

The Fourfold of the “Godding”

Primordially in Heidegger, Hölderlin and Dzogchen

An Ontology of Goetic Hermeneutics

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Abstract

My thesis explores the primordial dimension of Heidegger's work on the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) in *Contributions to Philosophy* and his related writings. This leads to a hermeneutic exploration of the nascent paganism in his being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) phenomenology, which signifies a moment of turning toward the fundamental phenomenon of the "goddling" (*Götterung*) of the gods and the "last god" in Heidegger's later philosophy. Heidegger's highlight of the Greek understanding of *daimonion* in his wartime lectures on Parmenides provide an uncanny (*unheimlich*) focus that brings together the philosophical power of the abyss (*Abgrund*) in being (*Sein* or *Seyn*) that restrains the metaphysics of light introduced by Plato into Western conception of being. This gathering (*legen*) goes beyond the unifying joining of being and nothingness in the being-historical appropriation of historicised time-space (*Zeit-Raum*) that is called *Ereignis*. The result is a phenomenological *Destruktion*, already promised by Heidegger with the audacity of a philosophical program in *Being and Time*, that does away with metaphysical dualism but with the price of casting *Dasein*, the human holism in the understanding of being, as a kind or race (*Geschlecht*) that goes under in the history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*) in curse and decomposition. This is Heidegger's postwar reading of the destining (*Geschick*) of humanity to the universal distress (*Not*) of the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) in his philosophical interpretation of Trakl's poetry. It forms a deep contrast to his protracted engagement with the pagan *poiesis*

of Hölderlin, which provides an opening in *Dasein's* relation to the truth of being (*aletheia*) that attunes humanity to the possibilities of the fourfold (*Geviert*) of gods and mortals, sky and earth. The fourfold also happens to be the key motif in contemporary neo-paganism. Given that *daimons* were experienced by the Greeks to be the clearing of being (*Lichtung des Seins*), which lightens as well as conceals, their return to the fundamental human experience of *aletheia* through Heidegger's later philosophy forms a full hermeneutic circle in *Dasein's* openness to being. This at the same time is a reclaiming of Goetia that has been demonised over the "onto-theological" centuries in the West, and which is hinted at in Heidegger's Parmenides lectures with his characteristic rhetoric of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) that first reared its head in *Being and Time*.

Heidegger is well-known for his encouragement of comparative hermeneutics of Western and Eastern traditions in mindful, cross-cultural thinking (*Besinnung*) about the question of being. When combined with the view to a fuller retrieval (*Wiederholung*) of this question from the oblivion of world time (*Weltzeit*), an opening is intentionally created in this thesis for a Heideggerian interpretation of the fundamental ontology of primordial light (*'od gsal*) in the ancient tradition of Dzogchen that is found both in the native religion of Tibet, loosely called Bön, and in the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism. My Heideggerian reading is mindful of the framework of controversy that Dzogchen, despite its acceptance by the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, continues to encounter to this day in reference to the Indian Buddhist (viz. Madhyamaka) founding of Tibetan philosophy, mainly on the topic of the primordial basis of being (*kun gzhi*) and its cognition in primordial mind (*sems nyid*). An alternative view that highlights the traditional "Goetic" attunement of Bön to the undecidability of the gods is provided in the thesis to throw light on the problem of primordality that appears to be intrinsic to the question of being that environs cultures and traditions in *Ereignis* but is not completely determined by them.

The "godding" in Heidegger's mindful thinking can provide a philosophical basis for the growing phenomenon of neo-paganism in the West, even if it has not yet taken place among neo-pagan writers at the time of my research. It can also be hermeneutically effective in the area of Tibetan studies where the true extent of Buddhist destruction of "pagan" (Bön) thought and spirituality in the history of Tibet has only been partly unconcealed by the latest research in the West. The

essential question, then, is more than the retrieval of the question of being, but also the “unleashing” of *daimonion* into human thinking proper, so that the ancient Greek experience of the in-dwelling of *aletheia* in *Dasein*, as the regeneration of a forgotten *Geschlecht*, can be with us again.

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Introduction

§ 1. Elucidation of the Question of Being

Martin Heidegger lay the foundation for a hermeneutic turn in German phenomenology through his life-long work on the question of the meaning of being (*Sein*).¹ The question is originally a monumental event in Plato's *Sophist*, described as *gigantomachia*, or the battle of giants. With the dualistic turn in Western philosophy that also began with Plato's doctrine of ideas or forms, the primordiality of the question was forgotten, and being came to be understood primarily as the "presencing" (*Anwesen*) of beings (*Seiende*) in the phenomenal world.² Heidegger's first major work, *Being and Time*, aims at the *Destruktion* of this ancient distortion that persists to this day in the tradition of metaphysics. For these purposes he uses a phenomenological method based on the hermeneutic circle, which begins with the pre-ontological facticity of human relation to being and arrives at a new beginning of various attempts at understanding being as a whole. In both arrival and departure in this understanding, there is an attunement (*Stimmung*) to being which can either illuminate or darken the question.

¹ Being is not capitalised in this thesis in order to avoid giving it the connotation of a supreme or transcendent being like God. In this practice I follow Joan Stambaugh and not John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, whose translations of *Being and Time* appeared in 1996 and 1962 respectively. However, I do not follow Stambaugh's hyphenation of the principal term *Dasein* as *Da-sein*. This is because "*Dasein*" is used by Heidegger throughout the text of *Being and Time*. In my citations of Stambaugh's translation, *Dasein* replaces *Da-sein*.

² Throughout the thesis, when being is written in plural, it stands for *Seiende*. Given that beings, too, and not just being, have to be understood anew hermeneutically, the traditional term "entities" is not used because it stems from the subject-object dualism of Western metaphysics.

In attunement, we ourselves are engaged in a holistic way for it can also involve the state of wonder, bewilderment or *Angst*. Using attunement as a fundamental philosophical approach with which to investigate the problem of being, Heidegger describes human being not in essentialist terms, such as the existence of a soul, but *hermeneutically* as understanding of being (*Seinsverständnis*). He calls it *Dasein*, “there-being”, in order to highlight the factual given of every individual’s awareness of his or her own existence prior to any theoretical or religious justification of it. *Dasein* exists factually and in primordially at the same time, because the ground of its being is its own question. The existential or *Dasein* analytic in *Being and Time* has the objective of grounding this question authentically in the primordial meaning of being and in face of the nothingness that each *Dasein* has in its being-toward-death. Existing in time, futurally projected and determined by the temporal horizon of radical finitude, *Dasein* is a being that is structured by care (*Sorge*) in its comportment to being (*Seinsverhältnis*). This is how *Dasein* finds itself in its attunement to being that is as primordial as its understanding of being and which grounds *Dasein* as a whole in the meaning of being. In *Dasein* analytic, as the philosophical method in *Being and Time* is called, primordially is not about origins, which belong to ontic disciplines such as archaeology and historiography, but the ontological grounding of *Dasein*’s understanding of being in its comportment to being, which carries it to its end in death. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger’s emphasis is on the groundlessness of any metaphysical grounding of being in an age of nihilism where being is abandoned among beings in the global framework of machination (*Machenschaft*). After the war Heidegger describes this prevalence of abandonment and manipulation as the *Gestell*, which is the blueprint of humanity’s comportment to being that is determined by technology. Technology is the modernisation of *techne* under the sway of the “gigantic” (*Riesenhafte*), which is Heidegger’s term for the essential phenomenon of the struggle between world and earth that is willed by *Dasein*, yet at the same time places in a historical position of great peril. The Greek experience of *techne*, where being shines forth in the relation between *Dasein* and beings, is lost in its transformation into technology.³ This transformation is the metaphysical manipulations of the “humanism” of *homo sapiens* and *homo faber* that pits *Dasein* against earth – and the gods. Earth was once revered as one of the gods. The question of being abandons *Dasein* – what Heidegger calls the state of *abandonment of being* (*Seinsverlassenheit*) – as *Dasein* is mired in its obsession with its own will to dominate through the rule of world over earth. Any understanding of being in

³ Heidegger sees the essential relation between *techne* and *poiesis* in Greece which is lost the moment the former is subject to machination and the latter, to propaganda. See Martin Heidegger, “On the Origin of the Work of Art”, in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pages 1-56.

Dasein now cannot be separated from this fundamental gap between it and earth on the one hand, and between it and the gods on the other. The time of *Dasein* is a temporality of presentiment of that which approaches, yet remains unknown.

Dasein therefore is not a theoretical construction with the traditional theme of establishing a transcendental principle of consciousness and knowledge that stands over and against the world of beings as the basis of actuality that supports the potentiality of becoming in mental life. The theoretical approach characteristically involves a knowing that grasps *being* as *beings*. It writes a history of being that excludes the totality of human existence which eludes ontic determination. In contrast *Dasein* is a very different way of describing human existence in that it is attuned fundamentally to nothingness. *Dasein* is the attunement of *Angst* before its non-being. Attunement is primordial to both conventional and theoretical knowledge in that it grounds *Dasein* as it is. The suchness of *Dasein* takes on an uncanny (*unheimlich*) character in that in being, *Dasein* cannot define itself in terms of anything else, whether mind or body. It finds itself simply thrown (*geworfen*) into the world. *Dasein's* fundamental orientation in the world, i.e. its being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*), is thrownness without ground.

Dasein is an abyss. The hermeneutics of the abyss joins together Heidegger's further meditations on the primordial question of being in his second major work, *Contributions to Philosophy*, already mentioned above. It was written between 1936 and 1938 as a private *Nachlaß* that would not have survived Nazi censorship if published at the time. It contains a severe critique of the nihilistic phenomenon of the "gigantic" that motivated the expansionist ideology of Nazism. If Ernst Jünger's novel *On the Marble Cliffs* (1939) is a *roman à clef* in its subtle yet devastating critique of Nazi totalitarianism (finally forbidden by the Gestapo in 1942), then Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy* can rightly be described as a *philosophie à clef*. The greater part of its text – 933-page long in manuscript – is however devoted to primordially in the meaning of being and its intrinsic relatedness to nothingness. Beginning with *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger starts writing being in the archaic spelling of *Seyn* instead of *Sein*. Heidegger unifies them in the onefold of *Ereignis*, where being can be properly being by also involving *Dasein*. What Heidegger calls the "will" of *Ereignis* is the primordial counter-essence (*Gegenwesen*) to Nietzsche's will to power (*Wille zur Macht*) as the pinnacle of modern nihilism.⁴

⁴ Heidegger describes "will to power" as Nietzsche's *Hauptgedanke* but not his *Grundgedanke*, the latter is "eternal recurrence of the same" (*ewige Wiederkehr der Gleichen*), which is poetically expressed by the imaginary figure of Zarathustra. Nietzsche, like Hölderlin, is according to Heidegger a fine German example of the joining of thinking (*Denken*) and poetry (*Dichten*). See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsches Metaphysik – Einleitung in die Philosophie: Denken und Dichten, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 50 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), § 5, page 99 and 103 respectively. In Heidegger's interpretation, what unites "will to power" and "eternal recurrence of the same" is the "will to will" (*Wille zum Willen*), which for Nietzsche is the fundamental

In opposition to Nietzsche's nihilistic voluntarism, the will in Heidegger's conception of *Ereignis* points to the withdrawal of primordial being from humanity's understanding of being and is thus beyond mortal willing or not willing. And Heidegger describes *Ereignis* in many other ways: all pointing to the acute existential condition of a *Dasein* for which the primordially of being is covered over by centuries of metaphysical distortions. In this thesis the challenging polysemy of *Ereignis* in *Contributions to Philosophy* is retained by leaving it untranslated.⁵ Its "foreignness" will serve to inhibit any possibility of return to the metaphysical conception of being. In Heidegger's discussions and his notes, statements can be found that he valued *Contributions to Philosophy* far more than *Being and Time* as he saw the impossibility of *Dasein* existing independently of the overall determination of being in its utmost primordially.⁶ The history of being is the primordial determination of *Dasein's* comportment to being; the two mirror each other and both are necessary in the formulation of the question of being as a whole. In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger begins writing *being* as *Seyn* in an effort to separate it from any connotation of traditional ontology that *Sein* might still contain. In *Ereignis* as the affirmation of *Seyn*, *Dasein* is attuned to the "sending" (*Schicken*) from being that decides its destiny (*Geschick*) in a historical age; *Dasein* is historicised in a being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) manner. In the present era, *Dasein* experiences the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) where being is no longer found among beings. A reversal of the Greek experience of being has taken place: *Seyn* as absence. Being is present only in so far as it is the being of beings, which is the metaphysical being. The ontological difference between being and beings in *Being and Time* has become an abyss in which *Dasein* experiences, in utmost distress (*Not*), being's withdrawal from beings, or the disappearance of ground. The abyss, or *Abgrund*, is as important as *Ereignis*

meaning of being that calls for *amor fati*. *Amor fati* in its fullest sense can only belong to *Übermensch*, who eternally returns like an avatar to express none other than this. The *eschaton* is absent in Nietzsche's thought, and precisely in this sense is his philosophical outlook *Aryan*. *Nietzsches Metaphysik* was based on the notes for a lecture course that was announced in the winter semester of 1941-1942 at Freiburg but was not held. Instead Heidegger lectured on Hölderlin's poem "Andenken" (*Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 52).

⁵ As early as 1919 Heidegger formulated a phenomenology of *Ereignis* by interpreting it as the envining arising of meaning in human being's relation to the world and everything that is in it; already Heidegger was removing the metaphysical distance between the "living" and the "lived experience". Instead Heidegger replaced it with the question of being as inherent in the human comportment to "there is". See Martin Heidegger, *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, translated by Ted Sadler (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), § 13, pages 55 and 58. This is a translation of *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, *Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 56/57, consisting of the first two lecture courses given by Heidegger when he transferred from the faculty of theology to the faculty of philosophy in 1919, they being "Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem" and "Phänomenologie und Transzendente Wertphilosophie".

⁶ See Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Contributions to Philosophy and Enowning-Historical Thinking", in Charles E. Scott, Sudan M. Schoenbohm, Daniela Vallega-Neu and Alejandro Vallega (ed.), *Companion to Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy"* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,), page 107.

in *Contributions to Philosophy*. When written as *Ab-grund*, Heidegger emphasises the being-historical event of a ground that stays away – hence the prefix “*ab*”.⁷ All that is left is primordiality without ground, signifying the urgent necessity of another beginning. *Dasein* exists historically now in the night of being where in its darkness the turning point of midnight is within the reach of its understanding as grounding attunement (*Grundstimmung*). Indeed Heidegger interprets *Ereignis* not as ontological stasis but as the belonging of turning (*Kehren*) to being, for the opening of the truth of being, which is none other than *aletheia*.

This grounding attunement to *Ereignis* in the dark night of being becomes the guiding thread of the thinking that is gathered in this thesis. The movement of its thinking, which is also a thanking, is attuned to a hermeneutic resonance with Heidegger’s paths and projections in *Contributions to Philosophy* as well as his own commentary on this difficult work, *Mindfulness*. At the same time, however, the thesis goes beyond the borders of Heidegger’s *topos* of the abyss by taking very seriously the *esoteric* central theme in his writings and lectures from the 1930s and the 1940s, namely the *question of the gods*, or “*godding*” (*Götterung*; *Göttern*). A distinctly pagan heterogeneity is present in Heidegger’s thinking from this period. It challenges philosophy to renew itself on a ground not conquered by the monotheist subjectivism of what Heidegger calls “*onto-theology*”: the *ens increatum* of God that obscures the question of being itself.⁸ To think outside the metaphysical holding sway of the Judaeo-Christian God, Heidegger turns to the mytho-poiesis of the great German poet Friedrich Hölderlin, whose direct engagement with the gods of ancient Greece puts him in a unique position in the history of modern Western thought. Interpreting *Contributions to Philosophy* with Heidegger’s Hölderlin lectures and notes in mind, it becomes quite clear that the former is a deeply thought out philosophical involvement on Heidegger’s part with the thinking (*denken*) in Hölderlin’s poetising (*dichten*). This is an enactment of what is described in *Contributions to Philosophy* as *Dasein*’s decisive, reticent, mournful and sacrificial preparedness for the ambiguity of the arrival or the departure of “the last god”.

⁷ While I am sympathetic to the argument put forward by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, the translators of *Contributions to Philosophy* (page xxxi), to use the neologism “*abgrund*” to mean what Heidegger intends with *Abgrund*, I still prefer “*abyss*” because of the richness of its meaning in esoteric thought, especially in Goetia. There are moments in *Contributions to Philosophy* when Heidegger does not use *Abgrund* in a technical manner, but in a way that opens up possibilities in pagan esotericism, as in his use of the term in his Hölderlin studies. In their translation of *Mindfulness*, Heidegger’s second being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) treatise immediately after *Contributions to Philosophy*, Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary also translate *Abgrund* as “*abgrund*” (pages xix-xxi).

⁸ All beings are “*interpreted*” in terms of God, who is outside being, and the primordial meaning of phenomena in *logos* (*legein ta phainomena*) is not understood. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), § 6, page 22; § 7, page 30.

The hermeneutic rapprochement between Heidegger and Hölderlin, when examined with an understanding of Western esotericism as a distinct history of being that is other than the metaphysics of the great philosophers, leads to the identification of pagan theurgy (*theourgēia*) as the consummate mode of being that is affirmed in both of their writings.⁹ Theurgy, in essence, is motivated by a yearning of the mortals for a sacred communion with the gods, a yearning that is displaced in modernity in an unguided search for the *tremendum* and the *fascinans*, which on their own may not be sufficient for the grounding of an authentic experience of the *numen*. Although theurgy is not directly named as such in Heidegger and Hölderlin, their pagan yearning for the return of the sacred relation between the mortals and the gods is of utmost significance, in that it is integral to an understanding of the *primordially* of being that *Dasein* can partake of in an essential, resolute manner. It is important to note that in Celtic and Norse paganism, gods and humans were believed to have arisen from the same source;¹⁰ they share in ontological primordially. Existing in primordial attunement, the gods can be heard by *Dasein* once again. Furthermore, instead of a reconstruction of theurgy as it was practised in ancient times, the paganism of Heidegger's philosophy of primordially is better understood through the facticity of *congressus cum daemonae* in modern occultism such as the Thelema.¹¹ Heidegger's late fascination with *daimons* is an important theme for the realisation of "godding", one that calls for *Dasein*'s full attunement and its resolute leap into the unknown *topos* of the sacred dread that is the abyss of being itself.

§ 2. Approach and Future Directions

One of the main features of this thesis is its concentration on Heidegger's writings and lecture courses during the National Socialist years in Germany. It was the most abyssal period in human history that was marked by what Heidegger describes in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the time of *Dasein*'s "utmost distress" in its awakening to the "abandonment of being"

⁹ Heidegger was not a scholar in Western esotericism. Yet there is sufficient pagan esoteric thought in *Contributions to Philosophy* to generate a subtext of esotericism that can be read in the *daimonios topos* of Heideggerian textuality. This is the essential task of my thesis: by identifying and portraying a different yet quintessential Heidegger, a retrieval of the question of being takes place that alters the historicity of the being-historical questioning in a *daimonic* heterogeneity.

¹⁰ Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981), page 88.

¹¹ See Aleister Crowley, "Liber Samekh: Theurgia Goetia Summa: Congressus Cum Daemonae", in Israel Regardie (ed.), *Gems from "The Equinox": Instructions by Aleister Crowley for His Own Magical Order* (Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 1997), pages 323-353.

(*Seinsverlassenheit*).¹² It was also the time of German “gigantism” in politics and culture, war and armament, science and technology. The “gigantic” is for Heidegger the ultimate expression of the will to power in nihilism as foreseen by Friedrich Nietzsche.¹³ It is a determining factor for Heidegger’s views on *techne* and *Gestell* that help link his thinking to “deep ecology”. On a deeper level, Heidegger understands nihilism as the flight of the gods; one indication of that is the total absence of pagan festivals and mysteries in modern society. The most significant aspect of Heidegger’s contemplation on the primordially of being from this period is the emergence of a distinct *pagan* outlook, which no doubt was influenced by his deep engagement with Hölderlin’s poetry. Recognising him as an original thinker, Heidegger’s writings from that time can be described as giving philosophical expressions to the pagan themes in Hölderlin, with the view to further elucidating the question of being originally asked in *Being and Time* with a more esoteric wholeness.

Apart from *Contributions to Philosophy*, the other texts from this period that I rely on include Hölderlin’s Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein”, Hölderlin’s Hymn “Andenken”, Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlin’s Dichtung*, *Mindfulness*, and *Parmenides*. I also consult Heidegger’s *Nachlaß* from the same period that are published in the *Gesamtausgabe*, such as *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (Volume 69), *Über den Anfang* (Volume 70), *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen* (Volume 75) and *Zu Ernst Jünger* (Volume 90). The key to the originality of this thesis is found however in *Parmenides*, a lecture course given by Heidegger in the winter semester of 1942-1943 at the University of Freiburg. The published text contains Heidegger’s exposition on the hermeneutic relevance of the Greek experience of *daimonion* for a phenomenological understanding of *aletheia* – truth as lightening or clearing (*Lichtung*) of being which remains a central theme in his life work. Heidegger’s hermeneutics of *daimonion* is based on his profound understanding of the *abyss* as the truth of being in the modern historicising of being that *Dasein* is attuned to in uncanniness and in distress. Also in the same work, *daimons*, which were sacred to the Greeks, were thematised by Heidegger for the first time. Fundamentally speaking, *daimons* point to the uncanny in the truth of being (*aletheia*). In the present study, this hermeneutics of the *uncanny aletheia* provides the ground for my own formulation of Goetia as the *daimonic* horizon of primordial temporality that provides a coherent focus for Heidegger’s ground work in *Dasein*’s attunement to a pagan or neo-pagan revival in the meaning of being. Paganism is horizontally commensurate with Heidegger’s advocacy for a “sacred mourning” for the old gods as *Dasein*’s grounding attunement to being as *Ereignis* in the abyss. It is also

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §§ 53-54, pages 79.

¹³ *Ibid.*, §§ 70-71, pages 94-96; § 260, pages 310-312.

commensurate with Hölderlin's yearning for the religious rites and festivals of pre-Christian Europe which Heidegger also shared. If there is soteriology in Heidegger at all, it is in the return of these pagan ways and celebrations within the fourfold of gods and mortals, sky and earth, the cardinal primordialities in *Dasein's* inceptual experience of being. The fourfold is the re-enactment of being's dwelling among beings in the holism of the sacred outlook. It shares, for example, a fundamental affinity with the Wiccan sacred rite of casting a circle in the magical topology of the god and the goddess.¹⁴ Read in a Heideggerian manner, paganism is not one religion among many but is the radical *otherness* to the metaphysics of onto-theology in religion. Paganism is the phenomenology of the heterogeneous. Understood in this sense, paganism is potentially inclusive of a primordial Christianity that is free from the Platonism of its Pauline appropriation during the early years of the church.¹⁵ From the perspective of comparative religion – and it is a perspective that is applied frequently in the philosophical hermeneutics of this thesis –, renewals of primordial appropriation take place throughout the history of Tibetan Buddhism in the form of Dzogchen, right to the present day, even as a source of refreshing provocation. Dzogchen is the ineffable primordiality that is always at the heart of the Tibetan experience of *Dasein*, be it in Buddhism or Bön, Tibet's native religion. In the same way Goetia is ineffable primordiality in *aletheia*. Goetia as the giving of a disciplinary form to Heidegger's hermeneutics of *daimonion* is the *Destruktion* of the restrictive, onto-theological determinations

¹⁴ See Margot Adler, *Drawing down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (New York: Penguin/Arkana, 1997), pages 19-20; for an Australian account, see Fiona Horne, *Witch: A Magical Year* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 1999), pages 20-28. The casting of circle (*circulum*) is however much older than Wicca; it was integral to medieval magic, including necromancy, as a means of protecting and heightening the power, either sacred or infernal, that was raised in a ritual. See Robert Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania, 1998), pages 175-176. The Greek magical papyri mention the use of circle; see *ibid.*, page 175. Certainly much younger than necromancy is Wicca, which is a neo-pagan movement started by Gerald Gardner (1884-1964) in 1948 in the UK. See Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (London: Rider, 1954). In his founding of modern witchcraft – not all witches identify themselves as Wiccans, however – Gardner was influenced, in ritual and in concepts, by the leading practitioner of modern occultism, Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), who was also the founder of the esoteric order Thelema (Cefalu, 1920). Gardner and Crowley were briefly acquainted with each other. See Doreen Valiente, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (Blain: Phoenix Publishing, 1978), page 17, on this subject, which is keenly researched in pagan studies. Valiente was Gardner's collaborator and rewrote many of the original rituals in order to place more emphasis on the Goddess or the divine feminine. In the same book Valiente devotes a whole chapter on the magic circle: see pages 66-77, which includes a discussion characteristic of Wiccans to appropriate the Neolithic, pre-Celtic monument of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain (dated second millennium BCE) as the primordial magic circle.

¹⁵ See Charles Seymour, *The Forgotten Mage* (Loughborough: Thoth Publications, 1999), page 155. This little-known text by an occultist colonel, who was an intimate associate of Dion Fortune (1891-1946), a leading English figure in Western esotericism who was also acquainted with Aleister Crowley, already contains most of the ideas constituting the neo-pagan outlook such as Wicca. Seymour served as the high priest in the magical order founded by Fortune, the Society of the Inner Light, which is still active. It is not considered as belonging to the neo-pagan milieu.

of Goetia as demonology, sorcery and necromancy. It then follows that the demonisation of *daimons* as “demons” are the Christians’ onto-theological covering over of the original luminescence of *daimons* in ancient Greece. In other words, as far as Goetia is concerned, Christianity is the concealment of *aletheia*. Indeed in *Parmenides* Heidegger suggests a primordial re-interpretation of demons so that their *inceptual* meaning and significance can become accessible again.¹⁶ A full-scale demonology is never worked out in Heidegger’s writings. Yet the hermeneutic beginnings of his thinking on *daimons* and demons can provide the basis of a philosophical understanding that resonates with the Goetic currents in contemporary occultism, such as Thelema and chaos magic, which are also known generally as “ceremonial magic” and are situated at key points of interface with neo-pagan movements.¹⁷

The reading strategy taken here, in resonance with a Goetic hermeneutics, is the playing forth of philosophy and mythology into each other in the interpretation of the being-historical meaning of “godding”, a primordial and numinous phenomenon that makes its first appearance in *Contributions to Philosophy*. The thesis is a retrieval of the “inceptual thinking” in the pagan primordality of Western history of ideas, for the explicit purpose of laying the foundation for a neo-pagan appropriation of philosophy that is yet to take place in academia. Pagan studies are currently confined to “ontic” disciplines such as anthropology¹⁸, history¹⁹, religious studies²⁰ and sociology²¹. Despite Heidegger’s overt pagan orientation, no neo-pagan thinker has yet appeared on the academic horizon with any philosophical teaching and publications. Nor do the scholars currently engaged in valuable, in-depth studies of paganism in the past and neo-

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, translated by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), § 6, pages 99-100.

¹⁷ Occultism involves the practice of magic as a disciplinary path toward *gnosis*. Occultism belongs to esotericism, yet not all esoteric traditions are occultist; but both are founded upon varying degrees of secrecy. Occultism generally sits uneasily with traditional religions; but every major religion has an esoteric stream within it. Magic, however, is integral to all neo-pagan movements.

¹⁸ See, for example, Tanya M. Luhmann, *Persuasion of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic and Witchcraft in Present-day England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Susan Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Helen A. Berger (ed.), *Witchcraft and Magic: Contemporary North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and Susan Greenwood, *The Nature of Magic: An Anthropology of Consciousness* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2005).

¹⁹ See, for example, Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁰ See, for example, Lynne Hume, *Compendium Beneficiorum: Beliefs and Practices of Modern Witchcraft in Australia* (Adelaide: Charles Strong Memorial Trust, 1994); Lynne Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1997); Nikki Bado-Fralick, *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Michael F. Strmiska (ed.), *Modern Paganism in World Cultures* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005).

²¹ See, for example, Douglas Ezzy (ed.), *Practising the Witch's Craft* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2003); and Jenny Blain, Douglas Ezzy, and Graham Harvey (ed.), *Researching Paganism* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004).

paganism in the present make use of Heidegger's thinking for the philosophical basis of their research and writing. The prominent and controversial pagan thinker of the French New Right, Alain de Benoist, appeals to Heidegger on a level of ideology that lacks the hermeneutics of the esoteric experience of the neo-pagans; yet his work provides an important foundation for a pagan self-evaluation of European history, spirituality and existence.²² This thesis therefore fills the philosophical gap in the cross-disciplinary studies of paganism by looking at the essence of the pagan and *daimonic* phenomena in Heidegger's mindful awareness of the grounding attunement of "godding" in human existence. Heidegger's own approach to the pagan gods was greatly assisted by his phenomenological reading of Hölderlin, as philosophy and mythology went separate ways in the advent of Aristotelian metaphysics, which privileges the "seen" and the "present" in being. The unseen world of the gods and the *daimons* was gradually forgotten.

Heidegger's profound engagement with Hölderlin's river poem "The Ister" opened up possibilities in his reflection on the primordially of being that go far beyond what his academic knowledge of Plato and Aristotle on the one hand, and Hegel, Kant and Nietzsche on the other, could provide. Heidegger's lecture course on "The Ister" in the summer semester of 1942, which describes the dwelling of the gods in *physis* and the playing forth of locality (*Ortschaft*) and journeying (*Wanderschaft*) in the projecting-open of *Dasein* in its attunement to the gods,²³ becomes a leitmotif in Heidegger's later philosophy that prepares him for the "fourfold" (*Geviert*) of gods and mortals, sky and earth that is already contained in *Contributions to Philosophy* but which is *named* as such in his postwar lecture "Building Dwelling Thinking".²⁴ The fourfold is in essence a description of both "godding" and "being-toward-death" in *dwelling*. It is a

²² Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?*, pages 26-28; and page 48. Nietzsche's "Anti-Christ" inspiration runs deeper in de Benoist's revaluation of paganism and Christianity than Heidegger's being-historical hermeneutics. De Benoist struggles against Christianity as a religion, unlike Heidegger who struggled against it as the onto-theological tradition of the West. Nietzsche, on the other hand, struggled against Christianity as a form of Platonism. De Benoist discusses the difference between Christian and pagan revaluation (what Nietzsche refers to as "*Umwertung*") on pages 135-136, which he correctly identifies as being based on the hermeneutics of visibility and invisibility. Paganism does *not* devalue the visible. In the example of Tibet, beauty can be viewed as an adornment of enlightened existence, a perspective that is basically tantric in origin. In the general aridity that onto-theology has turned the world into, tantra from the East has much to offer Western paganism to shake off the metaphysical yoke of Christianity.

²³ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Poem "The Ister"*, translated by William MnNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), § 6, page 30; and § 15, pages 91-92;

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking", in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), pages 148-149; see also Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in *ibid.*, pages 177-178. It should be noted that naming is an act of concentrated esoteric power in magical traditions. In Jewish esotericism, however, the naming of God is forbidden, for such is the *power* of naming.

moment of perfection in Heidegger's thinking about being that perhaps released him from the profound existential distress that is thematised in *Contributions to Philosophy*.

In the thesis I allow the question of being to project further into the *open* created by Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin. In Tibet, the primordial tradition of Dzogchen, which is active in both the native religion of Bön and the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism, takes an approach to the question of being that shares some similarities with the maturation of Heidegger's philosophy in the form of mindful awareness (*Besinnung*) of being. The comparative hermeneutics undertaken in Part Three, Division Two is the first of its kind and assumes familiarity with both Heidegger and the debates surrounding Dzogchen in Tibetan studies. There is no evidence of Heidegger's knowledge of Tibetan religion, although it is well-known that he is familiar with East Asian traditions such as Zen Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism).²⁵ While these two are also primordial traditions, they do not thematise primordiality as such as the Tibetans do in Dzogchen. In this aspect Dzogchen is unique in the history of ideas and has direct being-historical relevance for Heidegger studies. This comparative discipline is yet to be formalised in the West.

The thesis has therefore opened up a hermeneutic domain that invites future developments for 1) the philosophical grounding of the question of being through appropriation of Heidegger's *Besinnung* in the area of pagan studies; 2) the comparative study of Heidegger with pagan traditions, and not just with Greek paganism, which to him was a wellspring of philosophical inspiration and "guiding attunement"; and 3) the comparative study of Heidegger with Dzogchen, as more original texts in the latter tradition are becoming gradually available for Tibetan studies in the West.

Quite importantly, Heidegger's interpretation of *daimonion* as *aletheia* offers a non-metaphysical basis for approach to the recently founded discipline of studies in Western esotericism, the leading proponents of which are Antoine Faivre in France and Wouter Hanegraaff in the Netherlands.²⁶ The Goetia of *daimonion* as discussed in the thesis provides a non-Platonist alternative to the dominant paradigm of neo-Platonism in Western esotericism, based as it is on a "metaphysics of light", that determines the understanding of being in Hermetism, Hermeticism and Christianised Kabbalah. This is not to be taken as a primordial strife between "light" and "dark", but a determination of *aletheia*, or the truth of being, that

²⁵ See Steven Heine, *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dogen* (Albany: State University of New York, 1985); Graham Parkes (ed.), *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987); and Reinhard May, *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*, translated by Graham Parkes (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

²⁶ See Antoine Faivre and Wouter Hanegraaff (ed.), *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion: Selected Papers Presented at the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Mexico City, 1995* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

makes explicit the playing forth of concealment and unconcealment into each other that characterises the *mysterium magnum*²⁷ or the *fascinans, tremendum* and *augustum*²⁸ of being.

§ 3. Overview

The thesis is organised into three Parts. Part Three has Divisions One and Two. Section headings in all of them point to the themes and the developments of the hermeneutic matter at hand. Together the sections form a hermeneutic movement that aims to show the manifold but consistent displays of primordially in the question of being that is guided by the overall structure of the thesis. The leading motif in the thesis is the ambiguous question of “godding” that invites a horizontal fusion of philosophy, mythology and religion. These sections, twenty-three in total, serve as signposts of my thinking as it weaves in and out of the inner movements

²⁷ See Herbert Deinert, “Die Entfaltung des Bösens in Böhmes Mysterium Magnum”, *PMLA*, Volume 79, Number 4 (1964), pages 401-410. A hermeneutic approach toward the duality of God and Lucifer taken by Böhme (1575-1624) leads him to a position that is comparable to Heidegger’s understanding of *aletheia*. Heidegger never wrote or lectured on Böhme, despite both having reflected deeply on the abyss; yet Böhme’s understanding differs greatly from Heidegger’s in that he perceived the abyss as the dwelling place of eternity into which the Christian must descend as she turns away from everyday experience of the world. The abyss is for Böhme the *mysterium magnum* in the Christian renewal of *Dasein*. See Russell H. Holvbek, “Being and Knowing: Spiritualist Epistemology and Anthropology from Schwenckfeld to Böhme”, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Volume 22, Number 1 (1991), page 107. Caspar Schwenckfeld’s mysticism of *Gelassenheit*, as the receptivity of the soul to being, had a formative influence on Böhme. Again, Heidegger did not write or lecture on Schwenckfeld (1489-1561) either, and no detailed study comparing the two has yet been published.

²⁸ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, translated by John W. Harvey (London; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pages 58-59. For an account of Otto’s life and thought based on comparative religion, see Garry Trompf, *In Search of Origins: The Beginnings of Religions in Western Theory and Archaeological Practice* (New Delhi: New Dawn Press, 1995), pages 116-121. It is important to note that Heidegger read Otto early in his career and recommended *The Idea of the Holy* to Husserl. See Otto Pöggeler, *The Paths of Heidegger’s Life and Thought*, translated by John Bailiff (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1997), page 123. However, in his 1920-1921 lecture course *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger presented a critique of Otto’s doctrine of the divine as the irrational as a continuation of metaphysics. See Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, translated by Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), pages 251-252. For Heidegger, what is at stake is the understanding of the meaning of being as a universal that determines *Dasein*’s thoughts and experiences, including religious ones. The question of being is primordial to the phenomenon of religion. Heidegger’s position also puts him in opposition to Goethe’s exaltation of the irrational as daimonic. See Otto’s discussion of Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, pages 150-152. Goethe did not display a Greek understanding of *daimonion*, but a Christian one that saw *daimons* as being opposite to *logos*. Despite the hermeneutic, if not spiritual, intimacy he shared with Hölderlin’s poetry, Heidegger was not an heir to the aesthetic paganism of German Romanticism that was represented by figures such as Winckelmann and Goethe, and which influenced Hölderlin; the grounding of Heidegger’s pagan leaning was resolutely attuned to the question of being, and as such was pre-Socratic in the essential sense, and therefore “abyssal” and “daimonic” when viewed from the history of metaphysics.

of great Western and Eastern traditions that have been selected in this study. It is sustained with ease in parts, and with great tension in others. *Daimonion* is essentially an uncharted territory in the meaning of being. The result is a continuous plaiting of analytical and interpretive strands in the academic disciplines of philosophy and comparative religion that form a style of attunement honouring the uncanny as well as the ecstatic in the origins, the presences, the passings and the projections of being as it holds sway (*west*) in *Ereignis*. The aesthetics of my writing is distinctly Gothic in the many localities of my thesis, in that the question of being is investigated under the dark cover of the abyssal night in the current turning of being – as pointed out by Heidegger in his essay on Rilke.²⁹ At this point in time, a full illumination remains an event of distance.

Part One discusses the uncanny turn toward *daimons* in Heidegger's meditation on being in his 1942-1943 lecture course *Parmenides*. To honour their primordial power Heidegger does not see the necessity to differentiate *daimons* from demons, for the latter is the demonisation of *daimons* in "onto-theological"³⁰ thought. In *Parmenides*, Heidegger identifies the *topos* of *aletheia* as *daimonion*. Taking his inspiration from Parmenides' poem on the goddess of truth, which he discusses in great detail, Heidegger interprets the truth of being as a path not trodden by most mortals, even when it goes through the realm of the ordinary. It is therefore the extraordinary (*ungebeuer*); and *daimons*, as intermediaries between humans and gods, are no ordinary beings. In fact Parmenides studies reveal the possibility that the goddess of truth herself is a daimon; the primordial link between *aletheia* and *daimonion* is thus founded in pre-Socratic thought.³¹ Socrates spoke of *daimons* with great reverence, attributing his philosophical inspirations to the in-dwelling of *daimonion* in his *Dasein*. Because of its hermeneutic importance to the question of being, in accordance with the aim of the thesis I renew the meaning of *Goetia*, traditionally known as sorcery or demonology, as the interpretive integration of *daimonion* into *Ereignis* in *Dasein*'s primordial understanding of being. *Goetia* is then the in-dwelling of *daimonion* in the hermeneutic circle, not a branch of pneumatology, let alone "black magic". *Goetia* is a path to

²⁹ Martin Heidegger, "Why Poets" in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes, page 201: "In the age of the world's night, the abyss of the world must be experienced and must be endured."

³⁰ "Onto-theology" is coined by Heidegger to describe the metaphysics of God as the first cause that is itself not created. The word arose quite late in Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary but the insufficiency of the notion of *causa sui* to explain the meaning of being is already discussed in *Being and Time* (§ 10, pages 45-46). For Heidegger's exposition on onto-theology, see Martin Heidegger, "Die Onto-Theo-Logische Verfassung der Metaphysik", in Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1957), pages 34-73.

³¹ See J. M. Morrison, "Parmenides and Er", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Volume 75 (1955), pages 59-60. The goddess of truth is also a goddess of night, according to Morrison. The primordial link between *aletheia* and *lethe* in the essence of truth, which Heidegger discusses in *Parmenides* (§ 2), is established in this identification of divine truth with divine darkness.

gnosis – perhaps too dark for many as it integrates the abyss in being that becomes the hallmark of Heidegger’s thinking on being in *Contributions to Philosophy* and the *Nachlaß* that follows it, *Mindfulness*.

In *aletheia*, *daimonion* reveals itself to be the primordial depth of *Dasein* while it itself remains sheltered in *Dasein*’s mortality, for it is in the realm of the dead that *psyche* and *daimon* meet face to face. Heraclitus’s famous dictum “*ethos anthropos daimon*” (fragment B 119) can indeed be reinterpreted as *daimonion* being the grounding determination of *Dasein* in its ecstatic-temporal thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) in the world.³² Heidegger’s openness to *daimonion* as the determination of *Dasein*’s destiny is based not an idiosyncratic reading of Heraclitus. Instead it reveals Heidegger’s profound understanding of the place of *daimons* in Greek thought. This Goetic reading of Heidegger is supported by research on the topic of *daimon* that was undertaken independently of German philosophy by the scholars of classics.³³

Part Two, Division One offers a reading of *Contributions to Philosophy* that shows the equiprimordiality of the abyss and *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* is not an idealisation of the meaning of being that *Dasein* projects on to its being-in-the-world. Rather, it is the determination of how being in its continuous differentiation from beings includes or excludes related phenomena such as *logos*, *physis* and *aletheia* in the destining determination of humanity, which does not come from God but is implicit in *Dasein*’s comportment to being and is open to interpretation and understanding. Heidegger describes the current age as the “abandonment of being” (*Seinsverlassenheit*) in which the “forgetting of being” (*Seinsvergessenheit*) analysed in *Being and Time* has reached an extreme degree. *Dasein* now finds itself in what Heidegger calls the “epoch of total lack of questioning”, which he also names the “epoch of enchantment”³⁴. In the

³² For Heidegger’s interpretation of *ethos* as dwelling in a way that the *daimons* and the gods are in nearness to *Dasein*, see Martin Heidegger, “Letter on ‘Humanism’”, translated by Frank A. Capuzzi, in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), page 269. Heidegger interprets “A man’s character is his *daimon*” as “The human being dwells, in so far as he is a human being, in the nearness of god”. Yet the very notion of “*daimon*” itself opens up a clearing of being that invites a Goetic reading of the divine that reveals the abyssal nature of the appropriation of *Dasein* in *Ereignis*, in the history of being that is torn between remembering and forgetting the meaning of being. Dwelling becomes dwelling in the abyss – as “demons” do.

³³ See Shirley Darcus, “‘Daimon’ as a Force Shaping ‘Ethos’ in Heraclitus”, *Phoenix*, Volume 28, Number 4 (1974), pages 390-407; Shirley Darcus Sullivan, *Psychological and Ethical Ideas: What the Early Greeks Say* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), especially pages 150-153; and Frederick E. Brenk, “‘A Most Strange Doctrine’: *Daimon* in Plutarch”, *The Classical Journal*, Volume 69, Number 1 (1973), pages 1-11. Sullivan importantly discusses the Greek belief that it is a mortal’s attunement to the gods that increases her chances of being given a good *daimon* as a spiritual guide. Beneficent *daimonion* gives rise to *arete* – virtue – which Aristotle believes is essential to happiness (*eudaimonia*). Sullivan also discusses Pindar’s similar affirmative view of *daimon* on page 44.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 59, pages 86-87.

widespread oblivion of being, *Dasein* itself is threatened with dissolution – it will become what Heidegger in his reading of Georg Trakl’s poetry in “Language in the Poem” as the “decomposing *Geschlecht*” that goes under in the history of being.³⁵ *Geschlecht* is the overall determination of *Dasein* and therefore has its source in the being-historical essence of all happenings within *Ereignis*. Bearing in mind Heidegger’s reading of Heraclitus, a hermeneutic statement can then be made that *Geschlecht* is a more primordial manifestation of *Dasein* than *anthropos*, yet the question of what determines *Geschlecht* is perhaps as ambiguous as *daimon* itself. What we do have, in such understanding, is the Goetic attunement of *Dasein* in face of its future and its destiny.

In order to understand this existential decomposition further, it is essential to look at Heidegger’s diagnosis of the abandonment of being as a symptom of nihilism. Nihilism holds sway in *Dasein*’s comportment to being in the domination of the “gigantic” over *physis*, such that *Dasein* finds itself caught up in what Heidegger calls the strife between world and earth.³⁶ Heidegger’s insight is very relevant to Ernst Jünger’s contemporary writings on the formation of a new type of human being, which he calls the *Gestalt* of the worker (*Arbeiter*). In his enthusiastic description of the “total mobilisation” of Germany, Jünger revises the *Gestalt* into that of a soldier worker. Heidegger’s debate with Jünger is published in “On the Question of Being”, which is a letter he wrote to Jünger.³⁷ The two men were friends.

Nihilism is also manifest in the absence or “flight” of the gods. The nature of the gods’ determination of *Dasein*’s standing in the open of *aletheia*’s clearing in being is a principal matter for reflection in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Combining Heidegger’s interpretation of the largely forgotten meaning of *daimons* in modernity, I establish an essential link between *daimonion* and “goddling” that reveals how far the transformation of Heidegger’s understanding of the truth of being has gone in his transition from *Being and Time* to *Contributions to Philosophy* and beyond. This is the highlight of Division Two, Part One.

Heidegger seeks the pagan vision and rapture of Hölderlin to give form to the pagan grounding of the meaning of being that is already apparent when he asks the question, “What about gods?” in *Contributions to Philosophy*.³⁸ Part Two, Division Two is devoted mainly to this question of the gods, which Heidegger describes as *Dasein*’s grounding attunement to the “last

³⁵ Martin Heidegger, “Language in the Poem”, in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), pages 170 and 191.

³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 155, page 195.

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, “On the Question of Being”, translated by William McNeill, in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, pages 291-322.

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 279, pages 357-358.

god” that makes it a grounder of *Ereignis* as the *Dagründer*. The question of the last god is a *riddle* that makes us realise the essential situation of the gods’ need for *Ereignis* in their “godding”, if they are to return to form the fourfold with mortals again. By joining Heidegger in his philosophical reading of Hölderlin’s poems about the gods, such as “Germania”, I provide an original analysis that by the end of Division Two the possible candidate for the last god is named. The naming itself is an invocation of “godding” that at least on the philosophical level brings the gods back into what Heidegger calls the “onefold” of *Ereignis*,³⁹ so that the fourfold can be grounded as a fundamental and sacred dwelling on earth.

The vision of Hölderlin’s profound attunement to the gods is explored further in Part Three, Division One, through the projecting-open in the meaning of being provided by Heidegger’s *Hölderlin’s Poem ‘The Ister’*. In the image of the hesitating swirl of the Ister near its source, Heidegger captures the essential meaning of *Dasein*’s relation to the gods – Hölderlin writes that the Greek demigod Heracles dwells near the source hidden from the children of Germanic earth goddess Hertha – in the simultaneous locality (*Ortschaft*) and journeying (*Wanderschaft*) of *Dasein*’s existence. They are *Dasein*’s essential need for dwelling in the journey of its being-toward-death, which in *Contributions to Philosophy* involves more than the temporalisation of the “not yet” in the fundamental attunement of *Angst*: The “cleavage” (*Zerklüftung*) of being that “shelters” the essential belonging of “not”, hence nothingness, to the meaning of being, determines *Dasein*’s radical projection in temporal finitude, which is the meaning of its mortality.⁴⁰ But in being mortal, *Dasein* is at the same time ready for the gods. This is because *Dasein*’s readiness – and it has to be resolute in its authenticity – determines its futural projecting-open as the “ones to come”, who will receive the “last god” that as the ultimate *daimon* in the being-historical sense will show humanity the greatness and uniqueness of being itself.⁴¹ While abyssal, this futural, being-historical projecting-open is the grounding of a pagan *eschaton* which can only be utterly heterogeneous, hence perhaps even Goetic. In this thesis, *Contributions to Philosophy* is read as the most important source of modern philosophical grounding of a possible pagan revival in European *Dasein*. It is even possible to speak of a distinctly pagan *hermeneuein*.

In Part Three, Division Two, Heidegger’s project of being-historical mindful awareness of the question of being is compared with the question of the ground of being in the perennial *gnosis* of Dzogchen in Tibet. Longchen Rabjam, also known as Longchenpa, was the first

³⁹ Ibid., § 132, page 176.

⁴⁰ Ibid., § 160, pages 198-199.

⁴¹ Ibid., § 252, page 280.

Tibetan thinker to systematise the doctrines of Dzogchen and made them compatible with the Buddhist doctrine of Madhyamaka or emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) in Tibet. His efforts were, however, not welcome by many Buddhist scholars of the time who adhered to the principle that only those scriptures with Indian originals could be held to be genuine. Dzogchen tantras, however, are mostly visionary writings, based on the direct experience of the primordality of all phenomena, which Longchenpa calls “basic space” (*chos dbyings*). Intellectual elaborations are held as unreliable in Dzogchen and a holistic, authentic experience or way of being is valued instead, which then necessitates a close relationship between a teacher and a student, so that the quality, development and maturation of the latter’s understanding and experiences can be assessed continuously. What Heidegger portrays as the nihilism of “lived experiences” in *Contributions to Philosophy*⁴² is not the “direct experience”⁴³ of Dzogchen, which involves a full awareness of the ground of all beings, hence an ontological understanding that is uniquely Tibetan in its hermeneutics. The intellect, therefore, has a definite role to play in the transmission of Dzogchen lineages, as long as it does not get in the way of direct experience. As explained by a contemporary Dzogchen master, Namkhai Norbu, who is instrumental in introducing Dzogchen to the West:

The Dzogchen teachings, though their aim is not to develop the intellect, but to bring one beyond the intellect into the primordial state, contain a precise and crystalline structure of interlinked explanations.⁴⁴

The traditional doctrinal disagreements between Dzogchen and the so-called “new translation” (*sar ma*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism that began in the 11th century and continue to this day are referred to, but not examined in detail, in the present study.⁴⁵ This is in order to fulfil its purpose of using a well-established primordial tradition such as Dzogchen to illuminate, through comparative hermeneutics, Heidegger’s primordality thesis in his work on the question of being.

The similarities between Heidegger and Longchenpa are astounding, given that Tibetan thought developed in complete isolation from Western civilisation and that Heidegger never

⁴² Ibid., §§ 68-69, pages 93-94.

⁴³ See Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 20006), pages 49-50.

⁴⁴ Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2000), page 43.

⁴⁵ For analysis of this debate, see John Whitney Petit, *Mipham’s Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, The Great Perfection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999); Gareth Sparham’s Introduction in T’songkhapa, *Ocean of Eloquence: Tsong kha pa’s Commentary on the Yogacara Doctrine of Mind* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); and Paul Williams, *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998).

mentioned Tibet in his writings. However, Heidegger, through friendship with his Asian students, gained some knowledge of Zen Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) and, judging by the perspicuity of his comments on Eastern thought in writings such as “A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer”⁴⁶, Heidegger was able to establish an essential *philosophical* relationship with the Far East, which he never visited. This is reflected in the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of Heidegger’s philosophy in Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan. The first translation of *Being and Time* was in fact Japanese, which appeared in 1939-1940, and six editions of the Japanese translations are available.⁴⁷ In essence, the two streams of Buddhist and Daoist thought in the East flowed naturally into the well-spring of Heidegger’s thinking, in that all three share an ontological commitment to non-dualism and are therefore anti-metaphysical. On another level, Heidegger shares the intellectual make-up of Buddhists and Daoists in their leaning toward quietism, as evidenced by his famous 1955 address on “letting be”, *Gelassenheit*.⁴⁸

However, in this thesis comparison of Heidegger’s philosophy with either Zen or Daoism is deliberately avoided in order to let the essential thinking of Bön and Tibetan Buddhism shine forth. While Buddhist traditions in Tibet share the foundation of Mahayana Buddhism with their East Asian counterparts, the overwhelming influence on the Tibetan mind is the well-developed scholastic tradition of Indian Buddhism, notably the development of dialectics made by the 2nd century thinker Nagarjuna and generations of other thinkers such as Candrakirti (7th century) who followed his Madhyamaka system; the development of a philosophy of meaning and signs by the 5th century thinker Dignaga; and the development of logic and epistemology made by the 7th century thinker Dharmakirti. There is no textual evidence of reception of Greek philosophy, including neo-Platonism, among any of these thinkers. Based solely on its own efforts, Indian Buddhism shares similar concerns with Western philosophy about the nature of time, space, knowledge and phenomena. These metaphysical subjects have been enthusiastically taken up by Tibetan scholars ever since Buddhism became their state religion

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, “A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer,” in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), pages ?

⁴⁷ See the Introduction to Volume V (2005) of *Studia Phaenomenologica* by the Romanian Heidegger scholar Cristian Ciocan. It mentions that as at 2005 there were translations of *Being and Time* in 21 languages, with four more in preparation.

⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Memorial Address”, in Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pages 43-57. Heidegger states, on page 55, “Releasement [*Gelassenheit*] toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way. They promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperiled by it.” The opposite to *Gelassenheit* is “calculative thinking” (*rechnendes Denken*), which in essence is the absence of thinking, or “thoughtlessness” (*Denklosigkeit*), which threatens to become the only universally accepted way of thinking. *Gelassenheit* belongs to meditative thinking (*besinnliches Denken*), which belongs to *Dasein* and which Heidegger seeks to reawaken through philosophy.

during the 8th century. While there is no exact word for “philosophy” in Tibet, its reception of Buddhism as a wisdom tradition means that an enquiring approach toward true knowledge and cessation of ignorance became a key feature of the Tibetan cultural life. Writings in the form of a treatise (*bstan bcos*), all sharing the ambition of settling the perennial question of relative and ultimate reality, are hallmarks of great Tibetan thinkers. Indeed *ye shes*, which means “gnosis” or “exalted wisdom” in Tibetan, and *shes rab*, which can mean “wisdom” of either spiritual or worldly nature, are both much loved by the Tibetan people and are common in their personal names. In short, scholarship is a highly valued activity in Tibet, but more important than even scholarly learning is the Tibetan belief in attaining the “path of no more learning” (*mi slob lam*), namely a holistic liberation after the manner of the Buddha’s enlightenment (*byang chub*) that historically took place around 522 BCE in Bodhgaya, India.

In Dzogchen the ground of being is identified with primordial light. This is not a metaphor for the lightening of being (*Lichtung des Seins*) as in Heidegger’s case, but an actual belief in a dimension of light that is primordial to the time-space of the physical world. Primordial light is the suchness of being. In Dzogchen, *physis* can be transformed into *phos*, and in its advanced yogic practice such as *kbregs chod* and *thod rgal*, the practitioner’s body is dissolved into light and a new body of light, called “rainbow body” (*ja’ lus*), is attained.

Reading Heidegger, any definition of being in terms of another being, including the being or phenomenon of light, is metaphysics. For this reason, the comparison between Heidegger and Longchenpa results in a critique of the “metaphysics of light”⁴⁹ that supports the philosophy of Dzogchen, even if Dzogchen in essence has, in its quest for the direct experience of primordial light, little concern for philosophical arguments. My conclusion is controversial but it is based on a close reading of Heidegger’s phenomenology of *Ereignis* in *Contributions to Philosophy*. *Ereignis* is the onefold of both light and dark, even if out of the cleavage of being comes forth this most fundamental twofold, almost like *Geschlecht* of the sexes, of the abyss and the illumination. Yet both are necessary for *Dasein*’s understanding of being. In fact the very notion of the “ground of being” in Dzogchen can be subject to an abyssal *Destruction*, as Heidegger does with all notion of ground in both *Contributions to Philosophy* and *The Principle of Reason*. Longchenpa is careful to ascribe the numinous quality of “emptiness” – meaning the holding sway of all phenomena without an identifiable essence – to the ground of being. This contradicts Dzogchen’s fundamental position on primordial light, which is a continuum that

⁴⁹ For a detailed study of Heidegger’s critique of Plato’s metaphysics of light in the allegory of the cave, see Jae-Woo Song, *Licht und Lichtung: Martin Heideggers Destruktion der Lichtmetaphysik und seine Besinnung auf die Lichtung des Seins* (Saint Augustin: Gardez!, 1999).

Dasein can “leap into” or “cross over into” in the central practice of *thod rgal*. Longchenpa’s argument for the ultimate reality of the basic space as “empty yet lucid” (*stong gsal*) is based on this contradiction. The seriousness of this philosophical implication means that what Heidegger essentially thematises in his lifelong thinking as the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) needs to be brought into philosophical discussions about Dzogchen in order to save it from its traditional opponents from the ranks of the dominant Gelug order of Tibetan Buddhism, whose founding thinker was Tsongkhapa. Yet the Gelugpas approach “being” solely as entities (*ngo bo*) which are to be negated in the Madhyamaka dialectics of enlightenment. Being as differentiated from beings – ontological difference introduced by Heidegger in *Being and Time* - entails a universal status that challenges the supremacy of the noumenon of emptiness in Madhyamaka thought, hence Heidegger’s thesis of the primordially of being is problematic for Gelug thinkers. This is an impasse that awaits *aletheia* in a further *Auseinandersetzung* between Heidegger and Tibetan philosophy, which takes place for the first time in the clearing open of this thesis.

As a being in attunement, *Dasein* relates to the question of being fundamentally in its temporal orientation toward the future, which always remains open in its ecstatic truth. For Heidegger, temporal ecstasis is not random but is guided or destined by the destining of an epoch, including the withdrawal of being as the abyss that *Dasein* has great hesitancy in leaping into, for the *aletheia* of “sheltering-concealing” is essentially baffling: what is sheltered is not entirely absent, yet it is veiled from the privilege of seeing. *Dasein* therefore listens. Heidegger’s engagement with Hölderlin is a clearing of listening in the reciprocated resonance of thinking and poetry, which is guided by *Dasein*’s attunement to the “last god” – a god who wants *Dasein* to remember being in order that a divine attunement can once again hold sway in *Dasein*’s understanding of being.

§ 4. Notes on Convention

Each philosophical term used by Heidegger, when appearing for the first time in a division, is accompanied by the original German expression in parentheses. This device can be repeated in a new section within the same division for the sake of clarity.

The following German words from Heidegger are left untranslated in order to respect their hermeneutics of heterogeneity and polysemy:

- 1) *Angst*.

- 2) *Dasein*.
- 3) *Dagründer*.
- 4) *Ereignis*.
- 5) *Existentiale*.
- 6) *Gelassenheit*.
- 7) *Geschlecht*.
- 8) *Gestell*.
- 9) *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein*.
- 10) *Vorhandensein*.
- 11) *Zubandensein*.

Although “*daimon*” has been in the English vocabulary for quite some time, it is italicised in the thesis in order to preserve the richer meaning of this word in the Greek experience of *daimonion*. *Daimon* being primordial to the monotheist notion of “demon”, the two are not interchangeable. However, in paying heed to Heidegger’s suggestion in *Parmenides* that demons too are of interest to a holistic understanding of *aletheia*, in the philosophical Goetia that is at work in the present study, they are included in a positive manner. In German there is only one word for both *daimon* and demon: *Dämon*. Hence the powerful ambiguity of *daimon* is more easily retrievable in German than in English. It is worthy of note that in modern Western occultism a sharp distinction between *daimons* and demons is not often adhered to. Esoteric understandings of Lucifer, for example, which take him beyond the confines of evil personified and accord him the status of a demigod (*Halbgott*) of *gnosis* or a perfected understanding of being, qualifies him as a *daimon*.

New words introduced by translators of Heidegger, such as “presencing” (*Anwesen*), “godding” (*Götterung* or *Göttern*), etc, appear in quotation marks in the thesis.

For consistency all Tibetan terms are rendered in Turrell Wylie transliteration only, in order to avoid compounding the current problem of authors using their own phonetic systems in the English language publications on Bön and Tibetan Buddhism.

All of the Tibetan works consulted in this study are available in English. Some of them contain citations of Tibetan works that have not yet been translated. When such title is referred to in the thesis, it appears in Turrell Wylie transliteration, and with the first letter immediately after the prefix in the first syllable in upper case. Whenever possible, this is followed by the translated title in parentheses.

Because the present study looks at primordial traditions in Tibetan thought, it does not follow the convention in Tibetan Buddhist studies that shows the Sanskrit equivalent for each Tibetan term. It is a gesture of Goetic resistance against the Indo-Tibetan appropriation of the primordial currents in Tibetan thought that to Buddhism is “pre-history”. The *daimonion* in Tibet, which points to its sacred sites of the *truth of being*, is for a hermeneutic phenomenologist found in the lineage transmissions from the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung, which once occupied the northern and western regions of Tibet and the Himalayan areas around Mount Kailash. The *Ereignis* of the Tibetan primordial *hermeneuein* therefore belongs primarily to the Bönpos, whose pagan spirituality is nourished by their unceasing remembrance of Zhang Zhung. As Heidegger puts it in *Mindfulness*, only “by coming from far away from the remote beginning of the history of being, free from every ‘history’, can *thinking* prepare the readiness for the grounding of the *one decision*”.⁵⁰ This is the decision for the “fouring” of the “godding” in the fourfold, a way of life and an understanding of being that Bön preserves and shelters.

⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London; New York: Continuum, 2006), § 8, page 11.

Part One

Heidegger's Goetia

§ 5. *Fire and Storm in Thinking about Being*

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is unique in the history of Western philosophy in that his works are thematically united in his lifelong, single-minded effort to bring back the ancient *question of being* (*Seinsfrage*), or the *meaning of being* (*Seinssinn*), to the forefront of human consciousness. Heidegger's care with words and his insightful creativity with the German language serve the serious philosophical purpose of preventing metaphysical dualism from taking root in his original thinking about being. For example, "thinking" instead of "thought" is emphasised in Heidegger's later writings so that thinking, as *Denken*, cannot be appropriated as an "object" by a thinking "subject". In Western culture, there is nothing controversial about saying that thinking is the foundation of a cultural activity such as philosophy. But for a philosopher like Heidegger, an even greater height of cultural accomplishments is found in poetry, especially the writings of a *thinking* poet like Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843). According to Heidegger, thinking and poetising, *Denken* and *Dichten*, are primordial to each other. This means that thinking can have its genuine power expressed not just in the written language but also in *saying* – hence the primary importance of Socratic dialogues in the beginnings of Western philosophy. Heidegger himself produced some of his best work in the format of his university lecture courses at Marburg (1923-1928) and Freiburg (1928-1944).⁵¹ After making a major breakthrough in the world of academic philosophy, then dominated by neo-Kantianism, with the publication of *Being and Time* in the spring of 1927,

⁵¹ See "II. Abteilung, Vorlesungen 1919-1944" of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, published by Vittorio Klostermann since 1975, with *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, which is based on a 1927 Marburg lecture course, as the first volume to appear. It is translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Alfred Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), and contains an important elucidation on primordial temporality, which is only given a brief outline in *Being and Time*.

Heidegger's captivating teaching style further established his academic fame among his students, several of whom became famous philosophers in their own right.⁵²

In 1933, Heidegger's enthusiastic endorsement of the Nazi education policy (*Gleichschaltung*) as he became the rector of the University of Freiburg brought him the temporary power of a "philosopher-king" that Plato would have much desired.⁵³ Through his own initiative, Heidegger distanced himself from his mentor Edmund Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological movement that forced neo-Kantianism to become part of a history of ideas. The first publication of *Sein und Zeit* was dedicated to Husserl. The dedication was subsequently removed. After the war, Heidegger never provided an adequate explanation for it, despite the unforgiving scrutiny of his activities at Freiburg. His original dedication to Husserl was, however, reinstated in all postwar reprints of *Sein und Zeit*.

Heidegger never subscribed to the racial theory (*Rassenkunde*) of the Nazis;⁵⁴ nor did he support an imperialist vision of the German *Volk*. In two lectures he gave at Freiburg in August 1934, Heidegger states the following:

Der neue Geist des deutschen Volkes ist kein zügelloser, herrschsüchtiger und kriegsgieriger Nationalismus, sondern nationaler Sozialismus. ... Sozialismus ist die Sorge um die innere Ordnung der Gemeinschaft des Volkes.⁵⁵

Heidegger's initial fascination for National Socialism can be explained by his view of history as having *inner possibilities* that enable *Dasein* to retrieve the question of being from the oblivion of the Western metaphysical tradition. Attuned as such to the interiority of being, Heidegger's belief in the "inner truth and greatness" (*innere Wahrheit und Größe*) of National Socialism was something that he never renounced.⁵⁶ These possibilities determine *Dasein's* fundamental

⁵² Such as Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), Hans Jonas (1903-1993) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) in Europe, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) in the USA (German emigré), and Shuzo Kuki (1888-1941), Kiyoshi Miki (1897-1945) and Hajime Tanabe (1885-1962) in Japan. The literal meaning of Kuki is "nine *daimons*".

⁵³ See Julian Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), page 131; James Phillips, *Heidegger's "Volk": Between National Socialism and Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), page 1.

⁵⁴ Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat: Tatsachen und Gedanken (1945)", in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), page 381.

⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, "Die deutsche Universität (Zwei Vorträge in den Ausländerkursen der Freiburger Universität, 15. und 16. August 1934)", in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 304.

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), page 213. See also Martin Heidegger, "Spiegel-Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger (23. September 1966)", in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* pages 667-668, where Heidegger states that the striving for

openness toward a fundamental-ontological understanding of truth that discloses the as-structure (*Als-Struktur*) of beings:⁵⁷ nature as nature, plants as plants, animals as animals, tools as tools, space as space, time as time, gods as gods. And history as history. They are determined not by eternal forms in a realm beyond the senses, but are themselves determinations of truth in its disclosure, i.e. *aletheia*. Yet since *Dasein* is limited by its own perspectives on each being, there is always a possibility that there are aspects to a being that *Dasein* has no access to. There is an *otherness* in every phenomenon that is hidden from *Dasein*. For every unconcealment as the truth of being there is at the same time the possibility of concealment as well.⁵⁸ The philosophical problem of truth, then, is more primordial than the classical metaphysics of correspondence: it is fundamentally a question of otherness, a heterology of the abyss in each and every being. The phenomenon of dream and of madness respectively discloses the ever present possibility of opacity of *Dasein* to itself. The collective *Dasein* mobilised in German history through the normalcy-shattering movement of National Socialism could have hidden a total otherness from Heidegger that he no prior understanding of. However, whether the concealing otherness of Nazi ideology in the being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) sense would present a case for Heidegger's "unwitting collusion" remains a matter of debate in Heidegger scholarship.⁵⁹

On 23 April 1934 Heidegger resigned from his position as the rector of Albert Ludwig University at Freiburg. When he wrote *Contributions to Philosophy* between the years of 1936 and 1938, Heidegger's disillusionment with the politically actualised phenomenon of National Socialism – previously endorsed by him as the "*neue Wirklichkeit*"⁶⁰ – was complete, even if he never publicly protested against it. Textual evidence for Heidegger's "inner migration", just before the onset of the worst war ever witnessed by humanity, can be found in his bitter critique of the "gigantism" in *Contributions to Philosophy* – which reduces the meaning of being into *quanta* – and the "machinaion" (*Machenschaft*) – which manipulates beings for expansionist

planetary gigantism in National Socialist "values" (*Werte*) and "totalities" (*Ganzheiten*) destroyed the original "inner truth and greatness" of the movement.

⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 32, pages 139-143. The as-structure is the *a priori* of *Dasein*'s understanding of being. It is the basis of the hermeneutic circle of *Dasein*'s circumspectly interpreting *something* as *something* that enables *Dasein* to relate to beings through seeing (in the sense of understanding, like "I see myself as a philosopher").

⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, "Die gegenwärtige Lage und die künftige Aufgabe der deutschen Philosophie (30. November 1934)", in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 317.

⁵⁹ James Phillips, *Heidegger's "Volk"*, pages 100-101.

⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, "Die Universität im Nationalsozialistischen Staat (30. November 1933)", in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, pages 767-772. Heidegger also calls it "neue deutsche Wirklichkeit" and sees the fulfilment of *Dasein* in the German *Volk* in this new historical context.

purposes - that raged all around him. In National Socialism Heidegger began to see nothing but a full expression of the dreaded *nihilism* in the history of being, even if at the start the movement was intended to be its overcoming. *Contributions to Philosophy*, however, is classified as *Nachlaß* and does not therefore belong to the literature of underground resistance. During the war it had no overt existence in German public life. By removing himself from the world time (*Weltzeit*) of the National Socialism – and “removal” (*Entrückung*) is a distinct mode of being that is discussed in *Contributions to Philosophy* -, Heidegger chose to continue working within the concealed dimension of the truth of being, making every hermeneutic effort to interpret and to understand its destining historicisation away from the solicitude or the scrutiny of the *Volk*. In its character as “sheltering-concealment” (*Verbergung*), Heidegger’s method of interiorisation of being was the same one that in 1933 led him to make his infamous rectorship address, when he made a battle cry for the National Socialist appropriation of the German higher education system:

Wollen wir das Wesen der deutschen Universität, oder wollen wir es nicht? Es steht bei uns, ob und wie weit wir uns um die Selbstbesinnung und Selbstbehauptung von Grund aus und nicht nur beiläufig bemühen oder ob wir – in bester Absicht – nur alte Einrichtungen ändern und neue anfügen. Niemand wird uns hindern, dies zu tun.⁶¹

⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)”, in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 117. It should be noted that in this address Heidegger does not mention either Hitler or National Socialism by name, but its context is clearly intended for realisation of what Heidegger then believed to be National Socialist aims and goals. See especially page 114: “Die drei Bindungen – durch das Volk an das Geschick des Staates im geistigen Auftrag – sind dem deutschen Wesen *gleichursprünglich*. Die drei von da entspringenden Dienste – Arbeitsdienst, Wehrdienst und Wissensdienst – sind gleich notwendig und gleichen Ranges.” In Heidegger’s career this was the only time when the notion of primordially of being received its full expression as a political ontology that is founded upon the essentialisation of German peoplehood (*Volkstum*). It is important to note that Julian Young’s book, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, lays to rest any speculation about concealed Nazi tendencies in Heidegger’s philosophical works; see, especially, page 214: “None of Heidegger’s philosophy, I have argued, is implicated, either positively or negatively, in fascism, and neither, therefore, is the essential man.” Instead, although hidden from public view at the time, Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy* is a veritable contemporary critique of Nazi racism and expansionism. Miguel de Beistegui’s book, *The New Heidegger* (London; New York: Continuum, 2005), also supports Young’s thesis that Heidegger’s philosophy, even under historical-critical dissection, cannot be assessed as giving the ground for an ontological support to the Nazi worldview; see pages 155-176. Beistegui also mentions the fact that the leading Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946) suspected Talmudic influences in Heidegger’s philosophy (page 162); this ironically, was an indirect acknowledgement of the genuinely esoteric dimension of Heidegger’s thought. As far as personal shortcoming is concerned, it can perhaps be identified in Heidegger’s total lack of a *philosophical* self-critique of the Nazi *praxis* during his short-lived Freiburg rectorship; even in his *Nachlaß* that has been published so far in the *Gesamtausgabe* edition, there is no evidence of Heidegger’s realisation of his *moral* failure in Nazi Germany. Heidegger’s career is perhaps a reflection of the primordially of errancy in the occurrence of the truth of being that is central to his hermeneutics of *aletheia*, if not the uncanny monstrosity, which can come from the “claim” of *daimonion* present in *aletheia*, of the errancy of his

In the same address Heidegger describes the historic moment of National Socialist takeover of universities as an “*Aufbruch*” – a “marching off” of the *Dasein* collective, the *Mitdasein*, in this case the youth of Germany whose spirit will be renewed through a “folkish” (*völkisch*) awakening, as the essencing (*Wesung*) of being in the German *Volk* and their universities takes place “*von Grund aus*”, from the ground up, i.e. with resolute attunement to the primordial in being German – to the “national” of National Socialism. As his aggressive tone indicates, Heidegger and his comrades would tolerate no enemies of their cause – while in their fateful collision course against history. But in *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger writes, as one its main themes, of the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) in what he calls the “epoch of enchantment” with the “unrestrained domination of machination”.⁶² The signs of the abandonment are 1) calculation, which is “renunciation from the ground up of a freely growing transformation” for the sake of “steering”, “planning”, “managing” and “organising”, in order to establish a “dominion” where calculation “belongs to every human action” as the “basic law of comportment”; 2) acceleration, “of any kind”, manifest as “purely quantitative enhancement” and “blindness to what is truly momentary, which is not fleeting but opens up eternity”, therefore viewing the eternal as “the mere lasting of the same”; acceleration also displays “the restlessness of the always inventive operation, which is driven by the anxiety of boredom”; 3) the “outbreak of massiveness”, which is the spread of the absence of being in beings – non-beings – in all aspects of life, and it is detrimental to the “rare and unique (the essential swaying of being)”, for example, in the replacement of knowledge (*Wissen*) with information (*Kenntnis*); and 4) the divesting, publicising and vulgarisation of “all attunement”, manifest first and foremost in the “disempowering of the word”, reducing it to a “shell and magnified stimulation” that has no connection to meaning; furthermore, “all gathering of a possible mindfulness is removed and mindfulness itself is scorned as something strange and weak”; the abandonment of being is not experienced as “attuning distress” when attunement is divested, as the “growing emptiness” is disguised.⁶³

Before the 1942-1943 winter semester commenced at Freiburg, Germany’s descent (*Untergang*) into eventual defeat was secured through its overstretched siege of Stalingrad in August 1942. In January of the same year, the *Obergruppenführer* of the SS, Reinhard Heydrich (1904-1942), organised a conference in an elegant villa beside Lake Wannsee in Berlin to

political involvement, which, nevertheless, decisively attuned him to the distress of the abandonment of being that he discusses in *Contributions to Philosophy* and cast his later philosophy in a being-historical direction.

⁶² Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 59, pages 86-87.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, § 58, pages 85-86.

coordinate the “final solution” that targeted all European Jews (estimated to be 11 million).⁶⁴ During the early months of 1942, mass killings of Jewish men, women and children already began in earnest at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Heydrich was assassinated by Czech resistance fighters in May). Despite his philosophical fame, as an ordinary German Heidegger most probably would not have heard about the genocide; however, he could not have failed to notice the sudden drop in the population of Jews in Freiburg and its surrounding areas.⁶⁵ After the war, when he learnt of the Holocaust, Heidegger caused much controversy by equating it with just any process of gigantism. It was Heidegger’s refusal to talk about the *specificity* of Jewish deaths that angered many, especially in light of his important analysis of the irreducible “mineness” (*Jemeinigkeit*) of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*. When the winter of 1942 arrived Germany had already experienced its first air raids by British planes, which would become the way of death for over 360,000 German civilians in the next few years. The being-toward-death (*Sein zum Tode*) of the German *Volk* came to be determined by the *sky* – the endless space of which had already become fully accessible to the accelerated military machination, of both Germany and the Allies. The ordinary Germans were mostly killed by fire: the very element that the human-loving Prometheus stole from the gods in order to bring warmth and light into the sphere of mortal life. The fire is what differentiates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom: it is the *lumen naturale* of *Dasein* that allows it to exist in understanding of being and to express it in the form of discourse and action respectively. It is Prometheus’ fundamental comportment to humans in the form of fire that Heidegger in his rectorship address announces would deliver the being-historical regeneration of the German *Volk* in the temporalisation of the moment through the “inner truth and greatness” of the National Socialist movement.⁶⁶ At the end of the address Heidegger strangely misquotes a passage from Plato’s *Republic* and adds the primal phenomenon of storm (*Sturm*) to the folkish temporalisation.

⁶⁴ The villa was converted into a Holocaust museum and opened in 1992 (56-58 Am Grossen Wannsee).

⁶⁵ Freiburg was then in the *Gau* of Baden (now in the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg). According to Johnpeter Horst Grill, *The Nazi Movement in Baden, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), Nazi Party members were informed between May 1943 and July 1944, through the Baden weekly *Der Führer*, about the Party’s thoughts on the possibility of exterminating Jews. See Thomas Sheehan, “Heidegger and the Nazis”, *The New York Review of Books*, Volume XXXV, Number 10 (1988), page 41. On page 38 Sheehan provides the information that Heidegger was a Party member right up till 1945, which means that he could have knowledge of the Party’s genocidal intentions had he kept himself up-to-date with *Der Führer*. Sheehan reviews Victor Fariás’ unevenly researched *Heidegger et le nazisme* (1987).

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)”, in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 109. On the same page Heidegger writes about the winning back, for *Dasein*, the primordial Greek essence of knowledge, which he calls “inceptual thinking” (*anfängliches Denken*) in Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §§ 22-25, pages 40-43.

“Alles Große steht im Sturm...”

(Platon, *Politeia* 497 d, 9)⁶⁷

What Plato actually refers to is the ideal of the philosopher ruler, who can harmonise both philosophy and statecraft. Plato's own attempt at training an oligarchic ruler (Dionysius I) to become one at the Greek colony of Syracuse failed miserably. Plato fell out of favour and was sold into the slave trade, only to be rescued by a friend.⁶⁸ He never had anything more to do with politicians for the rest of his life. In 1933 Heidegger possibly saw himself in that role, even if his authority was restricted to the political reorganisation of the University of Freiburg. The passage from *The Republic* actually reads:

“How a state can handle philosophy without destroying itself. All great undertakings are risky, and, as they say, what is worth while is always difficult.”⁶⁹

The essencing (*Wesung*) of a *Volk* in the primordially of being was certainly a risky task in Nazi Germany, simply because of the wide gulf between philosophical thinking and the aggressive directives of the German ideology at the time. Anti-Semitism created an open that illuminated not the question of being, but its abyss in face of the National Socialist obsession with the renewal and the breeding of the Aryan *Geschlecht*. Heidegger, by bringing *fire* and *storm* together in his being-historical interpretation of the German moments of being at the time, *uncannily* projects the near-apocalyptic consequences of such combination in its historical occurrences for the people of Germany. As Heidegger states in the same address, knowledge is shattered before destiny, and this actually turned out to be the case in the end with his first public attempt to provide a dimension of *polis* to being. It was also Heidegger's personal and philosophical shattering. He fell out of favour with the Nazi Party and went under the surveillance of informers.⁷⁰ New editions of *Being and Time* were forbidden since 1938. Heidegger was also sidelined when it came to philosophy conferences in Prague and Paris.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Martin Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)”, in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 117. See James Phillips, *Heidegger's "Volk"*, page 132.

⁶⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Desmond Lee (London: Penguin Books, 2003), page xix.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, page 220. The person speaking is Socrates.

⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, “*Spiegel*-Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger (23. September 1966)”, in Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, page 667.

⁷¹ Martin Heidegger, “Das Rektorat 1933/34: Tatsachen und Gedanken (1945)”, in *ibid.*, page 393.

Such outcome appears *uncannily* foretold by Heidegger himself when he quotes Aeschylus, who has Prometheus saying,

“Wissen aber ist weit unkräftiger denn Notwendigkeit.”⁷²

“*Wissen*” is Heidegger’s translation of *techne* in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*. In the original Greek experience of it, *techne* belongs to *Dasein*’s know-how concerning beings, and that included art and craft. Prometheus was worshipped as a god of craft – fire makes the kiln work for the making of earthenware, one of the basic ingredients to the progress of a civilisation. But *techne* cannot release Prometheus from his sufferings and indignity. In the same play, when Prometheus is asked who guides the helm of destiny, he answers that it is the Erinyes, also known as the Three Furies. The Erinyes, who are the helpers of the goddess of justice, Dike, have power over *techne*, despite its divine origins in Prometheus.⁷³ In reference to Heidegger’s *Selbstbehauptung* talk, what is fate but the primordial temporalisation of a *Volk*? Is destiny (*Geschick*) the *Ereignis* of thinking? That the question of being is manifest to *Dasein* as historicised temporality suggests that this is the case. This mood (*Stimmung*) indeed permeates the task of thinking undertaken by Heidegger in *Contributions to Philosophy*. It also speaks of *Dasein*’s endurance of the punishment meted out by the Erinyes under heaven’s measure (*metra*) in the abandonment of being and in the silence of the gods.

Not long before the end of Heidegger’s lecture course on Parmenides, Germany experienced its first major defeat at Stalingrad on 2 February 1943, in the hands of the godless Soviets who were no doubt aided by the merciless *physis* of the Russian winter. It was the bitterest battle of World War II. The battle of Stalingrad on the Volga took place not in too great distance from the Caucasus Mountains in the south, where according to legend Prometheus was chained to a rock and had his liver eaten by an eagle every time it had been regenerated. It was a punishment given by Zeus for giving fire to humanity. Prometheus was eventually freed by Heracles, a human, i.e. a *Geschlecht* that he himself created. The titans are earth gods and we are earthlings. *Physis*, as the meaning of being of *earth*, is the ground of our primordially that allows for mutual resonance in grounding attunement (*Grundstimmung*) of our *Dasein*. This primordial relationship was however subverted by Zeus through the marriage of the beautiful Pandora, almost golem-like in origin, to Prometheus’ brother Epimetheus, who

⁷² Martin Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)”, in *ibid.*, page 109. See also James Phillips, *Heidegger’s “Volk”*, pages 100-103 on the failure of knowledge before fate.

⁷³ Heidegger offers a being-historical interpretation of Dike as the fittingness (*Fug*) of being in Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, page 171.

opened the *pitbos* of all ills that she received as a wedding gift from the Olympians, who were the sky gods. They entered the human realm and hope was all that remained that could assuage the pain, suffering and trauma of mortals. Hope is always oriented toward the future:

Heidegger defines *Dasein* as a futural being in *Being and Time*,⁷⁴ and in *Contributions to Philosophy*, he describes the *Künftige* – the “ones to come”, or the “futural ones”⁷⁵ – as the mortals who can rebuild the lost connection between gods and mortals. In the present, *Dasein* is a futural being that exists as an “in-between” between the mortals and the absent gods during the age of the abandonment of being that is also called nihilism. It is no surprise that Heidegger brings back the *daimons* to address the question of the being in *Parmenides*. Not only do they inspire mortals to philosophy, as in the well-known case of Socrates, in studies of Western esotericism *daimons* are described as intermediary beings that are involved in the fates of mortals, which are good and bad events in varying combinations. In Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, spiritually advanced people became *daimons* after death and acted as beneficent guides or tutelary spirits – the modern notion of “guardian angels”, or the more powerful belief in the Holy Guardian Angel in modern ceremonial magic, such as Thelema, which is based on the 15th century Abramelin system.⁷⁶ The following description of the postmortem intermediate state prior to reincarnation is from *The Republic*:

⁷⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 68, page 310.

⁷⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, Part VI, pages 277-281.

⁷⁶ Abraham ben Simcon, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage, as Delivered by Abraham the Jew unto His Son Lamech, A.D. 1458*, translated by S. L. MacGregor Mathers (New York: Dover Publications, 1975). Mathers translated a French version of the text held in Bibliothèque de l’arsenal. A new translation was published in 2006: Abraham ben Simeon of Worms, *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*, translated by Steven Guth (Lake Worth: Ibis Press, 2006). The following on the Holy Guardian Angel is from Guth’s translation (who simply writes “Guardian Angel”), page 81: “So think like this: ‘To come to the true magic, I need to fear God and follow the first tablet’, with a true heart and with all your soul. Here I need to say that righteousness begins by guarding against what is forbidden in the second tablet. When you take care in this way you are on the right path. Soon your Guardian Angel will secretly stand by your side and place suggestions in your heart on how you should organize your life and how to follow everything that is written in this book.

“Your Guardian Angel will remind you that you should not undertake this work for the following reasons: for entertainment; to show off; esteem; curiosity; and even less so for excitement; for immoral reasons; or to cause damage to others.

“Your Guardian Angel will ask you to start so that in doing so you will praise and honor God the Highest, the Holy Adonai, the mighty and powerful Zebaoth and his name. Also, in this way, to praise and honor your enemies and friends. Also, so as to praise and honor the whole earth with all God’s creatures – to bring them advantage by giving them inner harmony and help in their welfare.” From page 103: “Although invisible, your Guardian Angel is around you and leads your heart so that it cannot fail or make mistakes.”

The “tablets” referred to in the text are the Ten Commandments, adhered to in both Judaism and Christianity. The second Commandment forbids following or even respecting paganism: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” The absorption of Abramelin magic by Crowley, who was pagan, into his system of Thelema was therefore problematic in essence.

... when all the souls had made their choice they went before Lachesis in the order of their lots, and she allotted to each its chosen Guardian Spirit [daimon], to guide it through life and fulfil its choice. And the Guardian Spirit [daimon] first led it to Clotho, thus ratifying beneath her hand and whirling spindle the lot it had chosen; and after saluting her he led it next to where Atropos spins, so making the threads of its destiny irreversible; and then, without turning back, each soul came before the throne of Necessity and passing before it waited till all the others had done the same, when they proceeded together to the plain of Lethe through a terrible and stifling heat; for the land was without trees or any vegetation.⁷⁷

Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos are three Fates and are the maiden daughters of Necessity; each seated on her throne, together they work to dispense destinies to the souls of the dead, and each soul is allowed to choose its next life on earth. Philosophy can help them wisely. “And to see the souls choosing their lives was indeed a sight”.⁷⁸ Many choose foolishly. Like the soul who chooses the power of a tyrant only to find out later that his next life will involve cannibalisation of his own children.⁷⁹ Lachesis sing of things past, Clotho of things present, and Atropos of things in the future. They spin the threads of destiny. When Atropos has spun before a soul its destiny becomes “irreversible”, for futurity is indeed the *Geschick* of *Dasein*. Only a soul’s *daimon* knows its future in the next earthly life. This is because the souls of the dead forget their lives past and the lives they are going to lead again on earth once they drink the water of Lethe as they cross this river of the underworld. *Lethe* is the opposite of *aletheia*, in which *Dasein* stands in the truth of its being-in-the-world, but its past life is not accessible to it as “truth”, nor the future of the life it now lives. Because of the temporalisation of the “not yet” of death,

Dasein is its existence but not its life. And its time is projection into the future and is uniquely so; but temporalisation is also the recurrence of otherness to each moment of *Dasein*’s awareness, with the result that there is always more unknown than known. *Daimons* know the *whole truth* about each and every *Dasein*; therefore they are *not Dasein*. *Daimons* do not exist the way *Dasein* does because they do not experience *aletheia* the way *Dasein* does. *Aletheia* therefore determines the essential way to be, and in the case of *Dasein*, it is being-toward-death, which is

⁷⁷ Plato, *The Republic*, 620e–621a, pages 367–368.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 620a, page 367.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 619c, page 366.

the hallmark of finitude. In *Dasein's* finite existence, *aletheia* does not take it beyond the world of *appearance* to that of *noumenon*, that which is concealed from phenomenal appropriation. For the Greeks, supplication to *daimons* was based on a desire for greater knowledge of hidden things, i.e. of *beings in concealment*, hence for a better access to the fundamental phenomenon of *aletheia* in *Dasein's* comportment to being. Actually the *daimons* themselves remain for the most part concealed. Dealings with them are essentially *secret*, but it is their power to assist *Dasein* in the illumination of knowledge, which includes foreknowledge, that makes working with *daimons* esoteric. In Plato's time a high-minded relationship with *daimons* would be regarded as an expression of love for wisdom.

In Heidegger's case, what he describes in *Contributions to Philosophy* as *Dasein's* attunement to the "utmost distress" of the "abandonment of being" reveals the extent of the concealment of the truth of being in Nazi Germany. *Dasein* withdraws from the metaphysical self-certainty of the racially organised *Volk* that in the urgency of its nationalist resolve and war mobilisation tolerates no distress. *Dasein*, to stay true to the question of being, becomes a "disturbance" and an "irrelevant brooding" to the serious polity of the *Volk*.⁸⁰ While it is Heidegger's understanding of the historicity of being that *Dasein* and *Volk* find equal primordially in destiny, the actually existent National Socialism of his time tore the two apart in the concealment of their true possibilities. Given that Heidegger understands history (*Geschichte*) as the "transformation of the essence of truth",⁸¹ the abandonment of being that National Socialism brought about could only be a destructive transformation, such as disfigurement or decomposition. If the Greek belief in *daimons* is to be accepted, then the German *Volk*, including Heidegger himself, would have *chosen* such fate before their reincarnation. To be in distress in the abandonment of being that National Socialism represents is *to be oneself*. Yet this is an existential individuation of the abyss.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger defines the freedom of *Dasein* as being free to be *summoned* to the *call* of *destiny* through the choice of having a *conscience*.⁸² He rejects the ordinary meaning of "conscience" that is described as either "good" or "bad" for it is not decisive as to the true meaning of this existential phenomenon. Conscience, for Heidegger, is essentially "the call of care from the uncanniness of being-in-the-world".⁸³ It is similar to his understanding of *aletheia* as having nothing to do with *rectitudo* and *falso*,⁸⁴ which was the Roman distortion of the Greek

⁸⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 60, page 87.

⁸¹ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 3, page 55.

⁸² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 59, page 265.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, § 59, page 266.

⁸⁴ See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 3, pages 49-51.

experience that the West has inherited, and which structures *Dasein's* "conscience" in the pre-ontological sense. Conscience in the ontological sense, then, is the understanding of *Dasein* that enables it to be attuned to *aletheia* in the destining of being. For this to occur *Dasein* must first and foremost choose itself and not flee from it in a perpetual state of distraction. What is required is a definite *turning* on the part of *Dasein* – in *Contributions to Philosophy*, it is the abyss as the groundlessness of the ground. It is like *Dasein* facing the nothingness in death that attunes its primordial mood of *Angst* that Heidegger describes so well in *Being and Time*; only this time, it is greater than its own death because the gods have forsaken humanity. When they no longer show care for human history, the elements of *kosmos* take over, such as fire, as in its destructive use in a world war. Being-in-the-world becomes burning itself. The indifference of Dike and the Erinyes to human affairs is the danger of the most being-historical kind and *Dasein* will not want to will it.

§ 6. *Being, Ground and the Abyss*

The existential structure of *Dasein* in being-in-the-world, including the primordial temporality that shapes its projection in that world, is ultimately determined by the measure of finitude imposed by death. In its projection into the truth of being, *Dasein* never reaches infinity, but always lands on some ground or the other, including philosophy that examines the ground of ground. The phenomenology of human thinking is: "Nothing is without reason", or "Every being has a reason".⁸⁵ In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger shows how Leibniz (1646-1716) renders this principle into the supreme principle of metaphysics by shifting the *tonality* of this statement.

The principle of reason sounds like this: "*nothing is without reason*": "*Nil est sine ratione.*" We call this formulation of the principle the ordinary one. It implies that the principle at first and for a long time never stood out as a special principle. What it states is unremarkably common in the life of human cognition. Contrary to this, Leibniz extricated the principle of reason from its position of indifference and brought it to the level of a supreme fundamental principle. Leibniz brought th

⁸⁵ Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, translated by Reginald Lilly (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), page 75. This text is based on a lecture course delivered by Heidegger in the winter semester of 1955-1956 at the University of Freiburg and recapitulates the theme of "the abyss" in *Contributions to Philosophy*.

fundamental principle into the strict formulation of the *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis*. According to this formulation the principle of reason says: “Nothing is without a sufficient reason, which demands to be rendered. In the affirmative form this means that every being has its sufficient reason, which must be rendered. In short: “*nothing is without reason*”.

But finally we heard the principle of reason in a different tonality. Instead of “*Nothing is without reason*”, it now sounds like this: “*Nothing is without reason*”. The pitch has shifted from the “nothing” to the “is” and from the “without” to the “reason”. The word “is” in one fashion or another invariably names being. This shift in pitch lets us hear an accord between being and reason. Heard in the new tonality, the principle of reason says that to being there belongs something like ground/reason.

...⁸⁶

Tonality, which belongs to the phenomenon of *hearing*, is as fundamental to *Dasein*'s understanding of being as *seeing*. Its status as attunement is affirmed in Heidegger's study of poetry. For example, in his lecture course in the winter semester of 1941-1942, *Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"*, Heidegger explains hearing as a listening attunement to the inceptual word in the poem that brings *Dasein* to the opening of *aletheia* in being.⁸⁷ When that word does not come to *Dasein* at once, then a patient waiting is called for. Poetry does not yield up the meaning of words like logic does. The latter operates on the basis of conventions that reaffirm normalcy in understanding. In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger contrasts Leibniz' "rationalism" with the spirituality of the 17th century mystic Angelus Silesius (original name Johann Scheffler), whose famous verse, cited below, was familiar to Leibniz and Hegel (1770-1831) and they both saw something *daimonic* about him:

The rose is without why: it blooms because it blooms,
It pays no attention to itself, asks not whether it is seen.⁸⁸

To be without why is to be without reason. This strikes Leibniz as “godlessness” and Hegel as “pantheism” (the unity of God and beings).⁸⁹ Poetry confounds metaphysics, and spiritual

⁸⁶ Ibid., pages 50-51.

⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"*, *Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 52 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), § 5, pages 13-14. In this essential sense, *Hören* becomes *Horchen*, which means to “hark”, listening with full attention.

⁸⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, page 35. The poem is from Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer: Sensual Description of the Four Final Things*. The critical comments of Leibniz and Hegel are quoted on the same page.

poetry more so. In the passage from *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger clearly shows that in the Leibnizian moment of Western philosophy, being becomes equated with the ground of beings, i.e. the reason or the principle that beings exist. Metaphysical principle of this kind is fundamentally a demand that the human reason places on being – to explain itself. It indicates a certain lack of patience in one's comportment to being. In the example of the rose, disclosure and concealment are simultaneous. There is a ground in its blooming, as can be seen in the "because" in "it blooms because it blooms", but this disclosure is at the same a concealment of its relation to being because its blooming is without reason. The rose is simply being itself in the phenomenon of its blooming. There is something wrong about a rose that does not bloom: it can be stricken with a disease, the soil is probably not fertile enough, or the weather is unusually cold when it should not be. However, wherever a rose grows in a place that allows its potentiality-for-being to be fully realised, it blooms and in its shining forth as such, it pleases the senses. A rose garden is a source of great pleasure for humans and a gift of roses also. Roses are actively cultivated by humans because they are a part of their cultural being. Most commonly roses signify a profound human emotion such as love. Even love is without why. *Dasein* experiences it as it is. It happens to *Dasein*; it is neither willed nor created. The mystery of being in rose and in love simply defies Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason. It comes to a halt before being; in fact is shattered by it. Without ground and without why, being eludes metaphysical grasping and representation. But for a rose to exist in the first place, it is grounded in being. Being grounds beings. It is itself not a being – it offers no onto-theological narrative about God having created roses and all other kinds of flowering plants for humans to enjoy. Stories told to children are full of metaphysical deceptions that encourage the development of a dualistic mind. This is why the *daimonic* otherness of the groundlessness of being appears as the uncanny to most people, for dualism is instilled in them quite early in their upbringing. Philosophy is essentially a matter and a manner of unlearning. The abyss in understanding is more significant than the "objects" of understanding, for beings are more "beingful" (*seiender*) than them,⁹⁰ and in this ontological excess is another unconcealment of the abyss in being. The abyss does not belong to any "transcendental" method in that it is silent about the what constitutes objects as objects of our knowledge, i.e. the *a priori* conditions of our cognition of objects. The abyss yields up nothing. It neither takes anything away from knowledge, nor adds anything to it. The abyss is outside the domain of knowledge as we commonly understand it. The ocean yields up fish as a source of nourishment that sustains us,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., page 87.

but what the abyss of the ocean does, no one knows. If *Dasein's* relation to such abyss is to be understood, illumination has to be sought from the deities whose dominion belongs there, and for this one has to turn to mythology for answers. The Mesopotamian creation epic *Enuma Elish* is particularly helpful in this regard, but Heidegger never made any use of it.

Throughout his philosophical career Heidegger was single-minded about the grounding phenomenon of *aletheia* in *Dasein's* understanding of being. It is to the *mythos* of *aletheia* that he turns to in his thinking, which is found in Parmenides.

§ 7. *Aletheia as Daimonion*

The common Greek experience of *aletheia* was determined by Aristotle's understanding of being in *Metaphysics*, Book Θ, where he equates truth with *aletheia* pure and simple, i.e. unhidden and constant presence of being.⁹¹ Truth is about *being* true, and the temporality of the present and of endurance are metaphysically privileged this way. Philosophy, then, concerns itself with the absolute exclusion of the distortion of beings in knowledge. For this reason Aristotle privileges the appearance of the simple and holds the phenomenon of concealment as being unhelpful to the philosopher's pursuit of truth.⁹² In this respect Aristotle follows the Platonic preference for illumination as the ultimate source of knowledge in the allegory of the cave. Aristotle's main difference from his teacher Plato is the grounding of being not in the realm of ideas outside the reach of senses, but in the self-presence of beings as the only acceptable definition of *aletheia*. It is the "presencing" (*Anwesen*) of beings that provides the reason for Aristotle's understanding of the meaning being as primarily "substance". A being is a substance if it can become the subject of a predicate so that we can actually say something about it. It also means that a being is more fundamental than the properties that can be attributed to it. In the being-historical sense, the Aristotelian moment of philosophy shows that knowledge is a matter of confidence over beings. The cultivated ignorance of Socrates is not taken up by Aristotle. It is the securing of substantiality in beings that motivates his philosophical passion. The world,

⁹¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom. An Introduction to Philosophy*, translated by Ted Sadler (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), § 9, page 70. The text is based on a lecture course delivered by Heidegger at the University of Freiburg in the summer semester of 1930.

⁹² Ibid., § 9, page 96. If a being is at times unconcealed and at times not, Aristotle describes its being as accidental, i.e. not a really true being. A concealed being is not a being in untruth; but it is unconcealment, not its opposite, that is proper to being. The wave-particle indeterminacy in the being of phenomena at the quantum level will pose a major problem for the Aristotelian conception of being. Heidegger's phenomenology of primordially, with its ambivalence between being and nothingness, will fare better under the new science of the post-Einsteinian era.

for Aristotle, is basically alright and it is more important to provide explanations for it than to question it. A good life is quite within reach in the limited span of human existence.

Heidegger finds a kindred spirit in Parmenides in that the latter chooses to reflect on the meaning of being independently of the manifold displays of “beingness” (*Seiendheit*) in beings that have an enquiring mind like Aristotle’s enthralled. This withdrawal on the part of Parmenides is integral to the Greek experience of what Heidegger calls the “goddling” of the gods in *Contributions to Philosophy*.⁹³ In Parmenides, “goddling” is related directly to the question of being. Heidegger’s lecture on this pre-Socratic thinker begins with a poem by Parmenides on the goddess of truth (*aletheia*), who is without a name and is most probably a *daimon* of an exalted kind:

And the goddess received me with sympathy; she took my right hand in her hand; then she spoke the word and addressed me in this way: “O man, companion of immortal charioteers, arriving at our home with the steeds that covey you. Blessings be bestowed on you! For it is not an evil fate which has sent you ahead to travel this way – and truly this way is apart from men, outside their (trodden) path – but, rather, rule and order. There is, however, a need that you experience everything, both the stable heart of well-enclosing unconcealment, as well as the appearing in its appearance to the mortals, where there is no relying on the unconcealed. Also this, however, you will learn to experience: how the appearing (in the need) remains called upon to be apparent, while it shines through everything and (hence) in that way brings everything to perfection.”⁹⁴

⁹³ See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 259, page 309: “‘Gods’ need philosophy, not as if *they themselves* must philosophize for the sake of their godding, but rather philosophy must be *if* ‘gods’ are again to come into decision and if history is to obtain its ownmost ground.”

⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 1, page 6. In his study of Parmenides as a possible mystic from the Orphic tradition, Peter Kingsley argues that the goddess poem describes Persephone as a chthonic deity welcoming the philosopher into the underworld, where he receives wisdom that no living can. See Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness: Golden Sufi Center, 1999), pages 69-79. According to Orphic mysteries, for an adept to be received by the goddess’ right hand is to survive the journey to the *topos* of death; for her left hand means destruction, or the taking away of life. The underworld as a *daimonios topos* with a special relation to *aletheia* is discussed by Heidegger by way of the myth of Er; see Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 105. Goetia in the form of necromancy now appears in a positive light, as a clearing of being through the *daimonion* of death. From a philosophical perspective, what is most important is that Parmenides addresses the goddess as *aletheia*: no matter who she is, the encounter leads to the *daimonios topos* of the truth of being, this being the essence of philosophy. Parmenides’ poem, then, is “the naming of the essential place, where the thinker as thinker dwells. The place is *δαιμόνιος τόπος*” (Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 7, page 127).

The goddess' advice not to rely only on the unconcealed also determines Heidegger's primordial approach to the problem of truth in the question of being.⁹⁵ Truth is the playing forth (*Zuspiel*) of concealment and unconcealment into each other such that *aletheia* is determined essentially as the "clearing for self-sheltering-concealing" (*Lichtung für das Sichverbergen*).⁹⁶ Instead of access to constant presence, it is the otherness in the identity of being in beings, and not its pure differentiation, that continuously confronts *Dasein* in its comportment to being. The presence of a being is a veil. So is the metaphysics of constant presence. Heidegger does not ground impermanence as the meaning of being – far from it. Rather, it is the alternation of presence and absence in the identity of being that makes any notion of metaphysical unity highly problematic in the belonging together of being (*Sein*) and *Dasein* that is the grounding "identity" of *Ereignis*. More primordial than the metaphysical notion of the *same* in *Dasein*'s understanding of identity is the holding sway of identity in *Ereignis*, which in its being-historical character also brings being and nothingness together into *Dasein*'s mindful awareness of being. When *Dasein* looks for the same in the identity of a being, the being of that being conceals itself. A being (*Seiende*) conceals being (*Sein*). It may lend itself to metaphysical appropriation as in the case of Aristotle, but not its being. Being is its hidden essence. This is why Heidegger can say that in the Greek *Dasein* the making manifest of beings – the original meaning of *techne* – is "the wrenching of things and forms from and in the fearfulness of existence."⁹⁷ The fearfulness of fear is ultimately death, which destroys everything for the *Dasein* affected by it – if its dying takes some time. Quick deaths are a totally different matter. In its radical mortality, *Dasein* is eminently suitable for grounding attunement to both *Angst* – which is determined by pure nothingness – and fear. For the Greeks, moments of existential illumination in the fundamental uncanniness of existence are temporalised as *daimonic* temporality. It utters heterogeneity, which can never be subject to an onto-theological control, is the concealed holding sway of the power of the *daimons*. For this reason, the

⁹⁵ The representational interpretation of truth dominates metaphysical thinking in the form of a correspondence theory of truth, with its emphasis on *rectitudo*, or correctness. See *ibid.*, § 3, page 49. At this same point in his lecture, Heidegger observes that such metaphysics is an assimilation of thinking and propositions under the epistemic regime of *veritas est adaequatio intellectus ad rem*. It paves way for the rise of subjectivism in the Western notion of truth.

⁹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 214, page 237. Truth is not discussed in Part III, "Playing-Forth" but in Part V, "Grounding". "Playing-Forth" concerns itself mainly with the issue of primordial thinking about being in the first beginning of philosophy in Greece. However, given that the Greek philosophers were preoccupied with *physis* and *aletheia*, the problem of truth is directly relevant to the phenomenon of playing forth in *Ereignis*. See Daniela Vallega-Neu, Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy": An Introduction (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), page 68.

⁹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, § 8, page 50. Heidegger importantly mentions that Greek philosophical contemplation excludes complacency. We can say that it is a matter of getting to know one's *daimons*.

elaborate demonology written by the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno, *De magia* (1592), is not genuinely *daimonic* in that it concerns itself with the control of *daimons* – which Bruno divides into angels and demons in the Christian sense – in the cosmic hierarchy of the monotheistic God.⁹⁸

Daimons have undecidable identities and for this reason they are generally not named. As intermediary beings between humans and gods, they can bring both benefits and harm into human lives, and are therefore identified with fate,⁹⁹ i.e. the inderterminacy of its temporalisation of individual *Dasein*. In relating *daimons* to *aletheia*, it will be difficult for *Dasein* to identify the same in their mode of being, therefore *daimons* are closer to magic than to metaphysics. Yet the Greeks perceived them as being essentially related to the gods, such as those on Mount Olympus, and worshipped them in the same manner as the gods were, i.e. the *daimons*, too, could receive sacrificial offerings.¹⁰⁰ In Plato's *Cratylus*, there is a discussion about how the souls of good men become *daimons* when they die,¹⁰¹ but this understanding originally comes from Hesiod's *Theogony*, in which *daimons* are called a "golden" race (*Geschlecht*) because of their exalted qualities. Rudolf Otto identifies the *daimons* with the numinous forces of nature and of fate.¹⁰²

The Greek *Dasein* understood *daimonion* as the determination of the existence of *psyche*, the meaning of which, according to Heidegger, cannot be adequately rendered by the Christian notion of the "soul".¹⁰³ As we have already seen in *The Republic*, *psyche* and *daimon* have an essential relationship in the destining of the former into the being-in-the-world of *Dasein*. On the comparative level, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is full of similar accounts of the deceased encountering their tutelary deities in the intermediary realm of *bar do*, where the destining of the dead, which may or may not involve reincarnation, is a decisive spiritual experience. In the Greek experience, *daimons* are involved in the destining of *psyche* into the fate of a *Dasein* that, on the part of *psyche*, involves oblivion of the choice made prior to rebirth. *Psyche* therefore is not consciousness in the metaphysical sense, let alone self-consciousness. *Psyche* in *Dasein* is

⁹⁸ Karen Silvia de León-Jones, *Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah: Prophets, Magicians, and Rabbis* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), page 42.

⁹⁹ Roelof van den Brock, "Intermediary Beings I: Antiquity", in Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Volume 2 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), page 617.

¹⁰⁰ Herbert Nowak, *Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Begriffes Daimon: Eine Untersuchung epigraphischer Zeugnisse vom 5. Jh. V. Chr. Bis zum 5. Jh. N. Chr.* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1960), page 39.

¹⁰¹ Plato, *Cratylus*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (Champaign: Project Gutenberg, 1999), page 12. Electronic resource, University of Sydney Library.

¹⁰² Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, page 14.

¹⁰³ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 99.

forgetting of its primordial past before this life. *Psyche* is concealment in *Dasein*. And in reference to the *Cratylus*, *psyche* can only get out of the cycle of rebirth if it ascends to the state of being of a *daimon* based on merits earned while in earthly life. *Daimons* are therefore like bodhisattvas in Buddhism, who ceaselessly benefit all sentient beings in the freedom of their discarnate state, but can at any time enter into embodiment, either temporarily or for the duration of a lifetime, if they find it more beneficial to do so. However, there is no record of *daimons* taking on the form of flesh and blood in order to assist the humans they watch over. *Daimons* are strictly spiritual, like “guardian angels”. But according to one study, beginning with Pindar’s time (5th century BCE) there was a noticeable increase in emphasis on the division between “good” and “bad” *daimons*. This was one century before Plato but around the same time as Parmenides. The rise of dualism in the Greek *Dasein*’s understanding of *daimons* therefore took place well before the dualistic doctrine of ideas that Plato formulated in the *Phaedo* in 360 BCE. While there was no causal link between these two developments, the earlier rise of dualism in the Greek *Dasein*’s comportment to *daimons* can be viewed as having a determinative effect on its experience of *aletheia*; the concealment, therefore, had already had its essence well before metaphysics held sway in Western thought. It in fact corresponded to the degeneration of *daimonion* into popular magic (erotic charms, etc.), which proliferated in Pindar’s times.

With the Christianisation of Greece, all *daimons*, like the pagan gods and goddesses, were “demonised” as evil spirits and as enemies of God. Christian demonology is therefore a *covering over* of *daimonion*, so that we can speak of something like a *Dämonenvergessenheit* in *Dasein*’s relation to *aletheia*. In order to continue with the *daimonic* opening-projection in the question of being that has its inception in Heidegger’s *Parmenides*, it is being-historically meaningful to perform a critical retrieval of the primordial essence and power of the *daimons* from Western demonology, which reached its height during the Middle Ages and has returned in revived forms in modern occultism.

Demonology is also called Goetia. It refers to the legend of the 72 demons who helped King Solomon build the first temple of Jerusalem under his magical coercion. They are Bael, Agares, Vassago, Gamigin, Marbas, Valefar, Amon, Barbatos, Paimon, Buer, Gusion, Sitri, Beleth, Leraye, Eligor, Zepar, Botis, Bathin, Saleos, Purson, Morax, Ipos, Aim, Naberius, Glasya Labolas, Bune, Ronove, Berith, Astaroth, Forneus, Foras, Asmoday, Gaap, Furfur, Marchosias, Stolas, Phoenix, Halphas, Malphas, Raum, Focalor, Vepar, Sabnach, Shax, Vine, Bifrons, Vual, Haagenti, Procel, Furcas, Balam, Alloces, Caim, Murmur, Orobas, Gemory, Ose, Amy, Orias, Vapula, Zagan, Valac, Andras, Flauros, Andrealphus, Cimeies, Amduscias, Belial,

Decarabia, Seere, Dantalion and Andromalius. Each of these demons has specific qualities that Solomon found useful for his ambitious project. They are catalogued in *Clavicula Salomonis*. It was translated into English by Samuel MacGregor Liddel Mathers in 1904 as *The Goetia: Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, based on manuscripts held at the British Library. *Clavicula Salomonis* shares some similarities with *Pseudomonarchia daemonum* compiled by Johann Weyer (1515-1588), who was a student of the famous occultist, neo-Platonist and Hermeticist Henry Cornelius Agrippa (von Nettesheim), who composed *De occulta philosophia* (1531). In *Clavicula Salomonis* the description of each demon comes with a seal. In magical thinking, such seals are signs of fear for the demons. They are used by the demons' controllers to compel them into carrying out the latter's wishes. This is far cry from the respectful approach to *daimons* in the Greek *Dasein*, who like Socrates saw them as a source of wisdom and guidance.

The Goetic demons showed King Solomon the essential features of beings as *Zubandensein* so that the great temple of Jerusalem could be built in a "supernatural" manner. Architecture, as dwelling of the visible and the invisible, became in this case an invitation for otherness. Solomon's temple was for Yahweh, God of Israel, who tolerates no engraven images of "godding". Solomonic architecture was for the unseen. It was a concealment of the holiest that was beyond the perception and the imagination of the mortals. So right from the beginning God is the counter-essence of the Greek experience of *aletheia*. God is also the counter-essence of aesthetics, in that no form can be given to him; art annuls itself before God. This is how God "gods" (*göttert*) in the three Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam: against the open of being itself, and also against the "seeming" of the being of beings. God and the question of being contradict each other. The "being" of God is an impossibility; neither theism nor atheism is true. *Dasein* is attuned to God in the Abrahamic faith in a fundamentally different manner from its attunement to the pagan gods. *It is therefore not a question of one or many gods; it is a question of Dasein's grounding attunement to the possibilities of "godding"*. This is why it is said in *Contributions to Philosophy* that the gods are needful of *Ereignis* and that *Dasein* is heedful of it. Pagan rites and feasts are expressions of acknowledgement of this needfulness. This is why Hölderlin's poem "Germania", which describes the essence of the joyful gathering of gods and mortals at religious festivals, is so important to Heidegger's understanding of the nature of "godding".¹⁰⁴

Not only festive participation, but aesthetic presentation of the gods was also essential for the Greek *Dasein's* attunement to the "godding". The idea behind Solomon's temple would be quite incomprehensible to the Greeks. The pagan temples in Greece were built for *aletheia*. The

¹⁰⁴ See Part Two, Division One of the thesis.

statues of the gods were not idols to be worshipped; they were *listened to* by *Dasein* in their silence. This was one reason why theurgy was popular with the Greeks: the magical occurrence of speaking statues of gods. By entering into language, statues of gods unconceal the essential relationship between the divine and the mortal. Heidegger explains in *Parmenides*:

The statue and the temple stand in silent dialogue with man in the unconcealed. If there were not the silent word, then the looking god as sight of the statue and of the features of its figure could never appear. And a temple could never, without standing in the disclosive domain of the word, present itself as the house of a god.¹⁰⁵

Heidegger does not take into account the cultural facticity of theurgy in the Greek *Dasein*, which means that the silent word of the gods' statues can also become the spoken word.¹⁰⁶ A speaking statue is a *daimonic* occurrence. This is not because whether it is a god or a *daimon* who has just "come through" in a theurgic act, which was a subject that neo-Platonists often debated about; rather, it is because something *uncanny* has been shown. In the oracular utterances of statues, something is restored in *Dasein's* essential relation to being, so that it can exist in truth, i.e. with resolute openness for the possibilities of its being. The statues of the Greek gods were exemplary of sigetic hinting at the meaning of being in their uncanny "goddling", which determined the Greeks' guiding attunement to the sacred in their being. Theurgy, then, and *daimonion* more so, is a question of restoration of being in *Dasein*, so that it can project itself more fully and openly into the futural temporalisation of its being. Heidegger understands this as the essential meaning of *eudaimonia*: the primordial measure of the coming into presence of *daimonion*, so that *Dasein* can exist in a grounding attunement to being.¹⁰⁷ The Greek *Dasein's* relation to temples and statues concerned itself with *aletheia*. It is doubtful whether the Christian understanding of worship can ever be applied to Greek paganism.

The Solomonic subjugation and exploitation of the 72 demons was therefore a shutting out of the possibilities of *aletheia* and *eudaimonia*. As in other examples of ancient sacred architecture, the Solomonic temple had as its ultimate referent the eternity of God,¹⁰⁸ and not

¹⁰⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 116.

¹⁰⁶ For a study of "statue divination", see Polymnia Athanassiadi, "Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Volume 83 (1993), pages 122-123.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 117.

¹⁰⁸ See Adrian Snodgrass, *Architecture, Space and Eternity: Studies in the Stellar and Temporal Symbolism of Traditional Buildings*. Volume 1 (New Delhi: P. K. Goel for Aditya Prakashan, 1990), pages 54-56. It is about architecture expressing the forms in the mind of God. See *ibid.*, pages 26-27.

the being-historical temporality of the reciprocal needfulness of *Dasein* and the gods. *Daimonion*, however, is temporal; its absence from human affairs is the concealment or withdrawal of *aletheia* in *Dasein*'s comportment to being. Even though Heidegger does not see the necessity of studying demons, which he clearly understands are different from the *daimons* experienced in the Greek *Dasein*, the interpretive horizon shared between *daimons* and demons, due to the Christian "demonisation" of all pagan gods and spirits, calls for an entry of Goetia into *Dasein*'s fundamental attunement to *aletheia*. With the advent of Christianity, Goetia is already a "darkening" of this horizon that reflects the unconcealing moments of *aletheia*. Moreover, with religious persecution *aletheia* also becomes a question of what Heidegger calls "self-sheltering-concealing" (*Sichverbergen*) in *Contributions to Philosophy*. This is in fact *Dasein* itself: for the being of *aletheia* is never apart from it.¹⁰⁹ In the modern age of nihilism *Dasein* is reticent about *eudaimonia* in order to avoid ridicule and unnecessary attention. *Daimonic* ethics belongs to another form of saying: perhaps as riddles in *mantike*.¹¹⁰ In Heidegger's understanding of *aletheia* as the abyss, *daimons* themselves become refusal of and withdrawal from beings.¹¹¹ This is necessary because the gigantism that was once seen in King Solomon's ambition to build the largest temple in history, in order to worship a god that enslaves all other gods and spirits ("thou shalt have no other gods before me"), has returned as a result of the repeated forgetfulness of the *inceptual thinking* that made the Greek experience of *aletheia* possible. Nihilism cannot take *Dasein* back to the possibilities of the first determinations of *aletheia*. It is, however, important that they are known, for their total absence in the future can mean the disappearance of *aletheia* as a kind of understanding altogether, and the devastation of *Dasein* that has already begun with the abandonment of being in the phenomenon of the "gigantic" will have become complete.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 207, page 131.

¹¹⁰ Even Plato, who obscured the original meaning of *aletheia*, in *Phaedrus* described *mantike* as having divine sources. See Barbara Tedlock, "Divination as a Way of Knowing: Embodiment, Visualisation, Narrative, and Interpretation", *Folklore*, Volume 112, Number 2 (2001), page 190. Difficulty in understanding for the objectifying approach of the "they" instead of crowd-pleasing communication becomes necessary to *Dasein*'s integrity. Heidegger's hermeneutic proximity to *mantike* is described in Hans Jonas' recollection of his student years with Heidegger and Bultmann. See Eric Jakob, *Martin Heidegger und Hans Jonas: Die Metaphysik der Subjektivität und die Krise der technologischen Zivilisation* (Tübingen; Basel: Francke, 1996), page 215.

¹¹¹ The withdrawal of being in the abandonment of being concerns *daimonion* in *aletheia*, not the similar but monotheistic notion in the 16th century rabbinic thinker Issac Luria, namely the withdrawal of God from the created world in *tsimtsum*. See Gershom Scholem, "Issac Luria: A Central Figure in Jewish Mysticism", *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Volume 29, Number 8 (1976), page 10, on the monotheistic underpinnings of this Kabbalistic concept. This refutes any argument that Heidegger's thinking deliberately conceals any Jewish influence, as formulated in Marlène Zarader, *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*, translated by Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pages 134-135.

¹¹² For Heidegger's definition of the "gigantic" (*Riesenhafte*), see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 260, page 311.

§ 8. "Being and Time" in Light of Daimonion

Nothingness makes *Dasein* futural in its being and thereby frees it from death in the present. Ontologically speaking, any naïve empowerment of the "here and now" as some kind of perennial wisdom avoids the meaning of futural finitude of *Dasein* and risks rendering human existence inauthentic instead. The metaphysical account of time as a homogenous series of "nows", which in fact is an attempt to naturalise temporality, bears no resemblance to the time of *Dasein*. Heidegger calls the latter *primordial temporality* precisely to distinguish it from the ordinary time of reckoning, calculation and measurement as well as the social construction of world time. This is methodologically necessary in *Being and Time* to achieve a grounding of ontology *ontologically*, and not ontically in this or that being,¹¹³ which is traditionally practised in metaphysics and today in scientism as a new kind of metaphysical prejudice.

Primordial temporality has a structure that corresponds to the existential structure of *Dasein*, which Heidegger defines as *care* (*Sorge*) in *Being and Time*. In its most basic sense, care reveals the fact that *Dasein* can take the meaning of its being into the centre of its concern. Heidegger does not intend care to have the everyday sense of worry and troubles; more appropriate for phenomenological purposes is the ancient pagan sense of the word, *cura*. As explained by Heidegger himself, *cura* is that which animates *Dasein*, makes it what it is, *i.e.* a being that *is* existentially.¹¹⁴ Heidegger works with this special notion of care as the ontological clue to the question of the primordial totality of the structural whole of *Dasein*. In fundamental ontology, the determination of this whole must have a temporal character, because *Dasein* has temporality to start with. Here it is care that unifies the temporality of *Dasein*; it does this by making explicit the *ecstatic* character in which *Dasein* is concerned about time and engages itself in it. Based on the German word *Ekstase*, Heidegger uses this term to highlight the way *Dasein* stands out in time; its temporalisation is essentially uneven and differentiating, not homogeneous and flattening. Stretched out in time, the temporality of *Dasein* is its own existential narrative, at least on the manifest level. In all his writings, Heidegger emphasises the future-orientedness of *Dasein*: it is the future that stands out most in *Dasein's* time. *Ekstase* is a difficult word to translate; to avoid both the mystical and the hedonistic meanings of the word

¹¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 83, page 436. Heidegger intends fundamental ontology to be the basis of all other ontologies.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, § 42, pages 197-198.

“ecstasy” and to secure its status as a phenomenological term, the non-ordinary rendition of *ecstasis* is used in this thesis. It is an important concept for Heidegger in that he relies on it to construct a schema that can account for a primordial unification of *Dasein*'s temporality, so that the crucial requirement for holism in fundamental ontology can be met on that level.

The notion of *ecstasis* serves to have an unsettling effect on the metaphysical constructions of time, among which our understanding of the present is perhaps the hardest to be put in question. By interpreting time as temporalised *Dasein*, Heidegger is able to challenge the traditional picture of the objective, occurrent and uniform present by offering a phenomenological description of *Dasein*'s being in the present as effectively an “awaiting having-been”. This is based on Heidegger's observation of the authentic condition of *Dasein*'s temporalised existence as a resolute openness toward its existential possibilities, which includes a clear recognition of death as its “ownmost possibility”. Heidegger's notion of “awaiting having-been” signifies a hermeneutic fusion of past and future in *Dasein*'s existence, in which neither is obliterated by the metaphysics of the now that influences traditional understanding of time. The “*da*” of *Dasein* has always been its cipher for holism, and the key to its primordial meaning, which comes before any metaphysical appropriation, is to be found in the time that gives form to *Dasein* in the first place. Thus understood, *Being and Time* becomes illuminated as a contemporary treatise that offers an illustration of the analytic of *Dasein* as being profoundly structured by the *ecstasis* of “awaiting having-been”, not the ordinary model of time that structures unenlightened existence. The latter is exposed to be simply incapable of explaining *Dasein*, for the precise reason that *Dasein* is a kind of being that lacks the metaphysical objectivity to be segmented into sequential temporal parts.¹¹⁵ Hermeneutics is never a theory of objects that modern ontology has become.

Since *Dasein* is, ontologically speaking, not “naturally” occurrent in time, Heidegger's characterisation of it in *Being and Time* as a projection in the “ecstatic-horizonal” unity of its temporality has a great significance for philosophical thought. Projection has a futural quality that shapes the way *Dasein* is “temporal-existential”. Although each *Dasein* has its own history and story, in its projection upon time it is a being of not-yet. Its existence is structured by this form of temporal nothingness, if not dependent on it; Heidegger's incisive analysis of the phenomenon of being-toward-death has already made this quite clear. Nothingness in the not-yetness of *Dasein*, instead of allowing it to be permanently open-ended, renders it futurity *finite* instead. In fact it is this finitude that allows *Dasein* to have a future. The temporality of *Dasein*

¹¹⁵ Since *Dasein* does not have the being of a pure presence-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*), current analytic philosophy of temporal parts cannot account for the existential holism of *Dasein*'s constitution.

certainly does not have the characteristics of “now”, which, as Plato observed, is a reflection of eternity.¹¹⁶ Eternity does not temporalise at all; only time does. In other words, the endless succession of nows is not how *Dasein* is temporalised, because *the now is non-temporalisation*. In its face, *Dasein* is absent. The primordially of *Dasein*, i.e. in so far as it can be thematised ontologically, has no kinship with eternity. The existential meaning of *Dasein*’s primordially, then, is haunted by its own death, for as long as it exists. Conditioned as it is by time, every path taken in the phenomenological investigation into the primordial or ontological meaning of the being of *Dasein* leads back to death. The hermeneutic circle that *Dasein* exists in is *unheimlich*, not-feeling-at-home, for primordially it is the ground of the *daimon*, a fundamental understanding that has an otherness or strangeness to it which is, again, *unheimlich*.¹¹⁷ Although the Greek notion of *daimon* is not much discussed in Heidegger’s works, it has a covert importance in his thought, as indicated by his interest in the topic in *Parmenides*, a lecture course he gave in the winter of 1942 and 1943.¹¹⁸ True to his pagan revaluation of philosophy – in the Nietzschean sense of *Umwertung* –, Heidegger rejects the Christians’ narrow interpretation of the *daimon* as a diabolical entity.¹¹⁹ Instead he follows the ancient Greeks who understood *daimons* to be a class of beings that were quite close to the gods; the Greek belief bears no relation to the Christian division of the other world into the heaven of angels and the hell of demons. Yet to the dualistic mind conditioned by the onto-theology of metaphysics and modernity, *daimons* can appear to manifest both “angelic” and “demonic” qualities. They are

¹¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 81, page 423; see also page 425. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which further expands Heidegger’s hermeneutic explication of time in *Being and Time*, Heidegger analyses Aristotle’s homogenisation of time that lays the foundation for the metaphysical understanding of time: “Time is held together within itself by the now; time’s specific continuity is rooted in the now. But conjointly, with respect to the now, time is divided, articulated into the no-longer-now, the earlier, and the not-yet-now, the later. It is only with respect to the now that we can conceive of the then and at-the-time, the later and the earlier.” Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), § 19, page 247. Aristotle understood time not as ecstasis, but as intratemporality, “in time”.

¹¹⁷ Already in 1919 Heidegger lectured on the notion of “hermeneutical intuition”, which he tied in with the “worldliness (*Welthaftigkeit*) of experienced experiencing”. See Martin Heidegger, *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, § 20, pages 98-99. Eight years later, the transformation of “intuition” into “circle” in the “hermeneutic circle” of *Being and Time* was an *Ereignis* that can be further worked upon to invite the Goetic understanding of the circle in magic and the magical understanding of the circle in neo-paganism, especially Wicca. On the circle in Goetia, see Robert Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century*, pages 175-176; on the circle in Wicca, see Nikki Bado-Fralick, *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual*, pages 126-128, where it is described by way of philosophy of religion, but without any knowledge of Heidegger and the hermeneutic circle. In the book Bado-Fralick is a self-professed witch, which makes the element of *Vorgriff* in her interpretation even more challenging and multi-layered. Heidegger scholarship is yet to be applied to neo-pagan studies.

¹¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, pages 147-152.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 147.

non-ordinary beings that, while inspiring to the Greek poets and thinkers, are baffling and unsettling in today's world. Little known as it is, their way of being nevertheless points to a different possibility in ontology, not yet widely disseminated to humans. *Daimons* are therefore hermeneutically significant and phenomenologically useful. This was noted by Heidegger, though quite late in his career. It is a theme that will undergo further development in this thesis.

The uncertainty of beneficence and malevolence in the way of the *daimon* creates anxiety for great thinkers such as Goethe, who perceives rightly in his autobiography, *Aus meinem Leben*, that its true meaning can be found in the deification of immanent forces in the Greek mind.¹²⁰ These forces determine the destiny of being and are therefore overwhelming to the individuated existence of *Dasein*. They can in fact be so overwhelming that they can kill *Dasein*, like war and pestilence, and turn it at once into non-being. The *daimon* can therefore be a source of great fear. The trembling does not stop here; it can get more philosophical, therefore more disturbing. By applying the famous distinction Heidegger makes between *Angst* and fear (*Furcht*) in *Being and Time* – *Angst* is objectless –, we can say that the *daimon* can also be a source of *Angst* for *Dasein*, for it can come to *Dasein* as a harbinger of pure nothingness. *Angst* is essentially rooted in *Dasein's* comportment toward nothingness; in this way it determines *Dasein's* attunement to the uncanny that is inherent in its existential condition. Given this is the case, the ancient notion of *daimon* can be understood as a Hellenic divination of existential nothingness. As such the *daimon* dwells in the core of *Dasein's* being; or it walks beside or behind *Dasein*; or it watches over *Dasein* as it eats and drinks, makes love, and sleeps. In every situation where the uncanny can raise its head, the *daimon* can be *Dasein's* companion, mostly unnoticed in its state of ordinary wakefulness. As Heidegger explains, the “self” of *Dasein* is not the ground of its existential authenticity, for it is compromised by the metaphysics of objective presence and subjective representation; instead it is a more primordial individuation which encompasses the fundamental temporal awareness of *Angst*.¹²¹ The uncanny is that which makes manifest in a most powerful way the primordial undecidability between being and nothingness – or form and emptiness as Buddhists put it –, in the being of *Dasein*, in every moment of its existence. If we think and feel as the ancient Greeks did, the question of being is a question of *daimonia*. In *Parmenides*, Heidegger quotes Aristotle from *Nicomachean Ethics*, Z 7:

¹²⁰ See David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pages 6-7. It is these same forces that appeal to contemporary pagan movements such as Wicca and are used by their adherents in spellcasting.

¹²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 64, pages 322-323.

“It is said that they (the thinkers) indeed know things that are excessive, and thus astounding, and thereby difficult, and hence in general “demonic” – but also useless, for they are not seeking what is, according to straightforward popular opinion, good for man.”¹²²

With the insight gained from reading *Being and Time*, we can say that what is “good for man” is existentially and resolutely speaking “tranquilisation in inauthenticity”. It can therefore be said that in order to contemplate on the truth of being, an authentic philosopher prefers the company of *daimons* over that of humans. Without wanting to take away the spiritual complexities of the experience of the *daimon*, in *Parmenides* Heidegger chooses to use the adjective “*dämonisch*” to describe it, which in English quite rightly translates as “demonic”. In religious studies, the rendition “daimonic” can often be seen, in order not to think about the “devil”; but then Heidegger is careful not to exclude the *demonic* possibilities of *daimonia*.¹²³ In this aspect Heidegger’s understanding is akin to Aleister Crowley’s idea of the “Holy Guardian Angel”, which a Christian may find decidedly demonic.¹²⁴

Parmenides is some ways a Hellenic retelling of *Being and Time*, 16 years after the latter’s publication. In these lectures Heidegger significantly links *daimonion* to ontological difference: it is the *daimon* dwelling in the world of beings (*Seiende*) that reveals, in an uncanny manner, the primordial question of being (*Sein*) that needs to be asked;¹²⁵ the worldly assurance of *ratio* is never a reliable guide in the primordial work of fundamental ontology.¹²⁶ In appealing to the *daimon* as a phenomenological clue, Heidegger is of course integrating into his method the Greek harmony of *logos* and *mythos* that was accepted in their thinking as well as in their

¹²² Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 8, page 148. Here I cite the Schuwer and Rojcewicz translation of Heidegger’s German rendition of Aristotle.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, § 8, page 157.

¹²⁴ Aleister Crowley was probably the most important writer in modern occultism. His notoriety aside, Crowley’s ideas and ritual practice provided the foundation for contemporary ceremonial magic; no serious student of neo-paganism can grasp the essential concepts and techniques, including their soteriological benefits and their dangerous pitfalls, without first familiarising herself with Crowley.

¹²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 8, pages 150-151.

¹²⁶ In Heidegger’s understanding the Greek experience of *logos* equates his experience of the essence of human existence as *Dasein*. The Roman reduction of *logos* into *ratio*, upon which the modern concept of *reason* is based, is a far cry from the meaning of *logos* as the truth of being, *aletheia*. See *ibid.*, pages 101-102. Further, in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger points out the ontological meaning of *logos* as gathering: the taking form of being as a being. Therefore in attuning oneself to the original meaning of *logos*, phenomenological understanding arises.

language.¹²⁷ This he succinctly expresses in the following sentence: “Τὸ δαιμόνιον is the essence and essential ground of the uncanny.”¹²⁸ Since in the same lecture Heidegger identifies being as the uncanny in and around beings, the *daimon* has the answer to the question of being that *Dasein* is, existentially speaking, inextricably involved in. *Being and Time* is transformed into *daimonia* in Heidegger’s Parmenides lectures – which were among the last he gave as a university professor before the Allied forces forbade him from teaching for several years. This transformation is deeply meaningful in itself, in that it signifies the entry of fundamental ontology, which is solely based on the temporal hermeneutics of human existence, into the realm and the tradition of Western esotericism, which seeks the meaning of being in the “higher self”. Whether the ontological initiate can undergo a full spiritual transmutation is *die andere Seinsfrage* - the other question of being -, that the present thesis sets out to interrogate. After initiation, the alternative to transmutation is dissolution. Testaments to this are not difficult to find in the esoteric milieu of both West and East. In fact the subject of existential dissolution did preoccupy Heidegger in his later years, when he examined the issue of *Geschlecht*, or ontological gender, in *Dasein*.¹²⁹ This gender has the preponderance of giving *Dasein* over to dissolution, since *Dasein* is a being that has death at its heart – quite unlike the *Geschlecht* of *daimons*.

In *Symposium*, Plato recounts how the young Socrates, in the teachings he receives from the female philosopher Diotima, is imparted the fundamental Greek doctrine that *daimons* go between the mortals and the gods, and that thanks to the *daimons*, which are “many and varied”, the divine truth can become accessible to mortal understanding and benefit humanity.¹³⁰ It is this in-between state of being that allow *daimons* to be the uncanny in the ordinary of the being-in-the-world that *Dasein* is. Their dwelling in the ordinary, then, forms the primordial condition for the mortal *Dasein* to ask, “What is being?”

¹²⁷ See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 104.

¹²⁸ Ibid., § 8, page 151.

¹²⁹ *Geschlecht* simply means “sex”; however, in this thesis *Geschlecht* is understood as “ontological gender” as a means of avoiding the confusing discussions about the sex of *Dasein* in current Heidegger scholarship. See David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life*, pages 252-265. From the being-historical perspective, *Geschlecht* is abyssal in that it concerns itself with the essence of *Dasein* in its historicity and its futural projection.

¹³⁰ Plato, *Symposium*, 202. Cited in David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life*, Preface. The concept and the experience of the divine truth in a non-monotheistic context would have to do with the truth of being rather than the scriptural truth in the Judaeo-Christian, Islamic and Buddhist traditions. In many ways Heidegger’s philosophy can provide useful foundations for a better appreciation and understanding of pagan spirituality, which are quite difficult in the age of onto-theological modernism that we live in.

When the *daimon* shows, *aletheia* as the truth of being takes place. “Anything resembling the self-certitude of the self-conscious subject is alien to the Greeks,” says Heidegger in the Parmenides lectures.¹³¹ In the extreme individuation of death, called *Jemenigkeit* in *Sein und Zeit*,¹³² that each *Dasein* must go through, and the resolute recognition, acceptance and integration of which is essential for the dawning of truth in its own being, the *daimon*, whether as a mythic or a spiritual notion, provides *Dasein* with the only form of existential otherness that is not alienating. In holistic psychoanalytic work such as that of Ferenczi, the *daimon* is identified as a vital integrating force in people struggling against psychic dissolution after major trauma.¹³³ Plato names helpful *daimons* of this kind *agathodaimon* in *Symposium*.

In the Greek interpretation of it that is neither angelic nor demonic, the *daimon* that illuminates the question of being through its dwelling in the manifold and in this way determines *Dasein* in an ontological manner, may be *Dasein*'s only chance to exist beyond the temporal finitude that the phenomenology of the “*da*” ruthlessly imposes. In his analysis of death and *Dasein*'s being-toward-the-end in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger is well-known for his opposition to any query into the possibility of *Dasein* having a “life after death”, which he regards as merely ontic in interest.¹³⁴ But this issue also presents the existential challenge which Heidegger refuses to acknowledge, namely that if *Dasein* can ontically “survive” death, then the ontological question of its possibly being able to have a mode of being outside temporalisation arises. This is a real problem for Heidegger, for in *Sein und Zeit* he defines the existence of *Dasein* to be essentially the *existence* of “I am” or “you are”, i.e. *Jemeinigkeit*.¹³⁵ The philosophical

¹³¹ Ibid., page 27.

¹³² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 47, page 240: “In dying, it becomes evident that death is ontologically constituted by mineness and existence.” Also *ibid.*, § 50, pages 250-251: “As a potentiality of being, *Dasein* is unable to bypass the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein*. Thus *death* reveals itself as the *ownmost nonrelational possibility not to be bypassed*.”

¹³³ Donald Kalsched, “Trauma and Daimonic Reality in Ferenczi’s Later Work”, in *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Volume 48, Number 4 (2003), pages 479-480. In the Hebraic tradition, however, such as in the *Zohar*, even a cultivated integration of the demonic into one’s spiritual path is based on a primordial split between the holy and the unholy – the demons belong to the latter -, hence the Hebraic Goetia is different in essence from the Greek approach, which evaluated daimons according to their activities and not any inherent quality of good or evil. On Goetia in the *Zohar*, see Elliot R. Wolfson, “Light Through Darkness: The Ideal of Human Perfection in the *Zohar*”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Volume 81, Number 1 (1988), pages 76-77. The ontological principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* guides the kabbalistic adept to descend into the demonic in order to ascend to the divine. See *ibid.*, page 89. This is also known as the *restoration* of the demonic to its divine origin in accordance with the fundamental reality of *yibud*, which can be likened to an *Ereignis* of the divine. See *ibid.*, page 88 and 91. In *yibud*, the divine *sephiroth* and the demonic *qliphoth* mirror one another.

¹³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 49, pages 247-248.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, § 9, page 42.

problem of immortality can then be at least formally solved if the ontology of *Jemeinigkeit* can be worked out in a more encompassing manner.

In his profound attunement to the being of *daimon* in *Parmenides*, Heidegger is willing to reconsider his earlier position on life beyond this world. As long as he remains “within the compass of Greek thinking”, Heidegger, in his reference to the Platonic account of a warrior’s near-death experience and his visit to the spirit world, suggests the expansion of the understanding of *Dasein* to include both the “here” and the “there”, with either presupposing a world in its own right in which *Dasein* has its being-in-the-world. The world is no longer just the earth, as he insists in *Sein und Zeit*, but can also be one beyond life, what Plato calls *lethe*. Heidegger is beginning to think about a “course of life” that is not limited by the *bios* of embodied existence, or factual *Dasein*. Instead of being-toward-the-end, the ontology of death is now one that concerns transition – from “here” to “there”. And for Plato, from “there” back to “here” as well: reincarnation.¹³⁶ With the guide of Greek *daimonia*, Heidegger overturns the hermeneutics of *Sein und Zeit* by freeing death from time and spatialising it. The dominion of time, then, is restricted to the “course of life”, but not existence. The *being* of *Dasein* transcends the *bios* of its indefinite time allotted here on earth.

The guardians of *lethe*, the world that is concealed from this world, were for the ancient Greeks the *daimons* themselves. They also referred to it as the *daimonion*. In *Parmenides* Heidegger resists the meditation on the mysteries that were part of Plato’s religious life, which would have given him deeper access to the subject in question.¹³⁷ Perhaps there was some anxiety on his part as he delivered that part of the lecture course; talking about the *daimons* is like *invoking* them. Yet with his phenomenological attunement, Heidegger is able to identify the essence of the being of *daimon* as that which determines the being of beings for *Dasein*, in light and in darkness – in life and in death. Being so, the *daimon* shows both primordial emergence and concealment; its dominion sees an interplay between *aletheia* as the disclosedness of being and *lethe* as its hiddenness, which is beyond the temporalisation of *Dasein* that makes up the core of fundamental ontology. In this transcendence of mortal time, there is an intelligent, if not divine, otherness in being that takes care of the union of *aletheia* and *lethe* in the primordial truth of being. In both Plato’s and Heidegger’s meditation on *daimonia*, the intuition of essential thought takes precedence over metaphysical thinking.

¹³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, pages 93. The warrior who woke up on his funeral pyre and recounted his experience in the realm of the dead was Er, from the tribe of Pamphylians. See Plato, *The Republic*, Book X, 614 b2-d3; cited in *ibid.*, § 8, pages 145-147.

¹³⁷ See *ibid.*, § 6, page 100, on philosophers having knowledge of *daimonia*.

Heidegger says, "These are not 'demons' conceived as evil spirits fluttering about."¹³⁸

Dasein does not require the metaphysical stasis of presence to make it intelligible to itself and others. By learning from the divine inspiration received by Parmenides, *Dasein* can arrive at an understanding of the primordially of the truth of being as a tension between disclosure and concealment, presence and absence. It is tension, not interplay, that sustains the movement of *aletheia* on the primordial level, for concealment as *lethe* is a temporary obliteration of the making present of being. According to Greek mythology, for the dead to be reborn in this world, there has to be a forgetting, in the form of drinking the water from the river running across the otherworldly legion of *lethe* which removes any memory of past life. This fundamental tension obviously brings about the uncanny in an anti-metaphysical reflection on the nature of truth, which goes beyond Aristotle's conception of the opposition between truth and untruth, accuracy and distortion, honesty and deceit.

As being-toward-death, *Dasein* is a creature of *Angst* that has the uncanny as its constant companion, even when it loses awareness of it in moments of distraction. The *daimon* will always come to claim the being of *Dasein*, and according to the Greek experience, it is more likely to be helpful than malevolent. The *daimon* is not the personification of death, like some kind of dark angel in the romantic imagination, but it is that otherness in the primordially of *Dasein* that is the *lethe* in the truth of its being. Yet at the same time, as Heidegger carefully notes, the *daimon* can shine into that which has hitherto been hidden for *Dasein* to see. Phenomenon has its roots in the *daimonion*, if primordial seeing is that which is sought for. *Dasein* can see with a *daimon*'s eyes, and in this way become a philosopher - in the Greek sense of the epithet.

In his invocation of the greatness of ancient Greek thought, which grappled with the question of being and its truth in an original, encompassing manner, Heidegger allows the phenomenology of fundamental ontology to go through some "shattering" in the theurgy of *daimonia* that many Greek philosophers, such as Plato himself, were initiated into. Heidegger's work during the war years was deep reflection on the primordial thought of Parmenides (1942-1943) and Heraclitus (1943-1944), and it gave further form to the esoteric ideas, already distinctly pagan in tone and in expression, that he wrote in private during 1936 and 1938, *Contributions to Philosophy*.¹³⁹ Before Heidegger's *daimonic* turning in 1942, those ideas wandered like ghosts, quite out of place, in the phenomenological terrains of his earlier writings and lectures. This turning had a far deeper impact on the primordial dimension of Heidegger's

¹³⁸ Ibid., § 6, page 102.

¹³⁹ This will be discussed in detail in Part Two, Division One.

thought than the *Kebre* (turn) from *Dasein* analytic to *Seinsgeschichte* (history of being) that has become the topic of much scholarly research in recent years. The question is whether the existential foundations of time are now adequate for Heidegger to carry through the phenomenological task on the meaning of being under the uncanny illumination of *daimonia*, the mysterious workings of the *daimons* that bring on the divine, with which, for example, Parmenides was blessed with.

In his musings on *aletheia* during the last hours of his lecture on Parmenides, Heidegger expresses a mortal's passion to have an encounter with the same goddess, which the ancient Greeks would understand as a primordial, theurgic yearning that sustains the greatest among their thinkers.¹⁴⁰ Yet to be with pagan divinities of antiquity, one has to first know the ways of the *daimon*. Plato indeed talks about two different kinds of *daimons* in *Timaeus*, the *agathodaimons*, who are beneficent, and the *kakodaimons*, who are malevolent. The *agathodaimons* also provide the gateway to *gnosis*, the ultimate goal of every genuine philosopher. By making no such distinctions among *daimons* in the primordial realm of *daimonia*, Heidegger risks being overpowered by the power (*dunamis*) of its workings and falls into the abyss that opens up for *Dasein* in what he describes in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the cleavage in being.¹⁴¹ Quite unlike Plato's *theourgia*, Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics turns *daimonion* into Goetia instead of a pathway to the divine as it is understood in the history of religion. Yet this is a necessary path for the integrity of Heidegger's being-historical retrieval. Being is different, or is ontological difference itself, if *Dasein* is to awaken from the forgetfulness of being that has so far determined its historicity. *Ereignis*, the emblem of being according to Heidegger, is the sigilisation of Goetia in ontological thought; it is the progressive darkening of the interpretive horizon of *Dasein*'s understanding until it is itself swallowed up in the abyss of its being. The death of *Dasein* is not simply the death of the body, but death of a more fundamental kind: the abyssal concealment in the being-historical temporalisation of being in *Ereignis*. But the sacredness of death to the attainment of *gnosis* is attested in the Greek mystery religions, and while never self-acknowledged, Heidegger displayed a spiritual kinship with them that has not yet been discussed in scholarship. In abyssal attunement, Heidegger's contemplation of

¹⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 9, pages 161-162. Heidegger states with some envy, on page 162, "Ἀληθεῖα is θεα, goddess – but indeed only for the Greeks and even then only for a few of their thinkers. The truth: a goddess for the Greeks in the Greek sense. Indeed." David Farrell Krell assesses that at this juncture Heidegger could be making an onto-theology out of *Aletheia*, the same metaphysical bias that Christians have toward God. What Krell seems to be suggesting is that Heidegger needs to immerse himself further in *daimonia*, in order to break down further the human-centredness of *Dasein* analytic. See David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life*, page 304.

¹⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 156, page 278.

“goddling” makes a hermeneutic hint at the essential remembrance of the chthonic gods in the mysteries. These are the gods who, when remembered, are foremost absent in the forgetting of “goddling” in modern times.

§ 9. Goetia and Gnosis

In its uncanniest (*unheimlichste*) moment existential analytic takes *Dasein* to the gates of death and Goetia can set in as a condition that forces *Dasein* to confront its *otherness* in *aletheia* of the *daimonion*. In its recognition that it is not alone in this dark, primordial sense, *Dasein* is threatened with a spiritual implosion that destroys its sense of self before death actually takes it away from this world at the destined time. In order to think the most *primordial* of thoughts - the meaning of being and its relationship to it -, *Dasein* as the self loses its connection with a fully other *Dasein* but is doubled in a semblance of the self that is not the same and hence embodies the uncanny. On the primordial level being is manifest as the uncanny, as known and shown by the *daimons*; and on this level, the unity of the self is not survived by *Dasein* in the movement generated by the ontological differentiation of being from beings. The result is a metaphysical chaos that Nietzsche would delight in, if only to rethink and revalue the essence of what is human.

If the unity of the self cannot be sustained but is instead threatened by the *daimon*, the uncanny that is *other* yet is *not* wholly differentiated from onself, then what Heidegger extols in *Introduction to Metaphysics* as the “repetition and retrieval” (“*Wiederholung*”) of the original Greek greatness in thinking about being, which he assigns the “historical-spiritual” (“*geschichtlich-geistig*”) *Dasein* to do, is doomed to be a failure, for no other reason than the internal instability of his conception of human existence as *Dasein*. Fascist monumentalism¹⁴² as the erection of being may be a source of Heidegger’s underestimation of the true work of nothingness that he himself taught a few years earlier that *Dasein* was held unto. The Greeks invoked the *kakodaimons* for total warfare; Himmler’s immoral esotericism attempted something similar.

¹⁴² The strident tone of Greek reconstructionism, popular with Nazi ideologues, is evident in parts of *Introduction to Metaphysics*. This may be due to the fact that it was a lecture course given during 1935 at the University of Freiburg, only 2 years into the creation of the new Reich, and that it was also given by Heidegger in his powerful position as the rector of that university, which he gained through his decision to join the NSDAP. Within the context of Heidegger’s *Werke*, however, which span over a period of 50 years, such ideological expression is but an aberration. Yet the truth of being allows no such thing; it is evidence that Heidegger could write in untruth.

The historical shattering of Nazism is now engraved in the finitude of humanity. If *Dasein* could not possibly have made sense of its being in the collective being-together (*Mitsein*) of a *Volk* that fought for a misguided Greco-German cultural renewal and domination, then the mere historicisation of its being was no guide for an authentic truth-determination of its meaning. Historicisation, then, although a necessary manifestation of the temporality of *Dasein*, is not the sacred ground of primordiality that moves generations of thinking people who read *Being and Time*. Or is sacredness inscribed in *Being and Time* in the first place? Is it something else altogether? Not profane, yes, but *demonic*?

The relationship between primordiality and the sacred is affirmed in all esoteric traditions that seek to attain *gnosis*. *Gnosis* is to be distinguished from the historical religious phenomenon of Gnosticism, which came to prominence during 2 CE as a manifold of heretical challenges to the early Christian church. For the philosophical aim and purposes of this thesis I adopt a perennial, universalist understanding of *gnosis* which is followed by some contemporary scholars in comparative religion, such as Hans Jonas, an early student of Heidegger, and Dan Merkur.¹⁴³ Their studies have shown that *gnosis* as knowledge of the divine truths, accessible to only those who have the necessary mystical understanding and experience, can be found in branches of Christianity, Judaism and Islam – and also in Eastern religions such as Hindu tantra and Vajrayana or Tibetan Buddhism. In this cross-traditional sense *gnosis* can also be identified in the Hermetic currents of Western spirituality. While the heading of “Western esotericism” is currently popular in religious studies thanks to the influential works of Antoine Faivre and Wouter Hanegraaff, *gnosis* is a better defined term than esotericism in that it distinctly involves

¹⁴³ Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934; Part II in 1954). English version: *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and The Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958). Jonas’ doctoral dissertation on the New Testament was supervised by Heidegger and Rudolf Bultmann at the University of Marburg. Dan Merkur, *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993). It is important to note that there was no one single religious movement in 2 CE called “Gnosticism”; rather, a variety of “heretical” Christian traditions were classified by the early Church leaders such as Origen and were labelled “Gnostic” in an antagonistic sense. At the same time a “heretic” by the name of Irenaeus composed, in *Adversus Haereses*, a list of Christian groups which he characterised as “Gnostic” in a positive sense, *i.e.* believers who sought direct knowledge of the divine. Michael Allen Williams demonstrates in *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) that the multiplicity of phenomena which “Gnosticism” refers to, together with the almost exclusive reliance on Christian heresiological sources by modern scholars (due to absence of texts indicating any faith-declaring or group-identifying self-designation by those labelled “*gnostikoi*”), may suggest that it is sensible hermeneutics to avoid the typological construction of Gnosticism altogether. Yet in all the ancient texts relating to those groups, included those found in Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945, there is a strong indication that an *esoteric* method was practised by the so-called *gnostikoi* that caught the attention of the German phenomenologist Hans Jonas, who reconstructed the “Gnostic religion” on that basis. A similar and equally challenging hermeneutic problem exists for the gnostic doctrine of Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*) in Tibetan Buddhism, which teaches the primacy of primordial awareness.

the philosophical intellect, *nous*, in its evolving hermeneutics of the divine. The far broader category of Western esotericism, in contrast, includes movements in which the role of *nous* is either absent or less important, especially in its occult variants.

There is neither reference to the sacred nor the divine in *Being and Time*, preoccupied as Heidegger was with the finitude and mortality of *Dasein* and the authenticity of its radical individuation in face of the anonymous “they” (*das Man*), but with the maturation of his ontological thought in his secret writings from 1936-1938, published not until 1989 as *Contributions to Philosophy*, the ancient question of divinity, with which the Greeks were comfortable with, surfaced to join the question of being. Since *gnosis*, as pointed out in Jonas’ study, is mainly a Hellenistic concept, it is instructive to determine whether there is a Gnostic return of the sacred in Heidegger’s differentiation of being from the world of beings. After all, the non-representation of being is a key to the sacred for Jewish and particularly Muslim thinkers, who view any objective representation of the divine as idolatrous. But instead of placing fundamental ontology next to *gnosis*, Jonas, a pioneer in contemporary Gnostic studies, describes Heidegger’s work as necessarily leading a believer in God away from God.¹⁴⁴ In the theological sense, then, Heidegger’s thinking is pagan, if not “demonic”.¹⁴⁵ It is Goetia, the reversal of *gnosis*. For the rest of his philosophical career, Jonas was critical of the pagan immanentism of Heidegger’s being-historical project, which he saw as putting being before God.¹⁴⁶ It is what Jonas calls Heidegger’s “deification” of the world.¹⁴⁷

Existential analytic is an unsettling affair. As the projected mode of being of *Dasein* is discovered in human existence, we face the prospect of finding either a genuine ground for our being or the absence of one. We have already seen that the latter is recognised by Heidegger as being inherent in *Dasein* and is called “*Abgrund*”, which means “abyss”. Even so, the Kierkegaardian cry for a “leap of faith” is something that resonated with Heidegger’s own profound understanding of the question of being. It probably haunted him for the rest of his life, casting a shadow over the apparent methodological sure-footedness of his fundamental ontology, threatening to conceal everything that he had phenomenologically brought out into the open through *aletheia*, truth as unconcealment. It is not an easy question, and Heidegger

¹⁴⁴ See Hans Jonas, “Heidegger and Theology”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Volume 18 (1964), page 219: “My theological friends, my Christian friends - don't you see what you are dealing with? Don't you sense, if not see, the profoundly pagan character of Heidegger's thought?” Jonas declares on the same page: “Quite consistently do the gods appear again in Heidegger's philosophy. But where the gods are, God cannot be.”

¹⁴⁵ Hans Jonas, “Heidegger and Theology”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Volume 18 (1964), page 226: “I hope you agree with me that there are demons” [in Heidegger's philosophy].

¹⁴⁶ Eric Jakob, *Martin Heidegger und Hans Jonas*, page 223.

¹⁴⁷ Hans Jonas, “Heidegger and Theology”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Volume 18 (1964), page 220.

knew it. For he had once *resolutely* jumped into the abyss of National Socialism, while fully attuned to the call of being that came for him from the German *Volk*. In the hermeneutic core and periphery of *Dasein* itself, the being that is always involved in some kind of understanding of being, Heidegger had hoped to find the methodological security of phenomenology that was once in the hands of his Jewish mentor, Edmund Husserl, whom he betrayed, infamously.¹⁴⁸

In *Being and Time* Heidegger announces it to be the primordial unity of the structure of care in the temporality of *Dasein*.¹⁴⁹ It is as if the blueprint of human existence has finally been discovered: a *concordia philosophorum* that vindicates the primacy of Plato over Aristotle in ontological thought, which was already once grandly attempted during the Renaissance and was quickly suppressed by the Catholic Church.¹⁵⁰ It is significant that Heidegger started out as a Catholic theologian and 16 years after his decisive turn to philosophy at the age of 22 in 1911, finally established his treatise of human finitude in *Sein und Zeit* without God. In this temporalised and mortal state, the human as *Dasein* is no longer the *soul* that connects the divine and the world. Yet Heidegger thinks that being as the totality of this finitude is more primordial than God; ontology for him is deeper than confessional faiths. Not that man or woman is God: this would simply be an inversion of the onto-theology that he sets out to destroy. Heidegger's project is instead an invocation of divinities that arise from the abyss of being, through the necessary cleaving of being that *Dasein* must undergo in its being-historical awakening in its mindful belonging to *Ereignis*.¹⁵¹ As being is cleaved, the gods enter into *polemos* with *Dasein* in their appropriation of the being-historical character of modernity. *Ereignis* is the *logos of Destruktion* that was brought into the historicity of being through fundamental ontology. Heidegger draws upon Heraclitus, a philosopher known for his "darkness", as an essential source of inspiration in his attempt to reawaken the understanding of being in *Dasein*. Heraclitus identifies the holding sway of being in *Dasein* in *daimonion* itself,¹⁵² thus bringing the uncanny and human existence closer together on a path that differs from metaphysics. *Daimon*

¹⁴⁸ After becoming a member of NSDAP, Heidegger removed his dedication to Husserl in the reprints of *Being and Time*.

¹⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 65, page 327.

¹⁵⁰ I am referring to the writings of the Croatian-Venetian Francesco Patrizi (1529-1597), who was persecuted by the Church for his anti-Aristotelianism (hence a threat to the establishment of Thomist theology) and for his preference for pagan masters such as Orpheus, Hermes, Asclepius and Zoroaster over the Jewish prophets, even Moses. See Cees Leijenhorst, "Francesco Patrizi's Hermetic Philosophy", in Roelof van den Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (ed.), *Gnosis and Hermeticism: From Antiquity to Modern Times* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), pages 125-146.

¹⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 127, page 172-173. See also § 126, page 172, regarding the "greatness" of being in the gods' needfulness of it: this is Heidegger's pagan inversion of onto-theology.

¹⁵² See again Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus' fragment "*etbos anthropos daimon*" in "Letter on 'Humanism'", in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 269.

and *Dasein* are gathered together. As Patrick, a Heraclitus translator and commentator puts it, Heraclitus “introduced alarm into philosophy”.¹⁵³ He explains:

... the Heraclitic doctrine of the flux was a thoroughly radical one. Heaven and earth and all that they contain were caught in its fatal whirlpool. It exempted no immortal gods of the poets above us, no unchangeable realm of Platonic ideas around us, no fixed Aristotelian earth beneath us. It banished all permanence from the universe, and banished therewith all those last supports which men are accustomed to cling to.¹⁵⁴

The Heraclitean flux, in its uncanny, can be likened to the abyssal cleaving of being that thematises Heidegger’s interpretation of the totality of the history of being as *Ereignis*, which comes near to *Dasein* but also withdraws from it. This, again, is the *daimonic* notion of *aletheia* that Heidegger highlights in his discussion on the truth of being in *Parmenides*. *Aletheia* does not promise eternal bliss, for thinking and yearning for the latter contribute to covering over of being; it is *metaphysics*. Once this fundamental Goetic attunement in Heidegger’s working with the history of being is understood, then what scholars critically refer to as the *Seinsmytik*, or the mysticism of being, in Heidegger’s writings and lectures from the 1930s onwards is, while baffling to Western philosophy, a retrieval and repetition of the rite of Goetia in ontological thought: the critical entry of *daimonion* into thinking itself as the inception of any mindful thinking about being. Given that Socrates and his mentor Diotima were both guided by *daimons*, the inception of Western philosophy, if the path of Heidegger’s being-historical thinking is to be followed, was an *Ereignis* of *mageia* that “reason” and the “theoretical outlook” both came to suppress in the memory of the question of being. What Plato encountered and denounced as Goetia in the *Lebenswelt* of ancient Greece was no longer *daimonic-aletheic*, because they already showed signs of metaphysical appropriation through the wilful imposition of the human wish for love and success, in the form of spells and other magical rites, on to the being of beings.¹⁵⁵ The hostile differences between Plato and the *goetes* of his day were based on the question of the visibility, hence accessibility, of the being of beings – and not on the inspirational occurrence of *daimonion* in *Dasein*’s attunement to the truth of its own being. While Plato and his followers sought solace in the invisible, otherworldly realm of ideas, i.e. the enduring being of the eternal in *aei on*, the *goetes*, on the other hand, through their personal

¹⁵³ Ibid., page 65.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Matthew Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), pages 44-48.

charisma and their sorcerous arts, promised reward in the visible world of the senses. The metaphysics of presence determined the being-in-the-world of antiquity, even in spheres of life influenced by the Goetic *koinon* of the *Greek magical papyri*, which even the Egyptian priests adopted during the decline of their temple infrastructure during the 3rd and 4th centuries, despite their own great reputation in the tradition of *mageia*.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ David Frankfurter, "Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond: Towards a New Taxonomy of 'Magicians'", in Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer (ed.), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pages 159-160.

Part Two

The Abyss of Being

§ 10. *The Goetic Setting of the Ground Work on Being*

In its internal developments, Part One unravels the hermeneutic “demonisation” of Heidegger’s understanding of the *wholeness of being* as the esoteric preference for *Dasein’s* transcendent integration of nothingness into its own being. Such integration is the essence of esoteric practice in all religious and occult traditions and differs fundamentally from the mere following of the word and the law in exoteric observances. Although it is never explicitly stated in his lectures and writings, Heidegger, in his audacity to retrieve the forgotten meaning of being, brings about a moment in Western thought that allows for the insemination of an esoteric holism in philosophy that metaphysics has prevented from taking place. As an existential experience of deep significance such moment was familiar to the ancient Greeks, who had their own background in mysteries¹⁵⁷, and to a certain extent with German poets like Hölderlin,¹⁵⁸ whose intuitive paganism inspired Heidegger to explore a way of thinking that is primordial to the possibilities of philosophy itself, hence phenomenology as he understood and practised it. Heidegger’s works have resulted in an original *Wirkungsgeschichte* in contemporary thought that determines and carries forward in a most fundamental way how the hermeneutic

¹⁵⁷ Eleusinian mysteries, which involved the worshipping of Demeter, Persephone and Hecate, formed the main secret tradition in Greece until 4 CE, when Eleusis was destroyed by the invading Visigoths. Eleusinian priests taught initiates the secrets of the afterlife. The other two traditions were Orphic mysteries and Dionysian mysteries

¹⁵⁸ In the 33rd year of his life Hölderlin suffered a final mental breakdown that he never recovered from and his poetry writing ceased in complete form. In his Introduction to Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), Michael Hamburger surmises the cause of this great poet’s madness to be the irreconcilable spiritual tension in his attempt to reconcile Greek paganism with an experience of Christianity that was nevertheless shaped by his “pagan” or “pantheistic” understanding of nature and people in Germany (pages 14-15). The thesis of Hölderlin’s irreconcilable inner tension between paganism and Christianity is also supported in Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature: From Winckelmann to the Death of Goethe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), page 143. Such existential crisis appears to be absent in Heidegger.

methods of his thought and his composition can shape the future direction of philosophy, and not only in the West. Examined in this light, Heidegger's thought as a whole has a greater esoteric impact on philosophical thinking than the as yet little studied Hermeticism of modern occultism and the new interest that the West has in Eastern esotericism.¹⁵⁹ Therefore a comparative reading of Heidegger and esotericism promise a new holism in the essential task of thinking – what Heidegger calls “thinking the history of being”.

As evidence for the esoteric aims of Heidegger's project on the meaning of being is the existence of his “secret” writings from the 1930s, published posthumously as *Beiträge zur Philosophie* in the centenary of his birth in 1989.¹⁶⁰ It was not until a decade later that an English translation of this work, *Contributions to Philosophy*, became available.¹⁶¹ Heidegger viewed it as his second major work after *Being and Time*, yet in his own assessment, the thought that it contained had no access to public expression, either in word or in print.¹⁶² In many ways it is a *pagan* treatise that resonates profoundly with the Romanticism of Hölderlin's poetry that Heidegger greatly admired. In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger performs a *Destruktion* of the onto-theology of Western philosophical and theological thought, very much after the manner of undoing the subject-object dualism of metaphysics in *Being and Time*, but with a radicalism that leaves no subjectivist residues in the conception of *Dasein* that in his own assessment are still present in his earlier work. In this work, Heidegger goes much further than *Being and Time* by adopting what he calls a “being-historical” (*seinsgeschichtlich*) view on the question of being that surpasses the individualisation of *Dasein*'s being in its being-toward-death. This time, Heidegger also goes beyond the Abrahamic boundaries of onto-theology by invoking the old

¹⁵⁹ This is meant strictly in the academic sense. The two sources of modern occultism, the Hermetic Order of Golden Dawn and the Thelema - themselves based on adaptations from the Kabbalah, Hermeticism and the Enochian magic of the Elizabethan genius John Dee - are both popular among contemporary seekers of mystical experience and knowledge, but these are rarely taught in university courses. As to Eastern religion, the gradual spread of the Tibetan traditions of Vajrayana Buddhism, which is essentially esoteric due to its tantric origins, is yet to produce a genuine integration of esotericism into the Western mind, as the closed nature of its discipline encourages discipleship but not “elective affinities”.

¹⁶⁰ Volume 65 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989). Heidegger did not live to see its publication as he died in 1976.

¹⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). In this thesis I largely follow the hermeneutic advice offered by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann in his essay “*Contributions to Philosophy* and Enowning-Historical Thinking” in Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, et. al. (ed.), *Companion to Heidegger's “Contributions to Philosophy”*, page 105, namely that the key concepts in *Contributions* such as *Ereignis* should not be interpreted in reference to Heidegger's usage of them in his more accessible writings from the 1950s and 1960s in order to make it easier to comprehend, because this difficult work should be studied in its own right. The authority of von Herrmann lies in his being the editor of *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, the manuscript of which contains 933 handwritten pages.

¹⁶² See Translators' Foreword in Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, page xv.

gods, not for a surface reconstructionism of paganism, but for the making possible of the primordial understanding and experience of the sacred to re-enter life, within the holistic fourfold (*Gevierte*) of earth and sky, god and human.¹⁶³ The transcendental temporalisation of this event is found in *Ereignis*, the leitmotif of *Contributions to Philosophy* that becomes the emblematic meaning of being in Heidegger's later thought. For our purposes, in so far as Heidegger is to be read esoterically at all, his *nascent paganism* is to be taken seriously on the philosophical level and is given full expression as such. This is the guiding task of this thesis, with Heidegger's discourse on *daimonion* in Parmenides as the key to the many doors of understanding that need to be opened.

Viewed as an organic whole, Heidegger's works develop our understanding of *Ereignis* as the unconcealment of being as *primordial temporality*. Oriented toward this fundamental horizon of interpretation, we work with our understanding of time within the hermeneutic circle recurrently formed by the ontological difference between being and beings, and we are guided by the essential holism of the history of being that makes its mark in every era.¹⁶⁴ For Heidegger, temporality of such magnitude such as an eon essentially means the relationship of *being* to the Heraclitean notion of *kosmos* as an interplay between illumination and darkening: hence his famous metaphor of *pur*, fire.¹⁶⁵ In comparison with this genuinely pagan

¹⁶³ Ibid., § 190, page 218. But this schemata, which replaces that of the ecstatico-temporal horizon in *Being and Time*, is not given the name of "*Geviert*" yet in *Contributions to Philosophy*. It was not until 6 June 1950 that Heidegger began publicly using this term, in a lecture called "Das Ding", which appears as "The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001); see pages 175-178 for his discussion of the fourfold. See also Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking", in *ibid.*, pages 147-149, for another discussion on the same topic. From the viewpoint of environmental philosophy, in which Heidegger's thought is a significant source of influence and inspiration, the Platonism inherent in the Christian understanding of being, when combined with the universalism of *techné*, have direct bearing on the desecration of the earth. This is not to say that Christians cannot now take better care of the earth - as God's creation that is blessed with the in-dwelling of the divine presence. This approach, however, retrieves the *daimonion* and allows it to reclaim the meaning of God in a tradition that has demonised *daimonion* and exiled it.

¹⁶⁴ Heidegger was familiar with *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*, the ground-breaking work on Gnosticism written by his student Hans Jonas, but he never referred to the various schools of Gnostic thought in his lectures and published writings. Yet Heidegger's notion of being determining an age (*Ereignis*) that *Dasein* exists in bears some resemblance to the Valentinian doctrine on the eons, each of which is an expression of a different kind of transcendent reality, which may or may not be good for humanity (e.g. the eon of the demiurge when human souls are trapped in the material world without the *gnosis* of liberation).

¹⁶⁵ This is an interpretation of *kosmos* based on Heidegger's principal insight into the phenomenological possibilities of *aletheia* as the cosmic interplay between concealment and unconcealment in which *Dasein* takes part in order for its understanding of presencing of being as *legen* to be possible in the first place. See Martin Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)", in Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), page 117. Importantly in Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Ground", in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 112, Heidegger analyses the opposition of Pauline Christianity to *kosmos* as the turning away from God, which lay the groundwork for the Christian demonisation of paganism in subsequent centuries. Christianity, then, is the

understanding, the theological teleology that shapes Western mind and spirituality becomes highly problematic. For this reason, Heidegger's *Destruktion* of onto-theology by way of phenomenology results in a progressive decomposition of the onto-theological temporality of *kairos*, which actually determines the esoteric understanding of time in Christianity. Heidegger's philosophy stands at the crossroads of a decomposing figure of being (the ground of being as the "death of God" *qua* active nihilism) in the modern world where the futurity of *Dasein*'s *Geschlecht*, i.e. the figuration of its kind, is contested in its temporalisation in the present age where oblivion of the primordial meaning of being prevails. This is also the oblivion of the *pagan primordality* of Western thought. With the falling away of *kairos* *Dasein* is presented with the uncanny possibilities of going under (*Untergang*), but instead of leading to a factual demise, they guide *Dasein* to its essential calling for a holistic engagement with the primordial ground of the history of being that *Dasein* is necessarily a part of. In anticipatory resoluteness and in loyalty to itself, *Dasein*'s abyssal descent, instead of encountering disintegration, allows it to find its place in the *mysterium magnum* of *Ereignis*, which holds the key to *Dasein*'s natality, life and mortality. This is the knowledge of the temporalising of *Dasein* in temporality, i.e. primordality itself.

In *Being and Time*, time in its three ecstases as the horizon for interpretation of being is bound up with *Dasein* analytic, in so far as the latter is authentically and thus historically situated in *Dasein*'s fundamental attunement to the destining (*Geschick*) of being¹⁶⁶ and throws open the question of the essence of *Dasein* as the understanding of being as such. But the primordality of time as the *aletheia* or truth of being leads to the esoteric issue discussed by Heidegger in his Parmenides lectures, namely *daimonion* as the making possible of the condition of *aletheia*. In the falling away of *kairos*, the possibilities of *daimonion* in the existence of *Dasein* become all the more reluscent. As raised by Eugen Fink with Heidegger in *Heracitus Seminar*, it is in understanding both the being and nothingness of humanity, i.e. *Dasein* in its being-toward-

determination of being according to the turning away from *kosmos* in *Dasein*, which in fact is akin to the Gnostic sense of fundamental alienation from the world and the universe. Paganism is therefore essentially a turning of *Dasein* to *kosmos* – nature as *physis* included.

¹⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 74, pages 351-352. Destiny, as authentic historicity, is primordial to individual fates (*Schicksale*) and brings up the question of a generation (*Geschlecht*) of *Dasein*. Authentic historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) is the *occurrence* (*Geschehen*) of *Dasein* in history (*Geschichte*) and hence the inscription of its meaning in reference to understanding of being; this necessitates at the same time the *Destruktion* of the history (*Geschichte*) of ontology as a discipline in metaphysics. *Geschichte* is primordial to *Historie* – translated by Heidegger scholars as "historiography" or "history as a discipline" – and this distinction is very important to understanding Heidegger's labour on time and history, which recurs in his later writings. See *ibid.*, § 6, pages 17-18. Destining (*Geschick*), then, is the working of the history of being in and through *Dasein*. *Dasein* analytic provides us with possibilities to "read" being.

death, that the ultimate meaning of *kosmos* will allow the mortals an opening into their existential awareness. Insight and foresight then become the qualities of *Dasein* in face of the historicity of its being. In this way *Dasein* is open to the dwelling of *daimonion* even though it is never a physical place as such, but a special, if not uncanny, region or *topos* within *Dasein*'s understanding of being. The Greeks lived according to the "inner voice" of the *daimons*. Since an understanding of this kind always aims at the whole of existence, whether for redemption or perdition, it cannot be formally separated from being-in-the-world, which necessarily determines *Dasein*'s kind of being; and by "world" it is meant primordially as the "worlding" (*Welten*) of a world, therefore not the earth as *physis* alone. In the worlding of the world the wholeness of being is transmitted to *Dasein* in its natural capacity for attunement, i.e. interpretive understanding in its temporalised mode.¹⁶⁷ Worlding, therefore, is the presence of the oneness of being in any of the many worlds that *Dasein* can experience in the interplay of truth in concealment and unconcealment. Unified hermeneutically, the universe becomes a plethora of gateways, passages and destinations for *Dasein* who genuinely seeks to understand the intertwining of life and death observed by the first *daimonic* thinker of Western philosophy, Heraclitus. Access to these, of course, is the main aim of "high magic" in genuine esotericism, which seeks not the fulfilment of individual power but that of time as destiny. In Western esoteric thinking, the *meaning* of time is necessarily "apocalyptic", and as such it impacts upon the futurity of *Dasein*. But in the temporality of vision and narration that constitutes *Dasein*'s experience of being, apocalyptic time speaks to *Dasein* through differences in telling and in writing, for it too is subject to the opening up of being for *Dasein* at its different levels of understanding of being, even through destruction by nothingness, at whatever allotted time. The end time for *Dasein* is a contested being-in-the-world. In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger mentions the "flight of the gods" during the era of the oblivion of being as a reason for *Dasein*'s obscure temporality, because an era itself is the configuration of *Dasein*'s relation to the meaning of being.¹⁶⁸ Therefore the understanding of time in Western esotericism is as

¹⁶⁷ It may be hermeneutically fruitful to view the fundamental relationship of *Dasein* to "worlding" as the essence of the primordial religious phenomenon of shamanism, which according to the findings of scholars in comparative religion is universal on earth. Unlike metaphysics, shamanism holds ascent and descent of worlds but not their dualistic oppositions.

¹⁶⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 253, page 285. In *Mindfulness*, Heidegger describes the fulfilment of modernity as the fulfilment of metaphysics in Western history; see § 10, page 19. This immediately problematises Heidegger as an anti-modernist; however, his being-historical thinking, or his mindfulness of the primordial meaning of being (*Sein*) in his contemplation (*Besinnung*), does not place his nascent paganism close to the trend of Ariosophy in *völkisch* German esotericism, analysed in great detail by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke in his book-length study of the topic (Ariosophy in Austria and Germany) in *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (London: Tauris Parke, 2004). Although

follows: the overall determination of humanity's relationship with the sacred or the divine and the historical responsibilities that are bound up with it. On the occult level, this calls for a great struggle with sometimes fatal visions and endings.

Thus said, *Dasein's* understanding of being is clearly not an understanding of timeless Platonic ideas, but an understanding, perhaps necessarily problematic, that is bound up with the history of being which remains always open for *Dasein* in its futurity. Given that the meaning of being is forgotten in metaphysical consciousness, the *daimons* of Heraclitus and Socrates can no longer grant *Dasein* unmediated access in understanding of being as the Greeks experienced it in its entirety. Heidegger implies as much in *Parmenides*. Any understanding of *daimonion* at present time is overlaid by two millennia of Christian demonology that has made a cult of the perceived destructive powers and influences of the *daimons*. While a historian may interpret this as the full-scale demonisation of paganism by Christians for the purposes of conquests and conversions, a phenomenologist may see instead the workings of the *kairos* of the end of time in an indomitable rise of the history of being as *Destruktion*, which will clear away the obscurities and distortions of European nihilism. In other words, Western demonology is phenomenologically useful and may assist us in the uncovering of the true meaning and power of *daimonion* in *our* time, which determines the manifest aspects of *Dasein's* way to be.¹⁶⁹ *Daimons* and demons are phenomenologically equivalent in the primordial sense, despite their phenomenal difference and their difference in the history of being; for a phenomenologist, the study of *daimonion* is decisively Goetia, and in terms of esoteric understanding, it serves as the sigil of *Dasein* in the apocalyptic time of present-day historical determination of being. *Daimonion* pre-determines *Dasein's* being-toward-death and in terms of temporality is pre-disposed toward the end time of apocalyptic *kairos*.

By releasing demons into the realm of phenomenon, Goetia becomes phenomenology, and its main concerns and methods are decisively integrated into the question of being. The Goetic imagination, Gothic in its tendency, can recast Heidegger as a necromancer; his hermeneutics, after all, concentrated on dialogues with the dead, as Heidegger was notably reticent in his communication with contemporary philosophers. In the granting of meaning to any form of existential projection, namely the fundamental movement in time that characterises *Dasein*, Heidegger's lectures on *Parmenides* during the darkest years of human history can be understood as the enactment of a Goetic act that puts *Dasein* back in touch with the darkest

Heidegger never wrote about it directly, his critique of the racialist conception of *Volk* in *Contributions to Philosophy* is sufficient indicator for his antipathy to the Ariosophical world view.

¹⁶⁹ What is beyond any ready manifestation is the primordially of *Dasein's* temporality, which does not enter into the sensuous world of beings as a being, yet is that which illumines *Dasein's* understanding of being in the opening of *aletheia*.

aspects of itself, in the sense of a generation (*Geschlecht*),¹⁷⁰ in a primordial manner. At that time in modern history, an unimaginable abyss entered into *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world and made its deadly claim upon an entire *Volk*, the "chosen people" of God, and for many God died with them. The Western *Geist* has not still recovered from the cataclysm of Shoah, and probably not for a long time.¹⁷¹ Thus the traditional fear of demonic possession, which in essence is the laying of a claim upon *Dasein*, stays with us to this day. The result is often *death*.¹⁷² But death is the innermost potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) of *Dasein*, making possible its way to be, and its kind, or *Geschlecht*, that is most appropriate to the era of its existence. Perhaps what is at stake is the freedom *for* death, which is eclipsed in mass murders, genocides and possession? If so, what must *Dasein* be in history?

The dissolution of the self, which can be *thought* and even glimpsed at in mystical experiences, is the nothingness in the heart of being that *Dasein* dreads more than the insentience of postmortem decomposition. The joining of consciousness and no-self remains the *unthought* in Western philosophy, for its possibilities lie outside the appropriation of *logos*, in so far as our understanding of *logos* has been determined by metaphysics; yet Heidegger has liberated us from its grip. In unleashing the primordial power of *legein* in *logos*, the *Ereignis* of *logos* gathers being and nothingness, self and no-self together. In Western esotericism, such *Ereignis* is already familiar; the natural human *Angst* of dissolution is valiantly used as a tool for spiritual transcendence through working with the abyss of existence – phenomenologically speaking, the groundlessness of ground through ontological difference. In modern occultism, it is manifest as *congressus cum daemonae* – in being-historical terms, the *aletheia* of *daimons* is retrieved. The dissolution of ego as the conventional sense of self through a ritual descent into the abyss is the most challenging and dangerous moment in esoteric training, as evidenced by the tenth of the thirty Aethyrs in the Enochian system which involves the struggle between the adept and the deadly demon of chaos, Choronzon.¹⁷³ Similarly, the abyss as the necessary

¹⁷⁰ Heidegger links this puzzling question to the destiny of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*, § 74, pages 351-352.

¹⁷¹ The abyss of history was manifest between 1941 and 1944 at six places in Europe: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka.

¹⁷² See the modern paradigm of exorcism in Felicitas D. Goodman, *The Exorcism of Anneliese Michel* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981). After her death in 1976, Anneliese Michel became virtually a *daimon* – in the original Greek sense of the word. For many devout Catholics, and her grave, near Würzburg, is today a pilgrimage site. For a Heideggerian reading of exorcism, see John Wu, "Goetia, Exorcism and Demonic Struggles in Christianity and Tibetan Buddhism", in Carole Cusack, Frances Di Lauro, Christopher Hartney (ed.), *The Buddha of Suburbia: Proceedings of the Eighth Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference 2004* (Sydney: RLA Press, 2005), pages 87-107.

¹⁷³ The descent into the abyss is the hallmark of modern occultism through the desert workings of Enochian magic by Aleister Crowley in December 1918. See Aleister Crowley, *The Vision and the Voice* (York Beach: Weiser, 1998), page 163-165. Compare also the Wiccan adoption of the legendary descent of the Mesopotamian goddess Innana into the underworld,

comportment of *Dasein* to being is a difficult theme that recurs throughout Heidegger's writings. It must be thought in the destining of being that determines the freedom and authenticity of *Dasein* in its being-toward-death in time: not through the metaphysical structuring of concepts and discourse, but by way of the alternative path of holistic contemplation that Heidegger describes as *Besinnung* in his later works. Remaining unthought, the abyss becomes the most Nietzschean of philosophical curses: the eternal return of demonic haunting in the selfsame nothingness in *Dasein*'s encounter with itself, which is the absent face of being. Phenomenology, then, is a question of whether *Dasein* can still live if the face of being comes into presence in a hermeneutic moment still unknown to philosophers. In the darkness of this primordial concealment, which is the existential shelter offered by Goetia, *Dasein*, by virtue of the historicity of its being, is nevertheless challenged by the onto-theological violence of the Western *Geist*. This, in its spiritual memory, harks back to Moses' monumental encounter with God on Mount Sinai, who in the half-concealment of his primordially radiant presence, explained with absolute authority that a face-to-face encounter with the divine only meant certain death: "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live."¹⁷⁴ In the determination of its being by finitude and mortality, which together form the temporality specific to being-in-the-world as we know it, *Dasein* can only *see* God as the face of death. The direct experience of the divine has to take place in another setting, which perhaps explains the theurgic perennialism of esoteric mysteries, where the invoked god or goddess is "earthed" in the human body. That, in essence, is what makes *Dasein* worthy of any ultimate ontological inquiry that is decisive for an esoteric reading of existence *as the meaning of being as such*: as a being *for* the divine. Death being never transparent to reason, nothingness in its uncanny belongingness to being is the unthought in the history of metaphysics, but it is what *Dasein* can take up, most resolutely with uncompromised attunement to *Angst*, as the primary existential riddle for its finite time on earth.¹⁷⁵

through spiritual humiliation and physical decomposition, to encounter her sister Ereshkigal, the goddess of death and destruction.

¹⁷⁴ "Exodus" 33:20 (King James Bible).

¹⁷⁵ In the West it is only in mysticism that nothingness as the absolute is contemplated, e.g. in the case of Meister Eckhardt. Heidegger maintained an abiding interest in this German mystic, whose teachings are still not accepted as fully Christian by the Catholic Church, even if study of his thought and the inclusion of his method in contemplative practice are tolerated. On Heidegger and Meister Eckhardt, see Otto Pöggeler, *The Paths of Heidegger's Life and Thought*, pages 68-69.

§ 11. *The Fourfold in Hermeneutic Circle:*
Pagan Heterology in Heidegger's Inceptual Thinking

Death is always too soon for both the thought and the unthought in philosophy's enabling of *Dasein*, as its decomposing work is *Destruktion* pure and simple.¹⁷⁶ In *Dasein's* comportment to being, death is unmediated nothingness and as such it has the full-blown expression of primordiality in its own right. Yet in its conditioning of *Dasein's* mode of being as being-toward-an-end-without-a-when, death offers *Dasein* an opportunity, in lived time, for a holistic comportment to being that is possible to *Dasein* only, who has a fundamental interest in the meaning of being as a whole, and not just in this or that ontic fact about the world. *Dasein* is factually holistic. In this kind of facticity, *Dasein* analytic becomes possible in an ontological inquiry, and without any illusion of perpetual extendedness of time as death imposes the finite boundaries on *Dasein's* existence. That being the case, and being guided by the hermeneutic insights of Heidegger in *Being and Time*, there is an urgency, as *Dasein* exists in historical time, to embrace and to safeguard the primal power of ontological difference as the non-objectification of *Dasein* and its being-in-the-world, i.e. as the manifestation of *Dasein's* authentic, hence radical, freedom, for humanity as a mortal kind (*Geschlecht*) on earth. In this section this theme is critically developed in order to deepen the primordial possibilities of *Dasein* in both being and nothingness in as abyssal a manner as possible, in so far as the abyss, in Heidegger's pagan treatment of it, is actually the other side of "transcendence" when *Dasein* is consistently grasped within the hermeneutic circle of interpretation as existential (*existenzial*) resistance against the metaphysical appropriation of its mode of being as a purely subjective ecstasis. As indicated by Heidegger in *Contributions to Philosophy*, the abyss as the non-ground of being in beings is what brings about the hermeneutics of ontological difference in the first place.¹⁷⁷ Instead of a pure nothing of ultimate darkness, the phenomenon of the abyss is too primordial to be represented

¹⁷⁶ Necromancy, despite its great power, has to work with the extremely finite temporality of a decomposing corpse. For leading academic studies on this subject, see Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century*, already mentioned in footnote 14, and Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Necromancy was certainly taken very seriously in Renaissance magic, but its transmission appears to have been lost, judging by its prominent absence in modern occultism and in neo-pagan magic. For a Heideggerian analysis of corpses as "liminal bodies", see Dennis Schmidt, "What We Owe the Dead", in Hyland, Drew A. Hyland and John Panteleimon Manoussakis (ed.), *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), pages 112-113.

¹⁷⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 5, page 11. Grounding-attunement situates *Dasein* in the restoration of the truth of being in the manifold world of beings and not evasion from it; see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 5, page 12. The hermeneutics of ontological difference therefore does not lead to nihilism. As long as it abides in grounding-attunement, *Dasein* has an essentially affirmative relationship to beings.

with the devices of metaphysics; hence it eludes subject-object dualism altogether in its phenomenological eminence as the grounding attunement (*Grundstimmung*) that restores the truth of being as the question of being in *Dasein* and other beings.¹⁷⁸ In Western esotericism, however, the abyss is a site of demonic challenge to an adept to attain *gnosis* through the dissolution of ego, desire and thought but without giving in to rage and insanity, these being the immediate challenges that arise in a spiritual discipline of primordial dissolution. Given that Heidegger expounds in *Parmenides* the natural association between *daimonion* and the *topos* of *aletheia*, the abyss, necessarily uncanny in everyday experience and conception, is understood as a space favoured by Goetic intelligence in esoteric practice. In ontological terms, the abyss signifies the making possible of *daimons* in being, that they may partake in being and reveal essential truths about being to *Dasein*. In so far as the Christian imagination identifies the abyss as “hellmouth”, which severely limits *Dasein*’s potentiality-for-being in its descent there because of such negative characterisation, this motif lies outside the appropriation of revealed religion and works better with pagan experiences instead. It is no surprise, therefore, that the abyss features very importantly in Heidegger’s thought as his pagan mysticism becomes quite obvious in writings such as *Contributions to Philosophy*, which commenced nine years after the appearance of *Being and Time*. And just over a year before *Contributions to Philosophy*, the abyss already occupies a central place in Heidegger’s hermeneutic method, namely in his lectures on Hölderlin’s “Germania” and “The Rhine” during the winter semester of 1934-1935. Heidegger speaks of the flight of the gods and the abyss of invocation that this leaves behind. The gods have become the absent *Gewesene*, i.e. those who have been but are no longer here.¹⁷⁹

Hölderlin’s spirituality was totally other to Christianity. The affinity between the poet and the philosopher is evident in the latter’s phenomenology of religion, in which Heidegger explicitly rejects any ontological meaning in the salvific model of spiritual fulfilment that gives articulation to Christian life. Given that Heidegger affirms the primordial power of the historical occurrence of Christ,¹⁸⁰ this can only be understood in the ontological impossibility of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., § 5, page 11.

¹⁷⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein”*, *Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 39 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1999), § 9, page 107.

¹⁸⁰ See Frank Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), page xii, concerning a theology with a post-metaphysical awareness helped by Heidegger’s primordial understanding of the sacred, which allows “Christianity as the renewal of the Christ-event to unfold on the historical stage of the world-play of *aletheia*.” However, it is precisely the open-ended epiphany, or experience of the sacred, in Heidegger’s anti-onto-theological paganism that gives Christianity the time and space for its own renewal. This implies the deeper primordiality of the pagan experience that resonates with Heidegger’s insight into the “godding” (*Götterung*) of the gods in Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 126, page 172.

any organised religion that is based on the model of salvation to “fill” the nothingness in *Dasein* that determines it being-toward-death in the context of its temporal finitude. As late as 1953, Heidegger asserted the difference in paths between phenomenology and a revealed faith like Christianity, and advised theologians to be cautious about integrating his thought and his method into theology.¹⁸¹ That *Dasein* is attuned to being as a whole through the manifestation of the sacred fourfold is a statement on the essential paganism of Heidegger since the mid-1930s.¹⁸² The fourfold indeed comes to replace being-in-the-world, which is central to the structure of *Being and Time*, so that *Dasein*'s fundamental attunement (*Grundstimmung*) to being can actually surpass fundamental ontology in a sacralised holism, or phenomenology of a holistic spirituality that is based on the mindfulness (*Besinnung*) of being. Care (*Sorge*), which merits a very important phenomenological description in *Dasein* analytic, can have its meaning expanded to include also the care for the fourfold, which resonates the pagan spirituality that is currently undergoing revival in Western society. In paganism, *Dasein*'s care goes beyond individualism and takes on a more envioning, more receptive quality. Heidegger's fundamental ontology in *Being and Time* evolves into the first pagan treatise in contemporary philosophy that is *Contributions to Philosophy* and which is given the sacred name of *Ereignis*, as its subtitle, *Vom Ereignis*, indicates. Primordial contemplation on being, described by Heidegger as the mindful mode of being of *Besinnung* that receives its first naming in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is only possible when *Dasein* exists as a being that is attuned to the fourfold as the grounding of its own being. *Dasein*'s engagement in this sacred way of existing is not based on any revelation from God through the agency of the prophets. In other words, *Dasein*, in so far as it is understanding of being in *Besinnung*, cannot be represented authentically by the “people of the books”, who believe that outside the spiritual beginning of Abraham, a temporality for *Dasein* can only be demonic. Goetia can point to *other* beginnings for *Dasein*, or heterogeneity in inception, which is beyond the metaphysics of representation in religion, neither in dogma nor in image. In this sense Goetia is truly primordial and belongs to the ground work on the question of being. *Daimonic*, if not demonic, inspiration, is grounding attunement itself. *Ereignis* is the retrieval of *daimonion* in this question.

¹⁸¹ “Conversation with Martin Heidegger, Recorded by Hermann Noack”, in Martin Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking*, translated by James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1976), page 65 and page 68. This is the record of a conversation that Heidegger had with theologians from the Protestant Academy at Hofgeismar, of which Noack was one, in December 1953. Of great interest is Heidegger's discussion on Heraclitus, where he shows that the Greek view on being and thinking belonging together is quite alien to Christianity, which insists on the necessity of God's intervention to bring about this unity; see *ibid.*, page 63.

¹⁸² The esoteric notion of the fourfold as the sacred finds its echo in the beginnings of human civilisation: Sumerian religion honoured earth, sky, air and water as the four primordial manifestations of the divine to *Dasein*: An, Ki, Enlil and Enki.

In their conversion of different traditions of European paganism to the doctrinal hegemony of the Church, Christian missionaries engendered a crisis in *Dasein* never before seen in the West, and from which it may not recover for a very long time. This is because in the Christian establishment of the universal rule of God in everyday life as moral and epistemic force, the primordial truth of *logos* as the gathering of being that includes *Dasein* becomes deformed as the “Word” of dogma that either subjugates or excludes *Dasein* – the latter being of course the fate of eternal damnation.¹⁸³ In the fundamental sense, Christianity is a religion without *Dasein* in the first place. The similar organisation of the “destinies” of *Dasein* in the current proliferation of Buddhism in the West also threatens to recast the metaphysical oblivion of being in its cross-cultural formation of life-styles.¹⁸⁴ The ontological meaning of these current developments is yet to come under the scrutiny of phenomenology. Suffice it to say that in Heidegger, destiny remains open because of *Dasein*’s essential relationship with truth as the interplay between concealment and unconcealment in being. Being is not the *telos* of revelation in Christianity and of rebirth in Buddhism; it is *aletheia*. According to Heidegger, *aletheia* is at its fullest when the god of the *Geschlecht* that *Dasein* belongs to – such as the Germanic people – is known and lives within the *Mitdasein* of a community (*Gemeinschaft*), which obviously is lost in the modern formation of society (*Gesellschaft*). *Mitdasein* is the fundamental characteristic of pagan traditions that all died out in Europe as a result of Christian conquests and conversions.¹⁸⁵ Instead proximal alienation has become a common feature in the urban crowding that now determines *Dasein* through the pervasive homogeneity of world time (*Weltzeit*).

By invoking the ancient *daimons* in his meditation on being through Parmenides, Heidegger makes religiosity an impossible existential expression for *Dasein*. It is no accident that in

¹⁸³ The demonisation of those buried outside churchyards, namely suicides and unmarried women who died in childbirth, provides much food for existential thought. Folklores on vampires, for example, are probably of more interest to *Dasein* analytic that they may first seem, in that vampiric life is not temporalised by being-toward-death like human life but purely by finitude.

¹⁸⁴ Buddhists believe in the six destinies of being after death: rebirth as a god, albeit mortal; rebirth as a warring titan; rebirth as a human; rebirth as an animal; rebirth as a hungry ghost; rebirth in hell. In Tibetan Buddhist paintings this belief is depicted as the wheel of existence, *srid pa'i 'khor lo*, which is also understood as the turning of the wheel of samsara. Buddhist enlightenment is freedom from this conditioning of existence by destinies. To free oneself from the destining of being, however, is not to think in being altogether, which is problematic from the perspective of Heideggerian attunement. Indeed in Sanskrit the wheel of samsara is known as the wheel of *Dasein* as such: *bbavacakra*, “*bhava*” meaning “attunement”.

¹⁸⁵ See Carole Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples* (London & New York: Cassell, 1998), for a detailed study of the Christian destruction of Germanic and Nordic paganism. Being without the oppressive statecraft of Roman paganism, which Christianity inherited through Constantine, these and other European pagan traditions preserved the primordially of being for the people that followed them as part of their cultural life, hence their relevance to the Heideggerian project.

contemporary theological revisionism, the Luciferan principle is assessed to be an exaltation of the finitude of thought.¹⁸⁶ This other reading of the decomposition of the *Geschlecht* of an archangel like Lucifer provides a timely impetus for the introduction of Goetia into the methodology of hermeneutics proper. In Christianity, demons are essentially angels of a fallen kind: they share the same essence as angels in being able to show mortals the mysteries of ultimate reality, for good or for evil. In the *Book of Enoch*, the fallen angels were those who, in their caretaking role as “watchers”, taught humans “forbidden” knowledge, which included sorcery and witchcraft – the original Greek meaning of Goetia – but also cosmetics and metallurgy. Another major factor that contributed to these angels’ spiritual “decay” was their concupiscence with mortal women, whose physical beauty proved irresistible for them. The result was a “pollution” of their sacred *Geschlecht* through the birth of warlike “giants”, the *nephilim*, whose continued reproduction and influence on earth had to be stopped by the Flood. After death the souls of the *nephilim* became demons, roaming the earth to this day to torment humanity. The demonisation of *Geschlecht* in the apocryphal imagination, therefore, refers to the original “error” of imparting knowledge to *Dasein* that is too dangerous for it. But it is in this other origin, firmly rejected by the Judaeo-Christian tradition, that a genuine projecting open of a heterogeneous hermeneutics in resonance with *Dasein*’s ecstatic temporality is possible. *Dasein*, by becoming receptive to a new pagan spirituality through the radical heterogeneity of this hermeneutics, allows the grounding of Goetia as *daimonic aletheia* of a different kind. Among the ruins of modern nihilism as the culmination of the monotheist onto-theology, the monstrosity of demonic spirits as recounted by Enoch may well be the primary manifestation of *daimonion* that *Dasein* has to bring back into our own time, in order that *Dasein*’s crossing over the abyss will bring about the transcendence of renewal of the *question of being* in *Dasein*’s fundamental comportment to being. *Daimonion* and the meaning of being belong together in an *Ereignis* that brings *Dasein* to an altogether different history of being, one that can transform the *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* altogether. Most significantly, Heidegger, too, reflects on the possibilities of transformation of essence (*Wesenswandel*) in *Dasein* as he reflects, unbeknownst to himself, on this ancient question of spiritual alchemy in *Contributions to Philosophy*.¹⁸⁷ This is the true meaning of a pagan heterology: the phenomenological study of difference or otherness that rises from

¹⁸⁶ Lucifer is the archdemon in Christianity. Originally the most outstanding among the archangels, he was struck down from heaven into the abyss of hell because of his arrogant refusal to accept the supremacy of God and of the subsequent rebellion he led against him with other “fallen angels”. A Heideggerian reading of Lucifer will make him the advent of the “goddling” as the *Destruktion* of onto-theology. Such “goddling” also has the potential of taking on the meaning of the Antichrist in the way Nietzsche understood it in his struggle against nihilism in Christianity.

¹⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, page 3 (first paragraph before § 1).

the abyss of primordial holism. *Ereignis*, of course, is the making possible of the equiprimordiality of two different phenomena and its importance in preventing any dualistic reading of ontological difference must not be overlooked in any attempt at a hermeneutic understanding of being. That *Dasein* and *daimons*, or *demons* according to the bias of Western onto-theology, can have the *being* of their beings interpreted as *Ereignis* offers a secure ground for the development of a pagan phenomenology that maintains its kinship with Heidegger's *seinsgeschichtlich* thinking. Heidegger's retrieval of the ancient *daimonion* in his mindfulness about the question of being points to an important unconcealing moment in *Ereignis* that shows the onto-theological determination of *Dasein* at its weakest. Another *generation*, in the sense of engendering but without the fearful narrative pathos in the Enochian legend about the monstrous spawning of *nephilim*, is entirely possible and is to be wrested from the oblivion of being in the existential freedom worthy of *Dasein*. In resolute attunement to being, the question of *Dasein* is transformed into the question of *Geschlecht*. *Dasein* in the history of being is always more than the fate of an individual being-toward-death.

Heidegger's pagan notion of the fourfold redefines *Dasein*'s orientation in its being-in-the-world. The fourfold offers an alternative path to the unfolding of the Western *Geist* in the present era and as such it is full of positive possibilities for the continuity of the philosophical tradition. In its profound otherness to onto-theology, Heidegger's phenomenology, as primordial heterology, is at its most powerful when it is worked through in the "clearing" offered by Goetia, which in Western esotericism is manifest primarily as the abyss. In ancient Greece, a primordial thinker like Timaeus, who was well-known for his notion of *chora* as the fundamental determination of being, contemplated the perplexing otherness in the genealogy of *daimons* when compared to the Olympian gods.¹⁸⁸ In the inceptual thinking of the West, therefore, *daimons* were already a "wholly other", to use Otto's term,¹⁸⁹ and inspired awe, if not fear. *Daimonion* is heterogeneous "godding", i.e. "godding" of otherness and difference. The being-historical power of Goetia was nevertheless covered over with Plato's dogmatic determination of truth. In modern philosophy, it was not until Nietzsche's anti-Christian nihilism did a moment of monumental heterogeneity arise again on the being-historical level in Western thought. This time the "wholly other" was the Anti-Christ.¹⁹⁰ Yet its meaning was still

¹⁸⁸ Timaeus offers a different reading of Hesiod's *Theogony*. See John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's "Timaeus"* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), page 85.

¹⁸⁹ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, pages 25-28.

¹⁹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist, Sämtliche Werke*, Volume 6 (Berlin: Deutscher Taschenbuch; Walter de Gruyter, 1980). Instead of offering a phenomenology of the Anti-Christ, Nietzsche styled himself as one and proclaimed the death of Christianity as a sustainable European value; hence his battle cry for "revaluation of all values".

confined within the forgetting of being in the onto-theology of God's "goddling", even if a philosopher *thought* against it. While Heidegger assesses Nietzsche to have not overcome metaphysics enough, the facticity of *Dasein's* participation in nihilism¹⁹¹ as an eminent example of will to power (*Wille zur Macht*) in the history of being is an indication of the hermeneutic value of the non-dialectic nothingness of nihilism. Here it is important to point out that nihilism breaks up the fourfold in that in its "will to will" as a blind force, the relation between the mortals and the gods is covered up and denied: *Dasein* is worshipped instead, but only in the prevalence of its metaphysical appropriation. The contemporary objectification of *Dasein's* *eidolon*, which holds sway in its manifestation as knowledge in its metaphysical deformity as the *Gestell* of the earth as a universal "standing reserve" for exploitation, is the prominent fulfilment of nihilism; with the increasing anthropocentric appropriation of space as such, the "enframing" has even reached extraterrestrial proportions.¹⁹² Heaven and earth are both turned into an onefold of *topoi* for conquest by the modern subjectivism of the blind will to will, which in the disappearance of the question of being finds power as its most immediate medium of expression. In this moment in the history of being, spatiality takes precedence over temporality in the determination of the real. As such, heaven, too, is an abyss to the inquiring *Dasein*, in that as in the world below, being is concealed above.

The abyss, therefore, stands in an essentially problematic relationship to being, yet at the same time it *belongs* to the question of being, as nothingness is. This essential unity of the question of being is the most important insight in Heidegger's meditation on the elusive question of *Ereignis*. On the immediate level it is the abyss of heterogeneity – the withdrawal of being from the same – that *Dasein* faces as it enters into a Goetic comportment toward being, which must be allowed a full expression, if not manifestation, if *Dasein* is to avoid the premature demise of a psychic death before the rottenness of a physical one. This is because Goetia stands for another reading of the history of being, with the power of what Heidegger the "other beginning" in Western thought.¹⁹³ Non-metaphysical possibilities were present when

¹⁹¹ Martin Heidegger, "On the Question of Being", translated by William McNeill, in *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeill, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), page 311. As Heidegger shows in *Being and Time*, the temporality of *Dasein* is not separate from the history of being. Therefore he can write in the same essay that the "human essence itself belongs to the essence of nihilism and thereby to the phase of its consummation" (ibid.).

¹⁹² These highly descriptive terms began their circulation in Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary in the 1950s. Heidegger's critique of the current technological civilisation has its source in his intellectual confrontation with Ernst Jünger, whose polemics on planetary domination through the new *Geschlecht of Arbeiter* – workers who find meaning in their being through increased and aggressive mechanisation. See § 13 on the intertwining of Heidegger's thought with Jünger's in his discussion on the phenomenon of "the gigantic" in modern nihilism.

¹⁹³ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §§ 22-24, pages 40-42.

daimonion held sway among the Greeks. A resolve is called for in *Dasein* that involves what Heidegger calls the “higher power” of human finitude in *Being and Time*.¹⁹⁴ Here the movement of phenomenological thought hinges on a correct differentiation between *Ereignis* and *Gestell*.¹⁹⁵ The history of Western esotericism has shown that the abyss has sent many “seekers” back insane into the everyday world; in the West’s experimentation with Eastern religion, similarly disturbing and tragic examples can also be found. The abyss is spiritually as dangerous as its physical counterpart in nature. In monotheism, the dwellers in the abyss are all classified as demonic; in the more originary sense, the *Book of Enoch* describes how the two hundred fallen angels who violated the cosmic law of *Geschlecht*, led by Samyaza, Urakabameel, Akibeel, Tamiel, Ramuel, Danel, Azkeel, Saraknyal, Asael, Armers, Batraal, Anane, Zavebe, Samsaveel, Ertael, Turel, Yomyael and Azazel, were interred in the abyss until the apocalyptic end of time on earth, which is the moment of judgment for all. The first religion in human civilisation, that of Sumer, also viewed the abyss with fear: it was the residing place of Tiamat, the almighty dragon-like demoness of primordial chaos, whose appearances in the world of living each time resulted in terror and calamities.¹⁹⁶ But Tiamat acted as the primordial ground for world creation, and her violence is possibly vital to the forces required in this process: for the Sumerians, and the Babylonians who absorbed them, order could only arise from the initial conditions of chaos. There is some resonance between this ancient understanding and the traditional wisdom in Jewish folklore, which recognises the abyss as the necessary ground for the formation of the great oceans on earth by God.¹⁹⁷ The abyss, though *not* ground itself, nevertheless *grounds* the formation of the world. This is the primal mystery of the world to

¹⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 74, pages 351-352. This power stems from *Dasein*’s authentic understanding of *Angst*.

¹⁹⁵ *Gestell* is a later disclosure on being by Heidegger concerning the manipulative framework of *techne* that *Dasein* is increasingly subject to. This notion is made famous through Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*. However, occult practitioners in chaos magic will see *Gestell* as a necessary gateway in the present age to pass through in order to experience and to understand *Ereignis*, hence it is imbued with esoteric meanings in its own right. It remains highly debatable whether Heidegger’s notion of *Ereignis* is Romanticist in some way; it appears more likely that it was on the strength of his meditation on the meaning of being as *Ereignis* that Heidegger was able to decipher and to name the immediate and greater challenge that faces *Dasein* today in the form of *Gestell*, which in its radical futurity may one day allow science and technology to displace *physis* from *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world, thus destroying the sacred unity of the fourfold once and for all.

¹⁹⁶ The primal *mythos* of “goddling” is recounted in the Sumerian-Babylonian epic poem Enuma Elish, which describes the creation of the world through the activities of Apsu and Tiamat, and the slaying of Tiamat by the god Marduk in order to establish the gods’ rule over earth through the Babylonian dynasties. See Barbara C. Sproul, *Primal Myths: Creating the World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), pages 91-113.

¹⁹⁷ Gorion, Micha Josef bin (ed.), *Die Sagen der Juden* (Frankfurt 1913), page 9. Cited in Alfred Doppler, *Der Abgrund* (Graz: Hermann Böhlau, 1968), page 9.

which humanity also belongs. This fundamental belonging-together of the abyss and *physis*, or nature, is also observed by Hölderlin. In an unfinished poem he writes:

Vom Abgrund nemlich haben
 Wir angefangen und gegangen
 Dem Leuen glich, in Zweifel und Ärgeriß,
 Denn sinnlicher sind Menschen
 In dem Brand
 Der Wüste
 Lichttrunken und der Thiergesit ruhet
 Mit ihnen. ...

For from the abyss we
 Began and have walked like
 The lion, in doubt and annoyance,
 For more sensual are men
 In the blaze of deserts,
 Drunk with light, and the spirit of animals
 Joins in their rest.¹⁹⁸

This paves way for an expanded understanding of *Ereignis* in light of the ontological significance of nature, which is crucial to the formulation of a pagan, anti-dualist phenomenology. *Dasein* is *physis* in so far as the abyss is their primordial belonging together. As meaning of being, nature is therefore never a mere *Vorhandensein*, much less a *Zubandensein* for humanity's thoughtless exploitation. This is the primordial ground of any belief in the "consciousness" of nature, which actually is strictly *pagan*. The origin of paganism is the abyss. Pagan *Dasein*, as long as it abides in its primordially, is necessarily abyssal. Heidegger's appropriation of Hölderlin's insight will be discussed in Part Two, Division Two, of the thesis, as it provides an important angle on appreciating the primordial relationship that *Dasein* has

¹⁹⁸ Friedrich Hölderlin, "For from the Abyss...", in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 552-553. In contrast to humans, the gods arise from a union of heaven and earth, but even so nature remains primordial to "godding". See Martin Heidegger, "Wie wenn am Feiertage ...", in Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996), page 59. Most importantly, Heidegger observes that nature (*physis*) is the oldest time, without however it resembling in any way to the Christian notion of eternity. Nature is pagan time.

with the abyss in being, which is also yours and mine, inseparable from the *physis* of our existence on earth.

§ 12. The “Higher Power” of *Dasein*’s Finitude

Although strictly speaking an unfinished work, and one for which Heidegger abandoned any plan of completion, *Being and Time* nevertheless lays down the ground work for interpreting being in terms of temporality, beginning with *Dasein* as the central focus of what *being* means to *human* understanding. Heidegger is well-known for his methodological avoidance of philosophical anthropology, for the meaning of being as a whole cannot be grasped in any ontic discipline.¹⁹⁹ Yet fundamental ontology is radically human in so far as Heidegger does not accept “revelation” from a higher being to *Dasein* as the beginning of any existential inquiry. Instead, an *understanding of nothingness* as the fundamental condition of its being-toward-death in the world is the starting point for *Dasein*’s comportment toward being, even before its philosophical understanding of the ontological difference between being and beings. It can be said that prior to any notion of ontological difference comes the abyssal difference between existence and nothingness, which on the phenomenal level is manifest as the difference between life and death, or the living and the dead, in futurity as the finitude of *Dasein*’s relation with itself, others and the world.²⁰⁰ *Dasein* itself is the attunement to the abyssal in the being of beings in its understanding of being.

The pagan holism of *Contributions to Philosophy* cannot make full sense unless *Dasein*’s fundamental relation to nothingness, which it experiences as *Angst*, is understood as the basis of the “leaping forth” into the *Ereignis* as the primordial movement in the history of being. It is a different movement from the metaphysical understanding of this history as the progressive unfolding of mind, spirit, or *Geist*, which equates being with *techne*, the mastery over beings. For example, in the latest developments of knowledge, nanoscience is possibly the promise for the greatest mastery that humanity can ever achieve over matter, in that its fundamental structures can be altered according to human will: the vulgar meaning of magic that excludes spiritual

¹⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 10, pages 42-43. The basic point made by Heidegger in this section is that ontic studies do not aim at *Dasein* at all in their description of human being.

²⁰⁰ This is similar to the starting point of the Buddha who upon his spiritual awakening realised impermanence as the basic feature of phenomenal existence, and suffering as human beings’ universal comportment to impermanence. The Buddha’s *gnosis* was not given to him by supernatural means; herein lies, like Heideggerian phenomenology, the major difference that Buddhism has with Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

transformation. At the same time the abyss that opens up before *Dasein's* potentiality-for-being is far greater than Heidegger's reflections on atomic science in his lifetime. The potential abuse of nanoscience, or nanotech in its applied aspects, is already the subject of fervent debates among scientists and non-scientists. But the future cannot be reached until the effects and the results first come into being; this is the *abyss* inherent in the scientific enterprise that cannot offer signs of transcendence even if crossed over, but perhaps only bondage to the very same effects and results instead. In science, the temporality of futurity is determined by the *dynamis* of *physis* in so far as it is controlled, ordered and planned in *techne* as the primary comportment to being in scientific *Dasein*.²⁰¹ Science, essentially speaking, sets up *Dasein* in *Gestell*.²⁰² Given that *Gestell* now frames the universal advent of scientific knowing, *Dasein* lives in a time that calls for a heroic *gnosis*. This can only be grounded in a primordial being that still eludes ordinary awareness – hence what Heidegger describes as the “abandonment of being” in *Contributions to Philosophy* – as long as cultural pessimism, which characterises postwar attunement, holds sway in *Dasein's* comportment to being.²⁰³ Having just pulled through the cataclysms of nihilism in modernity in the form of two world wars, and hence still taken over (*benommen*) by it, *Dasein* cannot yet see clearly how its destiny is going to be fulfilled in the hyper-*techne* of its contemporary existence and temporality.²⁰⁴ With the progress already made in the interface

²⁰¹ Such paradigm reveals the metaphysics of ecological forgetting that holds sway in science and technology. Only the abyss of the real threat to human existence, in the evident climate change caused by modernity, is forcing science now to “think”. The danger of extinction – 844 species have already gone before humans and because of them, with another 16,118 being threatened (IUCN 2006 estimate) – opens up the fundamental question of being-toward-an-end that forces the very issue of *Dasein* to become relevant in science, which has predominantly concerned itself with the potentiality of nature for endless human use and control.

²⁰² Cf. Trish Glazebrook, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Science* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pages 104-107. Glazebrook makes a fascinating comparison between Ian Hacking, author of *Representing and Intervening* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and Heidegger on the understanding of reality. Glazebrook argues that both philosophers subscribe to the view that the more theoretical the description of reality is, the less “real” it becomes. Science is not disinterested, but interventionist, even when it tries its best to represent reality. What is more important to the human grasp of reality is the truth of *Dasein's* being-in-the-world, i.e. the hermeneutics of *Dasein's* understanding of being, which can never be replaced by theories from ontic disciplines such as anthropology and psychology. What Hacking implies is the difficulty of science to extricate itself from *Gestell* – which is aggressively interventionist – when any notion of reality is involved. Yet to replace reality with fantasy is to invite madness, not reason. This is the dilemma of philosophy.

²⁰³ The uniquely German moments in the modern history of being are in the following order: romanticism, terror and pessimism.

²⁰⁴ Yet Heidegger analyses in *Being and Time* that the uncanniness of being taken over (*benommen*) by *Angst* situates *Dasein* in the moment for an authentic potentiality-of-being. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 68, page 316. Here I follow the suggestion of Richard Detsch, in his book review of David Farrell Krell's *Daimon Life*, to translate “*benommen*” as “taken over” instead of “benumbed”, as both Krell and Stambaugh have done. See Richard Detsch, Review of *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* by David Farrell Krell, *German Studies Review*, Volume 18, Number 2 (1995), page 357. In being-historical terms,

between neuroscience and virtual reality, the phenomenon of *Dasein* as embodiment is no longer the boundary of being that philosophers traditionally viewed as the limits of existence in this world. Before this bewildering array of developmental possibilities, the abyss attunes *Dasein* from all directions, such that being becomes more akin to *chaos* than the being of beings that metaphysics held it to be for the last 2341 years of Western thought.²⁰⁵ This has important implications for Western esotericism, which has its own traditions of familiarity with chaos, especially in Goetic workings.

On the horizon of esotericism in the West, the fractal rather than linear developments of science have caused the new occult paradigm of chaos magic to arise.²⁰⁶ Many identify with Goetia and are well-versed in the controversial occult lore of *Necronomicon*.²⁰⁷ As its practitioners

Benommenheit is constitutive of *Dasein's* becoming aware of the distress of the condition of the abandonment of being in modern nihilism.

²⁰⁵ My calculation is based on the year Aristotle opened the Lyceum in Athens in 335 BC.

²⁰⁶ The identification of subcultural practice in occultism as chaos magic began with the subcultural appearance of *Liber Null* by Peter Carroll in 1978, who uses that term in his first book to announce the advent of an approach and attitude that "anything goes". However, the leading chaos magicians such as Carroll and Phil Hine see the British artist and magus Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956) as their predecessor, one reason being his highly individualistic and experimental methods. Spare's influence on Carroll is evident and acknowledged in *Liber Null*, see page 7. See also Kenneth Grant, *The Magical Revival* (New York: S. Weiser, 1972), pages 180-198; and Kenneth Grant and Steffi Grant, *Hidden Lore* (London: Skoob Boks, 1989 – pages unnumbered), for well-informed appraisals of Spare's occult career and significance; Grant was in fact instrumental in making Spare's writings and art work available to Western esotericism. Spare published five books in his lifetime, the most important one being *The Book of Pleasure* (London: Co-operative Printing Society, 1913). For a recent scholarly article on Spare, see Christopher J. Miles, "Journey into the Neither-Neither: Austin Osman Spare and the Construction of a Shamanic Identity", *The Pomegranate*, Volume 8, Number 1, pages 54-83. In my view the works of the recently deceased British occultist Andrew Chumbley incorporate the creativity and daring of both Spare and the Chaoists. See, for example, Andrew D. Chumbley, *The Argoëtia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* (Chelmsford: Xoanon, 1992).

²⁰⁷ First mentioned in the Cthulu myth stories written by the acclaimed horror writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), this grimoire of black magic, allegedly dating from 8th century Damascus, has never had its authenticity established and was most likely an invention by Lovecraft. The first edition of *Necronomicon*, which appeared on 22 December 1977, was compiled by an American who was known only as "Simon". He claimed to be a former Slavonic Orthodox priest who obtained a Greek version of the grimoire from a fellow priest in 1972. See Simon, *Dead Names: The Dark History of the "Necronomicon"* (New York: Avon Books, 2006). However, *Necronomicon* has a significant section on Pazuzu that shows more of the contemporary Western interest in this Babylonian demon that is at variance with its status in the Babylonian religion: *Necronomicon* appeared four years after the debut of movie *The Exorcist*, in which Pazuzu is the possessing demon that threatens the Western spiritual order. However, in nowhere was Pazuzu recorded as a possessing spirit in Babylonian literature; in fact figurines of Pazuzu were popular with people as he was believed to be able to ward off the attacks of spirits that caused diseases. See M. J. Geller, "Fragments of Magic, Medicine, and Mythology from Nimrud," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Volume 63, Number 3, page 336. In 2004 a different edition of *Necronomicon*, prepared by the American occult writer Donald Tyson, was published. Whereas the Simon edition merely emulates Babylonian sorcery, the Tyson edition shows a magical tradition that can stand on its own and is philosophically more sophisticated. The entire dissimilarity of the two editions lends support to the view that the original text probably never existed. Yet scholars in esoteric phenomenology can treat *Necronomicon* as an *Urtext* of some significance, especially in terms of a Goetic imagination that was

have not yet engaged themselves in academic writing, the philosophical content of chaos magic is yet to be analysed and assessed in scholarship. Suffice it to say that humanity has entered an age where developments in scientific thinking move much faster than those in the arts, which are traditionally viewed as being more creative and privileged by moments of the avant-garde. The hermeneutic phenomenon of such “tear” or dissonance in temporality in the understanding of being in the *Dasein*-referential humanities needs to be grasped as an existential whole, so that any esoteric implications and indications can be identified early for phenomenological seeing and thinking. Importantly at this stage, there needs to be a preliminary recognition that any fundamental dissonance is working material for the practitioners of chaos in contemporary Goetia. And chaos being akin to the abyss in the timeless myths of humanity, its relevance to the awakening of *Dasein* in the question of being, which is Heidegger’s fundamental hermeneutic task, requires no greater emphasis.

In the pagan understanding of being, the forces of chaos can be an abyss withholding *aletheia* from even the understanding of the gods. The abyss and *aletheia* make contentious claims on the meaning of being. As a Norse seeress explains to the god of all gods, Odin, in “Völuspá” from the *Elder Edda*, Ginnungagap, or primeval chaos, is beyond the memory of even the gods, let alone mortals, but it was what made *being* possible. Interpreted phenomenologically, i.e. as an existential whole, the Norse understanding of being includes chaos as part of the meaning of being, with a sensitivity to a different kind of temporality that is outside the reach of remembering. There is something about time that is “not-mind”. In the ancient wisdom of the Norse people therefore lies the possibility of an ontological retrieval that can lead *Dasein* to a greater understanding of the modern existential distress (*Not*) brought to those awakened by the critical momentum of metaphysical dualism, while the oblivion of being continues to hold sway in the ordinary understanding of being as the being of beings at the disposal of modern subjectivity.²⁰⁸ Heidegger did not write extensively on the phenomenon of chaos; it is not thematised in either *Being and Time* or *Contributions to Philosophy*. However, Heidegger’s original understanding of nothingness as *not* the antithesis of being allows his phenomenology to appropriate the significance of the *primeval primordality of chaos* by integrating

not influenced by the dualistic demonology of Judaism, Christianity and Islam but engages a power more primordial than metaphysics and onto-theology.

²⁰⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 54, page 79: “To this abandonment belongs *forgottenness of being* and at the same time the *disintegration of truth*.”

“Both are basically the same. And yet, in order to necessitate the abandonment of being as distress, we must be mindful of each, so that the utmost distress, *the lack of distress in this distress*, breaks open and lets the remotest nearness to the flight of the gods echo.”

it into the hermeneutics of nothingness that guides the essential thinking on being. *Dasein's* understanding of being is decisive attunement to indeterminacy as the higher meaning of the uncanny brought upon hermeneutics by nothingness. Precisely for this reason, in Heidegger's Nietzsche studies, which preoccupied him during the same period that he composed *Contributions to Philosophy*, he was able to offer a critique of Nietzsche's position on being, becoming and chaos. Nietzsche's destruction of the concept of being as a major push of his anti-Platonist strategy is well-known. What philosophy requires, according to Nietzsche, is a dynamic voluntarism that is founded upon a life-affirming understanding of becoming, which can deal adequately with a primordial phenomenon such as chaos. In Nietzsche's aesthetics, chaos in the form of discord between art and truth is to be vigorously cultivated. Nietzsche's preference for the sensuous becoming of art over the supersensuous permanence of truth is his way of destabilising any residual grip that Plato's ideas or forms may have over the philosophical mind. However, with Nietzsche the understanding of being is flawed in that there is no awareness of ontological difference. With Heidegger, the chaos of nothingness is included in his mindful treatment of the question of being. In the holism of Heidegger's hermeneutic approach, being and nothingness are not opposed to each other, but rather *belong together* in the dimension of primordially, like the way fundamental phenomena such as nearness and remoteness, arrival and departure, presence and absence can come together in the projection of *Dasein's* understanding. This is the precise meaning of *Ereignis* in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Being and nothingness are differences that are essential to the identity of being rather than binary opposites in the irreconciliation of metaphysics. They and the other phenomena mentioned all attune *Dasein* to being as a *whole*, thus placing *Dasein* primordially and factually inside the *circle* of hermeneutics.

Instead of letting chaos *be*, Nietzsche allows the schematisation of metaphysics to recur through his audacious re-interpretation of being as *will to power*. Heidegger's analysis of will to power shows it to have the ontic status of the being of beings, no different to the common understanding of God in Christianity. It *grounds* being in a being. Through Nietzsche's apocalyptic belief in the *Übermensch*, the will to power, as Heidegger observes, becomes the expression of a radically perspectival subjectivity that in its continuous voluntaristic assertion as a new *Geschlecht*, a collision course with being is inevitable: hence either madness or dualism. This is not Heidegger's way of bringing about the end of metaphysics: *Dasein* is initially allowed to understand the interplay of impermanence and endurance in the natural and cultural worlds of beings as either present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) or ready-to-hand (*zubanden*) while the *abyss* is revealed, as *Dasein's* understanding of being grows, in the most primordial of differences,

namely the difference in meaning between being and beings. Ontological difference is the most fundamental of phenomenologically meaningful abysses and its relation to chaos is unexplored in *Being and Time*. The finitude of *Dasein*, however, stands open before both order (*logos*) and chaos in relation to the question of being, while it is always bound, with its possibilities as a being-toward-the-end (*Sein zum Ende*), to the dissolution of chaos in death. Indeed in the English language, chaos has the meaning of the abyss, the apparent nothingness that lets beings be.²⁰⁹ However, when appropriated esoterically – and this is always done on the basis of *phenomenology* in the present study –, the abyss has the quality of universal generation as in the Norse myth of Ginnungagap, but in its *Destruktion* of the metaphysical creations that structure Western philosophy, the Sumerian appreciation of Tiamat in her ambivalence between beneficence and maleficence should also be taken into account. The ancient experience of Tiamat in the dawn of human civilisation bears a close resemblance to another Norse myth, namely the circling of earth – Midgard (*Midgarðr*), or the middle realm – by a primordial serpent called Jormangund, who will rise from the ocean during the twilight of the gods and enter into a deadly battle with them. In its symbolic rendition Jormangund has its tail inside its mouth: its circular form points to the existence of the primordial time outside historical time, which is also known as *uroboros* (*ouroboros*).²¹⁰ When primordial time enters history, history comes to an end through the fulfilment of the Norse apocalypse of Ragnarok, when Midgard will sink into the abyss of the seas. The reign of primordial chaos, which the Sumerians attributed to the gigantic serpent goddess Tiamat, will return, until such time when the next cycle of historical time commences with the re-emergence of Midgard from the abyss. Indeed apocalyptic vision of any kind is the re-ordering of profane time – what Heidegger calls “world time” in *Being and Time* – into a temporality of the sacred.

The Sumerian and Norse notions of the gigantic serpentine power ever present in the abyss of the dark waters both speak of a primordiality that is too heterogeneous to human survival for *Dasein* to fully integrate them into its understanding of being and time. Their utmost uncanniness disrupts *Dasein*'s sense of temporal orientation and its sense of its place on earth. Yet their abyss – nothing in this world can be a ground for their heterogeneity – can attune *Dasein* to the profound spiritual ambiguity in the Greek experience of *daimonion*, of which the West has neither cultural nor spiritual memory. Mythology on primordial chaos and abyss can therefore guide *Dasein* to be properly attuned to the *daimonic* beginning of the

²⁰⁹ Oxford English Dictionary.

²¹⁰ Garry Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, page 159. For a classic account of the Australian equivalent in the form of the rainbow serpent, see A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, “The Rainbow-Serpent Myth of Australia”, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Volume 56 (1926), pages 19-25.

Western experience of *thinking*, which held great fascination for a philosopher of wholeness like Heidegger. The *fear* of *daimons* as *demons* that today still remains in religious piety and in popular culture is in fact a manifestation of a *decline* in the West's original understanding of *daimonion*, hence the primordially of being itself. But we have all read enough about the difference, not only in meaning but also in value, between fear (*Furcht*) and *Angst* in the famous § 40 of *Being and Time* to repeat the same decline. Therefore whenever Goetia inspires *Angst* in *Dasein* in its working with the abyss in being, it is a moment of insight that places *Dasein* between the advent and the flight of the gods.²¹¹ *Dasein's* temporality, as this *being-in-between*, displays the character of a *liminality* that is no stranger to esotericism. The more *Dasein* becomes like *daimon*, that intermediary between gods and mortals, the closer it comes to the essential meaning of its own existence, such that the necessary mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) of *Dasein* reflects at the same time the fateful being-together as the destiny of its mortal kind (*Geschlecht*). Being is historicised in *Dasein* not in indifferent objectivity, but in the determination of fates; and destiny (*Geschick*), as the gathering together (yet not the sum total) of fates in *Dasein's* resolute understanding of being, works with the "higher power" of *Dasein's* finite temporality in that *Dasein* understands what it takes to be on the path of authenticity in relation to its own being. Authenticity is *Dasein's* mineness in the thrownness of being-toward-death which at the same time is the projecting-open, with being-historical awareness, for the gods. For *Dasein* to come to its own purely by way of itself is not sufficient for a genuine understanding of the fourfold as the basis for a sacred existence, something which *Dasein* is capable of appreciating in at least a pre-philosophical manner as a being that is fundamentally attuned to the sacred. There is a spiritual facticity in *Dasein* that enables it to have a preliminary notion of, or even basic experience in, sacred time-space. In Heidegger's insistence on *Dasein's* essential relation to the history of being, the liminal temporality of pagan mysteries in the historical context of the gods' presence and absence takes *Dasein's* self-understanding of its being-in-the-world to a transcendent level. It is a question that is not covered in *Being and Time*, for in it *Dasein's* own death looms larger than the gods on the horizon of its understanding. But in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger gives an account of *Dasein* existing in a grounding attunement that grounds the existential structuring of *Dasein* in care: the interpretation of being is no longer simply the determination of *Dasein* by death, but by the absent "presence" (hence as the *Gewesene*) of the gods in post-Nietzschean modernity. What *kind* of *Dasein* enables *Dasein* to be attuned to the being of the gods, so that its apocalyptic task can become known? Firstly, the invocation of the Goetia of *daimonion* is called for, and as the history of being discloses and conceals its truth before us, we

²¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 11, page 23.

find that Heidegger was already phenomenologically attuned to this act in his lectures and seminars on the Pre-Socratics.

If we view existence in *Dasein* analytic as a rite of passage in *Dasein*'s often uncertain orientation in its finite temporality, which nevertheless includes the rapture of ecstatic temporalisation in *Dasein*'s attunement to the wholeness of being, then it becomes clear that the abyss in its liminality in respect of everyday life and its discourse is crucial to the structuring of *Dasein*'s orientation in time as such. In being oriented, *Dasein* is ahead of itself (*sich vorweg*) in its potentiality-for-being, so that at any given time it is not an object for disposal by an ontic power such as the subjectivity of the will to will in the last metaphysics of Nietzsche. *Dasein*'s temporality is comprised of pathways to its genuine actualisation.²¹² This essential freedom of *Dasein*, being the truth of being, is not to be dispersed among the distractions offered by the society of *das Man*, the "they" of inauthentic multitude. Ontology is fundamental to *Dasein* in that the futurity of its being-ahead-of-itself, which Heidegger equates with the structure of care in *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world, is also the for-the-sake-of-which in its existence²¹³ that can never be exchanged for any proposition, including religious ones. In this sense only, while *Dasein* is necessarily connected to the community of *Mitdasein*, the meaning of *Dasein* is its self-orientation in its directedness toward the ecstatic futurity of its presence and its movement in the *Ereignis* bringing together being and humanity – in whatever configuration that an "era" throws up, the dangers posed by *Gestell* included. *Dasein* therefore cannot become lost in time if it is to be itself. Yet in the pre-ontological understanding of existence as life, a man or a woman can fall in and out of *Dasein*.²¹⁴ This is not about an item of knowledge that is circulated in the self-certainty of the "they",²¹⁵ but about awareness in its purest meaning: that which brings *Dasein* closest to itself and is the ground of *Dasein*'s understanding of being. For the "they" this ground appears as non-ground, or the abyss, because *Dasein* does not seek the existential

²¹² In the present age of the oblivion of being, it is the uncanny otherness that arises in *Dasein*'s attempt at attaining existential holism that takes precedence over any idealisation of "self-actualisation". Being attuned as such, there is no "enlightenment" as such in *Dasein*'s comportment to being, but a Goetic *Ereignis* instead. This is necessary for the fulfilment of "godding" as *Dasein*'s historical task, with both the gods and *Dasein* being needful of *Ereignis*, which is fundamentally the attunement of mindfulness of being (*Besinnung*).

²¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 41, page 179.

²¹⁴ This is because *Dasein*, as the essence of human existence, concerns its inner possibility but not with its what-being (*Wassein*) and so-being (*Sosein*). See Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Ted Sadler (London & New York: Continuum, 2002), § 19, page 127.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, § 38, page 166, regarding "tranquilisation in inauthentic being". Heidegger worked with philosophy as a fundamental awakening. This is highly significant, for in esoteric thought awakening is the most important moment in existence prior to and as a support to transformational resolve; it is the moment that makes transformation in *Dasein* possible in the first place and signifies the spiritual dimension of *Dasein*'s potentiality-for-being.

reification of finding security in knowledge: there can be no “informatics” about *Dasein*. The potential affinity between *Dasein* analytic and the path of self-directed *gnosis* in the contemporary Goetia of chaos magic, which is an esotericism of the abyss, calls for a phenomenological investigation of a different kind: *daimonion* in *Ereignis*. It places *Dasein* at the crossroads of fulfilment and dispersion as it travels on the path of its throwing-projection in primordial temporality. *Dasein*'s turning in this uncanny moment of decision generates the conditions for a *Mitdasein* of another generation – perhaps of a decomposing kind in its nearness to the abyss – one who goes under in the “guiding attunement of the leap”.²¹⁶ It is a *Geschlecht* first and foremost of non-duality: the breakdown of the inner and the outer reality in the primordial knowing awareness (*Besinnung*) of the onefold of *Dasein*, which is the primordial unifying power as seen in a being-historical phenomenon such as *Ereignis*.²¹⁷ Generation, of course, if the profound etymology of German is to be probed, projects the meaning of *Geschlecht* on to the temporal orientation of *Dasein*, the for-the-sake-of-which in its being. And in order to avoid any possible regression into metaphysics, a supplication to the fourfold is made in this projection. This ensures that the futurity of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world is the essential question in any esoteric searching, which actually involves the destiny of the entire human race in the modern crisis of the struggle between world and earth. Right from the beginning, in so far as hermeneutic understanding can be given a structure, the totality in the meaning of being at the same time involves the wholeness of the being of *Dasein*. Apocalyptic or otherwise, *Dasein* has the need to know in the most radical manner in relation to the fundamental question of being, and this is precisely where Heidegger's phenomenology falls into place: the *topos* of *aletheia*, or the Goetic dominion of *daimonion*, which makes possible primordial understanding in *Dasein* and hence its authenticity and its freedom in the truth of being. In the formation of *Dasein*'s destiny, its individual awakening is never suppressed or obliterated, nor is the power of its finitude. This is because truth is existentially integral to the

²¹⁶ The reference to decomposition in *Geschlecht* is an allusion to Heidegger's reading of Trakl in “Language in the Poem”, in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, pages 167-172. See also *ibid.*, page 164, for Heidegger's discussion of the motif of “going under” in Trakl's poetry. On the primordial phenomenon of the leap as belonging to *Dasein*'s projecting open in *Ereignis*, see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, Part IV.

²¹⁷ Chaos magic uses the overwhelming power of the uncanny in chaos to achieve a profound shift in perception and experience of reality. See Peter J. Carroll, *Liber Null & Psychonaut* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1987), page 192: “The manifest universe is just a tiny island of comparative order, set in an infinite ocean of primal Chaos or potentia. Moreover, that limitless chaos pervades every interstice of our island of order. This island of order was randomly spewed up out of chaos and will eventually be redissolved into it. Although this universe is a highly unlikely event, it was bound to occur eventually. We ourselves are the most highly ordered structure known on that island, yet in the very center of our being is a spark of that same chaos which gives rise to the illusion of this universe.” *Dasein*'s grounding attunement to the gods is a manifestation of the primordial struggle between structure (*logos*) against chaos, even if chaos played a role in the theogony of the pagan gods.

very notion of *Dasein* in human existence.²¹⁸ It makes *aletheia* possible for *Dasein*, and for *Dasein* to be attuned to *daimonion*.

§ 13. *The Abyss and Ereignis in the Gigantomachia of Being:
Primordial "Godding" and the Struggle against the Gigantic in Nihilism*

In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger meditates on the essentially esoteric nature of his project on the meaning of being that is set against the background of his *Destruktion* of metaphysics begun in *Being and Time*. The difficult question of the ground of being in the hermeneutic problematic of ontological difference is given more than a dialectic treatment in his second major work. In it Heidegger rejects both the metaphysical grounding of the meaning of being in the realm of beings - hence truth as correspondence of language to the objectivity of beings - and the transcendental grounding of *Dasein* in subjectivity - hence truth as the correlation of the contents of consciousness with the beings in the world. Through engendering this epistemic crisis, Heidegger's hermeneutic strategy opens up an "abyss" in the question of being and in *Dasein* analytic that the traditional dialectical opposition between being and nothingness cannot guide *Dasein* to an adequate understanding, thus calling for a different kind of interpretive horizon altogether. In *Being and Time* the truth of being is interpreted predominantly in terms of the ecstatic unity of primordial temporality that makes *Dasein*, in its existential care, a meaningful mode of being in its relationship with past, present and future, the three ecstases of time. Time speaks of being in a way that allows being to *be*, even if it is nothingness that has to first take *Dasein* to that understanding through *Dasein*'s experience of it primarily in its attunement of *Angst*. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the lecture course given by Heidegger soon after the publication of *Being and Time*, a schemata of temporality is offered in which the temporal ecstases can be shaped as a unity in meaning that describes a hermeneutic fusion of *Dasein* and time under the name of *ekstatikon*, as the most transcendent attainment in the finitude of a futurity that is bounded by *Dasein*'s being-toward-death. Traditionally the notion of *ekstatikon* finds its basis in the primordial possibility of presencing

²¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44, page 208: "Understood in its most primordial sense, truth belongs to the fundamental constitution of *Dasein*. The term signifies an existential." See also Timothy J. Nulty, *Primitive Disclosive Aletheism: Davidson, Heidegger, and the Nature of Truth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), pages 126-127. The position of Nulty, which is called "primitive disclosive altheism", argues that truth as *aletheia*, as Heidegger puts it, gives truth a primary structural role in the pluralism of concepts that inhabit the human intellectual world, and truth itself is irreducible to any other concept. Truth is therefore primordial. See *ibid.*, page 191.

(*Anwesen*) of being that of course encompasses *Dasein* itself. This characterises the ancient Greek understanding of being – being as presence – that is primordial to the oblivion of ontological difference that was to hold sway in the advent of Western metaphysics, which according to Heidegger began with the onset of Plato’s theory of forms or the unchanging real as the true meaning of being. Yet it is in his recognition of the existential possibilities of heterogeneity in primordially that distinguishes Heidegger from all other Western philosophers. For Heidegger, a genuine *Destruktion* of metaphysics or retrieval of the question of being can only begin with the “other beginning” that can be found in the “primeval bedrock” of the great metaphysicians that include Plato.²¹⁹ What matters to Heidegger most is to understand the inceptual thinking (*anfängliches Denken*) that the Greeks had direct experience in.²²⁰ This calls for a retrieval in an essential manner, the enactment of which, according to the phenomenological method of Heidegger, can only take place along the pathway of the meaning of being, the philosophical journey originally undertaken by Parmenides before the manifestation of the goddess of truth, *aletheia*.²²¹ In the contemporary context, this retrieval takes place in the hermeneutic circle that entails *Dasein*’s integral engagement with its being-in-the-world through the opening in understanding made possible by its attunement to the fundamental insight of ontological difference. In the Heraclitean sense, *Dasein*’s individuation requires the whole of being and *Dasein*’s remembrance of it as such, in the same way the fragmentation of being into beings “does not annihilate the world, but rather always *requires* it”.²²² *In ontological difference, being and beings require each other.* This is a succinct exposition on *Ereignis*

²¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §§ 93-94, pages 131-132. Heidegger never uses retrieval as the repetition of a tradition; it is instead the unconcealment of *Dasein*’s possibilities in the history of being, which is hermeneutic renewal with the view to *Dasein*’s transformation, as a primarily futural being, in the abyssal workings of *Ereignis*. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 74, pages 351-353; § 76, pages 360-361.

²²⁰ See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 20, page 39: “Only what is unique is retrievable and repeatable.” This is of course the question of being which Heidegger retrieves and repeats. This is what distinguishes the “inceptual” from a mere temporal beginning, based on *Dasein*’s mindfulness of the historicity of being (*ibid.*, § 23, page 40) that grounds its grounding attunement.

²²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 1, pages 4-5. See also *ibid.*, § 8, page 151: “Because only unconcealed beings can appear and do appear in the open of being, man adheres, at first unwittingly and then constantly, to these beings. He forgets being and in such forgetting learns nothing more than the overlooking of being and alienation from the open.” Translation modified by the author. For Heidegger’s account of the linking between retrieval (*Wiederholung*) as a phenomenological method and the ontological priority of the question of being, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 3, page 7. There, however, being is still thought as the being of a being, albeit against the background of ontic-ontological distinction; it is only in *Contributions to Philosophy* that Heidegger genuinely enters esoteric depth by interpreting being as the groundlessness of beings that makes *Ereignis* possible as the history and the truth of being, which calls for the rewriting of being as *Seyn*, itself an act of retrieval because of the archaic spelling of this word.

²²² Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Ground”, in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 112.

as the meaning of being. The circular movement of hermeneutics is founded upon this relationship, or what Heidegger aptly describes as the “mastering” of this essential and “genuine onefold” (*echte Einheit*).²²³

As *Dasein* situates itself in the unconcealing moment of its understanding of being as *Ereignis*, in accordance with the rigour of the hermeneutic method it is necessary first and foremost to remove *Dasein*'s metaphysical attachment to *presence* as the meaning of the being of beings that even the Greeks were not free from. The Greek approach to the question of being was determined by *legein*, which, in its role as the ground of the discourse on being, was primarily understood as the making present of beings in being within the gathering power of *logos*. The same methodological rethinking is necessary to counteract *Dasein*'s modern tendency to found its “subjectivity” upon this reading of the being of beings. With this problematic in view, it can perhaps be said that it is more Norse than Greek on Heidegger's part to invoke the *abyss*, i.e. the phenomenological withdrawal of beings from the meaning of being in order to heighten the nothingness in the thinking of the ground in phenomena, as the tutelary deity (*daimon*) of *Dasein*'s understanding of being in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Rather than repeating the tradition of metaphysics, Heidegger introduces a pathway in heterogeneity in the very same primordially with respect to the question of being that guided, inspired and puzzled the Greeks. Yet instead of giving this different kind of thinking a new name, Heidegger simply calls it “thinking” in his writings, for according to him to *think* is to think *against* metaphysics. Therefore it was simply without arrogance that Heidegger asserted in the early 1950s that the truth of being remained *unthought* in philosophy.²²⁴ Given the continuing unfamiliarity with the *abyss* as a philosophical theme in Western experience, this issue remains with us *to this day*. Furthermore, given that Heidegger's difficult meditations in *Contributions to Philosophy* can be read as a tribute to the departed gods in Western paganism, his refusal to name thinking as anything other than thinking is possibly a sign of his reverence for another advent of the gods in the futural historicisation of *Dasein* – only under their sway in the being of beings, but not in their absence, will a new name be given. For the time being, Heidegger's own thinking is a thought-provoking signpost to the advent of this utter heterogeneity in the future thinking of *Dasein*.

²²³ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 132, page 176.

²²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, translated by J. Glenn Gray (New York: Perennial, 2004; reprint of 1968 edition published by Harper Collins), page 6: “Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking.” In this 1951-1952 lecture course, the last given by Heidegger before his retirement from the University of Freiburg, Parmenides, the inceptual thinker of the West, is accorded the highest rank among philosophers, in that he brought to humanity the equiprimordially of being and thinking that allowed the event of philosophy to take place.

Contributions to Philosophy is known to philosophers as the moment of Heidegger's introduction of the new notion of *Ereignis* into phenomenological vocabulary. It is also a turning point in Heidegger's thought where the determination of *Dasein* by being in the history of being is given more weight than the fulfilment of authenticity in an individual *Dasein*'s existence in the existential analytic of *Being and Time*.²²⁵ *Ereignis* is an untranslatable word in that its very purpose is to defy any metaphysical appropriation, whether rationalist, idealist or materialist, of the meaning of being. *Ereignis* is therefore, in its indeterminacy, a hermeneutic tool of defiance; hence its meanings can only be understood according to how it is used in the many and necessary turnings that Heidegger made in his writings on being. Yet *Ereignis* is remarkably faithful to Heidegger's original vision of ontological difference as the key to the *Destruktion* of metaphysics and of *Dasein* as a hermeneutic, non-anthropological (hence non-ontic) account of human existence in its entire facticity, as evidenced by many passages on the multiplicity of readings of *Ereignis* in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Therefore ontology as the "hermeneutics of facticity", an approach taken by Heidegger even before his work on *Being and Time*,²²⁶ remains applicable to his project in the 1930s to bring about a heterogeneous inception in Western philosophy. Heidegger's important lectures in the 1950s, such as *What is Called Thinking?* and *The Principle of Reason*, only serve as additional commentaries on his major work in the 1930s. *Parmenides* from the 1940s, however, as we have examined in Chapter 1, is a key text that reveals an esoteric dimension to Heidegger's project, as his thematisation of *daimonion* provides a startling opening for a reading that invites the "dark" or "Gothic" esotericism of Goetia into the temporalised insights into the futurity of *Dasein* in his philosophy. This, however, can be argued as a case of Heidegger's nascent paganism in *Contributions to Philosophy* maturing in his later reflections on being as his grounding-attunement to the inceptual thinkers of the West deepened – and increased in uncanniness.

The grounding of being in *causa sui* is the hallmark of onto-theological metaphysics. In Nietzsche, whose thought according to Heidegger manifests the last moment in metaphysics, this grounding is found in the *will to power*, which in its essence aims for the "overcoming of metaphysics" and for the "revaluation of all values" through the clashing of the new.

²²⁵ The turning (*Kehre*), instead of being viewed as a turning away from the preparatory task of *Dasein* analytic that first opens up ontological difference, should be seen as a turning toward the primordial belonging together of being and *Dasein* in *Ereignis* while on the same journey that is begun in *Being and Time*. Indeed thinking, for Heidegger, if it has begun at all, is a journey that is only ended by death, and not by the willing or non-willing of *Dasein*; it is "enowned" (*ereignet*) in being.

²²⁶ See Martin Heidegger, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, translated by John van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); published as Volume 63 in Gesamtausgabe. The book is the text of a 1923 lecture course given by Heidegger at the University of Marburg and shows his preliminary attempts at defining human existence as a "being-there", i.e. *Dasein*, in the finitude of its temporal particularity.

subjectivity of the *Übermensch* against the idols of Platonism and Christianity – in the Norse fashion of wielding Thor’s hammer, to expand on Nietzsche’s metaphor of this basic tool in his later thinking. Despite the repetition of metaphysics in the culmination of his thinking in will to power and in *Übermensch*, Nietzsche nevertheless succeeded in breaking open the traditional question of being to release a powerful force that fits Heidegger’s description of the gigantic (*das Riesenhafte*) in *Contributions to Philosophy*.²²⁷ In the post-metaphysical era, this force configures *Dasein*’s comportment to being as *will to power*. The gigantic is according to Heidegger a moment in *Dasein*’s attunement to being that reveals the overflowing strangeness of the being of beings even in their familiar settings – but from a perspective that is obscured by the will to power over beings, which reaffirms the metaphysics of subjectivity. Under those conditions, *Dasein* is in the control of power, and in such determination it goes under, in the sense of a decline, in the projection of its possibilities. With the onset of this distortion, which Nietzsche mistakenly believes will call forth the “higher men”, the nearness or accessibility of beings to *Dasein* is determined by the bias of representation and objectification as *Dasein* goes about in the everyday world of beings in the untruth of the power of control. Dominion over the world of beings is to make (*machen*) a world in a calculative, manipulative and exploitative manner. Space and time are torn asunder in such a world, and their essential relation as time-space in the meaning of being is covered over. Heidegger problematises the holding sway of machination (*Machenschaft*) in *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world as it obsesses itself with the quantitative aspects of beings in the worldwide drive to produce more quanta, and faster. In machination, time and space, too, are treated as quanta.²²⁸ It is not difficult to see that machination, when expressed as the gigantic, results in expansionism: the Nazi politics of *Lebensraum* is a dire reflection of what this kind of metaphysics can yield in the collectivisation of *Mitdasein*. It is obvious that the dominance of the quanta in machination is precisely its furthest distancing from the meaning of being even while it is entrenched in beings in this manner of appropriation.²²⁹ The category of *quantitas* obscuring the meaning of being is reflective of the abandonment of being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) that characterises the condition of *Dasein* in the modern age of planetary machination.²³⁰ Yet Heidegger is careful not to merely enact a dialectic reversal by substituting

²²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §70, pages 94-96.

²²⁸ Ibid., § 70, page 95.

²²⁹ The popular circulation of the words “massive” and “awesome” in the colloquial language of young people nowadays is indicative of the extent to which the machination of the gigantic holds sway over *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world. In the appropriation of language by the gigantic, the return of the fascist *polis* is entirely possible; a degenerating language in fact calls for it.

²³⁰ See Martin Heidegger, “On the Question of Being”, translated by William McNeill and republished in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 295, regarding the “new actuality” that Heidegger refers to in this letter-essay to his friend Ernst Jünger (1895-

quantitas with *qualitas*,²³¹ for this is not sufficient in making manifest the abyss, i.e. the non-ground of being in being grounded in beings, that allows *Ereignis* as the *ownmost* belonging of ontological difference to the truth of being²³² to be enacted in *Dasein*'s comportment to being in its troubled being-in-the-world. In response to the crisis in the meaning of being in Nazi Germany, Heidegger is critical of the perversion of *Dasein*'s essential being-with into a quantitative amplification of the kind infamously known as the "total mobilisation" ("*totale Mobilmachung*"); he describes this signature phenomenon as the primordial abandonment of being by the German people.²³³ Most importantly, Heidegger does not agree that the engendering of a new *Geschlecht* is possible in this gigantic machination on *Mitdasein*:

The priority of *method* (*Verfahren*) and of *institution* in overall readying the masses and putting them into service – for what?

What does this priority of mobilization mean? That thereby a new breed of man is necessarily forged is only the consequence that is counter to this event, but never the "goal".

But are there "goals" anymore? How does goal-setting arise? From within the beginning. And what is beginning?²³⁴

As in all his writings Heidegger maintains the primacy of primordially in thinking and resists the appropriation of the latter in service of the gigantic. Heidegger's probing question here implies that he does not accept the Nazi doctrine of renewing a people through breeding and training – a biologism that even Nietzsche was tempted to consider in his attempt to formulate his study of "becoming" as the science of "will to power". However, Heidegger, being

1998), in response to Jünger's analysis of nihilism in "Über die Linie", which was originally published in the latter's 60th birthday. Jünger was a renowned soldier-writer who produced penetrating descriptions of the human condition in the age of increasingly mechanised warfares in *Die Totale Mobilmachung* (1929) and *Der Arbeiter* (1932). Awarded with an *Pour le mérite* (the French iron cross – Jünger fought in the foreign legion) in World War I, Jünger also served in the Wehrmacht during World War II, stationed mainly in Paris, but he was never a fellow-traveller of the Nazis. In 1943 Jünger risked his life to publish a pacifist pamphlet, *Der Friede*.

²³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 70, page 94. *Qualitas* corresponds to the metaphysical question of the whatness (*Wassein*) of being that still obscures the original question of being. Hence there is no way out for *Dasein* in the mere dialectical interchange of categories.

²³² This exact meaning of *Ereignis*, attuned by readings in hermeneutic phenomenology, explains the choice made by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, the translators of Martin Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*, to render this primal word as "enowning". See *ibid.*, Translators' Foreword, pages xix-xxii.

²³³ *Ibid.*, § 74, page 100.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

sympathetic to the folkish (*völkisch*) possibilities of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world, is not against the betterment of a people as such. In his quest for the primordial as the truth of being, Heidegger looked to the beginning of Western philosophy such as the fragments of Parmenides and of Heraclitus; therefore according to him, any renewal of the German *Volk* must involve a hermeneutic integration of the ontological priorities and pathways of the Greek civilisation, and perhaps Norse *Kultur* as well.

Perhaps the most difficult question that can be asked about the history of being is the extent to which *Dasein* actually has control over the revelation or the concealment of the truth of being, and this difficulty recurs in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the destiny of undecidability for *Dasein*. The distortion of the meaning of being through the gigantic, and the estrangement for *Dasein* that this creates, is according to Heidegger not decided by *Dasein*, but is a sign that being has "thoroughly abandoned beings and submitted them to machination".²³⁵ It is therefore a question of *Ereignis* in crisis. This abandonment gives rise to an ideology of unbounded openness and possession that characteristically determines modernity's relationship to the earth and to the labour of humans, such that the question of the very sustainability of the present-day civilisation is now asked by many that have an inkling of the primordially of the issue at stake.²³⁶ The determination of being-in-the-world by the gigantic takes *Dasein* away from a primordial understanding of its potentiality-of-being in finitude and obfuscates it by offering an alternate but nihilistic path of personal immortality through the *techne* of cyrogenesis. In this manner, *Dasein*'s being-toward-death is disrupted but not the occurrence of death itself, and *Dasein* dies with little or no understanding.

While oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*) is used to describe *Dasein*'s alienation from the truth of being in *Being and Time*, in *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger offers a more critical diagnosis of abandonment of being. In so far as *Dasein*'s comportment to being is concerned, there is no difference in meaning between the two.

Forgottenness of being is not aware of itself; it presumes to be at home with "beings" and with what is "actual", "true" to "life", and certain of "lived-experience". For it only

²³⁵ Ibid., § 72, page 97.

²³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, § 71, page 96. On the same page Heidegger appraises the phenomenon of the gigantic as the epitome of illusoriness and in this aspect it "holds onto its own and is singular". The gigantic therefore has qualities of singularity that can make it uniquely adversarial for a being of heightened singularity such as *Dasein*. But *Dasein* itself in its unawakened state is only too adept at arranging the illusoriness of the subject-object dualism, hence metaphysics, into reality.

knows beings. But in this way of the presencing of beings, beings are abandoned by being. *Abandonment of being* is the ground of the forgottenness of being.²³⁷

Yet the notion of “abandonment” reflects Heidegger’s deeper appreciation of the role played by *being* in the history of being, which is not determined by how *Dasein* understands it at the time. Rather it is *Dasein* that is determined by different moments in this history beyond historiography in the form of *Geschick*, a notion that is already active in *Being and Time* and paves way for Heidegger’s more developed understanding through his work with *Ereignis*. But to temporalise being’s relation to itself, with the view to making its workings accessible to *Dasein*, is to invite the danger of reintroducing metaphysics into phenomenology, perhaps in the manner of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e. self-knowledge of the absolute. Unlike the spirit (*Geist*) in Hegel, being does not unfold its self-development through the dialectics of history and *Dasein*’s contradictory relationship with it.²³⁸ This is because *being* is *primordial temporality*, whereas spirit only falls into time in order to become manifest as history in world time, but is itself atemporal.²³⁹ The oblivion of being is counteracted through *awareness* that are determined by moments of insight, which occurrences characterise a temporality that is originary and not derived from a secondary ground. Reading Heidegger, it is possible to imagine an entire civilisation built on the oblivion of being as the mastery of beings but which can be undone through the power of *awareness* on the part of *Dasein*. Therefore for *Dasein* to be mindful is to exist in grounding-attunement without distraction. This mode of being is thematised as *Besinnung* by Heidegger, a holistic, hermeneutic contemplation that first appears in *Contributions to Philosophy* as a definite sign of esoteric expression in his thought.²⁴⁰ It is also significant that during the two to three years leading up to his death, Heidegger chose the title of *Besinnung* for the *Gesamtausgabe* publication of his notes written in 1938 and 1939 that further developed his ideas in *Contributions to Philosophy*.²⁴¹ But the totality of this perfection in awareness will not

²³⁷ Ibid., § 55, page 80.

²³⁸ The principle of the “owl of Minerva” referred to by Hegel in his most important work explains that humans attempt to gain greater freedom once a culture becomes fully normalised.

²³⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 78, page 372. Heidegger offers a critique of Hegel’s understanding of time being limited to world time, which is derivative when compared to primordial temporality.

²⁴⁰ *Besinnung* is similar to the fundamental requirement of holistic contemplation in the esotericism of Dzogchen in Tibetan Bön and in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. See Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, pages 142-145.

²⁴¹ The *Gesamtausgabe* project, which is still continuing, began with Heidegger’s participation in September 1973. *Besinnung* appeared in 1997 as Volume 66 in Division Three of *Gesamtausgabe*, which contains Heidegger’s writings, lectures and notes not published during his lifetime. Its English translation only appeared this year: Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London; New York: Continuum, 2006).

come soonest to *Dasein*, given that it is spiritually situated in the historical moment of the flight of the gods (*Flucht der Götter*), i.e. in the temporality of the utmost distance from the sacred.

Yet given that *Ereignis* is the meaning and the utmost possibility of being, from the perspective of the truth of being in *Dasein*'s historicisation, which is supported by the mindfulness of *Dasein* in grounding-attunement, the estranging strangeness of the gigantic in the current age of universal machination of the capital needs to be wrested away from this course of alienation and has its power redirected into a different one, namely that which takes *Dasein* to the primordial question of being. As Heidegger describes in *Mindfulness*, "This errancy itself is the clearing (openness – truth) of primordial being."²⁴² This is not to say that being, like *doxa* (view), is neutral in respect of truth and falsehood.²⁴³ Rather it means that the *possibility* of the retrieval of being, even in the phenomenon of the gigantic, remains concealed from *Dasein*. Understood in this way, machination, as an error or a distortion, has much to reveal regarding what it is about the primordially of being that *Dasein* has missed, including its recognition and understanding of the modern phenomenon of the gigantic. Machination therefore is not mere concealment; it is a disfigurement of being that makes relationship to the ordinary and the inceptual in being all the more pressing in a philosopher's task. What then is the true face of the gigantic?

According to Heidegger *Ereignis* is farthest from the reach of *Dasein* when the ordinary, the false peace of which causes as little question-worthiness to come into view as possible, holds sway in beings. Complacency has its roots in the prevalence of what is ordinary, commonplace and predictable. This is why natural disasters, which shatter the ordinary, have a connection with the grounding of the gods, i.e. what Heidegger refers to as the "godding" (*Götterung*), not only in distant history but also in contemporary consciousness; with the disappearance of the ordinary, difficult questions of the final things, the *eschaton*, come into play. Temporality takes on a demonic character for many as it appears to work against the interests of humanity. This shattering would have determined the mood (*Stimmung*) for Heidegger's writing of his being-historical meditations in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the gigantic in the Nazis' race programs and total war raged all around him. The rage of the distortion of being must be such that the word "distress" (*No!*) appears on many pages of Heidegger's originally secret book, while at the

²⁴² Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, § 72, page 229. Translation slightly modified.

²⁴³ View alone cannot lead *Dasein* to the truth of being, for *Dasein* can hold on to a false view that obscures the matter in fact. See Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, translated by Ted Sadler (Continuum: London; New York, 2002), § 38, page 184, regarding Theaetetus' discovery of the two faces of *doxa* and Socrates' response in giving more weight to the phenomenon of the distorted *doxa*.

same time it serves to pull together disparate thoughts through “joinings” (*Fügungen*)²⁴⁴ that might have otherwise burst asunder through an implosion of his thinking-in-distress. Heidegger’s distress, as mentioned earlier, was caused by his realisation of the lack of it by his fellow human beings (presumably Germans in the 1930s and not the Jews) in face of the abandonment of being as *Dasein* collectively fell for the gigantic of totalitarian *polis*. The gigantic revealed itself to be the monstrous – a notion not taken up by Heidegger until *Parmenides* in the 1940s.²⁴⁵ But what Heidegger begins to treat as a leading theme in the history of being in *Contributions to Philosophy* is the strife between earth and world that determines from now on *Dasein*’s place in *Ereignis*. Although not explicitly stated by Heidegger, the gigantic is the first offspring of this strife while distorted *Dasein*, concealed from its genuine possibilities, imposes its will upon the earth in the name of the world.

The gigantic shows the magnitude of the self-certain [*subiectum*] which builds everything on its own representing and producing.²⁴⁶

The gigantic, it turns out, has the face of a human, although one that is disfigured by the will to an absolute hypostasis of itself. It is the metaphysical culmination, hence an inauthentic appropriation, of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* through the portrayal of an Aryan man towering above the horizon of history in Nazi propaganda posters, for something that essentially cannot be depicted as such.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ This term refers to Heidegger’s arrangement of the fragments that make up *Contributions to Philosophy*. Heidegger deliberately avoided the conventional organisation of chapters in a book in order to make manifest the non-linearity of the “leap”, the “echo” and the “playing-forth” that were necessary to his meditations on *Ereignis* in contemporary times.

²⁴⁵ Heidegger plays on the ambivalence of the ordinary and the literal meanings of “ungeheuer”, they being “monstrous” and “extraordinary” respectively, in order to bring out the complexity of *Dasein*’s fundamental relationship with being and beings, which essentially highlights the polysemy of the “open” as being is interpreted in *aletheia*. What comes into unconcealment can either be natural or unsettling (uncanny). For this the Greeks relied on the hinting and the showing performed by *daimons*. See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, pages 101-102; 109. *Daimonios topos* is the uncanny meaning of the open. The hermeneutic crossing over from the “uncanny” to the “monstrous” was originally enacted in Hölderlin’s translation of *deinon* in the first choral ode from Sophocles’ *Antigone*: “Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing/uncannier than man bestirs itself, rising up behind him.” English translation of the ode from Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, page 156. See *ibid.*, pages 159-162, for Heidegger’s discussion on the ontological significance of *deinon* and *to deinotaton*. See Andrzej Warminski, “Monstrous History: Heidegger Reading Hölderlin”, *Yale French Studies*, Number 77 (1990), page 199, on the more fitting translation of *deinon* as “monstrous” in view of Heidegger’s critique of the gigantic, *Technik* and *Gestell* in his later philosophy, all of which hold sway in the modern determination of the essence of being human.

²⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 260, page 311.

²⁴⁷ In making the struggle between world and earth as the leading theme in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger forgets to mention the monstrosity of the gigantic in the struggle between races or *Geschlechter*: the Nazi genocide of the European Jews

In its exaltation of the *subiectum* above the earth, Heidegger describes the four forms of the gigantic that work against the essential swaying of the sacred fourfold in the history of being:

1. The gigantism of the *slowing down* of history (from the staying away of essential decisions all the way to lack of history) in the semblance of speed and steerability of “historical” development and its anticipation.

2. The gigantism of the *publicness* as summation of everything homogeneous in favor of concealing the destruction and undermining of any passion for essential gathering.

3. The gigantism of the claim to *naturalness* in the semblance of what is self-evident and “logical”; the question-worthiness of being is placed totally outside questioning.

4. The gigantism of the *diminution* of beings in the whole in favor of the semblance of boundless-extending of the same by virtue of unconditioned controllability. The single thing that is impossible is the world and representation of “impossible”.²⁴⁸

Evil is not thematised in *Contributions to Philosophy* and the gigantism of the gigantic²⁴⁹, as described by Heidegger in its destruction of the possibilities of *Dasein*, comes closest to this perennial notion in onto-theological thought. Gigantism is also equiprimordial with the attunement of *abandonment of being* that dominates the pages of *Contributions to Philosophy*. It is the

that he never provided an adequate phenomenological critique of. In fact after the war, Heidegger notoriously remarked in 1949 that the mass murders of the Jews in concentration camps were equivalent to the mass production of food in mechanised agriculture. See Dieter Thomä, “Making Off with an Exile - Heidegger and the Jews”, translated by Stephen Cho and Dieter Thomä, *New German Critique*, Number 58 (2003), page 80. Nowhere in Heidegger does he mention the power of the *eidōs* in the modern *techne* of photography that expands *Dasein's* awareness and brings into *Mitdasein*. Humanity, for example, learnt a great deal about the Holocaust, and hence inhumanity as such, through the medium of photography, and this is one important way how the facticity of the look “clears” being qua *Gestell* but at the same time also against *Gestell* (as genocidal technology, such as Zyklon B, originally developed in Berlin-Dahlem for pest control during World War I). On the power of photography as an effective means of bringing about Holocaust remembrance in German national consciousness, see Bernd Hüppauf, “Emptying the Gaze: Framing Violence through the Viewfinder”, *New German Critique*, Number 72 (1997), pages 3-44. In the same article Hüppauf discusses Jünger’s advocacy of the detached gaze in photography that suspends engagement and critique. See *ibid.*, pages 25-26. The cult of detachment in the Nazi reconstruction of Aryan humanity enabled them to methodically record their brutal works, thus pitting *techne* against *mythos* on the horizon of the monstrous gigantic.

²⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 260, page 311.

²⁴⁹ In German both are expressed as “*das Riesenhafte*”, an adjectival substantive. See *ibid.* Heidegger offers a critique of the traditional definition of evil (*malum*) as *privatio boni*, which is based on the ontology of objective presence, in *Being and Time*, § 58, page 263.

precursor to Heidegger's later understanding of *Gestell*, the appropriation, in the progressive worldwide abandonment of being, of both *Dasein* and earth as resources in an ever expanding expression of a *subiectum* too degenerated to have even the faintest resonance with the phenomenological understanding of *Dasein*. The renewal of humanity is only possible if *Dasein* experiences a fundamental unconcealment of its being in *Ereignis* again, and that is dependent on *Dasein's* recovery of an understanding of being that allows such primordial event. The grounding-attunement to the abyss that opens up the possibilities of the advent of being among beings therefore takes on an existential urgency for *Dasein*.

That the gigantic has a section of its own in the final overview of the meaning of being (Part VIII) in *Contributions to Philosophy* is a strong indication that Heidegger intends his observation of this unsettling phenomenon to be enduring and not transient. This is primarily because the gigantic is the new meaning of nihilism in the age of machination. Although not specified as such, the gigantic is clearly the ground of the contemporary attunement of distress, which is the necessary existential condition for the awakening of *Dasein* in *Ereignis* regarding the abandonment of beings by being. Like Heidegger's understanding of *Angst* in *Being and Time*, distress does not disempower *Dasein* into inaction, but instead assumes a power that enables *Dasein* to be fully involved in the existential decision of crossing over into what is essential in the truth of being.²⁵⁰ In such action, *Dasein* itself is at stake. As Heidegger describes it, distress "aims at a total transformation of man".²⁵¹ Most significantly, we can see in this statement the bearing of the meaning of a new *Geschlecht*, simply because in this transformation is a creative event that carries the "mighty impetuses" for *Schöpfen*, which is *generation*.²⁵²

Yet Heidegger's hopeful tone of transformation has to be set against the picture of the world which shows "the movement of nihilism in the many forms of its inexorable and planetary character that eats away at and consumes everything".²⁵³ This was a description of *Dasein's* predicament offered by Heidegger in 1955 in response to an essay entitled "Über die Linie" by Ernst Jünger, which he dedicated to Heidegger's 60th birthday in a *Festschrift*. Jünger was the influential, if not highly controversial, German writer on the question of planetary domination by nihilism at the time and was taken very seriously by Heidegger. Jünger's influence on *Contributions to Philosophy* can be discerned in Heidegger's contemplation on the gigantic and total mobilisation; the latter is an important term in Jünger's thought, who wrote

²⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 54, page 80.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, § 53, page 79.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, § 52, page 78.

²⁵³ Martin Heidegger, "On the Question of Being", in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 296.

about this gigantic movement of *Dasein* in an Europe that would become completely dominated by war.²⁵⁴

Heidegger's response to Jünger, altogether 30 pages long, is republished as "On the Question of Being" in *Pathmarks*. It is a summation of Heidegger's thought in *Contributions to Philosophy* and in it his preoccupation with nihilism reflects the true danger in the abandonment of being:

No one of any insight would today wish to deny that nihilism in its most diverse and hidden forms is the "normal condition" of humankind.²⁵⁵

Dasein now stands in an essential relationship to nothingness as the essential sway of being; the abyss of ontological difference, which gives rise to the non-duality of being and nothingness in *Ereignis*, has disturbingly become the abyss of *Dasein* itself. Alienated from the possibilities of *Ereignis*, the abyss takes on an inauthentic meaning instead, and we witness what Heidegger describes as follows in *Being and Time*:

Dasein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nothingness of inauthentic everydayness. But this plunge remains concealed from it by the way things have been publicly interpreted so that it is interpreted as "getting ahead" and "living concretely".²⁵⁶

Heidegger specifies this condition of *Dasein* as falling (*Verfallen*) – the prefix "ver" in German has the connotation of disintegration of the essence of the kind of being referred to. Heidegger also describes this as inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*) – when *Dasein* is not properly itself, i.e. not appropriated (*nicht geeignet*) in the appropriation of essence in *Ereignis* (related to *eigenen*) that allows *Dasein* to stand in a proper relationship to the wholeness of being, which is also the ground for the essentialising (*Wesen*) in being.

The kind of movement of plunging into and within the groundless of inauthentic being in the they constantly tears understanding away from projecting authentic possibilities, and into the tranquilized supposition of possessing or attaining

²⁵⁴ Ernst Jünger, "Die Totale Mobilmachung", *Sämtliche Werke*, Volume 7 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), pages 119-142.

²⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, op. cit.

²⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 38, page 167.

everything. Since the understanding is thus constantly torn away from authenticity and into the they (although always with a sham of authenticity), the movement of falling prey is characterised by *eddying*.

Not only does falling prey determine being-in-the-world existentially; at the same time the eddy reveals the character of throwing and movement of thrownness which can force itself upon *Dasein* in its attunement. Not only is thrownness not a “finished fact”, it is also not a self-contained fact. The facticity of *Dasein* is such that *Dasein*, as long as it is what it is, remains in the throw and is sucked into the eddy of the they’s inauthenticity.²⁵⁷

Eddying, *Wirbel* in German, is the whirlpooling of an abyss that casts *Dasein* into mere receptivity to the machination of the gigantic, which in the revolutionary movements of the total mobilisation – fascist and communist totalitarianism in the time of *Contributions to Philosophy* – takes over the mediocrity of the they in the everydayness of democracy in the years of the Weimar Republic when *Being and Time* was written, in a manner more dire than previous historical periods to the possibilities of *Dasein*, in that its extinction is now found among it. The gigantic is already taken for granted – hence the deception of what Heidegger calls its “naturalness” – in today’s world as the polarisation between the globalisation of *techne* as the fundamental mode of being in late capitalism and the mass conversions in religious fundamentalism accelerates the withdrawal of *Ereignis* in *Dasein*’s understanding of being in a universal abandonment of being. The greatest threat when it comes to the future *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* is that an understanding of being may prevail in which *Dasein* disintegrates into non-being pure and simple. Another naming is beyond the current state of knowledge; however, in the nigromancy of occult knowing the *daimonion* may lead to a shimmering *topos* of understanding that allows what Heidegger curiously calls the “higher power” of *Dasein*’s finitude a glimpse into a possibly very dark future. The question, then, to be asked is, does the nihilistic phenomenon of the gigantic contain a concealed or withdrawn *gnosis* that can guide *Dasein* in its quest for transformation and renewal, *if only* the right kind of interpretation is enabled? The phenomenological non-duality of hermeneutics, akin to the esotericism of alchemy, can integrate elements in its circular understanding (hermeneutic circle) that can be found in either strife or harmony, and contains in this way the primal power of the sacred, the “godding” of all the gods and goddesses that have already appeared on the horizon of *Dasein*’s temporal ecstases. Given that esotericism is essentially a question of control of *gnosis*, which is

knowledge of the divine, and of the past, present and future of the fate of humanity, it is useful to define it phenomenologically as contested reading and interpretation, hence *leigen*, of primordially. The very ambiguity of the movement of *aletheia*, as Heidegger shows in *Being and Time* and in *The Essence of Truth*, problematises understanding and its expression in discourse as the very question of being itself. As in Parmenides' inceptual experience of *aletheia*, its opening is dependent upon divine blessing, hence the state of *Dasein*'s relationship to "goddling", which is deeply problematised in the nihilism of modernity. Nihilism is the *extreme* problematisation of *Dasein*'s access to the *gnosis* of primordially. Precisely because nihilism does not ground itself, Heidegger is able to say in "On the Question of Being" that there is nothing nihilistic about the essence of nihilism.²⁵⁸ The same hermeneutics can be applied to the uncanny phenomenology of the gigantic. In the apparent obliteration of being in the gigantism of what Heidegger calls "consummate nihilism",²⁵⁹ *Dasein* can only respond with a struggle of the most essential kind. This resolve, which surpasses the temporal schemata of *Dasein*'s finitude in care through *Ereignis*' reclaiming of what is traditionally understood as *eternity* as the interplay of recurrence and withdrawal of primordially, is according to Heidegger necessarily situated in the "strife of world and earth" in the age of nihilism.²⁶⁰ A strife of this mythic power is a recurring theme in Heidegger's writings after *Contributions to Philosophy* and points to his understanding of the history of being as being determined by more than a sequence of human events: primordial philosophy is the retrieval of *mythos*.²⁶¹ In this way Heidegger's thought provides the ground for a pagan eschatology which is nevertheless already a familiar motif in contemporary Western

²⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, "On the Question of Being", in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, page 313. On the same page Heidegger writes, "The zone of the critical line, i.e., the locality of the essence of consummate nihilism, would thus have to be sought where the essence of metaphysics unfolds its most extreme possibilities and gathers itself in them." The image of the line, which shows where the zone of nihilism begins, is the central motif in Ernst Jünger's essay "Über die Linie". See Ernst Jünger, *Sämtliche Werke*, Volume 7, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), pages 237-280.

²⁵⁹ Heidegger uses the orthographic device of *crossing out* being to show what he calls the strange absence or concealment of being in our age; see *ibid.*, page 313. The powerful terminology of "consummate nihilism" alludes to Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism as the reversal of the hierarchy of values, i.e. the Christian debasement of what is deemed noble and worthy in paganism; hence Nietzsche's passionate exhortation for the "revaluation of all values" (*Umwertung aller Werte*) in his struggle against nihilism. Heidegger is however critical of Nietzsche's understanding of the problem as simply that of values.

²⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 238, page 259. This opens up a phenomenological understanding of eternity as a primordial dimension of time that supports *Ereignis*, although Heidegger is not explicit on that point in *ibid.* For Heidegger's critique of the metaphysical understanding of *aeternitas* as the endless extension of now-points, see Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), § 19, pages 229-256.

²⁶¹ See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, pages 98, 112 and 114, and also Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger in seiner Zeit* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1999), page 247. In *Parmenides* Heidegger assesses Plato's use of myths in his dialogues to be recollections of primordial thinking, in contrast to the rise of metaphysics that he was preparing Greek thinking for.

occultism.²⁶² This has significant implications for the understanding of being in *Dasein* that Heidegger began with in *Being and Time*. In *Contributions to Philosophy* and the works that followed it, Heidegger genuinely grounds *Dasein* in a post-humanist reading that results in a hermeneutics beyond the existential determination of *Dasein* as being-toward-death in *Being and Time*. *Dasein*, rendered in the hermeneutics of *Contributions to Philosophy* as *Da-sein*, receives a new definition as the guardianship of the primordial temporality between the departure of the last god and the advent of the *futural wholly other*.²⁶³ The temporality of this “between” (*Zwischen*) becomes a wellspring of possibilities that enable *Dasein* to be attuned to an interpretive horizon which is above the one given by the factual individuation of *Dasein* in its being-in-the-world. More originary than its individuation through the existential phenomenon of mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) is the profound interpretation of *Dasein* as a phenomenon of opening in its temporal projection. And the open, as Heidegger explains in *Parmenides*, is the “primordial essence of unconcealment”, hence *aletheia*, which in its illuminating indeterminacy grounds *Dasein*’s understanding of being as a phenomenon primordial to *Dasein* and hence its very being.²⁶⁴ Yet *aletheia* is itself without a ground in beings, even “God” – another aspect of the abyss is shown here – in order to sustain the open.²⁶⁵ Hermeneutically this destroys any metaphysical substratum that defines *Dasein* in terms of the being of beings. Heidegger explains as follows:

As grounding the openness of self-sheltering [*Gründung der Offenheit des Sichverbergens*],
Da-sein appears to the view accustomed to a “being” [*Seiende*] to be not-being

²⁶² See, for example, the eschatology of the goddess Babalon in the new, post-Christian era of Horus in Thelema, the school of esotericism founded by Aleister Crowley. It aims to bring about the realisation of the true will in an adept who takes on the path of devotion to a theurgic attunement to Babalon. Thelema is an example of comparative religion in action in that it combines elements from ancient Egyptian religion, the Kabbalah, the Western magical tradition (Abramelin, John Dee and the Order of the Golden Dawn) and Eastern traditions (Indian yoga and Taoism).

²⁶³ Yet Heidegger’s understanding of “godding”, including that of the last god, is immanentist, as paganism generally is. Pagan immanentism involves a belief that gods and mortals both share the beingness of being, but the gods themselves are not the source of being. Pagan gods do not create *ex nihilo* – that was originally a strictly Hebraic understanding. Furthermore, in Heidegger “godding” is not Gnostic: divine existence is not alien to *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world. In Gnosticism, the world is Goetia pure and simple, and to human ecstasis it is only full of forebodings. Yet the existential analytic of *Dasein*’s fallenness (*Verfallen*) in *Being and Time* (§ 38) resonates with Gnosticism on the level of the mood (*Stimmung*), which in fact is *Dasein*’s attunement to the question of being in the thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) of its mode. See Susan Anima Taubes, “The Gnostic Foundations of Heidegger’s Nihilism”, *The Journal of Religion*, Volume 34, Number 3 (1954), page 160. With the publication of *Contributions to Philosophy* in 1989, the Gnostic thesis was surpassed by the pagan thesis. Yet to date neither Norse nor Celtic paganism has taken root in philosophical discourse to bring about profound transformations in the Western understanding of being.

²⁶⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 114.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, § 8, pages 149-150.

[*nichtseiend*] and simply imagined. Indeed: As throwing projecting-open grounding [*entwerfend-geworfene Gründung*], *Da-sein* is the highest actuality in the domain of imagination [*Einbildung*], granted that by this term we understand not only a faculty of the soul and not only something transcendental (cf. Kant book) but rather *Ereignis* itself, wherein all transfiguration [*Verklärung*] reverberates.²⁶⁶

Ereignis enables *Dasein* as a being of transcendence to exist in the finitude of the existential ground granted to it by death and determined by its own being-toward-death. It is purely because of transcendence that *Dasein* exhibits a higher level of existence than other life-forms on earth that are determined by the five senses; only the gods and the *daimons*, who belong to the world of the invisible, may surpass *Dasein* in its projecting-open in the truth of being.²⁶⁷ *Dasein* is differentiated from the godly and the daimonic by its place in transcendence in the fourfold: a schemata of the sacred that first determined Heidegger's renewed thinking on the meaning of being in *Dasein* in *Contributions to Philosophy* before being named the fourfold after the war. The sacred, then, has taken on a greater significance than the unifying *ekstatikon* of *Dasein* in the temporal schemata of the past-present-future ecstasis that is arrived at purely by way of phenomenology. In the utter non-subject and non-object of *Da-sein*, *Dasein*, in being imagined within *Ereignis* as such, finds itself in an opening of primordial appropriation that allows for its transformation outside the dualistic limitations of metaphysics and onto-theology. In their place is the resonant reciprocity offered by gods and earth. In such moment of holistic mindfulness, thinking as shown by Heidegger is truly touched by the "other beginning" in ancient Greece, and this by way of none other than *theourgia*, an inspirational mode of being and a transformed state of being that was appraised as the highest, as in Proclus' words, "greater than all human temperance and knowledge, gathering together the benefits of prophecy and the purifying forces of effective ritual and absolutely all the activities of divine

²⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 192, page 219. Translation slightly modified. German terms inserted in square brackets are taken from Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 65, § 192, page 312.

²⁶⁷ The understanding of enlightenment in Buddhism, however, gives *Dasein* the potential to rise above gods and spirits. On another note, in his reading of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)'s *Duino Elegies* in *Parmenides*, Heidegger displays his disturbance at the poet's notion that humans must attain the seeing of an animal in the wild in order to be able to see in the *open* in a primordial manner. Heidegger rejects Rilke's position by arguing that he fails to understand the open as *aletheia* and that animals, being without language, cannot "see" the unconcealed as unconcealedness. See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 8, pages 151-161. Yet the fusion of the human and the animal in seeing is important to the practice of shamanism, and it is also taken up in neo-paganism. It may be a point of contention whether Heidegger, in his exclusion of animals from the truth of being, could ever have reached the position of a *complete* paganism. The Greeks, for example, revered divinity in animal form, such as the phoenix, and animals certainly played significant roles in Norse and Celtic paganism.

inspiration.”²⁶⁸ Proclus and the other Neo-Platonists merely affirmed the position taken up by Plato on divine inspiration or “madness” (*mania*) in the *Phaedrus*, which was a significant feature of creativity in the Greek life. Heidegger’s notion of the “natural Greek *Dasein*”²⁶⁹ as the guiding path toward a more primordial illumination of *logos* can therefore appropriate theurgy in its domain of comprehensibility even if he did not write explicitly on this subject. However, anyone familiar with scholarship on theurgy in Western esotericism – from neo-Platonism through Renaissance philosophy to modern occultism such as Thelema and Wicca – can see its outlines in Heidegger’s discourse on the gods that began with *Contributions to Philosophy* and continued to the last years of his life.

Yet it should be emphasised that it was not neo-Platonism, but rather his close reading of and his active scholarship on Nietzsche that brought Heidegger to the proximity of the gods in the “other beginning” of Western thought. While composing *Contributions to Philosophy* in private, if not in secrecy, Heidegger gave thought-provoking lectures on Nietzsche in the public aspect of his academic life.²⁷⁰ Heidegger took seriously the primordial meaning of “the death of God” that allowed Nietzsche, in his own words, to “split history into half”.²⁷¹ Nietzsche’s preoccupation with the epochal meaning of the futurity of human destiny is appropriated by Heidegger in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the sustaining of the primordial split between being and beings in *Ereignis* that attunes *Dasein* to the nearness and the distance of the gods in a mode of being that he calls the “ones to come” (*Zukünftigen*). They are, according to Heidegger, “strangers” in the present age of machination of the gigantic, or the abandonment of being. But united in their like-mindedness, these strangers are harbingers of *Ereignis* who keep “sheltered what is most sheltered” in the “essential swaying” of the truth of being. In *Ereignis*, which is characterised by “silent reticence”, the temporality of the present is *Dasein*’s preparation for these strangers, or the ones to come, in so far as *Dasein*, as *Da-sein*, places itself in the grounding attunement of primordiality that can only come from the recovery and sheltering of inceptual thinking, i.e. the other beginning in Greek philosophy that is attuned to

²⁶⁸ Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, 1.25, cited in Anne Sheppard, “Proclus’ Attitude to Theurgy”, *Classical Quarterly*, Volume 32, Issue 1, 1982, page 219. Neo-Platonists made a distinction between higher and lower theurgy: the former involved philosophical contemplation, i.e. the comprehension of the divine truth by *nous*, and the latter, magic in the realm of human affairs, such as healing through invocation of Asclepius.

²⁶⁹ See Heidegger’s use of this expression in Martin Heidegger, *Plato’s “Sophist”*, § 10, page 45.

²⁷⁰ Published as *Nietzsche* in Volumes 6.1 and 6.2 in *Gesamtausgabe* in 1996 and 1997 respectively. The English translation of *Nietzsche* by David Farrell Krell, Joan Stambaugh and Frank A. Capuzzi, published in four volumes by Harper & Row between 1979 and 1987, is based on a 1961 edition published by Neske. The two-volume *Gesamtausgabe* publication, however, is based on Heidegger’s revisions of the 1961 Neske edition.

²⁷¹ See Martin Heidegger, “Nietzsche’s Word: ‘God Is Dead’” in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Tracks*, pages 157-199.

the fourfold, and not its division and sundering – hence decomposition - as metaphysics has done.²⁷²

In the ones to come, grounding attunement is at the same time “attuned-knowing” as the “will” of *Ereignis* – the essential swaying of truth is therefore a question of higher knowledge that can be considered as a question concerning *gnosis*. Instead of Nietzsche’s will to power which reduces being to power, the will of *Ereignis* is manifest in the “courage” of *Dasein* to remain steadfast to the ecstatic *topos* – given its temporalisation in its being-toward-death – that grounds its being in truth, which is the abyss of being in its turning away from the being of beings, resisting the reifying appropriation of the gigantic in beings with this freedom in groundlessness. Guided by this knowing, the ones to come, as strangers to the present age of metaphysical dissolution, are brought together in a primordial accord that is determined by the destiny of the “last god” (*letzte Gott*).²⁷³ This god, according to Heidegger, is not any god in particular but is known only by its total otherness to all the gods known to humanity, including the God of Christianity.

The totally other over against gods who have been, especially over against the Christian God.²⁷⁴

The last god has its most unique uniqueness and stands outside those calculating determinations meant by titles such as “mono-theism”, “pan-theism”, and “a-theism”. “Monotheism” and all types of “theism” exist only since Judaeo-Christian “apologetics”, which has metaphysics as its intellectual presupposition.²⁷⁵

The last god cannot be named, yet it is not non-being in that it is “unique” and that it “stands outside” the monotheist determinations of “godding” in the Abrahamic traditions that have come to dominate world religious life. Heidegger is less clear on the question of pagan gods. His statement on the last god quoted above, however, precludes it from being one of them. Yet by referring to Heidegger’s understanding of primordial temporality as *the reaching over into the*

²⁷² All quoted expressions from Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 248, page 277. Note the figure of the stranger becomes a motif for the question of *Geschlecht* in Heidegger’s reading of Trakl. See Martin Heidegger, “Language in the Poem”, in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, pages 175-179; and pages 196-198. Heidegger also pays close attention to the linking of the stranger to the madman in Trakl.

²⁷³ All quoted expressions from Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 248, pages 277-278.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., page 283 (title page of Section VII, “The Last God”).

²⁷⁵ Ibid., § 256, page 289.

*futural by what has been, to which the futural is also called,*²⁷⁶ gives us an idea that the question of the last god is not about the identity of this or that god, but like the question of being, is a way of understanding temporality as the horizon of the gods. This, in itself, is a pagan understanding of the divine realm manifest in the Greek and Norse traditions. In genuine paganism, the gods are the *guiding attunement* of a people (*Volk*) to the first and the last things that Heidegger understands as the question of being. To deny the nearness of paganism to the question of the last god is to re-enact the onto-theological denigration of it as idolatry. The primordial meaning of paganism cannot be explained by a term such as “polytheism”, since such word is created in reference to the dominant paradigm of monotheism since the rise of Christianity and Islam beginning in the 3rd and 7th century CE respectively.²⁷⁷ Moreover, Heidegger’s implied non-

²⁷⁶ Ibid. This formulation of primordial temporality has basically remained the same from *Being and Time*.

²⁷⁷ As S. Angus describes in *The Mystery-Religions* (New York: Dover, 1975; reprint of the 1928 edition of *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity* first published in 1925), page 278, the “natural” tolerance of polytheism means that as it prevails in an age, people respect differences in religious opinions and practice, and different gods can be worshipped in the same temple; yet Judaism is the antithesis to such spirit. The contemporary appropriation of paganism by some extreme right groups therefore runs counter to the religious tolerance of paganism in the distant past. It also throws into doubt the legitimacy of the “folkish” rendition of Norse paganism in its contemporary reconstruction as Asatru; however, not all followers of Asatru religion take this line. It can be argued that rather than coming from paganism as such, the “folkish” approach and its organisation have their source in the biologism of Germanic pagan revival that began in the 19th century, viz. Odinism of Guido von List (1848-1919), its modern, revived form being Armanism, which is an aggressive Aryan millennialism. See Friedrich-Wilhelm Haack, *Wotans Wiederkehr: Blut-, Boden- und Rasse-Religion* (München: Claudius, 1981), pages 40-47; also Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2003), pages 23-25. The belief in the racial determination of “goddling”, which Heidegger rejects in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is in the German context known as “*Artglaube*”, which is belief in one’s own ancestry and lineage as the primordality of the sacred. This is in fact an important motif in the Ring cycle in Richard Wagner’s operas. In political action *Artglaube* is expressed in *Artkampf*, which is none other than folkish struggle, and finds its extreme expressions in the Ariosophic writings of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954), who founded the Ordo Novi Templi in 1907, and of course Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). Hitler was influenced by Lanz’ journal, *Ostara*, in his Vienna years. Hitler, however, never fully embraced paganism and his religious passion was directed toward the Aryanisation of Christianity. See Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube Adolf Hitler* (München; Eßlingen: Bechtle, 1968), pages 247-268, where Heer analyses Hitler’s keen interest to reconcile the swastika and the Christian cross in order to achieve unity of state power that he represented. Hitler was more interested in becoming the second Luther of Germany (although he was Catholic himself) than becoming a pagan priest-king of the German *Volk*. Instead of promoting paganism, the Nazi security apparatus kept a close eye on even völkisch religious groups, both Christian and pagan, because the rise of a prophet figure from within the German people to challenge Hitler would not be tolerated. See Wolfgang Dierker, *Himmels Glaubenskrieger: Der Sicherheitsdienst der SS und seine Religionspolitik 1933-1941* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), pages 200-209. As a totalitarian ideology, Nazism was exclusively Hitlerism. It, therefore, cannot be used as a model for a genuine pagan revivalism in Europe; the adoption of pagan symbolism, especially of the Nordic variety, is misguided. In his advocacy of paganism, Pierre Krebs of the Thule Seminar (German New Right), simply uses it as a concept that is antithetical to what he sees as the Semitic influence of Christianity, without offering the cultural and spiritual alternatives that neo-paganism does. See Friedrich Paul Heller and Anton Maegerle, *Thule: Vom Völkischen Okkultismus bis zur Neuen Rechten* (Stuttgart: Schmetterling, 1995), page 133. The ontological meaning of National Socialism, i.e. its *Ereignis*, is yet to be fully explicated, a task that Heidegger never undertook. Racist paganism, which according to Gardell’s study is the fastest rising section of the white racist milieu in

exclusion of polytheism – *Polytheismus* or *Vielgötterei* in German – through omission of its mention in the paragraph cited above is indicative of his overall leaning toward the pagan past of Europe. This is why Heidegger talks about *Götterung* and *Göttern* in *Contributions to Philosophy*, both of which may be linked to *Vielgötterei* but not to the *Gott* of monotheistic faiths. For both pagans and Christians, therefore, the decisive question is that of “godding”, which requires *Dasein*’s grounding attunement to the last god, and not the form of worship.²⁷⁸

This reading is supported by another puzzle that Heidegger adds to his statement on the topic:

The last god is not the end but the other beginning of immeasurable possibilities for our history. For its sake history up to now should not terminate but rather must be brought to its end. We must bring about the transfiguration of its essential and basic positions in crossing [*Übergang*] and in preparedness.

Preparation for the appearing of the last god is the utmost venture of the truth of *Seyn*, by virtue of which alone humans succeed in restoring beings [*Wiederbringung des Seienden*].²⁷⁹

The ones to come, in courage and in reticence, can only restore beings by disassembling the all-reaching power of the gigantic in the age of planetary machination. This restoration is in accord with the “will” of *Ereignis* because it is the essence of *Ereignis* to re-establish the reciprocity of being and beings in the onefold of its wholeness. Ontological difference between being and beings is not differentiation in perpetual dispersion, but the mirroring of the hermeneutic circle in its part and whole relationship in the dynamic equiprimordiality of *Ereignis* and the abyss in our understanding of the truth of being. First and foremost, the fundamental kinship between being and nothingness, already discussed in the beginning of Western thought (Plato’s *Sophist*), is made manifest in this understanding in a meaningful way. If primordial thinking is to have an eschatology, can it be said that the will of *Ereignis* is expressed through the last god, like in Christianity where the will of God is expressed through the ministry of Christ?

In Heidegger’s understanding, the last god is indeed determined by *Ereignis*.

America, is an example of spiritual biologism, where “godding” is interpreted in the language of blood and genes. See Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the Blood*, page 17.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Gail Stenstad, “The Last God – A Reading”, *Research in Phenomenology*, Volume 23 (1993), pages 75-88, which does not support my reading and claims that Heidegger is talking about a “no-god”. But a Buddhist interpretation of Western paganism is problematic in light of the Greek foundation of Heidegger’s discourse on “godding”.

²⁷⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 256, page 289.

The last god is not *Ereignis* itself; rather, it requires *Ereignis* as that to which the founder of the there [*Dagründer*] belongs.²⁸⁰

If the last god is in need of *Ereignis* in order to be, this grants a meaningful destiny for *Dasein*, because *Ereignis* is grounded in the “*da*” of *Dasein*.²⁸¹ This is quite different in meaning from *parousia*, or the second *adventus* of Christ, even if a devout “Heideggerian pagan” similarly awaits the return of the gods as the renewal of the meaning of being in *Dasein*. In Christianity, it is the decision of Christ that determines the time of *parousia*. In Heidegger, both the gods and humanity are determined in their meaning in the history of being by way of *Ereignis*. Yet *Ereignis* is not eschatological, and no kairological narrative can be written in respect of it.²⁸² The last god is not a prophecy, but a moment of lightening of being in mindful awareness of being. It is how *Dasein* is historicised in the *Lichtung* in *Besinnung*. This is the pagan sacred, or *daimonion*, in the being-historical manifestation of the truth of being.

Ereignis lacks the “objectivity” of a historical event, such as the resurrection of Christ or his expected return. It is essential to remember that *Ereignis* takes on the character of an abyss as soon as “thought” brings it too close to the being of beings. The principle of ontological difference then immediately applies. But in this case “thought” is still lingering in the traditional domain of metaphysics and has not yet been fully liberated. Whereas in the state of liberation, namely in the truth of being, ontology is its own undoing, spontaneously. *Dasein* exists prior to the appropriation of history, whether sacred or profane, by metaphysical thought. *Dasein* is

²⁸⁰ Ibid., § 256, page 288. I have replaced “enowning” with the original term of *Ereignis*.

²⁸¹ This can be likened to the “heretical” notion of Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) that God requires humanity to exist; on his own God is nothing. Although not mentioned in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger was interested in this German mystic in the early years of his career, when he gave a lecture course posthumously published as *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, in which Eckhardt influenced his understanding of Western mysticism.

²⁸² A pagan reading of Heidegger is sustained by a decisive, hermeneutic recognition of *Contributions to Philosophy* as the complete *turning away* from the Christian ethos that inspired Heidegger’s works from the 1920s, which include *Being and Time*. Christian appropriation of Heidegger can only be based on his early works; a recent example of this recurring tendency in Heidegger scholarship is Benjamin D. Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Authenticity and Destruction* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2006). See especially Crowe’s insightful comparison of Heidegger’s *Destruktion* in *Being and Time* to *destructio (opus alienum)* in Martin Luther’s *theologia crucis* (page 45; pages 62-66). A question can be asked whether the later Heidegger was still “religious” in the Western sense. The theme of religion in Heidegger’s early works is tackled with phenomenological single-mindedness in Angus Brook, “What is Religion?” PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2005; on page 131 Brook mentions that Heidegger’s marriage to Elfride Petri, who was Protestant, might have influenced him to study Luther in depth; on page 132, what was appropriated by Heidegger from Luther is discussed. Brook and Crowe converge on the thesis that Heidegger’s notions of care, authenticity and being-toward-death in *Being and Time* have their source in Luther’s *theologia crucis*, which emphasises the primacy of the individual’s conscience and choices before the church as an institution.

always there before metaphysics, whether it prevails over human thinking or not (like it has in the West). The “there” of *Dasein* does not consume itself because of the pre-ontological facticity in its primary mode of being as being-in-the-world. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger demonstrates hermeneutically how the worldhood of the world determines *Dasein* in its factual being. This being the case, *Dasein* always already has some familiarity with its surroundings in at least a pre-philosophical manner. The familiarity of this kind also provides assurances for *Dasein*’s in its being-with (*Mitsein*) that it shares with others in the world and constitutes *Dasein*’s understanding of “life”. *Ereignis* needs the factual in-abiding (*Inständigkeit*) of this familiarity in *Dasein* so that the truth of being can be “incarnate”. Heidegger never intends *Dasein* to cross over into the invisibility of the spirit.²⁸³ Instead *Dasein* opens up the question of embodiment, difficult because it contains death, and the abyss of nothingness that is its being-toward-death. In terms of the development of his thought, it was not until the seminars in Zollikon, conducted with scientists and doctors between 1959 and 1969, that Heidegger thematised the body in his thought. The main corpus of his writings, on the other hand, points to a peculiar absence of embodiment as the most proximal phenomenon to the selfhood of *Dasein*.²⁸⁴ Given that it is the body that grounds *Dasein* in its being-in-the-world and is temporalised as impermanence in its being-toward-death, *Dasein* as the founder of the “there” (*Dagründer*) is needed by the last god in that it requires in-abiding of some kind. Only then does it make sense for *Dasein* to be in grounding attunement to the passing (*Vorbeigang*) and the advent (*Ankunft*) of this god: *Ereignis* grounds it in phenomenality. Heidegger’s paganism is robustly immanent. Immanence involves bodily existence. And historical paganism abounds in examples of deities that have bodies. Foremost in Greek mythology were the titans of both sexes (*Geschlechter*), also known as the elder gods of pre-Olympian antiquity, who were renowned for their gigantic embodiment. The first gods were titans. Mnemosyne, the female titan of memory, is mentioned by Heidegger in *What is Called Thinking?*, who describes the metaphysical oblivion of being as the expulsion (*Vertreibung*) of this goddess from the midst of *Dasein*.²⁸⁵ He adds that a world without the blessings of Mnemosyne is a devastated world, a wasteland that grows also in the

²⁸³ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 193, page 221: “*Da-sein* does not lead out of a being and does not vaporize (*verdunstet*) a being into a spirituality (*Geistigkeit*). On the contrary: In accordance with the uniqueness of primordial being (*gemäß der Einzigkeit des Seyns*) opens up above all the unsettleness (*Unruhe*) of a being, whose ‘truth’ is sustained only in a renewed inceptual struggle with its sheltering-into what is created by historical man.” Translation slightly modified. The tension between primordiality and historicity finds its *topos* in *Dasein* and is manifest on the level of *Mitdasein* as the strife between world and earth.

²⁸⁴ See *ibid.*, § 193, page 220. Heidegger sees body as only a partial explication of the meaning of *Dasein*; the body is seen as an orientation to a part, like soul or spirit, in the determination of *Dasein*.

²⁸⁵ Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, page 30.

hearts of humans, thus hidden from view.²⁸⁶ This wasteland is a great danger as it renders null the futurity of *Dasein's* destiny; it can bring about the death of primordial time. Mnemosyne is therefore needed by *Dasein* as the “godding” in the remembrance of the primordial question of being, so that it can be genuinely futural in the opening of the open in *aletheia*. A full retrieval of the question of being in the theurgic sense therefore calls for invocation of the *gnosis* of a titaness such as Mnemosyne, who is endowed with primordial memory and who blesses the mortals with the power to recollect and to live in remembrance. Being the daughter of the sky god Uranus and the earth goddess Gaia, Mnemosyne is well-suited to the role of uniting sky and earth with her primordial memory of humanity in Heidegger’s sacred schemata of the fourfold. The gigantic therefore can be reclaimed by Mnemosyne from the subjectivism of a *Dasein* distorted by the machination of the will to power in the age of nihilism. This can be likened to Parmenides’ goddess of truth reclaiming *aletheia* from the metaphysics of correspondence and representation, which excludes the question of being. The return of the primordial “godding” is fundamentally titanic in nature. And with the return of Mnemosyne in our contemplation on “godding”, the primordiality of being, depicted as *Seyn* by Heidegger, then becomes a question of titanism that places *Dasein* in the attunement of the awe. Titanism is in fact a main feature of the question of being in the first beginning of Western philosophy: *gigantomachia*, or the battle of the giants, in Plato’s *Sophist*. The battle is over the meaning of being. It involves two parties, the giants and the gods. The giants, who are earthbound, argue for the exclusive reality of the present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*), such as the trees, the rocks and the body, while the gods, who come from heaven, argue for the exclusive reality of ideas. On the hermeneutic level, it is a conflict between time and eternity as the horizon for the understanding of being. It is resolved in the *Sophist* in the figure of a child, born of a union between a giant and a god, who pleads for the unity of the earth and heaven in understanding of being. From then on both the visible (*oraton*) and the invisible (*aoraton*) have access to this understanding, and in this understanding itself the onefold of the truth of being can be found. Plato’s inquiry, however, did not stay in this way of questioning.

If metaphysics began with the tip of its balance in favour of Plato’s ideas, such that the original question of being became gradually forgotten with the passage of time, then the expulsion of the titans by the sky god Zeus, in a war known as the *titanomachia*, from the heights

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pages 29-30. On these pages Heidegger explains his point as follows: “Devastation is more than destruction. Devastation is more unearthly than destruction. Destruction only sweeps aside all that has been grown up or been built up so far; but devastation blocks all future growth and prevents all building. Devastation is more unearthly than mere destruction. Mere destruction sweeps aside all things including even nothingness, while devastation on the contrary establishes and spreads everything that blocks and prevents.”

of the earth to its abysses in Tartarus can be described as a moment of similar oblivion in the history of being in “godding”.²⁸⁷ The dualism between sky and earth held the myths of Olympian paganism together; but the abyss became an object of fear and was associated with death (Hades) and black magic. The later Christian persecutions of paganism were further distortions of this original distortion. Yet this pre-Christian dualism is always at the edge of being destabilised by the question of *Geschlecht* as that of the sexes, for the female titans such as Mnemosyne were spared by Zeus. Zeus, in fact, slept with Mnemosyne for nine consecutive nights, who bore the nine Muses: Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania and Calliope – in the order they are first mentioned in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. The Muses, all female, gave mortals, at their discretion, inspiration for music, dance, poetry, learning and history. In the *Cratylus* Socrates described the Muses as scholars’ allies. The library in Plato’s Academy contained a shrine dedicated to the Muses, and was called *mouseion*.²⁸⁸ Numerous positive references to the Muses are extant in the dialogues of Plato other than the *Cratylus*. They serve as evidence that the Muses were otherworldly guides deeply revered by the philosophers and were probably *daimons* of the highest order. However, the Greeks also understood the Muses to react cruelly to those who challenged them or showed them disrespect. Their beneficence came with the freedom of the “demonic”.

The Muses, being the daughters born of sexual union between a god and a titaness, bears the primordial meaning that the *gigantomachia* or *titanomachia* in the question of being is resolved this time through the making possible of the grounding attunement of mortal *Dasein* in its guardianship of the truth of being, namely in the two activities that Heidegger valued most, *denken* and *dichten* – thinking and making poetry. The question of the *Geschlecht* of the Muses – their femaleness – is however beyond the boundary of *Contributions to Philosophy*, if not that of Heidegger’s thought altogether, based on his reticence on sex. Yet the Muses’ collective replication of the *Geschlecht* of Mnemosyne signifies the importance of memory in inspiration

²⁸⁷ See Hesiod, *Theogony*, pages 45-46: “... Proud though the Titans were,/They were defeated by those hands, and sent/To misty Tartarus, as far beneath/The earth, as earth is far beneath the heavens.” The “hands” referred to the joint war efforts of the Olympian gods led by Zeus. A similar motif can be found in Norse mythology, namely in the recurrent conflicts between the Aesir, deities of the upper world (*Ásgarðr*) and the giants (*jötnar*) of the outer world (*Utgarðr*), culminating in *Ragnarök*, when the old world will be destroyed, and both the gods and the giants with it (with some survivors for the post-*Ragnarök* new world). Yet the opposition between the gods and the giants is not dualistic, since their dealings include many beneficial ones, including marriage. Thor, the most prominent Aesir warrior, is a son of Jörð, the goddess of earth, who is possibly a giantess. See Rudolf Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, translated by Angela Hall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996), page 179. Yet Thor is also a sky god, he being, like Zeus in Greek mythology, the controller of lightning. Thor is known as Donar in German, and Thursday (*Donnerstag*) is named after him.

²⁸⁸ The *mouseion* was the origin of modern museums.

for philosophy and poetry. Remembrance (*Andenken*), not oblivion (*Vergessenheit*), brings *Dasein* into the proximity of the question of primordially in being, such that its own being-in-the-world is transformed into a *topos* of this questioning. It is also a *topos* of remembrance: a shrine to Mnemosyne on the sacred remembrance of being.

Reticence, as mentioned in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is an expression of the “sheltering of truth” in being in *Dasein*’s struggle against nihilism.²⁸⁹ Therefore the question of femininity in *Geschlecht* is probably closer to the truth of being, hence *Ereignis*, than it first meets the eye – the primordial question is that of *Geschlecht* itself. That it played a role in the “godding” of Mnemosyne’s offsprings – in the onefold of their *Geschlecht* in femininity – opens up the possibility of femininity in the history of being to resolve the strife between world and earth, or between the gigantic and *Dasein*, in the present age. The last god, who preserves *Dasein* against total destruction by nihilism through its needing of the existential ground of *Dasein* in *Ereignis*, may cut the figure of a goddess. Perhaps the return of Mnemosyne will meet the call of these dangerous times. Mnemosyne’s remembrance of the question of being – hence in fundamental attunement to *Sein* and *Ereignis* – as well as her gigantic embodiment as a *titanis* will make her a formidable foe against the gigantism of beings caught up in the machination of planetary subjectivism.

The essential primordially of futurity in *Dasein*’s ecstasis creates a clearing in the realm of the being of beings that prepares *Dasein* for the monumental event of another *gigantomachia*. This time, instead of a Platonic doctrine of the two worlds, what will be shown instead is the belonging together of *Dasein*, as *understanding of being*, and earth – in an *Ereignis* that has the blessings of Mnemosyne.

§ 14. Hölderlin, Remembrance and the Revelation of Daimonion

The eminence of the *Geschlecht* of Mnemosyne and the Muses leads to the question whether in the existential region of the understanding of being as *Dasein*, there exists a *Geschlecht* that can illuminate the difficult question of the ground of the there, i.e. the figure of the *Daggründer* in *Ereignis*, in the highly esoteric issue of preparing for the advent of the last god’s *theourgia*, who

²⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 38, page 55. This is sigetic hermeneutics that Heidegger believes sways in the essential being of language itself, as “clearing of sheltering”. In abyssal times, clearing is never simple disclosure. In the same section Heidegger writes: “Reticence in silence has a higher law than any logic.” Even if the gods are still present with us, they are sigetic, i.e. staying away from the metaphysical articulation and grasping of a humanity that is oblivious of its existential distress.

may in fact be a goddess. The answer is found in the figure of the poet (*Dichter*) as a distinct *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* that is eminently suitable for the struggle of destiny at hand. Heidegger is well-known for his decisive turn toward poetry (*poesis*) in the *aletheia* of being made possible by the openings created by his questioning of being in *Contributions to Philosophy*. In it Hölderlin receives Heidegger's highest assessment. While Nietzsche is more evident on its pages as a fellow traveller on the urgent question of nihilism, Heidegger regards him as still being bound up with the assumptions of metaphysics.²⁹⁰ According to Heidegger's experience, Nietzsche demands a close engagement in the serious work of primordial thinking, but he is also to be left behind in order for it to continue outside metaphysical tradition. Not so with Hölderlin. The thinking in his poetry is so unlike the Western metaphysicians that Heidegger's own thought since the early 1930s began to follow the trajectory of desire – the full absorption of Hölderlin into his meditative thinking on being. In fact Heidegger began working on Hölderlin in earnest before he commenced work on *Contributions to Philosophy*. During the winter semester of 1934–1935 Heidegger gave a lecture course on Hölderlin's famous poems "Germania" and "The Rhine".²⁹¹ Hölderlin is for Heidegger an authentic case of *Dasein* as the grounder of the abyss in his receptivity to the mysteries of the gods. Heidegger's admiration for Hölderlin is based on his recognition of the poet as a true kin to his original vision in fundamental ontology, namely the primacy of the futurity of *Dasein* in its being-toward-death. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger describes Hölderlin as "the one who *poeticized the furthest ahead*".²⁹² In "Die Einzigkeit des Dichters" from 1943, Heidegger portrays Hölderlin as a true oracle of the German people who shelters the truth of being in both the said and the unsaid (*Unge-sprochene*) in what he poetised (*Gedichtete*).²⁹³ After the war, in his 1946 essay "Why Poets?", Heidegger equates Hölderlin's path in poetry as the trajectory of primordial temporality itself:

²⁹⁰ It can be said that Nietzsche did not make decisive enough a turn in his thinking when he composed the poem "Nur Narr, Nur Dichter!" Heidegger would have seen the supreme belonging together of madness and *poesis* in Hölderlin. For Heidegger's positive appraisal of creative madness, see Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"*, §§ 18-19, pages 44-48, where he discusses his notion of a *Wesensort* of otherness being involved in Hölderlin's madness and the poet's essential journeying there through his poetry.

²⁹¹ Published as Volume 39 of *Gesamtausgabe* in 1980; revised edition in 1989. No English translation available.

²⁹² Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 105, page 143.

²⁹³ Martin Heidegger, "Die Einzigkeit des Dichters", in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 75 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), page 37. In the same notes Heidegger refers to Hölderlin's self-understanding in his poem "The Poet's Vocation" ("Dichterberuf"). That Hölderlin can also be described as a *daimon* is supported by the following stanza from the same poem: "Der unverhoffte Genius über uns/Der schöpferische, göttliche kam, daß stumm/Der Sinn uns ward und, wie vom/Strale gerührt das Gebein erbebt"; "Divine, creative Genius came over us,/Dumbfounding mind and sense, unforgettably,/And left us as though struck by lightning/Down to our bones that were still aquiver". Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 172-173. This is in fact a phenomenological account of the liminal

Hölderlin is the forerunner (*Vorgänger*) of the poets in a desolate time. That is why no poet of this era can overtake him. The forerunner, however, does not go away into a future, rather he arrives from it in such a way that in the advent of his words alone the future presences. The more purely the advent takes place, the more essentially, the more essenced, it remains.

... What essences (*das Wesende*) in the advent gathers itself back into destiny.²⁹⁴

Heidegger finds in Hölderlin's poetry the power of the Heraclitean *polemos* in the modern age of nihilism, when *Dasein's* futural being is increasingly less understood in its true meaning – and when Heidegger was forbidden to speak futurally as himself, in the full expression of the history of being, during the Nazi years of rampant gigantism that covered over the flight of the gods. The distress of the “desolate time”, mentioned by Hölderlin in “Bread and Wine”, forms the primary existential mood of *Dasein*, which overtakes the mood of *Angst* relating simply to individual nullity in *Dasein* analytic.²⁹⁵ In the manner of catharsis, which is the projecting open of *Dasein* in the inception of another beginning in the retrieved thought on being, Heidegger's lectures on Hölderlin allowed him to transmit the *polemos* of the truth of being in *Ereignis* through a hermeneutic fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) between him and the dead poet. In the privacy of *Contributions to Philosophy*, away from the prying eyes of Nazi informers in lecture halls, Heidegger poses the following question in respect of Hölderlin:

Must we not turn in our thinking to totally different domains and standards and ways of being, in order to become ones who still belong to the necessities that are breaking open here? Or does this history as the ground of *Dasein* continue to be inaccessible to us, not because it is past, but because it is still too futural for us?²⁹⁶

state of divine possession in theurgy – hence the *daimonion* hypothesis. Just as *daimonic* is Heidegger's account of *Erzitterung*, translated as “enquivering” in *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 127, page 173: it is how the “godding” (*Götterung*) of gods in primordial being (*Sein*) becomes open to *Dasein*, and the experience is characterised by an intimacy (*Innigkeit*) that is no doubt familiar to mystics. Cf. the experience of “onrushing” (*Ansturm*) in the moments of *Dasein's* grounding and creating: *ibid.*, § 193, page 221.

²⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?” in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, page 240.

²⁹⁵ This is the meaningful difference between Heidegger of *Being and Time* and Heidegger of Hölderlin lectures and *Contributions to Philosophy* onward, while maintaining continuity through mindfulness of the history of being, i.e. as *seingeschichtliches Dasein*.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In the age of the abandonment of being, when the abyss as being's refusal to reveal itself through absence and nothingness is a sign of the gods in flight, the heterogeneity and the difficulty of access in the *topoi* of Hölderlin's poetry reaffirms the importance of mindfulness of the strange, the difficult, and the uncanny in *daimonion* that inspired philosophers as the scattered *topoi* of the truth of being. In its absence, the being-together (*Mitsein*) of a *Volk* is the mere herding together of the oblivion of being *en masse* and not a genuine gathering together in the understanding of being, or *logos* as Heraclitus knew it.

Heidegger lectured again on Hölderlin in the winter semester of 1941-1942 and in the summer semester of 1942, on "Remembrance" and "The Ister" respectively.²⁹⁷ In both Heidegger maintained his reading of Hölderlin as the unconcealment of the "other beginning" in Greece – an important notion of historicity in *Contributions to Philosophy* that points to the *daimonion* experienced by the first Western thinkers – that is essential for modern *Dasein* to grasp for the sake of its own restoration in being. Only then will *Dasein* truly understand the significance of the flight of the gods in modernity and how, with this understanding, *Dasein* will realise that nothing short of the return of the gods to attend what Hölderlin calls the wedding feast (*Brautfest*), which celebrates the union through *theourgia* in esoteric humanity and earth, will satisfy *Dasein's* primordial yearning that is awoken through *Ereignis*.²⁹⁸ Such union forms the basis for devotional practice in religious traditions in both West and East. An example is deity yoga in Tibetan Buddhism, which resembles theurgy in the Greek mysteries. Even Christianity, with its denial of the body in *Dasein*, talks about "marriage to Christ" for women who enter convents.

Hölderlin was probably the most pagan poet in Christian Europe. Even his admiration of Christ followed the manner of some Wiccans today, i.e. from a certain spiritual distance that cannot constitute the full body of a faith. Hölderlin's entire work can be described as a Romanticist regeneration of the theogony of the Greek gods, titans and Muses in the spiritual and aesthetic life of 19th century Germany, which is notable for its absence of the divine in the primordial sense. It was the age of German Idealism when Hegel, a fellow student of Hölderlin's, established a universal dialectics that used reason as the ground of God. Idealism, in its search for certitude in "spirit" ("*Geist*"), was manifest as the taking over of "godding" by metaphysics. Christianity became a rational faith that came to serve the interests of the state,

²⁹⁷ Published as Volumes 52 and 53 of *Gesamtausgabe* in 1982 and 1984 respectively. English translation is available for the latter: Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*, translated by William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

²⁹⁸ Friedrich Hölderlin, "The Rhine", in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, page 419. The emblem here is of course the perennial esotericism of *hieros gamos*.

which was the perfection of *polis* in reason. In this barren climate of metaphysical supremacy, Hölderlin's enchantment with demigods (*Halbgötter*), who are referred to with spiritual intimacy in "The Rhine",²⁹⁹ was something quite out of time altogether. Yet his natural closeness to the Greek experience of the *daimons* preserved him in the *topos* of primordiality that was only accessible in paganism. Even Hölderlin's poems on Christ display a pagan spirituality, in that he is believed to be present in the gods of other traditions; hence "Christ" is understood as an expression of "godding" in being.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, the divine as the one and the only one, which is the dogma of Christianity, placed great strain on Hölderlin's psyche. He was fully aware of the impossibility of spiritual reconciliation between the Church and his pagan sensibilities and longings. Yet in his understanding of the gods as the sacred in the immanence of nature which nevertheless calls for the transcendence of *Dasein* in the latter's grounding attunement to them, Hölderlin was unique among European thinkers to associate the divine with *topos*: hence Germany as Germania, the priestess for all her neighbouring nations who connects them with the gods, not as a nation state with military ambitions, but as a gathering place feasting in spiritual wholeness and honouring the old gods through it.³⁰¹ Germania shelters, reveals and celebrates the gathering of the sacred, as dwelling in the worlding of the world that is primordially open to *Dasein* as the receiver of the gods, in the crossings of different nations in the middle European *topos* of Germany. In Hölderlin's ecstatic vision, the futural Germany is a land of priestesses serving the gods and the spiritual needs of Germans and their neighbours – in a sense he is a *seiðr* far ahead of his time.³⁰²

Doch in der Mitte der Zeit
 Lebt ruhig mit geweihter
 Jungfräulicher Erde der Aether
 Und gerne, zur Erinnerung, sind

²⁹⁹ Ibid., page 417. "Of demigods now I think/And I must know these dear ones/Because so often their lives/Move me and fill me with longing."

³⁰⁰ See, for example, "The Only One" (First Version), *ibid.*, page 449. German title of the poem: "Der Einzige" (Erste Fassung). In the same poem Christ is called the brother of the demigods Heracles and Dionysos.

³⁰¹ The revival of the Norse tradition in the Asatru movement centres itself on the ritual and the feast of *Blót*, which may be close to what Hölderlin had in mind. Indeed "*Opfermahl*", translated by Hamburger as "votive feast", is a guiding theme in "Germania"; see Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 402-403. An Asatru appropriation of Heidegger is a moment of scholarship that is yet to be seen.

³⁰² *Seiðr* is the Norse equivalent of a shaman as described in the *Eddas*. Its return as a spiritual practice in Heathenry – the North European traditions in neo-paganism that includes Asatru – is discussed in Jenny Blain, "Seidhr and Seidhrworkers: Recovering Shamanic Practice in Contemporary Heathenism", *The Pomegranate*, Number 6 (1998), pages 6-19 and Jenny Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seid-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-shamanism in Northern European Magic* (London: Routledge, 2002), pages 33-38.

Die unbedürftigen sie
 Gastfreundlich bei den unbedürftigen
 Bei den Feiertagen
 Gemania, wo du Priesterin bist
 Und wehrlos Rath giebst rings
 Den Königen und den Völkern.

Yet at the centre of Time
 In peace with hallowed,
 With virginal Earth lives Aether
 And gladly, for remembrance, they
 The never-needy dwell
 Hospitably among the never-needy,
 Amid your holidays,
 Germania, where you are priestess and
 Defenceless proffer all round
 Advice to the kings and the peoples.³⁰³

Hölderlin's bringing together of the divine and *topos* can be likened to the gathering of beings in the primordial meaning of *legein* in language, with poetry as its eminent example, that according to Heidegger makes possible a genuine posing of the question, "What is being?" This event, as arising from *Ereignis*, in which each element in a *topos* comes into its own in mutual resonance without being reified as identities, is what prevents Hölderlin's pagan poetry from falling into the idolatry of mere representation. Instead the hermeneutics of *topos* inspires the fourfold, where the gods are the in-dwelling of the earthly "timing-spacing-thinging"³⁰⁴ that gives primordial meaning to *Dasein's* being-in-the-world. As mythical *topos*, the holism of the fourfold experienced by Greeks can be invoked for recurrence in the futurity of *Dasein*, enabling it to be resolute in the present for the preparation of the gods' return in the future. Indeed through myth and its poetic expressions, the meaning of *topos* is illuminated by Heidegger's holistic interpretation of "being-in" as the primordial meaning of place (*Ort*), and

³⁰³ Friedrich Hölderlin, "Germania", in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 406-407.

³⁰⁴ While timing-spacing is a dynamic way of describing the inseparable relation of time and space in *Contributions to Philosophy*, its joining to the primordial phenomenon of "thinging" is a creative and fitting coinage in Gail Stenstad, *Transformations: Thinking after Heidegger*, pages 118-119, as it indicates how *Dasein* can go about its everyday existence in the blessed state of the fourfold.

with *Dasein* as an eminent case of temporalised “being-in”, the sacred and the divine in *topos* are “enowned” in being as primordially temporalised space. This is Hölderlin’s understanding of the return of the mythical kingdom of Hesperia – the *topos* and the temporality of the elder gods from Mnemosyne’s era – through a pagan renewal of Germany as Germania.³⁰⁵ Heidegger’s guardianship of the truth of being has this esoteric aim in mind. Heidegger’s own spiritual vision of *Dasein* preparing the ground for the advent of the last god, an enactment of being that at the same time requires *Dasein*’s preparing itself as the grounder of the divine in the abyss of being, has its source in Hölderlin’s “Germania”. The truth of being is the pagan receptivity and resoluteness of *Dasein*. Being provides the open (*Offene*) for *Dasein* to enter into relation with the gods in the rapture and devotion of *aletheia*, the divine essence of which was already experienced by Parmenides in the inception of Western thinking. In this being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) awareness, which is also the contention between the first and the other beginning in ontology, it is evident that an esoteric temporality determines Heidegger’s mindfulness of being, one that acts as the horizontal schema for his reading of philosophy and poetry in *Dasein*’s originary transcendence in *Ereignis*. The question originally asked in *Being and Time*, namely whether time is the transcendental horizon for the explication of being, is transformed into a moment of Western esotericism as a question of the *topoi* of the gods, with or without their future “twilight” in Ragnarok, since being always endures as the open as long as *Dasein* is appropriated in the fourfold. This appropriation, however, makes manifest the uncanny in *daimonion*, and unsettles any metaphysical attempt to stabilise our understanding of both Heidegger and Hölderlin. Authentic paganism, bearing the gift of this “dark side”, resists any naïve romanticisation of the fourfold. The earth is not only the firm ground to take a walk on and the fertile soil from which myriad plant forms grow; it is also the abyss, and not only because the dead is buried in it. The interpretation of the fourfold by way of the belonging together of being and nothingness in *Ereignis* is paramount in the struggle against the appropriation of the sacred by what is “otherwise than being”, i.e. God and *techne* (gigantism).³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ In Hölderlin’s later writings, his fear of the daimonically inspired oracle becoming a battleground between the mortals and the gods introduces a classical notion of tragedy into the futurity of *Dasein*. See Eva Kocziszky, *Mythenfiguren in Hölderlins Spätwerk* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1997), page 73. Heidegger shares Hölderlin’s sense of tragedy on the destiny of being for *Dasein*. See, for example, Heidegger’s description of the present age entering the “midnight” of the history of being. Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?”, in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, page 201. But midnight being a midpoint in the night, it can also be understood as the time of turning in *Ereignis*.

³⁰⁶ This is an allusion to Emmanuel Levinas, whose antipathy to Heidegger’s paganism is based on a misreading of the fourfold as an idealised state of being. See Hent de Vries, “Theotopographies: Nancy, Hölderlin, Heidegger”, *MLN*, Volume 109, Number 3 (April 1994), page 460. On the deeper level it points to the unbridgeable gulf, hence a manifestation of the abyss, between pagan and Abrahamic understandings of the divine and the sacred that according to Michael Hamburger sent

The marriage of earth and aether in the “Germania” poem brings to mind the origin or “goddess” of Mnemosyne, daughter of sky god and mother earth. Although Heidegger does not name her as a possible candidate for the last god in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Mnemosyne as the goddess of memory and remembrance holds a place of special significance for him. Mnemosyne signifies a topology of the sacred in the primordially of being in that she brings back and preserves the memory of the question of being that is forgotten in Western metaphysics. In face of the question of being, Mnemosyne is probably the deity most important to *Dasein*’s own abiding in the fourfold. This is because remembrance in the fourfold invokes the thoughtful remembrance (*Andenken*) of being, as it is a hermeneutic circle on the sacred non-ground of being in the world of beings, which is not the negation of nothingness, but pure openness in which the originary Greek experience of appearance as luminosity (*Lichtung*) holds true – in *aletheia*.³⁰⁷ How the close relationship between nature and the fourfold can become manifest in the openness of being can be summed up in the beginning line of a poem entitled “Der Herbst” by Hölderlin, “Das Glänzen der Natur ist höheres Erscheinen” – “The luminosity of nature is appearance of a higher order” (my translation).³⁰⁸ In the primordial sense, this is the lightening (*Lichtung*) of manifold beings, as contained in *physis*, in the open or clearing (*Lichtung*) of *aletheia*, which determined the Greek experience and understanding of *physis*.³⁰⁹ Lightening, the open and clearing belong together. This being so, nature, through being *physis*, appears to *Dasein* as a revelation (*Enthüllen*), not of any first principle as in onto-theology, but of the recurrent differing of *daimonion* in the earthly manifold of earth.³¹⁰

Hölderlin insane. In Heidegger, however, the *Destruktion* of the onto-theology of monotheism is integral to the retrieval of the question of being right from the beginning. It is Heidegger’s insight into *Ereignis* in his inquiry into the meaning of being that prevented his paganism, nascent as it was never self-confessed, from finding its ground in what Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke has identified as the varied manifestations of Ariosophy, or Aryan esotericism, which was influential in Germany before and during the Nazi years.

³⁰⁷ In terms of *Dasein*’s understanding of being, *Lichtung*, as the lightening of the light, is enlightening in understanding – however, in *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger transforms this primordial phenomenon into the shimmering of *daimonion* in *Ereignis*. On this occasion I translate *Lichtung* as luminosity to prepare the reader for the comparative hermeneutics in the second half of Part Three, where I introduce the primordial Tibetan notion of the ground of being as luminous emptiness in which myriad beings appear as if in a magic dance.

³⁰⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Das Glänzen der Natur ist höheres Erscheinen”, in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen*, pages 203-209. These are previously unpublished notes from 1970. “Der Herbst” is not found in the Hamburger edition; included however is a different poem of the same title, written by Hölderlin after he went mad. On the question of luminosity of phenomena, see my discussion of this essential notion in the Tibetan tradition of Dzogchen in Chapter 3, “Of Source, Primordially and Lighting”.

³⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 207, page 231.

³¹⁰ *Daimonion* is the phenomenological grounding of deep ecology. This is one reason why neo-paganism is characterised by its spiritual and existential orientation toward nature, because in antiquity many pagan gods were identified with natural forms

Moreover, *Dasein* and *aletheia* are in the primordial relationship of *Ereignis* in that “the essential sway of truth has been originarily transformed into *Da-sein*.”³¹¹ In a way not dissimilar to the gods, *aletheia* as the lightening of the truth of being needs the grounding of *Dasein* as the *Dagründer*. This is how nature, which for Hölderlin is enduring as sacred *topos* or dwelling, becomes relevant as the opening in the history of being for the return of the gods. Not only the phenomenon of embodiment in *Dasein*, but the physical manifestations of nature as *physis* are what enables the gods to become grounded in the time-space of *Dasein* as an essential theurgy that in itself grounds all of its occult occurrences in the history of being. Precisely in this sense, occult movements which utilise the *techne* of theurgy, such as Thelema and Wicca, are in their contemporary existence manifesting Heidegger’s understanding of primordial temporality as the fusion of horizons between the past and the future. Furthermore, Heidegger’s definition of inception as the recurrent moment of significance that opens up being into *aletheia* – and the transcendent ecstasis of *Dasein* in its finite modality in its potentiality-for-being – allows for an interpretation of the fundamental event of *Ereignis* as the insemination of sacred time in profane time. This in fact is the core understanding of esotericism in the universal sense: the entry of the sacred into the profane so that a profound transformation of *Dasein* can take place, be it salvation in the Western sense or enlightenment in the Eastern sense. And if inception in the history of being is to be invoked after the manner of Heidegger, Heraclitus’ notion of the unity of *Dasein* and nature, which even the gods cannot interfere with, is the highest cosmic principle that as an enactment of being is the ground for the fourfold of gods and humans, *ouranos* and *gaia*.³¹²

Yet it is quite clear that Germania is not the Germany of Hölderlin’s as well as Heidegger’s time. The distinct, if not dignified, mode of being of “reserved reticence”, chosen by the *Dasein* that has resolutely made the decision to guard the truth of being in face of the contemporary onslaught of nihilism, has its origin in Hölderlin’s description of the German priestess in “Germania”:

Die Priesterin, die stillste Tochter Gottes,
Sie, zu gern in tiefer Einfalt schweigt,

and forces, whereas monotheism treat them merely as creations of a supreme being that is separated from *physis*. In Christianity, therefore, God has to borrow a human body in order for humanity to be able to relate to him again.

³¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 207, page 231.

³¹² Heraclitus, *The Fragments of the Work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on Nature*, translated by George Thomas White Patrick with Introduction (Baltimore: N. Murray, 1889), page 82.

The priestess, her, the quietest daughter of God,
 Too fond of keeping silent in deep ingenuousness,³¹³

Significantly, in his comment on Hölderlin in the beginning of “Why Poets?”, Heidegger reveals that the ground of the world no longer grounds because of the flight of the gods.³¹⁴ This implies that the abyss will withdraw from *Dasein*’s comportment to being (*Seinsverhältnis*) if the fourfold can become fully realised in the history of being. In modernity, the fourfold is at best a temple with absent gods; as a holistic resistance against nihilism, it is at best a heterotopia, a *topos* of being where the uncanny difference of *daimonion* holds sway. The possibility of an utopian advent of the gods in history, like the scene of the votive feast led by the awakened priestess in “Germania”, is challenged by the hope in Christian onto-theology in the second coming of Christ. Through “Germania”, and also through the tragic example of its author’s complete breakdown into silence and withdrawal, Heidegger sees the ironical clearing of being in the abyss of modern times that forms the difficult theme in his own meditation on being in *Contributions to Philosophy*. *Ereignis* configures the abyss but cannot relieve *Dasein* of it and replace it with the luminous ecstasy of the gods, who have all withdrawn into their primordial abode of aether when, according to Heidegger, the understanding of being became buried in oblivion. In his lecture on “Germania”, Heidegger concludes that the *grounding attunement* of *Dasein* during the era of the gods’ absence, when distress is experienced only by a minority in the world, is a *sacred mourning*. This is because such mode of attunement opens the way for *Dasein* to establish a relationship with the gods.³¹⁵ It can therefore be said that if sacred mourning is present in the contemporary practice of neo-paganism, which is diverse and is always undergoing transformations, then its ways of being are the most authentic *hints* (*Winke*) that *Dasein*, now on the crossroads of so-called postmodernity, can offer to *aletheia*.³¹⁶ In sacred being, hints are orientations for *Dasein* in the primordial temporality of “goddling”. *Ereignis*, as

³¹³ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Germania”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 402-403. It is important not to associate Hölderlin’s understanding of *Einfalt* with Johann Winckelmann’s placid aestheticism in his famous motto, “Edle Einfalt und stille Größe”, or “Noble simplicity and still greatness”. Hölderlin’s empathy with the Greek gods was more profound than any aesthetic theory about them can be (be it of Goethe or Schiller), for the reason that his was a complete existential engagement with the “goddling” in Greece. See Albert Henrichs, “Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Volume 88, 1984, pages 216-218. Note “*Einfalt*” (onefold) is used by Heidegger to describe the phenomenon of cleavage in *Ereignis*.

³¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?” in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, page 200.

³¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymns “Germanien” und “Der Rhein”*, § 11, page 140.

³¹⁶ Hints belong to a unique enactment of being in that they are divinatory temporalities for the flight and the advent of the gods, in particular the last god. They constitute therefore *Dasein*’s grounding attunement in its preparedness for “goddling”. See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 248, page 277 and § 252, page 280.

the highest moment of understanding of being in *Dasein*, then necessarily includes relationship with the gods. In being appropriated by primordial being through originary projection in *Ereignis* which is the *temporalised topos* of the meaning of being, *Dasein* is never alone. This, in itself, constitutes the essential meaning of *daimonion*, the being-between (*Zwischensein*) bringing together the mortals and the gods through the fundamental phenomenon of *Dasein*'s grounding attunement.

§ 15. The "Goddling" of Remembrance

Sacred mourning is an enactment of mindful remembrance, *Andenken*. This is a *topos* of profound significance in Hölderlin's poetry, and it is what makes Heidegger call him "heilig-nüchtern": sacred sobriety.³¹⁷ It is mindful clarity about *Dasein*'s preparedness for decision about the gods, in other words, its resoluteness in projection into a sacred relationship, in *being*, and not in the being of beings of metaphysical grasping. Sacred sobriety is the antidote to what Heidegger describes in *Contributions to Philosophy* as *Dasein*'s enchantment (*Entrückung*) with the ready manifestations of beings in the world. When Hölderlin describes the world, it is always in reference to the primordial background of "goddling" in Western history. Indeed in Hölderlin, the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of *Dasein* is closely tied up with the fate of the gods. Based on his reading of "Germania", "Bread and Wine" and "As on a Day of Festival...", Heidegger goes on to say that Hölderlin's sacred hermeneutics transforms historicity as a horizons of festivals celebrating the primordial resonance between gods and humans, which play forth in the unfolding of historical time in *Dasein*'s grounding attunement in *Ereignis*.³¹⁸ In his turning to Hölderlin, Heidegger appears not satisfied with the established Christians feasts of the saints and other major festivals such as Easter and Christmas; without grounding attunement on *Dasein*'s part, i.e. through mere exoteric observations, they are limited as onto-theological determinations of world time. Heidegger's reflection on Hölderlin's reorganisation of sacred time in the West gives the precise *topos* of the genuine paganism in his mindfulness (*Besinnung*) of being. Importantly, this is a major development of Heidegger's notion of primordial temporality from the fundamental-ontological beginning in his mindfulness – *Dasein*'s ecstases of past, present and future in the structuring moment of care – to his full-blown affirmation of

³¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, "'Andenken' und 'Mnemosyne'", in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen*, page 9.

³¹⁸ "As on the day of festival..." is my translation of the title "Wie wenn am Feiertage..." The translation of the poem can be found in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 373, 375 and 377.

pagan festivities in the transformed time-space of the fourfold. This development reflects Heidegger's deeper appreciation of the primordial temporalisation of historicity as the hermeneutic disclosure of being. The pagan holism of Heidegger is therefore not a "personal" decision, as in a religious conversion, but the determination of *Ereignis* in this moment of history that he characterises as the ambiguity between the advent and the departure of the last god. This moment is discernible ontologically as the withdrawal of being from beings in the disclosive mode of the abyss, i.e. the groundless of beings and of the gigantism involving *Dasein's* calculative fallenness among beings. The abyss, however, is precisely the *topos* that acts as the "ground" for *Dasein's* preparation for the ultimate theurgy of "godding" in the history of being. As such, *Dasein* as the grounder of the abyss produces the *Geschlecht* of a god-yearning humankind. In the gods' absence in modernity, the attuned *Dasein* is watchful of any hints or signs of their return or of the open into which they can once again come into presence as the shining ones that allow *aletheia* to be the illumination of *Dasein*.³¹⁹ *Dasein* exists for this projecting open and an understanding of sacred ecstasis is thus attained.

Heidegger notes the equiprimordiality of tragic dramas (*Trauerspiel*), such as Sophocles' *Antigone*, and religious festivals in the Greeks' honouring of their relationship with the gods.³²⁰ In its essence, Greek tragedy discloses the meaning of being through the distress of misfortunes that come about as a result of a combination of divine and human actions. The revival of drama as a means of recovering *Dasein's* comportment to "godding", which was familiar to the Greeks, is common practice in neo-pagan movements such as Wicca.³²¹ Heidegger views the Greek tragic dramas as the determination of the *image* of the historicity of being – hence this underlying phenomenon of *Dasein's* experience as appearance and lighting (*Lichtung*). *Antigone* in fact receives detailed analysis in Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* in respect of its central theme on human *Dasein* being the uncanniest among beings; this is one way of portraying *Dasein's* essential relationship with *daimonion* in the truth of being that unfolds in tragic plots.³²² On this ground of essence, gods and mortals encounter each other in the

³¹⁹ See Julian Young, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pages 114-115, on the caring for the gods in *Dasein's* guardianship of the fourfold.

³²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymne "Andenken"*, § 27, page 78.

³²¹ See Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco), pages 156-158. The popular use of drama in non-violent protest movements in the West also serves to highlight the essential tragedy of today's world situation.

³²² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pages 156-176. Here Heidegger links the uncanny to the violence of *deinotaton*, which places humans on the brink of becoming monstrous – a historical unfolding that was later manifest in the form of Nazi brutality and madness. In *Parmenides* (§ 6, page 101) Heidegger locates the uncanny in the ordinary, even though the uncanny can never be explained by it: this may throw some light on the puzzling phenomenon of the ability of murderous

primordial historicisation of time in *Ereignis*: what is revealed is the destiny of being in the “enowning” jointure (*Gefüge*) of divine and human fates.³²³ History, in coming into its own in this sacred temporalisation of *Ereignis*, is *Trauerspiel*.

Das Ereignis ist das Festliche des Festes.³²⁴

The taking place of tragic dramas during religious festivals discloses the jointure also of joy (*Freude*) and mourning (*Trauer*). Hölderlin was indeed drawn to Greek tragedy and attempted a tragic play of his own, “The Death of Empedocles”.³²⁵ His understanding of the ground of festivals which enables the aforementioned jointure is revealed in his notion of the “festive” (*Festliche*). It finds its primordially in the sacred (*Heilige*) as the determination of *Dasein*’s grounding attunement to the gods. Furthermore, the enactment of tragedy is remembrance of this sacred attunement that humanity has lost in the metaphysical oblivion of being. In this remembrance, gods and mortals, joy and tragedy, tragic drama and festival reveal their essence as jointure in the history of being, for they all need each other and do not encounter each other on the basis of mutual exclusion. Yet their differences remain in this reciprocal needfulness. In the case of gods and mortals, however, their selfhood is “there” only as historicisation in the obvious *Ereignis* of this jointure, which is essentially an interpretation of being with the horizoning of not just time, but time-space. This is because the festive is determined by the *topos* of its appearance: Heidegger correctly observes that the sacred festival of each land has its own character.³²⁶ This is the essential determination of Heidegger’s understanding of *Volk*, which resists appropriation by racism and biologism.³²⁷

On the theme of remembrance in Hölderlin’s poem “Remembrance”, Heidegger gave a winter semester 1941-1942 lecture course³²⁸ that is especially rich in interpretations of philosophical relevance to a deeper understanding of *Contributions to Philosophy*, as we have

evil to dwell in the day-to-day life of the Nazi “reality”. Yet on the same page Heidegger separates the uncanny from the monstrous, thus revealing his blindness to the monstrous everydayness of Nazism.

³²³ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne “Andenken”*, § 27, page 77. “Das Ereignis ist die eigentliche Geschichte,” Heidegger explains on the same page, thus confirming the importance of pagan tragedy festivals to *Dasein*’s understanding of the historicity of being, which it itself is. It can be said that there is an Antigone or an Oedipus in every *Dasein*.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Death of Empedocles”, Second and Third Versions, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 263-366.

³²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne “Andenken”*, § 27, page 80.

³²⁷ This primordial understanding is important to the continuous debate on the meaning of “folkish” in a racially homogeneous movement in neo-paganism such as Asatru.

³²⁸ Martin Heidegger, op. cit.

already seen in the discussion above. On the surface “Remembrance” concerns the poet’s idyllic sojourn in the south of France in 1802. What interests us here, however, is Heidegger’s unconcealment of the question of primordially in Hölderlin’s reference to the native and the foreign, literary antinomies that bring up the mindfulness of nearness and distance to the source of *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world. In modern nihilism, the native and the foreign are equalised in the homogenisation of ontological control over beings, time and space. *Topos*, highly individualised in *Dasein*, is reduced to coordinates that can be mathematically represented, i.e. calculated. No trace of the gods can be found in the geometric coordination of such calculation; and the artificial eyes of satellites will always inform us of their absence.

Technological advancements in geosciences, which conceal the historicity of being in geography, was certainly not foreseen in Hölderlin’s time. Europeans at that time were still fascinated by the romanticism of exploration; the Australian continent was discovered by the English in 1788, just nine years before Hölderlin started writing poems. He never mentioned Australia in his work, where gods prevailed in the Aboriginals’ relation to the earth, unlike the being-in-the-world of Germans.

... Mancher
Trägt Scheue, an die Quelle zu gehn;
Es beginnet nemlich der Reichtum
Im Meere. Sie,
Wie Mahler, bringen zusammen
Das Schöne der Erd’...

... Many a man
Is shy of going to the source;
For wealth begins in
The sea. And they,
Like painters, bring together
The beautiful things of the earth³²⁹

The sea is where the land withdraws from being and it is the abyss. It is also the abyss of primordial chaos that in prehistoric times was the source of manifold life that formed the world. It is the abyss of apocalyptic destruction in future history when gigantic serpents like

³²⁹ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Remembrance”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 490-491.

Tiamat and Jormangund awaken to reclaim the primeval reign of chaos that empties the entire world of beings into the sea. In “Remembrance” Hölderlin speaks of the “*Scheu*” of the living before the source, the “*Quelle*”. “*Scheu*” also means “awe” in German: the attunement of *Dasein* to the godly and in this mode it is described by Heidegger in *Contributions to Philosophy* as a moment of *aletheia* in *Dasein*’s preparation for the return of the gods.³³⁰ *The gods may come back and destroy us all* - in the manner of these Sumerian and Norse monster-deities, the monstrosity of which is revived in the Gothic imagination of Lovecraft and its subsequent developments in the *Necronomicon* lore.

Our fear of death amuses them, and they delight to watch us die so that they may find varied entertainment in our efforts to avoid our fate, and the terrors with which we confront our mortality.³³¹

In deep reflection, i.e. in *Besinnung*, the being-toward-death of *Dasein* reveals the essential fragility of humans before the undecidable futurity of “godding” on the interpretive horizon of *Dasein*’s ecstatic temporality. The lastness of the last god, being the *extreme* of this undecidability, is the *immeasurable* in possibilities of being that surpasses the horizontal schema of *Dasein*’s existentially constitutive temporality. As such the clearing or lightening of being (*Lichtung des Seins*), in which the meaning of being becomes manifest to *Dasein*, finds its place in the uncanny unknown of the “godding”. This, in fact, is another way of looking into the abyss. But as understanding of the undecidable, *Dasein* cannot advance in time of its own accord in regard to the last god, making the historicising grounding event happen sooner. Instead, by guarding the grounding attunement required of it in reticence, *Dasein* keeps returning to itself in its remembrance of the gods, in the decisive mode of refusal (*Verweigerung*) of, and estranging (*Befremden*) from, the gigantism that covers over the distress in the abandonment of being. Heidegger calls this mode of being *renunciation* (*Verzicht*).³³² It is also “*knowing as preserving what holds true*” (*das Wissen als Verwahrung der Wahrheit ds Wahren*) in the “holding sway of truth” (*das Wesen der Wahrheit*) in futural *Dasein* as *Da-sein* of the in-between (*Zwischen*) relating to the arrival and the flight of the gods.³³³ This knowing (*Wissen*) is philosophy as estranging

³³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 249, page 277: “Shock and deep awe together first let the echo be enacted in thinking.” The “echo” (“*Anklang*”) is awareness of the essential swaying of primordial being out of the abandonment of being, through the distress of the forgone-ness of being. See *ibid.*, § 50, page 75.

³³¹ Donald Tyson, *Necronomicon: The Wanderings of Alhazred* (St Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 2004), page 215.

³³² Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 26, page 44.

³³³ *Ibid.*

difference from metaphysics and onto-theology and is at the same time preparedness for grounding attunement. Phenomenology of the abyss of the in-between is Heidegger's estranging of phenomenology from systematic and transcendental philosophy in the German tradition. In Heidegger's hand, any contribution to philosophy is *Destruktion* in an originary, phenomenological manner, hence *Ereignis*.

Existential time, therefore, is not adequate to make manifest the great and abyssal determination of the "godding" of the last god. The "*Da-sein*" of *Contributions to Philosophy* cannot project or leap into the futurity of the truth of being solely on the basis of the phenomenological insights gained in *Being and Time*. What is required in the *Ereignis* that Heidegger has bought into the historicity of being, which includes *Dasein's* being-toward-death, is the needfulness of sacred remembrance and ritual that are invoked in the hermeneutic circle of gods and mortals in the mytho-poiesis of Hölderlin. And as Heidegger explains in his reading of "Andenken", the essence of poetry is not its words (*Wörter*), but what is poetised (*Gedichtete*) in the word (*Wort*).³³⁴ In the being of the having-been (*Gewesene*) of the poetised in Hölderlin's poems, Heidegger shows us the futural *Dasein* that is grounded in the preparedness (*Bereitschaft*) of the needfulness of the last god for its grounding in the historicity of being in *Ereignis*. As Heidegger says in *Contributions to Philosophy*, it is not that *Ereignis* needs the gods, but the gods need *Ereignis. Dasein*, in its existential constitution in *Ereignis* as projecting open the possibilities of being, therefore has a special relationship with the divine. This projection necessarily bears the sign of the reservedness and the reticence of the awe, like the guarding of a dangerous secret, during the age of nihilism when gods are treated as things of the past.³³⁵ In this style (*Stil*) *Dasein* grounds "the history of deep stillness" (*verborgene Geschichte der großen Stille*), where "there can still *be* a people".³³⁶ Heidegger sees the future of humanity in this light.³³⁷ The *Geschlecht* of this people in such grounding is the poet as the priest or priestess in the pagan sense, because it enables what Heidegger calls the "oneness" (*Einheit*) of this profound and

³³⁴ Heidegger discusses the importance of the *Wort-Wörter* distinction in *Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"*, § 12, page 33. The primordially of language as the gathering of the meaning of being is found in the *Wort*. The *Wort* therefore is the *legen* of German, and *logos* is best understood within the cultural context of a *Volk*.

³³⁵ In Wicca the magician follows the code, to *dare* and to be *silent*, especially in ritual workings.

³³⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 13, page 24. "In ihr allein kann noch ein Volk *sein*."

³³⁷ *Ibid.* Heidegger uses the term "*künftiges Menschsein*", of which Hölderlin, is an eminent example, even if he belonged to the past as a deceased. See *ibid.*, §105, page 143.

steadfast attunement.³³⁸ *Geschlecht* is the making possible of this onefold in the *Dasein* of a people, and not just of anybody.

Esoterically speaking, the *poetised* in Hölderlin is *theurgy*, the bringing forth of the gods into *Dasein's* compartment to being, which forms the essence of pagan festivals (*Feste*) that are described in “Germania” and “The Rhine”.³³⁹ In the latter poem, the *daimonion* of the demigods

³³⁸ Ibid. “*Einheit*” and “*Einfalt*” both convey the meaning of “onefold” in *Contributions to Philosophy*. It is explicitly developed into an understanding of *Geschlecht* in Heidegger’s essay on Trakl, “Language in the Poem”, in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, page 195.

³³⁹ The existential dissonance between Heidegger and Nazism becomes all too clear in the former’s contemplation of the Rhine through the eyes of Hölderlin instead of the *völkisch* ideology of his compatriots. The Nazi idolatry of a racial *imperium* is sadly reflected in the following diary entry of a naïve young German woman on the Rhine and the “pagan” ritual of solstice celebration that was organised as a political rite of the Nazi Party. Although undated, it must have been written before the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, as the author, named Gudrun Streiter, refers to herself as a SA (*Sturmabteilung*) man’s bride and describes the *Braunhemden* (brown shirts) with much adulation; this is because after the execution of the SA leader Ernst Röhm under the order of Hitler on 2 July 1934, the SA, although not disbanded, lost its prominence in the Nazi society to the SS. The SA rendered one more major service to the Nazi Party during *Kristallnacht* (9-10 November 1938), when they with SS, with both groups in civilian clothes, participated in the brutal, nationwide persecution of Jews, resulting in the murder of 91, the widespread destruction of synagogues and physical damages to over 7000 of their businesses. Heidegger was notoriously silent on the first organised violent persecution of Jews that became publicly manifest in Nazi Germany; despite *Contributions to Philosophy* and *Mindfulness* being both *Nachlaß* that included the year 1938 in their composition. Streiter’s diary entry, cited in George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual and Social Life in the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), pages 122-124, is a tragic reflection of the extent the meaning of nature and of earth-centred paganism was perverted in National Socialism: most striking, in fact, is the absence of the pagan gods in Streiter’s account, as they were in fact substituted by the idolatry of *Volk* – which in fact is subject to critique in *Contributions to Philosophy* (see, for example, § 196, on the *Volk* not being the “goal” and “purpose” but having *Dasein* as the basis of its ownhood, which is the grounding attunement to the holding sway of primordial being (*Sein*) in *Ereignis*, and in this way also preparedness for the gods. These elements are starkly lacking in the Nazi cult of German blood and soil; in fact the *Dasein* of someone like Streiter is objectified in the mode of *Zuhandensein* for the SA in particular and for the cause of National Socialism in its entirety. She writes: “Although I am very tired, I just cannot sleep. The events of the last few days have filled me with such a great enthusiasm that despite the late hour I take up my beloved diary in order to write in it what has so deeply stirred me. It was cloudy and overcast when I set out for the Rhine yesterday with my Hitler comrades, men and women. Nevertheless, we paid no attention to the unfavorable weather. Our hearts flamed with a glowing enthusiasm and a great joy. The lutes played and our song-happy lips never rested. Men and women party comrades boarded the train at almost every station and brought even more cheer to the frolicsome group. Time flew by so quickly with all the singing and jingling and jangling and before we were aware of it Germania was already greeting us from the Niederwald. Upon arriving in Bingen, we were still undecided whether we should go by ferry in order to travel up the other side of the Rhine by train or whether we should proceed to our destination by steamboat on the German Rhine. The weather decided for us. An opaque black mass of clouds had formed in the skies. The clouds were riveted together like iron chains. While we were looking up at the skies pondering alternatives, a violent storm began to rage and pound the waves of the Rhine with terrible force. Then we were all seized by a yearning for wild waves, stormy wind and rain. We boarded the steamer and clambered to the upper deck, to let the storm wind blow through us and to lift our heads to the elements. How loudly our hearts pounded and how proudly waved our swastika flags and pennants in the storm wind. Legend-woven castles greeted us boldly and stubbornly from both banks. And our enthusiasm and ecstasy grew even more. The beautiful trip was concluded much too quickly and soon we could spot the little Rhenish town, our destination, greeting us. A great stir of life could be seen on the

(*Halbgötter*) in natural *topoi* is described as a way of “goddling” in the pure sense. Human transformation into them will take *Dasein* even closer to the divine. Like the heroism of Heracles, that is an existential question of the authenticity of the moment in the worlding of *Dasein*’s mortal temporalisation. In other words, the temporal mode of projection of the demigods is the resolute openness in *Dasein* for the authentic moment of transforming the world around us, which is the *Ereignis* of mortals and gods in the mutual participation in the historicity of being.

shores of the Rhine. Unnumbered bands of Brownshirts marched with their blood-red flags to assembly on the banks of the Rhine. Roaring shouts of ‘Heil!’ greeted us, echoing back and forth. We were met by a wonderful panorama when we entered the town. The streets were a regular forest of flags. From every house waved the glorious German banners. Garlands and a profusion of flowers decorated the streets. There was liveliness everywhere. SA men hurried past us, carrying out the orders of their leaders. From every side we could hear stirring tunes of Prussian military marches. And then I saw something I had never seen before: women and girls in the brown Hitler uniform. They sold us badges for the solstice celebration. This touched me in a wondrous way, and a desire began to burgeon and to burn within me, to be permitted to help, like these women and girls, in the great work of our leader Adolf Hitler. A torch had been thrown into my heart and continued to flame and blaze. There was no place for any other thought within me. ... In the evening, at ten o’ clock, there was a great assembly before the Blücher monument. We had brought torches from the SA men and now we took our place in the ranks of the Hitler legions. Countless people stood in formation. SS and SA men, Hitler Youth, National Socialist women and girls’ groups, Stahlhelmer, Pfadfinder, Wandervögel, and thousands of others formed the endless ranks of the participants in the solstice festival. ... At twelve-fifteen finally came the great moment. The order came to march off and the torches were lighted. We marched with joyful song, accompanied by lutes, through the streets of the little town. After a short time we were in top marching form. As we entered the market square, there was a roar of ‘Heil!’ There stood Flight Captain Hermann Göring, his hand raised in the Hitler salute, and he reviewed the long line of marchers, while shouts of ‘Heil!’ echoed in the square. After we left the town, the road led us up into the mountains toward the solstice fire. It was a splendid sight. The road led to the mountain in serpentine twists and turns. From the top we could look back on the long marching columns. The brilliant glare of the torches in the night was glorious. My words were too poor to portray this experience. For a long time we let this picture enter our thirsty souls to their uttermost depths until our eyes were focused on one mighty flaming fire. It was our solstice celebration. We were received by the tunes of Prussian military marches. Then, with the Dutch Prayer of Thanksgiving, the inspiring festival began. Heads were bared. With folded hands we listened devoutly to the solemn melody: ‘We come to pray before the righteous God ...’ ... Toward the end Hermann Göring rose again to deliver a flaming address. In his call to battle for Germany’s freedom the rustle of the Rhine sounded like a prayer for redemption from foreign despotism. In the deep darkness of the night, the iron words of Ernst Moritz Arndt sounded forceful and thundering on Hermann Göring’s tongue: ‘The Rhine, Germany’s river, but not Germany’s border.’ ... Wolfgang Jensen [a SA man whom Streit met earlier] and I followed the example of the others and once again the flames shot up. We looked silently and seriously into the fire. Then Wolfgang Jensen said admonishingly, almost solemnly, to me: ‘Don’t ever forget the solstice fire. Let it flame in your heart and let its rays reach out to your racial comrades. Then you will truly help in the great work of Adolf Hitler.’”

Part Three

Primordial Measure

Division One

“The Ister”

§ 16. *The Destining Quest for Primordiality*

The deeper meaning of the festivals (*Feste*) for the gods that are mentioned in Hölderlin's poetry is the worship of the old gods as exemplified in the *blót* of Scandinavian religion such as Asatru. The application of Norse hermeneutics to Heidegger's pagan revival of primordial being, *Seyn*, was not undertaken by the philosopher himself. Nor did Heidegger appeal directly to the Eleunisian, Dionysian or Orphic mysteries of ancient Greece even if their essence has an interpretive effect on his reading of Hölderlin, namely in his acknowledgement of the role of ecstasy in primordial experience. Heidegger turned instead to the Far East, finding inspiration and meditative resonance in Zen Buddhism and Daoism through his Japanese and Chinese students. However, what he sought in these great traditions was not Oriental examples of the *Feste*, but a way of approaching the same conclusion of *Ereignis* in *Dasein*'s understanding of being from a source utterly different from the Greeks. In his faithful account of his teacher's philosophical pathways, Otto Pöggeler writes about the significance of Heidegger's notable hermeneutics of dialogue (*Gespräch*) as the unity of meaning in *Ereignis*, *logos* and *dao* as guiding words in *Dasein*'s quest for primordiality.³⁴⁰ It is obvious that both *logos* (Heraclitus) and *dao*

³⁴⁰ Otto Pöggeler, *The Paths of Heidegger's Life and Thought*, page 270.

(Laozi) are from the inceptual or originary thinking of Greece and China respectively; and *Ereignis* is the temporalisation of this thinking in inception in the post-metaphysical, which means post-Nietzschean, philosophy of the West. It is being within the nothingness of Heidegger's *Destruktion* of metaphysics that is never a pure negation but an opening (*Offene*) in which plays forth the lightening (*Lichtung*) of *aletheia* and the darkening of the abyss (*Abgrund*), like *Dasein*'s attunement to the *physis* of day and night.³⁴¹ This is yet another way of describing the many faces of *Ereignis*. And there are many more. Its real resemblance to the polysemy of *dao* held a long-term fascination for Heidegger. One of his unfinished projects was a German translation of *Dao De Jing*, possibly with his new philosophical vocabulary from *Contributions to Philosophy* and its related writing, *Mindfulness*; it was begun in 1946 and only eight of the eighty-one chapters in the 2300-year-old Chinese classic were completed.³⁴² That Heidegger describes his thinking as ways (*Wege*), instead of a system after the manner of Hegel, Kant and Husserl, is another indication of the hermeneutic kinship between *Ereignis* and *Dao De Jing*, for *dao* is "way".³⁴³ *Dao* is also the co-arising of being and nothingness; in *Ereignis*, the two "need" each other for thinking, in the grounding attunement (*Grundbestimmung*) of *Besinnung*, to reach into the primordially of being. *Dao* is also the way of the manifold phenomena of the being of beings. It bears the meaning of *how things are*, and this goes well with Heidegger's understanding of nature, or *physis*, which orients *Dasein* through the phenomenality of its appearances, in *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world.³⁴⁴ *Dao* is therefore also *Dasein*, because the latter is more a manner of being than a being, in that it is irreducibly an understanding of being; a futural human *being* (*künftiges Menschenwesen*) of transformation, and not human essence independent of time.³⁴⁵ This is the *way* how *Dasein* is, in consistency with the ground work laid

³⁴¹ Yet as Parmenides learnt from the goddess of *aletheia*, the gathering together of day and night belongs to the truth of the world of "godding", and cannot be seen with mortal eyes. See Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue with Heidegger: Greek Philosophy*, translated by Mark Sinclair (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), page 56.

³⁴² Otto Pöggeler, *The Paths of Heidegger's Life and Thought*, page 269. Pöggeler also reports, on the same page, that on the wall of Heidegger's Black Forest cabin, where he did all his writings in solitude, hung a Chinese calligraphy of the verses from the 15th chapter of *Dao De Jing*. "Who can remain, still to become clear? Who can become quiet and remain lively?" For a first-hand account of Heidegger's collaboration with his Chinese student, see Paul Shih-yi Hsiao, "Heidegger and Our Translation of the Tao Te Ching", in Graham Parkes (ed.), *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, pages 93-104.

³⁴³ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 40, page 57: "The work of thinking in the epoch of the crossing (*Übergang*) can only be and must be a passage (*Gang*) in both senses of the word: a going (*Gehen*) and a way (*Weg*) at the same time – thus a way that itself goes." By "crossing" ("*Übergang*") Heidegger means the crossing to the "other beginning", i.e. *Dasein*'s projecting-open in the primordially of being. See *ibid.*, § 89, page 124.

³⁴⁴ *Physis* is grounded in *aletheia*. When this is not happening, machination, which is essentially an alienation, holds sway. See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 186, page 215.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, § 176, page 212. The futurity of *Dasein*, being pure difference from the present, becomes a question of *Geschlecht* in the destining of being.

out by Heidegger in fundamental ontology that is also known as *Dasein* or existential analytic (*existenzielle Analytik des Daseins*).³⁴⁶ In attunement and in projecting-open, *Dasein* itself is a way.

As a hermeneutic strategy I shall not enter into discussions on the similarity between Heidegger and Zen Buddhism on the question of nothingness, selfhood and nature, which all come into play in the Buddhist notion of emptiness, or *shunyata*. My strategy will also avoid the comparisons between Dzogchen and Zen³⁴⁷, or Chan in Chinese, that has preoccupied Tibetan lamas since the 8th century, when Indian and Chinese traditions vied for ascendancy in Tibet; and the as yet unexplored territory of Dzogchen and Daoism. Given that Heidegger's phenomenology is a philosophy of experience, and more importantly one of knowing awareness (*Besinnung*) of being, it is the experience of primordially in different traditions that will have hermeneutic priority over doctrinal similarities and differences in the current study.³⁴⁸ Despite differences in traditions, realisation of the absolute as the unspoken is universal in esoteric understandings of religious experiences, and the phenomenon of keeping silent (*Verschweigen*) is certainly no stranger to Heidegger, to which he accords great ontological import, even in his reading of the poetised (*Gedichtete*) in Hölderlin.³⁴⁹ Although never described as such by Heidegger, *Ereignis* fulfils the role of the absolute in his meditative thinking on the primordial meaning of being, as *Ereignis* is that which is about being that *Dasein* comes back to again and again if it is to question it with the power and openness of inceptual thinking; but this is itself a critique of the idealist absolute as the pinnacle of a dialectical ascent. *Ereignis* is essentially an esoteric opening in *Dasein's* understanding of being, in that Heidegger's poetic, non-sectarian paganism reveals the needfulness of the gods of this opening in order to come through the historicisation of being and to become part of the fourfold renewal of being in the world.

³⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 4, page 11; § 9, pages 39-42.

³⁴⁷ See Namkhai Norbu, *Dzog Chen and Zen* (Nevada City: Blue Dolphin, 1984).

³⁴⁸ On this point as a methodological issue, see Sallie B. King, "Two Epistemological Models for the Interpretation of Mysticism", in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Volume 56, Number 2, 1988, pages 257-279. In Tibetan Buddhism, realisation is more valued than experience itself, since the latter can be affected by delusions. Methodologically speaking, this is rather problematic in that realisation is incommensurable with mystical experiences in other religious traditions. See Janet Gyatso, "Healing Burns with Fire: The Facilitations of Experience in Tibetan Buddhism", in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Volume 67, Number 1, 1999, pages 113-114. Heidegger shares a similar critical attitude toward the absolutisation of experience in *Contributions to Philosophy*. What is more essential is *Dasein's* grounding attunement in mindful awareness (*Besinnung*) of the question of being.

³⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Andenken"*, § 44, page 135. Here Heidegger discusses the difference between a mere not-saying and the keeping silent – in Hölderlin's case, of the highest principle that is the departure and the advent of the gods.

Tibet as *topos* of the myth of Shambhala is as promising as “Germania” in the invocation of the fourfold.³⁵⁰ Guided by the hermeneutics of *Ereignis* that takes thinking to its essential ground, we can search for existential resonance with fundamental notions in Dzogchen that can lead us to a greater understanding and appreciation of the main issues covered in *Contributions to Philosophy*. This is a path of horizontal fusion never undertaken by the historical Heidegger, as he never mentioned Tibet in his works. The contemporary interest in Tibetans as a primordial Aryan race (*Geschlecht*) of relevance to occult orientations in Ariosophy and Nazism, which Heidegger also never referred to, need not concern us here.³⁵¹ What then is of interest to the present inquiry into a *Gespräch* or *Zwiesprache* between Heidegger and Tibet that never took place?

I refer again to the hermeneutics of the unspoken in Heidegger. That which did not take place is something that did not enter into the world of presencing (*Anwesen*) in the being of beings that shaped Greek understanding of being first and foremost. But in the historicisation of being that Heidegger distinguishes from the chronicling of events in historiography, it is the

³⁵⁰ For an uncritical study of the Western projection of this myth on to Tibet, see Victoria LePage, *Shambhala: The Fascinating Truth behind the Myth of Shangri-la* (Wheaton: Quest Books, 1996); for a highly critical one, see Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). The legend of Shambhala was made famous in the West through Nicholas Roerich, *Shambhala* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1930), which is a record of the author’s journey through Central Asia and Tibet that is influenced by his involvement in Theosophy; and the fictional work of James Hilton, *Lost Horizon* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1933). For a contemporary Tibetan Buddhist appropriation of the legend from the 1930s, see Chögyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1984), where he discusses Shambhala’s true significance as not just a mythical place but as the primordial mind that is present in all of us; Shambhala therefore concerns itself with primordial wisdom, and not the establishment of an earthly kingdom (page 171). For an account of the entire history of the Shambhala legend, see the web site of Tibetan Buddhist scholar Alexander Berzin, www.berzinarchives.com.

³⁵¹ See Christopher Hale, *Himmler’s Crusade: The True Story of the 1938 Nazi Expedition into Tibet* (London: Bantam, 2003). The decisive intellectual environment in which Heidegger developed his ideas was the phenomenological movement founded by Husserl after the publication of his *Logical Investigations* in 1900-1901, which transformed philosophy into a pursuit of knowledge of essences. It is his preoccupation with the question of essentia that led Heidegger to the primordial questioning of being performed by Parmenides and Heraclitus and which was distorted by the metaphysical turnings instigated by Plato and Aristotle. The closest that Heidegger would come to the prevalent *völkisch* idea of his time was his commitment to the localisation of the meaning of *polis*, yet he sees the problem of “counter-essence” (*Gegenwesen*) in it, which is probably his allusion to the problems of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*. See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 90: “The *πόλις* is the abode, gathered into itself, of the unconcealedness of beings. If now, however, as the word indicates, *ἀλήθεια* possesses a conflictual essence, which appears also in the oppositional forms of distortion and oblivion, then in the *πόλις* as the essential abode of man there has to hold sway all the most extreme counter-essences, and therein all excesses, to the unconcealed and to beings, i.e., counter-beings in the multiplicity of their counter-essence.” Heidegger never participated in the Ariosophical circles of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels and Guido von List; at any rate the racist basis of their *völkisch* beliefs, which can rightly be described as “onto-theo-biology”, would be rejected by him. As James Phillips points out in his *Heidegger’s “Volk”* (page 35), racial doctrine (*Rassenkunde*) is based on the notion of truth as *certitudo*, which is concealment of the primordial meaning of truth as *aletheia*.

meaning of being that comes to the fore of hermeneutic thought. This means that concealed relevance can be found in the many unexplored *topoi* in the quest for a primordial understanding of being that includes reading of being in philosophy, religion, art and literature. Philosophical hermeneutics is the unconcealment of being through *Dasein*'s constitutive and temporal interpretation of being, and not how texts should be read or not read. In the case of comparative hermeneutics, which Heidegger gained some experience in through his engagement with Eastern thought, the matter of interest is the formation of an interpretive horizon that overarches different traditions to uncover the *arche*, or origin, of the question that can bring them together. Origin, according to Heidegger, should not be viewed as the being of beings in metaphysics, such as the *demiurgos* in Gnosticism and neo-Platonism. In Heidegger's hermeneutics of truth, *aletheia*, in its opening for *Dasein*'s relation to the question of being, can at the same time conceal the "there" for the grounding of *Dasein* in the truth of being. As Hölderlin mentions in his unfinished poem "Mnemosyne", it is the destiny of *Dasein* to "reach into the abyss"³⁵² instead of finding its ground in the illusory consolation of beings – even the eternal God of onto-theology, which grounds all beings in him. Heidegger, in his comment on this poem, describes the abyss as "the total absence of ground", as the "failure" of ground to appear.³⁵³ Heidegger also uses the term "abandonment of being" (*Seinsverlassenheit*), which correlates with *Dasein*'s most distressing distress in its awakening. This is a distress beyond good and evil, for it is "ownmost" to being. But *Dasein* is not to avoid this time of desolation – or this sending of desolation to *Dasein* from the *Ereignis* in being. Heidegger writes

Assuming that a turning point in any way still awaits this desolate time, it can only come one day if the world turns radically around, which now plainly means if it turns away from the abyss. In the age of the world's night, the abyss of the world must be experienced and must be endured. However, for this it is necessary that there are those who reach into the abyss.³⁵⁴

The "world's night" is also the age of the flight (*Flucht*) of the gods, which means that what is most distant is also that which abides within *Dasein*, because *Dasein* is a manner of being that is futural, involving its decisiveness over the arrival (*Ankunft*) or the departure of *the last god*: the question of god, or "godding" (*Göttern*), at the most extreme point in the historicisation of

³⁵² Martin Heidegger, "Why Poets?", in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, page 201.

³⁵³ Ibid., page 200.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., pages 200-201. Tibetan Buddhists similarly view the present historical cycle as dark, foreboding and decaying, namely as *kaliyuga*. Note that here "*kali*" does not refer to the goddess of destruction in Hinduism, Kali.

being, the opening of which in the history of being can mean the restoration of pagan festivities that unite gods and humans, or the dawning of a twilight that will have the earth witness once again the deadly *gigantomachia* of primeval times. In the present age of nihilism, “goddling” is necessarily *extreme* in the aftermath of Nietzsche’s proclamation of “the death of God”. This is the primary meaning of Heidegger’s intimations of the last god in *Contributions to Philosophy*.

The relation between primordially and the far distance is a main theme in *Contributions to Philosophy* that guides Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin, especially his *Nachlaß* hymn “The Ister” (“Der Ister”). Heidegger’s discussion of primordially in his 1942 lecture course on this hymn is of great potential to the hermeneutic reaching of the “other beginning” in the understanding of primordially in Tibet. “Ister” is the name Hölderlin gave to the Danube (*Donau*). Historically, however, only the lower course of the Danube was called Ister, during the Roman Empire when the river, the second longest in Europe, formed its northern boundary in southeastern Europe during the 3rd century. Ister is the Latinisation of *Istpos* in Greek. We shall stay with Hölderlin’s naming of the river, for the name conceals a primordial meaning that acts as the highlight of Heidegger’s reading.

The lower course of the Ister empties on the Romanian coast into the Black Sea, which is an inland sea. The sea, as described in Hölderlin’s other poem “Remembrance” (“Andenken”), is *die Quelle*, the source, that mortals are shy of reaching, like their natural fear of the abyss. The sea was the original abyss in the creation of the world and from which life on land came. We carry the sea in our blood – and blood is the originary meaning of our embodiment. The same applies to beasts. In pagan Scandinavia, *blót*, a powerful example of the festival honouring the gods that is poetised futurally in Hölderlin, is possibly etymologically linked to *fórnarblóði*, which means sacrificial blood. Traditionally animal blood, and sometimes even human, was spilt at *blót* as sacrificial offering to the gods. In Norse mythology, it was the blood of the primordial giant Ymir who was slain by the sibling gods Odin, Vili and Ve that formed the sea. In mythic thinking, the sea is therefore a reminder of the *gigantomachia* between the gods and the giants that in its Greek version gave rise to the inceptual thinking about the question of being, the riddle in Plato’s *Sophist* which resolution – the belonging together of being and nothingness – inspires the notion of *Ereignis*.

The sea is the destination of a river, of its journeying as flowing water. It is not the source. A river’s source is at the other end, a wellspring, the “other beginning” that is not the abyss. Traditionally the Ister referred to the lower course of the Danube that reaches the sea. For the Romans, it had a more distant meaning than “Danubius”, which was the name they gave to the upper course of the river that is closer to its wellspring, its “home”. Heidegger observes that

the reason for Hölderlin's renaming of the entire river as the Ister reveals his observation of its fundamental enigma.

Der scheintet aber fast
 Rückwärts zu gehen und
 Ich mein, er müsse kommen
 Von Osten.
 Vieles wäre
 Zu sagen davon. Und warum hängt er
 An den Bergen gerad? Der andre
 Der Rhein is seitwärts
 Hinweggegangen. ...

Yet almost this river seems
 To travel backwards and
 I think it must come from
 The East.
 Much could
 Be said about this. And why does
 It cling to the mountains, straight? The other,
 The Rhine, has gone away
 Sideways. ...³⁵⁵

The enigma of the Ister is its seeming whiling near its source, giving the impression that it flows backwards, with the sea as its improbable source. The Ister gives the illusion that it arises from the abyss and not from a ground that provides the opening for a wellspring.

... Aber allzudedultig
 Scheint der mir, nicht
 Freier, und fast zu spotten.

... But all too patient
 He seems to me, no

³⁵⁵ Friedrich Hölderlin, "The Ister", in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 494-495.

More free, and nearly derisive.³⁵⁶

As if under the influence of sorcery, the Ister shows hesitancy in its supposedly natural disposition to flow west, and in its swirling movement inside the Black Forest, the river introduces an attunement to the uncanny in Hölderlin's observation of it. The uncanny here strikes Hölderlin as derision, like the laughter of a river spirit. The poet was, however, correct about the Ister's direction: it is the only European river that travels from the east to the west. Looking from Germany, the Black Sea is in the course of the setting sun, the beginning of twilight and nightfall: the night of the abyss of the gods' flight. Heidegger notes that in the appearance of the Ister flowing backwards, it brings to its German source elements of the foreign (*Fremde*) and in so doing, an opening is created for a renewed meaning of being in Hölderlin's poetic understanding of this river. In appearing to refuse to abandon its source, the Ister becomes a moving testimony to the remembrance of being that is absent in the age of nihilism. In the case of a river, this is the display of the unhomely, i.e. the literal meaning of the uncanny in the sense of "not feeling at home", as Heidegger famously depicts in *Being and Time* in relation to the attunement of *Angst*. Hölderlin writes in the same poem,

... Umsonst nicht gehn
Im Troknen die Ströme

... Not in vain do
Rivers run in the dry.³⁵⁷

He gives the reason as follows:

Denn Ströme machen urbar
Das Land.

For rivers make arable
The land.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Ibid. William McNeill and Julia Davis, in Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*, translate "spotten" as "to mock" on page 5.

³⁵⁷ Friedrich Hölderlin, "The Ister", in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 494-495.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

Rivers make home for humans. They created the first civilisations on earth by enabling agriculture as a way of life. The Sumerians and the Babylonians had the Euphrates and the Tigris; the Egyptians, the Nile; the Indians, the Ganges; and the Chinese, the Yellow River and the Yangtse. If the sea was primordial to *Dasein*, the rivers civilised *Dasein* as a historical being.

In providing home for *Dasein*, the rivers made something like the house of being possible, for based on this essential relationship *Dasein* can guard the truth of being in sacred architecture such as shrines and temples. Indeed a structure resembling a shrine stands over the Ister's gentle flow from its wellspring at Donaueschingen in Germany. The Ister, of course, has not failed in its natural role as a river to nourish the land on its either side, and flows through a great cultural centre of Central Europe like Budapest and several important cities. Many homes have been built along it, generations after generations have lived in them, inviting the gathering of *Dasein* as *Mitdasein* and as *Volk* – and also as *Geschlecht*, as it includes the meaning of generation. This phenomenon resonates with what Heidegger calls the essence of rivers (*Stromwesen*). From *Mitdasein*, *Volk* and *Geschlecht* arises *Dasein's* adulation of great rivers. Hölderlin writes in "Voice of the People" ("Stimme des Volks"), Second Version:

Du seiest Gottes Stimme, so glaubt' ich sonst
 In heil'ger Jugend; ja, und ich sag' es noch!
 Um unsere Weisheit unbekümmert
 Rauschen die Ströme doch auch, und dennoch,

Wer liebt sie nicht? und immer bewegen sie
 Das Herz mir, hör' ich ferne die Schwindenden,
 Die Ahnungsvollen meine Bahn nicht,
 Aber gewisser ins Meer hin eilen.

The voice of God I called you and thought you once,
 In holy youth; and still I do not recant!
 No less indifferent to our wisdom
 Likewise the rivers rush on, but who does

Not love them? Always too my own heart is moved
 When far away I hear those foreknowing ones,
 The fleeting, by a route not mine but

Surer than mine, and more swift, roar seaward,³⁵⁹

Heidegger remarks, “Die schwindenden und ahnungvollen Ströme gehen nicht die Bahn des Menschen” – “The fleeting and foreknowing rivers do not follow the path of humans.”³⁶⁰ The seaward paths of rivers end in what Hölderlin in the same poem describes as “*Abgrund*”, the abyss.

... so stürzt

Der Strom hinab, er suchet die Ruh, es reißt,
Es zieht wider Willen ihn, von
Klippe zu Klippe den Steuerlosen

Das wunderbare Sehnen dem Abgrund zu;
Das Ungebundne reizet und Völker auch
Ergreift die Todeslust...

So rivers plunge – not movement, but rest they seek –
Drawn on, pulled down against their will from
Boulder to boulder – abandoned, helmless –

By that mysterious yearning toward the chasm [*Abgrund*];
Chaotic deeps attract, and whole peoples too
May come to long for death, ...³⁶¹

Comparing this poem to “Remembrance”, Hölderlin’s understanding of the abyss as the source can find a high degree of hermeneutic attunement from Heidegger. Given the equiprimordiality of the abyss and *Ereignis* in Heidegger’s understanding of being, it can be said that Hölderlin, the great German poet of the rivers, is one who introduced an understanding of *Ereignis* in the poetising *Dasein* of his writing. Again, in “Remembrance”, the shyness of mortals before the sea as the source is its fundamental attunement of *Angst* before the nothingness of their death. Those who leap into the sea for the sake of the “chaotic deeps” end in death. The rivers, in

³⁵⁹ Ibid., pages 178-179.

³⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”*, § 6, page 28; *Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 53, page 33. Translation modified to align with Hamburger’s translation of “Stimme des Volks”.

³⁶¹ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Voice of the People”, Second Version, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 178-179.

contrast, are deathless: they do not follow the “route” of *Dasein*’s being-toward-death. Their temporality differs from *Dasein*’s – yet in the meaning of Hölderlin’s poetry, not radically. The two temporalities, to borrow Heidegger’s term in *Contributions to Philosophy*, “pulsate in each other”.

The rivers are not *Dasein*, yet they determine *Dasein* in the manner of grounding attunement to *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* appropriates their mutual “pulsation” in an opening of being.³⁶² This is why Heidegger is enchanted by the river motif in his Hölderlin lectures. Heraclitus, in fragment 41, uses the metaphor of the river to describe time and impermanence. Heidegger, however, achieves more depth in his contemplation on rivers by characterising them as the onefold of locality (*Ortschaft*) and journeying (*Wanderschaft*), with a fundamental impact on *Dasein*.

The river is the journeying. We are not saying that it is an “image” of journeying, for instance, of humans journeying on their path from birth to death. This path can also be interpreted in a Christian manner, as a passage through the earthly realm (*das Irdische*), which is regarded as a vale of tears. Such passage is then the meeting of demands through whose fulfilment the kingdom of heaven is earned. What we here name journeying with respect to the rivers is fundamentally different from this Christian representation of an earthly path taken by human beings. This journeying that the river itself *is* determines the way in which human beings come to be at home upon this earth. Yet when Hölderlin says “earth”, he is not at all referring to the “earthly realm” understood in a metaphysical or Christian way, a realm that, as a transitory, preliminary stage to the eternal, remains precisely something to be surpassed, given up, and thereby “lost”. The journeying that the river *is* prevails, and does so essentially (*waltet und west*), in its vocation of attaining the earth as the “ground” of the homely (*Heimischen*).³⁶³

The locality of the river is the dwelling of *Dasein* upon earth, and in “The Ister”, Hölderlin appeals to “Hertha”, the Germanic equivalent of the goddess Gaia, for attestation to the truth

³⁶² Heidegger appropriates the Greek myth of the otherworldly rivers, e.g. the river of forgetting in the field of Lethe, in his discussion of *aletheia* and *daimonion* in Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 7, page 126. In contrast the Mnemosyne is the river of memory and remembrance. In *ibid.*, § 5, page 85, Heidegger discusses the belonging together of *lethe* and *aletheia* prior to all thinking and poetising. These two aspects are relevant to the philosophical as the knowing awareness of the grounding attunement in Hölderlin’s poems of the rivers.

³⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”*, § 6, page 30.

of this grounding.³⁶⁴ Although not mentioned in the poem, according to German folklore Hertha travels in a chariot at night to a mysterious lake from time to time and takes bath there with her female attendants, who drowned as sacrifices to her. The traditional association of this goddess with water then makes Heidegger's bringing together of river and earth, in the primordial unity of locality and journeying, all the more poignant. This unity is decisively pagan in its spirit. It is also thought-provoking that an almost forgotten German goddess is invoked. Hölderlin's act of invocation itself is a tribute to Mnemosyne. Furthermore, it is worthy of thought in the Neo-pagan sense that Mnemosyne can be viewed as the mother of all forgotten goddesses awaiting remembrance in the moment of *aletheia*.

The river, fleeting and foreknowing, intimates a divine having-been (*Gewesene*) in Germany that at the same time has futural relevance for *Dasein*, in that in its homely way of being, the foundation of the fourfold as the transcendence of the nihilistic condition of humanity is foretold. Divination in the sense of grounding attunement is *Dasein's* resolute preparedness for the fourfold. The fourfold, as the twofold dwelling of both gods and humans, is a powerful alternative to the Platonic doctrine of the two worlds that determines the onto-theological metaphysics of the Christian religion. In primordial temporality, the fourfold is also the twofold simultaneity of the have-been and the futural in the determination of *Dasein's* grounding attunement to the gods. This means that the pagan history of Europe historicises *Dasein* in its futural projection toward the gods as it reaches into the abyss in the present. Therefore despite Heidegger's hesitancy in naming the gods, the old religions of Europe have a definite relevance to the primordial relation between *Dasein* and *aletheia* that is opened up in *Contributions to Philosophy*. The pagan history of the West is the renewing clearing of being, not the oblivion of a dead and buried past. This interpretation may be helpful in explaining the enigmatic reference to the element of "estranging" (*Befremden*) in Heidegger's description of grounding attunement in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Christianity can only respond to the pagan gods as the strangeness or the uncanny of *daimonion*, for it has ruthlessly demonised all of them in the Abrahamic conversion of the West into monotheism. In the present age, which is determined by the discord between Christianity and godlessness, hermeneutic and spiritual insights from Heidegger and from his reading of Hölderlin can only be bring about transformative existential grounding through the strategy of philosophical and religious *Destruktion* that belongs

³⁶⁴ Also known as Nerthus, as mentioned in *ibid.* Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, in *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, surmises that she might be the mother of the Norse goddess of fertility, Freya. It is also significant that wherever Hertha visited, festivities would take place and wars would cease. Wars could return when she tired herself of mortal affairs. Hertha would be the ideal goddess for the priestess in Hölderlin's "Germania" to serve. For a 1st century account of the goddess Hertha, see Tacitus, *A Treatise on the Situation, Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany*, § 40.

essentially to Goetia. The river provides the *daimonios topos* necessary for *aletheia* to stage the clearing of being in the being-toward-death of *Dasein*.³⁶⁵

In its whiling at the source, the Ister is the counter-essence of the Ameles, the otherworldly river of carefreeness in Greek mythology. In *Parmenides* Heidegger describes the Ameles as the “pure going away itself”, unlike the Ister’s hesitant flow in its German homeland. Being without care, the Ameles is totally unlike *Dasein*, for whom care is the structure of its temporality: its care for the constant presence of the truth of being in *aletheia*, which is the dwelling of *daimonion* in a locality.³⁶⁶ The Ameles simply flows away from its source in the land of forgetting, Lethe, which bears an essence counter to *aletheia*. Lethe is “withdrawing concealment”.³⁶⁷ Also according to the Greeks, Lethe is the land that the souls of the dead visit prior to reincarnation, so that they will have no recollection of their past lives when reborn. Reincarnation, then, is the forgetting of one’s origin, and in the Buddhist belief system, it is a main feature of the cyclic temporalisation of *samsara* or this-worldly existence. The Ister, in its hesitancy, is a river of enlightenment in that it counters *samsaric* oblivion of being.

The Ister’s remembrance of being is the most important theme in Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”, and not just in the phenomenological sense. Heidegger is mindful of Hölderlin’s pagan understanding of the dwelling of divinity in nature, which is the essential meaning of *daimonios topos*. In both “The Ister” and “The Rhine”, the river is described as the locality of *Halbgötter*, or demigods. They embody the mode of being of the *in-between* between *Dasein* and the gods. To be like a river, then, is to be like a demigod. In Hölderlin the river is the poetic *legen*, or letting be seen, of the demigods, which is also their primordial gathering to attune *Dasein* to an inceptual remembering, i.e. a *primordial awareness* removed from inauthentic enchantment with beings as the covering over of being. This is knowing as grounding attunement, as primordial philosophy of *daimonion*. Demigods also bring up the question of *Geschlecht* in *Dasein*. For they are human in kind yet not quite human also, in that they are co-determined by both *Dasein* and “godding”. *Dasein* has an essential relation to “godding” but is not determined by it, and that enables *Dasein* to be in mortal dwelling upon earth. On the other hand, the demigods’ relation to mortality is a question of ambiguity. In Greece, a demigod was the offspring of a union between a god and a mortal. With the exception of a heroic figure such as Heracles (Hercules), who was invited to live on the Olympus and became a god, many suffered horrible deaths due to ill-starred fates. After death, however, they became *daimons*, as intermediaries between the

³⁶⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 7, page 127.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, § 7, page 119.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

mortals and the gods. But while alive, as dwellers upon earth, demigods are not *daimons*. Given that Heidegger interprets *aletheia* as *daimonion* in *Parmenides*, what essential relation does a demigod have to the truth of being?

Heidegger, in a commentary on Hölderlin's poem "Mnemosyne", writes that in the truth of being, the gods differ from the mortals in that they are the *Zweifelose*, those without doubt – they are those who decide decisively according to their nature.³⁶⁸ The source of Heidegger's observation is possibly the following unfinished and untitled poem by Hölderlin:

Vom Abgrund nemlich haben
Wir angefangen und gegangen
Dem Leuen gleich, in Zweifel und Ärgeruß,

For from the abyss we
Began and have walked like
The lion, in doubt and annoyance,³⁶⁹

Another line of the poem reads:

... Allda bin ich
Alles miteinander.

... And there I am
All things at once.³⁷⁰

The origin of *Dasein* is the abyss and as *Dasein* walks on earth, its existential projection can be anything and "all things at once": it is the freedom of mortals that they have no fixed nature or course. Even *Dasein*'s "wellspring", or *Quelle*, is in the abyssal darkness of the unknown. For *Dasein* to walk in doubt is to exhibit the facticity of its having no full knowledge of its futural projection. To exist in *Dasein* is to be not transparent to itself. In contrast to *Dasein*, the gods simply *are*. Unlike *Dasein*, they experience being only as enduring presence, hence their immortality. The gods do not *walk* on earth as such for they are not touched by death, and

³⁶⁸ Martin Heidegger, "'Andenken' und 'Mnemosyne'", in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen*, page 29.

³⁶⁹ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 552-553.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

death is the return of life to earth.³⁷¹ Heidegger identifies the gods with the “*Himmlichen*”, the heavenly ones – like the Aesir in Norse paganism – referred to in “Mnemosyne”.³⁷² In the same poem the gods are described as being “wounded” by “contradiction” from “noble-minded” mortals.³⁷³ The gods have no use for hermeneutics. The mortals, however, are abyssal – they reach into the abyss in their preparedness for the gods’ needfulness of *Ereignis*, for it is the belonging together of being and nothingness that enables the gods to dwell in the fourfold. Hölderlin writes in “The Titans” (“Die Titanen”):

Von der Stunde des Aufgangs
 Himmlischer Thau glänzt,
 Muß unter Sterblichen auch
 Das Hohe sich fühlen.
 Drum bauen sie Häuser
 Und die Werkstatt gehet
 Und über Strömen das Schiff.

From the hour of sunrise
 Glistens heavenly dew,
 Among mortals also
 What is high must feel at home.
 That is why they build houses
 And the workshop’s astir
 And over currents the ship.³⁷⁴

Only by understanding the nothingness in *Dasein*’s temporality can the gods “love” us. Until such destining by being, *Dasein* is held unto the abyss in the gods’ refusal to come through in

³⁷¹ The unique Tibetan sky burial is therefore an emulation of the way of the gods without denying the reality of death. Cutting the physical link of the deceased with the world, he or she is aided in the journeying of the afterlife (*bar do*) by buddhas and deities through the spiritual practice of those left behind.

³⁷² Martin Heidegger, “‘Andenken’ und ‘Mnemosyne’”, in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen*, page 29.

³⁷³ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Mnemosyne”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 498-499. One such kind could be Ajax, called “Great Ajax” (“Groß Ajax”) in “Mnemosyne”, a titan-like human who sought no help from the gods in his heroic battles during the Trojan War. See *ibid.*, pages 500-501. Homer’s *Iliad* describes how Ajax went mad after Achilles was killed in the Trojan War and losing the deceased’s armour to his rivalrous Odysseus. When Ajax returned to his senses, he committed suicide. After his death Ajax was elevated to demigod status by the people of the Salamis Island in Greece.

³⁷⁴ Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Titans” (“Die Titanen”), in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 532-533.

the time of the abandonment of being, when being is interpreted as the representation of objects at *Dasein*'s disposal, under the sway of gigantism, instead of the essential unity of gratitude and offering in the festive temporalisation of the sacred on consecrated earth. The demigods, too, are different from the gods, but not in the same way as *Dasein*. They bring into their being a bringing together of the heavenly and the abyssal, the cycle of day and night, the alternation of sun and moon. Heidegger calls it the primordial metamorphosis (*Verwandlung*) of the abyss in being; this is also the "law" (*Gesetz*) of the "true" (*Wahre*) in the primordially of being (*Seyn*).³⁷⁵

Das Wahre ist die ursprüngliche, selbst je "Gesetz" gebende Verwandlung des Abgründigen, wohin gerade die Himmlischen nicht reichen, so daß sie nicht die Weite des Seyns ermessen. Das Wahre ist dieses Seyn selbst als Ursprung des Zweifel-losen und des Abgründigen der Menschen.³⁷⁶

Heidegger differentiates the true (*Wahre*) from truth (*Wahrheit*) in order to disassemble metaphysics in this important formulation, which shows the primordial relationship between *Dasein* and the gods as the law of being. In traditional mythology, the gods are essentially *distant*; even Hertha, the peaceful goddess of the earth, grows tired of mortals' ways in a cyclical fashion and departs from them, only to return at an unknown date. Heidegger points out that in their non-abyssal character, the gods do not gauge the full expanse of the primordially of being; *Dasein* is therefore essential to their understanding and experience of primordially.³⁷⁷ Zeus, in his repeated pursuits of mortal women, might have an idea about this truth. He fathered at least one demigod through these liaisons: Dionysos. Dionysos and the other demigods, however, suffered like mortals do: the trials of life and for some of them, death.³⁷⁸ Their essence and their ways reflect the potentiality-for-being of mortals, namely the entry of nothingness into their fates. The death of Achilles is mentioned in "Mnemosyne", and in "The Rhine", which is Hölderlin's accomplished river poem, the poet's feeling of closeness for them leaves a strong impression on the reader.

³⁷⁵ Martin Heidegger, "'Andenken' und 'Mnemosyne'", in Martin Heidegger, *Zu Hölderlin – Griechenlandreisen*, page 29.

Heidegger describes "*Verwandlung*" as "*Verwabrung*", the transformative opening of the truth of being. See *ibid.*, pages 28-29.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, page 29.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ Hölderlin, however, refers to Christ as a god who experiences like a demigod the life and death of a mortal. See Friedrich Hölderlin's unfinished poem "Celebration of Peace" ("Friedensfeier") in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 426-427.

Halbgötter denk' ich jetzt
 Und kennen muß ich die Theuern,
 Weil oft ihr Leben so
 Die sehnende Brust mir beweget.

Of demigods now I think
 And I must know these dear ones
 Because so often their lives
 Move me and fill me with longing.³⁷⁹

In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger exemplifies *Dasein*, in the inceptual projecting-open of *Da-sein*, as that in-between mode of being that enables it to be the historicising ground, in the modern strife between world and earth, and for the coming and the going of the gods. *Dasein* therefore contains the midpoint of transformative historicity, i.e. a turning of major significance for both gods and mortals.³⁸⁰ This turning is to be understood primordially, i.e. in *Ereignis*, and not as moments in the sequential progression of world time.³⁸¹ Like the Ister that swirls near its source, *Dasein* as the locality of the “fundamental occurrence of future history” (*Grundgeschehnis der künftigen Geschichte*)³⁸² is precisely at the same time a journeying back to its origin as it journeys futurally.³⁸³ There is swirling in its projection. *Dasein* is a living symbol of the swastika in its ancient purity – an interpretation of esoteric understanding that was never put forward by Heidegger himself.³⁸⁴

In “The Ister”, Hölderlin describes how near the source in its upper course now dwells Heracles, who is invited as a guest by the unnamed Germanic spirit of the river. The reason for doing so is not clearly stated in the poem. Heracles was invited to join the gods at the Olympus because of his heroic strength and courage. Is the spirit of the Ister desirous of these qualities? Is its hesitant swirling near its source to become a powerful, vertiginous whirlpool?

³⁷⁹ Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Rhine”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 416-417.

³⁸⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 11, pages 22-23.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, page 23: “The origin of *Dasein* is in *Ereignis* and its turning.”

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ In a tradition of primordial *gnosis* such as Dzogchen, there is no time, in its ordinary sense, in primordially.

³⁸⁴ In Bön, the native religion of Tibet, the swastika is the symbol of the divine principle, *ye shen*, which Bön followers also associate with the enriching fullness of being. With the devastation wrought upon humanity by Nazism (1933-1945), the swastika may not be able to reclaim its esoteric meaning in the West for a long time to come.

The presence of the guest in the homely locale tells us that even in, indeed precisely in the locality of the homely, journeying still prevails and remains determinative, albeit in a transformed manner. The guest ... is the presence of the unhomely in the homely.³⁸⁵

Through the presence of this Greek demigod, the foreign and the native enter into co-determination of *Dasein* just like that of locality and journeying in the essence of the river. In the case of Heracles, his foreignness is not an absolute in the oppositional sense, because in Greece is the inceptual moment in the question of being, and the primordial meaning of the source is reflected in it. In Heracles' being, therefore, is the other source of the Ister.

He appears, however, almost
 To go backwards and
 I presume he must come
 From the East.
 There would be
 Much to tell of this.

The "East", for Hölderlin, is the primordial source of the river's being. In the first stanza of "The Ister" he writes:

We, however, sing from the Indus
 Arrived from afar and
 From Alpheus, long have
 We sought what is fitting.

What is fitting, what is proper to any being in its being, is the sense of being located in *Ereignis*, hence the primordial understanding of being. Within *Ereignis* there is neither discord nor dissonance. What is proper to the Ister is not only what is manifest as the homely in its locality for *Dasein*, but its relation to the distant origin in Greece (Alpheus) and in India (Indus). The latter is the birthplace of the Indo-European *logos* and witnessed therefore the original gathering of beings. Even the Greek pantheon contains foreign elements, such as the chthonic goddess

³⁸⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*, § 23, page 142.

of the crossroads, Hecate.³⁸⁶ If in the flowing of a river like the Ister locality and journeying both become a question of being, *Dasein*, too, becomes a question related to it. According to Heidegger, the river “brings human beings into their own and maintains them in what is their own.”³⁸⁷

Whatever is their own is that to which human beings belong and must belong if they are to fulfill whatever is destined to them, and whatever is fitting, as their specific way of being. Yet that which is their own often remains foreign to human beings for a long time, because they abandon it without having appropriated it. And human beings abandon what is their own because it is what most threatens to overwhelm them. One’s own is least of all something that produces itself of its own accord. One’s own must come to be appropriate. And in turn, whatever has become appropriate needs to be appropriated. ... to dwell in what is one’s own is what comes last and is seldom successful and always remains what is most difficult.³⁸⁸

Heidegger goes on to explain that the river assists *Dasein* in belonging to what is its own, i.e. in making it become homely (*heimischwerden*). This it does in an essential manner, in the mode of there-by (*da-bei*).³⁸⁹ The river is there for *Dasein* and is also by *Dasein*. On the everyday level, the river’s constancy ensures *Dasein*’s survival. A river’s death is the death of a people (*Volk*). What belongs to *Dasein*, in fact to *Mitdasein*, is found in the essence of the river, and the river is appropriated by *Dasein* in mutual authenticity of existence. This is exemplified in Hölderlin’s poetic care of the river in his river poems, and in his thoughtful awareness of the interplay between locality and journeying, the homely and the foreign, especially in the being of an enigmatic river like the Ister.

Was aber jener thuet der Strom,
Weis niemand.

Yet what that one does, the river,

³⁸⁶ See Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pages 205-210, regarding Hecate’s possible origin in the Anatolian region.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, § 5, page 21.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Nobody knows.³⁹⁰

No German writer has displayed more intimacy with the Greek experience of gods, titans and demigods than Hölderlin. In the essential power of the poetised in his poems, the question of whether Hölderlin actually believed in their existence is less important than the pagan hermeneutics that arose as a result of Heidegger's deep engagement with Hölderlin's poetry. Hölderlin most probably did believe in them. And according to Heidegger's poetics, what the poet writes about is essentially the opening of the moment of truth in the ground of being – in the form of gods, demigods, mortals and rivers. It is what Heidegger calls “poetising founding” (*dichtende Stiften*).³⁹¹

Only a poet like Hölderlin could have the vision of imagining himself as the spirit of the Ister inviting Heracles to stay with him awhile. Only Hölderlin could have understood the primordial source in the semi-divine being of Heracles, too, despite his utter foreignness in the German locality of the Ister's upper course, where it is mixed with journeying in the swirling of the river near the source.

The essence of one's own is so mysterious that it unfolds its ownmost essential wealth only from out of a supremely thoughtful acknowledgment of the foreign.³⁹²

In the homely of the Ister, Heracles does not lose his foreignness, i.e. his own homely in the locality of the Alpheus. A “supreme” appropriation, therefore, is not the conversion of the foreign into the homely, but letting the foreign be in the homely. Within both the foreign and the homely, there is instead an opening, a clearing of being that allows for mutual resonance, for the conversation of the two (*Zwiesprache*) that bring together Heracles and the Ister in the unity of the primordially of being that must surely please the native goddess of the earth, Hertha. In the in-dwelling awhile of the foreign demigod in the river's homely locality, the meaning of being disclosed is *daimonios topos*. Hertha bears witness to this as the goddess of *aletheia*. The poetised in the Ister poem has accomplished its founding by bringing into appropriating unity the heavenly divine and the abyssal *Dasein*, thus fulfilling the “law” of the primordially of being discussed earlier.

³⁹⁰ Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Ister”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 496-497.

³⁹¹ Ibid., § 26, page 157.

³⁹² Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn “The Ister”*, § 10, page 55.

Poetizing founding builds the stairs for the descent of the heavenly.³⁹³

As in the Wiccan rite of drawing down the divine into oneself while standing firmly grounded on the earth, the poet does honour to Hertha by becoming “the earth upon which the stairs are to be built”. The *Geschlecht* of poets as the poetising founder is therefore at the same time the grounder of the heavenly. They are like the rivers. This is because the heavenly – namely the sun and the moon – are reflected in the rivers which are themselves not heavenly. But in this relation to the heavenly by reflecting it, there is a showing and a pointing that belongs to the Greek understanding of *daimons*. The river is a sign that the gods, the *Himmliche*, can identify and relate to. They can descend and reach into the mortal dwelling of *Dasein*. They will want to do this all the more in the case of the Ister, where Heracles, one of the mortals become heavenly, stays as a guest, in its upper course near the source. The rivers belong to the earth, they are children of Hertha. But in having demigods who have journeyed to dwell among their homely localities among *Dasein*, the rivers at the same time bear the essence of the “children of the heavens”.

Through Hölderlin’s pagan figuration of the poet, the difficult question of *Geschlecht* is placed in a clearing of being that promises new possibilities of the renewal of the bond and the tradition between mortals and gods. Rather than being configured in either sex or race, *Geschlecht* becomes a question of attunement to the gods while establishing a primordial relationship with both the earth and the heavens. *Geschlecht*, in essence, is the way of being for *Dasein* in the fourfold. In the unity of this grounding attunement can be found the ideal onefold (*Einfalt*) in *Geschlecht* that Heidegger speaks of in his reading of Trakl: not androgyny, but as the *race* of gods’ men and women, which is fundamentally beyond sex and race. In the light of this pagan understanding, the Icelandic notion of *Ásatrúarmenn* – people who are true to the gods – becomes highly relevant.

³⁹³ Ibid., § 26, page 158.

Division Two

The Great Crossing

§ 17. *The River of Transitory Inwardness:*

Primordially in the Tibetan Tradition of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection

Longchen Rabjam, also known as Longchenpa, was the first Tibet Buddhist meditator and scholar to unify the primordial tradition of Dzogchen by organising it into a cycle of doctrine and esoteric practice and to integrate it fully into Tibetan Buddhism through the Nyingma school that he belonged to. This was in the 14th century, at least 550 years after the official dissemination of Indian Buddhism into Tibet during the reign of King Trisong Detsen, who commissioned the building of the first Buddhist monastery at Samye. Dzogchen is most possibly of non-Buddhist origin; it is a question of continuous debate in Tibetan studies.³⁹⁴ It can be likened to the Greek mysteries in that in its first recorded existence, hardly any text was written about its teachings and its methods. Like the Eleunisian initiate, the Dzogchen adept was introduced *directly*, i.e. experientially and not just intellectually, to primordial being. In Dzogchen, primordially is awareness of the whole, luminosity in all directions and

³⁹⁴ The leading scholar in this field is the Tibetan exile Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, Emeritus Professor at the Centre national recherche scientifique (Département des sciences de l'homme et de la société) and a world-renowned authority in Bön studies. See Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection. A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), pages 220-223, viz. the case of a collection of Bön texts called *bsGrags pa skor gum*.

unobstructed openness. Dzogchen is a living tradition that has been active in the West on a modest scale since the early 1980s. When approached as a non-systematic holistic philosophy, Dzogchen displays an immediate hermeneutic resonance with Heidegger's understanding of the Greek experience of *aletheia* as *daimonios topos*, which is an open, luminescent region of *Besinnung*, or mindful awareness of the whole of being. Heidegger's own encouragement for dialogue with Asian philosophy notwithstanding, it is the inner possibilities for renewal of *Dasein's* place in *Ereignis* that are more important in the comparative hermeneutics that is about to be undertaken in this section. In the contemporary context, both Heidegger's *Besinnung* and Dzogchen enables modern *Dasein* to confront the universal nihilism that is now devastating society and world, and which gives rises to the possibility of a *Geschlecht* of humanity which Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* describes as the "last man".³⁹⁵ Both resist what Heidegger fears most as the "inner fragmentation" of humanity.³⁹⁶

The central doctrine in Buddhism is emptiness: the *anatman*, or non-essence, in human and in all phenomena. In Tibetan Buddhism, the no-self and no-other of emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) has been developed into a high level of scholastic sophistication based on the Prasangika Madhyamaka (*dbu ma thal 'gyur pa*) system of the 7th century Indian Buddhist philosopher Candrakirti (ca. 600-650), which was itself elaborations (*spros pa*) on the unique renewal of Buddhist thought in the antinomian dialectical tracts written by the founder of Madhyamaka, Nagarjuna, in the 2nd century.³⁹⁷ Nagarjuna's main text is *Treatise on the Middle Way* (*Mulamadhymakakarika*) and Candrakirti's, *Introduction to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakavatara*).³⁹⁸ Prasangika Madhyamaka has been the prevailing philosophical view in Tibet since the second transmission of Buddhism into Tibet that took place mainly during the 10th and 11th centuries. The name Prasangika refers to its method of argumentation as *reductio ad absurdum*, i.e. using absurd conclusions to point out the invalidity of self-existing essences and substances in beings. It aims to be philosophically instructive in the clearing away of erroneous views that hinder a

³⁹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Sämtliche Werke*, Volume 4 (Berlin: Deutscher Taschenbuch; Walter de Gruyter, 1980), page 19: "So will ich ihnen vom Verächtlichsten sprechen: das aber ist *der letzte Mensch*." For Heidegger's comment on the "last man", see Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, pages 62-64; 82-84.

³⁹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, page 84.

³⁹⁷ See Daniel Cozort, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*, pages 33-41; on the doctrines of Prasangika Madhyamaka, see *ibid.*, pages 41-71.

³⁹⁸ See Nagarjuna, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's "Mulamadhymakakarika"*, translated with commentary by Jay L. Garfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Candrakirti, *Introduction to the Middle Way: Candrakirti's "Madhyamakavatara"*, translated by Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambhala, 2002); and Peter Fenner, *The Ontology of the Middle Way* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), which contains Fenner's translation of *Madhyamakavatara* in Appendix One (pages 211-302). The Sanskrit original of *Madhyamakavatara* has never been located; modern scholarship is based on its Tibetan and Chinese translations.

Buddhist on his or her path to enlightenment. While it does not reject external reality *tout court*, the Prasangika Madhyamikas relegate sensuous phenomena to the status of contingent or conventional determinations without intrinsic being, but which is knowable through valid cognition only on the basis of the metanarrative of emptiness. In other words, the factual beings in phenomenology are according to them conceptual imputations. The question of primordial being simply does not arise. Following Buddha Shakyamuni's injunction, neither is there existence, nor is there non-existence; and neither neither nor both. Therefore what can ultimately be known is the emptiness of all phenomena and the emptiness of emptiness itself. In Madhyamaka, phenomena being mere representations of ideas without basis in being (the being of beings), essential thinking along the line of hermeneutic phenomenology is suppressed. There is no ontological difference between being and beings in Tibetan scholasticism, but only an ontological void. Understanding is not understanding of beings as such, but that of internal cognitive arrangements according to convention, and for the purposes of enlightenment, according to the inscription of the emptiness paradigm. The world is rewritten through the Madhyamaka view by granting a relative and limited truth value to this or that being, but an absolute one to the non-being of emptiness. The division of truth into two kinds is fundamental not only to Prasangika Madhyamaka but its rival tradition, Svatantrika Madhyamaka.³⁹⁹ Such schematisation allows the Madhyamikas to approach ordinary reality with an implicit, unacknowledged "understanding of being" that is described by Heidegger as handiness or ready-to-hand (*Zuhandensein*). It enables, for example, tools to be made, books to be written and butter lamps to be lit and is the foundation of everyday life.

Until Buddhahood, all phenomena are like a magician's illusions, appearing one way but existing in another way; nonetheless, there still is validly established effectiveness.⁴⁰⁰

But this is also where Prasangika Madhyamaka becomes problematic. With its understanding of effectiveness in everyday life, the Prasangika Madhyamikas subscribe in fact to an "understanding of being" as *phronesis* because here more than a cognitive state is involved in their "comportment to being". It is what Aristotle calls "practical reason" in *Nicomachian Ethics*, or as discussed by Heidegger in the existential analytic of *Being and Time*, the phenomenon of *Dasein's* circumspection, *Umsicht*.⁴⁰¹ That Madhyamaka is metaphysics, i.e. oblivion of being, can

³⁹⁹ Phenomenologically speaking, the Svatantrika Madhyamikas accept the existence of beings *as* beings even if they are ultimately empty.

⁴⁰⁰ Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1995), page 107.

⁴⁰¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 15, page 65.

be demonstrated when it is compared with Heidegger's description of what *really* happens when *Dasein* encounters things. Even before the establishment of their reality or illusoriness is *Dasein's* pre-ontological orientation to beings as a whole.

These "things" never show themselves initially by themselves, in order then to fill out a room as a sum of real things. What we encounter as nearest to us, although we do not grasp it thematically, is the room, not as what is "between the four walls" in a geometrical, spatial sense, but rather as material for living. On the basis of the latter we find "accommodations", and in accommodations the actual "individual" useful thing. A totality of useful things is always already discovered before the individual useful thing.⁴⁰²

This discussion about circumspection is one of the most important moments in *Being and Time* because it leads to two fundamental observations: beings as ready-to-hand and *Dasein* as being-in-the-world. In the discovery of a thing in the totality of accommodations, *Dasein* can experience it as the unconcealment of its being as a ready-to-hand, a handy being that is not a mere occurrence in space.

Handiness (*Zuhandenheit*) is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself initially a theme for circumspection. What is peculiar to what is initially at hand is that it withdraws, so to speak, in its character of handiness in order to be really handy. What everyday association is initially busy with is not tools themselves, but the work. What is to be produced in each case is what is primarily taken care of and is thus also what is at hand. The work bears the totality of references in which useful things are encountered.⁴⁰³

In this totality *Dasein* finds itself going about things in a surrounding environment. In it, things encountered can be recognised for what they are made of, such as stone, wood, metal, etc., which are from nature. Svatantrika Madhyamikas in this situation will accept the appearance of these objects as being empowered by the power of nature, whereas Prasangika Madhyamikas will not admit that such power inheres in any of these objects. Neither is taking into account the enviroing nature of the meaning of being as *Dasein* encounters these objects. In contrast,

⁴⁰² Ibid., § 15, page 64.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., § 15, page 65.

Heidegger is able to offer a more holistic account that will lead to the grounding of the being of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world.

... “Nature” is also discovered in the use of useful things, “nature” in the light of products of nature.

But nature must not be understood here as what is merely objectively present, nor as the power of nature. The forest is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock, the river is water power, the wind is wind “in the sails”. As the “surrounding world” is discovered, “nature” thus discovered is encountered along with it. We can abstract from nature’s kind of being as handiness (*Zubandenheit*); we can discover and define it in its pure objective presence. But in this kind of discovery of nature, nature as what “stirs and strives”, what overcomes us, entrances us as landscape, remains hidden. The botanist’s plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow, the river’s “source” ascertained by the geographer is not the “source in the ground”.⁴⁰⁴

The question implied here concerns primordially. Worlding (*Welten*) is the primordial phenomenon that orients *Dasein* in time and space and in relation to manifold beings; their facticity is already pre-ontologically affirmed as a moment in the hermeneutic circle of *Dasein*’s understanding of being that determines *Dasein* for what it is in the first place. The enchantment of landscape or, to refer to Hölderlin again, the mythic relationship between a river and the gods – this is a moment of *aletheia* in nature as *physis* that can elevate *Dasein* to its higher powers as the grounder of the attunement to the last god in the age of nihilism. What Madhyamaka cannot take into consideration, based on its metaphysical adherence to emptiness, is the equiprimordially of being and seeming, a deep relation between the two that allows the *question* of being to be posed. Instead, the Madhyamaka theory of two truths gives rise to a “subjective” approach to seeming that confines it to the parameters of epistemological formulations, affirming some interpretations and negating the others. It makes no difference, therefore, that in Tibetan Buddhism since the 14th century, the great philosopher Tsongkhapa, who founded the Ganden school which later gave rise to the Gelug order that came to dominate Tibet, interpreted the phenomenal world as expressive of emptiness – actually identical but conceptually different (*ngo bo gcig dang ldog pa tha dad*).⁴⁰⁵ On the ultimate level, samsara and

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., § 15, page 66.

⁴⁰⁵ Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Central Philosophy of Tibet: A Study and Translation of Jey Tsong Khapa’s “Essence of True Eloquence”*, page 147.

nirvana are the same. This leads to another formulation by Tsongkhapa, namely the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness (*snang stong dbyer med pa*).⁴⁰⁶ In Tsongkhapa, and this is unique to Tibetan Buddhism, Prasangika Madhyamaka is transformed into a phenomenological monism, so that two truths become a *unity* of them.⁴⁰⁷ However, Tsongkhapa, in adhering to the Madhyamaka tradition, understands being as the being of beings, and not as the abyss that is capable of withdrawal from beings and of deferred advent, as Heidegger understands it in his exposition on the fundamental, being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) phenomenon of *Ereignis*. Yet it is precisely in the being-historical sense that Tsongkhapa's work brought about a major turning point in Tibetan thought. Tsongkhapa's thesis of indivisibility certainly has a semblance of *Ereignis* in it, in that it is founded upon a notion of belonging together that creates a unique form of *logos* established by him and his followers, the Kadampas and later the Gelugpas, in the Buddhist tradition. Yet the indivisibility or the belonging together is arrived from an understanding that beings are not involved in *Wesung*, the "essencing" that covers both the facticity and the potentiality of essences, e.g. the "godding" of the gods in Heidegger's thought. From their side, the Madhyamikas will see *Wesung* as evidence of mental clinging to the notion of inherent existence and it is thus irrelevant each to Tsongkhapa's revised system. In fact Tsongkhapa like any Prasangika Madhyamika maintains the view that beings appear to us as beings through momentary arisings of phenomena and that their coherence in being, i.e. their identities, are only conceptual imputations. These imputations themselves do not inhere in the human mind but are the results of karmic propensities, which on the general level are determined by what we can call the destiny of *Geschlecht*. For example, the warm feelings generated in the *Mitdasein* of familial or conjugal relationships are *nothing* to a hungry tiger which

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., page 148.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Sonam Thakchoe, "The Relationship between The Two Truths: A Comparative Analysis of Two Tibetan Accounts", in *Contemporary Buddhism*, Volume 4, Number 2 (2003), pages 111-127. Thakchoe's translation of *ngo bo* as "ontological identity" instead of "entity" brings Tsongkhapa closer to the Heideggerian understanding of being, however, identity itself is problematised in Heidegger's notion of the truth of being through the equiprimordiality of sameness and difference. Sonam Thakchoe's reference to the "appearance" of the "ultimate truth" of emptiness that is consistent with the "mode of existence" of emptiness (page 121) is phenomenally impossible in that emptiness cannot belong to phenomena: it is never manifest, but is the product of cognition, for emptiness is negation of the phenomenally manifest (but not the cognition of phenomena itself). Sonam Thakchoe therefore provides a robustly realist reading of Tsongkhapa's qualified realism (emptiness is real but is always hidden as a phenomenon). In Gorampa, who was a Sakyapa, there is an abyss between phenomena and emptiness that renders the two truths incompatible in a single ontological identity (page 117). What is missed in this historical debate between Tsongkhapa and Gorampa is an understanding of truth as *aletheia*, in which *Dasein* projects itself into the truth of being as an unconcealment that does not exclude the possibility of hiddenness, depending on *Dasein's* nearness to or remoteness from the phenomenon concerned. Phenomena endure as the manifest, from momentariness to the span of an eon, because of their fundamental determination by what Heidegger calls the "time-space" in *Contributions to Philosophy* (§ 239, pages 259-262).

sees a family group or a couple merely as a potential source of food. Similarly, Homer wrote in antiquity that humans were mere playthings of gods, as in the case of Zeus' relationship with Semele, which ended in this mortal woman's death by immolation. To continue further with this attunement to the frightful, the occult lore of *Necronomicon* among the Chaoists in neo-paganism has the belief in the return of soulless ancient gods who merely desire the death of humanity. In short, the Madhyamikas do not accept that humans inhere as humans, either individually or as a race (*Geschlecht*). For Tsongkhapa, the world simply does not *world* as Heidegger says.⁴⁰⁸

An ontological *gigantomachia* is yet to take place in Tibetan Buddhism. In Greece, the *machia* was of primary importance to its inceptual thinking prior to the rise of metaphysics and which undergoes a retrieval (*Wiederholung*) in Heidegger's works. Unlike Tibetan Buddhists, the Greeks approached phenomena from an understanding of being that privileged presence and showing, hence their notion of primordial truth as *aletheia*. Yet, as Heidegger observes, being and seeming can only exist uneasily together in the history of being, but this is exactly the condition for the *question* of being to arise.

Only by undergoing the struggle between being and seeming did they wrest being forth from beings, did they bring beings into constancy and unconcealment: the gods and the state, the temples and the tragedies, athletic competition and philosophy – all this in the midst of seeming, *besieged* by it, but also taking it seriously, knowing its *power*. Only with the sophists and Plato was seeming explained as, and thus reduced to, mere seeming. At the same time, being as idea was elevated to a supersensory realm. The chasm, *khorismos*, was torn open between the merely apparent beings here below and the real being somewhere up there. Christian doctrine then established itself in this chasm, while at the same time reinterpreting the Below as the created and the Above as the Creator, and with weapons thus reforged, it set itself against antiquity as paganism and distorted it. And so Nietzsche is right to say that Christianity is Platonism for the people.⁴⁰⁹ (*First two italics mine.*)

In Plato, the dualism of the two worlds signifies two kinds of truths like such notion in Madhyamaka philosophy; the latter, however, grounds the two truths in non-duality. For

⁴⁰⁸ Yet for all Tibetan Buddhists, there is a soteriological reason behind the non-worlding of Buddhism, because every worlding involves arising of karma, which must be extinguished for enlightenment to happen.

⁴⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, page 111.

generation after generation, Tibetan Buddhists have taken great pains to avoid any possibility of *leborismos* taking root in their ontology. The status quo, as we shall soon see, is threatened continuously by the undecidability of the ontological status of primordially. For buddhahood to be real and attainable, it has to exist in a way that is *primordial* to this world of phenomena and experiences, so that the traditional Buddhist discourse on “buddha nature” can make sense. This is particularly important when there is no place for establishment of the *world* – and this includes *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world – in Prasangika Madhyamaka. The Prasangika Madhyamikas do not approach the phenomenal world with the question, “Why is there being rather than nothing?” Instead they ask, “How can we establish the nothing in being?” Their soteriological aim of “proving” the selflessness or *anatman* not only in human beings but in all phenomena, in order to wean the unawakened ones from their attachment to this world, results in Prasangika Madhyamikas interpreting nothingness in a manner that, when compared with Heidegger’s, diverges significantly from his formulation of the inceptual question. This question is nevertheless uncannily present in the background of the Prasangika Madhyamikas’ concerns, even if viewed with suspicion in accordance with their inherited tradition. The question therefore lies with the question, and not with metaphysical master narratives in Tibetan Buddhist soteriology.

§ 18. *The Tibetan Controversy on Primordially*

One of the main concerns of Tsongkhapa was the challenge posed by the renewed Dzogchen system of Longchenpa, who lived just one generation before him. For the Nyingmapas, who started as the original Buddhists in Tibet and were not afraid of eclectically absorbing the “pagan” influences of the native spiritual traditions of Bön, Dzogchen represents the highest teaching in Buddhism, which they also call *ati yoga*. Longchenpa developed further the syncretistic tendencies of the Nyingma lineages by admitting Prasangika Madhyamaka into their philosophy but only after critically qualifying it with the fundamental beliefs of Dzogchen. Prior to this turning point in their history, the Nyingmapas followed Svatantrika Madhyamaka, which accepts the inherent existence of beings on the relative level as beings and not reducible to conceptual imputations. This synthesis of Dzogchen and the Gelugpas’ Prasangika Madhyamaka was to take place again in the 19th century in the extensive scholarship of the

Nyingma lama Mipham Gyatso.⁴¹⁰ According to Tsongkhapa and his followers, any such move is a serious compromise of Prasāngika Madhyamaka and can be likened to the attempt by the Jonangpas to interpret emptiness as having the quality of being. Their leading scholar, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (1292-1361), proposes in *The Mountain Doctrine: Ocean of Definitive Meaning* that buddhahood is a primordial, eternal and unchanging matrix.⁴¹¹ Here the Western philosopher is reminded of Timaeus' notion of *chora*: the primordial being that determines all beings by containing them in its creative spatiality and at the same time is present in all of them.⁴¹² There is nothing controversial about asserting that buddha qualities are ultimate and noumenal; it is, however, to assert that they *are* "other-empty" but *not* "self-empty". By this it is meant that buddhahood is the primordial ground of being that is empty of all samsaric qualities – hence "other-empty" – but is *not* empty of itself. A Tibetan understanding of being becomes manifest

⁴¹⁰ On Mipham's major exegesis on Madhyamaka, see Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso, *Speech of Delight: Mipham's Commentary on Santarakṣita's "Ornament of the Middle Way"*, translated by Thomas H. Doctor (Ithaca; Boulder: Snow Lion Publications, 2004). On Mipham's argument for reconciliation of Dzogchen with Prasāngika Madhyamaka, see *ibid.*, page 85; see also John Whitney Pettit, *Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, The Great Perfection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999), page 402: Mipham writes in his commentary on his short but important work, *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me* (translated as *Beacon of Certainty* in *ibid.*) that "the great Madhyamaka that is free of all elaborations of the four extremes and the luminous Great Perfection of the vast expanse free of extremes are both identical with respect to their object, the dharmadhatu that is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, but with respect to mere names, they are different." Yet the Gelugpas have always rejected Mipham's notion of "coalescence" (*zung jug*), which is similar to Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis*. It can be said that Mipham's ecumenical gesture has never been reciprocated by the Gelugpas. Just one generation after Mipham Gyatso, the most influential Gelug lama Pabongka Rinpoche (1878-1941) virtually declared a sectarian war on Dzogchen as heretical teachings. Forced conversions of Dzogchen followers began to take place. This sectarian antagonism is presently held largely at bay through the conciliatory and inclusive approach of the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, who like the 5th Dalai Lama before him engages in a personal practice of Dzogchen. The biggest international Tibetan Buddhist organisation, Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), follows the Pabongka lineage. It does not disseminate Dzogchen but does not actively oppose it either.

⁴¹¹ Jeffrey Hopkins, *Reflections on Reality: The Three Natures and Non-natures in the Mind-Only School*, Volume 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pages 273-274.

⁴¹² See John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's "Timaeus"*, pages 111-124. *Chora* is primordial to *physis* and at the same time escapes *eidos*, hence invisible. It can also be said that *chora* is withdrawn from *eikos logos*. See *ibid.*, page 128. Chorology, if fully developed in Western philosophy in its beginnings, might have placed it on path of development quite different from the ontology of metaphysics. During an interview conducted by a deconstruction scholar Outi Pasanen, Sallis discusses "how the *chora* exceeds the opposition of intelligible and sensible, how it both makes that opposition possible and disrupts its operation – thus dislocating metaphysics at the very moment it enables it." Outi Pasanen, "Double Truths: An Interview with John Sallis", *Man and World*, Volume 30, Number 1 (1997), page 112. It can therefore be said that even with Plato, the inception of the other beginning was present in his philosophical workings, for it was he who composed *Timaeus* and recorded Timaeus' reflections on *chora*. Heidegger, however, never wrote on *chora*, although his notion of *Ereignis* certainly shares an affinity with it; yet an understanding of primordial temporality was absent in *Timaeus*. *Chora's* hermeneutic nearness to Longchenpa's notion of basic space is obvious. Both Timaeus and Longchenpa concentrated on the spatiality of primordially at the expense of temporality.

in the *gzhan stong* doctrine. Being the primordial ground, buddhahood is not subject to impermanence like all samsaric phenomena.⁴¹³ To speak in Madhyamaka terms, buddhahood inheres in itself and is *only* emptiness in reference to samsara. This also implies that enlightened beings living in the world, which to the majority is the cyclic manifestations of pleasure and suffering, attachment and aversion and so forth, are factual selves or essences that are not empty. In Dolpopa, therefore, the “meaning of being” in buddha or nirvana qualities is a transcendent heterology of startling freshness in Tibetan thought.

Just as a river in summer
 Is said to be “warm”
 But in cold season
 Is said to be “cold”
 So when covered with the nets of afflictive emotions
 It is called “sentient being”
 But when separated from afflictive emotions,
 Just it is called “Buddha”.⁴¹⁴

Buddha nature as the matrix of “one-gone-thus” – a traditional epithet for the enlightened ones since they have departed from samsara – is self-arising, like a wellspring of primordial perfection. Dolpopa’s position – and he asserts throughout his writings that his conclusion is compatible with the early Madhyamikas – is *gzhan stong*, in contrast to *rang stong* (self-empty) of Tsongkhapa and his followers in the Gelug school. To use Heidegger’s study of Hölderlin’s Ister poem here, enlightenment as buddha nature is the locality (*Ortschaft*) of *Dasein* that its journeying (*Wanderschaft*) in samsara in its pre-enlightened state cannot negate. Enlightenment according to the Jonangpas is the complete clearing and lightening of being in the totally unobstructed open of the primordial being (*Seyn*) in *Dasein*’s attunement to it. Such finality, or realisation of “a positive self-powered final nature” is however not Heidegger’s aim in either the fundamental ontology of *Being and Time* or the being-historical theurgy of *Contributions to*

⁴¹³ Ibid., page 285. This is heretical as far as the majority of Tibetan Buddhists are concerned. However, the 14th Dalai Lama’s appointment of the 9th Khalkha Jetsun Dhampa, who is in fact his equivalent in Mongolia and a Gelugpa, as the guardian of the Jonang tradition ensures that the “other-empty” teachings on emptiness will gradually find their way back into the mainstream of Tibetan Buddhist thought. This significant appointment took place in 1991, when Mongolia regained its independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

⁴¹⁴ Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, *The Mountain Doctrine: Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, cited in *ibid.*, pages 298-299. Hopkins’ translation of this work is forthcoming in August 2006, to be published by Snow Lion Publications.

Philosophy. Despite its adherence to primordiality, the ontology implied in the doctrine of *gzhan stong* is not the goal of Heidegger's holistic hermeneutics of the *Dasein's* temporal finitude, even in its resolute preparedness for the advent of the gods on the horizon of the history of being. The primordial matrix of enlightenment that Dolpopa describes is the ground of *Dasein's* transformation into a "god" in the perfect sense, which means the complete conquest of time, space and nature. "Godding" is invoked in the absence of a Western equivalent of "buddhahood". Yet this explicitly alchemical understanding of human existence in Tibetan Buddhism, which is common to both Western Hermeticism and Tibetan Highest Yoga Tantra, is not integral to Heidegger's fundamental approach to the question of being. He is concerned with a *Dasein* that can surpass the unfree conditions of nihilism, gigantism and planetary devastation during the abyssal time of the abandonment of being. There is no transformation of *Dasein's* essence in Heidegger; at best it is an "in-between" that is resolutely attuned to "godding" as it draws near to *Ereignis*. Transformation, for Heidegger, is the attainment of a "more originary stance of questioning" in respect of being.⁴¹⁵ Indeed the contemporary movement of *engaged Buddhism* puts into question the priority of attaining omniscience and other perfect qualities of buddhahood as *Dasein* reaches into the abyss and endures the uncanny of its holistic existential leap. For the Tibetan people this is a daily reality as China relentlessly lays to waste their spiritual, cultural and political identity even if the overt killings have stopped in recent years. The nihilism of the world is most pronounced in a region on earth such as Tibet precisely because it is the pinnacle of the world: the conquering nature of gigantism gives priority to ascent over descent. It also brings up, in an essential and unsettling manner, the question of *polis* and its relation to primordiality in being, which Heidegger examines in *Parmenides*, especially on the topic of strife (*eris*) as concealment (*lethe*) in the historicisation of being.⁴¹⁶

What concerns Dolpopa first and foremost is the doubtless state that tantric practitioners of the Jonang tradition can enter into without effort through the self-arising of primordial wisdom. Samsaric concealment of the truth of experience simply falls away in the stability of the *gzhan stong* view. This can be likened to what Heidegger calls the *Zweifellose* of the gods, i.e. their decisiveness in their essence without the slightest trace of doubt.

The Jonang view of experiential decisiveness through *gzhan stong* was banned when the followers of Tsongkhapa gained supreme power under the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., § 156, page 196.

⁴¹⁶ In essential thinking, *polis* is understood as the "settling of the place of the history" of a people, and in the case of the Tibetans, this has been severely disrupted by the Chinese. On the primordial meaning of *polis*, see Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 90.

Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617-1682) during the 17th century. He was the first Dalai Lama to rule Tibet and began construction of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, which literally means the “city of the gods”. Most of the Jonangpas were forcibly converted and their tradition came to an effective end. Yet the 5th Dalai Lama, despite being a Gelugpa, was a strong supporter of Dzogchen of the Nyingma tradition and revered as an accomplished practitioner in it. Dzogchen’s central tenet of the primordial mind is fully compatible with *gzhan stong* of the Jonangpas. In fact the strongest criticism levelled against *gzhan stong* by the Gelug lamas was its strong resemblance, if not equivalence, to Dzogchen. The hermeneutic circle of the self-arisen primordially that is itself not empty thus remained unbroken in a concealed manner right inside the *polis* of the 5th Dalai Lama. Its strife with the counter-essence of *rang stong* was allowed to continue unabated among the Tibetan Madhyamikas of dissimilar convictions. It has taken the form of reenactments of the controversy between Tsongkhapa and Longchenpa in the journeying of Tibetan Buddhism even in its current exile and its international dissemination after 1959. In essence, this traditional tension in Tibetan thought traces the being-historical movement of essential questioning about the nature of primordially, which is the wholeness of being. That it is alive and well in Tibetan philosophy provides openings for a genuine hermeneutic rapprochement for Heidegger scholars, especially those who have gained familiarity with the *Ereignis* of the “history of being” in Heidegger’s later writings.⁴¹⁷

§ 19. Primordially in Longchenpa

When Tsongkhapa wrote his famous work *Essence of True Eloquence*, his main aim was to refute Dolpopa and Longchenpa among others,⁴¹⁸ as both are proponents of the thesis of primordial being in buddha nature. Viewed phenomenologically, it displays an understanding of the true nature of reality that places emptiness in a position that is subordinate to an intrinsic *understanding of being* in human existence. In other words, the primordially thesis affirms *Dasein* even before the principal doctrine of emptiness that gives philosophical structure to Tibetan Buddhism. Although Longchenpa does not use the term “*gzhan stong*” to describe the truth of primordial being, its meaning is implied in the other-emptiness of primordial awareness as an unconditioned understanding that is unfettered by metaphysical notions of any kind, including

⁴¹⁷ The most notable example in English is Charles E. Scott, Susan M. Schoenbohm, Daniella Vallega-Neu and Alejandro Vallega (ed.), *Companion to Heidegger’s “Contributions to Philosophy”*, cited in Part One of this thesis.

⁴¹⁸ See Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Central Philosophy of Tibet*, page 62; Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, page 93.

emptiness.⁴¹⁹ Like Dolpopa's understanding of buddha nature, primordially in Dzogchen transcends the conditioned nature beings in an ultimate way. The unconditioned of primordially is freedom in being, a freedom that is beyond the limitation of concepts and lies outside the reach of their access – hence the controversy with Tsongkhapa who views true understanding as being founded upon correct analysis. Dzogchen, in contrast, has the characteristics of fundamental ontology in that it situates primordially in the opening made by ontological difference between being and being. Longchenpa explains his difference from Tsongkhapa as follows:

Dzogpa Chenpo's view of freedom from extreme is similar to to Prasangika-Madhyamaka's for the most part. [The main difference is that] the important basic view of Madhyamaka is of a spacelike empty aspect, while the principal basic view [of Dzogpa Chenpo] is of primordially pure and naked intrinsic awareness, which is ineffable and unceasing. According to Dzogpa Chenpo, intrinsic awareness and everything that arises within it are free from all extremes, like the [nonexistence of] limits to space.⁴²⁰

Longchenpa also explains that intrinsic awareness is the basis of beings as a whole.

Just as rays of sunlight are subsumed within the orb of the sun, all phenomena of the universe of appearances and possibilities are subsumed within their source, awakened mind.⁴²¹

The awakened intrinsic awareness is not a being to which all other beings are *ens creatum*.

... given that even what is termed “awakened mind as the supportive ground” or “awakened mind as basic space” has never existed as something with an identifiable essence, all things are none than their true nature, which is like space; this is conventionally referred to as “things being subsumed within the true nature of

⁴¹⁹ John Whitney Petit, *Mipham's "Beacon of Certainty"*, page 94. According to Petit, Longchenpa wrote no commentary on Dolpopa even though the latter was his famous contemporary.

⁴²⁰ Longchen Rabjam, *Ch'os dbyings mdzod keyi 'grel ba Lung gi gter mdzod*, folio 76b/1, cited in Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission: A Commentary on "The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena"*, page x.

⁴²¹ Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission: A Commentary on "The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena"*, page 123.

phenomena". But it should be understood that subsuming and what is subsumed are without foundation or support.⁴²²

Dzogchen, then, can meet Heidegger's thinking with a fundamental resonance in its total rejection of metaphysical explanation of things or beings. In his later writing such as "The Thing", Heidegger sees the primordially of being at play in the way things manifest themselves as the gathering of the fourfold of gods, mortals, sky and earth in the sheer openness of their relatedness.⁴²³ The open in this openness is the "basic space" understood by the intrinsic awareness that is awakened in the finite temporality of *Dasein*, which at the same has *Dasein* in a throwing-projection inside the infinite abyss of the groundlessness of the ground. The *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* is dispersion in time without implosion, i.e. with the intrinsic possibility of in-abiding (*Inständigkeit*). Such potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) is perceived in Dzogchen as the enlightened quality of primordial space that is found in all beings. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger writes:

Projecting is the release of a throw by which unconcealedness submits and infuses itself into what is as such.⁴²⁴

The unconcealedness of the suchness of being in beings is made explicitly "projective" in the following poem by Heidegger:

Forests spread

Brooks plunge

Rocks persist

Mist diffuses

Meadows wait

Springs well

Winds dwell

Blessing muses⁴²⁵

⁴²² Ibid., page 124.

⁴²³ Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, page 172; see also Gail Stenstad, *Transformations: Thinking after Heidegger*, page 106.

⁴²⁴ Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, page 71.

⁴²⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Thinker as Poet", in *ibid.*, page 14.

Things in Dzogchen are not *res*, therefore not metaphysically represented *ens rationis*, and definitely not the *res cogitans* of a subject split off from the world of beings in a transcendental manner, and which alone can unify things as objects. In Prasangika Madhyamaka, things are perceived as *res cogitans* by a subject that has no inherent existence and yet on the “conventional” level is as subjective as it can be in the full meaning of metaphysics. This paradox itself is the bind that metaphysical thinking has on Prasangika Madhyamaka. With the qualified “realism” of Tsongkhapa that propounds the doctrine of the indivisibility of emptiness and phenomena, everything is left where it is, including *ens rationis* such as subjectivity - *for the time being*, as they await becoming objects of negation (*dgag bya*) in the trained reasoning of the ultimate that the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism provides. However, philosophical reasoning, as Heidegger shows, has an implicit understanding of being that is often concealed from reason. When we rely on reason alone, which is the propositional determination of being as beings, essential questions about *aletheia* remain unthought and the primordial meaning of being is covered over. Tibetan Buddhist reasoning, therefore, cannot take place outside the hermeneutic circle as an exercise in ultimate truth, for the ultimate is needful of the relative as in *Ereignis*. What the Prasangika Madhyamikas certainly reveal in their arguments is how they hold the “pre-ontological” attunement of *Dasein* to beings as highly suspect: phenomena, in their holding sway, are essentially cut off from truth and truthfulness. Emptiness is the negation of phenomena as the manifest.⁴²⁶ In Madhyamaka, no attunement to truth is possible by way of phenomena, hence being-in-the-world, too, is impossible to be true. In the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness, the significance of phenomena in relation to the question of being is not thought as a matter of internal necessity, thereby obscuring the hermeneutic understanding of being that makes *Dasein* possible. Aryadeva, a founding member of the Madhyamaka tradition in the 3rd century, says:

Delusion gets into everything, just as the physical sense (pervades) in the body.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Tsongkhapa salvages conceptuality in Madhyamaka by describing emptiness as a hidden phenomenon that is by its own nature differentiated from the manifest manifold of the phenomenal world. Both, however, involve cognition. Taking a gradualist approach to enlightenment, Tsongkhapa promotes a Buddhist practice that uses conceptual understanding to reach the non-conceptual understanding of emptiness, which is the stage of advanced realisation. See Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness*, pages 104-105.

⁴²⁷ Aryadeva, *Four Hundred Stanzas*, cited in Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Central Philosophy of Tibet*, page 310.

Being-in-the-world is contaminated with delusion; experience of it is full of poison; Buddhism is basically a purificatory doctrine. “Antidote” (*gnyen po*) is *the* guiding word for the Buddhist way. Dzogchen, on the other hand, does not take on such a “Gnostic” view of the world. Its historical and contemporary situatedness within Tibetan Buddhism is a sign of the *inceptual recurrence* in *Dasein*’s understanding of being⁴²⁸ that will take place regardless of whatever tradition that *Dasein* finds itself in attunement to.⁴²⁹ When Longchenpa writes that “all things are none other than their true nature, which is like space”, his fundamental description can be compared with Heidegger’s discussion of the time-space as the abyss where the essential question of being, in its “hesitating refusal” to be represented as beings, is the “first and utmost shining of the hint” for the opening of its truth.⁴³⁰ Here it is important to reiterate that the abyss is not “the no to every ground but rather the yes to the ground in its hidden expanse and remoteness.”⁴³¹ The hidden is the “self-sheltering” of what is ownmost to the truth of being.⁴³² Being (*Sein*) holds sway in this sheltering. Under its shelter, being lets every same and every different kind of being (*Seiende*) to be what it is and how it is, i.e. manifest in its true nature in the manifold that is the ground of *Dasein*’s worlding comportment to being in time and space and in the twofold of present-a-hand (*Vorhandensein*) and ready-to-hand (*Zubandensein*). Primordial to this fundamental phenomenon is Heidegger’s later notion of time-space (*Zeit-Raum*) in *Contributions to Philosophy*. In time-space the essential relating of time and space to each other holds sway as an onefold of gathering; it is the *site* of the *moment* for the truth of being that eludes metaphysical grasping.⁴³³ In the section “Sheltering of Truth in What Is True” in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger includes the strife of earth and world in the unity of “self-sheltering”, “concealing” and “hesitating refusal”,⁴³⁴ where the sheltering of truth is understood as “growing back into the closedness of the earth”.⁴³⁵ This understanding hints at Heidegger’s

⁴²⁸ Inceptual recurrence is Heidegger’s appropriation of Nietzsche’s notion of eternal recurrence of the same. Instead of the unbearable burden of Nietzsche’s nightmarish vision, Heidegger draws our attention to the creative transformation inherent in each opening in the history of being that he calls “inceptual thinking” in *Contributions to Philosophy* (see especially §§ 29, 30, 31, pages 46-48, and § 95, pages 132-133). See also Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 238, page 259: “The eternal is not what ceaselessly lasts, but rather that which can withdraw in the moment, in order to return once again.” In Dzogchen this can be described as follows: “The starting point is the path is the goal.” See Keith Dowman, *The Flight of the Garuda*, page 39.

⁴²⁹ This does not mean at all that *Dasein* is the universal subject of metaphysics. *Dasein* is always the self of a “who” and not the “nobody” of the “everybody”. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 27, pages 120-121.

⁴³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 242, page 271.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid., § 243, page 271. “Sheltering belongs to the essential swaying of truth.”

⁴³³ Ibid., § ? Note Heidegger writes *Zeit-Raum* to distinguish it from the *Zeitraum* in quantum physics.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., § 246, page 273.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., § 245, page 273.

later notion of beings as the invocation of the fourfold in which the rightful place of the earth is restored in the being of beings. For *Dasein* to be a *Dagründer* for this, i.e. as guardian of this sheltered truth in its attunement to the gods, it has to allow the strife to be “enstrified” in *Ereignis*.⁴³⁶ *Dasein*’s grounding attunement in this destining of being in the age of the abandonment of being is *renunciation* of the nihilism of the world through being-removed-onto (*entrückt*) the abyss of time-space.⁴³⁷ In sheltering the truth of being, nothing is negated. In fact all is affirmed for the strife of earth and world for the fulfilment of its essence.

The affirmation of all, instead of the negation of all that pervades the Mahayana or sutric level of Tibetan Buddhism, is fundamental to Dzogchen teachings. Precisely because of this, the operant notion of emptiness in Madhyamaka, which forms the basis of the Mahayana view, is relegated to secondary status in Dzogchen. The controversy of Dzogchen in the eyes of many Prasangika Madhyamikas in Tibetan Buddhism can be possibly explained by its demonstration that *primordially* can take the place of *emptiness* in understanding the fundamental nature of reality. By using the metaphor of the sun that illuminates all, Longchenpa places emphasis on the awakened mind as having awareness of the whole of being. This awareness is the ground of being (*kun gzhi*). Heidegger would say that *Besinnung*, as knowing awareness, locates *Dasein* within the *Ereignis* of the truth of being, but as the *decision* of *being* in regard to the being-historical character.⁴³⁸ Similarly, awakening in Dzogchen is not a subjective decision but a happening, i.e. a sending (*Schicken*) of being to *Dasein* in its destining, grounding attunement in the essential gathering of *Ereignis*. The Tibetan followers of Dzogchen, completely independent of the Greeks, understand the primordially of being to beings. Longchenpa quotes from *Rig pa rang bar* (*Naturally Arising Awareness*):

Before there was space,
 there were never any characteristics of space.
 Before there was the true nature of phenomena,
 there were not even names for characteristics of objects
 in the phenomenal world.
 Before there was buddhahood
 there was never anything to characterize an ordinary being.
 Before there was nirvana,

⁴³⁶ Ibid., § 246, page 273.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., § 239, page 261.

⁴³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, § 5, page 5.

there was never anything that could be called “samsara”.⁴³⁹

Rig pa, primordial or naturally arising awareness, is one of the main guiding words in Dzogchen.⁴⁴⁰ Its resonance in *Besinnung* when the two are put together in the hermeneutic moment of the understanding of being points to the possibility of primordial convergences in two very different histories of being (Graeco-German and Tibetan) that reflects on the question of unconcealment in temporality. *Rig pa* unconceals *Dasein* through a primordial unconcealment of the fundamental nature of phenomena; in *aletheia*, what is unconcealed in *Dasein* in its grounding attunement is the fundamental question of being. The fundamental nature of phenomena is equivalent to the understanding of being in its fullest sense. In Tibetan, ontological difference cannot be enacted in the *logos* of its language, as there is only one word for being as a being, *chos*. The same word is used for “phenomena”, and this forms the basis for a metaphysical approach to the question of being in Tibet. The Madhyamikas are restricted to affirmation or negation of being as a being, or phenomena as composed of beings. This ambiguity is compounded by Tibetans using *chos* to describe things; the extantness of beings in the temporal mode of presencing determines the Tibetan approach to phenomenological questioning in a fundamental manner. But if the question about the thing in the manner of Heidegger that puts into question the thingliness (*Dinglichkeit*) of a thing leads to a primordial insight into the unity and gathering of the fourfold of sacred existence, then Dzogchen’s orientation to *kham* as the fundamental nature of phenomena that becomes knowable only in *rig pa* is evidence of a Tibetan understanding of *Ereignis* where another Dzogchen notion (*rang sar grol ba*) – each being free in its own place – illuminates the question of being for the Tibetans. The question of being becomes the freedom of being. In Longchenpa’s words,

All phenomena are timelessly free in awakened mind,
and so there is no phenomena that is not free.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ Longchenpa, pages 126-127.

⁴⁴⁰ See Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 87-88. In hermeneutic-phenomenological terms, *rig pa* is understanding of being but as a lightening that illuminates in the fully unimpeded *aletheia* of *Dasein*’s primordial being, which in Dzogchen is called the “self-perfected state” (*lhun grub*), in the “basic space” (*chos dbyings*) of phenomena. See also explanation of “self-originating clear light” in Longchenpa, *You Are the Eyes of the World*, translated by Kennard Lipman Merrill Peterson, page 36.

⁴⁴¹ Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, page 319.

Heidegger's writes of the fundamental onefold (*Einfalt*) of the fourfold, or "fouring", that calls for *Dasein's* grounding attunement.⁴⁴² The four is the one in being as being unifies as well separates. This is similar to Longchenpa's understanding of the onefold:

There is freedom in oneness – freedom is the expanse that is
the true nature of phenomena.⁴⁴³

While the Madhyamikas in their dogmatic training are busily refuting the reality of the "self" in phenomena, the followers of Dzogchen affirm the fundamental onefold of the phenomenal world in a contemplative attunement. It is this affirmation of being-in-the-world that supports Longchenpa's understanding of the "basic space" of phenomena, which is primordially as the ground of being. Most importantly, Longchenpa defines this "basic space" as *awareness* (cf. *Besinnung*) itself, thus rendering *understanding of being* as the ground of the meaning of being. At the same time *Dasein*, as the *being* of this understanding, is affirmed, not as a this or that being, but precisely in this understanding.

Awareness is "basic space", because whatever manifests occurs
within a single state of equalness.

It is "the ground of being", because it gives rise to all enlightened
qualities.⁴⁴⁴

Unlike Tsongkhapa, who does not accept that emptiness is compatible with any notion of "ground of being", Longchenpa accepts that there is an underlying oneness in all phenomena, which makes possible an understanding of being that is not just of beings but of primordially itself. Tsongkhapa is concerned primarily with justifying the actuality of emptiness, so that epistemology becomes possible as a discipline in Tibetan Buddhism, one that metaphysically hinges upon the subjectivity of cognition and the objectivity (causality) of experience. What is not considered by Tsongkhapa, however, is knowing as a form of *dwelling* in a world which Heidegger takes to be a primary disposition of *Dasein*.⁴⁴⁵ In being *Dasein*, *Dasein* dwells – as being-in-the-world. The founding character of being-in for *Dasein* is "knowing the world".⁴⁴⁶ In

⁴⁴² Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, page 171.

⁴⁴³ Longchen Rabjam, *The Basic Space of Phenomena*, page 129.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, page 125.

⁴⁴⁵ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 13, page 58.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, § 13, page 56.

dwelling, *Dasein* is world-oriented and in that manner becomes temporal. This is a difficult problem for Buddhists because of their doctrinal rejection of the world as actuality: samsara as the illusory displays of an unawakened mind. In Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism, an inversion takes place whereby the negation of the world, emptiness, is validated to be the basis of the actual. In all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, their tantric approach to vision the world as a mandala of deities with enlightened qualities – each of the five elements, fire, water, earth, air and space, being represented by a buddha – is a fusion of *eidos* (appearance) into belief and does *not* essentially illuminate the worlding of the world that forms *Dasein*. Moreover, the very reason for the essential need for mandala visualisation is indicative of the *remoteness* (*Ferne*) of primordially from *Dasein*'s everyday experience of the world.⁴⁴⁷ Both Heidegger and Tibetan Buddhism point to the same phenomenon of remoteness. Remoteness of primordially is different from the nearness of being in the gathering of *logos*. Thinking back to Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin, the journeying water of the Ister gets farther and farther away from its source as it eventually reaches the open sea. The Ister's hesitant swirl near its source takes on the shape and even the qualities of a mandala as it integrates both inception and projection, i.e. primordial time and futurity.⁴⁴⁸ In the swirl there is recurrence of the two and that defines its unique temporality. It is also the integration of the existential phenomenon of *Dasein*'s care (*Sorge*) into time-space, thus overcoming the alienating worlding of nihilism that covers over the essence of *Dasein*.⁴⁴⁹

In a time when a vision of the primordially of being is eclipsed in favour of beings, the abandonment of being enters into the history of being as destining in the age of nihilism. In the truth of being, nihilism is the oblivion of being: "If it is seen at all, this forgottenness looks like the mere nothingness."⁴⁵⁰ As *Dasein* endures this historical moment of distress, even as a decomposing *Geschlecht* that reaches into the depths of the abyss, beings "continue to exist only as semblance".⁴⁵¹ Semblance, *Anschein*, is *phainesthai* (being seen) without *aletheia*, or *aisthesis*

⁴⁴⁷ On the remoteness of the everyday, see Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, § 60, page 131.

⁴⁴⁸ Tibetan Buddhist mandalas generally follow the principle of having *logos*, as *stong pa nyid*, in the centre, with all that surrounds it being the myriad displays of phenomena as dependent arising, *rten 'byung*. See Grace E. Cairns, "The Philosophy and Psychology of the Oriental Mandala", *Philosophy East and West*, Volume 11, Number 4 (1962), pages 219-229; and Laura Marwick, "Tibetan Buddhist Wisdom in Hildegard of Bingen's Visions", in Carole M. Cusack, Frances Di Lauro and Christopher Harney (ed.), *The Buddha of Suburbia: Proceedings of the Eighth Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference 2004*, (Sydney: RLA Press, 2005), pages 81-82.

⁴⁴⁹ Nihilism disfigures *Dasein* very much like the decomposition of a deadbody covers over the image of humanity. The dead is not recognisable.

⁴⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, § 68, page 191.

⁴⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 199, page 226.

(sense perception) without ground, i.e. a compromised *deloun* (making manifest) of beings, one that is obstructed at the fundamental level. This brings about an oblivion of primordial being: *einai* (being) as *eikona* (semblance), the metaphysics of Platonism. The gathering of *logos* in *Ereignis*, in which a being comes to be seen as something, is disrupted. Tibetan Buddhists, including Longchenpa, talk about the enchanting display of illusions in the phenomenal world; the path to enlightenment therefore is “removal-unto” (*entrückt*) emptiness. It is the aim of Longchenpa to reconcile Dzogchen with Madhyamaka as the principal philosophy of emptiness so that the former can be fully integrated into Buddhism. Despite its history of eclecticism, the Nyingma school has appropriated Tibetan “paganism” (Bön) with a Buddhist agenda. Is Dzogchen *pagan*? Did it therefore require the hermeneutic reworkings of later Nyingma thinkers such as Longchenpa and Mipham in order to survive in the overwhelmingly Buddhist culture of Tibet? In the latest monograph study of Dzogchen in Bön, *Unbounded Wholeness*, jointly written by Anne Carolyn Klein and well-known Bön teacher Tenzin Wangyal, this is indeed the working theory of a new generation of scholars.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has sparked some controversy in Buddhist circles with his suggestion that Shenrab Miwo’s teachings may have surfaced in Orgyan, possibly prior to the teachings of Padmasambhava, and that the famous Garab Dorje of Buddhist Dzogchen lineages may have been Shenrab Miwo’s disciple.⁴⁵²

Namkhai Norbu is a contemporary Dzogchen master active in the West through the International Dzogchen Community that he founded in 1985, with growing numbers of students also in Asia. Although his lineages are Buddhist, as a professor of Tibetology for many years at the University of Naples Namkhai Norbu is also a leading expert on Bön. Shenrab Miwo was the first teacher of Bön, born in 1856 BCE in what was probably today’s Tajikistan; that was around the same time as the formation of the Persian people from Aryan tribes such as the Medes and the Parsa.⁴⁵³ Orgyan, also known as Oddiyana or Uddiyana, was the

⁴⁵² Anne Carolyn Klein and Tenzin Wangyal, *Unbounded Wholeness: Dzogchen, Bon, and the Logic of the Nonconceptual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), footnote 112, pages 330-331.

⁴⁵³ 1857 BCE according to Tenzin Wangyal in Tenzin Wangyal, *Wonders of the Natural Mind: The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet* (Barrytown: Statin Hill, 1993), page 29. See also Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and The Way of Light*, pages 38-39. Reynolds’ speculation that Shenrab Miwo might have come from an Iranian stock calls for a critical examination, since it was the pastoral-nomadic Aryans who were forming settlements in the Iranian plateau at the time. The people already living there had possibly Mesopotamian influences. Here it is a question of linguistic and mythological differences. Tibetan hagiographies used in Western publications on Dzogchen do not lead to the identification of which *logos* and *mythos* that Shenrab Miwo belonged to: Aryan or Sumerian. During the years of Shenrab Miwo’s youth, the Sumerian city of Ur was

birthplace of Padmasambhava and Garab Dorje. It was the source of tantric Buddhism and Buddhist Dzogchen. Orgyan, an independent kingdom, was probably situated in the Swat Valley of present-day Pakistan but possibly encompassed a much greater territory.

Padmasambhava is revered as the Second Buddha by the Nyingmapas. In the late 8th century Padmasambhava was invited by the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen during the first official dissemination of Buddhism into Tibet to oversee the founding of the first Buddhist monastery at Samye and to start tantric lineages. The Nyingmapas also believe that Padmasambhava initiated his disciples into Dzogchen in secret. As to Garab Dorje, the Nyingmapas revere him as the first teacher of Dzogchen in world history (3rd century BCE).⁴⁵⁴ However, Padmasambhava's influence in the court of Trisong Detsen also spelt the beginning of a major decline of Bön in Tibet.⁴⁵⁵ All the old gods and goddesses of Tibet were either demonised or were subjugated by Padmasambhava to the lowered status of protectors of Buddhism. Their spiritual autonomy was therefore completely suppressed. This first act of subjugation of the gods became paradigmatic in the later development of religious power in the "new translation" schools, such as the Gelugpas. Training in Tibetan Buddhist clerical mastery revolves around the axis of this spiritual hegemony.⁴⁵⁶ This fateful turning in Tibetan *Ereignis* is described with

destroyed by the Semitic Elamites from present-day Iran around 2004 BCE. (Mesopotamia was urbanised since 4000 BCE – see David W. McAlpin, "Proto-Elamo-Dravidian: The Evidence and Its Implications", in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Volume 71, Number 3, 1981, page 58; whereas agricultural production involving village settlements began since 5500 BCE – see *ibid.*, page 59.) Less than one and half millennia later, Babylon was incorporated into the newly founded Persian Empire in 539 BCE. Since the central importance of light as the basis of phenomena is something shared between Zoroastrianism and Dzogchen, there is a possibility that Shenrab Miwo lived in a much later period. Under Darius I, the Persian Empire extended to the Indus River, which has its source in western Tibet (then Zhang Zhung), during the 5th century BCE, and Zoroastrianism, with its central figure of the magi, was already firmly established as the state religion.

⁴⁵⁴ Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and The Way of Light*, page 40.

⁴⁵⁵ An attempt to reverse this situation was made by King Langdarma during his short reign between 836-842, who violently suppressed monastic Buddhism and restored Bön under his reign. However, he tolerated the *ngakpas*, the wandering yogins in the Nyingma tradition who wound their long hair into a top knot and were dressed in white. Nubchen Sangye Yeshe was one such ngakpa who was a disciple of Padmasambhava. Through sorcery he was able to intimidate Langdarma into leaving the lay Buddhist yogins alone. In 842, it was a Buddhist monk, Lhalung Pel Dorje, who assassinated the king with a bow and an arrow hidden in his sleeve. After Langdarma's death, the earlier persecution of Bönpos by Buddhists, begun by King Trisong Detsen, unfortunately returned in full force. Altogether Bön prevailed in Tibet for just over a millennium, if the estimate of the renowned Indian scholar of Tibetan studies, Sarat Chandra Das, is to be accepted, according to whom the Bön period in Tibetan history began in 416 BCE and ended in 617 CE, when the first Buddhist king Songtsen Gampo was enthroned. See J. F. Rock, "The Birth and Origin of Dto-mba Shi-lo, the Founder of the Mo-so Shamanism, According to Mo-so Manuscripts", *Artibus Asiae*, Volume 7, Number 1/4 (1937), page 8.

⁴⁵⁶ See Martin A. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), page 17 and pages 249-253. Mills' thesis is that the legitimacy of the Buddhist rule in Tibet rested to an important extent on its power over chthonic deities. It can be said therefore that because of the Buddhist conversion of Tibet, the Tibetan people are determined by a forgetting of the primordial "godding" of their being-in-the-world. A similar phenomenon of forgetting can be

dramatic details in an 18th century hagiography about Padmasambhava's famous consort Princess Yeshe Tsogyel (757-817)⁴⁵⁷, Taksham Nuden Dorje's *Bod keyi jo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi mdzad tshul rnam par thar pa gab pa mngon byung rgyud mangs dri za'I glu' phreng* (*The Secret Life and Songs of the Tibetan Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*). Yeshe Tsogyel is revered in the Nyingma school as a female buddha and the mother of all buddhas (Kuntuzangmo). An early scene in her hagiography depicts the major power struggle between Padmasambhava and Bön priests in the royal court as Trisong Detsen deliberated on whether the old religion of Tibet could co-exist with the new religion of Buddhism. According to traditional lore, magic was used by both sides and the latter were mostly killed; an uncanny rite – Dorje Phurba - was performed by Yeshe Tsogyel that had “the power to make enemies their own executioners.”⁴⁵⁸ Taksham narrates this historic moment in Tibetan religion after the magic battle:

The Emperor immediately confined all the Bonpos at Samye, where they suffered some chastisement. Guru Rimpoche decided their fate. “Since the Reformed Bonpos have a faith that is in accordance with the Buddha’s doctrine, they may sleep in their own beds. The Bon-shamans, however, all fanatical extremists, shall be banished to border countries. No purpose is served by killing them.”

The King, acting in accordance with the Guru’s command, classified Bon books into Reformed and Shamanist categories, casting those of the Bon-shamans into fire, while the books of Reformed Bon were concealed as hidden treasures for future revelation. The Reformed Bonpos were sent back to Zhang-zhung and the provinces, while the Bon-shamans were sent to Treulakchan in Mongolia.⁴⁵⁹

Given Bön’s forced demise – the only Bönpos spared were those who revised the native religion in line with Buddhist beliefs, methods and institutions, hence the condescending title “reformed Bönpos” -, any thesis of primordality of Bön to Tibetan Buddhism in Dzogchen is a very contentious issue even at present times. It is an inversion of Tibetan history possibly more traumatic than even the 20th century annexation of Tibet by China and the spiritual

found in the overall spiritual situation of Europeans. Neo-paganism is therefore driven by an ideology of remembrance and of reawakening, hence the clearing or lightening (*Lichtung*) of being.

⁴⁵⁷ According to the chronology of Yeshe Tsogyel’s life in Keith Dowman, *The Sky Dancer*, pages 338-339.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., page 114. The Buddhist side maintained that it was the Bönpos who initiated the act of deadly sorcery.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. Guru Rimpoche (Guru Rinpoche) means “precious master”, an epithet of great respect accorded to Padmasambhava by the Nyingmapas. He is also called Guru Pema, the “lotus master”, the lotus being a symbol of enlightenment in Buddhism.

violence of Chinese modernism. Approached with a Heideggerian angle on hermeneutics, it can be said that the retrieval (*Wiederholung*) of Bön has the potential to signify a new turning (*Kehre*) for “godding” in the history of being in Tibet that challenges what Hölderlin refers to in “Remembrance” as humanity’s existential hesitancy before the source. It also brings up the Heideggerian issue of inceptual thinking and its possible recurrence in the ambiguous history of Dzogchen.

The primordially of Bön Dzogchen is unlikely to be ever accepted by the majority of Tibetans so long as Buddhism holds sway in Tibetan culture and spirit. The traditional view of Tibetan Buddhists is that Bönpos are imitators of Buddhist teachings and practice. Even the Nyingmapas, who have accepted non-Indian tantras (texts; *gyüds*) into their canon *Nyingma Gyubum*, will have nothing of the Bön primordially thesis.

... some say that the Pön tradition and the Great Perfection seem to be intimately connected because the diction of the Nyingmapa and Pönpo is similar. There are indeed many similarities in their doctrinal terminology and so forth, but since these [Pön works] were written so as to resemble the Buddhist doctrine how could they be dissimilar? For example, it is taught in India there were ten conventional [non-Buddhist schools] which paralleled the pious attendants, and, in the same manner, the self-centred buddhas, Mind Only, Madhyamaka, Kriya, Caryā, Yoga, Father Tantra, Mother Tantra, and Non-Dual Tantra. Likewise, in Tibet as well, Buddhist doctrines including all the texts of the Madhyamaka, Transcendental Perfection, Vinaya, *Treasury of Abhidharma*, and mantras; [means for attainment] of deities such as Cakrasamvara, Bhairava, and Vajrakila; and [the instructions of] the inner heat, Great Seal, Great Perfection, and so forth, have all had their Pönpo imitations. Those, however, are not original. So, how can one begin to refute such limitless, adventitious fantasies?⁴⁶⁰

The answer to this question can be found in the inceptual thinking on the question of being contained in Dzogchen. Dzogchen followers in both Bön and Buddhism engage themselves fully with this question – in the thrownness, projection and openness of *Dasein* – based on direct experience of primordial or intrinsic awareness as the “basic space” of the freedom of being in phenomena both in the mind and in the world. Dzogchen is essentially a path of direct experience and understanding. Heidegger reveals this aspect to a significant degree in

⁴⁶⁰ Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, translated by Gyurme Dorje, Volume 1 (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), page 936.

Contributions to Philosophy, which was composed with the overwhelming attunement of distress in the most uncanny surroundings of National Socialist ascendancy. The swirling of the Nazis' reversed swastika is a reversal of the path to primordial enlightenment symbolised by the swastika sceptre held by the founder, if not the demigod, of Bön, Shenrab Miwo in his right hand as he sat cross-legged in the posture of meditative equipoise. The legend of Shenrab Miwo invokes *Dasein's* grounding attunement to "godding" in that the Bönpos find in him the source of Yungdrung Bön, the "eternal Bön" that is primordial to the historic manifestations of the native religion of Tibet that give the Bönpos their spiritual identity and path.⁴⁶¹ In contrast, the Nazi reversal of primordality pointed to the false temporality of the *Tausendjähriges Reich* that never came, as well as the future *Geschlechter* (race and generations) that were supposed to embody this degenerate notion of eternity. To evoke again Heidegger's reading of Trakl, the *Dasein* that is projected in the abyss of a false temporality can be none other than a decomposing (*verwesend*) or dis-essencing (*ver-wesend*) *Geschlecht* in whom the holding sway (*Wesung*) of *Dasein* in understanding of being is disrupted. What is at stake in the Dzogchen tradition of Yungdrung Bön therefore is a question of the figuration of *Dasein* as *Geschlecht* that is projected open – *thod rgal* in Dzogchen - into the timeless moment (*Augenblicke*) of *aletheia*-awakening.

Every *projecting-opening* is storm, bliss, verve, moment.⁴⁶²

Dzogchen, then, is an ecstatic fulfilment of the temporality of *Dasein* that is beyond death. It is also a moment of mindful (*besinnend*) wholeness that fundamentally attunes *Dasein* as the being of preparedness (*Dagründer*) for the moment of godding – the turning toward the *sacred* in the midpoint of *Ereignis* that founds the fourfold, in a fully opened historicity that decides the last god. This is a heightened moment of discontinuity with the counter-essence of *aletheia* in the onto-theological determination of the sacred that *Dasein* has been subject to, primarily in the history of being of *subiectum*.⁴⁶³ The great crossing of *thod rgal* is therefore also a fundamental

⁴⁶¹ That "*gyung drung*" can also mean "primordial" means that the Bönpos share the same understanding of eternity as Heidegger. Yungdrung Bön is referred by all contemporary Bön groups in India, Nepal and the West to mean the indestructible path and teachings central to Bön, the pinnacle of which is Dzogchen. The Bön establishment among exiled Tibetans, which is based in Dolanji, India, uses the name Yungdrung Bön for both its monastic centre (Menri Monastery and Redna Menling Nunnery) and its library. Yungdrung Bön and Dzogchen are thus equiprimordial. See Anne Carolyn Klein and Tenzin Wangyal, *Unbounded Openness*, page 181, regarding this historical reference to Yungdrung Bön.

⁴⁶² Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 245, page 273.

⁴⁶³ The metaphysics of *subiectum* determines the meaning of truth as "the self-certitude of human being in his self-positing". See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 91. *Subiectum* has no reliance on *daimonion*. The modern interpretation of *daimon* as

break with the untruth of unknowing that in the West is manifest as metaphysics; in other words, it is heterology of the sacred, or *pagan* heterology as such. In *Dasein's* projecting open in the primordial transcendence of *thod rgal*, the godding is an abyssal break with the godding of God (the Christian *verum* as the *certum* of faith). This is why Dzogchen can appropriate a Western follower in madness (*Verrücktheit*) in its primordial sense: *Dasein's* going-away or displacement in *Ver-rückung* from the distorted essence of metaphysical determination in order to reach the ground of the essence of being.⁴⁶⁴ Nothing is the same again when metaphysical man or woman is in the company of the gods, for they are what Heidegger describes as “being itself as looking into beings.”⁴⁶⁵ In the language of the mortals, such exchange of looks is *ineffable*; even the *mantike* of magic, which essentially is of Goetia itself, is only a cipher.⁴⁶⁶ Yet in the ineffability of truth itself, the struggle of life ceases; perhaps life itself. This is why the gods are known as immortals.

§ 20. Mindful Projection in the Basic Space of Dzogchen

Thod rgal belongs to the most esoteric dimension of Dzogchen. Learning it can only be done through Dzogchen *man ngag de*, also known as Atiyoga, which is the lineage of direct oral

“reason” shows a lack of understanding of the essential belonging together of *aletheia* and *daimonion* that forms the leitmotif of Heidegger’s *Parmenides*. For an example of this counter-essence to *mythos*, see Stephen R. L. Clark, “Reason as Daimon”, in Christopher Gill (ed.), *The Person and the Human Mind: Issues in Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pages 197-198, which internalises and individuates the meaning of *daimon* as the higher part of the self that is identified with *nous*. It is also an attempt to subjugate *daimon* to the structure of *psyche*. For Heidegger’s critique of such approach, see Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 6, page 117: “This is not a ‘spirit’ dwelling somewhere within the breast. The Socratic-Platonic talk of the *daimonion* as an inner voice signifies only that its attuning and determining do not come from the outside, i.e., from some being at hand, but from invisible and ungraspable being itself, which is closer to man than any obstrusive manipulatable being.” Clark’s reading is Plotinian, and in the history of being neo-Platonism was already far removed, in its essential meaning and understanding, from the primordial power of the inceptual thinking of the Greeks.

⁴⁶⁴ Heidegger is unique in the history of Western philosophy to provide an affirmative reading of examples of madness that he sees as expressions of *Dasein's* primordial place in the truth of being, hence a distinct form of lightening of being itself. See Martin Heidegger, *Grundfragen der Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 45 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1984), Anhang, § 7, pages 214-216. See also Ferit Güven, *Madness and Death in Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), pages 100-103. Heidegger, unlike Hegel, does not oppose madness against truth, but makes madness an example of the lightening of being that primordially determines the meaning of truth as *aletheia*.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., § 6, page 111.

⁴⁶⁶ The *mantike* of Tibetan Buddhism is of course its *mantras*, the most famous one being *om mani padme hung*. Tibetan Buddhism is therefore also known as Mantrayana, the “vehicle” of *mantras*.

transmissions (*nyan rgyud*) from master to student.⁴⁶⁷ It means “leaping over” or “crossing over” in the *topos* of intrinsic awareness and the experience is direct and decisive. The movement is precisely primordial in that the entire *Dasein* of the practitioner is integrated into the presencing (*Anwesen*) of knowing awareness (*Besinnung*). *Thod rgal* gathers together all of the three pith instructions from Garab Dorje that form the foundation of Dzogchen in Tibetan Buddhism, namely:

1. Direct introduction (*ngo rang thog tu sprad*)
2. Not remaining in doubt (*t’ag gcig thog tu bca’d*)
3. Continuing in that state (*gdeng grol thog tu bca’*).⁴⁶⁸

Thod rgal is also the uncanniest aspect of Dzogchen in that if any of the three essential aspects described by Garab Dorje is found to be missing in the practitioner, the visionary experiences during the leap over unto the primordially of being can replace his or her *Dasein* totally, thus resulting in a long-term mental breakdown. While such state may correspond to Heidegger’s analysis of *Ver-rückung* as *Dasein*’s mode of being as the turning away from the world, it lacks the decisive quality that Heidegger attributes to *Dasein* as the *Dagründer*: one who grounds the truth of being through one’s understanding of being. In this understanding is *Dasein*’s turning away from the metaphysical appropriation of being as beings that causes the strife between world and earth, between the way of gods and the way of humans: what is decisive is *Dasein*’s removal unto the truth of being through *Ent-rückung*, not the pure remoteness and displacement of *Ver-rückung*, even if both resist the charming-moving-onto (*Berückung*) of contemporary nihilism’s holding sway.⁴⁶⁹ In *thod rgal* *Dasein* is fully present in its whole; the wholeness of existence – body, mind and speech with the mandala as being-in-the-world⁴⁷⁰ – is in fact experienced not only in meditation and contemplation but also through spiritual

⁴⁶⁷ *Ati* means “pinnacle” in Sanskrit. In the ninefold system of Nyingma School - the same number as the Nine Ways of Bön (Four Portals and Five Treasures) - Dzogchen is equated with Atiyoga. See Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pages 214-215. On the nature of *nyan rgyud*, see Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 101-104. He writes on page 149: “In Dzogchen, transmission is the life of the teaching; we cannot attain realization without it.”

⁴⁶⁸ Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, page 110; Tibetan from John Myrdhin Reynolds, *The Golden Letters*, page 39. In Bön Dzogchen, an early teacher by the name of Zhang Zhung Garab is mentioned, which may lend support to the Bön view that Dzogchen is independent of Buddhism, but Nyingmapas can equally argue that the Bönpos have appropriated this teacher.

⁴⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 242, pages 268-269.

⁴⁷⁰ In Tibetan Buddhism the mandala signifies a sacred outlook in which all living beings including oneself manifest enlightened qualities. The duality between gods and mortals is gathered into the onefold of the pervasiveness of “goddling” in all.

exercises such as the Yantra Yoga, known in Tibetan as *nyi lza ka 'byor*, literally meaning “union of sun and moon”, i.e. the fusion of day and night as primordial temporality.⁴⁷¹ In his explanation on Yantra Yoga, Namkhai Norbu places emphasis on the Tibetan word for yoga, which is *rnal 'byor*: it has the deeper meaning of attuning to primordial understanding (i.e. grounding attunement), which at the same time is the unconcealment of the intrinsic awareness of *Dasein*.⁴⁷² With the attainment of complete *Gelassenheit* that comes with primordial knowing, *Dasein* relaxes utterly in *kbregs chod*.⁴⁷³ phenomena enter into the state of *Ereignis*, where the unity of being and nothingness dissolves the metaphysical substantialism and the ordinary solidity of beings. *Kbregs chod*, moreover, is not limited to sitting, but can be practised also while in movement.⁴⁷⁴ It is antecedent to the mighty leap of *thod rgal*. In the basic space of phenomena, *Dasein*'s embodiment becomes a pure lightening of being in that it becomes primordial luminosity itself. To the others, *Dasein* in *thod rgal* becomes a pure abyss, a being that is now being-away. Both Longchenpa and the Bönpos agree on that point; and also on the different manifestations of *kbregs chod* and *thod rgal* attainments. Longchenpa explains as follows:

... the exhaustion of the elements after the principle of the primeval purity has been finalised (by means of) the *kbregs chod*, “cutting off the rigidity” and the purification of the elements after the spontaneity has been finalised (by means of) the *thod rgal*, “passing over the crest”, are identical in their (effectiveness) for purifying the external and internal substances, but (in the case of) the *kbregs chod*, when the atoms (of the body) vanish separately, the (adept) is instantly released to the primordial purity. (He has no time to have) an appearance of a luminous body. (In the case of) the *thod rgal* (the adept assumes) a luminous body and accomplishes the “Great Movement”. There is difference between them in having a luminous body or not, but not in the way in which they are released to the primeval purity.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 129-130.

⁴⁷² Ibid., page 131.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., page 97. Namkhai Norbu emphasises that *trekchö*, which he writes as “Thregchöd”, is not mere relaxation, but has primordial understanding as its pre-condition. This resonates well with Heidegger's “*Gelassenheit*”, in that “releasement toward beings” implies a profound understanding of being in our *Dasein*. See Martin Heidegger, “Memorial Address”, in Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pages 54-55.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. Namkhai Norbu uses the two examples of walking and eating. Sexual intercourse, too, should not be an exception.

⁴⁷⁵ Longchenpa, *gNas lugs mdzod*, folio 85b, 2, cited in Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pages 193-194. The English translation of *gNas lugs mdzod*, *The Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding and the Exposition of the Quintessential Meaning of the Three Categories*, translated by Richard Barron under the direction of Chagdud Tulku, was published in 1998.

Sharza Tashi Gyaltsen (1859-1935) of Bön Dzogchen, a master who taught both Bönpos and Buddhists in the Kham region of eastern Tibet, explains as follows:

In Trekchö the body cannot become the light body – it can only be made to disappear to the level of the atoms. There are many systems to make the physical body disappear, such as the temporary illusory body. Even in the practice of shamata the physical body can disappear. But they are not true or final. Tögel, however, completely transforms the physical body into pure light.⁴⁷⁶

In Tibetan Buddhism there is a fundamental belief in the reality of a subtle or illusory body that co-exists with the physical body and departs from it after death with one's consciousness intact. It is similar to the notion of the "astral body" in Western occultism, which in recent years has been popularised through the New Age movement. On its own basis the subtle body does not lead to spiritual liberation. For the Tibetans, its fate is very much determined by the visions that arise in a person's mind as death nears; hence the importance of spiritual understanding and practice while one is still alive. In both Bön and Nyingma Dzogchen, however, the meaning is quite precise: 'od lus, body of light, which in its leaping-projection into primordial understanding becomes one with the suchness of being. There have been fierce debates in Tibet whether the body of light has Buddhist origins, and in Tibetan doxography this always means whether it has an Indian equivalent or precedent.

The body of light is also known as the rainbow body (*ja' lus*).⁴⁷⁷ This is because in Dzogchen there is a fundamental belief that phenomena can be refined into coloured rays perceptible to the human eye: the rainbow indeed shows the full spectrum of the visible colours.⁴⁷⁸ In Namkhai Norbu's introduction of Dzogchen to the West, the complete spiritual

⁴⁷⁶ Sharza Tashi Gyaltsen, *Heart Drop of Dharmakaya*, translated with commentary by Lopon Tenzin Namdak (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1993), page 77.

⁴⁷⁷ Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 116-117; and Samten Gyaltsen Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pages 190 and 194.

⁴⁷⁸ Visible light is our eyes' response to a narrow range of radiations of energy within the entire electromagnetic spectrum (sunlight). Measurement is made by the distances between the crests of wavelengths in which different kinds of light travel. Visible colours – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet - cover the range of 400-700 nonametres. Below or shorter than 400 there is ultraviolet light; above or longer than 700, infrared light. Both are invisible but they act on our physical existence daily. In science it makes sense to talk about invisible colours. The Tibetan inner heat yoga (*gtum mo*), from the Six Yogas of Naropa lineage, historical to the Kagyupas but also practised by other Tibetan Buddhists, demonstrates psycho-physical workings with infrared radiation. Its main aim, however, is the attainment of great power – the literal meaning of *gtum mo* - to go forward with clarity and courage and complete the path of enlightenment. It is also interesting to note that in

accomplishment in manifestation of the rainbow body is described with the assurance of an existential facticity that to date has not yet been witnessed in the West. In the Dzogchen hagiography of both the Bönpos and the Nyingmapas, however, a chronology of rainbow body manifestations at the end of lineage masters' lives vindicates the authenticity of the tradition. It is also a demonstration that Dzogchen is necessarily beyond the intellect – hence the Madhyamaka scholasticism of Buddhist monasteries. Furthermore, the obvious ambiguity of Dzogchen's origins points to the possibility of a primordial path that is superior to Buddhism, and the rainbow body is certainly no ordinary kind of phenomenon. The possible superiority of Dzogchen also implies the existence of a perennial, and primordial, tradition of *gnosis* in Central Asia (Shambhala) that is independent of the stage of development of a culture. Zhang Zhung, for example, was “merely” a nomadic society, not a kingdom of ziggurat-builders like the Sumerians and the Babylonians, whose civilisation pre-dated Tibet. Yet the transformation of the perishable embodiment of flesh and blood into a body of light as a principal orientation in futural *Dasein* was unheard of in more sophisticated civilisations around the world.⁴⁷⁹ Based on a Dzogchen tantra called *sGra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud*, Namkhai Norbu states that Central Asians were once the privileged recipients of direct access to primordial understanding and transformation from possibly extraterrestrial sources, as the text in question mentions Dzogchen transmissions in thirteen other solar systems apart from ours.⁴⁸⁰ From the cross-cultural perspective, Dzogchen places the history of being in a unique light.

contemporary spiritualist literature, there is a remarkable consistency in the accounts given by spirits of the dead – those who are in heaven – that they are surrounded by colours that they cannot find names for.

⁴⁷⁹ A notable exception can be found in the Jewish and Christian apocrypha, namely in the antediluvian figure of Enoch. He did not die a physical death but crossed directly over into heaven, was transformed into the angel Metatron and “walked with God”. However, while this may resemble *thod rgal* in some ways, there is no equivalent of Dzogchen in either Judaism or Christianity in that no path similar to Enoch's is taken up as a spiritual method even if his fate is greatly admired. It is nevertheless worthy of further thought that in the Judaeo-Christian belief light was the first thing created by God: hence light is *logos*, as opposed to the abyss of chaos. Heraclitus equated *logos* with primordial understanding of being, and this moment in inceptual thinking profoundly influenced Heidegger, shaping also his formulation of *Ereignis*. Ancient Egyptians and followers of Orphic mysteries also believed that *logos* was light. See Arthur Jeffrey, “Ibn Al-'Arabi's Shajarat al-Kawn”, *Studia Islamica*, No. 10, 1959, page 47. It was the Sumerians who developed the notion that *me*, their version of *logos*, could be expressed through words, hence there were such things as divine words. See Arthur Jeffrey, op. cit., pages 48 and 53 (footnote 2). In Christianity Jesus is *logos* become flesh, which is the reversal of Enoch. A similar notion is very important to Tibetan Buddhism, i.e. the active principle of *sprul pa'i sku* or *sprul sku*, whereby buddhas take on either physical or apparitional forms in order to interact with humans and assist them (see the doctrine of the three *keyas* in Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, page 163); hence *sprul sku* as *reincarnate* lamas.

⁴⁸⁰ Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, page 33. *sGra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud* belongs to the Dzogchen Mennagde (*snyan rgyud*) series of seventeen tantras taught by the Chinese-born Sri Simha. See Nyoshul Khenpo, *Marvellous Garland of Rare Gems*, pages 47-48; also page 682. Sri Simha lived in Oddiyana and was the third-generation master in the history of Dzogchen transmission in Buddhism. Sri Simha taught both Padmasambhava (Padmakara) and Vairocana (Bairotsana), but at different

Thod rgal points to light not from without but from within, taking nothing from nowhere, and for this reason Dzogchen is also described as “natural great perfection.” Nothing is added to or subtracted from *Dasein*; hence Dzogchen is also awakening to buddhahood without effort. Effortlessness is indeed the mark of *kbregs chod* that forms the basis of *thod rgal*, like the way a bundle of sticks naturally fall to the ground when the rope that ties them is cut. *Dasein* in Dzogchen has nothing to improve; in its existence, its temporalisation is primordially. Like Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, ethics and mores do not form the ground of primordially. The basic space of phenomena can be likened to nothingness, one in which freedom of being prevails without any hindrance of dualistic grasping. In Buddhism there is much talk about renouncing the “three poisons” of ignorance, fear and craving in order to cultivate mindfulness. According to Dzogchen, however, an authentic primordial awakening immediately renders these harmful conditions irrelevant in *Dasein*, whereby *Dasein* is liberated from their ordinary determination. Longchenpa writes:

Thus, all desirable, undesirable, and neutral mental states,
 in which the three poisons arise as display due to
 dynamic energy,
 occur within basic space, arising within the context of that
 space.
 Since they occur only within basic space, not straying from it
 in the least,
 without trying to anticipate or manipulate them in any way,
 it is crucial to identify basic space itself, for as soon as you rest
 in that context,

times. Vairocana introduced Dzogchen tantras into Tibet; Padmasambhava gave only teachings in that tradition. Sri Simha received his transmission from Garab Dorje’s disciple Manjusrimitra. For an account of Sri Simha’s apprenticeship with Manjusrimitra, see Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, *The Supreme Source: The Fundamental Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde “Kunjed Gyalpo”* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1999), pages 46-50. Vairocana was one of the first seven monks ordained at Tibet’s founding Buddhist monastery, Samye, Santaraksita; he was also a disciple of Padmasambhava. After his return from Oddiyana, Vairocana’s introduction of Dzogchen into Tibet was met with hostility from the other Buddhist monks. As a result of their influence on King Trisong Detsen, Vairocana was exiled to eastern Tibet, and this perhaps laid the foundation for Dzogchen’s holding sway in that region. See Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 108-109. The king’s treatment of Vairocana is baffling because he was initiated into Dzogchen himself by none other than Padmasambhava. See *Secret Instructions in a Garland of Vision (Man ngag lta ba’i phreng ba)*, a verse record of oral transmission attributed to Padmasambhava, translated by Keith Dowman in Keith Dowman, *The Flight of the Garuda*, pages 181-195. Only four texts are believed to have been composed by Padmasambhava, including a Goetic text on the invocation of the native female demons of Tibet; see *ibid.*, page 157.

they will subside naturally, vanish naturally, and be freed naturally.⁴⁸¹

Another explanation by Longchenpa is as follows:

Pleasure is timelessly free, free in the evenness that is
the true nature of phenomena.

Pain is timelessly free, free in the uniform spaciousness
of the ground of being.

Neutral sensations are timelessly free, free in dharmakaya,
equal to space.

Purity is timelessly free, free in the emptiness of underlying
purity.

Impurity is timelessly free, free in the supreme state of
total freedom.⁴⁸²

This is precisely why Dzogchen is described as the path to self-liberation, as it opens up a free dimension of being, i.e. the basic space of phenomena as Longchenpa calls it, which is not conditioned by the three ecstases of past, present and future. In *Dasein's* understanding of and comportment to being, there is no “impure vision” that ought to be transformed into “pure vision”; in fact there is neither indulgence in impurity nor striving after purity in primordial being.⁴⁸³ Either position is the conditioning of *Dasein* by a dualistic vision, which means that the truth of being is obscured in archetypal life-styles, in the Western context, of either a Marquis de Sade or a Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. In the absence of both sin and virtue, the basic space of phenomena is in a sense like the abyss, and *thod rgal* indeed involves the dissolution of the ordinary sense of reality with its net of reference points. Precisely for this reason, Namkhai Norbu states that Dzogchen teachings were never

... particularly widespread or well-known in Tibet; in fact rather the reverse was true. Dzogchen was always a somewhat reserved teaching. But the Dzogchen teachings were the essence of all Tibetan teachings, so direct that they were always kept a little hidden, and people were often a little afraid of them.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, page 296.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, page 321.

⁴⁸³ Namkhai Norbu, *Dzogchen Teachings*, pages 44-45.

⁴⁸⁴ Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, page 34.

The hesitant *aletheia* of Dzogchen is beyond good and evil and in this respect it is the uncanny in Tibetan spiritual life. However, in its history Dzogchen masters are anything other than the uncanniest – their aim is not to introduce the frightful into the necessary *Mitsein* of the human condition, even if ordinary Tibetans are, as Namkhai Norbu says, somewhat fearful of what Dzogchen can do. In the wisdom tradition of Tibet, the extraordinary is always balanced with *bodhicitta* or (*byang chub keyi sems*), the enlightened motivation that is based on compassion and is expressed in intelligent altruism. As Nyoshul Khenpo (1931-1999), one of the last Nyingma masters of Dzogchen in exile from Tibet, puts it:

What is arousing bodhicitta according to the uncommon approach of Dzogchen?

This is something that is not even mentioned in the other vehicles. It is “summoning forth or evoking mind as wisdom”. There is a difference between “generating bodhicitta using the mind” and “summoning forth or evoking mind as wisdom”.

What is the uniqueness of generating the heart of the enlightened mind “as wisdom”?

It begins from the same premise as the motivation of the sutra vehicle, from the realization that “all sentient beings who do not realize shunyata and who are deluded wander endlessly in the ocean of samsara”. But the key point here is that all these sentient beings are recognized as having within themselves inherent wisdom, self-abiding dharmakaya – the self-knowing rigpa, the unity of space and wisdom, that is the actual who is the all-pervasive sovereign, the glorious primordial buddha Samantabhadra. That actually resides within us all, and so we wish: “May I be able to bring all sentient beings to the level where they realize this.”

You could also call this intrinsic wisdom “self-arising rigpa” or “buddha nature”, but whatever term you use, according to Dzogchen it exists spontaneously within all sentient beings, without ever wavering or fluctuating. It is because they fail to see or realize this that beings are deluded and cling dualistically to concepts of “self” and “others”. So our aspiration is to bring them to the primordially pure level of Samantabhadra. However, this is not the attainment of enlightenment as something separate, or some buddhahood to be achieved, as it were, from outside, since it already exists within them. Rather, it is a question of actualizing the wisdom that they already possess within themselves.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁵ Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvellous Garland of Rare Gems*, translated by Richard Barron (Junction City: Padma Publishing, 2005), pages xxiv-xxv. Nyoshul Khenpo had great affinity with Longchenpa and deified him in his guru yoga. It can be said

Bodhicitta is a question of *guiding attunement* in order to awaken the truth of being (*dharmakaya*) in all people. The dualism of self and other is certainly challenged in Heidegger's analytic of *Dasein*; in *Being and Time* he offers a fundamental account of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world that is unconcealed phenomenally as both being-in (*In-sein*) and being-with (*Mitsein*). The worlding of the world always involves *Dasein* in the interpretive movement of the hermeneutic circle, in which *Dasein* is encountered as attunement to being as a whole as well as being as the being of beings (*Sein des Seienden*). In this twofold attunement *Dasein* finds itself as a being among beings that makes *Dasein* a *reflexive awareness* in being one among others, to use a Dzogchen term. Its basis, importantly, is *Mitsein*.

“The others” does not mean everybody else but me – those from whom the I distinguishes itself. They are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, those among whom one is, too. This being-there-too with them does not have the ontological character of being objectively present “with” them within a world. The “with” is of the character of *Dasein*, the “also” means the sameness of being as circumspect, heedful being-in-the-world. “With” and “also” are to be understood *existentially*, not categorically. On the basis of this *like-with* being-in-the-world, the world is always already the one that I share with the others. The world of *Dasein* is a *with-world*. Being-in is *being-with* others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is *Mitdasein*.⁴⁸⁶

While death is also in the world, perhaps right in its centre as nothingness, the unique minneness (*Jemeinigkeit*) of *Dasein*'s being-toward-death (*Sein zum Tode*) is primordially balanced with the *Mitdasein* of life. This life-and-death circle, verily hermeneutic, is *Dasein*'s basic character in its understanding of being. The balance of being and nothingness indeed makes *Dasein* a being of the abyss (*Abgrund*) in that the eternity of primordial being withdraws always from its finitude, for *Dasein* is essentially a finite being that dies. The abyssal nature of mortal temporality, however, does not isolate *Dasein* in solipsism; complete indifference is merely pathological, i.e. not in accordance with the essence of *Dasein* as *Mitdasein*. The “I” is a basic character of the world of being-with.

that in Tibetan Buddhism, the phenomenon of “godding” is manifest through a practitioner's devotion to his or her lineage masters, who may not even be alive at the time, as in the case of Nyoshul Khenpo.

⁴⁸⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 26, pages 111-112. As further evidence of his non-dualistic understanding of otherness, see also Heidegger's Hölderlin interpretations concerning the foreign in the homely in Martin Heidegger, ?

And even when *Dasein* explicitly addresses itself as “I here”, the locative personal designation must be understood in terms of the existential spatiality of *Dasein*. When we interpreted this (section 23), we already intimated that this I-here does not mean an eminent point of an I-thing, but as being-in is to be understood in terms of the over there of the world at hand where *Dasein* dwells in taking care.⁴⁸⁷

Given that it is the primordial condition of *Dasein* to be in *Mitsein* and to *care about*, essentially, the *understanding of being* that is the in-dwelling, if not *daimon*, of each and every *Dasein* in the totality of being-in-the-world, it is even possible to provide a phenomenology of a religious phenomenon like *bodhicitta*. As an enactment of hermeneutic resonance with orientation toward *aletheia*, this provides an explicit basis for Dzogchen’s unsentimental resolution of all of *Dasein*’s doing, thinking and disposition in the basic space of phenomenona, which is the ground or the truth of being in Dzogchen.

Since *thod rgal* is about the *aletheia* of the natural light of being, not only in understanding but also in existence, Heidegger’s reflection on the *lumen naturale* of *Dasein* can assist us further with the integration of the Dzogchen tradition into our cross-cultural understanding of the primordial history of being as *Seyn*. *Seyn* in Heidegger is thinking about being outside the determination of Western metaphysics; this philosophical freedom is already an invitation to a project of hermeneutics across traditions, to what Heidegger calls “planetary thinking” in a positive sense.⁴⁸⁸ On this issue it is helpful to be reminded of Heidegger’s advice when looking at different traditions in philosophy:

Plato’s thinking is no more perfect than Parmenides’. Hegel’s philosophy is no more perfect than Kant’s. Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a philosophy is the way it is. It is not our business to prefer one to the other, as can be the case with regard to various *Weltanschauungen*.⁴⁸⁹

The task that presents itself before us, therefore, is not about choosing between the thinking of being in the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger on the one hand, and “the way of light” in the ancient tradition of Dzogchen on the other. Within Dzogchen itself, it is not about

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., § 26, page 112.

⁴⁸⁸ J. L. Mehta, “Heidegger and Vedanta: Reflections on a Questionable Theme”, in Graham Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, page 28.

⁴⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy”, in Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, page 56.

choosing between its Bön and Buddhist (Nyingma) lineages. The question, then, is what Heidegger calls “the free space of the opening”⁴⁹⁰ that, by determining the matter at hand, enables every questioning to be *Dasein* in *aletheia*. It is *Dasein*’s potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) in the truth of being that situates our discussion of *lumen naturale*, acting as the *locality* of lightening in the *journeying* of *Dasein*’s projecting-open (*Entwurf*). Indeed, it is *aletheia* that is the ground as well as the abyss of *Dasein*. In terms of being-historical thinking, Heidegger importantly notes in *Contributions to Philosophy* that *aletheia* signifies a transition from the classical metaphysics of correspondence to the primordial hermeneutics of the open in *Dasein*’s understanding of, and comportment to, truth.⁴⁹¹ Given that this hermeneutics is primordial, the ancient (Pre-Socratic) and the modern (Heideggerian) understanding of truth as *aletheia* each belongs to the same *Ereignis*.

In order to assess the philosophical content of Dzogchen’s understanding of being, it is useful to look at Heidegger’s interpretation of *lumen naturale* in *Being and Time* as the “existential-ontological structure” of human existence. By this Heidegger means that *Dasein* is not a natural entity that gives off light (such as a glow worm), but a being that experiences a true moment of illumination in its being-in-the-world, not by others but by the facticity of *Dasein* being itself the *lightening* or *clearing* of being (*Lichtung des Seins*), i.e. in its understanding of being.⁴⁹² Again this emphasises Heidegger’s method in fundamental-ontological *Destruktion* of metaphysics in that it is through *Dasein* that being in general and as a whole becomes available for interpretation. It can be said that the essence of *Being and Time* is the *Ereignis* of ontological hermeneutics in light of *Dasein*. This reading is confirmed by Heidegger’s position on the phenomenon of *Dasein* in *Contributions to Philosophy*: *Dasein* is that which comes into its proper being in *Ereignis*.⁴⁹³ *Ereignis*, in turn, is the opening in which a being is in being, fully and totally, and not as an object appearing in the field of consciousness of a subject’s cognition⁴⁹⁴ – as in the case of Madhyamaka metaphysics. The essential unity of *Dasein* and the lightening of being, which grants *Dasein* its freedom, has never been compromised even when Heidegger shifts his focus from *Dasein* analytic to the history of being in his writings from *Contributions to Philosophy* onwards. This is because the lightening of being is equiprimordial to *aletheia* – and Heidegger’s

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., page 67.

⁴⁹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 206, page 230.

⁴⁹² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 28, page 125. Apparitions of the dead are described across cultures as glowing or even radiant figures. But the *lumen* of the afterlife no longer belongs to the existential-ontological determination of *Dasein*. The rainbow radiance of *thod rgal* therefore breaks down the boundary between the living and the dead.

⁴⁹³ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 271, page 343.

⁴⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Über den Anfang*, § 97, page 117. *Nachlaß* from 1941 published as Volume 70 of Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, which like *Mindfulness* is closely related to *Contributions to Philosophy*.

thinking throughout his life was always in grounding attunement to it as Parmenides would honour his goddess of truth. What is true in the truth of being is *aletheia*. Its possibility lies in the presupposition of light in the clearing of being, which is open to illumination and also to its play with darkness, like there is both light and shadow in the clearing of a forest.⁴⁹⁵ Longchenpa would see it as the clearing in phenomena. This is what he calls the “uncontrived expanse of being” and that it is primordially pure, in that it is not affected by the constraints of characterisations that the human mind “deliberately and compulsively” engages in.⁴⁹⁶ Longchenpa describes meditative stability in “uncontrived expanse” as that of the gods and that is also Dzogchen.⁴⁹⁷ This implies that the “goddess” in Dzogchen has its ground in the groundless openness of primordial awareness that illuminates *Dasein* and provides its an opening into a radically transformative phenomenon such as *thod rgal*.

As the existential-ontological determination of *Dasein*, Heidegger treats the phenomenon of light very differently from Plato and the neo-Platonists. In the famous allegory of the cave in *The Republic*, Plato describes the sun as the source of all illumination in the world, if not life itself, and he identifies it with the idea or form of the good. Because of its blinding light, the majority prefer to live inside a cave of moving shadows. There can therefore be discrepancy between human sight and the higher forms of truth, and philosophers who find liberation in the latter are liable to be murdered by the mob who prefer to live in semi-darkness. For the neo-Platonists, however, the sun is only the highest form of light in the illusory world of appearances;⁴⁹⁸ there is a primordial light beyond the visible light which is the illumination of the One in its manifold emanations. It can be said that in the neo-Platonist understanding of being, the blinding nature of the sun when looked at directly blinds us to the reality of the One, thus resulting in double blindness. The neo-Platonic denigration of the sun also leads to the separation of understanding of being from temporality, which is originally derived from the alternation of day and night. Phenomenal lightening is therefore interpreted as concealment in illumination itself, which is more problematic than the mere darkening of the illuminated through withdrawal of light. This distrust of the senses resulted in the identification of *lumen naturale* with reason in medieval scholasticism: it knows through formation of concepts and not through the stimulation of sight through phenomenal light, while all the time requiring a higher

⁴⁹⁵ Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking, in Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, page 65; see also Gail Stenstad, *Transformations*, pages 169-170.

⁴⁹⁶ Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, page 265.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Claudius Strube, “Die Existenzial-ontologische Bestimmung des Lumen Naturale”, in *Heidegger Studies*, Volume 12 (1996), page 110.

illumination by the divine *logos* of God as the first cause of all beings in the hierarchy of knowing. In Descartes, the light of *lumen naturale* becomes pure intelligibility of clear and distinct ideas on which knowledge can be built with certainty, but only if there exists a constant divine support for human reason, which is accessible through introspection. In contrast, certainty based on sense experiences can be subject to a demonology of deceptive certainty, hence falsehood.⁴⁹⁹ The important role of onto-theology in determining the metaphysical meaning of *lumen naturale* is recognised by Heidegger as the distinction between *lux*, the source of light, and *lumen*, the illumination by light. In German such distinction can be made between *Lichtquelle* and *Leuchten*.⁵⁰⁰ However, it is illumination – unconcealment – that interests Heidegger as the basis of phenomenological understanding of being. Light on its own is ontic and does not constitute *Dasein* in an ontologically thematic, i.e. hermeneutic manner. The grounding of lightening is found in a primordial understanding of phenomenon as such as the fundamental horizon of interpretation of being.

Phaino belongs to the root *pha-*, like *phos*, light or brightness, that is, that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. Thus the meaning of the expression “phenomenon” is *established as what shows itself in itself*, what is manifest. The *phainomena*, “phenomena”, are thus the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light. Sometimes the Greeks simply identified this with *ta onta* (beings).⁵⁰¹

In order to ground *phainomena* in the meaning of being, Heidegger finds no need to use a notion that is central to the Platonic and neo-Platonic metaphysics of light, *lux intelligibilis*, which takes understanding of being to the realm of ideas beyond the senses and the visible. This is the distinction between *nous* and *noein*. Through the latter, Plato has the sun as the “idea of the good”, which belongs to the highest knowledge. However, “being-beyond” is definitely not *Dasein*’s mode of transcendence, for it has “being-in” as its illumination in its understanding of being. The transcendent nature of *Dasein* is found in its understanding of being, and in its not being just any being among beings which are illuminated optically in the world as presence-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*). *Dasein* transcends simply being seen; *Dasein* itself is the ground of seeing.

⁴⁹⁹ Cartesianism, despite being dualist, bears a surprising resemblance to Tibetan Buddhist thought. Both reject the sensory world as a source of certain knowledge; and like Descartes, a higher knowing is also invoked in Tibetan Buddhism in the form of *dharmakaya*, which is essential to enlightenment.

⁵⁰⁰ Claudius Strube, “Die Existenzial-ontologische Bestimmung des Lumen Naturale”, in *Heidegger Studies*, Volume 12 (1996), page 113.

⁵⁰¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 7, page 25.

This *is* the primordially of phenomenon, and it is also the locality (*Ortschaft*) of being.⁵⁰² It also resonates with the understanding of proximity and distance in *Contributions to Philosophy*, since this is how *Dasein* approaches a place; at the same time it is relaxation or intensification of *Dasein*'s temporality in its being-toward-death.⁵⁰³ While Heidegger employs the metaphor of "transparency" (*Durchsichtigkeit*) in order to highlight the enabling of seeing in *Dasein*'s basic comportment toward phenomena, the fundamental notion of reflexive awareness in Dzogchen is also relevant to Heidegger's *Destruktion* of the metaphysics of light, in that illumination is possible in the first place because of reflection.⁵⁰⁴ A being that does not reflect light at all is a being in complete darkness, hence out of sight altogether, and in that sense, out of the way of *Dasein*'s projection into the truth of being. Before returning to Longchenpa, it is worthwhile to first take a look at the belonging together of lightening, truth and freedom in Heidegger's understanding of *lumen naturale*.

§ 21. *The Illuminated Essence of Truth and the Self-sheltering of the Abyss*

It is only when the question of being is examined in a being-historical manner can the metaphysics of Plato or any other great philosopher be evaluated with an assent to the originary power of inceptual thinking in determining *Dasein*'s understanding of being. This necessitates an understanding of *Contributions to Philosophy* which, situated as it is in the midpoint of Heidegger's philosophical career, illuminates the hermeneutics of those writings that both come before and after it. Only then can the *Destruktion* of Western philosophy declared by Heidegger in *Being and Time* be appreciated as a walking together with metaphysics for part of the way to the gathering of primordial understanding in *Ereignis* that is never an outright rejection at the start. This is because thinking in philosophy is a thinking back in order that thinking futurally can take place in the present, like the "hesitant" movement of the Ister near its source. This is *Dasein*'s grounding attunement to the truth of being in preparation for "the ones to come" – a

⁵⁰² This can also be called the origin of essence (*Wesensherkunft*) in the phenomenon of being as such and is its lightening or clearing (*Lichtung*). See Jae-Woo Song, *Licht und Lichtung: Martin Heideggers Destruktion der Lichtmetaphysik und seine Besinnung auf die Lichtung des Seins*, page 304.

⁵⁰³ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 67, page 308: "The temporality of taking care of things makes it possible for circumspection to be modified into perceiving that looks at things and the theoretical knowledge based on such perceiving. The temporality of being-in-the-world that thus emerges at the same time turns out to be the foundation of the specific spatiality of *Dasein*."

⁵⁰⁴ Transparency is the same as the unconcealment or the unconcealing moments of *aletheia*, inviting a resolute path of seeing (*Blickbahn*) on the part of *Dasein*.

Geschlecht that reaches *gnosis* through the shimmering lightening of *daimonion*. Clearing or lightening of being is, like the ecstatic projection of *Dasein* in time, resolutely futural, and is also the guiding attunement for *Dasein* in the leap into the time-space of the “godding”-turning in the history of being.

First and foremost, Heidegger’s position can be summed up in his identifying a “collapse” of *aletheia* in Plato’s formation of the doctrine of ideas in his allegory of the cave.⁵⁰⁵ Heidegger’s fundamental ontology and his later being-historical mindfulness (*Besinnung*) of the primordially of being (*Sein*) both concern themselves with the inceptual philosophical possibilities in this moment of collapse in the history of being through the advent of Platonism in metaphysics. These possibilities provide the opening through which a decisive re-enactment of originary thinking can be carried out under *Dasein*’s guardianship of the truth of being through its leaping projection into that opening. Being is cleared through the sheltering-concealing of this guardianship that is also attuned to the absent gods, or the abyss of “godding”. Within the understanding of the history of being, *aletheia*, in respect of the meaning of being, cannot simply be translated as “unconcealment”,⁵⁰⁶ otherwise *Dasein*’s understanding of being remains metaphysically confined to being as presencing (*Anwesen*) and its temporal implications. This means that the illumination of the lightening of being is at the same time the possible turn toward darkness in the necessary sheltering-concealing of being in *Dasein*’s “there”-grounding in *Ereignis*, which in its historicity is situated between the present-day strife or *polemos* between earth and world.⁵⁰⁷ The playing forth (*Zuspiel*)⁵⁰⁸ of light and dark is the *Destruktion* of the

⁵⁰⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 233, page 251.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, § 233, page 252.

⁵⁰⁷ In what is tantamount to the impossibility of romanticism, *Dasein*’s nearness to earth within the *Gestell* of technology can mean its further destruction, as in the Western appropriation of earth-based spiritualities based on a metaphysical notion of spirituality as *techné*. See Douglas Ezzy, “Popular Witchcraft and Environmentalism”, *The Pomegranate*, Volume 8, Issue 1 (2006), pages 40-44 and 50-51, concerning the conflict between “ecocentrism” and “anthropocentrism” that is not resolved, or rather fully understood or worked out, even among neo-pagans, who generally understand themselves to be earth-friendly and nature-oriented. Yet the rise of “urban magick” (cf. chaos magic), as discussed in Ieuan Jones, “Song of the Car, Song of the Cinema: Questioning ‘Semi-orthodox’ Pagan Rhetoric about ‘Nature’”, *The Pomegranate*, Volume 8, Issue 1 (2006), pages 16-20, signifies the alternating currents of magic and modernity in the other fields of neo-pagan consciousness and practice. In Heidegger, however, the fourfold *requires Dasein*; its phenomenology can therefore illuminate this current debate in pagan studies. The non-duality of Buddhism – especially the Yogacara tradition which Dzogchen has an affinity with – also presupposes such relational way of being where neither one nor the many is the absolute in the determination of existential meaning. See Peter Oldmeadow, “Buddhist Yogacara Philosophy and Ecology”, in Carole Cusack and Peter Oldmeadow (ed.), *This Immense Panorama: Studies in Honour of Eric J. Sharpe* (Sydney: School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney, 1999), pages 251: “Since the Yogacarin vision is based on an organic non-duality between self and world it is understood that any attempt to master the ‘world’ is misconceived and futile. The subject does not stand outside and opposed to the world and hence the world cannot ultimately be an object to master. The self is embedded and implicated in the world; or rather, self and world

Platonic tradition of *Lichtmetaphysik*. *Gnosis* is the playing forth of Goetia into itself; the neo-Platonic identification of the One with the absolute light of divine illumination is not Heidegger's way. In bringing back the Greeks' primordial understanding of *daimons*, the modern understanding of "godding" becomes demons' playing forth into angels. *Dasein* in modernity has *this* as the essential decision about its own understanding of what god *is* – in the reservedness of sheltering-concealing during the "enframing" (*gestellend*) age of the abandonment of being, when the very question of being is an abyssal withdrawal in human knowledge. Like the "liberated" man in Plato's allegory of the cave, who is murdered for giving the knowledge that tells light from dark, to speak too openly of "godding" in *Dasein* can be the beckoning of death. To use a historical example, the Christian genocide of witches in medieval Europe is founded upon a belief in the Goetia of "godding", the true essence of which is concealed from the bloody haze of onto-theology.

Heidegger understands liberation (*Befreiung*) as *becoming-free for being*.⁵⁰⁹ *Dasein* is essentially attuned to the many possibilities in being in its potentiality-for-being and does not exist in the mode of unattached "liberty of indifference" (*libertas indifferentiae*).⁵¹⁰ At the same time this means for *Dasein* as human existence to be steadfast in truth.⁵¹¹ Similar to *Dasein*'s experience of *thod rgal*, the "great crossing", Heidegger understands liberation as the temporality of suddenness manifest in the full locality of being.⁵¹² There is no hesitation and no delay in this

both emerge from a deeper contextuality and cannot be grasped as independent entities." However, the Yogacarin vision and Buddhism in general differ from Heidegger and European paganism in that there is traditionally no attunement to nature or earth as the sacred. The contemporary *Erreignis* of *dharma* and Gaia (Dharma Gaia) is in fact a reflection of a pagan appropriation of Buddhism "from within". This trend is famously popularised through the environmentalism of the 14th Dalai Lama, when there is no tradition notion of Gaia, or the *godding of earth*, in Tibetan Buddhism. Yet there is no doubt that the postwar "greening" of Buddhism is empowered by the real "ecofriendly" life-style of the early Buddhist communities, who modelled themselves on the Buddha's deeply caring comportment to nature and all the living beings that it sustains. See Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, "Early Buddhist Views on Nature", in Alan Hunt Badiner (ed.), *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990), pages 8-13. Kabilsingh, formerly a lecturer of Buddhist studies in Thailand, became the first Theravadin woman to receive full ordination as a *bhikkhuni* in February 2003, although she had to travel to Sri Lanka in order to do so.

⁵⁰⁸ Playing forth is "in itself essentially a transformation-initiating preparation for the other beginning", hence essential to primordially. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 82, page 119.

⁵⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, § 12, page 70.

⁵¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 31, page 135.

⁵¹¹ Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit", in Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe*, Volumes 36/37, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997), § 13, page 134. The lecture course "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit", given during winter semester 1933-1934, is the recapitulation and substantial revision of *The Essence of Truth*, which was a lecture course offered during winter semester 1931-1932 (published in Volume 34 of *Gesamtausgabe*, with the subtitle "Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet").

⁵¹² See *ibid.*, § 15, page 14.

liberating temporalisation of *Dasein*. Given that Heidegger approaches the locality of the meaning of being as the *topos* of *aletheia*, *Dasein*'s becoming-free for being is the topology of lightening as the primordial significance of the fundamental phenomenon of light in *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world. This is also the primordial understanding of the spatiality of *Dasein* which is more than its embodiment in the world in that its knowing has a topological dimension to it. This topology is the source of light (*Lichtquelle*) in the hermeneutic sense. The "mapping" of truth takes place therefore not in the Platonic abstraction of ideas but in the full existential immersion or dwelling in the fundamental question of being, which opens up *Dasein* in a holistic way. In this opening, the phenomenon of light becomes the horizon of the clearing of being according to the schemata of *aletheia*. This horizon is more fundamental to *Dasein* than the explicit temporalisation of past, present and future in the horizontal schemata of time in respect of being. That it can be illuminated (*gelichtet*) at all puts *Dasein* in a unique position *vis-à-vis* light that transcends both the physics and the metaphysics of this universal, if not cosmological, phenomenon; yet light is "refracted" through the *topos* of human existence and exhibits a temporal-spatial character in this manner. Heidegger does not use the term "refraction" but this ontic word has the ontological significance of pointing out the mediation of understanding in the hermeneutic circle in the form of fore-conception (*Vorgriff*), fore-having (*Vorhabe*) and fore-sight (*Vor-sicht*) that belong together to the fore-structure (*Vor-struktur*) of *Dasein*.⁵¹³ Any talk of "purity" only indicates an orientation toward the question of being that needs to be uncovered in a resolute interpretation, requiring perhaps even *Destruktion*. The hermeneutic circle is therefore incompatible with the doctrine of pure, primordial light in Dzogchen that is integral to the Tibetan understanding of liberation. It can also be asked whether *Dasein* will actually face dissolution in the "clear light" (*'od gsal*) of "primeval purity" (*ka dag*) in Dzogchen liberation.⁵¹⁴ Does temporal or historical determination make sense in Dzogchen at all? In contrast to this uncertainty on the level of grounding attunement is the guiding attunement of light in its "impure", "interpreted" illumination. Being-historical "refraction" also includes the possibilities of the total absorption of light in darkness, i.e. the abyssal concealment of being even in the illumination of *Dasein*. Beings, too, in their "beingness" (*Seiendheit*), become the abyss of light and appear *dark* in varying degrees to

⁵¹³ The hermeneutic circle is the original moment in *Dasein*'s interpretive understanding of being. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 32, pages 142-143.

⁵¹⁴ For explanation of *'od gsal*, see John Reynolds, *The Golden Letters*, pages 49-52. The belief in *'od gsal* is present in all Tibetan Buddhist schools. It is often mentioned by the 14th Dalai Lama's popularisation of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. For explanation of *ka dag*, see Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, page 213. Another expression in Dzogchen, *yongs dag*, means "total purity". See Longchen Rabjam, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, page 511.

Dasein.⁵¹⁵ This is in line with Heidegger's insight that to understand truth in *Dasein*'s comportment toward being there is already a relation to untruth (as hiddenness).⁵¹⁶ Neither can be objectified as the "true" or the "untrue" in the reserved, mindful discourse of *Dasein*'s grounding attunement in *Ereignis*. In fact in *Dasein*'s hermeneutic fore-sight, light and dark, truth and untruth already and always come together in the primordial appropriation (*Ereignis*) of *logos*.

Within *Ereignis* *Dasein* finds itself in either nearness or remoteness in respect of the question of being. The temporal-spatial structuring of primordially that *Ereignis* is, from which *Dasein* itself is not exempt, provides an understanding of clearing or lightening of being that does not require a hypostasis of the source of lightening that brings in the metaphysics of essential and changeless ideas or forms. The phenomena in this world are not the shadows of ideas from another world. In so far as their meaning is concerned, phenomena are self-illuminating in their "presencing", because being is self-clearing. Only then can being be free from the ontological reduction of being into beings in metaphysics. Clearing as illumination is the affirmation of the time-space of ontological difference, the primordial difference that frees *Dasein* for the question of being. The clearing of being is a fundamental attunement that is comparable to the notion of intrinsic awareness in Dzogchen, which in its *lumen naturale* the "basic space" of phenomena can be known and experienced by *Dasein*, the human being that essentially *understands*.

To think about being in terms of *Ereignis* is to interpret the playing forth of the beginning of metaphysics into the other beginning of primordial thinking, which also includes the Hölderlinian enactment of remembrance of beginnings. What is brought into *Ereignis* is the echoing of Platonism, which dominates the Western experience of thinking, against the creative remoteness of Mnemosynian "godding". Platonism is for Heidegger the guiding question in the being-historical development of ontology into onto-theology.⁵¹⁷ It is based on a heliocentric "godding" which has its own conception of lightening (*Lichtung*), resulting thus in a metaphysics of light that basically obscures the illumined nature of phenomena themselves in their showing. Plato's understanding of lightening is therefore not a clearing of being.

⁵¹⁵ Earth-based neo-paganism therefore differs fundamentally from all major religious traditions that privilege an idealised light over the darkness of the fertile soil, the deep oceans and the impenetrable forests.

⁵¹⁶ The question of untruth is in every essential determination of truth, i.e. of *aletheia* as the fundamental situation of human existence. See Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, § 17, pages 89-90; § 18, pages 97-98; and § 19, pages 104-106.

⁵¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 106, pages 143-144. It is important to understand Heidegger's methodology in this matter. In the same section he writes, "Merely rejecting 'ontology' without overcoming it from within its origin accomplishes nothing at all; at most it endangers every will to thinking."

Hermeneutically expressed, *phos* on its own cannot adequately characterise the full meaning of *phainomena*, for the possibilities of understanding and interpretation are located in the primordial phenomenon of being itself. Plato's awe before the question of source, as can be seen from his allegory of the cave, results in a hesitancy that blinds him to the true potential of the illuminated (*Gelichtet*) in phenomena. Instead of the sun, the most illuminated is *Dasein* itself, in how it exists in truth and untruth in the being-historical appropriated manner of *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* is *aletheia* as the "abiding origin of our existence"⁵¹⁸ – it is what separates the being of *Dasein* from a total dispersion into nothingness. *Dasein* is the inabiding of *aletheia* in being. Heidegger sees it as the "fundamental experience" that fully awakens *Dasein* in its potentiality-for-being, which entails its "philosophical comportment toward beings" through thrownness in the phenomenal world.⁵¹⁹

In his transformation of the metaphysical theme of *lumen naturale* into the hermeneutics of the clearing of being, Heidegger moves away from the heliocentrism of Plato and enters into the Goetia – precisely because of its opposition to onto-theological grasping – of the abyss as the clearing itself. Heidegger describes the abyssal clearing as the sheltering that lights up even in concealment.⁵²⁰ *Dasein's* understanding of being is the "demonic" light of Luciferan self-awareness,⁵²¹ so to speak, and here we arrive again at the uncanny ground of Goetic hermeneutics that has not received its full expression in Heidegger, but only hinted at. The hint is that the abyss, as *Ab-grund*, is a being-historical refusal at articulating any ground. The hint, however, is given a special place in *Contributions to Philosophy* in that this is the primary fashion in which *Dasein* exists reservedly in grounding attunement while nihilism rages in the strife between earth and world. There is a *darkening* of the original vision of the clearing of being that is presented in *Being and Time*, but this is the result of Heidegger's deeper attunement to the

⁵¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, § 16, page 85.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 242, page 265. Sheltering is not covering over but preserving beings in the truth of being, as in the preservation of earth, which embraces both growth and decay. See *ibid.*, § 245, page 273.

⁵²¹ The biblical tradition links Satan with the morning star, which is Venus – originally associated with the Semitic goddess of fertility, Astarte, also known as Ashtoreth. The Babylonian goddess Ishtar and the Greek goddess Aphrodite (Venus in the Roman pantheon) are different personifications of the same goddess. Fish, an important symbol of Christianity, is sacred to her. See Theodore F. Wright, "A Symbolic Figure of the Queen of Heaven", *The Biblical World*, Volume 17, Number 16 (1901), pages 447-449. The Israelites following Yahweh degraded all goddesses of the region and it is possible that Astarte was demonised as the 29th demon in *Clavicula Salomonis* (Solomonic Goetia), Astaroth, who rides an infernal dragon with a viper in his right hand: a symbol of poison and death instead of fecundity. Ironically, its sigil contains a five-pointed star in the middle. It should also be noted that in Revelations 12:16, Jesus proclaims, "I am the bright and morning star." Hence "Lucifer" is a title of illumination. This is relevant for *Dasein* analytic in light of the phenomenon of the clearing of being.

deepest – hence abyssal - distress of the being-historical temporalisation of the abandonment of being.

In Heidegger's later philosophy, it can be said that there is an *occult aletheia* at work. In its determination, the clearing of being is not the simple illumination of beings that light can reach. After two millennia of onto-theology, it also determines how *Dasein* comports to *daimonion*, which can never be as proximal to us as it was once to the Greeks. In the being-historical appropriation that takes place in Ereignis, more light is absorbed in *being* – or in its *archai* as *Seyn* - than reflected in order to reveal its abyssal character in *Dasein's* fundamental relation to its primordially. This ontological observation may or many not correlate with the current ontic knowledge about the greater presence of “dark matter” in the cosmic space that we are aware of, where light is but a very, very small minority; even the sun is now known to die one day, as no star is eternal. The eternity of Plato's ideas is founded upon an illusion about the nature of the greatest source of light, and life on earth, in the solar system.

Heidegger devotes the entire Part One of *The Essence of Truth* – 67 pages long in the English translation - to Plato's allegory of the cave, hence a great deal of significance is attributed to the heliocentric approach to the problem of truth in Plato. Given the crucial determination of Western esotericism, which is largely Hermetic and Hermeticist⁵²² in form and character, by neo-Platonism – the Alexandrian Hermetica of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Renaissance *magia* of Bruno and Ficino, right up till the 19th century occult movement of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn -, Heidegger's *Destruktion* of the Platonic metaphysics of light is a true moment of Goetic turning in the history of the esoteric understanding of being in the West. The implication cannot be fully understood until Heidegger's abyssal *Destruktion* reaches far and wide in the essential activities of human thinking and conduct, so that the *locus classicus* occupied by this allegory⁵²³ in the shaping of *Dasein's essential thinking* can be changed to

⁵²² Faivre makes a distinction between Hermetism and Hermeticism which is central to the method of study in Western esotericism. Hermetism refers to the ancient traditions and the arcane philosophy that are centred on the archetypal figure of Hermes Trismegistus (Hermes the Thrice Great), perhaps a Western example of the Tibetan understanding of *sprul sku* as it relates to the Greek god Hermes. Hermeticism is the 15th to the 17th century, i.e. Renaissance revival and further development of Hermetism by a leading neo-Platonist such as Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who taught Plato in the Academy of Florence. See Antoine Faivre, “Esoteric Currents in Modern and Contemporary Europe”, in Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (ed.), *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, page 4 and 9, and Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, page 35.

⁵²³ See Garry Trompf, “From the Esoteric to the Exoteric and Back Again”, in Edward F. Crangle (ed.), *Esotericism and the Control of Knowledge*, pages 24-25, regarding the classical place of Plato's metaphysics of light in the formation of esoteric thought, which also finds its parallel in the distinction between the illusion of what one sees and experiences (*maya*) and inner stability in the form of wisdom (*vijnana*) in the *Upanishads*. This dualism also applies to Buddhism, in that unlike Heidegger no valuable place is given to the ontic in *Dasein's* comportment to being, viz. the phenomena of the present-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*) and the ready-to-hand (*Zuhandensein*).

something else. The question, then, as Heidegger urges us continually in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is the “other beginning” in the history of being in and among what had already been historicised as well as temporal-spatially determined.

Viewed from a being-historical perspective, *aletheia* has a span unique to itself that the ecstatico-temporal horizon based solely on the *Dasein* analytic of *Being and Time*, and explained by Heidegger in greater detail in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, is no longer adequate to describe the playing forth of the history of being from its historical beginnings in Plato’s metaphysics of light to the other beginning opened up by the *daimonic* hermeneutics of Heidegger’s later philosophy. The “turning” in Heidegger’s pathway of thinking is decided by differences in the determination of being as beings (ideas in the case of Plato), which is always hermeneutically open in *Dasein*’s understanding of being, in its possibilities of being. Essential thinking takes note of the transitions from one determination to the other so that the “course” of the history of being can be perceived in as much entirety of the total phenomenon as possible. In the age of the abandonment of being, however, the abyss holds sway as the ungrounding of any determination that is all too familiar, and it is “strangeness” - the Greek experience of *daimonion* and Rudolf Otto’s understanding of the “daemoniac” – that shines forth as the eminent moment of clearing in *Dasein*’s interpretive activity and orientation. The *daimonic* becomes the vanguard in *Ereignis*, just as Dzogchen, with its cultivated dissolution of embodied existence into light and so forth, is at the forefront of the uncanny in the Tibetan quest for primordially.

The fundamental phenomenon of transparency as the letting through of light in the lightening of being is taken over, through being-historical surpassing, by the darkness of the abyss in *Contributions to Philosophy*. We arrive at a moment where in the understanding of primordially Heidegger and Longchenpa go separate ways. This is based on the primordial separation between light and dark that guides human knowing. Heidegger goes further by saying that this makes the clearing of being possible in the first place.⁵²⁴ In *Dasein*’s comportment to being, *lumen* is experienced not as the source of the light but as brightness (*Helle*). Brightness can be diminished by degree to different levels of darkness, until its absence results in pitch blackness. If for Plato the sun is the source of his inspiration for the doctrine of ideas and shapes his understanding of reason as *nous* – the enabling of *Dasein*’s perceiving beings in the light -, then for *daimonic* thinkers such as Parmenides and Heraclitus, the rhythmic

⁵²⁴ “Brightness and darkness are first and originary; they cannot be explained in terms of anything else.” Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, § 6, page 40.

alteration of day and night, hence light and dark, determined their understanding of being.⁵²⁵ Their understanding was also founded upon a horizon of temporality that is based on nature. In perceiving day and night and experiencing it, *Dasein* is not fixated upon the sun alone – even if the sun is indeed the underlying sustenance of nature. Heraclitus’ interpretation of illumination in terms of the duration of the burning fire – which we know the sun is – is closer to the meaning of being in lightening, hence more of a clearing in relation to being, than Plato’s exaltation of light as the possibility of *eidos* (the seeing of the being of beings in idea). Even Heraclitus’ notion of the “eternal living fire”⁵²⁶ does not lend itself to metaphysics; instead it points to a primordial thinking about the possibilities of *lumen naturale* in *Dasein* that knows and experiences the bringing forth and the shining forth of beings, as well as their darkening and concealment, in time. It is being’s relation to time that is more primordial than the sun’s apportioning of time, in the cycle of day and night, as “was”, “is” and “will be” to beings. This is because what persists in Heraclitus’ understanding of being is how gods and humans stand in the constitutive phenomenon of *aletheia* in the cosmic fire’s illumination. *Aletheia* invites both light and dark. As Heidegger puts it so well in *The Essence of Truth*, it is in the dark that we see the stars,⁵²⁷ so that we may understand the primordial meaning of *kosmos* that the blinding brightness of the sun cannot give.⁵²⁸ Hence a primordial meaning can be given to the famous statement from the magus of the abyss, Aleister Crowley, in *The Book of the Law*: “Every man and woman is a star.”⁵²⁹

In Longchenpa, the “basic space” of phenomena as the ground of being is the primordial light. In the 10th section of *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena*, the following verse raises the hermeneutic question whether Dzogchen, in its prevailing form through the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, is in fact a form of the metaphysics of light:

The ongoing flow of utter lucidity, timeless and omnipresent,

⁵²⁵ Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, pages 43-44.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 57-60.

⁵²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, § 6, page 41.

⁵²⁸ The sun is itself a star that cannot be seen in the dark because it excludes it. The sun therefore stands in a relation to the abyss in this withdrawal from letting be seen in the dark. For Eugen Fink’s remark on this phenomenon, see Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, page 42.

⁵²⁹ Aleister Crowley, “Liber AL vel Legis”, in Israel Regardie (ed.), *Gems from the “Equinox”: Instructions by Aleister Crowley for His Own Magical Order* (Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 1997), page 77. See also “Liber HHH” in *ibid.*, page 215: “Let the Mind become as a flame”. *The Book of the Law* was written between noon and 1 o’ clock in the afternoon on the 8th, 9th and 10th in April 1904 in Cairo through the dictation of an Egyptian spirit called Aiwass, who was a messenger of Horus and appeared to Crowley “transparent as a veil of gauze” on those days. See Aleister Crowley, *The Holy Books of the Thelema* (Boston; York Beach: Weiser Books, 1988), pages vii-viii. *The Book of the Law* was first published in *The Equinox*, Volume 1, Number 10 (1913).

is spontaneously present within this context, in which nothing is
 discarded or adopted,
 and so it is the most sublime enlightened intent – the basic space
 of phenomena, the nature of samsara and nirvana.
 This vast expanse, unwavering, indescribable, and equal
 to space,
 is timelessly and innately present in all beings.⁵³⁰

In Dzogchen, the primordial light, as “the ongoing flow of utter lucidity”, carries the tradition as it is passed from one generation of adepts to the other. It cannot be historicised in that it is free from the interferences of time, and in that it remains pure. It is this pristine permanence and continuity that enables Dzogchen to be explained today the same way it was first transmitted from Garab Dorje to Manjushrimitra more than 2200 years ago (according to the Buddhist tradition, not the Bön):

In the Dzogchen teachings, it is considered that the primordial state, which is beyond time, and beyond creation and destruction, is the fundamentally pure base of all existence, both at the universal and the individual levels. It is the inherent nature of the primordial state to manifest as light, which in turn manifests as the five colors, the essences of the elements.⁵³¹

The focus of Dzogchen is on the primordial flow of light that endures in time, regardless of the arising and the dissolution of phenomena that earn the famous Buddhist description of “impermanence” (*mi rtag pa*), which makes mockery of any human attempt at grasping at beings. Every breath of life sustains being but none of it can be captured. Yet breath is conditioned by impermanence that the primordial light of Dzogchen is not.

Phenomenologically understood, the “utter lucidity” (*’od gsal* – clear light) in the essence of phenomena bears a strong resemblance to Heraclitus’ notion of the “eternal living fire”, for both are ways of describing the fundamental clearing of being in *Dasein*’s understanding of being as it remains open to *aletheia*. Yet an important difference between Longchenpa and Heraclitus cannot be overlooked. In Heraclitus, light has a boundary that it does not cross, so it

⁵³⁰ Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena*, page 83.

⁵³¹ Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, page 93. Garb Dorje was active during the 2nd century BCE. See Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, page 26.

cannot be present in all beings as the essence of enlightenment. In Greek mythology the goddess Dike, with the three Erinyes as her female helpers, ensure that the sun stays in its orbit and that it is surrounded by the abyss.⁵³² It is the fate of a mortal (*Dasein*) that she cannot have direct knowledge of what the abyss is, for the law of the *kosmos* dictates that death accompanies a full entry into the abyssal in being. In so far as *Dasein* is being-toward-death and not death itself, it stands in *aletheia* as a being that is illuminated. Once in the afterlife, the dead's communication with the living is fraught with ambiguities: hence the Greek experience of them as "shades". Indeed they understand death as *lethe*, as the oblivion that leaves everything behind (Elysian bliss), hence the opposite of *aletheia*. The freedom of the dead is in their forgetting; remembrance is the return to life (reincarnation). In the hermeneutics of *poiesis*, the Ister on earth and the Lethe in the underworld are two rivers symbolising *remembrance* and *forgetting of being* respectively.⁵³³ The determination of both is the primordially of being.

Situated after *The Essence of Truth* (1932) and before *Heraclitus Seminar* (1966-1967), *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936-1938) shows Heidegger working on a new understanding of clearing of being that removes him completely from the Platonic metaphysics of light. Instead of Plato's fascination with the human ascent to the symbolic sun of the idea of the good, Heidegger describes how the *lumen* of clearing is in fact related to the abyss of being, where the sun, hence the brightest light of all, cannot reach – in accordance with the cosmic law enforced by Dike and the Erinyes, who in their fierce, snake-haired appearance, the uncanny of *daimonion* is decisively invoked. The Erinyes are related to the Furies, and in human affairs their wrath reveals the fearful aspect of time in an ill-fated being-in-the-world. Yet they are sometimes portrayed as beauties with wings in an alluring female form. In the Erinyes the undecidability between fear and enchantment has the clearing of being problematised as the question of *logos*. Dike and the Erinyes police the boundaries (*termata*) separating light from dark, so that the fundamental appropriation of lightening in being can be maintained for the continuity of the possibilities of the understanding of being in *Dasein*. This boundaries set the measure (*metra*) of *Dasein's* understanding, so that blindness in *Dasein's* experience of either light or dark can be

⁵³² See Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, page 41. Fink says: "Perhaps Ἥλιος, who apportions everything, is himself confined by another power. The jurisdiction that finds him out in a case of overstepping and brings him to account is Dike with her helpers. Dike is the deity of the just, the deity who watches the boundary between the domain of the sun's brightness and of what is found therein, and the domain of the nightly abyss that is denied to us. The guardians of this boundary are the helpmates (*Gehilfinnen*) of Dike. They watch out that Ἥλιος does not overstep his own domain of power and attempt to break into the dark abyss."

⁵³³ As described by Hölderlin, the gods dwelling by the Ister are gods who relate to mortals in the fourfold. It is the "godding" of the living.

carefully avoided.⁵³⁴ In Heraclitus it is *logos* rather than presence that determines the meaning of being. In *logos*, beings as all things (*panta*) are gathered together in the onefold of being, but without losing their differences as the many (*panta*). This, for Heidegger, is the essential coming forth of beings in appearance that determines what he means by the clearing of being in *aletheia*. This phenomenon is more primordial than being illuminated from within (Dzogchen) and from without (ontic knowing). Neither the endless flow of primordial light nor the cyclic orbiting of the sun can provide adequate measure for the meaning of being in the *Ereignis* of the one and the many. Notwithstanding its monism of eternal light as the basic space of phenomena (being of beings), Dzogchen shows itself to be an Eastern form of metaphysics of light that can be subject to *Destruktion* in the *daimonic* or Goetic hermeneutics of Heidegger just as much as Plato. The decisive question returns again to the *meaning of being*, and in the case of Dzogchen there is silence in the Tibetan language for either *Sein* or *Seyn* (see § 19). This then points to the question of *logos*, its *lesein* in language in particular. Based on Heidegger's discussion of "Greek humanity" in *Parmenides*, *lesein* becomes a question of the *Volk* as the essential gathering of *polis*.⁵³⁵ Being-historical awareness (*Besinnung*) is *völkisch* in its historicity of being and in the case of the Greeks it was determined by *aletheia*.

In its essence, Heraclitus' mindful awareness (*Besinnung*) of the phenomenon of fire (*pur*) concerns itself with that which brings-forth-into-appearance (*das zum Vorschein-Bringende*).⁵³⁶ In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger is also interested in examining the meaning of being in relation to that which brings-forth-into-absence or disappearance. Yet even more uncanny than either is *vanishing* – there is a phenomenological awareness of the possibility of the return of that which has vanished. Deeper than the ordinary understanding of this phenomenon is the hermeneutics of haunting: *daimonions topos*. There is *daimonic* in the vanishing, in that what is exactly the *daimonic* is that "it" is possibly still around somewhere, but not seen. In the Greek relation to being, *daimons* were understood to watch over *Dasein*. In Greek paganism is an attunement to primordial temporality, in which the vanishing, or the *daimonic* in it, is a *Destruktion* of the eternal. To think of the sacred in the vanishing is to think *daimonically*. This *daimonic* attunement is essential to a mindful awareness of the question of the last god, namely in its non-presence in the indeterminacy of its arrival or departure. *The last god is probably already here* – walking among us, or beyond our reach in a state of seclusion. The *daimonic* is therefore beyond even the Tibetan attunement to the primordial light in Dzogchen, which is a constant

⁵³⁴ The relation of the sun's orbit and its luminescence to *metra* and *termata* in *kosmos* is discussed in Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, page 40.

⁵³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 5, page 78; see also *ibid.*, § 6, page 96.

⁵³⁶ Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, page 59.

flow of the truth of being behind the illusory interplay of phenomena. Being abyssal, *daimonic* thinking, or being-historical awareness in Goetia, is without any metaphysical substratum. Invoking Dike again, light and dark are but primordial measures of being and “godding”. In their similitude of hide-and-seek, a conception of the “godding” of the gods as *physis* is impossible. A goddess is *not* a beauty, beautiful she may be.

Heidegger and Longchenpa share many similarities in their profound thinking about the primordial meaning of being. It is on the question of the hermeneutic significance of light that they differ. In Dzogchen, the fundamental notion of a clear light (*'od gsal*) that is always there in the basic space (*chos dbyings*) of all phenomena as their true nature (*chos nyid*), and which only requires awakening in *Dasein* through the combined yogic discipline of *khreg chod* and *thod rgal* for it to transcend its facticity and become light itself, is founded upon an understanding of being that interprets the meaning of being in terms of photic essence and manifestations. In Dzogchen, light has the same status as *idea* in Plato. Both Plato and Longchenpa see the sun as subsuming the manifold in the illumination and the illuminated.

This – the ultimate meaning of suchness itself – is like the essence
of the sun.

I hold that it abides as a natural state of rest, unwavering utter
lucidity.

It can be shown that other approaches are like attempts to create
the already-present-sun
by dispelling clouds and darkness through a process of effort
and achievement.

Therefore, these two kinds of approach are as different as heaven
and earth.⁵³⁷

Longchenpa goes one step further by identifying the sun with the meaning of being itself. The “two kinds of approach” he refers to is the opposition in the approach to enlightenment in Dzogchen and the culturally and politically dominant Gelug school, whose followers take the stage-by-stage approach, whereas Dzogchen followers believe that the realisation of “buddha nature” is spontaneous and immediate (hence the complementary twofold of *khreg chod* and *thod*

⁵³⁷ Longchen Rabjam, *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena*, page 39. See also *ibid.*, page 91: “Let your mind and body relax deeply in a carefree state./With an easygoing attitude, like a person who has nothing more to do,/let your mind and body rest in whatever way is comfortable, neither tense nor loose.” This is the essential meaning of *khreg chod*.

rgal). In Dzogchen, the highest good of enlightenment is both immanent and transcendent. Bringing Longchenpa and Plato together again, the significant difference between the Tibetan and the Greek turns out to be that the primordial light of Dzogchen carries both phenomenal and noumenal qualities, whereas Platonic ideas are by definition beyond the reach of the five senses. In this sense, the boundary between beings as a whole in the world and the utter otherness of noumena is not clearly observed by the Dzogchenpas, by virtue of their adherence to the spontaneous presence of the basic space of being, anytime and anywhere. In contrast, the Madhyamikas' understanding of emptiness in beings – the nothingness in beings while still existing – creates an opening for this boundary to be observed,⁵³⁸ for the soteriological purposes of detaching *Dasein* from the enchanting as well as the disturbing displays of the “beingness” (*Seiendheit*) of beings. Yet, given that Nagarjuna ascribes emptiness to only those phenomena which, in their existence, exist in the mode of dependent arising (*rten 'byung* or *rten 'bre*),⁵³⁹ it can be said that the fundamental phenomenon of clear light in Dzogchen, which is also called “immutable light” (*'od mi 'gyur*),⁵⁴⁰ cannot be an example of dependent arising. Primordial light is not emptiness.⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, according to the Madhyamikas emptiness is applicable only to an understanding of being that looks for or apprehends inherent existence in things;⁵⁴² but in *things* Heidegger sees the gathering of being, time and space, which are themselves not things.⁵⁴³ This means that emptiness can also not be attributed to the meaning of *being*. Gathering is the giving of form to temporalisation in the coming, abiding, and going of phenomena that together constitute *Dasein's* being-in-the-world.

In the staying, arriving and departing of beings, gathering dwells in the playing forth of locality into journeying, as we have seen in Heidegger's philosophical reflections on Hölderlin's poem “The Ister”. In the dwelling, gathering invokes the fourfold which, in the temporality of

⁵³⁸ For discussion of the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness entailing the necessity of phenomena and noumena, see Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness*, page 104, and Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Central Philosophy of Tibet*, page 146.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., pages 185-186. Cited there is Nagarjuna, *Treatise on the Middle Way*, XXIV: “Because there is no phenomenon/That is not a dependent-arising,/There is no phenomenon/That is not empty.”

⁵⁴⁰ Namkhai Norbu, *Lhun grub rdzogs pa chen po'i ston pa dang bstan pa'i byung tshul brjod pa'i gtam nor bu'i phreng ba*, cited in Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, page 21.

⁵⁴¹ Neither can emptiness be applied to Plato's theory of ideas. Buddhists will find Plato fit the description of an ontological eternalist. The Madhyamikas traditionally call Bönpos “eternalists” as a pejorative appellation.

⁵⁴² Elizabeth Napper, op. cit., page 56. On the same page Napper writes: “Emptiness was found by a consciousness seeking inherent existence; were that analysis to be applied to emptiness itself, emptiness would not be found but rather the emptiness of emptiness.” This is not the basic orientation of Dzogchen, which is being-in-and-toward-clear light.

⁵⁴³ See Gail Stenstad, *Transformations*, page 91. On the same page Stenstad writes: “Gathering is relationally dynamic.” It is in this dynamism that things are constituted, not the actualisation of an inherently existent substance.

the attuned awaiting⁵⁴⁴ in the modern age of distress that is *Dasein* in *Ereignis* as *Dagründer*, the gods are invoked as remembrance of the inceptual (pre-Socratic) mindfulness of measure (*metra*) that determines the fourfold. In the abandonment of being that is modernity, this measure is how the strife between world and earth, through our being as *Dasein*, determines our understanding of and comportment to being.⁵⁴⁵ In so determining, we stand in the clearing of the abyss which is not lightening, but darkening to the uncanny of *daimonion* in Heidegger's reformulation, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, of clearing as "self-sheltering-concealing" (*Sichverbergung*) – hence *aletheia* as well.⁵⁴⁶

Viewed from Heidegger's *daimonic* perspective on *aletheia*, the fact that Bön is the uncanny or even the Goetic in spirituality to the Buddhist majority among Tibetans creates the "open" for a pagan renewal of Tibetan hermeneutics, enabling an *Ereignis* of much that is forgotten or concealed. In its teachings, Bön offers an understanding of the wholeness of being that invites what Heidegger calls the fourfold into a living presence, which configures the primordial freedom of being in Dzogchen as transmitted by the Bönpos.⁵⁴⁷ Bön Dzogchen is not about the individual attainment of enlightenment, but is about an enlightened honouring of the "goddling" in Tibet. In re-attuning themselves to their native gods and spirits, it behoves the Tibetans to call for a distinct understanding of *legein* in Bön ontology that is free from the "metaphysical" appropriation of "emptiness". The gathering of being in Bön is the unsettling of the Prasangika Madhyamaka *Weltanschauung* that has come to dominate the Tibetan *Geist*. In the perennial struggle between the two, which Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit* claims is historicised by the defining moment of recognition, it is the primordially of the meaning of being that attains the absolute in self-awareness, so much so that the Buddhist notion of "enlightenment" becomes other than what is culturally codified as spiritual goal and effort, like the spiritual *techne* of Madhyamaka that determines the *dynamis* of Tibetan Buddhism (e.g., the combination of "insight" and "analytical" meditation). Dzogchen, which predicates itself of the

⁵⁴⁴ In *Contributions to Philosophy* (§ 242, page 268) Heidegger calls it "remembering awaiting" (*erinnernde Erharren*), which means remembering the "concealed belongingness" (*verbüllte Zugehörigkeit*) to primordial being (*Sein*) and awaiting its call.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., § 281, page 359.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., § 209, pages 232-233. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly translate *Verbergung* as "sheltering-concealing" due to the prefix *ver-*, as in *Verhüllung*, which means concealment or veiling; and *Bergung* as "sheltering". Also *ibid.*, § 214, page 237, regarding the essential sway of truth as sheltering-concealing; this is grounded in *Dasein*. See *ibid.*, § 233, page 252: "The sheltering-concealing that lights up has to be grounded as *Da-sein*." Sheltering, of course, has the connotation of preservation (*Bewahrung*), namely the meaning of being in beings in order to retrieve the question itself. See *ibid.*, § 246, page 273: "Sheltering is basically preserving enowning (*Ereignis*) by strifing of strife."

⁵⁴⁷ See Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, "A General Introduction to the History and Doctrines of Bon", in Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), pages 104-156.

primordially of enlightened understanding, or the originary, absolute lightening (*Lichtung*) of being, then becomes Bön's site of struggle for recognition within the being-together-with-one-another (*Mitdasein*) of Tibetan existence. The Tibetan *Ereignis*, in its attunement to the mostly forgotten gods of Tibet, then is a being-historical (*seinsgeschichtlich*) turning that is also the return of a topological hermeneutics, the *daimonic praxis* of which has only just begun.

As the provider, for good or for ill, of the leading *Weltanschauung* of the world, the West has much to learn from the meaning of this *daimonic* Tibetan struggle. The co-determination of this meaning can already be found in the profound hermeneutic resonance between Bön and European neo-paganism, given that the latter's avowed struggle against the "onto-theological" metaphysics of Christianity and its inverse variety in the form of secular humanism involves a resolute guiding attunement of today's troubled *Dasein* to the ancient voices of the Norse, Celtic, Greek, Baltic and Slavic gods of pre-Christian Europe. As Heidegger elucidates on the poetry of "godding" in Hölderlin, poetic saying is hearkening to the philosophical *legein* in the primordial measure of thinking. Whether in the West or the East, to *think* with mindful awareness (*besinnend*) as a pagan, therefore, is to think in terms of the gathering of beings in the *being* of the old gods, which in being-historical terms, as Heidegger points out in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is the gods' needfulness of *Ereignis* in their "godding" in the sending (*Geschick*) of being to *Dasein*, which determines the latter's ecstatic *Existenziale*.

Conclusion

§ 22. Heidegger's Riddle of the "Last God"

After all, the temporalisation of the "not-yet" is no longer restricted to the individuated being-toward-death that affects first and foremost the self-awareness of "mineness" of *Dasein*, which provides the ground for its knowledge of impermanence and mortality. Rather, by resolutely *being there* to ground the grounding attunement to "godding" by "sheltering-concealing" the sacred mourning for the absent gods amidst the monstrous uncanny of the gigantic in nihilism, *Dasein* opens up the futurity of the possibilities of its own potentiality-of-being, as well as that of the earth, by enacting in a being-historical manner the fundamental remembrance of the "last god", which I have shown in the thesis to be the "godding" of care, as exemplified in a titan like Prometheus and a titaness like Mnemosyne. Prometheus is the fire-bearer that in his power created humanity and guided its civilisation in grounding attunement. His relation to *Ereignis* in the history of being of mortals is recurrent in an authentic clearing or lightening of being. It is the *daimonion* of primordial light. Mnemosyne's relation to *Ereignis* in the history of being of mortals is recurrent in the remembrance of the primordial, inceptual question of being that offers a guiding attunement for *Dasein* to honour the originary sacred in being, which is concealed in the strife between world and earth in the age of the abandonment of being that modernity is. It is the *daimonion* of primordial depth, which is the abyss of being. The riddle of the "last god" in *Contributions to Philosophy* is solved in the thesis by pointing out the originary titan *gnosis* that is the ground of the "godding" (*Götterung*) on earth. The sky gods of Mount

Olympus concealed this truth of being and in the case of Zeus, the ground was laid for an onto-theological appropriation of *Dasein* in his “goddling” (*Göttern*) as the god of the gods. The sun god Apollo, as the son of Zeus, further appropriates *Dasein* in the metaphysics of the sun that arose with Plato. Heliocentric rendition of the primordial phenomenon of light resulted in Plato’s doctrine of ideas or forms, which was the first metaphysics of Western philosophy. It also determined *Dasein*’s fundamental understanding of truth as *aletheia*. The *daimonion* of Heraclitus’ wisdom, however, points out the Erinyes’ abyssal constraint of the sun through the primordial dark. There is a primordial measure that determines the “goddling”, in a way that can be understood by *Dasein* through the pathway of being-historical orientation in *Ereignis*. Heidegger insists that the gods need *Ereignis* in order to *be*. Pagan *mythos* is about the question of being that is meaningful to *Dasein*. Outside *mythos*, the gods are beyond *Dasein*’s understanding and cannot exist the way that *Dasein* is said to exist. But by recovering *mythos* in the way of thinking that Heidegger shows us, which is the “mindful awareness” (*Besinnung*) of being, gods and mortals can relate to each other in the *Ereignis* of the fourfold that includes sky and earth, with one disclosing light and the other concealing it. As the daughter of sky and earth, Mnemosyne is best placed to bring the fourfold into the *Midgard* of mortals, positioned precariously as it is between the abyss above and the abyss below. In its complete otherness to the *Midgard*, the uncanny *Jotunheim* of the giants is not to be feared; the last attunement before time’s further turning away from being in the artificial gigantism of *Gestell* is *decisive* regarding this *daimonios topos* that is not longer included in the metaphysical topography of the “abandonment of being”. As Heidegger states in *What is Called Thinking?*, the turning of thinking into thought objects determined by the *techne* of *Gestell* is in essence the exorcism of the lingering spirit of Mnemosyne that still makes possible to this day *Dasein*’s mindfulness of the meaning of being. Heidegger’s dialogic joining of *Denken* (*noein*) and *Dichten* (*poiesis*) is a theurgic enactment of Mnemosyne. Despite the apparent Goetia (in the traditional sense) of titan *gnosis*, the primordial phenomenon of the “towering up” of time-space from the “cleavage” of being,⁵⁴⁸ which enables the “turn” within *Ereignis* that determines the being-historical projection of *Dasein* into the *aletheia* of its ecstatic mortality, is an enactment of remembrance of the gigantic in “goddling” in the primeval temporality of the titans. The “magic” of phenomenology as reclaimed and renewed Goetia is the re-enactment of this *titanic* temporality through invocation of the *daimonic* link between “goddling” and *Dasein*. In this view, the present is the “not-yet”; the future, the undecidability of the mythic phenomenon of “goddling”. As Hölderlin writes in his unfinished poem, “The Titans”:

⁵⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 10, page 22.

Nicht ist es aber
 Die Zeit. Noch sind sie
 Unangebunden. Göttliches trifft untheilnehmende nicht.

Not yet, however,
 The time has come. They still are
 Untethered. What's divine does not strike the unconcerned.⁵⁴⁹

§ 23. *The Last Attunement*

As the highest land on earth, Tibet is the Mount Olympus of the world. Its gods and goddesses are mostly related to the *topoi* of mountains, lakes and rivers: the Tibetan “goddling” is based on *Dasein*'s primordial comportment to *physis*. With the conversion of Tibet to Buddhism, this comportment was replaced by a notion of self-perfection that is known as enlightenment. The main controversy within Tibetan Buddhism itself is whether this enlightenment is always there as the ground of being, in which case what needs to be done is a “great crossing” into the “basic space” of being; or whether it is something to be attained through meditation, philosophy and ethics, which is the view of the majority of Tibetan Buddhists, especially those who adhere to the orthodoxy of the Gelug tradition. The former belongs to the view and practice of Dzogchen and despite some differences in method, it is an esoteric tradition that is common to the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism and the pagan-Buddhist syncretism of Bön. Debates continue as to whether in its original form prior to Tibet's exposure to Indian and Chinese traditions in Buddhism, the Bönpos followed a primordial Dzogchen that originated in Central Asia and was practised in the kingdom of Zhang Zhung before it was annexed by the 7th century Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo, who also actively supported the introduction of Buddhism into his empire. In Part Three, Division Two of the thesis, I demonstrate how a “metaphysics of light” that Heidegger grapples with in Western philosophy is also foundational to the Nyingma tradition of Dzogchen, which is named Longchen Nyingthig after Longchenpa, the 14th century Tibetan thinker who was innovative in giving a

⁵⁴⁹ Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Titans”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pages 530-531.

philosophical basis to Dzogchen that is compatible with the intellectual heritage of Madhyamaka in Tibetan Buddhism. Yet the phenomenon of primordial light as the being of beings – and which *Dasein* can transform itself into through the combined practice of *khreg chod* and *thod rgal* – lacks the open of *aletheia* that allows *Dasein* to be attuned to both light and dark, truth and untruth. In its photic monism, Dzogchen in Tibetan Buddhism also contradicts the basic tenet of emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) in Madhyamaka, in that emptiness cannot be described as a phenomenon at all (Nagarjuna’s injunction). The traditional scepticism of the Gelugpas toward the veracity of Dzogchen is based on their founding philosopher Tsongkhapa’s rejection, in the name of emptiness, of any understanding of ultimate reality that is based on a notion of a basis of being (*kun gzhil*). However, by accepting the validity of metaphysical thinking on the conventional level, for which Tsongkhapa is famous for, the Gelugpas still reply on the language of subject-object distinction in the way they describe both ordinary and extraordinary cognitive events. By not acknowledging any “understanding of being” as primordial to valid cognition (including the *gnosis* of enlightenment), Tsongkhapa fails to see that language is the gathering together (*legein*) of being and nothingness (metaphysically speaking, substance and emptiness) and its expression is more important than conventions in order to speak about, or be reserved about, the “truth of being” as *Ereignis*. What is absent in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy is therefore an understanding of primordial temporality that opens up a mindful awareness of the being-historical determination of being. But this *aletheia* problematises “enlightenment” itself, since it entails a notion of *sophia perennis* that is outside being-historical configuration of any kind. In perennialism *Dasein* has no *Geschlecht*, which is historicised and historical; this is because *Dasein* is seen as a temporal emanation of an original “form”, like the Kabbalist belief in Adam Kadmon. Dzogchen is perennialist but without adherence to a primordial form of any kind; it is *formless* in primordial light; the dissolution of *Dasein* in *thod ghal* is not decomposition but a transformation into a higher reality which is *already* here. Flesh and blood, sinews and bones become light. In this body of light, more good, or *eudaimonia*, can be achieved for all living beings in the world in that the Dzogchen adept is no longer restricted by time and space.

In Heidegger, *aletheia*, in its resonant play (*Zuspiel*) of light and dark, holds *Dasein* unto the abyss in being that includes its dissolution in death. Death is the dispersal of elements that *Dasein* is *not*, in that it is being-toward-death but is not death itself. In the freedom that *Dasein* finds in this nothingness in time and in its essentially futural projections into moments of clearing of being that decide its fate in this or that turning within *Ereignis*, the legacy of Heidegger is in the phenomenological crafting of a saying of being that bring together the

primordial unity of *Denken* and *Dichten* in the language of the gods. It is in *this* that *Dasein* can see (*erseben*) “godding” with what Heidegger calls the “higher power” of its finitude⁵⁵⁰, and that is the *fate* of humanity in the *destining* of the gods’ *daimonion*. In the example of Tibet, Bön is still a living tradition, despite the forced transformations it had to undergo from centuries of Buddhist persecution. Given this is the case, one can learn a thing or two about primordial “godding” from the ritualised relationships with the old gods of Tibet that the Bönpos hold dear. The luminescent *lhas* are the Bönpos’ *daimons*, who determine their *Dasein* in the manner of guiding attunement, which sustains their being-in-the-world. However, more primordial than the “eight classes” of gods and demons is the Tibetan demoness-goddess of earth that awaits release from the “nailing” of her vast, *titanic* body to the ground by all the Buddhist temples of Tibet.⁵⁵¹ Known as *srin mo*, or the “supine demoness”, she is supposed to never get up again. The possibility of *srin mo*’s relation to the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung,⁵⁵² which once included Tibet and belonged to the formative years of the Tibetan cultural identity, points to the primordially of “godding” in Bön, for “paganism” in Tibet has its inception in Zhang Zhung. Zhang Zhung is the forgotten origin of Tibet. It is believed by some Tibetologists that the Zhang Zhung language contained a script that was the original script of Tibet. In Zhang Zhung Bön was called *gyer*, which means to “chant”.⁵⁵³ Chanting is the invocation of the old gods of the Tibetan plateau. The subjugation of *srin mo* to Buddhism is therefore a symbolic act of erasure of the inceptual thinking in Zhang Zhung, which was not Madhyamaka but the “godding” of the nature gods that determined all the goods and ills of Tibetan *Dasein*.

The dichotomy between empowered femininity and Tibetan Buddhism is well-known; what is worshipped by Tibetan Buddhists is in fact an iconographical femininity.⁵⁵⁴ Femininity as earth is a goddess’ “godding” in the ground of being as *physis*, which is primordial to the divine existence of Gaia in Greece, Hertha in Germany and *srin mo* in Tibet. The dichotomy between “deep ecology” and Tibetan Buddhism is much less looked at, given the contemporary reinvention of the religion as an “eco-friendly” tradition. In the neo-pagan understanding of

⁵⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 74, pages 351-352.

⁵⁵¹ Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), page 168. Tsuglakhang, the central temple of Tibet in Lhasa, is supposed to go right through the Tibetan “Gaia”’s heart. See also Martin A. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism*, page 17.

⁵⁵² Robert J. Miller, “The Supine Demoness (Srin mo) and the Consolidation of the Tibetan Empire”, *Tibet Journal*, Volume 23, Number 3, page 9.

⁵⁵³ Namgyal Nyima Dagkar, “The Early Spread of Bon”, *Tibet Journal*, Volume 13, Number 4, pages 6-7.

⁵⁵⁴ See John Wu, “The Dance of the Self-Beheading Woman: Death and Mutilation in the Tibetan Hermeneutics of the Feminine”, in Christopher Hartney and Andrew McGarrity (ed.), *The Dark Side: Proceedings of the Seventh Australian and International Religion, Literature and Arts Conference 2002* (Sydney: RLA Press, 2004), pages 161-177.

nature, however, the primordial depth of nature is a question of “godding” and is thus far more involving of *Dasein* than the taking care of the environment and the non-killing of animals. The essential definition of paganism is the identification of *physis* with *daimonion*. This is also Heidegger’s understanding of the harmonious bringing together of the fourfold of gods and mortals, sky and earth. Through his interpretation of Hölderlin’s river poems, Heidegger introduces into the Western philosophic imagination the *Ereignis* of the locality and the journeying of the gods within nature. In its deepest attunement to the abyss of being, hermeneutics turns out to be the topology of “godding”, so that a new *mythos* befitting *Dasein*’s understanding of being may one day *arise*, but never *forced* (Heidegger’s injunction against making of idols). But given that the “will” of *Ereignis* is beyond *Dasein*’s decision, the being-historical determination of the abandonment of being is already showing “strange” signs of “godding” in a new *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* as “technonature”, i.e. cyborgs.⁵⁵⁵ This is a further development of Jünger’s notion of the “worker” in the age of being *gestellt* in the *Gestalt* (form) of *Gestell*. In future, will a Dzogchen practitioner who is a cyborg be able to dissolve her machine parts into light during the “great crossing” of *thod rgal*? They will most probably be left behind like hair and nails, as the “impurities” of her body. But can a cyborg truly attain primordial understanding at all (*überhaupt*)? Will the inclusion of *techne* into the physical dimension of *Dasein* compromise its primordial opening toward mindful awareness of being? The fundamental tension between being (*Seyn*) and *techne* possibly cannot be resolved in primordial phenomenon of any kind, because ever since modernity, *techne*, as *Technik*, only has the temporal meaning of futurity. This is the moment of fissure in Heidegger’s being-historical notion of *Ereignis*, as being, as *Seyn*, withdraws from human understanding once again. The “occultation of *poiesis*”⁵⁵⁶ that *techne* presents in today’s temporality of the gigantic cleaves to *Dasein*’s understanding of being in an urgency that is hidden from the surface of everyday understanding. It is the concealment by way of such occultation that presents the greatest danger to *Dasein*; humanity stands, in its primordial relation to being as *Dasein*, before an abyss. As Heidegger writes, “The actual threat has already affected man in his essence.”⁵⁵⁷ How the truth of being can continue to hold sway in the essence of *Dasein* that is being transformed fundamentally, and therefore horizontally in the hermeneutic sense, is now the pressing

⁵⁵⁵ Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”, in Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pages 149-181.

⁵⁵⁶ Richard Rojcewicz, *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), page 153; Rojcewicz’s discussion on the occultation of technology is based on Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), page 28.

⁵⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, page 28.

question for mindful philosophy. Heidegger's reading of Trakl concerning the decomposing or "dis-essencing" (*ver-wesend*) *Geschlecht* of modern *Dasein*⁵⁵⁸ then puts into question the "saving power" of the destining *poiesis*,⁵⁵⁹ even of the Hölderlinian, pagan kind, when it is the abyss itself that stands as the midpoint of *Dasein*'s ecstatic temporality, calling for a turning that shudders. In his influential essay "The Question Concerning Technology", Heidegger proposes looking into the violent eye of *Gestell* in order to appropriate the "saving power" of this greatest danger. This wrestling of power from the gigantism of *Gestell* must occur even if what *technopoiesis* brings forth is "demonic" in the conventional sense, if the meaning of *Dasein* is not to degenerate into the "standing reserve" of the "they". Thinking of Otto, we are reminded of the primordial moment in the religious history of humanity when violence in nature was the condition for an awareness of the *daimonic*, which in turn grounded, as *daimonion* always is *aletheia*, an understanding of the sacred in ancient paganism.⁵⁶⁰ But in the advent of *Gestell*, the *daimonic* violence is of a different kind, because it disperses rather than gathers (*legen*), thus forming an anti-*logos* that determines *Dasein*'s understanding of and comportment to being in an *otherness* that as yet escapes being-historical explication. The post-Heideggerian task thus has a definite orientation toward *Dasein*'s possibilities of being. Thinking again of the essential meaning of *Geschlecht*, *Dasein* faces the possibilities of an ontological deformation, if not miscarriage, if this being-historical task in the aftermath of Heidegger is not carried out. *Techné* has to be thought and attuned to as the opening of new understanding and experience of *daimonion* – but this is "dark" and is as furthest away from the "metaphysics of light" as possible in the *Ereignis* of the future *Geschlecht*. What is to be reawakened in the being-historical understanding of *Dasein* is the primordial unity of *logos* and *mythos* that was in the beginning of Western philosophy prior to Plato's metaphysical appropriation. In *Parmenides*, Heidegger points to *mythos* as the primordial pathway of the gods, which now waits mindful *Dasein*'s rediscovery, guardianship and devotion.

⁵⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, "Language in the Poem", in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, pages 170 and 191.

⁵⁵⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pages 28-29. This phrase is derived from Hölderlin's poem, "Patmos": "But where danger is, grows/The saving power also." Cited by Heidegger in *ibid.*, page 28. In the tradition of onto-theology, the Greek island of Patmos was the birthplace of the apocalyptic temporality, for it was there that a writer traditionally believed to be John the Apostle had, as he writes in his "Book of Revelation", the vision of the end of all times. Also known as "Apocalypse", this is the most *daimonic* text of Christianity that determines all the meanings of the Christian way of being. Is Heidegger implying the apocalypse that *Gestell* presents to *Dasein*?

⁵⁶⁰ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, pages 15-16; 27.

Yet the modern meaning of being is the rift (*Riß*) between *logos* and *mythos*.⁵⁶¹ But their gathering together can still take place in *poiesis*, as poetry continues to be written and recited in our cultural life. Poetry remains the “blueprint” (*Grundriß*) of the truth of being in the age of nihilism, which allows the bringing forth of *Dasein*’s projection (*Entwurf*) into its shared outline (*Umriß*) with the setting-into-work of truth.⁵⁶² Even more importantly, poetry is the form of saying that Parmenides skilfully used to unconceal the primordial gathering together of *aletheia* and “goddling”. In the *poiesis* of poetry, therefore, *Dasein* can become whole again, in the primordial manner of the *theurgic* gathering of the fourfold. The fullness of futurity in the *Geschlecht* of *Dasein* is in the return of *Dasein*’s determination in *aletheia* as its essential meaning. In face of the modern crisis of the separation of *techne* from *poiesis*,⁵⁶³ which opens up an abyss in the withdrawal of primordial being (*Seyn*) from *Dasein*’s grasp, Heidegger’s invocation of Hölderlin’s “Patmos” in “The Question Concerning Technology” is most timely. What we can take heart in is fact the opening line of this very poem, which says

Nah ist

Und schwer zu fassen, der Gott.

Near is

And difficult to grasp, the God.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶¹ Heidegger understands rift as the strife between measure and unmeasure; yet it also shows the fundamental unity of the two, as in the concept of *Grundriß* (fundamental design or blueprint). See Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art”, in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, page 38 and 43 respectively. Strife, however, only serves to heighten *Dasein*’s being-historical understanding of the gathering power of *Ereignis*.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, page 38 and 47 respectively. See *ibid.*, page 47: “The poetizing projection of truth, which sets itself into the work as figure [*Gestalt*], is never carried out in the direction of emptiness and indeterminacy. In the work, rather, truth is cast toward the coming preservers, that is to say, a historical humanity. What is cast forth, however, is never an arbitrary demand. The truly poetizing projection is the opening up of that in which human existence [*Dasein*], as historical, is already thrown [*geworfen*]. This is the earth (and, for a historical people, its earth), the self-closing ground on which it rests, along with everything which – though hidden from itself – it already is. It is, however, its world which prevails from out of the relationship of existence to the unconcealment of being. For this reason, everything with which man is endowed must, in the projection, be fetched forth from out of the closed ground and explicitly set upon this ground. In this way, the ground is first grounded as a ground that bears.” The authentic figure of humanity is therefore *Dasein* as it exists through the primordial determination of *aletheia* as its measure and which has its source in the fourfold that gathers together mortals, gods, sky and earth and bring them into the view of grounding attunement through the creative power of *poiesis*.

⁵⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pages 12-14; page 34.

⁵⁶⁴ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Patmos”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger, pages 462-463.

The “goddling” now accompanies our mindful awareness of *techne* as another possibility of *daimonion*. We think of the likeness of the dark gods of traditional Goetia perhaps; or perhaps the demon-like gods of Tibetans who symbolise the “dark” aspects of enlightenment, i.e. the darkness that provides primordial measure for the complete lightening of understanding, not unlike the relation of Dike and the Erinyes to Helios in the Heraclitean vision of *logos*.⁵⁶⁵ Even in the darkest moment of being-historical turning in *Ereignis*, the “goddling” is near. Ontological dangers are but the “summits of time” (*Gipfel der Zeit*),⁵⁶⁶ which await the courageous access of the lofty-minded. As the meaning of being in *Dasein* becomes revealed through *Gestell* as the perennial desire for immortality, it is inevitable that there will be striving for the integration of *techne* into not only the *Körperding* of *Dasein* but ultimately its “mind”. This is “black magic” in the esoteric sense – the attainment of power over the destining of being as mortality –, as *techne* rides on the rising tide of a “Luciferian” awakening. This is fearful only according to the traditional prejudices of onto-theology, but not the attuned awareness of the revived pagan thinking that Heidegger helped to bring forth; to the latter it is abyssal and calls for a heroic leaping forth.⁵⁶⁷ In the futural ones to come, the uncanny challenge of the new *Geschlecht* of cyborg is of relevance to neo-paganism, as its Goetic understanding does not hesitate to look at the question of power of “technonature” in the face, as can already be seen in the occult paradigm of “pandemonacon” in the chaos magic movement.⁵⁶⁸ Heidegger’s turning in the 1950s from the pagan romanticism of Hölderlin to the foreboding *Geist* of Trakl is an indication of his understanding of the crisis of the ontological conditions of *Dasein*. No answer is found in Heidegger’s *Nachlaß*; we are not given the gift of another secret work like *Contributions to Philosophy*. We are faced instead with what Heidegger calls the “apartness” of death, since this is where he now belongs. Yet “apartness” (*Abgeschiedenheit*) is for Heidegger a

⁵⁶⁵ See Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heracitus Seminar*, page 40.

⁵⁶⁶ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Patmos”, in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, pages 462-463. This was Hölderlin’s last poem before his permanent mental breakdown.

⁵⁶⁷ As described by Jacques Derrida in his influential essay, “*Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hand*”, Heidegger’s discussion of *Geschlecht* on the gathering site of Trakl’s poetry has no framework of reference in either Platonism or Christianity. Jacques Derrida, “*Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hand*”, translated by John P. Leavey, reproduced in Stephen Mulhall (ed.), *Heidegger* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), page 463.

⁵⁶⁸ See Peter J. Carroll, *Liber Kaos* (Boston; York Beach: Weiser Books, 1992), pages 76-77. Carroll writes on page 76: “The gods are dead. Long live the gods.” Chaos magicians conduct rituals *as if* the gods are real (ibid., page 76). This means that “goddling” becomes a mere reflection of *Dasein*’s existence, if not its expansion in the universe. Yet chaos magic is not like the aesthetic paganism of 19th century German literature, in that in pandemonacon, “The magician is not one striving for any particular limited identity goal, rather one who wants the meta-identity of being able to be anything” (ibid., page 77). The distinct pagan piety of Hölderlin, unique in being-historical terms, is absent. Chaos magic also has the danger of turning gods into what Heidegger calls an “expedient of man” (Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 279, page 357).

“pure” *Geist* that has the power of carrying *Dasein* back into its primordial being, which houses the “kindred twofoldness” of humanity: its *Geschlecht*.⁵⁶⁹ From Trakl Heidegger learns the resoluteness of “going under” into the abyss of the primordial. In it is the future of what Heidegger describes in *Contributions to Philosophy* as the “ones to come”, which holds together both their birth and death. In Trakl’s poetry of apartness, Heidegger finds the gathering together of childhood and grave⁵⁷⁰ that unifies the ecstatic temporality of *Dasein*. The cleaving of life and death defines the essential moment of *Dasein*’s attunement to *Ereignis*. In the cleaving itself is the impossibility of an unified substance as the ground of *Dasein*: *Geschlecht* is anti-metaphysical. The cleaving awaits the leap of *Dasein* into being as *Ereignis* so that it can open up as that which the gods need, and to which *Dasein* belongs.⁵⁷¹ This belonging is however determined by *Dasein*’s resolute attunement to the uncanny of *daimonion*. It completes the Goetic theurgy of *congressus cum daemonae* as the essential way of being which is nevertheless problematised, permanently, by the question of being *qua techné*. The gods, if they return, will be returning to a world that is not earth, but a chaotic, gigantic assemblage (but not *Versammlung*) of networks, both human and technological, where *techné* is the most general determination of being. They may not have any authentic temples, that are still capable of housing the sacred, to return for their divine dwelling.⁵⁷² The metaphysical principle is now the *Zuhandensein* of our own creation, one which bears no relation to the work of the hands (*Handwerk*) and surpasses our capabilities in many areas: it is *techné* as violence (*Gewalt*), which demolishes *Dasein*’s attunement to primordial measure and replaces it with its dominion.⁵⁷³ Unlike the gods, *techné* as

⁵⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, “Language in the Poem”, in Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, page 185.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, page 188.

⁵⁷¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, § 156, page 196; § 157, pages 196-197.

⁵⁷² For a phenomenological account of the challenge for design in architecture when earth conceals itself before the world in the clearing of being, see Glen Hill, “The Architecture of Circularity: Design, Heidegger and the Earth”, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1997, pages 287-294. See also Christian Norberg-Schulz, “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture”, *Perspecta*, Volume 20 (1983), pages 61-68, on the possibility of thinking, as remembrance of being, opening up the possibilities of dwelling in building as the “worlding” of the “between” that *Dasein* essentially is. For a hermeneutic account thereof, see Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), pages 27-55. See also *ibid.*, page 129, on hermeneutics being embedded in communities, thus asserting the primacy of *Mitdasein* before the advancement of *techné* in architecture and design. The crucial question that remains to be asked in hermeneutic architectural thought is that of “goddling”. The analysis of the threshold as the gathering of the “alien” and the “habitual” in the paper by Norberg-Schulz (page 66), when compared with Austin Osman Spare’s *Dasein* as dwelling on the threshold (see Kenneth Grant, *The Magical Revival*, pages 182 and 193) between this and the other world, can offer a clearing of being in which the possibilities of *daimonic* building and dwelling await to be projected open.

⁵⁷³ See Marcus Paul Bullock, *The Violent Eye: Ernst Jünger’s Visions and Revisions on the European Right* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), page 139. See also Martin Heidegger, “On the Question of Being”, in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*,

technology, in its being, is indifferent to concerned dealings with us. Heidegger calls such holding sway of *techne* (the *Gestell* of technology over being) “the destiny of metaphysics and its completion.”⁵⁷⁴ The essential measure of *pragma* is covered over, and existential forgetting befalls *Dasein*.⁵⁷⁵ For *techne* to become the essence of *Dasein* as the human hands do, it has to be a different kind of *Dasein* that goes beyond the *physis* of its *Körperding*, or the body in its natural state. The abyss of the overall being-historical determination of being, by way of which *Dasein* is cast in one *Geschlecht* or the other, is the recurrent uncanny of the *aletheia* of being that even to Heidegger is disclosed only as the problematic temporality of the present, but with no further signs and showing. Being is *sigetic* saying.⁵⁷⁶ The future speaks, but the “now” is silent. In its radical finitude, the ultimate question that *Dasein* can ask of being is whether there is an end to *Dasein* on earth. Sybilline and apocalyptic, this is the turning at the midpoint of the gathering together of being and nothingness that is the most primordial of all temporalities. The dangers are nearby, but so perhaps are the gods. And so perhaps are the *demons* as *daimons*.⁵⁷⁷

page 305, regarding the German philosopher’s discussion of Jünger’s analysis of pain being the determinant factor in modern man’s figure (*Gestalt*), which in fact is underpinned by the turning violent of *techne* in the struggle between world and earth.

⁵⁷⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, § 63, page 151.

⁵⁷⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, § 5, pages 81-83.

⁵⁷⁶ Reticence in silence is how being holds sway. See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, §§ 37-38, pages 54-56. The primordial meaning of sigetic projecting-open is *Dasein*’s being-historical attunement to the gods, with *Dasein* itself as the *Dagründer* for the future godly ones.

⁵⁷⁷ In King Solomon’s Goetia, *daimonion* was only related to as an expedient to the building of the First Temple. It was the beginning of the onto-theological appropriation of *daimons* as demons, in order to glorify Solomon’s *hubris* in his institutionalisation of monotheism as the only possible, and permissible, “godding”. In Solomon’s hands, *daimonion* was reduced to *techne*. And in the inherited monotheistic “godding” in Christianity, we witness the full-scale concealment of the native, pagan spirituality of Europe, a devastation that has its origin in the Solomonic violence toward Goetia. For a study of Solomon’s interactions with the demons, see Sarah L. Schwartz, “Building a Book of Spells: The So-called *Testament of Solomon* Reconsidered”, PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005.

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