 2000, 162.

It is important to emphasize that this is not a work embodying earth because its is made from tree leaves and because these leaves have some naturalness or some materiality to them that make them appear to the senses in a particular way. Only through the artistic manipulation, through the “setting-up” of a work of art, do these leaves glow as something of the earth in the world of color they open up, and what is earth-like in seeing these leaves is not the coloring itself but the withdrawal of this glowing into an elemental indeterminacy. Thus, in the passage already quoted—“all this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the brightening and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word”—it is the common trait of all these phenomena that they manifest the withdrawing and refusal essential to earth. Not the glowing colors of these leaves in themselves, but the reluctance of their emergence from out of darkness and sheer brightness is the earth in the work of art. Not because it is made of certain ‘natural’ materials (stone, wood, metal—or in the case of Goldsworthy’s sculpture: tree leaves) does the work destroy every-day visibility and open up an intensified way of looking at the colors of nature. It is rather only through the resistance of that which does not immediately appear that in this lies an experience of earth. Only because of that, Heidegger can summarize: “The earth appears openly cleared [*offen gelichtet*] as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is essentially undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up [*ständig sich*”

verschlossen hält]. [...] To set forth the earth means to bring it into the open region as the self-secluding.” (GA 5, 33) The appearance of the earth may thus happen through a simple rearrangement of leaves on the ground, but it will need a ‘setting up’, how minimal it may be. It is not the naturalness of the material or its sensible appearance in itself but the interplay of original seclusion and openness taking place in these experience that makes the experience of an artwork such as Goldsworthy’s sculpture an experience of the earth. This appearance out of seclusion is the second characteristic of phenomena that are of the earth.

The earth does not move

If a word indeed gathers different meanings, different contexts, and discloses different dimensions of the same phenomenon, it may serve to find another of its phenomenal traits. The word thus allows one to turn to another author, to Husserl, in this case, and his discourse on earth. Here, we see this self-secluding character of the earth developed in a manner fully independent from Heidegger, in a text Heidegger probably did not know. Albeit some intellectual exchange or some common source for Husserl’s and Heidegger’s use of the term may still be discovered, it is imperative to emphasize the historical independence of their accounts.⁴⁴ Surely, both are authors of the phenomenological

⁴⁴ As Husserl’s assistant, Heidegger had access to all of Husserl’s manuscript while he was in Freiburg. After his appointment in Marburg, it is very difficult to say which of the extensive research manuscripts Heidegger may have had the chance to consult. By 1934, after presenting his lectures *Phänomenologie und*

movement writing in nearly the same year (Husserl's manuscript was written between May 7th and 9th, 1934) using the same words, but that is insufficient ground to relate their texts. Rather the claim that both phenomenologists speak of the same phenomenon when they write 'earth' already relies on an interpretation of Husserl's text in view of the same phenomenon, i.e. on a phenomenological interpretation. If one indeed looks at the manuscript that seems to have so little to do with art on a first sight from the place of the artwork essay, gathering discourses on earth in a single place, more of that which is called earth should become manifest. If phenomenological interpretation is successful and the anticipations it makes are justified, it should become manifest and indeed it should show itself that both speak of the same phenomenon. There should be some overlap in their discussions of earth and their should phenomenological insight be gained from thus arranging these texts.

When it was edited, the text of the manuscript was found enclosed in an envelope on which Husserl had written its full title: "Overthrow of the Copernican theory in the usual interpretation as a worldview. The original ark, earth, does not move. Foundational investigations of the phenomenological origin of the corporeality of the spatiality pertaining to Nature in the initial meaning of the natural science."⁴⁵ Already this title

Anthropologie at several occasions in which he criticized Heidegger openly, it is very unlikely that Husserl or one of his assistants would have entrusted Heidegger with a newly written manuscript.

⁴⁵ The text was published in English as "Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature," translated by Frederick Kersten, in: Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston (eds.), *Husserl: Shorter Works*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1981, 213-221. The first publication

indicates the context of Husserl's account of the earth: Husserl describes the earth as the condition of movement; it is the ground or origin, the ἀρχή of movement, a characteristic trait that is lost if one conceives of planet earth, as we do since Copernicus, as a celestial body among others. Precisely by bringing it into view as a moving celestial body, earth has been restraint in its original appearance by the abstraction of modern, Copernican science. Already in that it can be concealed through our modern misunderstanding of it, we should note, the earth is historical. For Husserl, earth is essential to a phenomenological understanding of movement:

Motion [*Bewegung*] occurs on the earth, or near it, moving off away from it, based on it. In conformity with its original idea, the earth does not move and does not rest; only in relation to it do motion and rest [*Ruhe*] have meaning. [...] rest is given as something decisive and absolute, and likewise motion: that is to say, they are so given at the first level of constitution of the earth as basis [*Boden*].⁴⁶

The characteristic immovability of planet earth, on the most fundamental level of movement, is shared by other spatial objects. In our conscious experience, the first of these is the lived body. It is earth-like in that it is a “basis body” (*Bodenkörper*) relative to which there is movement; my lived body is “the body carrying me while moving [*der mich bewegt tragende*].”⁴⁷ Yet because I always experience myself as moving and

in German can be found in: “Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum phänomenologischen Ursprung der Räumlichkeit der Natur”, in: Marvin Farber (ed.), *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1940, 307-325. The full title I have translated above is given on page 307 of this edition: “Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre in der gewöhnlichen weltanschaulichen Interpretation. Die Ur-Arche Erde bewegt sich nicht. Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der Körperlichkeit der Räumlichkeit der Natur im ersten naturwissenschaftlichen Sinne.”

⁴⁶ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 309-310.

⁴⁷ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 311-312.

experience my own movement, the earth-like immovability of my body is mostly overlooked, as is its heaviness and firmness. Earth is the name for this primacy of rest in the movement of my lived body as well as in the movement of all bodies.⁴⁸ This rest may be concealed if we see something moving but do not recognize it as also resting in itself, but it is there already in that there is *something* that moves: that there is something that remains throughout change allows one to speak of an object at all. The movement of something also always appears as a movement relative to something else, and be it relative only to the position of the observer who only has a position by having a body, by being of the earth at least in this respect. This relativity of movement describes its ground and its limitation, but it also defines movement as we understand it. It is only in contrast with the rest of the earth or of something like the earth that we experience movement. We therefore do not have experiences of the earth because we have a body, but we are more fundamentally dependent on the earth for having a body at all which has essentially the same function as the earth has. Yet by borrowing our corporeality from the earth, as it were, we do not simply obtain a means to have sensible experience. We gain take part in the phenomenality of all that is of the earth.

Something similar can be observed in the *Roman Fountain*. In the poem, not only do the meaning and the sound of words intermingle so as no longer to allow for the aesthetic

⁴⁸ On Heidegger's development of this idea, see Guang Yang, "Kehrseite der Bewegung. Zu Heideggers Verständnis der Ruhe in den Marburger Vorlesungen und der Φύσις-Abhandlung," in: Tobias Keiling (ed.), *Heideggers Marburger Zeit. Themen, Argumente, Konstellationen*, Frankfurt: Klostermann 2013, 191-206.

differentiation of a meaningful content and its form or medium. What becomes present in the poem is, even more than a blurring of the distinction between sensible and intelligible, a configuration of movement and pause, an exercise of both voice and stillness, the rhythmic flow—*Und jede nimmt und gibt zugleich*—coming to rest in the final phonetic repose borrowed from Goethe’s famous poem: *Und strömt und ruht*. In a seminar held in 1936/37, during the years in which he rewrites *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger explicitly makes his students aware of this characteristic of the poem. According to the transcript of Wilhelm Hallwachs, Heidegger not only draws attention to the “striking emergence of sounds [*eigentümliches Hervortreten von Klängen*]” in Meyer’s poem but also to its particular rhythm and rhyme:

The poem not only *sounds* [*klingt*] but there is movement throughout the poem, going through it, a peculiar vibration [*Schwingen*] of the sounds and this vibration is *not* identical to the *metrum*. The poem has its own vibration. In saying it, we are taken with this vibration. In saying the poem there is: *tone* [*Ton*], *unrest* [*Unruhe*] and an *off-swinging vibration* [*Ausschwingung*] and then, finally, its rhyme [*Reim*].⁴⁹

Also, note that the poem in these final verses—*Und jede nimmt und gibt zugleich*—no longer speaks of the jet of water but of the basins themselves streaming and coming to rest. We can thus say that the *Roman Fountain* does not set up the earth because its rhythms highlight how the water in a fountain flows while the fountain remains solid, closed off and immovable. It is not because of a similarity of the verbal sounds to the sound of flowing water that we recognize the flowing of water in the sound of the poem.

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Schillers Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, ed. Ulrich von Bülow, Marbach am Neckar 2005, 84-85

Acceleration and negation of movement rather pertain to the fountain as a whole, to the poem and what it represents, to the basins and the water. While we all know abstractly that the basin of a stone fountain does not move and rests when water flows through it, and that it is the water that makes the sounds, not the basin, this is different in the poem. The fountain of the poem is at once water and basins and as the unity of the poem it flows and rests: what becomes manifest is the appearance of something both resting and moving at the same time, something that opens up its proper place, makes a halt and holds back its movements and comes to rest in a space at once logical and vocal. The fountain of the poem is primarily a unity of rest and movement and only as such can it be discussed in the different respects opened up by the distinctions of presentations and represented, of sensible and sensed.⁵⁰ In the rest of the fountain as poetic object, the poem and what it shows at once belong to the earth. The poem reveals this not by contrasting and then again intertwining sensible and intelligible but by setting rest against and in continuous strife with movement, while this very movement, reversely, shows itself as the movement of an inner rhythm proper to a particular thing and defining its essence and substantiality. The poem reveals the Roman fountain as a kinetic nexus, and it does so precisely by becoming part of them. It brings forth the fountain as primarily a configuration of both movement and rest and as this configuration, the fountain defines the space of its phenomenality in the poem.

⁵⁰ It should be emphasized that in this, the poem/fountain is essentially meaningful. On the four dimensions of the meaning of *sense*, see John Sallis, *Force of Imagination. The Sense of the Elemental*, Bloomington/Indianapolis: IUP 2000, 32.

This phenomenal trait of the earth, too, can be found in Husserl. As Husserl observes, the immovability of the earth, by supporting movement and rest, also defines the corporeality as the intentional correlate of movement, as *that which* moves and stops. The coming-to-be of objectivity happens through earth providing a place, itself immovable, for something to appear as moving. The earth is, as Husserl says, a “system of place [Ortssystem], i.e., as a system of possible terminations of motions of bodies [System möglicher Enden von Körperbewegungen].”⁵¹ Like the human body moving on the ground, an object in space moves and only in thus moving and remaining the same is it something, does it emerge into the relationality of places in the world. It is as if the very unity of a thing was borrowed from the earth as its ground. Thus in that they rest, both an object and a body are not only of the earth, they also occupy a place they leave when moving, positioning one object in relation to others and myself in relation to the objects of the world surrounding me. What Husserl thus describes, is the constant interaction of a totality of (possible) movement and a totality of (possible) rest, or as Heidegger would have said, a strife of the movements of the things of a world with the the earth and what in the world is alike it in that it rest. In that it rests and provides for places, the earth is the immovable dimension over and against, yet in constant relation to, all movement, the complex configuration of the two defining the space of apperance as we know it. As Husserl explains, the earth usually does not appear as the immovable ground of

⁵¹ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 313.

appearance that it is to moving things: things are “perceived as bodies in space, always in their place.” The earth remains “unperceived yet perceivable (or experienceable in a modified way) [*unwahrgenommen, doch wahrnehmbar (oder modifiziert erfahrbar)*] as what is continually enduring, in a motion that is spread out over this duration [*Dauer*]—i.e., rest”.⁵² Insofar as they rest, then, all things belong to the earth and when they rest the earthly character of things is revealed as their individual duration. This duration gives to the things of the earth even a place in time.

Heidegger’s example reveals this trait of the earth, too. It is such duration that appears in contrast to the flow of water in Meyer’s poem when the words begin to burble and gurgle for finally coming to rest in the long *ruht*. Goldsworthy’s art, too, has such a duration, although it is longer and much more indefinite: when the leaves lose their arrangement and are taken back by nature, the work of art is no longer of the earth and thus ceases to be a work of art, it no longer displays the earth as enduring. This does not mean that the leaves may not continue to rest on the ground. But that they do hides as the primordial rest recedes into the normality of movement and the nearl imperceptible background, with primary attention again being paid to moving objects.⁵³ When the

⁵² Husserl, “*Räumlichkeit der Natur*,” 314.

⁵³ In his interpretation, De Warren emphasizes the limited duration of the work. Just the sculptures of leaves can then be understood as an implicit criticism of the thingness Heidegger believes is essential for artworks: “For Goldsworthy, these found materials are ‘as if on a journey.’ Each artwork is in fact an intersection of two journeys, the wanderings of Andrew Goldsworthy and the meanderings of materials along the broad courses of nature [...] It is as if each of the travellers—the leaves and Andrew Goldsworthy’s artwork—made temporary use of the other, and went on their separate ways. This ephemeral character is transparently expressed in Goldsworthy’s act of throwing sand in the air or in the release of red clay into a

leaves are scattered or when the poetic voice breaks off, the earth again becomes “unperceived yet perceivable,” waiting for another moment to be shown and to manifest itself.

In terms of movement in both space and time, then, we may speak of the earth as what marks rest—“the original ark, earth, does not move.” Such movement reveals a particular spatial function of the earth: the earth is the relation of places where such movements terminate, it is a constellation of places; in terms of time, the earth is what makes a movement have a certain duration, the earth is, as we might say, what makes things take time. To use another one of Heidegger’s most enigmatic notions, one may call the earth a particular aspect of the unity of time and space, of *time-space* (*Zeitraum*).⁵⁴

Home and iteration

Husserl also observes another characteristic trait of the earth, its primordial sameness, and this is the fourth trait of the earth I examine: if one speaks of earths (in plural), one speaks of something that cannot be experienced in this numerable difference. All earths

flowing stream. The poignancy of Goldsworthy’s aesthetic sensibility is here fully manifest: the exposure of artworks to the nature from which they emerge, in which they are situated and to which they return. The materials at work in the artwork, as with the flowing of clay, are not transformed into materials from which an artwork is made; instead, it is the first encounter with natural materials that gives being to an artwork that binds itself over time, and thus to the passage, of those materials. This challenge of what kind of things are Goldsworthy’s artworks provides a first point of contact with Heidegger’s reflection on the origin of the work of art.” (Nicolas de Warren, “Off the Beaten Path: The Artworks of Andrew Goldsworthy.” *Environmental Philosophy* 4, 29-48, here 33-34)

⁵⁴ Indeed, without referring explicitly to the earth, Heidegger can describe the time-space as the correlative appearance of time and space in things as it is experienced in the movement of objects. See GA 41, 14-22.

one can imagine are one and the same, insofar as they are of the earth, and as this primordial same, so Husserl says, the earth is the historical home to mankind: “there is only one humanity and one earth—all fragments belong to it which are or have been detached from it.”⁵⁵ As home to mankind, by providing the place for human history, by allowing it to unfold in time and space, the earth itself becomes historical.⁵⁶ It is the earth which defines mankind and guarantees the very unity of its history:

Every people and its historicity [*Historizität*] [...] is itself ultimately at home, by nature, on the ‘earth.’ And thus all developments, all relative histories have a single originary history [*Urhistorie*] of which they are episodes. In that sense, it is indeed possible that this originary history would be a togetherness of people living and evolving completely separated, except that they all exist for one another in the open, undetermined horizon of earth-space [*im offen unbestimmten Erdraumhorizont*].⁵⁷

This open horizontality of the earth distinguishes it from the horizontal structure of the world in which all horizons are determinable. As in the perception of a thing from different sides, whatever can be seen within a world is integrated by the horizontal structure of intentional objects, defining respective outsides and insides.⁵⁸ The phenomenality of the earth, on the other hand, lacks this integrality and intentional determinacy. Nonetheless—and this is what lets it appear not as chaotic but as “open”—

⁵⁵ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 324.

⁵⁶ On earth as the “seat of history [*les assises de l’histoire*]” see Michel Haar, *Le chant de la terre. Heidegger et les assises de l’histoire de l’être*, Paris: L’Herne 1985. Haar’s book still constitutes the most comprehensive study on the notion of earth though it restricts itself to Heidegger’s work and select poets (Rilke, Hölderlin).

⁵⁷ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 319.

⁵⁸ Husserl makes the very useful distinction of an “inner” and “outer horizon” (*Innenhorizont*, *Außenhorizont*). See Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, Husserliana VI, ed. Walter Biemel, The Hague: Nijhoff 1964, here 165. According to this distinction, the horizon of the earth would be the outer horizon as such, for it does not delimit an inside.

the earth allows for some determinability of the individual as moving and resting in time and space, as belonging to both the world and earth itself. Its peculiar appearance is a horizon that never gathers into a perceptual unity, nothing that would be an object. The essential incompleteness of its manifestation makes its appearance in resting and as ground to movement remain so vague that it is no surprise to see Heidegger hold that everything, insofar as it belongs to the earth, displays a limit to its knowability and an essential restraint of presence.

That is why pieces of the earth do not simply become objects. As soon as the primordial unity of the earth (and by this, the unity of history) is split up, the earth is not divided into two, rather, as Husserl says, an “iteration [*Iteration*]”⁵⁹ of the same happens. Because the earth is that which is always one, this oneness is a phenomenal trait that draws together all objects as elements of the earth as well as all histories, uniting all its “episodes” and “iterations” into the single history of a single mankind on a single earth. Although infinitely divisible as a rock broken into pieces,⁶⁰ the earth’s unity

is in principle not repeatable [*prinzipiell nicht wiederholbar*], but everything that is relates back to this historicity of transcendental constitution as pertinent core and as

⁵⁹ Husserl, “Räumlichkeit der Natur,” 320. On the roots of this concept of deconstruction in phenomenology, see Edmund Husserl, *L’Origine de la Géométrie*, traduction et introduction par Jacques Derrida, Paris: PUF 1962, 79.

⁶⁰ Heidegger gives an excellent example: although a rock may be subsequently smashed into pieces, it will never reveal an inner side: “The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull pressure and bulk of its fragments.” (GA 5, 33)

an ever-widening core [*sich erweiternder Kern*]*—everything newly discovered as world-possibility is connected with the sense of Being already established.*⁶¹

All things, insofar as they belong to the earth, thus have a “core,” and if they withdraw from all attempts to open and submit things to human bidding, then it is because they belong to the earth that they refuse to be controlled. It is not that the earth as object may not be destroyed and divided into different pieces. But if it happens, the two pieces still hold a moment of unity, of sameness and not of mere identity. According to Husserl, this unity shows itself in that it is something at all, some core-thing and, surprisingly, it is in this elemental sameness that things have their being. In view of the unity of beings, earth may thus be taken to provide a meaning of Being, albeit a meaning held in reserve. Yet if unity is what defines Being, then the discourse on Being should turn to what, phenomenally, provides this unity, and this is the earth. According to Husserl, the being of earth is of course only constituted by transcendental subjectivity. Only because it has a “historicity of transcendental constitution” does an object belong to the one earth and can it be said to be. Yet it is remarkable that although there are many transcendental subjects and even though there even may be different earths, the unity of mankind and thus the unity of transcendental constitution and of history is provided by the sameness of earth, despite its phenomenal negativity. It is as if the earth would determine mankind from the outside, by being the outside to the inside of subjectivity.

⁶¹ Husserl, “*Räumlichkeit der Natur*,” 323.

Singularity

Husserl's emphasis of the iterative appearance of the earth allows one to anticipate a new understanding how it is present in language and in poetic language in particular. In the passage already quoted, Heidegger describes the effect of the lyrical arts by two complementary characteristics: "the word" comes "to say [sound, speak]" when the poetic work sets itself back "into the naming power of the word." Thus in a poem, words come to say in a manner quite unheard of in the world of everyday talk, by drawing, as Heidegger would say, on the originary *Nennkraft*, on the "naming power" or "naming force" of language in order to set up a meaningful world.⁶² Such force is another trait of the earth-like characteristic of a poem, the phenomenal trait into which its saying, its voice and sound, retreats. Through naming things, languages open up a world, the difference of names corresponding to the difference of things. Yet what makes the unity of a world of different things is that things can be referenced, can be named, at all, and precisely this power to name something in its individuality provides the unity of language. If one considers a poem, its names do not primarily refer to some thing outside the poem. Especially if one emphasizes, as Heidegger does, that the poem sets up its own world, the referents of words are in their particularity created just by that they are named.

⁶² On the Aristotelian context of this determination, see Günter Figal, "ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ ΜΕΤΑ ΛΟΓΟΥ. Heideggers Sprachphilosophie im aristotelischen Kontext," in: *Zu Heidegger. Antworten und Fragen*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2009, 95-106.

As Heidegger points out in the before-mentioned seminar, if one compares the different versions of the poem Meyer wrote (the version quoted by Heidegger in the artwork essays is the seventh and final one), it is striking how he deletes all passages that refer to something beyond the fountain as an individual thing (Rome, a garden, the sunlight on the fountain).⁶³ Meyer thus seems to attempt to cancel all reference beyond the poem and rather concentrate on the power of the poem to still make the appearance of a particular thing manifest, or, in Heidegger's words, its naming power. Notice that this does not mean that the poem would consist of names or other elements of speech that function as such grammatically. Besides the definite-indefinite title *The Roman Fountain*, there is no particular part of the poem that has the referential character of a name. What the poem shows, then, is not the function of names in contrast to other elements of language but rather the manifesting power of language that Heidegger in general calls its naming power. In that respect, every reader will let a different Roman Fountain become manifest in every of her readings but each time, a universal power of language is evoked. It does so by gathering into a single meaningful presence a number of contextual references. As Heidegger points out, the poem is no description of a fountain for the fountain does not, as it is described, exist outside the referential nexus of the poem.⁶⁴ It rather evokes this very particular thing, calling it into an each time different

⁶³ See Heidegger, *Schillers Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, 91.

⁶⁴ See Heidegger, *Schillers Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, 92-93.

presence. The poem lets a fountain have an each time different appearance, a naming not entirely different at each instance but each time—to use Husserl’s phrase—“iterated.”

Most important to this manifestation achieved through the naming power of language is the singularity of the thing meant as it is meant. Besides the heightened presence to the senses the earth evokes, its immovable character, the duration it grants in space and time, and the particular sameness of all its manifestations—making all pieces of the earth one and letting its pieces reiterate in a way particulars of the same kind would not—this singularity of things as pieces of the earth is the fifth phenomenal trait associated with the earth.⁶⁵ All pieces of the earth are not only of a primordial sameness but they are also of an extreme individuality, each being not only the same in the fact that it is of the earth (but in no other respect) but also radically different from any other, a tension that is not mediated but is as such tension characteristic of the a-systematic logic of the earth. Only in recognizing both the primordial sameness and the singularity of its instances, one fully understands what Husserl means by an “iteration” of the earth: not a repetition or duplication of the same, not a different instantiation of the same kind but an event of manifestation both singularizing and uniting with the earth as a whole.

This is, albeit against his general intention, shown by Hegel. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel develops how life in general (*das allgemeine Leben*) as the genus (*Gattung*),

⁶⁵ Both Reiner Schürmann and Jussi Backman, in their work on singularity (see note 35 above), focus on Heidegger’s ontological discourse, and do not relate singularity to thing and earth.

divides itself into a number of species. In this process of systematic differentiation, the earth is described as what interrupts this process and the systematization of nature it would encompass. Not to speak of its strife with world in art, Hegel discovers the violence of the appearance of the earth even within nature:

The genus, which divides itself into species on the basis of the *general determinateness* of number [*allgemeine Bestimmtheit der Zahl*], or which may adopt as its principle of division particular features of its division, e.g., shape, colour, etc., while peacefully engaged in this activity, suffers violence from the universal individual, *the Earth*, which as the universal negativity preserves the differences as they exist within itself—their nature, for the sake of the substance to which they belong [*um der Substanz willen*], being different from the nature of those of the genus—and in face of the systematization of the genus. This action of the genus [*Tun der Gattung*] comes to be a quite restricted affair which it is permitted to carry on only inside those powerful elements and which is interrupted, incomplete and curtailed by the unchecked violence of the elements.⁶⁶

If one turns to another of Goldsworthys leaves sculptures (plate 2),

⁶⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes, Werke (Theorie-Werkausgabe)* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1970, vol. 3, 224. The (difficult) German original reads: “Die Gattung, welche sich in Arten nach der *allgemeinen Bestimmtheit* der Zahl zerlegt, oder auch einzelne Bestimmtheiten ihres Daseyns, z.B. die Figur, Farbe, u.s.f. zu ihrem Einteilungsgrunde nehmen mag, erleidet in diesem ruhigen Geschäft Gewalt von der Seite des allgemeinen Individuums, *der Erde*. des allgemeinen Individuums, *der Erde*, welches als die allgemeine Negativität, die Unterschiede, wie sie dieselben an sich hat und deren Natur um der Substanz willen, der sie angehören, eine andere ist als die Natur jener, gegen das Systematisiren der Gattung geltend macht. Dieses Tun der Gattung wird zu einem ganz eingeschränkten Geschäft, das sie nur innerhalb jener mächtigen Elemente treiben darf, und das durch die zügellose Gewalt derselben allenthalben unterbrochen, lückenhaft und verkümmert wird.”



Plate 2: Andy Goldsworthy, *Leaves laid on a river boulder / held with water / green to yellow / dark to light*, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 9 October 1999. © Andy Goldsworthy 2000.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Image taken from: Goldsworthy, *Time*, 173.

his sculptures seem to exemplify this interruption of the logical classification of things on the basis of properties such as shape or color: one will well recognize a single leaf in its individuality and also, even though in an indeterminate sameness, understand that this individual leaf has a place in the whole of the work and within the color transitions Goldsworthy used to organize this whole. Yet it seems impossible to count the number of, say, green or yellow leaves. The continuity of the color spectrum, becoming present in the artwork, interrupts any conceptual classification of the leaves—in, say, a yellow, maybe an orange, and a green kind. The peculiar arrangement of the leaves, their sculpting or setting-up as a work, highlights these colors, makes them “glow,” Heidegger would have said, but it does not reveal any organization according to genus and species nor even a countable number of instances of the same kind. This is another aspect of the earth Goldsworthy’s art can show. By this, the work reveals, according to Hegel, the violence living nature does to itself: the “universality of organic life [*die Allgemeinheit des organischen Lebens*]” lets itself “fall down immediately into the extreme of singleness [*Einzelheit*], without a genuine mediation of its own [*lässt sich, ohne die wahrhafte fürsichseiende Vermittlung, unmittelbar in das Extrem der Einzelheit herunterfallen*].”⁶⁸

Yet what thus comes forth are, nonetheless and as Hegel acknowledges, differences of another nature than those created by the logical differentiation in genus and species, differences, as Hegel says, *um der Substanz willen*: not only *pertaining to* but *for the sake*

⁶⁸ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Werke vol. 3, 225.

of the individual substance. It is precisely by belonging to the elemental color transitions that every leaf is not simply an instance of a color kind but is itself absolutely individual.

The earth not only interrupts the systematic evolution of nature, as Hegel sustains, but it also gathers the elements, shows itself as their manifest, unrepeatable unity.⁶⁹ In doing so, it also reveals an enduring substance in things, the earthly core (*Kern*) of things, Husserl would have said, attesting to the resistance of things to the systematizing activity of spirit: the logic of genus and species that guides observing reason *attempts* to sequence these “differences of the earth,”⁷⁰ but it does not achieve systematization and therefore, it fails at mediating the singular with the universal. Therefore, Hegel concludes, nature cannot have a representation of the whole. The irregular movement in nature *does* take place and becomes an object to observing reason, but it cannot be understood according to the logic of genus and species. The earth resists nature being sublated into the results of (philosophical) biology.

Yet even though the whole does not achieve a universality representation of its generalities as they are restricted by genera and internally differentiated by kinds, a certain generality does become manifest in the “universal individuals” themselves, i.e. in

⁶⁹ This is decisive for John Sallis’ discourse on the “elementals.” See his *Force of Imagination*, chapter 6. I am indebted to this work for referring me to the passage from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* quoted above.

⁷⁰ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, *Werke* vol. 3, 224: “Außerdem also, daß die beobachtende Vernunft in der organischen Natur nur zur Anschauung ihrer selbst als allgemeines Leben überhaupt kommt, wird ihr die Anschauung seiner Entwicklung und Realisierung nur nach ganz allgemein unterschiedenen Systemen, deren Bestimmtheit, ihr Wesen, nicht in dem Organischen als solchem, sondern in dem allgemeinen Individuum liegt; und, unter diesen Unterschieden der Erde, nach Reihungen, welche die Gattung versucht.”

such singular things as the living organism which, if contrasted with the matrix of genus and species, display an exterior generality, an eminent singularity in contrast to numeric identity: it is singular in contrast to everything there is. It is a thing in the eminent sense only because it gains this singularity from the earth for it cannot have received it as member of a species.⁷¹ Even more importantly, precisely in being something other than just a member of a species is is an eminently living thing, gifted, as it were, with a life as such.

Because this universality contrasting singularity has not yet become (as it will be through the historical working of spirit when it comes to enclose nature) a universality mediated within consciousness, it makes itself manifest as that which withdraws from (and even does violence to) such representation within the system. Taken as themselves, as elemental substances, living beings, the earth (in its resistance to history) and also self-conscious spirit (as long as it has not yet achieved purely inward, purely systematic universality) are such “universal individuals.” Although spirit and earth remain foreign to each other, through this common exteriority, the “earth” nonetheless becomes “our home, not as physical, but as the home of spirit [*Heimat des Geistes*].”⁷² Despite the differences in their respective accounts of spirit, reason or transcendental subjectivity, Hegel and Husserl thus concur in the idea that mankind and its history are in need of a home, and if

⁷¹ This is also highlighted in Eugen Fink’s discourse on earth. See Damir Barbarić, “Wende zur Erde,” in: Damir Barbarić, *Aneignung der Welt. Heidegger – Gadamer – Fink*, Frankfurt am Main 2007, 233–245.

⁷² G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke vol. 9, 131.

this is true, then mankind and historicity may be so intricately connected just because they share the same nexus of places that is the earth. There is no generic determination that would specify that to this kind of (rational) animals there belongs this particular planet; it is just a unique and universal fact that gives us a home. Yet that every singular individuum as well as mankind as a whole is in need of (a) home is, at least if Hegel is correct, a violence done to the spirit and its wish to not have a home but become one with it. As long as it remains foreign to spirit, the *Heimat des Geistes* cannot but be an estranged home.

The trait of singularity is also present in Heidegger, yet in difference to Hegel, earth as the relation of singularity and universality is not conceived of as violent but as eminently harmonious. A passage of *The Origin of the Work of Art*, already cited in part, describes just this asystematic but singularizing unification that things gain through the earth and that the earth gains because it thus relates all things in their singularity:

All things of earth, and the earth itself as a whole, flow together into a reciprocal harmonious accord [*in einen wechselweisen Einklang*]. But this confluence is not a blurring of their outlines [*Aber dieses Verströmen ist kein Verwischen*]. Here there flows the regulating stream which, while resting within itself, delimits everything present in presencing. Thus in each of the self-secluding things there is the same not-knowing-of-one-another [*Hier strömt der in sich beruhete Strom des Ausgrenzens, das jedes Anwesende in sein Anwesen begrenzt. So ist in jedem der sich verschließenden Dinge das gleiche Sich-nicht-Kennen.*]. The earth is essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means to bring it into the open region as the self-concealing. (GA 5, 33)

The regulating and delimiting “stream,” the “harmonious accord” offers a radically different idea of unity than the order of genus and species Hegel discusses in the

philosophy of nature. It is not, as Heidegger stresses, that the singular things would be indeterminate because they are not numerable instances of a general determination. The “confluence” in their appearing is no “blurring” of the individuals’ delimitations, rather it constitutes their very singularity for it denies their inclusion in a matrix of genera and kinds. Yet the metaphors of “confluence,” “stream” and “accord” force one to admit that the earth as the source of unity in things is not a fully manifest unity, and it is not to be exposed as such.⁷³ Rather it denies such presence and shows the self-concealing character that is characteristic of the earth in Heidegger’s discourse. Earth as the harmony of singular things is both absent and present, it modulates the presence and absence of things but it does not do so in a coordinate or systematic manner. It is thus coherent when Heidegger describes what Meyer’s poem achieves is not the depiction of a “general essence [*das allgemeine Wesen*]” (GA 5, 23) of fountains but, as we can now say with Hegel, the “universal individuality” of a/of the (Roman) fountain, the fountain in its singularity.

Dimensions of the earth

Returning to the beginning of this discussion, one could ask—and I will leave this an open question—whether the discourses on earth we examined, rather than disclosing the

⁷³ Manuel Schölles has interpreted this figure of a harmonious unity along the lines of ancient philosophy. See Manuel Schölles, “Die Kunst im Werk. Gestalt-Stimmung-Ton,” in: David Espinet/Tobias Keiling (eds.), *Heideggers Ursprung des Kunstwerks. Ein kooperative Kommentar*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2009, 99-114.

immediate sensible and material character of the earth do not show quite the opposite, namely that even our body essentially belongs to the earth, to the earth in its five dimensions, in the five phenomenal traits discussed. Certainly, it is in works of art that Heidegger sees the earth exposed in its (self-concealing) essence and these works hold strong sensual experiences, and surely this is also due to what they are made of.

But what about Husserl's claim that as primordial rest, the body is earth-like? Does it not show that one of its principal characteristics, the human body has only borrowed from the earth? And what about our personal identity we take to be a singular perspective on the world? Could we not say that the singularity of our being, too, is derived from the earth as we see it in the things surrounding us? Do we then not submit ourselves, too, to a logic that is prior to the λόγος of genera and kinds, a logic that lets universality and singularity also stand opposed and does relate but not in total mediate them? Is it so sure that in experiencing art we all experience the same sensible material, or is what we see not itself singular, if it belongs to the earth? In contrast to an aesthetic experience of meaningful content or enhanced sensibility, is there not rather an interaction at play in the work of art, and maybe a harmonious accord that may be achieved in view of artworks, an interaction that brings out both the singularity of myself and of the thing of art before me? And would it not explain both our emphasis on belonging somewhere and our hesitations whether a particular place is really where we belong, that the singular universality of the earth is our home? And would it not be conclusive to understand both

our individual stories of estrangement and homecoming and the history of mankind as a whole by turning to where history resides? As there is no genera and kinds of peoples or of states, should not also the idea of a unified history of *a* people, of *a* state, of *a* class or of *an* epoch become questionable? Is it not true that there is countless, different, singular stories that can still all be related, within the limits set by misunderstanding?

If such questions are meaningful, then it might be worthwhile to further pursue the discussion of earth. In particular, the discourse on earth offers some alternative to the ontological discourse or at least to one major field of the ontological discourse: one does not have to go so far as to claim that all beings qua beings are grounded in Being; it would be enough to emphasize that insofar as all beings are to some extent of the earth, all beings including human beings are what they are in their singularity. If we are to agree on the unity and singularity of the earth, then we could let go of an essential part of the ontological discourse. But not only the discourse on Being, the discourse on ground, too, would have to reoriented towards the earth in order to do justice to the nature of the grounds we encounter.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the German Studies Graduate Student Conference *Sinn und Sinnlichkeit. Uses and Abuses of Aesthetics Today*, at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY on February 18th 2011. I am indebted to the discussants for comments.

5. *Erklärung*

Heidegger's thinking of projection

Philosophy is in need of images. Yet these images unfold their own logic—even against each other. This is no less true if philosophical images show themselves in the medium of language and thus in the medium of philosophy. Heidegger's mastery of philosophy has much to do with his skill of using the possibilities of language and translation as few thinkers have. His formation of new terms and concepts does not simply submit to the history of words, nor does it twist or distort this history, even though his use of etymologies has often been suspected of being either uncritical or philologically wrong, or both. Yet the problem does not lie in the use of etymologies in the attempt to concentrate the descriptive force of a word, but rather in the matching of words and things: because words do not produce what they designate, they can be well or ill chosen. If a choice of word fails, one begins to search for alternatives: it becomes evident that the philosophical images are images, and different images begin to compete in view of what they show. The search for the right words in philosophy is also the search

for the right images for what it attempts to think. Yet the dynamic unleashed by the competition of philosophical images is no less significant than the dynamic created by the exchange of philosophical argument.

One of the less prominent and also one of the weaker concepts that Heidegger has formed, is *Erklüftung*.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, I believe an examination of this concept to be valuable, precisely because in this case the formation of a philosophical concept fails. First, I will turn to the word itself, and then in the second and third section, reconstruct Heidegger's thinking of projection (*Entwurf*) in order to situate this word within his thought. I will emphasize the temporalization of projection that Heidegger undertakes in *Being and Time*, and will then follow the connection of projection and ground that Heidegger develops most explicitly in a passage of the artwork essay. Then, I turn to *Contributions* and will address the role that the image of *Erklüftung* plays in this text. In all this, I do not aim to put forth the word as a philosophical concept heretofore underestimated and to represent its hermeneutical potential as greater than it is. Rather, in a fifth section, I ask why *Erklüftung* is suited to understanding projection up to a certain point but eventually fails to accomplish the philosophical aims to which Heidegger submits this word, why the image is not suited to explain the paradigm of

⁷⁵ In their recent translation of *Contributions*, Daniela-Vallega Neu and Richard Rojcewicz render *Erklüftung* as “sundering.” Though this translation—in distinction from “fissure” which they use for *Zerklüftung*—justly emphasizes the dynamic character of this process, it breaks the link between *Erklüftung* and *Zerklüftung* and related verbs. I will thus leave both words untranslated in occurrences where I wish to emphasize this connection.

projection as a whole. Yet thanks to the creativity of Heidegger's thought, it does not remain mute: the word *Lichtung* (*clearing*) simply matches much better what Heidegger wants to think and also allows for a better understanding of projection.

The word *Erklüftung*

To find out what a German word means, what phenomena it speaks about and which semantic relations it may meaningfully entertain, one may take a simple—a look into the dictionary compiled by the Brothers Grimm. There one reads:

ERKLÜFTEN, *findere*, zerklüften.

ERKLÜFTUNG, *f. fissura, rima*: diese masse, von jenen erklüftungen wenig erleidend. GÖTHE 51, 74.⁷⁶

Erklüften thus has the meaning of Latin *findere*, of which *fissus* is the past participle from which the German loanword *Fissur* is derived as well as the English *fissure*. Then, the Brothers Grimm hold, *erklüften* is a synonym for *zerklüften*. In the entry for the substantive *Erklüftung* one finds an according entry to the Latin nouns *fissura* and *rima* as well as a single reference of the word *Erklüftung* in German literature. That an entry features only a single reference is very rare in view of the abundance of references the dictionary holds.

In distinction from *erklüften*, the verb *zerklüften* is determined as a transitive verb with the basic meaning “to cleave wide, to divide with gaping cuts [*breit zerspalten, mit*

⁷⁶ Jacob Grimm/Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 3, Leipzig: Hirzel 1862, 878.

klaffenden einschnitten zertheilen].” *Zerklüften*, “in its authentic meaning” is used “mostly as adjective and participle [i.e. *zerklüftet*] of rocky mountains, blocks of stone or the coast of a land [*im eig. sinne, zumeist nur als adj. partic., von felsgebirgen, gesteinsblöcken oder der küste eines landes*].” Secondly, *zerklüften* also means “to divide up into groups or to be divided by groups and the like [*in oder durch parteien spalten u. ä.*].” In this entry one also finds the addition that *zerklüften* has another authentic meaning, namely “to cleave wood [*eig. schliesslich noch holz z[erklüften]*],“ or as one may say more frequently in English, to “chop wood.” In “extremely rare” cases, there is also an intransitive meaning of *zerklüften*.⁷⁷ A reference for this is given with a passage from Adalbert Stifter, in which Stifter writes: “the wood cleaved and fell down in pieces [*das holz zerklüftete und fiel in stücken herab*].”⁷⁸

The single reference given for *erklüften* is also about such an intransitive meaning of the verb. It can be found—as the only occurrence of *durchklüften* the Brothers Grimm note⁷⁹—in Goethe’s scientific writings, more precisely in a text entitled *The Formation of Mountains as a Whole and in the Particular* (*Gebirgs-gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen*, printed 1824). In this text, Goethe is interested in the “makro-mikromegic process of

⁷⁷ Grimm/Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Bd. 31, Leipzig: Hirzel 1956, 704.

⁷⁸ Adalbert Stifter, “Über den geschnitten Hochalter in der Kirche zu Kefermarkt,” in: *Werke und Briefe. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Alfred Doppler and Hartmut Laufhütte, vol. 8.4, ed. Johannes John and Karl Mösender, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2011, 68-85, here 80.

⁷⁹ Vgl. Grimm/Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Bd. 2, Leipzig: Hirzel 1860, 1633: “DURCHKLÜFTEN, *durch und durch spalten*. der kieselschiefer ist so vielfach durchzogen und durchklüftet.” The reference to Goethe can be found in: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” in: *Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, ed. Hendrik Birus et al. (cited as SW), vol. 25, ed. Wolf von Engelhardt and Manfred Wenzel, Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 1989, 628-635, here 632.

Nature [*makro-mikromegische Verfahren der Natur*],” which “does nothing on the bigger scale that it would not also do in the small [*im Großen nichts [tut], was sie nicht auch im Kleinen thaete*],” and also does “nothing concealed what it would not also show to the day of light [*nichts im Verborgenen [bewirkt,] was sie nicht auch am Tagslicht offenbarte*].”⁸⁰

From this premise of his philosophy of nature, fundamental insights in geology may be gained from single examples such as the importance of the so called “solidescence [*Solideszenz*]” in the emergence and formation of mountains: “solidescence is the last stage of becoming, the liquid being led through the soft to the solid, presenting the becoming in enclosed form [*Solideszenz ist der letzte Act des Werdens, aus dem Flüssigen durch’s Weiche zum Festen hingeführt, das Gewordene abgeschlossen darstellend*].”⁸¹

Erklüftungen thus occur in the process of becoming, in the transition from potentiality (*potentia*) to reality (*actus*), which Goethe calls the “originary grating [*Urdurchgitterung*]” of stone.⁸² Yet an *Erklüften* is part of the gradual solidification of stone only because of a phenomenon that, so Goethe says, “does not let go of us because of its inscrutability: *solidescence is associated with tremor*. This phenomenon, because of its delicacy, is decisively recognized only very rarely [*uns bei seiner Unerforschlichkeit nicht losläßt: Solideszenz ist mit Erschütterung verbunden. Nur selten kommt dieses Phänomen, seiner Zartheit wegen, zur unmittelbaren entschiedenen Anerkennung*].”⁸³ The cleavages, the

⁸⁰ Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” SW 25, 631.

⁸¹ Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” SW 25, 628.

⁸² Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” SW 25, 628.

⁸³ Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” SW 25, 630.

cracks and fissures in stone are thus produced through a shock interrupting the solidification of the liquid stone.

A very remarkable example for this is the “Florentine ruin marble we all know [*allbekannte Florentinische Ruinenmarmor*].” The marble, so Goethe imagines, “was just in the process of layering [...] when some twitching cut through the fine layers with little vertical cleaves, significantly displacing the horizontal lines [...] such that we now see the formation of a breached wall [*sich bandartig zu bilden im Begriff [...], als ein gewisses Zucken die zarten Streifen mit verticalen Klüftchen durchschnitt und die horizontalen Linien bedeutend verrückte [...], wodurch uns dann die Gestalt einer lückenhaften Mauer vor Augen tritt*].” The marble is indeed, as the reference quoted in the Grimm dictionary reads, “suffering very little from these *Erklüftungen* [*von diesen Erklüftungen wenig erleidend*].” Despite the cracks in its structure, the stone can be worked in many ways, it can be cut, polished and even painted. The cracks in particular account for the particular beauty of the marble: the “fine stripes [*zarten Streifen*]” and the “vertical little cleaves [*verticalen Klüftchen*] in cut and polished tablets” appear, says Goethe, “as sky above a landscape, if one is willing to take them for it [*bei geschnittenen und polirten Tafeln über der Landschaft als Bewölkung, wer es dafür will gelten lassen*].”⁸⁴ (plate 3)

⁸⁴ Goethe, “Gebirgs-Gestaltung im Ganzen und Einzelnen,” SW 25, 633.



Plate 3: Ruin *marble*, Florentine workshop, polished and framed in the first quarter of the 17th century.
© 2007 Hirmer, Munich.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Image taken from: Raphael Rosenberg/Max Hollein (eds.), *Turner, Hugo, Moreau. Entdeckung der Abstraktion*, Munich: Hirmer 2007, 69, plate 28. Online edition: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-artdok-7602> (26.03.2013)

Erklüftungen, according to Goethe's use of the word, are thus the result of a sudden interruption in the process of solidification. Astonishingly, though, this interruption joins in in the hidden development of stone in a harmonious way, for the marble probably does not break because of the pressure from the outside. Rather, the solidity of the stone encloses the cracks, halting the cleaving for only the cleaves inside to remain. The *Erklüftungen* of the marble, although they are created by a spontaneous interruption in the process of solidification, occur in concealment and do not expose the transformative process. Only those pieces broken out of the stone and the "cut and polished tablets" attest to them. Nonetheless, Goethe tries to describe the event causing *Erklüftungen*. The solidly conjoined fractures provide an occasion to imagine the origin of stone.

The temporality of projection

At first sight, Heidegger's thinking of projection has little to do with cracks in stone. It is rather marked by a somewhat forced determination of what is projected: beings as a whole, the whole of experience, of the open and of the understandable—*Dasein*. This philosophical appreciation of the image of projection comes about when Heidegger uses it to discuss the understanding (*Verstehen*) grasping everything in human *Dasein*, even

Being itself: all understanding has the same structure as projection, so that everything understood is as such projected.⁸⁶

The occasion for Heidegger to make this transfer, the explicative identification of Dasein, projection and understanding, is the modality of *potentiality*. Dasein is potential being and understands itself in this being by projecting. In Heidegger's words: "Dasein as understanding projects is being upon possibilities." (GA 2, 197) Only the "projecting character of understanding" makes "the there as there of a potential being" accessible to Dasein. But this projecting "has nothing to do with being related to a plan thought out in advance, according to which Dasein arranges its being but, as Dasein, it has always already projected itself, and it is, as long as it is, projecting. Dasein has always understood itself and will understand itself from out of possibilities [*aus Möglichkeiten*]. [...] Understanding as projecting is the mode of being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities." (GA 2, 193)

These conceptual operations are comprehensible in the context of *Being and Time*, yet they lack intuitive understanding for they only correspond to a very limited degree to what we commonly understand by *projecting*. To have a specific project, rather, seems to be precisely what Heidegger excludes as the "being related to a plan thought out in advance:" an idea, a plan is made and tested in view of its possible realization, potentiality

⁸⁶ Heidegger here obviously varies Kant's conviction that "reason only understands what it produces in accordance with its own projection [*die Vernunft nur das einsieht, was sie selbst nach ihrem Entwurfe hervorbringt*]." (Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B XIII).

becomes a certain something, a project, and thus a concrete possibility. Projecting in this sense may indeed be described as an understanding of possibilities, as the human capacity to determine possibilities, to explore them and even reject them without having to realize and exhaust them. Yet to do this, it is decisive that projecting be integrated into a process of understanding, planning, and realizing that exceeds projection and that will produce an objective result in one way or the other, be it as a sketch, an outline or some other form of draft. Only this draft, finished in itself in some manner, makes the process of projecting upon possibilities communicable to others and only because this process is directed at something at all that is to serve as illustration, projecting achieves a disclosure of potentiality in its concretion and an understanding of one concrete possibility in distinction from others. Yet this is not the way in which Heidegger describes projecting and uses it as an image for Dasein's understanding of its potential being. For Heidegger, by projecting, we essentially understand the indeterminate and mere potentiality in Being.

Even if one finds plausible enough (though perhaps one-sided) the idea that projecting relates to the possible, and even if one accepts that Heidegger disregards the fact that projecting is bound to creating particular sketches, drafts, proposals or outlines, there is another, much more ambitious claim that follows from his identification of projecting and understanding: not only is everything that is understood also projected; because for Heidegger, understanding is essentially understanding oneself (*sich verstehen*), namely understanding oneself in one's possibilities and understanding one's own there as

potential being, projecting too must be essentially reflective. To be able to be (*Seinkönnen*), to project one's potential being thus for Heidegger means to project oneself unto oneself. Dasein projects itself when it understands itself and because understanding is an essential determination of its being, Dasein cannot but understand and be projecting. Yet that projecting is supposed to be a self-projection of the possible out of itself unto itself, is an idea difficult to argue for. The image of projecting as a creative process that despite its creative potential is still bound to something beyond it and continues to be bound to it, something by which projecting is inspired or to which it belongs and where it is to return once the project is realized—this image of projecting native to our languages is distorted by the view that projecting is a projecting of one's own being and of Being itself. Because of the distortion that the series of identifications produces, projecting appears to become an absolutely creative and all-encompassing event.

Because Heidegger attempts to use the paradigm of projection in order to illustrate his ontological discourse, his conception departs from the usual semantics of projecting, and thus it becomes questionable whether projecting provides an image apt to the illustration of fundamental ontology. Heidegger reacts to this resistance of his linguistic imagery by surpassing it even further: projecting is to be understood as an eminently *temporal* experience in Dasein in order to provide a foundation for the self-enforcing character of projecting. Heidegger develops the complex structure of the different experiences of time, rated as either authentic or inauthentic, in order to describe the temporality of Dasein

and make clear that the aspect of time specific for projecting can only be understood from the *future*: “the self-projecting grounded in the future [*das in der Zukunft gründende Sichentwerfen*]” belongs to “the essential character of existence,” and because Dasein as a whole projects itself in its existence, the “*primary meaning [primärer Sinn]*” of existing is “*the future.*” (GA 2, 433) Yet Heidegger is not interested in the fact that planning and projecting something implies that the project can be realized in the future. Dasein does not seem to know any concrete projections or have any determinate projections of itself. Heidegger is rather led by another consideration: if projecting is the understanding of possibilities, then it relates to the potential that an open and undecided future offers. It is the indeterminacy of the future that is disclosed by projecting understanding and that allows one to think the self-referential creativity in the way Heidegger understands projecting.

For Heidegger, projecting relates to the future without concrete determinations, making the future accessible in its indecision and indeterminacy, neglecting all conditions to which projecting may be subjected. With this, a new meaning of projecting becomes paradigmatic: *to project something upon something (etwas auf etwas entwerfen)*, or, in the case of Dasein, to project *oneself* upon something (*sich auf etwas (hin) entwerfen*). If to project means to disclose the undecided, to disclose the openness of the future, then there is meaning in speaking of a projecting upon the indetermined and into the future. In this sense, one has to understand the formulation that Dasein projects itself upon its

possibilities. Yet if this is true, projecting is not the capacity to form a particular project or to produce a draft, a sketch or a model embodying the possible before it is realized. It is rather a projecting upon the wholly indeterminate surface which is the unwritten future. Projecting without projects implies the capacity to imagine the future not in its concrete possibilities and limitations, i.e. in view of the limitations of projecting or in view of the realization of concrete projects, but in view of its utter indeterminacy. What we, as Dasein, understand if we project ourselves, is not the radical contingency in everything related to the future but our seemingly infinite capacity to represent the potentiality of Being by projecting ourselves upon it. Projecting is then not related to “thought out plans,” indeed, but rather it relates to the indeterminacy of the future that lets it be meaningful to make plans at all. Yet in this way, Heidegger appears to lose sight of all factual determinacy of the future and to neglect all conditions to which projecting is submitted. If it is oriented toward the future, as Heidegger holds, then it is in fact oriented towards nothing but itself, it is a projecting upon “the always already projected being possible [*immer entworfene Seinkönnen*],”(GA 2, 447) a projecting upon the projecting, a projecting continuously reaffirming itself.

In the context of temporality, this is most evident when Heidegger combines projecting and anticipation (*Vorlaufen*). Projecting projects both past and present upon the indeterminacy of the future, anticipation does not disclose it in concrete and different possibilities but in its mere potentiality: nothing of that which was and is must still be in

the future, and to recognize just this opens the space for projecting. While the mere awaiting (*Gewärtigen*) of the future evades its indeterminacy, the projecting character of anticipatory understanding makes it possible to be open to the future in an authentic way, understanding it in how it can be radically different from past and present. Anticipating the future thus makes it possible to shape Dasein as a whole, and this means to expose it to the three authentic experiences of time that Heidegger determines as the moment (*Augenblick*), as the retrieving (*Wiederholen*) of the past and of anticipating the future (or ‘running ahead into it,’ *Vor-laufen*). These three experiences are gathered in the projection upon the indeterminacy of the authentic future so that it is in projecting that both the present moment and the retrieving of the past come together, yet anticipation as authentic form of understanding takes precedence and determines what is revealed in them: nothing determinate, mere possibility. The image of projection thus unifies the three temporal ecstasies of Dasein (present (*Gegenwart*), having-been (*Gewesenheit*), future (*Zukunft*)), so that the three ecstases are not of equal rank but related only under the primacy of the future and thus, under the primacy of the indeterminacy of Being. This primacy of the future, however, has no intuitive confirmation beyond the image of projection that Heidegger uses in order to determine authentic future. The image of projection is burdened with the whole analysis of temporality, with providing the meaning of the being of Dasein. If it were to fail to confirm Heidegger’s conception of temporality—and in my eyes, it does—one will have to look for another paradigm to understand the unity of Dasein and to grasp it in its potentiality.

Yet Heidegger's attempt to think the ontological primacy of the future, the constant "ahead-of-itself [*Sichvorweg*]" (GA 2, 562) of Dasein in the image of projecting, is also the reason why projecting cannot result in projects, cannot create something enduring and cannot produce even some preliminary form of result, as provisional as it may be. Projecting, in the over determination to which Heidegger submits it, needs nothing outside itself, nothing that it makes use of or upon which its realization would depend; as anticipating disclosure of potentiality, projecting is never objective and therefore never discloses concrete possibilities as particular projects do. It only discloses the future as wholly indeterminate potentiality in Being and thus, as Heidegger believes, the future as a future.

Ground and projection

Although Heidegger describes projecting as a self-enforcing activity beginning in the anticipation of the future, projecting is not an absolute event. Despite all vehemence with which Heidegger attempts to demonstrate the primacy of the future for Dasein, it would not be convincing to describe Dasein only as indeterminate potential being, and Heidegger is well aware of this. Yet the dependence of projecting, so Heidegger thinks, does not arise because there have to always be concrete projects created in the process of projecting so that even the indeterminacy of the future must become part of a process of understanding that will at some point have to begin determining the future. The limitation to projection does not arise from a determinacy of concrete plans, proposals,

sketches, models, or drafts. Rather, the limitation of projecting that is to take the place of such concrete projects has to do with the second philosophical image representing the same phenomenon and competing with the image of projecting: Dasein is not only projected and projecting at once but it is also to be the *ground* (*Grund*) of its own projection. Although there is another limitation of projecting through the idea of the “thrownness into the there [*Geworfenheit in das Da*]” (GA 2, 197) and the recurring phrase of a “thrown projection [*geworfener Entwurf*].” (GA 2, 378 and *passim*), these formulations lack the necessary force, for if Dasein “as thrown [is] thrown into the mode of being of projecting [*in die Seinsart des Entwerfens geworfen*],” (GA 2, 193) this means nothing but that it is forced to project itself (upon itself) at all. Thrownness does not establish a limitation of projecting but only reaffirms the necessity and primacy of the activity of projecting.

A more forceful and, as it were, material limitation to projecting is achieved only when it is linked to the image of ground. This counter-image does not lend projecting a resultative moment or a goal for mere anticipation; the ground of Dasein is not the result of its projecting. Rather, if one attempts to blend the two images, the dependence of projecting Dasein lies in the fact that Dasein, although it is the “ground of its potential being,” has “*not itself* laid this ground.” In contrast to the image of the thrown projecting character of existence, Heidegger writes that Dasein does not anticipate and run ahead into its future but rather “rests in its heaviness [*ruht in seiner Schwere*]” and only out of

this heaviness may it project itself “upon those possibilities [...] into which it is thrown.” According to this description, Dasein reaches its own possibility without being able to integrate it and only now the decisive limitation to potential being is established: the dependence of projecting lies in the fact that it needs a ground and although this ground is Dasein itself, Dasein can “fundamentally *never* possess [*von Grund auf nie mächtig werden*]” this ground and thus “continuously lags behind its own possibilities.” (GA 2, 377) Only the negativity of the carrying but uncontrollable ground that Dasein is no less than self projecting projection provides an intuitive counter-image to the self-disclosure and self-enforcement of Dasein as being of mere potentiality. Only the force proper to ground allows one to think projecting not as a continuously self-empowering activity but as a space of potentiality both carried by its ground and limited by it.

Yet although this unity of projection and ground may be pronounced in a few words, it is difficult to think both together, to see before the mind’s eye, as it were, both images at once. How can Dasein, anticipating and understanding potential being, also be the ground of this being at the same time? How can Dasein both run ahead and rest? How can ground and projection belong to the same entity?—It is a connection of these two philosophical images and an answer to these question that is attempted by the idea of *Erklüften*.

The matter that these questions address may be gathered by saying that it lies in the semantics of *entwerfen* that the future of a project must be thought of as an open future.

Though Heidegger forces the idea, it is true that projecting relates to the future because what will happen with a certain project—whether it will be realized, modified or discarded—is not decided in the moment of projecting. Heidegger goes too far in claiming that the activity of projecting does not even create individual and different projects but is mere openness in anticipating the indeterminacy of the possible, for this makes it impossible to think the space in which projects compete with one another, where there are stages of development of a project or their revision. Yet if the connection of ground and projection cannot be made plausible through the idea of a projection into the future, this openness must be understood differently than the indeterminacy of the future. As images for the disclosure of Dasein's possibilities, the resting ground and the projecting anticipation of Dasein exclude each other. Although both are present in the text of *Being and Time*, they do not become manifest in such a way as to both be intelligible at once. If one looks at the discourse about projecting, understanding, and future, one thinks a different image than that in Heidegger's language of thrownness and ground. Both semantic fields lie too far apart.

Heidegger must have taken notice of the competition of philosophical images in *Being and Time* and, in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, reacts by developing the image of ground within a theory of history instead of within a theory of time. If *Being and Time* aimed at a theory of the appearance of Being in time, in the artwork essay, Being is discussed in its historicity in reference to different works of art. Here, the orientation of projecting

towards the future is no longer at issue in the horizon of understanding and anticipating the future in order to make manifest the temporality of Being, but rather in view of the question how to understand history as it manifests itself in the experience of art. If according to *Being and Time*, Dasein disclosed its own wholeness in time through anticipating projection, in the artwork essay, Dasein finds something that does not integrate but rather remains a ground outside its self-projecting and outside Dasein. Only in such a way, it seems, does true creativity become possible, for it now finds historical ground outside the projecting and precisely through this gains the freedom to disclose something that leaves behind anxiety (as fundamental attunement), silence (as authentic discourse), anticipating (as authentic understanding), transcending in such a way care (the being of Dasein) and temporality (the meaning of care). True aesthetic spontaneity, the artwork essays reveals, decisively transgresses the framework of the analytic of Dasein, yet Heidegger remains true to his paradigm, projection. But here, in the artwork essay, it is developed very differently than in *Being and Time*.

Heidegger now relates ground and projection to the past and to what is concealed, not to the future as authentic ecstasy of the temporality of Dasein. In his discussion of the establishing (*Stiften*) of history, Heidegger distinguishes giving (*Schenken*), grounding (*Gründen*) and beginning (*Anfangen*) as different aspects of how a work of art can be understood as a historical event. These three aspects of the historical character of the work of art take up the three ecstasies of time, past, present, and future. Now, significantly,

projection is discussed not in relation to beginning, i.e. in terms of the relation of art to the future, but in relation to grounding. In discussing how works of art are projected as historical events of truth, Heidegger combines anew the philosophical images conflicting in *Being and Time*, but now not in relation to the indeterminacy of the future but as belonging together in the relation to the past. The ground of Dasein is no longer to be understood from projecting as anticipating the future but conversely projection is to be thought from the ground that the past is for Dasein. The movement of historical Dasein is dependent on the stillness of the ground to which the projecting relates. With the change of perspective from Dasein to the work of art, the concealed ground and not the indeterminacy of the future becomes the cipher of the unknown.

Thus with the idea of establishing history as inceptual grounding, the task is no longer to retrieve the past and to thus show the comportment towards time that Heidegger had determined as the essential comportment to the past in *Being and Time*. Rather, through projecting, the ground that history is shall be opened up at all: the “poetic projection of truth established in the work through its being formed is never actively achieved through projection upon the empty and indeterminate [*dichtende Entwurf der Wahrheit, der sich ins Werk stellt als Gestalt, wird auch nie ins Leere und Unbestimmte hinein vollzogen*],” and thus, one will have to add, it is also not accomplished by projecting upon the indeterminacy of the future as if it were an empty surface. Projection is rather to be understood as the “opening up of that wherein Dasein has already been thrown as

historical being. This is the earth and for a historical people its earth, the self-concealing ground upon which it rests with all that it, though maybe still hidden to itself, already is. [...] This is why everything already given to humans must still be extracted from the closed ground and set upon it. In such a way the ground is founded as a carrying ground. *[Eröffnung von Jenem, worein das Dasein als geschichtliches schon geworfen ist. Dies ist die Erde und für ein geschichtliches Volk seine Erde, der sich verschließende Grund, dem es aufruht mit all dem, was es, sich selbst noch verborgen, schon ist. [...] Deshalb muß alles dem Menschen Mitgegebene im Entwurf aus dem verschlossenen Grund heraufgeholt und eigens auf diesen gesetzt werden. So wird er als der tragende Grund erst gegründet.]*” (GA 5, 63) Thus projecting, the “poetic projecting” which Heidegger here calls the projection of truth and not of Dasein, draws from the ground, extending into the concealed being of ground and building on it, and here this means that a historical relation to the past is disclosed anew through the establishing of art. The orientation of projecting in time is thus reversed vis-à-vis *Being and Time*: to put it in the terminology used there, projecting is not specified by an anticipating, by a running-ahead, but by retrieving the past. Projecting is no longer understood as an absolutely creative activity, nor does it simply access possibilities past. Rather it lets both the past be the ground for the future and remain past. But then, the past is no longer subordinate to the future through projecting. In the simultaneity of giving, grounding, and beginning, both prove to be of equal rank. The different temporal ecstasies are now understood as aspects of the historical effect that works of art have in view of past, future, and present at the same time. Over and against

the primacy of the indeterminacy of the futural orientation of self-projection, the past is rehabilitated, the past concealed to Dasein as its proper ground.

Erklüftung

Even though this concept is to also encompass the past and gains its ontological relevance precisely because of this, there is an intuitive plausibility when Heidegger identifies the earth as an essential moment of projecting. Whoever projects something and drafts it, draws on the ground, gives to his idea a ground such as to make it a project. Yet Heidegger takes over from *Being and Time* the self-referentiality of projecting, now to be understood as the self-referentiality of the projected and projecting ground. That is why Heidegger claims that through projecting the project becomes identical to the ground, just as closedness and openness of the past both shall be understood as two aspects of the same. But this explanation, again, does not lead to a unified intuition of what Dasein is. Ground and projection remain incongruent in any description of projecting, and thus in their very identification, the two philosophical images separate again.

In *Contributions*, Heidegger begins to fully recognize the contradictory nature of the two images—and ground and projection are only two of the philosophical images that compete in this text. The phenomenal ground Heidegger calls earth is now not disclosed through a projection but it remains, as Heidegger says, a “self-enclosing against every projection [*Sichverschließen vor jedem Entwurf*].” (GA 65, 482) The idea is familiar from

the artwork essay: a rock smashed into pieces will only be stone again unless it is integrated into the made meaning-relation of the world—yet if it happens to be a stone in the fractured or cut surfaces of which we recognize ruins, as in the marble described above, this has always already been achieved before humans began to shape it. Concealed, nature itself is actively shaping and forming images.⁸⁷ This closedness of the earth now also holds for history, so Heidegger claims, because without remembering it, it eludes the present and the shaping of history in the direction of the future. That the ground of historical Dasein and the projecting of Dasein are identical is taken over in Heidegger's description of the earth in the double phenomenological role that Heidegger attempts to give to the earth and that can be described so well in the example of the ruin marble: the earth is both object of projecting and in so far, it is disclosed; yet it also remains the concealed ground, elemental and indistinguishable materiality. The marble shows that there are eminently meaningful processes that resemble human projecting but are not caused by any human, that there is thus a projecting taking place in the ground, in earth itself. In this way, one would have to explain with Heidegger how Goethe uses the word *Erklüftung*. Heidegger could make an emphatic use of Goethe's ideas and even go so far as to claim that this fundamental trait cannot only be recognized in the natural development of massive stone but also in history, as the concealing ground of Dasein, itself.

⁸⁷ This has motivated Roger Caillois to speak of a "painting" of nature. See Roger Caillois, "Natura pictrix," *Cahiers du Musée de Poche*, vol. 1, Paris: Georges Fall 1959.

The double role of earth as ground and projection of projecting, as it can be seen paradigmatically in the ruin marble, helps to understand Heidegger's own discourse on *Erklüftung*. The word occurs in the fifth part of *Contributions*, entitled *The Grounding* (*Die Gründung*), in a section entitled *Of Da-sein*. This is the section where for the first time in Heidegger's oeuvre he sketches the structure of the *fourfold* (*das Geviert*) or a structure at least very much resembling the later so-called fourfold. (plate 3) The section aims to speak of Da-sein "by way of grounding [*gründend*]," which also means to speak "historically in our and for our future history." This can be done "in a rightly understood projection [*im rechtverstandenen Entwurf*]" letting "resonate [*anklingen lassen*]" that human beings are "broken out into the open [*ausgebrochen [...] ins Offene*]." The ecstatic constitution of Dasein is thought here not as anticipation of the future but as simultaneous openness and, as will become manifest, as eminently spatial. It is the event (*Ereignis*) relating world and earth, humans and gods at once. From the little sketch with its centripetal arrows, so Heidegger thinks, "it can already be seen which unitarily formed force of projection is required [*einheitlich gefügte Entwurfskraft*]" (GA 65, 310)—the unitary force of projection of the event.

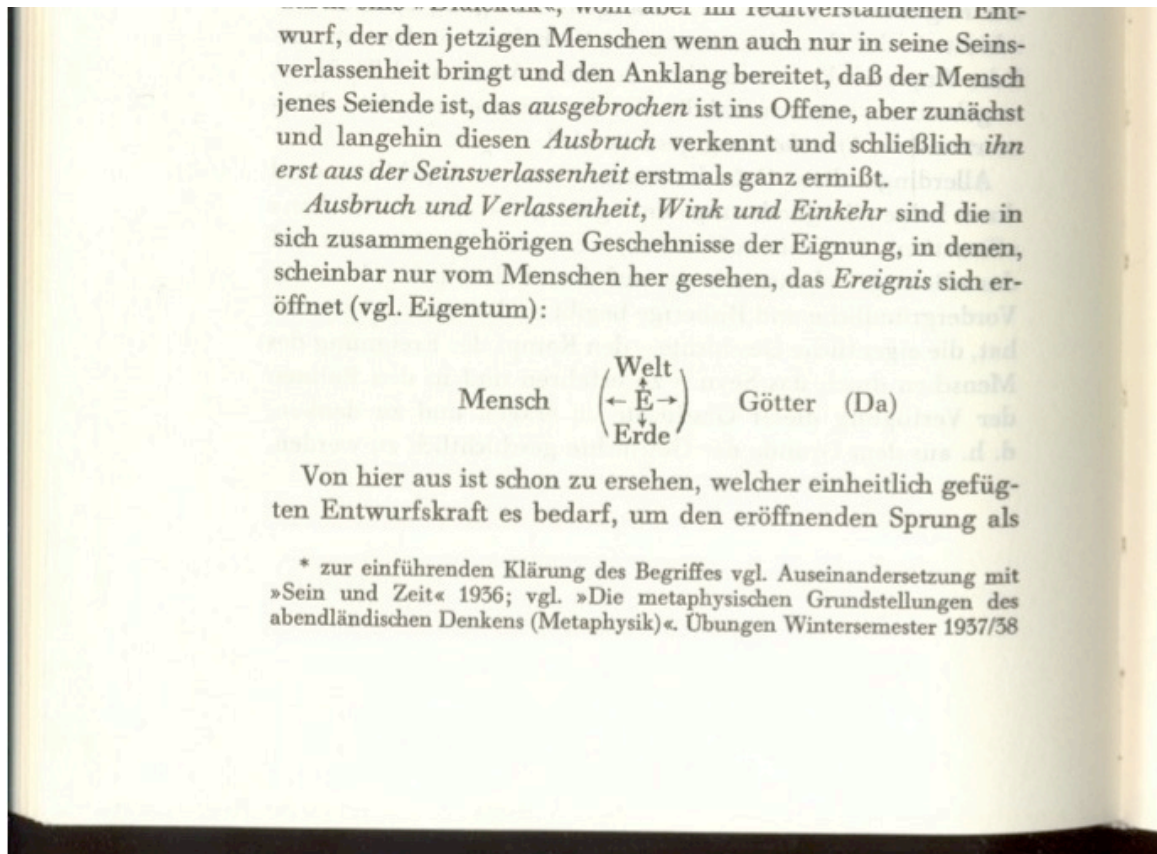


Plate 4: Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (*Contributions to Philosophy*), section 190, illustrative sketch. © Vittorio Klostermann GmbH 1989.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Image taken from Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie. Vom Ereignis*, GA 65, 310. I am using the image with kind permission of Vittorio E. Klostermann. The recently published English translation (page 246) renders the vertical arrows pointing in the wrong direction (the upper one down instead of up, the lower one up instead of down). I have consulted the original manuscript available in the *Deutsches Literaturarchiv*, Marbach, Germany: the German edition is correct.

In the attempt to describe this force of projection, Heidegger begins his discourse on *Erklüftung*. The “event [*Geschehnis*] of *Erklüftung*” is the “en-owning [*Er-eignung*]” of the four dimensions that Heidegger identifies: through *Erklüftung*, “historical man” finds itself; the “nearing and distancing [*Nahung und Fernung*]” of the Gods is experienced. The name further designates that dynamic spatiality of “nearing and distancing” that is “the origin of time-space [*Zeit-Raum*]” and the “realm of the strife” (GA 65, 311) of world and earth. In astonishing proximity to Goethe’s use of the word, the sundering *Erklüftung* is that reshaping of the ground the projective force of which does not come from the subject. The projecting of this ground is not only inherent in the ground as possible but it happens out of its proper force, without human manipulation although also without opening itself to human sight.

The two other passages of *Contributions* where Heidegger speaks of *Erklüftung* confirm this image. In the first passage, the role of humans in the event of projection is determined and related to the analytic of Dasein. The authentic “selfhood [*Selbstheit*],” as Heidegger says, develops from the strife of sundering if one accepts “to stand into and to stand through [*ausstehen*]” (GA 65, 321) this event. Authentic existence is thus the acceptance of the event of *Erklüftung*, of a hidden fracturing in the self. But the event is no longer structured and filtered by the three ecstasies of time, and Dasein can no longer be closed by an anticipation of the future which ends in one’s own death. Inversely, the four dimensions of the fourfold as well as time and space are rather to be thought from

the idea of a projective and concealed sundering, which is the alleged appearance of time-spaces. In an “inceptual consideration of time-space,” the image of the centrifugal movement is taken up and varied accordingly: time space is the “en-owned sundering of the turning paths of the event [*ereignete Erklüftung der Kehrbahnen des Ereignisses*].” This dynamic is not to be understood “as in the usual conceptions of time and space,” nor from the three-dimensionality of a threefold ecstatic of time. Rather, one is to see the “concealed appearance of time-space” in “nearness and distance, emptiness and giving, momentum and hesitation [*Nähe und Ferne, Leere und Schenkung, Schwung und Zögerung*].” (GA 65, 372) *Erklüftung*, one may want to paraphrase, designates an ungraspable disclosing of time and space through events, hidden as if it were hidden in stone itself.

This is paralleled in Heidegger’s use of *Zerklüftung*. As such, one is to understand the “unfolding of the intimacy of Being remaining in itself [*in sich bleibende Entfaltung der Innigkeit des Seyns*].” Sundered Being is thus both open and closed, it remains in itself while expanding and unfolding. Making use of the “‘metaphysical’ modalities,” however, one can only think *Zerklüftung* as an essential paradox, as the “highest reality of the highest possible as possible and therefore as first necessity [*höchste Wirklichkeit des höchsten Möglichen als des Möglichen und damit die erste Notwendigkeit*].” (GA 65, 244) Yet because of this, reversely, it should be possible, so Heidegger claims, to reinterpret the ontological modalities in view of this event, although it remains unclear how this could be

done. And while projecting discloses the possible as possible in understanding, the rutted and indented Being cannot be understood as Being in its mere potentiality. In the logic of the images, the ground is something radically foreign to projecting, as the concealing earth is. In contrast to the analytic of Dasein and the primacy of potentiality as an ultimate positive determination of Dasein, this is a radical rehabilitation of reality and necessity, linked here with those phenomena Heidegger describes as the remaining-in-itself (*In-sich-bleiben*), linked with the very same phenomena that already in *Being and Time* referred to through the image of ground. As *zerklüftet*, Being is not mere potentiality but the itself conditioned necessary condition of possibility of beings, “first necessity” and also “highest possibility.”

The second passage can be found on the page of *Contributions* on which the word *Erklärung* appears four times in the longest passage Heidegger highlights in the entire volume. In this passage, the above considerations are gathered in one of the most enigmatic formulations: Dasein is the “event of *Erklärung* of the midst of the turning of the event [*Geschehnis der Erklärung der Wendungsmitte der Kehre des Ereignisses*].” (GA 65, 311) Interpreting this cascade of genitives, one can say: Dasein takes place in the field structured by the dimensions of the fourfold and in the interplay of time and space Heidegger calls the time-space, preceding all determinate spaces. In this taking-place, Dasein does not project itself into the future but sunders as the ground that it also is. Sundered by its own being, Dasein is exposed to the resonance of events that are not mere

possibilities of man's manipulation nor reducible to any other of the four dimensions of the fourfold.⁸⁹ In such a way, Heidegger believes, the being of Dasein becomes an event, yet not the realization of a principle but the turning in the center of the field of the different determinations Heidegger gives—world, earth, humans, gods, time, space. In this field, each of the phenomena thus addressed has not only a concealed history. Also their interplay withdraws from thinking so that we have to turn to the image of sundering to grasp it. Only in the free play of these events, the proper phenomenality of humans and Gods, world and earth, time and space takes place. To be Dasein then means to be in the “turning midst” of these events. Not only the connection of projection and ground but this highly complex event—this is *Erklüftung*.

Clearing, place and the void

What Heidegger attempts to think as *Erklüftung*, then, is not simply an event of projection de-centering the subject as it is the image for the understanding of the whole of Dasein as temporal projecting. *Erklüftung* means no disclosure of the future accelerated by thrownness or slowed down by history. The fusion of ground and projection already implicit in *Being and Time* rather inspires Heidegger to think the accessibility of beings not only as a dynamic and emerging event but also as an event taking place in what is concealed—not on the earth but in the earth. As the sudden

⁸⁹ On the notion of the fourfold see Andrew J. Mitchell, “The fourfold,” in: Bret Davis (ed.), Martin Heidegger. Key concepts, Durham: Acumen 2010, 208-217. I am indebted to Andrew Mitchell for letting me consult the manuscript of his *The Fourfold. Reading the later Heidegger*.

sundering of stone produces the *Erklüftungen* without anyone noticing, so events change Being without our knowing it, although our own being resonates from these Sunderings in Being itself.

Yet this claim contradicts the intuition that a theory of openness and of the accessibility of beings, a transcendental theory in the broadest sense, must not only lay claim to or mystify this transcendental but must also be able to expose it. Projecting certainly needs a ground—the idea that a projecting takes place in the concealed, however, is not in accordance with the fundamental trait of projecting, namely that it is an activity concerned with openness, a discovery and formation of the possible that sees the light of day and is to some degree accessible and understandable even if it may not be completely so. The *erklüften* that Heidegger claims to be the fundamental event of Being can thus not be more easily intuited than the fusion of the images of temporal projecting and self-concealing ground. There may be something like *Erklüftung*—but if it is, it can only be thought as the contradiction and strife of images, in the speculative transgression of what these images represent, eventually leading into the unseen. Yet such contradictory imagination set free by these images is not enough for Heidegger, for he wishes to find a single image to think Dasein. It is maybe a phenomenological ethos that forces Heidegger, already on the next page of *Contributions*, to give the reader another philosophical image for Dasein, an image conflicting with *Erklüftung* as the fusion of ground and projecting, an image that will eventually take their place in his thinking: Dasein is *clearing*. The idea

that Dasein must be understood as clearing does not deny phenomena of absence and concealing but rather allows them to gain their proper presence: “something absent can only be as such if it is present in the *free open of the clearing*.” (GA 14, 82) In the same vein, one would have to say of the philosophical images of projecting and ground that there must be an open space accessible at least to imaginal thinking in which these images can relate.

This is indeed the central idea of the later Heidegger’s thought that only begins in *Contributions*. Yet the idea of the clearing cannot be thought in the image of the sundering ground remaining in itself. The forceful thinking-together of ground and projection becomes intuitive neither through a logic of the anticipating retrieval in time nor through an inceptual beginning of history nor in the image of *Erklüftung*. Precisely to be manifest, as Heidegger says in the passage from *Contributions*, as the “grounding of the openness of self concealing [*Gründung der Offenheit des Sichverbergens*],” Dasein must be thought in relation to the clearing. Here, for Heidegger, this means to speak of imagination (*Einbildung*) outside the paradigms of ground and projection. It indeed appears to be the logic of imaginability that forbids one to think both philosophical images as one although it does allow one to think them as contradicting each other.⁹⁰ The two competing images of the same thing and the primacy that Heidegger will eventually grant to the imagination and the clearing become evident when Heidegger says that

⁹⁰ On the logic of imagining contradictions see John Sallis, *Logic of Imagination. The Expanse of the Elemental*, Bloomington: IUP 2012, ch. 1 and ch. 3.

precisely as “projecting-thrown grounding [*entwerfend-geworfene Gründung*],” Dasein would have to be determined as “highest reality in the domain of imagination [*höchste Wirklichkeit im Bereich der Einbildung*],” and this would mean to determine it as the clearing. Imagination here means no “faculty of the soul, not even a transcendental faculty” in the Kantian sense but the “event of the *clearing* itself [*Geschehnis der Lichtung selbst*].” To have something present in imagination does not mean that it stands before one’s eyes as a mere idea but that it “becomes shining in the clearing, in the there [*zum Scheinen gebracht werde in die Lichtung, in das Da*].” (GA 65, 312) It is precisely this shining that the *Erklüften* taking place in the hidden ground never achieves. It remains speculative, a mere mirroring of two images.

Thus even if one attempts to enforce Heidegger’s idea of the unity of projection and ground using Goethe’s model of the ruin marble, one must draw the same conclusion, namely that openness or clearing as the determination of the whole of existence precedes both grounding and projecting. It is the astonishing trait of the ruin marble that it has been shaped as if it were projected and made by man even before man’s hand had touched it and that it thus appears to hold a spontaneous and natural creativity. But that this is the case becomes manifest only when the stone comes to light, and this does not happen when the stone, as Heidegger would say, sunders itself (*sich erklüftet*), but only when it breaks open or is smashed. In such a way it becomes accessible, it comes into a clearing, as Heidegger would say, that is of a different origin than the cracks and rifts in

the stone and that makes them possible for us. To think projection as an image for the whole of the manifest would not be possible even if the projection would itself also be a self-concealing ground, as it allegedly is in *Erküftung*. Projecting certainly needs a ground, and it may even attempt to bring it to light while this ground closes off. But projecting is not itself this ground but the way we gain access to more originary opening of the clearing in which all of this happens. Neither ground nor projection are images for the whole of Dasein. If one allows the competing philosophical images to unfold their proper sense, it is no surprise that the image of the clearing becomes decisive for what Heidegger attempts to think.

This result is confirmed by two related passages in which Heidegger further determines the image of the clearing as an image of the whole of experience and connects it with the notions of *place* (*Ort*) and *void* (*Leere*). Both are constitutively excluded in the logic of *Erklüftung*, and yet these two notions now appear to be essential for the phenomenology of projecting. In such a way, projecting itself is put in a more limited but also much more plausible position and one can begin to describe, following Heidegger but beyond the logic of *Erklüftung*, how projecting operates in the clearing and unto a ground with which it is not identical—namely in the creation of places and as formation of the void.

The first passage is a marginal note to *The Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger must have written after 1960. Next to the word “projecting,” Heidegger notes that “not the

clearing as such” is projected. For this, he gives the reason: “because only in the clearing a project is placed [*denn in [der Lichtung] erst ist der Entwurf geortet*].” (GA 5, 61) Thus even if projecting creates places, it does not create them out of nothing. That would be the explicitly excluded self-warrant of projecting according to which the whole of the clearing, the whole of the disclosed, of the possible, of the real and the necessary would be created by projection. Heidegger’s criticism also points to a particular weakness of the idea of *Erklüftung*: it does not become clear how, from out of the event of the sundering taking place in the compact solidity of stone, places can come into being. The claim that *Erklüftung* is the origin of time-space, the origin of nearness and distance, remains mere assertion for all those phenomena cannot exist within a closed ground. The double image of *Erklüftung* takes for granted a density and originary solidity of space that is not self-evident but rather contrary to intuition. If Being were really to be opened in *Erklüftungen* as the rock is broken by its cracks and rifts, all openness and emptiness would be the result of the spatial dynamic, yet openness and emptiness would not be originary constituents of this dynamic. This is already different when Heidegger speaks of a *Zerklüftung* of Being in a perfective sense coming to light in the open of the clearing. *Zerklüftung*, one may summarize, is visible, *Erklüftung* is not.

The strongest counter-image to the idea of *Erklüftung* can be found in the principal idea of the essay *Art and Space* (1969), namely the idea that the void is itself a “bringing forth [*Hervorbringen*]” because it is “twins with what is essential about place [*mit dem*

Eigentümlichen des Ortes verschwistert].” The void and emptiness is precisely not created through the projection of ground or through the sundering of ground. It is rather this openness that is disclosed and formed. One can see this already in the prints Eduardo Chillida has created for this text and for which Heidegger has written the text. (plate 4)

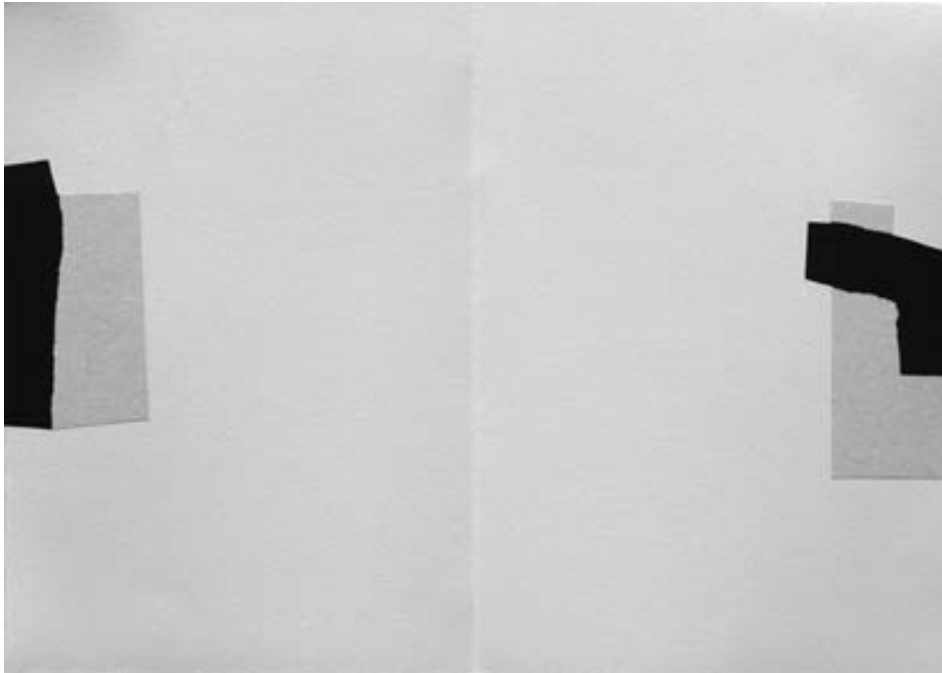


Plate 5: Eduardo Chillida, *Die Kunst und der Raum*, no. 2, 1969. Lithocollage, 15.5 cm. × 21.5 cm. Photo: Image Bank VEGAP. © 2009 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid.⁹¹

⁹¹ Image (black and white print) taken from: Andrew J. Mitchell, *Heidegger Among the Sculptors. Body, Space, and the Art of Dwelling*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2010, 80.

The void and emptiness of the white paper is precisely not opened up by the concealing black but only formed through it. It is also worth noting that Heidegger here no longer speaks of Dasein as potential being or of the temporal unity of understanding that is projected but only about works of modern sculpture when he says that these are the “searching-projecting establishing of places [*suchend-entwerfende Stiften von Orten*].” In such a way, Heidegger silently returns to the projection *of something upon something else*, to the meaning we usually attribute to *entwerfen*, and instead of thinking projection as a projection into the indeterminate surface of the future, it is now evident that there is something that is projected, namely, places and that there is something within which projection takes place, namely the clearing. Places are those concrete structures of possibilities the experience of which is set free through projecting.

For the philosophical attempt to understand projecting, this means that projecting must relate to clearing and void (as its conditions of possibility) and also to that which is created in protecting (places of experience). Rather than the fusion with the ground in the idea of *Erklüftung*, one would turn to situations localized in the open and the bright, located in the clearing, to understand projecting. One would turn to paradigms such as drawing, skiagraphy,⁹² or sculpture,⁹³ to the phenomena Heidegger already addresses in his consideration of Chillida. Yet in view of Heidegger’s philosophy, although one can use

⁹² See Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires d’aveugle. L’autoportrait et autres ruines*, Paris: Editions de la réunion des musées nationaux 1990.

⁹³ See Mitchell, *Heidegger Among the Sculptors*, esp. 66-91.

the image of projection to follow the way in which Heidegger's thinking moves the idea of *Erklüftung*, which was not to become manifest in the phenomenological use of imagination, was with Heidegger only for a very short part of the way.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ I have presented an earlier, German language version of this chapter at the conference *Suchen. Entwerfen. Stiften – Entwurfsdenken im Ausgang von Martin Heidegger* at the eikones National Research Centre, Basel, Switzerland on March 9th 2012. I am indebted to Emmanuel Alloa, David Espinet, Günter Figal, Toni Hildebrandt and Alexander Schnell for comments.

6. Conclusion

The last lecture course Heidegger gave, in 1956/57, is entitled *Der Satz vom Grund*, published already in 1957. Although the lecture course is devoted to a single theme and proceeds successively—in difference to *On the Way to Language* (1959), which is a collection of essays—it is hard to determine how precisely the course proceeds or what its results are. While the first half of the lecture is devoted to a presentation and critical discussion of Leibniz' law of sufficient reason (*principium reddendae rationes sufficientes*),⁹⁵ with the beginning of the eighth session (GA 10, 87), Heidegger broadens the scope of his discussions and begins to reflect more emphatically on what has been and what can be achieved in the discourse on ground. Heidegger's methodological reflection centers on the notion of *place* (*Ort*):

That from where the demand [*Anspruch*] of the principle speaks we call the place of the principle of reason [*den Ort des Satzes vom Grund*]. The way that is to lead to this place and that is to scout this very place we call the consideration [*Erörterung*] of the principle of reason. [...] The ways of considering and thinking [*Denkwege der Erörterung*] are particular in that we are closer to the place when underway on such ways than if we think we would have arrived at the place in order to settle down in it; for such place is of a different nature than a position [*Stelle*] or a site [*Platz*] in space [*Raum*]. What we call place [*Ort*], here, the place of the principle of reason, is rather that which gathers in itself what is essential to something [*das Wesen einer Sache in sich versammelt*].” (GA 10, 87-88)

⁹⁵ As an excellent introduction to the problem at stake in *The Principle of Reason* and its import, see Jeff Malpas, *Ground, Unity and Limit*, in: *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place. Studies in the Topology of Being*, Cambridge: MIT Press 2012, 73-96, esp. 74-76.

Place, then, is the name of a specific configuration of appearing, and if Heidegger's idea can be generalized, places are always particular, are indeed always places *of* something: the place of something is the configuration of appearing specific to that which appears. In contrast to a position or site in a pre-defined space, places such as the place *of* the principle of reason open up a space specific to what appears in this place. While a position in a (homogenous, geometric) space is abstractly defined and can be filled with whatever appears in it, a place in the eminent sense is itself so strongly defined by the particularity of what appears in it that the (spatial) configuration of its apperance is bound by it through and through.⁹⁶ Such place could be called an *intentional position*: it is not an absolute position defined by the measure of some abstract grid but the relative positioning *of* something particular over and against something else. This positioning may be explored through following a specific way, and ideally—in what Heidegger calls the *Erörterung* of the *Ort*—, following this way is itself the experience of the place and thus of something in its specificity and in all its essential traits. This exploration, Heidegger explains, is the peculiar method of research into such phenomena as ground, and indeed, the true meaning of method: “In Greek, the way is called ὁδός; μετά means

⁹⁶ In a recent collection of his further studies of the notion of place in Heidegger, Jeff Malpas has named three moments of the topological character of Heidegger's own thinking, namely that place constitutes the *focus*, the *horizon* and the *origin* of thinking. See Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place*, 9. As in his first study however, Malpas does not situate this idea in the phenomenological discourse but takes the topological character of philosophy as indicative of, or grounded in “a more fundamental *ontological* structure (albeit one that is not to be found beneath the surface of things so much as in the very iridescence of surface itself—surface, like boundary, and also, I would argue, like the concepts of unity and ground, being itself an essentially topological concept).” (4) It would seem to me that one could very well also understand this structure not as ontological but as phenomenological, if it indeed determines things in how they appear.

‘after’, ‘following’ [*nach*]; μέθοδος is the way on which we follow a thing [*auf dem wir einer Sache nachgehen*]: the method.” (GA 10, 92). One does not have to agree with the claim that this is indeed the true meaning of method in order to acknowledge that this is how Heidegger conceives of the just method to treat the phenomenon of ground, and if the exploration of the place of ground is the just method to treat this philosophical problem, then whatever ground or reason or the principle of reason is, it will open up a place specific to it, it will show itself in a configuration of appearing specific to it. By exploring the space proper to an intentional positioning we learn what it means for something to appear as it is.

In view of *The Principle of Reason*, the studies of this book can thus be understood as such explorations of the place of ground, of the meaning of ‘earth’ or of the place of other phenomena of presence-absence such as the rock smashed into pieces and the crumbled chalk. If the attempt to research what is essential to these phenomena has been successful, according to Heidegger, the four studies would have followed a way that has become the place of these particular phenomena, a way determined in its specificity by what is essential to their appearance. The discussion of Heidegger’s and other’s texts would have become a topical experience of these phenomena.

In the lecture course on *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger continues his own exploration of ground in two ways. One way consists in an exploration of the semantics of ground, the second in his discourse on the history of Being and the sending of Being. The

ways constantly cross each other and sometimes align, yet it is all but sure that both will lead to the same place, to the same configuration of apperance. Already in the difficulty of determining what *Grund* means, Heidegger draws an analogy to 'Being,' marking a first intersection of the ways:

In order to make way here, we must accept that the presentation will be of crude form. In view of what is to be thought in the word 'ground [*Grund*]' holds true what was said about understanding and saying the word 'Being [*Sein*].' The word 'ground,' too, we have somehow understood already during the last lectures. Thus we were able to defer what can now not be delayed any longer: to discuss the word 'ground' and the names that in the history of thinking came to determine what in our language we generally call 'ground.' In order for us not to lose our way during our discussions [*Erläuterungen*], I call to mind what we wish to arrive at, namely, an insight into the fact that and how 'Being' and 'ground' 'are' the same [*das Selbe*]. (GA 10, 136-137)

Considering his description of genuine philosophical method and the character of places as configurations of the essential apperance of something, this reminder comes as a surprise, for philosophical way-following was precisely not knowing in advance what place a way will lead to, and philosophical method was to consist not in settling down somewhere—and be it in the sameness of ground and Being—but rather to let the experience of the philosophical way become an experience of the phenomenon considered. In other passages, Heidegger is well aware that the place particular of philosophical inquiry is an “underway” (*Unterwegs*): the “underway gives us the opportunity to see, at least here and there, in which sense that which Being and ground name ‘is’ the same. For this same is also the steady which is lit up by the suddenness of a sending of Being. [*Denn dieses Selbe ist zugleich das Stete, das jeweils in der Jähe eines*

Seinsgeschickes aufleuchtet.]” (GA 10, 142) The place of the sameness of Being and ground is thus not openly accessible but only disclosed from time to time, “at least here and there,” through the sending of Being as by a sudden light. Being underway would thus mean to look out for those spontaneous revelations of the identity of ground and Being. Although Heidegger is not explicit about how such experiences of the alleged identity of ground and Being are to be recognized, he continues his consideration of the semantics of the word ground: “We now ask: what does ground mean? What is that which the word ‘ground’ calls upon us to think?” (GA 10, 142) It is the word itself, then, that is to lead, all of a sudden, to an experience of the identity of ground and Being. Mark that in this particular discussion at least, Heidegger seems to fall short of his methodological goal of reaching the place proper of the phenomenon in question, for it is not entirely clear if the sudden revelation of an experience of Being is its proper place. If Being is a steady ground, how can it also be revealed as that something striking by an unexpected flash of light?

Yet Heidegger’s course is set. The way of the meaning of ground is to become the same as the way of the ontological discourse in order for the sudden sending of Being to be revealed as an experience of ground, for the ground to reveal itself as the place of the sending of Being. But it should be noted that this is but a contention to be affirmed by an actual confrontation with what ground means, an affirmation that it will in my eyes not receive. The following passages gather Heidegger’s discourse on the semantics of the

German word *Grund* and its translations, a discourse proceeding in a very particular manner over the course of the second half of the lecture.

The first passage preliminarily circumscribe a meaning of ground with the help of some examples, composite forms of the word (*Grund-*). Heidegger's entry in the semantic discourse is highly rhetorical:

If we ask for the basic meaning [*Grundbedeutung*] of the word 'ground,' then we have already answered by asking, we have already invoked what we mean by 'ground,' namely the basis [*Basis*], the foundation [*Fundus*], on which something rests, stands and lies. We speak of fundamentals [*Grundmauern*], of a ground rule [*Grundregel*], of a principle [*Grundsatz*]. (GA 10, 137)

The second and crucial passage puts forth a certain tension in the meanings of ground by considering other composites (*-grund*) and the noun in its simple form (*Grund*):

We speak of fundamentals [*Grundmauern*], of a ground rule [*Grundregel*], of a principle [*Grundsatz*]. Yet we should presently note that this meaning of ground may be familiar, but it is also abstract, meaning that it is removed from and detached [*weggezogen und losgelöst*] from that domain from which the word says this meaning in a more inceptual way [*anfänglicher*]. Ground means the depth, i.e. the dept of the sea [*Meeresgrund*], the bottom of a valley [*Talgrund*], the mead [*Wiesengrund*], the low ground [*Senke*], a part of the land that is deeper than other parts; in a wider sense, it means the earth, ground soil [*Erdboden*]. Even more originarily, 'ground,' in the Allemanic Swabian dialect means humus [*Humus*]. That is the grown ground [*gewachsener Grund*], the heavy, fertile soil. A flowerbed, for instance, may not have enough ground [*zu wenig Grund*], ground is to be added for favorable growth. Thought generally [*ins Ganze gedacht*], ground means the domain that is both deeper and bearing. Thus we speak of the bottom of the heart [*Herzensgrund*]. To reach ground [*auf den Grund kommen*] already in the 16th century means: to determine the truth, that was truly is [*die Wahrheit, das was eigentlich ist*]. Ground means that to which we descend [*hinabgehen*], on which we rely [*zurückgehen*], inasmuch as the ground is that on which something rests, on which something is grounded, from which something follows [*worauf etwas ruht, woran etwas liegt, woraus etwas folgt*]. (GA 10, 143-144)

In this way, Heidegger both criticizes an alleged abstraction of the meaning of ground, redetermining it by reference to what the word (in its most basic form as a simple noun) ‘originarily’ (and even “more originarily”) means, by referring the meaning of the word back to earth and basis, to those elemental phenomena of absence-presence. But despite his critique of abstraction, Heidegger, immediately after giving these examples, begins to abstract and generalize himself, determining ground as “the truth, that was truly is.” At this point, Heidegger submits the study in the meaning of ground, first begun to understand the phenomena associated with this words, to the identity of ground and Being, forcing the semantic and phenomenological way to the place of ground to align with the ontological and metaphysical way. After an excursus on Hegel, Heidegger continues:

Yet with such comments that can easily be piled up, we get caught with the discussion of the occasional word ‘ground’ [*bleiben wir in der Erläuterung des vereinzeltten Wortes ‘Grund’ hängen*]. We see nothing of the place from which the principle of reason speaks if we hear it according to the second tonality that lets the togetherness of ground and Being resonate. We only hear this resonating by considering that the principle of reason, more precisely, its formation as first principle by Leibniz, prepares that epoch of the history of Being in which Being appears as transcendental objectivity. (GA 10, 144-145)

With this determination, Heidegger’s consideration of the meaning of ground and its phenomena is firmly enclosed in the ontological discourse, yet it is far from evident that the meaning of ‘ground’ (or *Grund*) has indeed affirmed the identity of ground and Being. It would rather seem that the words spoke of something else, of earth and depth, unless made to resonate with the ontological discourse, unless one made them say what

Heidegger, in reference to the first half of the lecture, calls the second tonality of the principle of reason, the “assonance of Being and ground”: “the new tonality discloses [*enthüllt*] the principle of reason as a principle of Being. When we discuss the principle in the new tonality we are thus moving in the realm of what one may call, with the general title, the ‘question of Being.’”(GA 10, 76)

The further discussions of the meaning of ground focus on the notion of ground in the history of Being, reaffirming that in contrast to a random discussion of linguistic meaning, the only true place of ground lies in its sameness with Being. The third passage, proceeding from a discussion of ratio, projects a regress even to the beginning of the history of Being:

‘Ground’ [*Grund*] is the translation of ratio. That what ‘ground’ means and that from which the principle of reason says thus carries along what is said and thought in the twofold but unitary saying of ratio. We must ask for what is thus said, though we can do so here only in a very sketchy manner. In order not to give but a random explanation of words, we shall keep an eye on the direction of our path [*Wegrichtung*], for what counts is only to see that and how Being and ground ‘are’ the same. This now says: What counts is to memorize, to take up and back into genuine remembrance [*ins echte Gedächtnis auf- und zurückzunehmen*] how the sameness of Being and ground is announced in the beginning of the history of Being, announced for then not to be listened to and remained unthought [*ungehört und ungedacht zu bleiben*] for a long time. Yet that what was not listened to [*Ungehörte*] is the unheard of, the singular of the history of Being and its beginning. In the word ‘ground’ speaks ratio in its double sense of reason [*Vernunft*] and ground. [...] Yet if we think carefully, we must admit that what ‘ground’ says, namely depth and earth, basis, has nothing to do with reason and understanding to begin with. (GA 10, 146-147)

Heidegger thus uses the phenomena of ground and its phenomenal semantics (depth, earth, basis), the place arrived at on the semantic way, to call into question its identity

with the Latin ratio and to criticize the Latin for its ambivalence in the meaning of ground and its abstraction. Yet the semantic way is not allowed to come to an end and to display the traits of these phenomena. It rather serves but another regress, this time indeed, so Heidegger thinks, to the very beginning of the history of Being: ground, as translation of ratio, albeit an incongruent translation, was named λόγος in the very beginning of philosophy. The fourth passage yields the most originary saying of ground in the history of Being, with which the lecture course (and all of Heidegger's courses) comes to its end:

The question as to the togetherness of Being and ratio is asked in the manner of the history of Being and in an inceptual manner [*seinsgeschichtlich nur und anfänglich*] only if we think the question and what it asks for in a *Greek* way. The way of our question is sketched by how we hear the principle of reason. Thus we went back from ground to ratio. But ratio speaks Latin or Roman and not Greek, and thus it does not speak in a way that would make us capable of asking our question in the manner of the history of Being and in an inceptual manner. Or does the Roman word ratio also speak Greek? Indeed. In the history of thought, ratio is itself a translation, a traditional word, a word carrying something with it [*übersetzendes Wort und d.h. ein überlieferndes*]. As the double ratio is carried over into the fundamental words [*Grundworte*] of Modern thinking, reason and ground, so in the Roman word ratio there speaks a Greek word: λόγος. We thus hear the principle of reason in the second tonality in the manner of the history of Being and in an inceptual manner only when we say the subject-matter of the principle in Greek: τὸ αὐτό (ἐστίν) εἶναι τε καὶ λόγος. Though there is no such principle phrased in these words in the Greek thinkers, but this phrase names the traction [*Zug*] of Greek thinking in the history of Being, and it does so in a manner anticipating the later epochs of the history of Being. (GA 10, 158)

In view of the meaning of ground, this regress to a fictive principle of the beginning of the history of Being leads to a condensed determination that may be seen as the summation of the whole lecture. In the fifth passage, the meaning of ground is finally

brought back to its inceptual, *Greek* meaning and here, at the projected beginning of philosophy, the regress comes to an end in a series of identifications Heidegger takes to say the sameness of a single phenomenon:

Λόγος as λεγόμενον means also that which is said, or shown, or that which lies in front [*das Vorliegende*], the present in its presence [*das Anwesende in seiner Anwesenheit*]. We say: beings in their being. Λόγος names Being. But λόγος as that which lies in front [*das Vorliegende*] is also that on which something else lies and rests [*worauf anderes liegt und beruht*]. We say: the basis, the ground. Λόγος names ground. Λόγος is both presence and ground. Being and ground belong together in λόγος. The λόγος names this togetherness of Being and ground. (GA 10, 161)

The place of the sameness of ground and Being is thus, so Heidegger thinks, also the place of λόγος. Surprisingly though, this result is only in part achieved through a discussion of the meaning of ground. While the semantic and phenomenal way gathered both the abstract and concrete meanings of ground, both its German meanings and its translations, it was the ontological discourse, the philosophical way of the history of Being, the history of Being as a philosophical way that was to eventually lead back to an inceptual and, as it were, fundamental meaning of ground. Only because of the ontological tonality of the principle of reason, only because of the resonance of Being in ground was λόγος to be determined as equivalent to both Being and ground (and thus, through the modifications it undergoes in the history of Being, equivalent also to ratio and reason).

But was this tonality of λόγος indeed never heard in the entire history of Being so that the identity of ground and Being had to remain unthought?—Notice that this claim

starkly differs from the claim advanced in *The End of Philosophy*, namely that it is the clearing that remained unthought in the history of philosophy as metaphysics and that now, at the end of philosophy, the task is to begin to think the clearing as such. If one turns to *The End of Philosophy*, it is not the unthought identity of Being and ground that has to be thought, but this identity is precisely what—for it is the very definition of metaphysical thinking—is to be left behind and to be replaced by a thinking of the clearing. If it were the second, ontological tonality of the principle of reason, of λόγος, that was to become the task of thinking, Heidegger would have already achieved this task in his lecture. The ontological way of thinking ground, establishing the complex sameness of Being, ground, reason, ratio, λόγος in the history of philosophy, would in its culmination have exhausted thinking as a whole. His last lecture course may indeed seem as the culmination of philosophy, circumscribing the end of philosophy by way of an interpretation of the identity of Being, ground and λόγος. Yet the end of philosophy is not the task of thinking.

Already that, after delivering his final lecture on ground, Heidegger has eventually called for a new thinking, this time not regressing to the primordial sameness of the fundamental words of philosophy in its beginning but beginning anew at the end of philosophy, hints at that for the thinking of ground, too, the ontological way is not the best way philosophy can take. It is indeed questionable if by regressing to the sameness of

ground with Being, Heidegger has really disclosed the place, the intentional positioning of the phenomena of ground in their specificity, in contrast to those of Being and λόγος.

It should be clear what is the alternative I have in mind: rather than attempting to demonstrate an alleged primary unity of the fundamental words of philosophy, following the semantic and phenomenological way would aim to disclose the complexity of speaking about ground and associated phenomena and thus aim to disclose their essential traits. Instead of starting from the the principle of reason, making it spell out its ontological implications, letting the entire history of Being resonate in it, one would attend to the “place of silence” (GA 14, 84) that is the clearing and see how in it, grounds both show themselves and withdraw. One would attentively turn to the presence-absence of the earth and of the other phenomena of ground. In attending to these phenomena and what they hold back, one would attempt to find what we mean by ‘ground’ or by ‘earth’ without knowing their ontological meaning in advance. Would it then be sufficient to gather these words and to attend to these phenomena, to wait for them to disclose their singular λόγος? Would it be the more philosophical way to look up at how things are grounded, facing, if there is, the music proper to them?