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# Heidegger's Contributions to Education

Carolyn Thomas

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**HEIDEGGER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION**

**BY**

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**December, 2015**

## **DEDICATION**

To Ted and Sissy, who put family and education first to give us learning lives.

And to Marthalene Jenkins, who raised me tall.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally, I thank all with whom I've learned along the way, especially those with whom I learned dearly—Laura first, Zayd lately, and the many in between.

# HEIDEGGER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of Martin Heidegger's thinking on education, a neglected thematic in the extensive philosophical literature of Heidegger scholarship. Discussion of Heidegger and education inevitably evokes the fault of Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism at Freiberg University. However, the core of this dissertation project is to show that Heidegger *contributes* favorably to our philosophical thinking on education. Further, this study aims to suggest that to consider the matter of 'Heidegger and education' only in the dark light of the act and political implications of Heidegger's becoming the first Nazi rector of Freiburg University is to miss Heidegger's central educational concern: that of *teaching and learning the thinking and gathering of being itself*.

My central argument to this end is that in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger speaks a radical vision of education as preparation for overcoming the crises and plights of modernism, including those of late-modern education. More specifically, as Heidegger envisions it, this education would prepare future human beings 1) for returning to the

original domains of questioning, to philosophy and philosophizing at its root; 2) for thinking in those original domains apart from, and even other than, the thinking of modern erudition, including philosophy; 3) for an ontological overcoming of the ontotheological essence and ground of the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics; 4) for thinking another beginning for philosophy, philosophizing, and the worlds of intelligibility and structures such a beginning would unfold.

I situate the main of my discussion in Heidegger's tumultuous and transitional middle period, 1929-1938, specifically in both 1930/1940 studies of Plato's Cave Allegory 1936-38 and Heidegger's second masterwork *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. By 1929, and in terms of plight (*Not*) and nihilism, Heidegger is beginning to thematize his thinking on the university and need for philosophical education to answer late-modern plight.. I understand *Contributions to Philosophy* to present the first thoroughgoing expression of Heidegger's mature philosophy of education as that which prepares human being for the *thinking and gathering* of being itself, which Heidegger calls *Ereignis*.

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## NOTES ON TRANSLATION AND CITATION

### ***Translation:***

Translations of Heidegger's works are reproduced in the form employed by the source of the quotation, unless otherwise stated. Greek words are transliterated and standardized for the sake of consistency. German terms are reproduced according to the form employed by the source quoted.

### ***Citation:***

In-text citation of Heidegger's works will appear by means of abbreviation and page number referring first to the English translation, followed by /, and second to the German *Gesamtausgabe*.

As example, (CP 32/GA65: 38) refers to *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012. p. 32 and *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. F. W. von Herrmann, ed. Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1989, p. 38.

For a list of abbreviations used for works by Heidegger, see page 132.

The readiness for questioning consists in a certain *maturity* of *existence*...it is also not a matter of finishing as soon as possible, but instead of holding out for years in uncertainty for the critical confrontation with matters under investigation, of being free to reject every hasty answer.

—Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*

## INTRODUCTION

As the title of my dissertation study forecasts, and forecasts not sarcastically but sincerely, I aim to consider Heidegger's favorable contributions to our thinking on education. I do think there is good in the juncture of Heidegger's thinking and education—even as any discussion of Heidegger, especially Heidegger and education, inevitably evokes the fault of Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism, his becoming the first Nazi Rector of Freiburg University in 1933, his anti-Semitism, and his unforgettable silences and sayings afterwards.

How to make sense of Heidegger's fault, what sense to make, are how to respond to that sense—and, then, how to read and respond to Heidegger's philosophical work, his philosophy, and his legacy—are each additional multi-dimensional problems within the larger problem of Heidegger's Nazism. The problems of Heidegger's Nazism are especially relevant and difficult in a discussion of Heidegger's *contributions* to our thinking on education, because the problems' epicenter was in a university and its community, the core of educational provision and activity itself, and because Heidegger's violations of educational integrity were multiple.

These problems have drawn prodigious (some might say exhaustive) energy and attention (scholarly and not) in the thirty years since the publication of Victor Farías's *Heidegger and Nazism* in 1987 and its declared 'exposé' of Heidegger's Nazism provoked an all-hands-on-deck confrontation of Heidegger's political involvements.<sup>1</sup> While this all-hands confrontation has yielded deep and wide-ranging benefits for our reckoning with Heidegger the man, Heidegger as thinker, Heidegger as a legacy of

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<sup>1</sup> See Jesús Adrián Escudero's fine account of initial and later confrontations with Heidegger's political

thought-ways and works, and other important thought-problems, the confrontation has brought forth troubling features of human being and activity beyond those of Heidegger and his political involvements themselves. The exposé hype and shoddy scholarship of Farias's book introduced a sensationalist element to our confrontation and more receptive encounters with Heidegger that hasn't gone away, as the initial overdramatized response to the publication of Heidegger's so-called *Black Notebooks* affirmed. The sensationalist element has quieted and retreated for long stretches—the “L’Affaire Heidegger” giving way to the “Heidegger Case” (to indicate more sober, if not impartial, scholarly adjudication of Heidegger's political involvements) to the more superficially benign “Heidegger Controversy”—yet that element persists. And it persists in a way that leaves the Heidegger waters, already legitimately tainted by the problem of Heidegger's Nazism, further tainted if not toxic.

Given the intense notoriety of the “problem” of Heidegger and education, many Heidegger scholars—defenders and critics alike—would likely think my project to consider Heidegger's contributions to education to be a fool's errand, if not irresponsible in many senses. One such irresponsibility would surely be my failure to disqualify any Heidegger contributions not only for the reason Heidegger critic Richard Wolin speaks, that “in the 1930s, Heidegger himself placed the decision about the truth of Being as he sought it in a political context,” but also, and perhaps even more so, for the reason that Heidegger placed the decision about the truth of Being as he sought it in a political and *educational* context. He appropriated the matters and activities of education

for the “priority of the political,” which in the Nazi university also named the Nazi education policy that made political indoctrination compulsory in the classroom.<sup>2</sup>

But it will be my project here to show that Heidegger’s National Socialism, Nazi involvements, anti-Semitism, and educational ‘sin’ notwithstanding, his thinking on education is a favorable contribution indeed. These contributions include Heidegger’s insight into the essence of education, his seeking what is most proper to education, his phenomenology of the activities of education (such as thinking, learning, teaching), his depiction of what is essential to the proper situation and place of education, and his prescient identification of educational plights that are today even more confirmed. Heidegger’s penetration and conveyance of educational matters that are rarely deeply grasped or said is further favorable contribution indeed.

Additionally, I aim to suggest that considering the matter of ‘Heidegger and education’ only in the dark light of the act and implications of Heidegger’s becoming the first Nazi Rector of Freiburg University is to miss Heidegger’s central concern: that of *teaching and learning* the *thinking and gathering* of being. The conjoining of *teaching and learning* and *thinking and gathering* in my formulation of Heidegger’s central concern is intentional. Characteristic of Heidegger’s mature philosophy of education—or perhaps more properly, his mature *philosophical educating* (which includes self-educating)—is that teaching and learning and thinking and being draw so near to one another in belonging together that each is facet of the other and also the same. Teaching is learning is thinking is gathering of being. Gathering is thinking is learning is teaching of being. Remarkably few have considered favorably, constructively, that philosophy and pedagogy in Heidegger’s work “belong together” and are the “same,” as Heidegger’s

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<sup>2</sup> See Julian Young, “Poets and Rivers: Heidegger on Hölderlin’s ‘Der Ister,’” 408-9.

thinks identity (ID 23ff/GA11: 27ff). Few have shown that for Heidegger, philosophy in its most essential human happening, which Heidegger calls *Ereignis*, is pedagogical.

I situate the main of my discussion in Heidegger's tumultuous and transitional middle period, 1929-1938, and in Heidegger's 1936-38 second masterwork *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)* (GA65). By 1929, and in terms of plight (*Not*) and nihilism, Heidegger is beginning to thematize his thinking on the university and on the place of philosophy in the university. I understand *Contributions to Philosophy* to present the first thoroughgoing expression of Heidegger's mature philosophy of education as that which prepares human being for *Ereignis*. That said, I see Heidegger's 1951-2 lecture course *What is Called Thinking?* and 1953-4 imaginary conversation "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer" to hold the most mature expressions of Heidegger's philosophical educating—the latter especially because of its depiction and discussion (both implicit and explicit) of the educative roles of language, art, and *Gelassenheit* in teaching, learning, thinking, and gathering of the meaningful presence of being. I also include in my discussion Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's Cave Allegory, which appears with some variation in three works from Heidegger's middle period: *The Essence of Truth* (1930-1), *Being and Truth* (1933-34), and "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (1930/1940).<sup>3</sup> Heidegger's interpretations of Plato's Cave Allegory are among his more explicit writings on education and indicate his convictions on *paideia* as the essence of

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<sup>3</sup> Though "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," written in 1940, delivered as a lecture in 1941, and published in 1942, is later than the purported 'end' of Heidegger's 1929-38 middle period, I include it in my study because its origins are in the 1930 lecture course *The Essence of Truth* and its concerns are arguable more 'middle' than 'later.'

education and the dynamic role of the negation of that essence as *apaideia*, or our educational plight.

As I have forecasted, the core of my dissertation project is to show that Heidegger *contributes* favorably to our philosophical thinking on education, and contributes beyond the negative example of what-not-to-do in Heidegger's Nazi involvements at Freiberg University. My central argument to this end is that in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger speaks a radical vision of education as preparation for overcoming the crises and plights of modernism, including those of late-modern education. More specifically, as Heidegger envisions it, this education would prepare future human beings for 1) returning to the original domains of questioning, to philosophy and philosophizing at its root; 2) thinking in those original domains apart from, and even other than, the thinking of modern erudition, including philosophy; 3) an ontological overcoming of the ontotheological essence and ground of the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics; 4) thinking another beginning for philosophy, philosophizing, and the worlds of intelligibility and structures such a beginning would unfold.

I argue that *Contributions to Philosophy* contributes to our philosophical thinking on education in several primary ways. 1) *Contributions* locates the ontological root of educational plight in the metaphysical standpoint that late-modern human beings take on entities and their being. 2) *Contributions* lays forth an educative way for realizing an alternative standpoint. 3) *Contributions* discloses Heidegger's idea and image of *Ereignis*, which indicates the essence of learning as a disclosing realizing of meaningful presence, akin to a flash of insight drawing together mind and what-is, neither

subjectively nor objectively. 4) *Contributions* points human being toward a way of thinking that is itself human being in its essence.

My method is a combination of historical study and hermeneutical philosophy, especially interpretive encounter with Heidegger's texts, his "thought-ways" (*Denkwegen*) as he called them, and their thinking. The spirit of my approaching Heidegger is one indicated by Jacques Derrida, expressed in a different way by Heidegger himself, and, in one sense at least, scorned recently by Peter Trawny, editor of Heidegger's *Schwarze Hefte* (*Black Notebooks*). First, though I am convinced of the merit of encountering first-hand, without secondary or biographical mediation, the phenomena of "thought-ways" and other works expressive of intelligibility, imagination, skill, in the case of Heidegger and study of Heidegger and education, to bracket out the bright darkness of Heidegger's Nazi involvements at Freiburg is to call forth censure that would eclipse whatever of Heidegger's favorable contributions I may disclose. But this isn't a study meant to explain or even to reckon with the facts of Heidegger's Nazi involvements. Instead, I will follow Derrida, who in responding to the matter of relating "these 'facts' to Heidegger's 'text,' to his 'thinking,'" called for those "who condemn unequivocally both Heidegger's Nazism and his silence after the war, but who are also seeking to *think* beyond the conventional and comfortable schemas, and precisely to *understand*."<sup>4</sup> The conventional and comfortable schema since the publication of Farías's 1987 "exposé" has been to avoid engaging Heidegger's texts, his thinking—especially on education—in any way other than in the bright darkness of Heidegger's Nazi involvements.

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<sup>4</sup> See Jacques Derrida, "Heidegger, the Philosopher's Hell," 181-2.

My method also is to follow Heidegger's characterization of encountering a thinker's thought, rather than countering it, and to do so, as Derrida guides, in order to understand Heidegger at his encounter of the matters he thinks. In 1951, having already experienced the influence of his Nazi problem on the viability of his philosophical work and legacy—or, perhaps, delivering a variation on what had been from the beginning of his lifework a principle in his own hermeneutic practice and his teaching of it—Heidegger says,

One thing is necessary, though, for a face-to-face converse with the thinkers: clarity about the manner in which we encounter them. Basically there are only two possibilities: either to go to their encounter, or to go counter to them. If we want to go to the encounter of a thinker's thought, we must magnify still further what is great in him. Then we will enter into what is unthought in his thought. If we wish only to go counter to a thinker's thought, this wish must have minimized beforehand what is great in him. We then shift his thought into the commonplaces of our know-it-all presumption. (WCT 77/ GA8: 83)

Some would take Heidegger here to proclaim his own greatness, to speak a disturbing disavowal or trivializing of the relevance of his Nazism, and even to impose a philosophical shaming of anyone who would to “minimize beforehand what is great in him” either by reading his greatness—his thought—only by the commonplaces of presumptions about ‘his’ National Socialism and/or by insisting that Heidegger own and atone for his Nazi involvements beyond the avowals and intimations of error that exist.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These include Heidegger's *Das Spiegel* interview (DS 313-333/GA16: 652-683), “Letter to the Rector of Freiberg University, November 4, 1945” (see Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*,

Some too, such as Peter Trawny, would take Heidegger's 1951 saying from *What is Called Thinking?* as one example among many of Heidegger prescribing the reading of Heidegger and therein attempting control of the reception of Heidegger, man, works, and legacy. These "some" may be right.

In Trawny's recent discussion of the problem of 'how to read Heidegger,' specifically how to read the Heidegger after the *Black Notebooks*, Trawny characterizes "Heideggerian" readers as scholastic-lovers blindly obedient, assuming that "Heidegger's self-interpretation must be the beginning of every engagement" with him, following "the 'master's' 'instructions'" in interpreting him, and so incapable of freedom of thought that "they are not philosophers and never can be."<sup>6</sup> In other words, these "Heideggerian" readers are so near to Heidegger's encounter that they are inevitably collusive (in Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism is the subtext). Instead of the Heideggerian reading, Trawny calls for philosophical reading of Heidegger, which "the freedom of thought which inscribes itself in every philosophy. The freedom of philosophy counts for more than obedience to a beloved thinker."<sup>7</sup> I see a curious paradox in Trawny's philosophical reading: were Trawny to look to the master's instructions in Heidegger's 1951 saying from *What is Called Thinking?* quoted above, he would see Heidegger calling readers of great thinkers to go to the encounter of a thinker's thought, magnify what is great in him, and then enter into what is unthought in his thought. That unthought is what Trawny calls "the freedom of thought which inscribes itself in every philosophy"; the unthought is thinking to be thought free beyond the limit (or self-interpretation) (or

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61-66), "Documents from the Denazification Proceedings Concerning Martin Heidegger" (see Brainerd, "Heidegger and the Political," 581-611).

<sup>6</sup> See Peter Trawny, "Heidegger, World-Judaism and Modernity," 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter Trawny, "Heidegger, World-Judaism and Modernity," 6.

instructions) of a thinker's self-understood thought. And as Heidegger tells us, it can happen only if a thinking reader draws so near to a thinker as to encounter him in his greatness and then leap through the doorway in that thinking to think that thinker's unthoughts. That, as Heidegger depicts it for us, is both to encounter both a great thinker on his own terms, by his own encounter with what-is in his thinking, *and* is to look for the doorway to think freely by merit of that encounter beyond that thinker encountered and his thought.

I am still learning to encounter Heidegger in his encounter, specifically in his encounter with education—thinking, learning, teaching. In this study, it will be my method here to follow Derrida's guideline and the choice Heidegger speaks to go to the thinker's encounter (in this case the thinker I encounter is Heidegger). I do so by following Heidegger's indications for how to read him (for they invite and call for compliance, as exemplified above, but do not demand subservience as Trawny regards them) and may magnify his greatness along the way, though I am too much a beginner still to see, much more go through, Heidegger's unthought thought and its doorway.

## PHILOSOPHICAL NEGLECT OF HEIDEGGER'S THINKING ON EDUCATION

### 1.1 Philosophical Neglect—The Problem

If we look to the literature of Heidegger scholarship for indication of which concerns in Heidegger's *philosophical* works are important, then we're likely to conclude that education (as learning, thinking, teaching, essential preparation for meaningful human being, as pedagogical program, as movements of transformative passage—all of which are significant aspects of education for Heidegger) is not one of them. Much has been written about Heidegger and education in relation to Heidegger's political actions and convictions in becoming the first Nazi Rector of Freiburg University but remarkably little written about education as a significant philosophical concern or theme in Heidegger's philosophical work.

Within the extensive philosophical literature on Heidegger's Rectorship, what some might count as philosophical consideration of the theme of 'Heidegger and education' is instead consideration of Heidegger's university administration, especially the extent of its ethical failings or its leader's personal philosophical, such as Heidegger's support of the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* (the synchronized control of universities that dissolved universities' educative autonomy and freedom). Or, what some might count as philosophical consideration of 'Heidegger and education' is the question of whether Heidegger's political involvements in educational administration indicate a 'fatal flaw' or contamination of all of Heidegger's thought. There's been little discussion even of the

*educational* failings Heidegger's Rectorship as appropriating specific matters of education (learning, teaching, program, transformative passage, life preparation) for ideology, compromising education with politics. And there's been almost no philosophical consideration of what I take to be the bona fide matter of the theme "Heidegger and education": Heidegger's philosophy of education, specifically his thinking on what is proper to education, to its purposes, and to its pedagogy.<sup>8</sup>

Along with a small body of work by educational theorists and social scientists on Heidegger's thinking on education, work which I survey below, there are two important exceptions to scholarly neglect of Heidegger's philosophy of education, which I introduce here and discuss at greater length below. First is Iain Thomson's *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (2005), which situates Heidegger's willingness to become Nazi Rector of Freiburg in Heidegger's philosophical critique of Western metaphysics as ontotheology, in that ontotheology's erasure of the ontological grounds of the university's sciences and their essences, and Heidegger's ontological project to re-essentialize the sciences and, therein, unify them by their common ontological ground. The second exception to the omission of scholarship on Heidegger's philosophy of education is Michael Ehrmantraut's 2001 dissertation in Political Science, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy" (part of which was later published as *Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy* (2011)). Ehrmantraut's study realizes two important insights for the continuing study of Heidegger's thinking on education: 1) Heidegger's pedagogy is philosophic; and 2) for Heidegger, philosophizing may itself require of kind of pedagogy.

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<sup>8</sup> While there has been little philosophical consideration of Heidegger's thinking on what is proper to education, to its purposes, and to its pedagogy, there has been, as I'll further discuss below, more than a decade of ample work by Australasian educational theorists and social scientists.

## 1.2 Philosophical Neglect—Elucidations

The question of why there is remarkably little written about Heidegger's philosophy of education is, thus, on the one hand, obviously answered, yet on the other, that question is more complicated than it might seem. The obvious answer, of course, is the problem of Heidegger's Nazism, more specifically the epicenter of Heidegger's Nazism at Freiburg University and, then, in the world of education itself. Less obvious, perhaps, and more complicated have been specific repercussions of Heidegger's Nazism in the world of Heidegger scholarship and their impact on favorable consideration of Heidegger's thinking on education. These repercussions have brought, and continue to bring, valid benefits from the 'academy' to our understanding of many matters, including understanding of Heidegger's involvements and understanding that the light his particular case sheds on abiding questions about why a 'modern,' 'enlightened,' 'occidental' state could authorize and author a holocaust.

As beneficial inquiry unfolded, it raised larger, fundamental concerns extending beyond Heidegger's particular case. These include significant fundamental questions 1) about the bearing of a philosopher's lived life on his works, and his works on his lived life; 2) about philosophical errancy; 3) about the yoking of education and politics; 4) about what means and decides 'greatness' in a thinker; 5) about a maker's right to control organization and reception of works; 6) about identity and difference, how we understand, identify, and distinguish who we are.

Beneficial too has been gathering and publication of relevant primary materials, leading to widely shared consensus, even among Heidegger apologists, that Heidegger

was a willing National Socialist, Nazi, and anti-Semite. Beneficial too has been substantial, probing inquiry into the extent, understanding, and commitment of Heidegger's political involvements, including the widely shared consensus, even among Heidegger critics, that Heidegger's anti-Semitism was not the Nazi biological or racial oppressive kind, a judgment that is understandably significant in the context of the Shoah and is also a meaningful waymarker for those contending with, or agreeing with, Richard Wolin's influential 1991 claim, "now that we know the extent of Heidegger's partisanship for the Nazi cause in the early 1930s, we cannot help but read him differently."<sup>9</sup>

Along with the benefits, however, have been difficult, sometimes dismaying, and distracting repercussions in the academic and journalistic confrontation with the facts and interpretations of Heidegger's Nazi involvements and anti-Semitism, repercussions "on display" again as Thomas Sheehan noted, with sensationalized intensity upon the 2014 publication of three volumes of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* devoted to several of Heidegger's *Nachlaß Schwarze Hefte*, the so-called *Black Notebooks*.<sup>10</sup> What's dismaying isn't critical confrontation of Heidegger's writing and thought, including explicit remarks taken as anti-Semitic in the *Black Notebooks* volumes.<sup>11</sup> What's been dismaying throughout the academic and journalistic confrontation with the facts and interpretations of Heidegger's Nazi involvements and anti-Semitism—and no less so with

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*, vii.

<sup>10</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, "Review: Krzysztof Ziarek, *Language After Heidegger*."

<sup>11</sup> By way of (my) explanation: The *Notebooks* contain writings from 1930-1976, writings Heidegger elsewhere described as setting forth "the basic mental states of questioning and the paths to the most extreme horizons of all attempts at thinking" (M 376/GA66: 426).<sup>11</sup> But the main attention given to the published *Black Notebooks* volumes has been to the twelve pages (twelve of 1200+) of the *Notebooks* that contain anti-Semitic remarks. These remarks link "world-jewry" causally to the "end of philosophy," nihilism's withdrawal of being, and the capitalist, cosmopolitan plights of our late-modern world. Similar remarks, and notably more numerous, throughout the *Notebooks* causally link Americans, the British, Bolsheviks, and Catholics to the same ends and plights.

the publication of the *Black Notebooks*—has been salacious gossip and pandering for celebrity recognition (beginning with the exposé hype and shoddy ‘scholarship’ of Fariás’s provocative book). Troubling too has been the confrontation’s careerism, its self-manufactured scandalmongering, its internecine polemics, and perhaps most especially its intellectual vigilantism.

This intellectual vigilantism has been directed not only against Heidegger (arguably legitimately), but also against those pegged as defending or ‘apologizing’ for Heidegger, and those choosing not to read Heidegger “differently” and within the Nazi Heidegger schema, and those whose purported apologetic sin is intellectual liberality of the kind Jacques Derrida called for (and already quoted from in my introduction). A month after the publication of Fariás’s provocative *Heidegger and Nazism*, Derrida said publically, “it is important that the discussion remain open” and not to allow interest in scandal to replace “rigorous and more difficult work” by those who know the facts of Heidegger’s political involvements, “who condemn unequivocally both Heidegger’s Nazism and his silence after the war, but who are also seeking to *think* beyond the conventional and comfortable schemas, and precisely to *understand*.”<sup>12</sup>

Nearly thirty years later, Anthony J. Steinbock recalled the lambasting Derrida, Foucault, and others attracted for having ‘taken inspiration from that Nazi’ and recalled it in the context of the *Black Notebooks* fracas: “the overall point was that the Heidegger-waters were toxic, and if one draws philosophical sustenance from these waters in any way, then the reader, too, will be poisoned. It is best, then, to avoid any contact lest we also become contaminated, even against our better selves. It also seemed to be imperative now to have no truck with any thinkers who had also drunk from those waters, be this

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<sup>12</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Heidegger, the Philosopher’s Hell” 181-2.

thinker a Foucault, a Derrida, a Levinas, or a de Beauvoir.”<sup>13</sup> And if the Heidegger waters in general became toxic, we might extend the metaphor to say those waters were lethal for any one drawing philosophical sustenance from them by the way of Heidegger’s philosophy of education, given Heidegger’s. No wonder and obvious is the reason for philosophical neglect of Heidegger’s thinking on education, given the epicenter of Heidegger’s Nazism at Freiburg University and, then, in the world of education itself.

There are also less dramatic but nonetheless significant reasons for why remarkably little written has been about Heidegger’s philosophy of education. Less dramatic but nonetheless significant, are the general neglect of education as a serious philosophical concern, the often implicit nature of Heidegger’s philosophical work on education, and Heidegger’s unsystematic approach.

The neglect of Heidegger’s philosophy of education as a serious concern in Heidegger’s thought is also consequence of the general contemporary neglect, especially in the Anglo-American analytic tradition of the last eighty years, of education as a serious concern in philosophical study. Concern for, thought about, and discussion of education and pedagogy has mostly been relegated to journalism and its pundits, to social science research, and to (the remaining) education schools and departments of universities and their professors, professionals, and practitioners. In these hands, as Heidegger might style it, meditative thinking on education and pedagogy too often becomes the calculative thought of education theory and journalism.<sup>14</sup> Education becomes systematized business,

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<sup>13</sup> See Anthony J. Steinbock, “Heidegger, Machination, and the Jewish Question: The Problem of the Gift,” 50.

<sup>14</sup> For Heidegger’s well-known discussion of the need for meditative thinking alongside the calculative thinking of our late-modern age, see “Memorial Address” (DT 43-57/GA16: 517-529). Further, the calculative thought of educational theory is most concretely and perhaps most ridiculously exemplified in products like the *Journal of Educational Measurement* and its offerings, such as “An Odds Ratio Approach for Assessing Differential Distractor Functioning Effects under the Nominal Response

educational theory becomes positive science, and education as practice and theory increasingly fails to realize “an ontologically adequate answer to the question about what *kind of Being*” and beings it serves and must cultivate—educate—for the sake of the future of individual—beings and Being collective (BT75/SZ:50). It increasingly falls away from philosophical inquiry into and about the essence of education and the culture and learners it serves. Simply said, in their hands, education increasingly falls away from thinking.

The failure of those designated by the university structure to be scientists of education (and our ongoing ‘crisis in education’ confirms the failure of them and their science) is for the early Heidegger an ontological failure, Thomson’s significant study *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, shows. It is a failure to grasp what kind of Being and beings are served by educational science and its practice, education. The failure of educational science and practice passes the buck to a greater failure. The greater failure is the failure of philosophy and philosophers, whose specialized discipline and training should be for the sake of ontological questioning, so as to answer adequately the question about what kind of Being and beings is at issue for the science of education.

The removal of education from philosophy, the distancing of philosophy and philosophers from education as a matter for their serious concern, and education’s falling away from thinking, both in its theory and its practice, were already matters of serious

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Model” (2008). In the United States, the most pervasive product of education professionals and practitioners is the American public school *system*, where calculative thinking systematizes teaching and learning by reducing teaching to a set of rules and methods and reducing learning to a set of standards and skill grids. Paul Smeyers, writing on “The Context of Education Nowadays” in “The Origin: Education, Philosophy, and a Work of Art,” 91, says, “Modernity is instrumentalist. Under performativity, deliberation over ends is eclipsed and all kinds of business and activity are measured and ranked against each other with ever less concern for the rationale for doing so.”

concern in Heidegger's time. As Thomson argues in *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, they were matters of serious concern for Heidegger throughout his entire career of thought and were the intellectual impetus for his involvement in National Socialism. As Thomson characterizes Heidegger's educational concern throughout his entire career of thought, "Heidegger seeks to effect nothing less than a reontologizing revolution in our understanding of education."<sup>15</sup> It is terribly ironic, then, that philosophers, whom Heidegger would argue to be best equipped to offer insight into the essence or being of education—insight which might guide or serve practical education and its theory—neglect education as a serious concern in philosophical study. It is additionally ironic, but predictable, and arguably legitimate, within Heidegger's own story of the calamity wrought by the attempt to affect educational and political reality from a philosophical position, that study of Heidegger's work would neglect education as a serious concern in his thought and would, then, not hear and not learn from the call of its teaching.

Finally, the neglect of Heidegger's philosophy of education as a serious concern in Heidegger's thought is also likely a consequence of the subtlety of much of Heidegger's thought on education. Heidegger's thought on education is only occasionally explicit or direct, and instead implicit or seemingly peripheral in writings and teachings where other matters appear central. Few of his writings directly consider education or educational themes philosophically (the Rectoral Address (1933), "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (1940), *What is Called Thinking?* (1952) are exceptions and give evidence to literalists that education is at least a concern in Heidegger's thinking, if not a central concern). His systematics are mytho-poetically expressed, if they do in fact exist—and may do so only in the structure of 'fugal' movements of preparatory vision in

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<sup>15</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 158.

*Contributions to Philosophy*—or merge with his philosophizing. Heidegger’s disclosing of the practical details of his educational thought— for example, what is learning and how to learn, or what marks educational ‘progress’—are esoterically presented to protect what they call for from ordinary understandings of pedagogical methodology, and require that they be learned by the very way of learning they teach: an encounter in thinking what is in them questionworthy and in that thinking, an unfolding to bring near the manifold meaningful presence they hold.

More often, though, the pedagogical details of Heidegger’s educational thought are missed altogether, or if noted and merely noted, remain so much at a distance as to be ‘useless.’ Heidegger might tell us that our overlooking the importance of the matters of education to his philosophical work is yet another indication of our propensity to neglect, to fall away from, or to set far from us what is near (P 253/GA9: 163).

### **1.3 Philosophical Neglect—Exceptions from Social Science**

Even though academic philosophy has been reluctant or slow to take up seriously Heidegger’s thinking on education, educational theorists and social scientists working in university education departments have used Heidegger’s thought to ‘inform educational thinking and practice’ and have created a literature discussing the application of ‘Heidegger’s ideas’ in educational practice.<sup>16</sup> Most of their work concerns ideas from *Being and Time*, and especially *Being and Time* read in terms of existentialist or onto-existentialist schema. Their thematics include being-in-the-world of the classroom first and ‘life’ later, being-human, self-transformation, and especially authenticity and

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<sup>16</sup> See Robert Shaw, *Towards a Heideggerian Pedagogy*.”

technology.<sup>17</sup> The work on technology shows a greater understanding of Heidegger's technology project, especially its aim to call technology and calculative thinking into question and to view technology as that which empties human being of being. The majority of this theoretical and practical work concerning authenticity and technology has been done in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>18</sup>

The best of this work (I survey two examples here) is more philosophical in its grappling with Heidegger's thought than it is practical in educational application; the best of this work's practical considerations *appropriate* Heidegger's thought instead of *applying* it as a tool ready to hand.<sup>19</sup> However, little of this work penetrates the surfaces of Heidegger's thinking on education, and in its apparent innocence or ignoring of Heidegger's political involvements, it further seems to lack circumspection about the philosophical 'gold' they mine and mind eagerly. Nevertheless, their recognizing that Heidegger's philosophy includes thinking on pedagogy and the general aims of education does confirm that Heidegger's thought is indeed enough about education to draw consideration from educational thinkers and practitioners. A review of this work is useful

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<sup>17</sup> For a good example, see Michael Bonnett. "Education as a Form of the Poetic," 229-244.

<sup>18</sup> The worst of it bowdlerizes Heidegger's thinking, misunderstanding and agonizing it as Nietzsche's "God is dead" has been misunderstood and agonized, and while it is exciting to see Heidegger reaching beyond philosophy departments, Heidegger probably would have been uneasy with the project developers who twice found "Heidegger's thinking...useful," once when they "had to consider carefully the nature/characteristics of the students and they came to call them 'Heidegger's Greeks.'" (See Robert Shaw, *Towards a Heideggerian Pedagogy*.) These 'Heidegger's Greeks' were Maori students, whom Shaw characterized "the strugglers in schools, perhaps easily distracted from their work, ... in schools bombarded with images and movement, distracted easily by this movement, and distracted by their friends." The remove of social science's application of bowdlerized Heidegger thinking from Heidegger's thinking in full and in truth is not always so ridiculously great, but I offer it as reason for my not including more of social science's literature on Heidegger's educational ideas in my review of the literature available, and as support for my claim that serious understanding of 'Heideggerian pedagogy' has been, with very few exceptions, neglected.

<sup>19</sup> See Michael Peters, ed. *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, the journal Peters edits. See also *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, edited by Paul Standish.

here for its speaking a survey of introductory ideas and scholarly interpretation of Heidegger's thinking on education that are relevant to my study.

As scholar and as founding editor of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Michael Peters has more steadily than anyone else to date supported the best of the philosophical and practical literature on Heidegger's educational philosophy and continued to argue for serious philosophical consideration of Heidegger as an educational thinker. In Peters' editorial introducing a special issue of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* devoted to Phenomenology and Education (41:9 February 2009), he echoes many of the views I've introduced here and aim to develop in my dissertation project. Peters attributes the "little... written on Heidegger or about his work and its significance for educational thought and practice" to the complexity of Heidegger's work and its neologisms, Carnap's attack on Heidegger's metaphysics that discredited Heidegger among analytic philosophers, and Heidegger's association with Nazism.<sup>20</sup> Peters believes "a convincing argument can be made for the centrality of his philosophy to education including Heidegger's critique of the ontotheological tradition... together with his overriding concern for the question of the meaning of Being," for "no philosopher since Socrates, was so committed to questions of education and to good teaching as Heidegger."<sup>21</sup> "Many of his texts," Peters says, "especially those works that come to us as lectures he gave to specific audiences, are specifically and self-consciously pedagogical."<sup>22</sup> And, finally, what could serve as one of the premises of my dissertation

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<sup>20</sup> See Michael Peters, "Editorial," 1.

<sup>21</sup> See Michael Peters, Heidegger, Education, and Modernity, 2, 3.

<sup>22</sup> See Michael Peters, Heidegger, Education, and Modernity, 2, 3.

project: “education for Heidegger constitutes a passage into thought that involves our entire being.”<sup>23</sup>

In David Cooper’s “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress,” Cooper rightly reminds us that we should not only look for Heidegger’s educational thinking in the remarks Heidegger’s made explicitly on education (such as those in *What is Called Thinking?*), but also look to *Contributions to Philosophy* and to Heidegger’s thinking on *Wissenschaft*, which “occupied Heidegger over forty or more years.”<sup>24</sup> Cooper explicates Heidegger’s prediction that “universities will become [quoting Heidegger] ‘merely operational institutions’ and ‘sites for scientific research and teaching’” by relating Heidegger’s prediction to Heidegger’s critique of technology and to Heidegger’s long developed discussion of truth, including Heidegger’s view of the centrality of truth to the essence of *Wissenschaft* and, most importantly, Heidegger’s view that the essence of truth had changed in its shift from truth as disclosure or unhiddenness/unconcealedness to truth as correspondence.<sup>25</sup> This shift means for Heidegger, as Cooper reads Heidegger in the *Contributions to Philosophy*, that “with truth conceived as a fixed relation between entities, assertions, and their objects, humans lose all sense of themselves as being essentially engaged with the emergence of truth, in a process, that calls for ‘deep awe,’ whereby things emerge out of hiddenness into the light.”<sup>26</sup> Following Heidegger, Cooper says that humans live lives bombarded by objects, are themselves viewed as objects, and are “palpably bereft of the deep awe and wonder that obtain when there is mindfulness of

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<sup>23</sup> See Michael Peters, Heidegger, Education, and Modernity, 2, 3.

<sup>24</sup> See David Cooper, “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress.” In Michael Peters, ed. *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, 48.

<sup>25</sup> See David Cooper, “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress,” 49, 53, 55.

<sup>26</sup> See David Cooper, “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress,” 57.

truth.”<sup>27</sup> This shift in truth, mindfulness, and awe, as Cooper recounts Heidegger’s view from “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” “underlies the mutation of *paideia* as a ‘passage’ from one condition to another into ‘schooling’ as the ‘calculated, swift, massive distribution of understood information to as many as possible in the shortest possible time.’”<sup>28</sup>

#### **1.4 Philosophical Neglect—Exceptions from Philosophy Thomson, Ehrmantraut, and Derrida**

As forecasted above, there are two important exceptions to *philosophical* scholarly neglect of Heidegger’s philosophy of education: Iain Thomson’s *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (2005) and Michael Ehrmantraut’s 2001 dissertation in Political Science, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy.”

##### ***Thomson***

Iain Thomson’s *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* is significant—first, because it is a first: it is the first published work of philosophical scholarship devoted extensively to Heidegger’s philosophy of education, establishing the study of Heidegger’s philosophy of education on serious philosophical grounds, and leaving open questions for further serious study.<sup>29</sup> Second, it shows that

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<sup>27</sup> See David Cooper, “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress,” 57.

<sup>28</sup> See David Cooper, “Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress,” 57.

<sup>29</sup> It could be said that several studies by Hubert Dreyfus, Iain Thomson’s teacher, come earlier than Thomson’s and are ‘first.’ These might include “Education on the Internet: Anonymity vs. Commitment,” 113-124, and “How Far is Distance Learning From Education” and “Disembodied Telepresence and the Remoteness of the Real,” both collected in Hubert Dreyfus, *On the Internet*; as well as Dreyfus’s successful ‘experiment’ with the then new iTunes U in 2007, the podcasting of several of Dreyfus’ lecture courses at Berkeley (including two of his Heidegger courses), and Dreyfus’s reaching and ‘teaching’ a global, mass learning audience. Dreyfus’s podcasting ‘experiment’ and its pedagogical example surely supports Dreyfus’s exploration of the Heideggerian concern of what might be appropriate ways to implement technology without giving ourselves over to it (for

Heidegger's commitment to education as ontological education extends beyond his 1933 Rectorship in its argument that later work, such as "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (1940) and *What is Called Thinking?* (1951-2) speak Heidegger's mature educational philosophy. Third, it offers a way of thinking about the Heidegger controversy and a way of approaching its problems, particularly the question of how a philosopher could participate in a political practice so egregious as National Socialism, and whether or not Heidegger's political mistake "disqualifies," as Richard Wolin conveys it, Heidegger's philosophy altogether.<sup>30</sup> And, finally, in its discussion of Heidegger's philosophical shift from fundamental ontology to an understanding of metaphysics as ontotheology, and situating Heidegger's educational thinking in that shift, Thomson gives us philosophical reasons to take Heidegger seriously as a philosopher of education and to learn from his teaching, when we might otherwise have held that Heidegger's decision to appropriate his philosophical thinking on education in service to National Socialism disqualifies him.

Thomson argues that Heidegger's decision to join National Socialism and become the first Nazi Rector of Freiburg was based on a philosophical mistake, on Heidegger's early view that there was "a substantive fundamental ontology waiting beneath history to be discovered" and enacted in the university from the top down under Heidegger's

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Heidegger, shortening university to "U" signaled further decay of the university—see WCT 34-5/GA8: 37). However, Dreyfus's work on Heidegger and education more responds philosophically to the practical implications for education of Heidegger's later work (and teaching) on *Bestand* and technology, as the titles of Dreyfus's papers indicate, than it addresses Heidegger's philosophical thinking for, and guidance of, education in its essence (leading human being to the place of its essential being and accustoming human being to it). Nevertheless, Dreyfus's work on technology and education is grounded in his regard for Heidegger as a serious thinker and teacher about educational matters, and grounded in Dreyfus's teaching of this regard, as Thomson gratefully acknowledges (see Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, x-xi, 179).

It should be noted that Michael Ehrmantraut's *Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy*, written in 2001 as his Ph.D. dissertation (published in 2011), which I address below, does not include reference to Thomson's work, nor does Ehrmantraut indicate awareness of it.

<sup>30</sup> See Richard Wolin, "Over the Line: Reflections on Heidegger and National Socialism" in *The Heidegger Controversy*, 4.

leadership as university Rector. Heidegger's aim as philosopher-dean to the departmental faculty as guardians was what Thomson terms a "reontologization" of a university fragmented by the separation and specialization of the various academic departments. This reontologization was to be accomplished through the "mutual recognition that...the community is committed to the same formal pursuit," not merely understanding what *is*, but investigating the ontological presuppositions guiding the various fields of knowledge, and "forming excellent individuals, where 'excellence' is...a kind of ontological perfectionism in which students learn to develop their distinctive capacity for world-disclosing as they participate in the advancement of science by learning to question the science's guiding ontological presuppositions."<sup>31</sup> The singularity, the solidarity, and the existential perfectionism of this vision have their ground in fundamental ontology, the faith in the successful recovery of which was, Thomson claims, Heidegger's philosophical mistake.

Thomson's analysis is not meant to excuse Heidegger's political misdeeds or dismiss with 'he made a mistake,' as with the wave of a hand, the seriousness of his misdeeds, but to explain and understand them on philosophical ground. Thomson's analysis addresses some of the persistent questions of the Heidegger controversy with precise reasons realized through philosophical analysis so as to understand how Heidegger the philosopher and the man—and the teacher—could act as he did. Furthermore, Thomson argues that Heidegger, having seen his project for education go so egregiously wrong in 1933 because of his philosophy of fundamental ontology, abandons fundamental ontology for a philosophy of historically sequenced ontotheologies. This philosophy of historically sequenced ontotheologies forms the basis for Heidegger's

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<sup>31</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 101.

critique of technology and Heidegger's more mature vision of education as that which turns us toward overcoming our age's reigning ontotheology.

Thomson's work is groundbreaking for Heidegger study because it makes it possible for us to set the issues of the Heidegger controversy in the background (it is probable that they will never be left behind entirely), and it sets in the foreground Heidegger's philosophy of education as a matter for serious study apart from the Heidegger controversy and as central to Heidegger's philosophy as a whole. In doing so, Thomson sets before us theses that are important to serious *philosophical* study of Heidegger on education, some of which Thomson develops and others of which remain undeveloped and preliminary, but initiated and opened up nonetheless.

Implicit in Thomson's developed thesis that Heidegger abandons fundamental ontology for a philosophy of historically sequenced ontotheologies, and in doing so seeks to correct and refine his failed reontologizing revolution in our understanding of education, is the idea, wanting further study, that education, being, and truth are interdependent and central to Heidegger's thought. I aim for this idea to be one of the theses and guiding principles of my dissertation project. In *Heidegger on Ontotheology* Thomson offers the term "ontological education" to name or characterize Heidegger's philosophy of education and Heidegger's project for education.<sup>32</sup> In that term is an expressed correlation of being and education and *logos*, or account, implying language,

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<sup>32</sup> Bruce Hyde uses the term "ontological education" in 1995 to denote "education that is ontological in nature, in that its focus is 'the 'being' of human beings rather than their knowledge." Hyde's version of ontological education draws from the ideas of Heidegger, Rorty, and Gadamer. It is particularly inclined toward "ontological dialogue" as a method and "is an inquiry into the ontological assumptions that are at work unnoticed in our language, communication, and relationships"(4). See Bruce Hyde. "An Ontological Approach to Education." Hyde was at that time working with the Landmark Education Corporation, whose mission, Hyde writes, is "an ongoing inquiry into the possibility of an ontological approach to education" (6).

and the means by which truth as *aletheia* is humanly represented. Thomson offers that ontological education is what Heidegger in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” takes to be the essence of *paideia*: this education “lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it.” Ontological education, as Thomson elucidates it, accustoms us to our “distinctive capacity for world-disclosing” and teaches us to “to disclose the essential in all things.”<sup>33</sup>

Heidegger mentions in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” having developed it more fully in *The Essence of Truth*, that the allegory of the cave in Plato’s *Republic*, “not only illustrates the essence of education but also, and at the same time, opens our eyes to a transformation in the essence of ‘truth.’ If the ‘allegory’ can show both [the essence of education and a transformation in the essence of truth], must it not be the case that an essential relation holds between ‘education’ and ‘truth’? This relation does, in fact, obtain. And it consists in the fact that the essence of truth and the sort of transformation it undergoes here first make possible ‘education’ in its basic structures (P167/GA9:218).

This essential relation between education and truth, and their relation to being, is the fruit, and its development is the focus, of Heidegger’s early educational thought from his earliest writings, through *Being and Time*, to the writings of the early 1930’s, including “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” and *The Essence of Truth*. His insight, that this relation between education and truth is essential, holds through his shifts from metaphysics as fundamental ontology to metaphysics as epochs of ontotheologies, although his understanding of *truth* shifts in this time, as does the education and research that relates to it. What, perhaps, does not shift is Heidegger’s understanding of the *Frage*,

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<sup>33</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 101.

the question, and its role in relating truth to education as research and as learning. The essential relation among education and truth and being, and Heidegger's understanding of the *Frage* and inquiry in that relation, will guide my study and search for Heidegger's work on education before and including *Being and Time*.

Implicit in what Thomson calls an "interpretive thesis" for *Heidegger on Ontotheology*—that education is a theme through Heidegger's entire career and a radical rethinking of education is one of the deep thematic undercurrents of Heidegger's entire career of thought—is the claim that "we should expect to find some sign of Heidegger's supposed lifelong concern with education" in Heidegger's work before and after his failed reontologizing revolution at Freiburg in 1933.<sup>34</sup> This claim opens into questions of whether or not these signs are present throughout Heidegger's entire career of thought, beyond the signs Thomson explains and identifies in Heidegger's work before 1933, in the work of the Rectoral period, in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," and in *What is Called Thinking?*<sup>35</sup> Implicit in this same claim that a radical rethinking of education is one of the deep thematic undercurrents of Heidegger's entire career of thought are questions about whether Heidegger remained committed to the renewal of the university, whether he remained committed to the same project or vision for renewal of the university, and if committed to a different or refined vision, what is that vision?

Thomson shows that Heidegger's initial aim for ontological education was that it reunify the university by "shattering the encapsulation of the sciences in their different disciplines" and restore "substance to the notion of excellence," "where excellence is understood in terms of a kind of ontological perfectionism, in which students learn to

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<sup>34</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 457.

<sup>35</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 457; and Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, Chapters 3 and 4, 78ff, 144ff.

develop their distinctive capacity for world-disclosing as they participate in the advancement of science by learning to question the sciences' guiding ontological presuppositions."<sup>36</sup> Thomson's view of Heidegger's mature aim for ontological education is that it teach students 1) about the ontological posits of the disciplines in which they study and major; 2) that these ontological posits "stem from the particular historical ontotheology that implicitly guides our age"; 3) to "recognize, contest, and transcend" this ontotheology.<sup>37</sup>

Acknowledging that *Heidegger on Ontotheology's* concentration on Heidegger's later works may leave unanswered the question of whether or not we do "find some sign of Heidegger's supposed lifelong concern with education" in his "magnum opus" *Being and Time*, Thomson's 2005 paper, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," takes up this question, finding that though not explicitly present, Heidegger's concern with education is subtly present.<sup>38</sup> Thomson explores this presence in terms of *Being and Time's* perfectionist themes of authenticity, authentic being-together, and Heidegger's exhortation "Become what you are!" Thomson finds "*Being and Time's* primary pedagogical insight...[to be] the distinction between a 'leaping ahead' which 'liberates' and a 'leaping in' which 'dominates' (BT 158-9/SZ: 122)], a distinction which for Heidegger maps onto the difference between authentic and inauthentic methods of pedagogical 'being-together' (*Mitsein*)."<sup>39</sup> Thomson wonders, "what the early Heidegger thought teachers might do *directly* – as well as how far he

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<sup>36</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 101.

<sup>37</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 172.

<sup>38</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 457.

<sup>39</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 456.

though they should go *indirectly* – to help students achieve authenticity.”<sup>40</sup> Michael Ehrmantraut’s *Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy* (2011) takes up this very issue.

### ***Ehrmantraut***

Given how little scholarship there is on Heidegger and his philosophy of education, it is encouraging that two scholars, Thomson and Ehrmantraut, unknown to one another until recently, produce work on Heidegger’s philosophy of education that is so strong, so complementary, and so foundational for this overlooked area of Heidegger studies. Many of the insights Thomson offers in “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*” are also offered and developed in substantial detail in Ehrmantraut’s study. Ehrmantraut’s thesis is “that philosophy is, for Heidegger, pedagogical in the widest and deepest sense of the word” and “may itself require of kind of ‘pedagogy’”; and that, because philosophizing happens only in human being (*Dasein*), whose pre-philosophic tendencies hinder philosophic questioning, philosophizing “needs its own liberation and guidance.”<sup>41</sup>

Ehrmantraut concentrates his study on the early Heidegger and on the lecture courses from the years 1927-35, especially the yet untranslated *Einleitung in die*

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<sup>40</sup> See Iain Thomson, “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*,” 456.

<sup>41</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy.” (Note: For several reasons, my citations of Ehrmantraut’s work will direct my reader to text and pagination in Ehrmantraut’s 2001 Ph.D. dissertation, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” rather than the 2011 publication, *Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy*. First, the 2011 version is significantly abridged for publication, diminishing the dissertation’s meditative analysis and removing some noteworthy insights opening onto discussions beyond the scope of Ehrmantraut’s dissertation but nonetheless rightly mentioned there. Second, as I say below, I think it significant that Thomson’s *Heidegger on Ontotheology* and Ehrmantraut’s dissertation are in accord in many ways in their quite original openings of new ways of approaching the theme of ‘Heidegger and education’ even though neither was aware of the other’s work at that time. Third, the version published ten years after the dissertation does not explicitly engage the dissertation’s matters in light of later scholarship, most especially Thomson’s book, so I’ve chosen to engage the earlier version, which may be truer to Ehrmantraut’s pathway of thinking than the later version.)

*Philosophie (Introduction to Philosophy)* (1928/9), *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929/30), and to a lesser extent *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), arguing that after *Being and Time*, which is not methodologically suited to philosophic pedagogy, Heidegger adopted “a new pedagogy,” “the university lecture as the primary way in which philosophic inquiry is communicated.”<sup>42</sup> *Being and Time* is not methodologically suited to philosophic pedagogy because “the guidance given by the [formal indicative] ontological interpretation is...indirect” and *Being and Time* cannot discuss how “Dasein in each case factually resolves itself,” but philosophic pedagogy, as Ehrmantraut presents it, is grounded in its ontological interpretation and implicit exhortations.<sup>43</sup>

The need for philosophic pedagogy arises from the need presented in *Being and Time*, that Being (*Sein*) “while universally ‘understood’...always eludes one’s ability to comprehend it.”<sup>44</sup> That is, an understanding of Being is essential and universal to human being, it is an understanding that enables human being to relate to the world, its things, and its beings, and because this understanding permeates and conditions man’s everyday interaction in the world, it goes unquestioned and is understood implicitly but not comprehended explicitly. Philosophizing is a way to comprehend explicitly what is merely implicitly understood. Philosophizing is a way to comprehend that understanding of Being and beings is more complicated and more meaningful, holding and concealing more possibilities for meaning, significance, and practice, than human being everyday understanding holds. Heidegger’s Being eludes universal understanding, resists the fetters of universal understanding, so as to keep questions open, to keep open and ongoing the

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<sup>42</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 21.

<sup>43</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 19.

<sup>44</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 335.

question of Being particularly. Philosophy itself, for Heidegger, purports universal understandings that fail to comprehend or question fully or even adequately the possibilities and need for meaning, significance, and practice in an understanding of Being and being. Understanding of Being is analogous to education, or to the aim of philosophic pedagogy, inasmuch as education, as Ehrmantraut characterizes it, is “a process of disclosure [that] transforms what is ‘already’ disclosed, but every new disclosure is imbued with its own mode of hiddenness.”<sup>45</sup> The need for the practice of philosophic pedagogy, then, emerges as if from Hamlet’s exhortation to Horatio: “there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,/ Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”<sup>46</sup>

Philosophic pedagogy happens for Heidegger, Ehrmantraut says, primarily through the lecture.<sup>47</sup> It is Ehrmantraut’s view that Heidegger “takes advantage of the constraints imposed by his academic position as a teacher— for example, the official duty to deliver lectures and to ‘introduce’ beginning students to academic subjects though such lectures—in order to execute his deepest philosophical intentions.”<sup>48</sup> One of Heidegger’s deepest philosophical intentions is to liberate the individual student and, through him the *Volk* and the West.<sup>49</sup> This liberation of human being that emerges through students, the *Volk*, and the West, is a complicated notion in Heidegger’s thought. During the Rectoral period, Heidegger aims for his philosophic pedagogy to make lecture students aware of their duty to awaken philosophically to the possibilities of Being and human being and to lead other students and other Germans to do the same. The awakening first of students and then the German people is an awakening of the *Volk* as grass roots populace, spirit,

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<sup>45</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 218.

<sup>46</sup> See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 226.

<sup>47</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 12.

<sup>48</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 55.

<sup>49</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 277.

and source for authentic being that may renew the decadent West and revitalize the West as historical community. Explicit in Heidegger's thought during the Rectoral period especially is that this *Volk* is specifically German. The philosophical awakening of students and of the German *Volk* is meant to give to Germany the task of leading all of the West toward awakening and renewal. This awakening and leadership is, for Heidegger, a German destiny, a collective happening to be seized and enacted. It is Heidegger's belief, especially and explicitly during the Rectoral period, that the realization of this destiny could begin in university students and spread beyond to the *Volk* and to the West.

Heidegger's deepest philosophical intentions, then, are pedagogical, argues Ehrmantraut, for Heidegger sees this liberation happening first in students through awareness of their historical situation, both as western Germans and as teachers and learners together at the university, and through the awakening of philosophical attunement and philosophizing in them. These lectures repeatedly ask, "what is philosophy?" and so, argues Ehrmantraut, they cultivate and guide students toward the "pre-understanding of philosophy" that in "compelling them to what Heidegger calls their "inner task," attunes, awakens, and liberates them.<sup>50</sup> This liberation is what Thomson calls the "work of philosophical education... a kind of self-recovery... won by recognizing, confronting, and overcoming a pre-existing source of resistance, [which is] in *Being and Time* ... the inertial undertow of *das Man*...[and] in the later work ... comes, ultimately, from the unnoticed effects exercised on us by a set of historically specific metaphysical or, more precisely, *ontotheological* presuppositions."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 61.

<sup>51</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 457-8.

Ehrmantraut's study does not look beyond Heidegger's early philosophy of education and Heidegger's early pedagogical aim in the 1927-34 lectures to guide students to liberation from *das Man*. The aim of Heidegger's philosophic pedagogy, as Ehrmantraut reads it, is liberation and guidance, and its task is to make philosophic questioning possible for others. The problem of this philosophic pedagogy is what Ehrmantraut, citing Heidegger, calls "the problem of beginning," and the main of Ehrmantraut's study is devoted to this problem and how introducing philosophic questioning to others implies philosophic leadership.<sup>52</sup> As Ehrmantraut formulates it, this problem of the beginning includes how to bring students into participating in philosophic inquiry, how to begin the questioning of Being, how to begin to seize the possibility for philosophizing when merely reading the ontological interpretation alone in *Being and Time* is not enough, and how to convey that "academic study carries with it a certain communal obligation to exercise... leadership grounded in the fact that philosophy involves a privileged understanding of the whole of human possibilities."<sup>53</sup> There is, then, in the aim, task, and problem of philosophic pedagogy as Ehrmantraut interprets it, moral-political significance and awakening to this significance is part of what Ehrmantraut takes to be Heidegger's deepest philosophical intentions.

Ehrmantraut explicates Heidegger's *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928/29) to find Heidegger's method for directly and indirectly awakening students. Ehrmantraut

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<sup>52</sup>As a dissertation in Political Science, Ehrmantraut's "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy" is a study of Heidegger's philosophy of education as political philosophy, as philosophy educates leaders for the polis, though it takes up explicitly the issues of Heidegger's Rectorship and their implications only in the epilogue and only briefly). However, we might even say that as it is for Heidegger that "all our efforts in the existential analytic serve the one aim of finding a possibility of answering the question of the *meaning of being* in general" (BT 424/SZ: 372), it is for Ehrmantraut that 'all his efforts in the educational analytic serve the one aim of finding a possibility of answering the question of the *meaning of leadership* in general.' It is in this way, that Ehrmantraut's study implicitly examines the question of Heidegger's Rectorship from inside Heidegger's early educational philosophy.

<sup>53</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 13, 63.

says Heidegger presupposes a capacity for “living philosophizing” and giving evidence that shows that Heidegger’s lecture course *Einleitung in die Philosophie* involves direct “exhortatory appeal” to students to awaken to the crisis in science and the collapse of *Bildung*, a collapse he presumes they can recognize and feel in their own dissatisfaction with their academic education, in “the fragmentation of the sciences [which] is at once a fragmentation of reality.”<sup>54</sup> Heidegger’s lecture mode exhorts them to self-reflexivity, so as to realize the need for ‘living philosophizing’ and to pursue through it the possibility of restoring reality to their lives. A lecturer’s exhortation, Ehrmantraut says, is not wholly authoritative because it involves ambiguity: a student cannot know if the teacher speaks truly or if the student as really understood him; “philosophic pedagogy is inherently ‘non-authoritative’ in that, strictly speaking it does not prescribe possibilities of thought or action, nor does it involve transfer of knowledge.”<sup>55</sup> Philosophic pedagogy essentially involves ambiguity and its risk, as does philosophy itself, and experiencing ambiguity as a source of distress is essential, as Ehrmantraut quotes Heidegger, “in all philosophical conceiving” and attunement.<sup>56</sup> It involves calling students to let themselves, as Ehrmantraut quotes Heidegger, “be beset by the unknown.”<sup>57</sup> Philosophic pedagogy, Ehrmantraut concludes, does not end like *Bildung* (education, edification, spiritual formation) in the “state of completion of existence and knowledge, but rather involves a constantly renewed and deepened understanding of the ‘untruth’ and concealment that belongs together with the truth of human existence and the truth of Being.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 82-3, 87, 88.

<sup>55</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 92-3.

<sup>56</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 97.

<sup>57</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 181.

<sup>58</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 218.

In addition to exhortation, Heidegger's lecture method involves "discursive communication...not as the transference of opinions from the interiority of one subject to another, but as the explication of possibilities of Dasein's being-with-one-another in the world."<sup>59</sup> One outcome of the discursive communication mode of the lecture and its philosophic pedagogy is boredom, which Heidegger interprets in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* and uses to awaken in students the experience and attunement of "being-left-empty," which leads to an awareness of the problem of the whole, of world, and leads to the compulsion to take over their own Dasein.<sup>60</sup> As Ehrmantraut observes rightly, Heidegger understands that ambiguity, boredom, and the fundamental attunement to philosophize cannot be objectified or summoned by will by teachers and teaching. Awakening cannot involve a demand to transform one's self or produce and attunement. Neither discursive communication nor exhortation can instigate the attunement to philosophize. It cannot transform, but the lecture, Ehrmantraut concludes of Heidegger's lecture pedagogy, can "prepare" students for living philosophizing, bringing them to the brink of its possibility and, then, to the "'leadership' in the whole of historical-being-with-one-another."<sup>61</sup> This leadership, Ehrmantraut argues, prepares the restoration of *Bodenstaendigkeit*, indigenusness or rootedness, that is undermined by *Das Man* and what Heidegger will later call enframing, and the liberation to a historical community awakened to "a sense for Being in the world as a whole, out of which philosophic questioning can begin."<sup>62</sup> This leadership and liberation to such a community is the purpose, Ehrmantraut argues, of Heidegger's philosophic pedagogy. The

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<sup>59</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 103.

<sup>60</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 118, 121.

<sup>61</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 132.

<sup>62</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 209.

community is for Heidegger, “a successively more comprehensive historical whole,” moving from the lecture’s group of students to the *Volk* to the West.<sup>63</sup>

In an epilogue, Ehrmantraut recognizes that his discussion of “Heidegger’s pedagogy remains incomplete.”<sup>64</sup> A more complete treatment “would require extensive attention to Heidegger’s interpretation of poetry” and “special attention to... ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’ ...and the theme of *paideia*,” which Ehrmantraut appears to distinguish from Heidegger’s philosophic pedagogy, though he does not elaborate.<sup>65</sup> The distinction indicates to me, though, that Ehrmantraut sees Heidegger’s philosophic pedagogy develop toward *paideia* as a more mature philosophical position (and *paideia* as Heidegger appropriates the meaning of the Greek idea), with which I agree. I might elaborate further that the later Heidegger would find “philosophic pedagogy” a problematic, if not oxymoronic, term, inasmuch as pedagogy usually indicates a method for transmission of an academic subject or concepts and it is Heidegger’s view that philosophy and the ‘philosophic’ in their authentic senses are not subjects, not academic subjects, not transmittable as such, and not teachable as are the sciences and “fixed disciplines” of universities in the general sense (FCM 1/GA 29-30:1).

In considering the possibility that Heidegger brought his philosophic pedagogy to the Rectorship, Ehrmantraut identifies possible false assumptions that led to the

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<sup>63</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 277. The increasing comprehensive whole, from the lecture’s group of students to the *Volk* to the West, is a complicated notion in Heidegger’s thought. During the Rectoral period, Heidegger aims for his philosophic pedagogy to make lecture students aware of their duty to awaken philosophically to the possibilities of Being and human being and to lead other students and other Germans to do the same. The awakening of students and the German people is an awakening of the *Volk* as grass roots populace, spirit, and source for authentic being that may renew the decadent West and revitalize the West as historical community. Explicit in Heidegger’s thought during the Rectoral period especially is that this *Volk* is specifically German. For Heidegger in the Rectoral period, the philosophical awakening of the German *Volk* and, then, the specifically German leadership of the West toward renewal is a German destiny.

<sup>64</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 334.

<sup>65</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger’s Philosophic Pedagogy,” 334.

Rectorship's failure, namely 1) the assumption that philosophy belongs to the essence of man, 2) that a student bears within him openness to Being and is receptive to it, and 3) that a human community can be founded on philosophic questioning. While I take these assumptions themselves as Ehrmantraut has formulated them to be true of Heidegger's philosophy of education, true for Heidegger throughout his lifelong concern with education, only the third—that a human community can be founded on philosophic questioning—seems a likely direct factor in the failure of Heidegger's Rectorship, as Thomson's elucidation in *Heidegger on Ontotheology* of Heidegger's project to restore philosophy as the ontological queen of the ontic sciences would confirm.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, Ehrmantraut suggests, “even after his withdrawal from the Rectorate, Heidegger continued to maintain that there was an inner relation between philosophic inquiry and teaching.... Thus even where Heidegger falls short of the more far-reaching pedagogical aims, the clarity that results precisely from such a ‘failure’ may constitute a necessary step ‘towards’ the question of Being.”<sup>67</sup> I take both insights here to be right and important to my study on several points: 1) that there is, for Heidegger, an inner relation between philosophic inquiry and teaching, 2) that this relation continues after the Rectorship, 3) that failure or error in Heidegger's pedagogical project may clarify the more proper way toward what Heidegger calls “real education.”

It seems clear to me that philosophic pedagogy was merely a beginning for Heidegger, a problematic beginning, in approaching pedagogically the question of Being and teaching the living of that question philosophically.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 92ff., especially §14.

<sup>67</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut, “Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy,” 343, 345/(SU).

<sup>68</sup> The fact that Ehrmantraut's study, as do the studies of other ‘orthodox’ Heideggerians, finds so many themes common to what I take to be later stages of Heidegger's vision for education may call

## *Derrida*

Although I have said above that Thomson's work offers us the first extended scholarly philosophical *study* of Heidegger's philosophy of education, Jacques Derrida's work also offers a first: the first, and also, truly, the only profoundly rich and extended philosophical *response* to Heidegger's philosophy of education. Derrida engaged in a lifelong consideration of education, spurred, arguably, by his lifelong engagement with Heidegger, Heidegger's teaching, and his own teaching. It could even be said that Derrida thinks Heidegger's educational unthought, and that in Derrida's Greph project and his cofounding of the International College of Philosophy, Derrida succeeds where Heidegger failed in realizing his educational philosophy in educational and political *practice*.<sup>69</sup> Derrida is a great reader and thinker of Heidegger's educational thought. It is possible (though speculative) that Derrida's practical involvements in education were at least responses to his engagement with Heidegger, specifically his engagement with Heidegger's radical rethinking of education, Heidegger's failure at practical, political, educational leadership, and the questions of whether Heidegger remained committed to

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into question both my argument and Thomson's that Heidegger's philosophy of education develops and matures throughout his lifetime. It may be, though, that Ehrmantraut and these other Heideggerians anachronistically impose some of Heidegger's later formulations onto the explications and interpretations he gives of Heidegger's earlier work and his account of Heidegger's philosophic pedagogy. Or, it may be that these themes identified and attributed to Heidegger's earlier work on education that also appear in Heidegger's later work on education are not in their earlier formulations as developed or layered as they become in Heidegger's more mature work, but are "construction sites" along the way. This seems true of *Ereignis*, among others. And as Heidegger said pointedly and repeatedly through the mouthpiece of the *Fragenden* in "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer," which I take to be a most mature instantiation of his educational philosophy particularly, "as you begin, so you will remain" (*Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft*); i.e. that which has come remains to-come, and that which arrived at the origin or inception still calls us ahead toward and into it. Ideas from early work such as *Being and Time* circle around questions and problems that were in its background but later come into in the foreground of his thought, their relationships and proportions of influence and significance still unclear to him (OWL 6-7/GA12: 91-2)

<sup>69</sup> Derrida said in *Le Monde* in 2000, "the question of teaching runs through all my works and all my politico-institutional engagements."

the renewal of education and the university, and, if so, whether Heidegger remained committed to the same vision for renewal.

Derrida's understanding of Heidegger's thinking on education is deeply considered and to my eye, right, though Derrida's own vision for the university and education, if we may judge from Derrida's educational writings and practical projects, misses some of the subtle necessities of Heidegger's mature understanding of ontological education and its practice. Nevertheless, Derrida's understanding of Heidegger as philosopher and practitioner of education is profound and a true philosopher's, inasmuch as Derrida comes to an understanding of Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism that allows him to reckon with Heidegger the ontological educator and thinker as nearly no one else has.

In Derrida's lecture *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, Derrida, like most reviewers of educational themes in Heidegger's work, takes up involvement with National Socialism, specifically the question of Heidegger's stand before Spirit (*Geist*, *l'esprit*) in his involvement with National Socialism. However, unlike most, Derrida stands open before the question beyond whatever political angers he might bring to it, willing to heed the "the call or the guarding of the question" in order to approach "what is highest and best in thought."<sup>70</sup> Derrida is able to remain open to Heidegger as educator and as educational philosopher. He accepts, without validating, Heidegger's decision to become Nazi Rector, such that Derrida can say in "Mochlos, or the Conflict of the Faculties" that Heidegger's much maligned Rectoral Address is "the last great discourse in which the Western university tries to think its essence and its destination in terms of responsibility, with a stable reference to the same idea of knowledge, technics, the State,

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<sup>70</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, 9.

and the nation, very close to a limit at which the memorial gathering of a thinking makes a sudden sign toward the entirely-other of a very terrifying future.”<sup>71</sup>

As Thomson reminds us in Chapter 3 of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, that after Derrida’s statement in “Mochlos” on Heidegger’s Rectoral Address, Derrida gives his view on whether or not, after Heidegger’s failed Rectorship and involvement with National Socialism, Heidegger remained committed to the renewal of the university and whether or not he remained committed to the same or a different vision for the university and/or education. Derrida writes,

after this speech...the enclosure of the university—as a commonplace and powerful contract with the state, with the public, with knowledge, with metaphysics and technics—will seem to him less and less capable of measuring up to a more essential responsibility, that responsibility that, before having to answer for a knowledge, power, or something or other determinate, before having to answer to a being or determinate object before a determinate subject, must first answer *to* being, *for* the call of being, and must think this coresponsibility. But, once again, essential as it may seem to me, I cannot explore this path today.<sup>72</sup>

Thomson counters that Derrida here “exaggerates Heidegger’s break with the university,” for it is Thomson’s view that Heidegger’s commitment to reessentializing the notion of excellence in education continues throughout Heidegger’s career of thought.<sup>73</sup>

In Chapters 3 and 4 of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, Thomson refines the views of Derrida and Otto Pöggeler on the questions of whether or not Heidegger remained

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<sup>71</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Mochlos, or the Conflict of the Faculties,” 88.

<sup>72</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Mochlos,” 88.

<sup>73</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 134.

committed to the renewal of the university and, if Heidegger did, whether he remained committed to the same project or vision for renewal of the university. Thomson writes that Heidegger did not “give up trying to transform education in general—and, thus, by implication, university education as well,” and that “the later Heidegger ceaselessly seeks to expand the parameters of the ontological education he sought to install at the heart of the university, thereby working to broaden the educational situation beyond the boundaries of the university.”<sup>74</sup> Thomson associates this commitment of Heidegger’s with university education particularly. While I agree that Heidegger’s commitment to resensualizing education does continue, I am more likely to side with Derrida’s view that the university seemed to Heidegger less and less capable of answering the call of being in education, that it seemed less and less capable of ontological education.

This does not mean that Heidegger abandoned hope for the renewal of the university, but that his vision for education may have required places and spaces and an ethos other than those possible in the modern university’s structure. Derrida’s own work in education intends to make space for a particular kind of philosophical place, and it intends to transform the rights and responsibilities of the university, its constituents, and its projects, mitigating, if not ending, the university’s particular mode of violence. Derrida’s project for education is a deconstructive project, aiming, as Derrida believes deconstruction can, to open the university, teaching, and philosophy “to its own future.”<sup>75</sup> Our responsibility in philosophizing—our responsibility in the space that is the university—is to keep open the place where the interchangeability and instability and incompleteness of names, logos, and myths can be read and realized, deconstructed and

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<sup>74</sup> See Iain Thomson. Heidegger on Ontotheology, 138.

<sup>75</sup> See John H. Caputo, “The Villanova Roundtable,” in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 18.

renewed. Derrida aims, by his educational project and leadership, to avoid particularly the violence—the human violation—of Heidegger’s political allegiances and leadership in his educational project at Freiburg. Derrida aims also, it seems, to avoid the academic violence suggested by Plato’s educational project of the *Republic*’s city in speech—the lie, however noble, that speeches can give complete account of, or even realize, that political and educational center that is, seemingly, Plato’s *Republic*.

While a similar political language, purpose, and position characterizes the Heidegger of the Rectoral period, after the 1934 lecture course *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (GA38) and Heidegger’s notorious remark in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (see footnote), Heidegger is carefully less publically political or is even apolitical in his writings and his taken position in them.<sup>76</sup> His most political writing of the post-1935 period is likely *Contributions to Philosophy*, inasmuch as its language and images reflect the Nazi rhetoric and reality happening as Heidegger wrote *Contributions to Philosophy* and are, arguably, an element of Heidegger’s confrontation with and critique of that reality. *Contributions to Philosophy* shows Heidegger at his most pessimistic about the future of the university. Heidegger stipulated that *Contributions to Philosophy* not be seen publically or published until all the lecture courses of the ‘second’ division of his *Gesamtausgabe* had been published, effectively removing its political, educational, and philosophical purport from public and political life. (Heidegger considered the thought of those courses to be prerequisite for understanding the way of

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<sup>76</sup> Heidegger’s notorious remark, which he later amended with the phrase in parenthesis, read as follows: “In particular, what is peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of National Socialism, but which has not the least to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely, the encounter between global technology and modern humanity), is fishing in these troubled waters of ‘values’ and ‘totalities’” (IM 213/GA40: 152)

thought that he ventured ontology, beginning in 1936. His stipulation was respected until 1989, when the managers of the publication of his *Gesamtausgabe* decided to publish *Contributions to Philosophy*, even though all the lecture course texts were not yet published. Heidegger's removal from active political life at Freiburg or elsewhere after 1934 probably contributes to Derrida's sense that Heidegger broke from the university, because for Derrida the university, its discourses, and its activities are for political (often Marxist) strivings and revolutions.

## ***PAIDEIA AND APAIDEIA IN “PLATO’S DOCTRINE OF TRUTH”***

The fact that Plato reaches for a simile (*Gleichnis*) when he comes to the extreme boundary of philosophy, the beginning and end of philosophy, is no accident. And the content of the simile especially, is not accidental.... We must relinquish the idea of interpreting in all its dimensions this inexhaustible simile.  
—Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*

### **2.1 “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth”: Introduction**

In several works written during the span of Heidegger’s tumultuous and transitional middle period (1929-1940), Heidegger takes up the Cave Allegory of Plato’s *Republic*, revisiting it to work and think there as if the allegory is a lodestone, perhaps even a pivot in Heidegger’s turnings of thought, during the 1930s. Though Heidegger refers to Plato’s Cave Allegory in a couple of earlier lectures (notably the 1927 Marburg lecture series *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*), Heidegger’s deep exploration of the “explanatory power” of the Cave Allegory begins with Heidegger’s 1931-2 Freiburg lecture course *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theatetus* (GA34). From November 1933 to February 1934 (GA36/37), during Heidegger’s Rectorship, *The Essence of Truth* lecture course was repeated, but repeated with an added introduction addressing Heraclitus’ *polemos* fragment and additional numerous political allusions and interpolations, all of which indicate Heidegger’s capitulation to the “priority of the political,” the Nazi education policy that made political indoctrination compulsory in the classroom.<sup>77</sup> Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy*, composed in 1936-38, includes

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<sup>77</sup> The 1933-4 version appears in Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* as *Sein und Wahrheit* (GA36/7) and translated as *Being and Truth*. For discussion of the “priority of the political” Nazi education policy, see Julian Young, “Poets and Rivers: Heidegger on Hölderlin’s ‘Der Ister,’” 408-9. Young claims, distilling a more extended discussion in his *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, 20ff, and contrary to the evidence of political allusions interpolated into the 1933-4 version of *Essence of Truth*, that “it is to Heidegger’s credit that, even in the “Rectoral Address” given in 1933 at the height of his involvement

discussion of the allegory in several of its component ‘joints’ (§214, §232, §233) within the larger joining section “The Grounding,” which develops Heidegger’s vision for a ‘new’ inceptual grounding of philosophical truth and the ‘future human being’ that grounding entails. And, finally, Heidegger again revisits his interpretation of Plato’s Cave Allegory in the 1940 lecture/essay, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” one of Heidegger’s explicit works on education outside of his Rectorship writings and a more ‘poetizing’ thinking than is usually acknowledged.

“Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” is almost univocally read as a treatise by which Heidegger argues two points: 1) the Cave Allegory depicts Plato’s “unsaid” “doctrine” or teaching, which transforms the essence of truth from *aletheia* (unhiddenness, unconcealedness) to *orthotes* (correctness of representation); 2) Plato’s transformation of the essence of truth is the great event that begins the historical unfolding of western metaphysical thinking, which leads to Nietzschean metaphysics, nihilism, and late-modern plight or dire need (*Not*).<sup>78</sup> The fact that Heidegger devotes nearly half of the exegetical discussion of “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” to the matter of education is mostly

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with Nazism, he opposed absolutely the priority of the political.” Heidegger’s version, in the *Der Spiegel* interview, is that he resisted the Nazi priority of the political, and in *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, 20ff, Young cites evidence corroborating Heidegger’s version on at least two occasions (including Heidegger’s Rectoral Address), but in the case of the political interpolations recorded in student transcripts of the 1933-4 version of *Essence of Truth*, Heidegger apparently heeded the policy.<sup>78</sup> Per Heidegger’s construal, the meaning of *aletheia* emerges from early Greek thinkers’ wonder before the *presence* of things and phenomena presencing to Greek thinkers, ‘unhiding’ before them. This revealing unhiding or unconcealing of something (thing or phenomenon) to someone and the wonder of its presencing (either as its actually happening or in anticipation of its happening) is *aletheia*. In the early Greek sense, a thing or phenomena or being-itself is only “accessible” to human intelligibility “when it stands in *aletheia*,” as if standing uncloaked, naked present, in the open. (ET 74/GA34: 103). That something stands in *aletheia*, and is ‘presencing’ as unconcealed determines, for the early Greeks, that something is *known*. Knowing the ‘truth’ of something is to encounter and experience it standing in the open, in or as *aletheia*. Further, Heidegger says of Plato’s sense of *aletheia* in *Republic*, “In a way that is self-evident for a Greek, [Plato] quite unambiguously understands *aletheia* not as a property and determination of seeing, of knowledge, nor as a characteristic of knowledge in the sense of a human faculty, but as a determination of what is known, of the things themselves, of the beings” (ET 74-5/GA34: 103)

neglected in philosophical scholarship. If scholars address Heidegger's thinking on education in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," that thinking is usually taken to be preparatory hermeneutic work for the two 'main' arguments (1 and 2 above) that follow from Heidegger's interpretation of the allegory. This preparatory work is taken to be necessary because, as Heidegger reminds us, "Plato's assertion is clear: The 'allegory of the cave' illustrates the essence of 'education,'" and Heidegger's project is to show that "the 'allegory' not only illustrates the essence of education but at the same time opens our eyes to a transformation in the essence of 'truth,'" a transformation "that becomes the hidden law governing what the thinker says" (P 167/GA9: 218). Heidegger scholarship takes "not only" to indicate a pushing by the wayside of the matter of education for the sake of showing transformation in the essence of truth; rather than taking "not only" to indicate an equal regard of both, reflected in Heidegger's subsequent questions, 1) "If the 'allegory' can show both, must it not be the case that an essential relation holds between 'education' and 'truth'?" and 2) "what is it that links 'education' and 'truth' together into an original and essential unity?" (P 167-8/GA9: 218)

One of my aims for this chapter is to turn the priorities of the usual position of Heidegger scholarship on what matters in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," such that my stand will be that "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," not only opens our eyes to a transformation in the essence of "truth" but also, and at the same time, illustrates the essence of education. Heidegger appropriates this essence of education for his philosophy of education, such that by this essence, we may begin to understand what Heidegger takes *education* in its proper sense to mean.

A second aim for this chapter is to show 1) Heidegger's thinking on what is proper to the original, essential unity and relation of education and truth; 2) it is Heidegger's view that what is proper in that unity is deformed by the essence of truth as *orthotes* (correctness of representation); 3) it is Heidegger's view that what is deformed in that unity leads to *apaideia*, a un-education or plighted education that is pervasive in our late-modern time.

A third aim for this chapter, but addressed first, is to suggest that "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" is not ultimately a treatise, or philosophical argument, but a *poetizing thinking* of a kind that Heidegger is during the middle period attempting in other 'forms,' such as the fugal *Contributions to Philosophy*, and is explicitly elucidating in 'more' 'philosophical' work from the middle period and early 1940s, work that overlaps with the writing and presentation of "Plato's Doctrine of Truth."

## **2.2 "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" as Poetizing Thinking**

As I hope to bring forth here, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" is a poetizing thinking, thinking and poetizing the history of being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*) and the essence of education, among its other purports. As a poetizing thinking, it creates and preserves a thinking that stands within the understandings of its ontotheological epoch—late-modern Nietzschean will to power and its nihilisms, including the everyday plights of its epoch's education and education—but also projects to stand apart and stand into the history of being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*) both past and future. Of such a stand, Heidegger writes in *The Event (Das Ereignis)*, "Meditation on the thinking of the history of being, since this thinking inceptually thinks thinking itself, must also enter into dialogue with the

poetizing that poetizes the domain of poetry and thus must think through the relation between poetizing and thinking (E 216/GA71: 250). It is my view that Heidegger's "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" is not a treatise or traditional philosophical argument that counters or opposes Plato's Cave Allegory and its interpretation but is a poetizing thinking that encounters Plato's thinking in its greatness, for the sake of thinking the future need of education and human being.

What Heidegger means by *poetizing* (*dichten*) develops over his career of thought and is a central concern of Heidegger's middle and later thought.<sup>79</sup> Poetizing (*dichten*) and poetry (*Dichten*) belong together, as Heidegger makes explicit. Both stand in an opening removed from and cleared of everyday understanding and 'worlds.' There, both 'project truth' as a new disclosure of "everything that it already is, though still hidden from itself" and set that truth into work, "wherein truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward an historical group of men" (PLT 73/GA5: 63). Poetizing and poetry (like any art, as Heidegger thinks art) are *not* acts of modern subjectivity, "the self-sovereign subject's performance of genius," but are a gathering from "that into which human being as historical is already cast," that is, from the groundings and ground of the history of human intelligibility and its worlds (PLT 73/ GA5: 63). Poetizing and poetry of a poet bring forth this gathering and bear forth a future in it. Poetizing and poetry imply in that future issue a shift, a transformation, a new beginning, a turn, for poetizing and poetry are inceptual and destining: what they bring forth, what their peculiar leap bears, is a historical beginning, one that "already contains the [historical] end latent within itself"

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<sup>79</sup> Heidegger's focus on poetizing and poetry intensifies with Heidegger's first extended work on Hölderlin (1934) and "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935-6), continuing through the Nietzsche lectures (1938-42) and later work on Hölderlin, which overlap with the writing Heidegger's self-critique of *Contributions to Philosophy, The Event (Das Ereignis)* (1941-2) and the writing and presentation of "Plato's Doctrine of Truth."

(PLT 74/GA5: 64). Further, “The truth that discloses itself in the work can never be proved or derived from what went before” (PLT 73/GA5: 63).

The thinking aspect of a poetizing thinking, for Heidegger, is not “‘Thinking,’ in the ordinary determination that has been usual for a long time, [as] the representation of something in its *idea* [‘look’] as the *koinon* [‘common’], representing something in its generality” (CP 51/GA65: 63). Instead, having let go and clear of the ordinary determinations that have been usual for a long time, the thinking aspect of a poetizing thinking stands out into the abyss of all possible thinkings and their projection, open to something inceptual, hearkening toward the note of a future need, but doing so without image, so as to remain open to possible projections and their imageless grasp: “Thinking is the imageless opening up of the abyss.” (E 279/GA71: 322). As thinking is the imageless opening up of the abyss, poetizing is “inventing—founding: ‘image’” (E 279/GA71: 321). “Poetry, although it exists only in the “element” of language, constantly possesses in its words an “image,” that is, something to be intuited, through which and in which it poetizes its compositions” (E 226/GA71: 262).

A poetizing thinking, for Heidegger, is a radical and cumulative and inceptual gathering, all together. It thinks what has been—“Remembrance [*Andenken*] is a poetizing thinking” (E 216/GA71: 250)—both radically and cumulatively. It thinks to the *root* of what is, returning to original domains of questioning and thinking, and in those domains doing what Heidegger thinks modern erudition and education (including modern academic philosophy) cannot do: “modern erudition [*Vielwisserei*], the knowledge of everything and discussing of everything, has lost its edge [*unfähig*; lit. become impotent] long ago and is now incapable of radically differentiating between what we do

understand, in the genuine sense, and what we do not understand, within the original domains of questioning” (BAP 9/GA22: 12). It thinks *cumulatively* in thinking the history of being, which, within the western philosophical tradition, is the chronological sequence and unfolding of ontotheologies, or in other words, human beings’ essential grasps of the supreme meaning of entities. And, a poetizing thinking and its thinker thinks *inceptually*: thinkers “do not merely think ‘of’ what has been and what is coming; instead, they think ahead into the beginning.... their thinking, as a thinking ahead, out of the pure separation [from the current ‘knowledge’ tradition and its worlds], possesses something of the character of grounding (that is, poetizing)” (E 211/GA71: 244).

What is at stake in seeing “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a *poetizing thinking* and not a traditional philosophical argument ranges from ‘local’ concerns about the presentation of the work to historical concerns of the greatest consequence for human being and for Heidegger. First, and beginning with the local, taking “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a poetizing thinking casts different light on its linguisticity and other rhetorical decisions. Heidegger’s extensive and unrelenting use of ‘scare’ quotation marks, drawing attention to words such as *allegory, truth, education, idea, forms, image, the good* are meant to call into question our traditional take on the senses of these words, pushing us to think them polysemically and question-worthy, or even to think them as images of abysses, opening into unknown and not yet ungrounded encounters with the meaning of allegory or truth or education apart from what we already think we know.

Taking “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a poetizing thinking casts different light on the possibility and role of “violence” in Heidegger’s reinterpretation of the Cave Allegory and, perhaps, in hermeneutic philosophy in general. Were we habituated differently to

what constitutes or discredits philosophical thinking or response, Heidegger would not need to address or apologize for ‘violence’—violations of hermeneutic propriety—as if it were irrational or irresponsible when it founds, as does ‘poetic license,’ a bearing ground for a new thinking, even as it is “of the unfamiliar and extraordinary, which means that it also contains strife with the familiar and ordinary” (PLT 74/GA5: 64). Additionally, taking “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a *poetizing thinking* can also answer the scholars who have focused their commentary on what Heidegger gets wrong in the details, or anomalies in, his interpretation of Plato's Cave Allegory and its translation into Heideggerian German.

### **2.3 Future Need**

Plato’s Cave Allegory is, perhaps, more credibly a poetizing thinking than is Heidegger’s “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” As I understand Heidegger’s take on poetizing thinking, explored explicitly in *The Event (Das Ereignis)* among other middle and later works, one of the criteria for poetizing thinking, as I’ll develop below, is that a poetizing thinking realizes and answers “future need.” As Heidegger says of his interpretation of Plato's Cave Allegory and its saying in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,”

according to our interpretation, which is rendered necessary by a future need, the ‘allegory’ not only illustrates the essence of education but at the same time opens our eyes to a transformation in the essence of ‘truth.’ If the ‘allegory’ can show both, must it not be the case that an essential relation holds between ‘education’ and ‘truth’? This relation does, in fact, obtain. And it consists in the fact that the essence of truth and the sort of

transformation it undergoes here first make possible 'education' in its basic structures. (P 167/GA9: 218)

There are several deep points here, some of which will make more sense in the next chapter, where the Cave Allegory's transformation in truth, as Heidegger says in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," 1) "follows the change in the essence of truth, a change that becomes the history of metaphysics, which in Nietzsche's thinking [specifically, Nietzschean will to power and its nihilisms] has entered upon its unconditioned fulfillment" and 2) begets the plight (*Not*), including plights in education, that make visible or manifest a need for education in its basic structures (P 181/GA9: 237).

Appropriating the Cave Allegory as Heidegger does, interpreting it as he does, is not for the sake of scholarly correctness but to open the question of the essential relation between truth and education, and the need to think it. Such a need, Heidegger indicates here, is "a future need," which renders necessary the poetizing thinking of Heidegger's interpretation of the Cave Allegory that is "Plato's Doctrine of Truth." It may be a future need that is not said or even acknowledged in, or by, a poetizing thinking but is of its saying nonetheless, as an unsaid saying or unthought thought.<sup>80</sup> I think Heidegger would say that the Plato's unsaid saying, his "doctrine" (*Lehre*) or transforming teaching on the essence of truth, in the Cave Allegory is within what is said in the allegory, in *Republic*, and in Plato's thought for the sake of a future need within the history of being.

Such needs 'dawn' in the history of being, thinks Heidegger, and constitute essential history's (*Geschichte*) happenings, its dynamic, and the shared human destiny (*Geschick*) that emerges human being's historical decisions, which not the relatively

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<sup>80</sup> For further elucidation of Heidegger's thinking on unsaid sayings and unthought thoughts see *What is Called Thinking?* (WCT 76-77/GA8: 82)

trivial happenings that constitute our ordinary schooled sense of ‘history’ (*Historie*), but the decisions that decide and destine the meaning of all entities and phenomena and their worlds. To that point, Heidegger says at the end of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,”

Thus Plato's doctrine of ‘truth’ is not something that is past. It is historically "present," not just in the sense that his teachings have a "later effect" that historians can calculate, nor as a reawakening or imitation of antiquity, not even as the mere preservation of what has been handed down. Rather, this change in the essence of truth is present as the all-dominating fundamental reality—long established and thus still in place—of the ever-advancing world history of the planet in this most modern of modern times. (P 181/GA9: 237)

Mark Ralkowski reminds us in his fine study, *Heidegger's Platonism*, that Heidegger is famous for his interpretation of Plato's Cave Allegory and Plato's thought in general as having caused “the waning of the Greek experience of truth as *aletheia*” in the subordination of *aletheia* to *idea* or as causing “subjectivism and ontotheology, the fraternal twin evils of Heidegger's history of Being that lead toward the crisis of European nihilism and the ontological decline of the West,” including the ontological decline of western education.<sup>81</sup> But “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” is not an indictment of Plato or Plato's thought as *causing* the devolution of the west into nihilism and crisis; it is not an argument within the discourse of Plato scholarship meant to get something ‘right’ about Plato and therein ‘advance’ truth in reading and teaching Plato. Heidegger's engagement with Plato is more properly educative, in terms of what means education for Heidegger, than refutation or indictment. Simply said, Heidegger engages Plato not to

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<sup>81</sup> See Mark Ralkowski, *Heidegger's Platonism*, 63.

indict him but to learn from him and to appropriate Plato's grasp of the essence of education and its image for Heidegger's own radical vision for education. He indicates some of the pedagogic principles and activities of that vision in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth"; a fuller presentation of that vision, as we shall consider later, emerges in the earlier (though not public or published until 1989) *Contributions to Philosophy*.

Among the pedagogic principles and activities is Heidegger's vision for education is his view that in radical questioning and thinking—that is, a return to inceptual or originating grounds of the history of human intelligibility and questioning and thinking there—we may realize the questioning, thinking, and decisive grasps of what-is (entity, phenomena) that determined or destined our current 'knowledge' tradition (western philosophy as metaphysics) and its worlds of structures, truths, and activities. As image of such a return, Heidegger gives us "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," wherein he returns to a site—Plato's Cave Allegory—in which an ontological and ontotheological happening in the history of being, specifically a shift in the essential meaning of truth, is occurring. There, Heidegger endeavors to think truth near to Plato's thinking truth in Plato's Cave Allegory and, then, for the sake of future need, interpret Plato's thinking and saying for the sake of future need.

Heidegger is following his own later account of encountering a thinker's thought, in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," as in *The Essence of Truth*, Heidegger engages Plato by going to Plato's encounter as it is disclosed in the Cave Allegory.<sup>82</sup> There, as spoken in

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<sup>82</sup> As reminder of my introduction, Heidegger writes in *What is Called Thinking?*: "for a face-to-face converse with the thinkers.... there are only two possibilities: either to go to their encounter, or to go counter to them. If we want to go to the encounter of a thinker's thought, we must magnify still further what is great in him. Then we will enter into what is unthought in his thought. If we wish only to go counter to a thinker's thought, this wish must have minimized beforehand what is great in him. We then shift his thought into the commonplaces of our know-it-all presumption. (WCT 77/ GA8: 83)

“Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger magnifies what is great in Plato and Plato's Cave Allegory: that Plato’s “thinking follows (*folgt*) the change in the essence of truth” (P 181/GA9: 237). Heidegger magnifies what is great in Plato for the sake of learning Plato’s unsaid saying, his “doctrine” (*Lehre*) or teaching on truth. That unsaid saying is the poetized *image* of Heidegger’s poetizing thinking in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” The thinking aspect of Heidegger’s poetizing thinking in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” is its radical and cumulative and inceptual gathering for the sake of a future need, the need to address what Heidegger sees as plight and crisis in the west, certainly on full display in Nazi Germany as Heidegger composes “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.”

Heidegger’s view that in a great thinker’s thought and saying (a thinker may be an artist or engineer and her ‘thought’ and ‘saying’ an image or a structure) a questioning thinker may discern that thinker’s ‘unthought’ and ‘unsaying’ opens the poetizing thinking of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” and forecasts that the work brings to light Plato’s unsaid saying:

The knowledge that comes from the sciences is usually expressed in propositions and laid before us as conclusions that we can grasp and put to use. But the "doctrine" of a thinker is that which remains unsaid within what is said, that to which we are exposed so that we might expend ourselves on it. (P155/P9:203)

What Heidegger means by “exposed” and “expend” and “we” here is ambiguous. The “we” may be all human being who is touched by a thinker’s unsaid saying and its historical—because transforming human intelligibility and worlds—consequence. If so, then this “we” is exposed (*ausgesetzt*) to the ‘doctrine’ or teaching of a thinker so we

might expend (*verschwende*) ourselves on it, an exposing and expending that constitute the unfolding of the history of being, its ontologies and ontotheologies. Or this “we” may be the audience of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” and its poetizing thinking. If so, this “we” is exposed (*ausgesetzt*) to the ‘doctrine’ or teaching of Plato so we might expend (*verschwende*) ourselves on it. This expending would entail 1) realizing what follows after Plato’s teaching and 2) reckoning with its consequences. Heidegger takes what follows Plato’s teaching to be—without indicting Plato—Platonism and the ontotheologies, including our late-modern Nietzschean will to power and nihilism.

Further, the words and connotative images Heidegger chooses for his saying here are, in *ausgesetzt* (exposed) and *verschwende* (expend), evocative. Along with more neutral senses, both carry negative senses: *exposed* as ‘exposed position’ or ‘out in the open, but imperiled’; and *expend* as ‘lay waste,’ ‘spin one’s wheels,’ ‘dissipate.’ These negative senses bear interestingly on both senses of “we.” If “we” are all human being who is touched by Plato’s unsaid saying, then Heidegger is indicating that Plato’s unsaid doctrine manifests a decisive historical happening, the transformation of the essence of truth, to which human being was exposed so that human being might expend or dissipate itself on or by that happening during the unfolding future. Though it might seem that Heidegger is saying that Plato or Plato’s unsaid doctrine ‘caused’ that unfolding future, which unfolds through the western philosophical tradition and its worldly manifestations toward what Heidegger takes to be its end in late-modern nihilism, Heidegger is clear to say later, both in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” and *Contributions to Philosophy* and elsewhere that Plato’s thought *follows* or manifests a change in the essence of truth that is a historical happening, not one that Plato or Plato’s thought caused, e.g. Plato’s “thinking

follows (*folgt*) the change in the essence of truth” (P 181/GA9: 237).

That change, as Heidegger construes its depiction in Plato's Cave Allegory, is a yoking of *aletheia* as experiential happening to its representation as *idea*. This shift transforms or turns human intelligibility from 1) attention to the coming-into-unconcealed-presencing of all-that-is (entities, phenomena, etc.) in their unique essence (which the Greeks called *aletheia*, per Heidegger's construal) to 2) attention toward a conceptual representation of presencings in terms of their commonness, common *look* or *idea*. In this shift, as Heidegger thinks it, human regard for entities (*Seienden*) turns from a wondering, experiential welcoming of the presencing of what-is (entities, phenomena, etc.), a welcoming that is restrained in its trying to preserve or shelter, but not 'capture,' that presencing in *logos* to pursuit of the *idea*. Pursuit of *idea* or concept is pursuit of the correct or 'true' common look of entities or phenomena and is pursuit of the *logos* or grasp that corresponds correctly to this look. The unconcealed presence of something (Greek *aletheia*) becomes the experiencing of the *idea* instead of the presencing itself; what is taken as 'true' or 'truth' is correct grasp of the idea rather than experiencing the unconcealing of something. In the way that *aletheia* as unconcealing offers degrees of unconcealing in a human's experience of what is unconcealing and seen, so does truth as *idea* (*orthotes*) offer degrees of correct grasp of the idea. However, it is Heidegger's view that, as correct grasp of *idea* overcomes experiencing unconcealing presencing itself, and as *idea* unfolds to become not only concept but also concept-as-entity, such that ideas are objects of thought, exchange, and even commerce, the *aletheic* presencing of the entities and phenomena that ideas represent dissipates and withdraws, hollowing both the meaningful presence of truth, human being's intelligibility of the entities and phenomena

of its worlds, and human being itself, inasmuch as humans are, for Heidegger, essentially the place—the there—where meaningful presence or being (*Sein/Seyn*) happens or ‘events.’ The emptying or withdrawing of meaningful presence, including from ‘truth’ itself, is the characterizing essential happening of our late-modern world. As Heidegger realizes in thinking that truth and education are linked in an original and essential unity, a shift in the essential meaning of truth at the site of Plato's Cave Allegory is also a shift in the essential meaning of education.

#### **2.4 *Paideia* and *Apaideia***

In “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a poetizing thinking, Heidegger depicts a ‘thought-image’ of his own learning from Plato’s unsaid saying and its ‘teaching’ of a transformation in the essential meaning of truth that manifests in Plato’s thought. “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” shows Heidegger thinking the Cave Allegory’s depiction of the “original and essential unity” of truth and education, a thinking for which Heidegger had done extensive preparatory thinking in his close reading of the Cave Allegory in *The Essence of Truth*. In *The Essence of Truth*, Heidegger’s explicit focus is the transformation in the essence truth. Heidegger follows that transformation through a study of Cave Allegory’s image of a pedagogical happening—the turning of the prisoner from the cave wall and compelling him toward the ideas and their illumination by the highest idea—but the pedagogy itself of the pedagogical happening is hardly Heidegger’s concern in *The Essence of Truth*. However, in the only section of *The Essence of Truth* explicitly addressing education (as *paideia*), Heidegger does indicate several aspects of what will become his more mature vision of education in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.”

First, he quotes the statement that introduces the Plato's Cave Allegory in *Republic*:  
“Picture to yourself [namely the following image as given in the cave allegory] our human nature in respect of its possible positionedness [*Gehaltenheit*] on the one hand, or lack of bearings [*Haltungslosigkeit*] on the other hand” (ET 83/GA34: 114). As Heidegger offers as reminder “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” “Plato's assertion is clear: The ‘allegory of the cave’ illustrates the essence of ‘education’” (P 167/GA34: 218), then implied here is that education affects “positionedness” and “bearings” of human nature, which indeed it does for Heidegger.

Further, Heidegger says of education in *The Essence of Truth*:

*Paideia* is not education [*Bildung*], but...that which prevails as our ownmost being, both in respect of that to which it empowers itself, and also of what, in its powerlessness, it loses, of that into which it degenerates. It is not a matter just of *paideia*, but *paideias te peri kai apaideusias*, of the one as well as the other, that is, of their confrontation or setting-apart, of what is *between* both and out of which they both arise, so that they may then assert themselves against each other. *Paideia* is the *positionedness* [*Gehaltenheit*] of man, arising from the 'stance' [*Haltung*] of the withstanding that carries through [*sich durchsetzenden Standhaltens*] wherein man, in the midst of beings, freely chooses the footing [*Halt*] for his own essence, i.e. that whereto and wherein he empowers himself in his essence. This innermost empowerment of our own essence to the essence of man, this free choice of footing by an entity given over to itself, is, as occurrence, nothing else but philosophizing, as

the questioning that presses through to being and unhiddenness, i.e. to what itself empowers unhiddenness. (ET 83/GA34: 114-5)

What Heidegger speaks in this thinking on education is difficult to grasp and less lucid than his thinking ten years later on the essence of education in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” but we may gather of Heidegger’s thinking on education in *The Essence of Truth* that 1) *Paideia* is not education [*Bildung*]; 2) *paideia* arises out of philosophizing, the innermost faculty of the essence of human being; 3) when human beings fall away from philosophizing (which is their innermost essence), *paideia* degenerates into *apaideia*; 4) *paideia* and *apaideia* are in *polemos*, dynamic strife; 5) *paideia* in its arising out of philosophizing realizes a human being’s positionedness, or standpoint.

There are some notable differences between what *paideia* “is” here in *The Essence of Truth* and what is education in its essence in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” It is possible that *The Essence of Truth* passage is a “construction site” (*Baustellen*) in the unfolding of Heidegger’s thought and work on education; that is, a ‘site’ never abandoned but built upon and subsumed into later thought” (OWL 21/GA12: 21). Or, as Heidegger is presenting in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” what he takes to be Plato’s essential “illustration” in the Cave Allegory of essence of education, it is possible that the essence of education that Heidegger brings forth in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” belongs more to Plato than to Heidegger or more to Heidegger’s poetizing thinking and the *image* of Plato’s unsaid saying that Heidegger is unfolding than to what Heidegger takes to be his own essence of education. It is my sense that all of these possibilities are in play.

In *The Essence of Truth* passage, Heidegger says *paideia* is not the German *Bildung*, but in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger writes,

the German word *Bildung* [formation] comes closest to capturing the word *paideia*, but not entirely,” and it comes closest only if *Bildung* is restored to its original power as a word, [wherein] *Bildung* means “forming people in the sense of impressing on them a character that unfolds and ‘forming’ by antecedently taking measure in terms of some paradigmatic image, which for that reason is called the proto-type [*Vorbild*]. Thus at one and the same time ‘formation’ means impressing a character on people and guiding people by a paradigm. The contrary of *paideia* is *apaideia* lack of formation, where no fundamental bearing is awakened and unfolded, and where no normative proto-type is put forth. (P 166/GA9: 217)

What all Heidegger is up to here is multifold and ironic. On the one hand, Heidegger is sincerely indicating that *paideia*, like *Bildung* in its original sense and *power*, impresses a guiding, paradigmatic character, probably a philosophical character. On the other hand, the reiteration of ‘form,’ even more numerous in an unabridged quotation of the passage, indicates that Heidegger in considering Plato’s sense of *paideia* is questioning an educational ‘form’-ation that impresses a character in terms of a paradigm or normative proto-type that is deformative or, in terms of the passage from *The Essence of Truth*, is falling away from philosophizing and, therein, invoking *apaideia*.

Absent from the account in *The Essence of Truth* is the emphasis in “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” on the “movements of passage” from stage to stage depicted in the Cave Allegory (stage 1: the prisoner turned to cave wall. Stage 2: the prisoner unshackled and turned to the fire in the cave. Stage 3: the liberated cave-dweller compelled into the

sunlight outside the cave. Stage 4: the liberated cave-dweller turning his gaze to the sun.) These movements of passage, as Heidegger characterizes them, have three fundamental characteristics: slow, steady, and turning. They are slow because the “turning around has to do with one’s being and takes place in the very ground of one’s essence; they are steady because the turning must “develop into a stable comportment”; and they are turning because, “as Plato defines its essence, *paideia* means the *periagoge holes tes psyches*, leading the whole human being in the turning around of his or her essence” (P 166/GA9 216-7).

Furthermore, as Heidegger explains in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,”

The “allegory of the cave” concentrates its explanatory power on making us able to see and know the essence of *paideia* by means of the concrete images recounted in the story. At the same time Plato seeks to avoid false interpretations; he wants to show that the essence of *paideia* does not consist in merely pouring knowledge into the unprepared soul as if it were some container held out empty and waiting. On the contrary, genuine education takes hold of our very soul and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it. (P 167/GA9: 217)

Again, what all Heidegger is up to here is ambiguous and/or ironic, but befitting a poetizing thinking, what he is up to is not literal exegesis. In “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” Heidegger is, as Plato is in the Cave Allegory, concentrating the explanatory power of his poetizing thinking on making his audience able to see and know the essence of *paideia*. Like Plato, Heidegger seeks to avoid false interpretations. Like Plato, Heidegger wants to

show that the essence of *paideia* does not consist in merely pouring knowledge into the unprepared soul as if it were some container held out empty and waiting.<sup>83</sup> And, for (only) Heidegger, genuine education takes hold of our very soul and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it—it is noteworthy that Heidegger doesn't explicitly attribute *this* expression of education to Plato. Noteworthy too is that this expression speaks “genuine education.” The sequence of statements here, slow and steady, are meant to turn Heidegger's audience toward what is questionworthy (and, therein, questionable) about ‘*paideia*’ as depicted in Plato's Cave Allegory. Heidegger accepts Plato's takes on the essence of *paideia* and its process, and he appropriates these takes for his philosophical understanding of education, its essence, and its processes: 1) Heidegger accepts that genuine education (*paideia*) must consist of movements of passage that should be slow, steady, and gradual, so that “the human essence is reoriented and accustomed to the region assigned to it at each point” or stage (P 166/GA9: 216); 2) Heidegger accepts that education is essentially periagogic, a turning; and, 3) Heidegger accepts that genuine education awakens and unfolds a fundamental bearing in the “innermost” “ownmost being” (to borrow from the passage from *The Essence of Truth* quoted above).

What Heidegger does not accept without question is the ‘form’-ation aspect of *Bildung* and Platonic *paideia* when the “proto-type” deforms or fails to awaken and unfold the philosophizing “innermost” or “ownmost being” of human being, or when ‘education’ fails to a human to the place or ‘positionedness’ of our essential being. Such ‘form’-ation, such ‘education’ is for Heidegger *apaideia*.

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<sup>83</sup> Heidegger might say “jug” instead of container, and as I'll show in Chapter 4, the image of *apaideia* as filling a jug is particularly powerful for what Heidegger suggests is *paideia*, or genuine education.

Furthermore, though Heidegger accepts the Cave Allegory's depiction of the movements of education as indeed unconcealing the essence of *paideia*, in contrast to *apaideia*, what Heidegger does not accept from his standpoint, as he regards his standpoint within late-modernism, is what the education depicted in the Cave Allegory turns its liberated prisoner learner *to*. The Cave Allegory depicts an education in mastering knowing the ideas; it depicts an education in metaphysical knowing. It depicts a *paideia* that turns its learner *to* the ideas and the highest idea and to their pursuit. It positions its learner to regard entities in terms of their common look as *idea* and to turn *from aletheic* presencing of the entities and phenomena. Heidegger interprets the educational turning and repositioning of the human learner as it is depicted in the Cave Allegory to be *apaideia* not *paideia*, and, then, a deforming turning and education. It deforms because paradigmatic image of a human positioned toward *ideas* fails, as Heidegger thinks it, to position human being in the place of its essential being and accustoming us to it. That place is *aletheia* and its happening in *Ereignis*. Heidegger's accustoming, or preparing, human being for that place and happening includes his educative appropriation of Plato's Cave Allegory and its depiction of *paideia* and turning that depiction to become his unsaid saying in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth": that the *paideia* of metaphysics is *apaideia*.

## **2.5 Thinking Heidegger to Thank Plato**

Heidegger's encounter with Plato in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" and the disclosure of *apaideia* in the Cave Allegory's *paideia* is not an indicting of Plato but is instead commemorating and 'thanking,' thanking Plato for what his thought holds for the sake of

human future need, a future that is upon and yawning before late-modern human being. As Heidegger spotlights in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” *apaideia* and *paideia* belong together, for “*paideia* is essentially a movement of passage, namely, from *apaideia* to *paideia*” (P 166/GA9: 217). Thus, what is *apaideia* in the Cave Allegory can compel a movement of passage to *paideia*, if the plight of *apaideia* is thought and its need answered.

About poetizing thinking, or thoughtful poetizing, and its thanking, Heidegger writes in *The Event*, a notebook nearly contemporary with “Plato's Doctrine of Truth”: “thanking as thoughtful poetizing. 1, the thanking is a poetizing—greeting. 2, the thanking is a thinking—as a questioning of that which is *worthy of question*” (E 285/GA71: 328). In Heidegger’s poetizing thinking that is “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger is thanking Plato for Plato’s greatness as a thinker, particularly Plato’s greatness as a being-historical-thinker, inasmuch as Plato’s thinking instantiates a significant shift in the history of the truth of what-is. Such thanking is also a questioning, a challenging forth of the ground or ‘earth’ of a great thinker (and, again, not an indictment), for the sake of what that thinker’s saying and unsaying can teach. It is also a “greeting”—a meeting and encountering of that thinker in his or her own encounter, for the sake of discerning what is unsaid or unthought there.

Evident in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” as in *The Essence of Truth*, is Heidegger’s engaging with Plato by going to Plato’s encounter as it is disclosed in the Cave Allegory. In “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger magnifies what is great in Plato and Plato's Cave Allegory—that Plato’s “thinking follows (*folgt*) the change in the essence of truth” (P 181/GA9: 237)—and magnifies what is great in Plato for the sake of learning Plato’s

unsaid saying, his “doctrine” (*Lehre*) or teaching on truth. That unsaid saying is the poetized *image* of Heidegger’s poetizing thinking in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” If that unsaid saying is the *poetizing* aspect of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” as a poetizing thinking, then the *thinking* aspect of Heidegger’s poetizing thinking in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” is the work’s radical and cumulative and inceptual gathering for the sake of a future need, the need to address what Heidegger sees as plight and crisis in the West, increasingly manifest in Nazi Germany as Heidegger composes “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.”

It is Ralkowski’s view that “at some point during the 1930s, however, for reasons he never fully explained, Heidegger’s understanding of Plato’s place and role in the history of Western philosophy changed significantly. By the time Heidegger published ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’ in 1940, Plato was no longer the philosopher in whose thought we might recover ‘the history of man’s essence’ (*ET* 84).”<sup>84</sup> By my reckoning of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger *does* see Plato as a philosopher in whose thought we might recover ‘the history of man’s essence,’ and does so as of 1940, when he composes “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” Else, we would not have Heidegger’s elucidation of Plato’s unsaid “doctrine” on the essence of truth, or truth’s essential relation to education, or Heidegger’s appropriation of Plato’s teaching for his own radical vision for education.

In other senses, though, Ralkowski is right that by the time Heidegger published ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’ in 1940, Heidegger no longer thought Plato’s ontotheological view of being itself as the “highest” idea or “Good” the thinking of being itself by which

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<sup>84</sup> See Mark Ralkowski, *Heidegger’s Platonism*, 63.

human being might recover “the history of man’s essence.” Heidegger says in the only section of *The Essence of Truth* explicitly mentioning education (as *paideia*),

If, therefore, the perceiving of the idea constitutes the ground upon which man as a being comports himself to beings, then to the highest idea there must correspond a perceiving that occurs most deeply in the essence of man. The questioning which penetrates through to the *highest* idea is thus simultaneously a questioning down into the deepest perceiving possible for man as an existing being, a questioning of the history of man's essence that aims at understanding what empowers being and unhiddenness. We have followed this question of the history of man's essence in our interpretation of the cave allegory, and we have seen that it is a quite definite occurrence with quite definite stages and transitions (ET 81/GA34: 112).

Heidegger is here chasing his most fundamental question—What allows for meaningfulness? (“what empowers being and unhiddenness”?)—and is finding in his reading of the Cave Allegory that what makes Plato’s highest idea ‘good’ is that it 1) makes possible “the ground upon which man as a being comports himself to beings” and 2) calls for “a perceiving that occurs most deeply in the essence of man.” Further, in a sentence that resonates with the questioning and purport Heidegger depicts himself to be pursuing in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger speaks a notable duality, if not ambiguity, in the “idea” that makes possible the ground and perceiving that occur most deeply in humans: “The questioning which penetrates through to the *highest* idea is thus simultaneously a questioning down into the deepest perceiving possible for man as an

existing being, a questioning of the history of man's essence that aims at understanding what empowers being and unhiddenness.” Questioning that idea involves both an up (as highest) and down (into the deepest). This duality—and ambiguity, I would say, as Heidegger also does—at this moment in Heidegger’s reading of Plato indicates that an essential transformation in Heidegger’s thinking about “what empowers being and unhiddenness” is underway, a transformation toward a critique of metaphysics as ontotheology. Further, it is underway in a way analogous to the ambiguity and simultaneous appearance of truth as *aletheia* and truth as *orthotes* in Plato’s Cave Allegory, which also indicates an essential transformation underway.

By 1936-38 and *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger has let go Plato’s idea of the ‘Good’ as that which constitutes, empowers, and lights the essential questioning and perceiving of humans. So, indeed, in this way, Ralkowski is right that Heidegger is no longer looking to Plato and Plato’s idea of the ‘Good’ as that by which humans might recover the history of man’s essence. Instead, as Ralkowski’s study argues, “to counter Nietzsche’s inversion of Platonism and exhaustion of the possibilities opened up by original metaphysical questions, Heidegger argues for a fundamentally Platonic account of Being as such: a return to authentic (non-metaphysical) Platonism. However, what Heidegger leaps from in Plato’s account of Being-as-such is its position as “highest” in Plato’s thought, is its representation as sun above, is its ontotheological ‘lighting’ of entities from without, subordinating their lighting—or presencing—from within. What Heidegger leaps from too is the position of human being toward entities called for in Platonism and both depicted and ‘taught to’ the prisoner in the Cave Allegory: in Platonism, human beings turn their backs on the entities and phenomena of the earth, as

does the prisoner in leaving the earth of the cave, and instead turn their gaze and attention to what's 'highest' and direct their pedagogical energies (at risk of death in the Cave Allegory) to compelling fellow humans to turn their backs to entities and their gaze to the sun and what's highest.<sup>85</sup>

What Heidegger leaps to during the 1930s is no highest 'Good' but is being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*), without metaphysical divinization. This being-itself is imagized as "earth" and regarded as lowest, because a ground-source unformed, a no-thing, rather than the ultimate form and entity that the Platonic 'Good' is. The question corresponding to this being-itself is not "what are entities?," which metaphysics answers as "the Being of beings" (*Sein des Seiendes*), thinking 'up' toward whatever metaphysical entity is holding sway in its respective western ontotheological age (the idea of the Good for the Platonic Greeks, Creator-God in the Middle Ages, no-God or dead-God in late-modern Nietzscheanism). Instead, the question corresponding to being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*), without metaphysical divinization, is "what is truth of being?" Heidegger takes this question to call for "a questioning *down* into the deepest perceiving possible for man as an existing being [emphasis mine]" and "a questioning of the history of man's essence that aims at understanding what empowers being and unhiddenness," for this question and its questioning leads human being to find and found what Heidegger calls "being-historical-truths," each one a ground in its time for the meaning of what-is and the bringing forth of intelligibilities on or by that ground. This is not, as is Platonism, a questioning 'up' to perceive form—ontotheological light—already there and merely recollecting it. It is instead a human questioning 'down' and *into* and *toward* the

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<sup>85</sup> See Carolyn Thomas and Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Contributions to Education (From Thinking), 96ff.

inexhaustible source of grounds and intelligible groundings and, there, gathering originally and originatingly truth that lights the unfolding of worlds by a non-traditional ontological understanding. That non-traditional ontological understanding is essentially temporal, and “not ultimate but stands under an empowerment,” which for Heidegger in the middle 1930s, is historical being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*). While this might seem a non-metaphysical, but nonetheless fundamentally Platonic, account of Being as such, as Ralkowski reads it, it is at the same time fundamentally *other* than Platonic ‘Being as such.’

Heidegger’s leap in the middle 1930s from metaphysical fundamental ontology and its questioning ‘up’ to perceive form—ontotheological light—already there toward historical ontotheology (within metaphysics) and the prospect of a radical ontological “truth-event” in human being’s encounter with historical being-itself (*Seyn/Sein*) happens especially in response to what Heidegger perceives to be plight (*Not*) and need in the university and the significance of their “happening” (LQ 55/GA38: 60). This leap, motivated by plight and its privation, discloses, as we will see in Chapter 3, a radical shift in Heidegger’s thinking and questioning of being itself.

## PLIGHT, CRISIS, AND NEED—THE *NOT* IN THINKING HEIDEGGER

### 3.1 Crisis and Paradigm Shift

Thomas Sheehan, an accomplished Heidegger scholar of nearly fifty years, has focused his work of the past fifteen years on his argument for a “paradigm shift” in the reading of Heidegger.<sup>86</sup> Sheehan’s call for, and account of the *need* for, a paradigm shift in the reading of Heidegger and in Heidegger scholarship can, for my study, can serve as an *analogy* by which Heidegger’s project for educational preparation in *Contributions to Philosophy* may be made more approachable and, then, Heidegger’s contribution to our thinking on education may be made more clear. The term “paradigm shift” of course originated with Thomas Kuhn in 1970, but the idea of paradigm shift is more originally Heideggerian and, in Heidegger’s version, is even more fundamental than Kuhn’s, as this chapter aims to introduce. A Kuhnian paradigm shift accomplishes a foundational revolution in scientific intelligibility, as exemplified in the shift from Aristotelian classical physics to Newtonian physics and, later, the shift from Newtonian physics to quantum physics. In a Kuhnian revolutionary paradigm shift, the organizational and interpretive structure of a science undergoes revision in order to account for, and incorporate, anomalies in the science’s prior range of knowledge and insight. These anomalies can be said to indicate or belong to deficiencies or wants in the interpretive structure holding sway. In sufficient number or degree, these wants amount to *crisis* that *needs* or calls for radical revision in the interpretive paradigm.

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<sup>86</sup> See Sheehan’s first major paper on this focus from 2001: Thomas Sheehan, “A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research.” And, more recently, Sheehan’s 2014 book, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*.

In its most radical and fundamental version, Heidegger's vision for paradigm shift is a revolution in *ontological* intelligibility, turning human being-in-its-ownmost-essence from one most fundamental ontological standpoint to another. As we saw in Chapter 2, Heidegger takes such radical turning to be the essence of education. Heidegger's earlier, more fundamental version of revolution in intelligibility points *most radically* toward fundamental revolution in *ontological* intelligibility, albeit an ontological intelligibility that is other than the ontology of the western philosophical tradition and its metaphysics. Further, and in only one degree less radically, Heidegger's earlier, more fundamental version of revolution in intelligibility points toward fundamental revolution in *ontotheological* intelligibility. Heidegger's thinking on revolution, or shift, or turn in ontological and ontotheological intelligibility constitutes one of the central ideas in the Heidegger's thought as a whole.

This central idea is neither briefly nor simply explained and a full explanation is beyond the scope of this study. In one of Heidegger's formulations—Heidegger's account of the “history of being”—Heidegger's argues 1) that the meaning of “being” (*Sein*) is ontologically historical in ‘all time,’ unfolding and shifting through time, and 2) that within western metaphysics and its temporal duration, the meaning of “being” (*Sein*) is ontotheologically historical. An ontotheological revolution, or ontotheological ‘paradigm shift’ in intelligibility takes place within the western philosophical tradition, which in its essence is, for Heidegger, ontology practiced as metaphysics. More specifically, Heidegger sees the western philosophical tradition as having an ontotheological structure and constituted as a series of ontotheological epochs (for example, 1) Ancient Greek, 2) Platonic, 3) Medieval, 4) Modern, 5) Nietzschean late-modern), each one indicating an

ontotheological revolution and shift.<sup>87</sup> Each epoch answers essentially differently the guiding question of western philosophy as metaphysics is *tí to ón*, “what are entities?” (CP 30/GA65: 38). By this guiding question and its answering, Heidegger says, metaphysics determines and grounds the meaning of the “being of entities” (*Sein des Seiendes*) as a whole, and in so doing, metaphysics posits “the truth about the totality of entities as such.”<sup>88</sup> This truth—the meaning of entities as a whole—is an ontotheological stand or position. In its ontological capacity, this ontotheological stand determines the innermost meaning or ground of entities—the essential meaning that unifies all that is (in the sense of, “all entities *are* X’). In its theological capacity, this ontotheological stand determines the outermost or supreme meaning or ground of entities—“the indefinite or infinite source and ultimate destination of all entities” (such as Anaximander’s *apeiron*, or the “form of the Good” in Platonism, or Christianity’s Creator-God) and that “from which reality derives and by appeal to which the meaningfulness of reality can be vindicated.”<sup>89</sup> An ontotheological revolution, or ontotheological ‘paradigm shift’ in intelligibility, then, is a shift in the holistic intelligibility of all phenomena and things, all entities, anything that in any way “is”: for example, what nature *is* to the Greeks, or how nature appears to the Greeks, is essentially different from what nature *is* or how it is regarded by late-modern Nietzschean nihilists.

As Heidegger thinks it, an *ontological* revolution, or *ontological* ‘paradigm shift’ in intelligibility takes place in an inceptual “temporal-spatial playing field” or open

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<sup>87</sup> For thorough elucidation of ontotheology and metaphysics’ ontotheological structure, see Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, §2, 11ff. Chapter 1 of Iain Thomson’s *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* further develops in several respects Thomson’s discussion of ontotheology and metaphysics’ ontotheological structure in *Heidegger on Ontotheology*; see 7ff.

<sup>88</sup> See Carolyn Thomas and Iain Thomson, “Heidegger’s Contributions to Education (From Thinking),” 99.

<sup>89</sup> See Carolyn Thomas and Iain Thomson, *Heidegger’s Contributions to Education (From Thinking)*, 99.

clearing, clear of or not trodden upon by the worlds, structures, knowings, and ‘answers’ already realized. Within this open clearing, new modes of questioning being-itself (*Sein/Seyn*) philosophies—other than the western philosophical tradition and its metaphysics—are disclosed (CP 335ff./GA65: 424ff.). By this view, the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics, what we know traditionally as “philosophy,” is the “first beginning” of philosophy, to be followed by other beginnings, other guiding questions than the *tí to ón*, “what are entities?” of metaphysics, other ontological posits or positions than that of metaphysics toward beings, other philosophies, other traditions, other modes of intelligibility other than those realized in the unfolding of the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics, and other worlds of intelligibility and their structures, activities, meaningfulnesses. We may find hints or analogues of this otherness in non-western thought, traditions, intelligibilities, worlds.

Sheehan argues that the need for paradigm shift in the reading of Heidegger’s works and thought emerges from Sheehan’s view 1) that Heidegger scholarship has disclosed “a caricature of his philosophy,” and 2) that this scholarship offers a reading of Heidegger’s works and thought, especially since the publication of *Contributions to Philosophy*, that “is no longer able to accommodate the full range of his lectures and writings as they are now published in his virtually complete *Gesamtausgabe*.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, among the more recently published volumes of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* there are anomalous texts that don’t fit Heidegger scholarship’s interpretive paradigm. Further, this paradigm discloses a Heidegger who, as caricature, is but a representation of Heidegger that is *not*-Heidegger, not fully what Heidegger was “driving at,” as Sheehan characterizes it in his own preferred plain-speak. Sheehan recently characterized this need

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<sup>90</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, xii.

for paradigm shift in Heidegger scholarship as emerging from *crisis*: “Heidegger scholarship is in crisis these days, and not just because his anti-Semitism has recently been put on full display. The crisis, rather, is that almost ninety years after his major work was published and sixty years after his best work was finished, Heidegger scholars still cannot agree on what he was driving at.”<sup>91</sup>

The current paradigm, Sheehan reminds us, is what Sheehan calls “the classical paradigm,” established by his teacher William Richardson’s *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (1963). The classical paradigm posits that 1) Heidegger’s main concern is the meaning of being; 2) the fundamental or guiding question of Heidegger’s thought is “what is being (*Sein*)?”; and, 3) there is a turn in Heidegger’s thinking during Heidegger’s middle period from Heidegger’s pursuing the guiding question “what is being?” in terms of fundamental ontology (“Heidegger I” or ‘early’ Heidegger) to Heidegger’s pursuing the guiding question “what is being?” in terms of historical ontotheology or ‘history of being’ (“Heidegger II” or ‘later’ Heidegger).<sup>92</sup> The classical paradigm, says Sheehan, which established “the ‘being’ discourse, the *Sein*-ology that has dominated Heidegger research for the last half-century, . . . [and] has exhausted its explanatory power.”<sup>93</sup>

One of the signs of the exhaustion of the explanatory power of the classical paradigm of Heidegger scholarship is Kuhnian anomaly (the anomalous Heidegger texts and their thought, especially seen in light of the publication of *Contributions to*

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<sup>91</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, “Review: Krzysztof Ziarek, *Language After Heidegger*.” *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews: An Electronic Journal*. Dec 13, 2014. <https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/54620-language-after-heidegger/>

<sup>92</sup> See William Richardson’s account of the evolution of his terms “Heidegger I” and “Heidegger II” in William Richardson *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, xxvff. Richardson also characterizes the turn in Heidegger’s thought as one from “Being and Time” to “Time and Being. See too Parvis Emad, “‘Heidegger I,’ ‘Heidegger II,’” and *Beitriige zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*,” 129ff.

<sup>93</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, xii.

*Philosophy*, that don't fit the classical paradigm). A more fundamental sign of the exhaustion of the classical paradigm's explanatory power is its *errancy*, what the classical paradigm does not 'get right' about Heidegger's thought. What the classical paradigm and its *Sein*-ology doesn't get right, according to Sheehan, are two fundamental points. First, Heidegger's principal concern was never was fundamental ontology, the "being" of entities (*Sein des Seienden*)—even before the classical paradigm's view of the so-called turn in Heidegger's thinking. The "turn" and the common perception established by the classical paradigm's *Sein*-ology that Heidegger is the philosopher of metaphysical being pursuing the ontological and ontotheological question spoken in *Being and Time*—What is being?—are erroneous. There was no turn; there are no two Heideggers, Heidegger I and Heidegger II. Instead, Sheehan claims that Heidegger was a phenomenologist throughout his entire career of thought, pursuing phenomenology as "the meaningful presence (*Anwesen*) of things within contexts of human concerns and interests."<sup>94</sup> Consequently, Heidegger's focus is not *Sein*-ology but meaningful presencing (*Anwesen*). The second point missed by the classical paradigm is that Heidegger wanted to move beyond analyzing meaningfulness as that which makes things intelligibly present to us. Instead, Sheehan tells us "he was after what *allows* for meaningfulness"—and that is *Ereignis*.<sup>95</sup> The classical paradigm misses *Ereignis*, the event of meaningful disclosing ("truth" as *aletheia*) intelligible to human being in human being's encounter with the retractive source (*beyng/Seyn* in *Contributions*) of all meaningful intelligibility.

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<sup>94</sup> See Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, "no one can jump over his own shadow: Richard Polt and Gregory Fried in conversation with Thomas Sheehan." For developed versions of Sheehan's Heidegger-as-phenomenologist argument, see Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*. See also Thomas Sheehan, "A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research."

<sup>95</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, 189.

Several times in work after 1935, Heidegger confirms Sheehan's view that the question of *what allows for meaningfulness* is Heidegger's unique question and concern. First in the prelude of *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger writes, "the question of 'meaning [*Sinn*],' that is, according to the elucidations in *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*], the question of the grounding of a projected domain, or, in short, the question of the truth of being, is and remains my question and is my unique question, for at issue in it is indeed what is most unique." (CP 11/GA65: 10-11). In *Ereignis* happens "the truth of being," "the grounding of a projected domain." Or, in other words, in human being that is creatively open to the self-concealing source of all meaningful intelligibility (*being/Seyn/Sein*), truth preserves (though not permanently) a happening of meaningful intelligibility and by that truth and its shining forth a projected brightness, other meaningful grasps are possible. This 'truth-event' is *Ereignis*.

In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger is seeking and aiming to prepare human 'students' for *Ereignis* on the largest possible scale: an *Ereignis*, or truth-event, that finds, founds, and grounds "another beginning" for western philosophy. Such an *Ereignis* would be the most radical and most far reaching possible paradigm shift, for Heidegger in *Contributions* is calling for a radical restart to the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics and a radical restart all worlds and structures of intelligibility that unfold from any inceptual philosophical ground. By Heidegger's analysis of the ontotheological history of western metaphysics, the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics is at its end with Nietzschean metaphysics, which manifests as nihilism, wherein the meaning of being—or the meaning of meaningful presence in whatever form (as life, science, art, book, education)—is nothing more than a resource for optimized

commodification. In the Nietzschean ontotheological age or epoch of western metaphysics, thinks Heidegger, meaningful presence has so drained from human encounters with entities and phenomena, from how entities and phenomena are experienced and ‘show up’ to human beings, that human encounters with phenomena are now deformed, in crisis, and in *need* of a revolutionary turn.

As Heidegger calls for a radical, comprehensive, ontological paradigm shift in western philosophy—a radical reappropriation of the truth or meaning of what-is (all phenomena, entities, anything that ‘is’)—so is Sheehan calling for a radical, comprehensive, ontological paradigm shift in the reading of Heidegger or in Heidegger scholarship. Both Heidegger’s project and Sheehan’s project call for ‘ontological’ shift inasmuch as each is seeking a regrounding, or re-truthing, of the ontological meaning of their field of entities—the totality of all that-is in the case of Heidegger; and all that-is of Heidegger’s works and thought in the case of Sheehan. Where Heidegger finds errancy in western philosophy’s first tradition, fundamental ontology as metaphysics, Sheehan finds errancy in Heidegger scholarship’s first tradition, the “classical tradition” as *Sein*-ology. Where Sheehan’s argument for paradigm shift in Heidegger scholarship aims to ‘teach’ or direct its audience toward a new reading of Heidegger, to bring forth a new interpretative ‘worlding’ of Heidegger’s textual ‘earth,’ Heidegger in his educative capacity in *Contributions to Philosophy* aims to prepare those willing to ‘learn’ as guided, in order to bring forth a new philosophical ‘worlding’ of intelligible ‘earth’ (*Seyn*, for Heidegger in *Contributions*).

Sheehan’s argument, his presentation of his case for paradigm shift, is not as dramatically urgent as Heidegger’s plea for the overturning of metaphysics, but in most

senses, less is at stake in Sheehan's case. With Heidegger, what is at stake is meaningfulness of all that is, including the meaning of human being, since, for Heidegger, the essential function, the essential *energeia* of human being, is to be-at-work in disclosing meaningful presence of what-is (as it is the meaning of a Heidegger scholar to be at work disclosing the meaningful presence of Heidegger's work and thought). Sheehan doesn't appear to think that Heidegger scholars need any more direction or 'education' in disclosing the meaningful presence of Heidegger's work and thought beyond his argument that the classical paradigm, *Sein*-ology is at its end, has "exhausted its explanatory power." In other words, Sheehan seems to presume that if he can persuade those who disclose Heideggerian meaning of the anomalies and the errancy of *Sein*-ology in its reading of Heidegger—specifically that it misses Heidegger's continual phenomenological standpoint and his central concern *Ereignis*—and if Sheehan can persuade them of "crisis" in Heidegger scholarship that these anomalies and errancies indicate, then readers of Heidegger and Heidegger scholars as 'scientists' will respond to the need for shift and find their way to their disclosing a new interpretive paradigm of what Heidegger is driving at. They will find their way to what is most question-worthy in the intimations Sheehan presents and, then, in whatever intimations ensue therein. Sheehan presumes that they know their way around the temporal-spatial playing field of reading and disclosing Heidegger. Heidegger, by contrast, thinks that those who will enact his paradigm shift need direction or educative "preparation" (*Vorbereitung*) in order to respond appropriately radically to the call of late-modern anomaly, which Heidegger designates in *Contributions to Philosophy* as *plight* or dire need (*Not*).

As we saw in Chapter Two, Heidegger accepts Plato's descriptive form or shape of *paideia* in Cave Allegory, but not deformation it yields within its program of study, specifically the question it pursues—*tí to ón*, what are entities?—and its prevailing answer: being (or meaning) as correctness of representation or objectification. Heidegger accepts Plato's view that education is essentially a turning. He accepts that this turning consist of slow and steady movements of passage through a series of stages to accustom a learner to the bearing of each stage. He accepts that genuine education awakens and unfolds an innermost disposition. He accepts that genuine education leads a human being to the place of ownmost being, belonging, and concerns. But for his late-modern time and its needs, Heidegger rejects the 'Sein-ology' of what Heidegger calls "the first beginning" and its metaphysical teaching of the quest for the being of entities (*Sein des Seiendes*), a quest that renders entities as dumb, dark objects devoid of their own meaningful presence until metaphysical thinking lights them with its idea. Remarkably similarly, Sheehan's justification for letting go the Sein-ology of 'the first' paradigm of Heidegger scholarship is that it has, over time, exhausted its explanatory power, rendering and teaching of Heidegger's works, the entities of his thought, only a caricatured look of their meaningful presence.

Heidegger's seemingly common sensical thought, "the concept of philosophy changes according to the mode of questioning being," follows from his critique of metaphysics as a critique of metaphysics' mode of questioning being (CP 335/GA65: 424). If education in our late modern age is plighted and in crisis as Heidegger thinks it is, and if that plight and crisis emerges from metaphysics' taking as truly true only those responses to its mode of questioning being that bear the correct representation of being,

then a corollary *for education* to Heidegger's seemingly commonsensical thought would be "the concept of education changes according to the mode of questioning being." That is, the concept of learning, thinking, teaching, even evaluating, changes according to the mode of questioning being. And indeed, changing the mode of questioning being becomes Heidegger's strategy for enacting a radical, comprehensive, ontological paradigm shift in western philosophy and for 'overcoming' the 'exhaustion' of the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics. That exhaustion is evident, Heidegger argues in *Contributions to Philosophy*, in the plights and crises of late-modernism, including the plight and crisis in education and its institutions, activities, and pedagogical happenings.

The change in questioning that Heidegger teaches in *Contributions to Philosophy* is, by the look of it, unremarkable. But it is a sign of the crisis of our late-modern age and its need that the question of this mode of questioning would not appear question-worthy, not appear overflowing with possibility for meaningful presencing. The question Heidegger teaches in *Contributions to Philosophy* and the question that opens a change in questioning being is simply, *what is beyng (Seyn)?* That is the teaching of Heidegger's notoriously inscrutable behemoth *Contributions to Philosophy*; simply said, that is Heidegger's contribution—to philosophy, to education, to remedying the withdrawal of meaningful presence from all entities and phenomena of late-modern life. It is because we late-modern humans do not know how to 'take' such a question, or what—or where—to make of such a question, that Heidegger must prepare, educate, those among us who can, to "receive...the intimation and intrusion of the absconding and nearing" of such a basic, opening question. It is because we late-modern humans do not know how to 'take'

such a question that Heidegger's teaching, his *Contributions*, is gigantic, as befits the age. Were we already taught, turned, we would find our way to what is most question-worthy in the intimations of Heidegger's question and his teaching would need be only its three words and interrogative inflection.

It strikes me as fitting that in *Making Sense of Heidegger*, which Sheehan says is his capstone work on Heidegger, he appropriates the Kuhnian paradigm shift and its implicit thematics of deficiency/want, crisis, and need. It is, first of all, *fitting* in that the thematic of deficiency/want, crisis, and need runs throughout Heidegger's entire career of thought, especially his thinking on education and its concerns. This thematic might seem unremarkable, given that the movement of human intelligibility within most, if not all, academic and research disciplines, traditions, and their systems is compelled by deficiency or want in approach, thinking, or theory, followed by addressing that deficiency or want to resolve it. However, as this chapter of my study will next consider, Heidegger makes the thematic of deficiency/want, crisis, and need a *matter* for both his thinking and his pedagogical vision. Heidegger shows the thematic of deficiency/want, crisis, and need to be a *dynamic*, the force that stimulates change or progress within a system (including, for Heidegger the change and 'progress' that is the overcoming of systems and the metaphysical 'need' to systematize). Further, in bringing forth the presence of deficiency/want, crisis, need and their dynamic, Heidegger indicates or opens a thinking site, a 'clearing' apart from and, nevertheless, within the system wanting change and beckons others to that thinking site and calls them to make there what they would. Sheehan too is opening up a thinking site and opening it, like Heidegger, by calling for a change in the mode of questioning, from pursuing the ontological in

Heidegger's thought-entities (his work and thought therein) to pursuing the phenomenological in Heidegger's thought-entities.<sup>96</sup>

### 3.2 The *NOT*-Structure in Heidegger's Thinking

Without validating it, Jacques Derrida *accepted* Heidegger's decision to become Nazi Rector, such that Derrida can say in "Mochlos, or the Conflict of the Faculties" that Heidegger's much maligned Rectoral Address is "the last great discourse in which the Western university tries to think its essence and its destination in terms of responsibility [to being]."<sup>97</sup> In the summer of 1934 and soon after Heidegger resigned the Freiburg Rectorship, he taught a lecture course, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (GA38), a course initially offered by the title "The State and Science." At the beginning of the first class meeting, Heidegger "categorically and demonstratively announced... 'I am teaching *Logic*'—to the surprise and disgruntlement of several NS-functionaries who had turned up to his lecture" (LQ 144/GA38: 172). The lecture's tone is equally disaffected and urgent, even angry, showing Heidegger's with the university and its community for failing to act decisively for the "happening of education" (*Erziehungsgeschehen*) (LQ 50/GA38: 56). This lecture includes some of Heidegger's

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<sup>96</sup> While it does strike me as fitting that Thomas Sheehan appropriates the Kuhnian paradigm shift and its implicit thematics of deficiency/want, crisis, and need for his capstone work on Heidegger, I find it curious too, since Sheehan is among those readers of Heidegger who take Heidegger's account of the "devolution of Western culture... [and] alleged concatenation of ever-increasing stages of obliviousness—what Heidegger discusses as "metaphysics"—[culminating], in his story, in the contemporary global *modus vivendi* that is characterized by widespread techno-think and techno-do" to be "narrative," "a philosophically ungrounded and ungroundable claim," and "where Heidegger went wrong," "overreached and went far beyond his competence."<sup>96</sup> At the risk of making a category mistake, conflating scholarly philosopher Heidegger with philosophical scholar Sheehan, I find it curious that Sheehan has appropriated a milder version of devolutionary crisis, oblivion (increasingly we readers of Heidegger don't know what Heidegger "was driving at") and forgetting of the original grounds (the *Ereignis*) of the classical paradigm, in Heidegger scholarship to call for *his* paradigm shift. See Polt and Fried, "no one can jump over his own shadow: Richard Polt and Gregory Fried in conversation with Thomas Sheehan" and Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 27-8, 249ff.

<sup>97</sup> See Jacques Derrida, "Mochlos, or the Conflict of the Faculties," 88.

more explicit writing on education and is remarkably transitional, showing Heidegger to be standing in between his failed educational project for the Rectorship—the ontological reessentializing of the sciences, as Thomson characterizes it—and the radical ontological education project he lays out in *Contributions*. It also shows Heidegger to be standing between conceptual language of *Being and Time* (“resoluteness”) and that of *Contributions to Philosophy* (“event,” “happening”): for example, “Resoluteness is itself an event, which *fore-grasping* that happening, constantly co-determines the happening.... Resoluteness is a distinctive event [*Geschehnis*] in a happening [*Geschehen*] (LQ 166/GA38: 77). The lecture also shows Heidegger to be standing between the ‘political’ position of the Rectorship and the apolitical, or less political, or private teaching duty he claimed later was his position after 1934.

Heidegger’s philosophical work on education does continue after his failure as Rector of Freiburg University, though Jacques Derrida observes in reflection on Heidegger’s Rectorship, that after Heidegger’s much maligned Rectoral address, “the enclosure of the university—as a commonplace and powerful contract with the state, with the public, with knowledge, with metaphysics and technics—will seem to [Heidegger] less and less capable of measuring up to a more essential responsibility, that responsibility that... must first answer *to being, for* the call of being, and must think this coresponsibility.”<sup>98</sup> In an autobiographical remark written in 1945 and included in *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität. Das Rektorat*, Heidegger offers an autobiographical account from which Derrida’s reflection likely draws:

From 1934 on, I lived outside the university to the extent that I no longer troubled myself about its ‘proceedings’, but rather attempted merely to

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<sup>98</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Mochlos,” 88.

fulfill the most needful teaching duty according to my powers. But in the following years, teaching was more a self-conversation of essential thinking with itself. Perhaps, here and there, men were affected and awakened [*getroffen und geweckt*], but it did not develop into a nascent structure of a determinate mode of conduct, from which something originary could have again sprung [*aber es gestaltete sich nicht in ein werdendes Gefüge eines bestimmten Verhaltens, dem selbst wieder Ursprüngliches hätte entspringen können*] (SU).<sup>99</sup>

Heidegger critics no doubt find in Heidegger's account deflection of accountability for his Nazi involvements, especially in his suggestion that his "attempts" at that time were "merely" educative, not political, and irreproachably committed to the "most needful teaching duty according to his powers." But for a trace of the maudlin, Heidegger's account here is corroborated by his work and concerns in the middle period after 1934. As my study has indicated along the way, a concern and, further, a fundamental premise for Heidegger during the middle period is that the modern west, and all that is of it— for example, human beings, their life-worlds and science, philosophy, education—is in distress (*Not*). The essence of this distress or plight is, as Heidegger characterizes it, "abandonment of being" (CP 14ff./GA65: 15ff.).

The German word *needful* (*nötig*), as in Heidegger's "most needful teaching duty," derives from the German word for *plight* (*Not*). The German *Not* is usually translated to English as *dire need*, *distress*, and here, in my study, *plight*.<sup>100</sup> The German

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<sup>99</sup> Translation Michael Ehrmantraut, in Michael Ehrmantraut, "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy,"

<sup>100</sup> *Not* is also translated as *plight* in the 2012 English edition of *Contributions to Philosophy* to which I'll be referring throughout my study.

*Not* resonates fortuitously in English as the English adverb *not* that both expresses and forms the negative, and resonates, a bit more cheekily, as the English homophone *knot*, which in its senses of the unpleasant feeling of tension (as in a ‘knot in the stomach’) and of a something difficult to unravel.

As a very initial opening into the meaning of plight for Heidegger, on our way to considering its significance in Heidegger’s thought, particularly his thinking on education, *plight*—as word and as phenomenon—for Heidegger indicates want, danger, and duty. Plight means *want* in the sense of being-without and in the sense of dearth, as both paucity and dearness, for what is lacking or wanting is to be cherished and held near. Plight means danger as that which threatens not only human well-being but human essential being as the site where being, the meaningful presencing of entities and phenomena in their unconcealing (*aletheia*), happens. And plight means duty as in a call of duty, a responsibility or “coresponsibility,” as Derrida characterizes it, to heed the call of plight and, for the sake of human being as a whole, respond. For Heidegger, the needful—what is needful—is *clarified* by plight, plight as impoverishment, want, lack, deficiency. For Heidegger, the needful teaching duty clarified by plight is to prepare human beings to hearken to plight as plight, to the *Not* as *not*, and then to respond appropriately.

As Heidegger suggests in *The Essence of Truth* and “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” without much elaborating, *paideia* and *apaideia*—education and *not*-education—are dynamic together, one giving way to the other: “*paideia* is essentially a movement of passage, from *apaideia* to *paideia* (P 166/GA9: 216). What is *apaideia* in the Cave

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Allegory can compel a movement of passage to *paideia*, if the plight of *apaideia* is thought and its need answered. The deterioration of *paideia*—education—into plight is the happening of the alpha-privative, but within Heidegger’s *Not*-structure.

There is in Heidegger’s entire career of thought what I call a “*Not*-structure” that may explain the dynamic relating of *paideia* and *apaideia*. Simply said, in Heidegger’s thinking, the positive (the affirmative, the presence) and the negative (the denial, the absence) belong together, are dynamic together as the force that stimulates change or progress within a system. The *Not*-structure in Heidegger’s thought can be thematized in a number of ways: as dire need or plight (*Not*), fallenness (*Verfallen*), inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*), errancy (*Irre*), danger (*Gefahr*), enframing (or the more recent translation choice but less imagistically and polysemically evocative “positionality”) [*Gestell*], forgottenness/ concealment (*Verborgenheit*), and *apaideia*, an especially concerned plight for Heidegger in the middle period.

As the analytic of *Dasein* (human being) in *Being and Time* lays forth, the dynamics of a human existence—the force that stimulates change or progress—are “nots,” negatives. In *Being and Time*, these include fallenness, inauthenticity, and world-collapse (or the failing or ending of a project or way-of-being-in-the-world). There is, for Heidegger, disclosive power in the privative: the ultimate “not” in the analytic of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* is, of course, death, and in Heidegger’s analysis, authentic being-toward-death, the reality of the “not” are compelled to more meaningful being. In the dynamism of the *Not*-structure, “it is plight in the compelling toward the necessity of the highest possibilities, on whose paths human beings, in a creative and grounding way, go beyond themselves and back into the ground of beings” (CP 38/GA65: 46). And “all

necessity,” Heidegger thinks in *Contributions*, is rooted in a plight. Philosophy...has its necessity in the first and most extreme plight [the forgottenness of plight]...” (CP 37/GA65: 45).

Plight is not only adverse for Heidegger, for deficiencies or absences reveal the possibility for their opposites to those human beings open to making sense of deficiencies or absences by means of thinking and questioning. The greatest plight is a lack of a sense of plight—not realizing plight as plight. Modern erudition and its transmission as education is a particularly disastrous form of modern plight, because modern erudition mostly lacks genuine understanding, or even genuine sense, of its own plight. Heidegger writes, again in *Contributions*,

The lack of a sense of plight is greatest where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable, and especially where it has been decided, with no previous questioning, who we are and what we are supposed to do....Where “truth” has long since ceased to be a question...and even the attempt at such a question is dismissed as a disturbance and inconsequential musing” (CP 99/GA65: 125).

In *Making Sense of Heidegger*, Sheehan characterizes Heidegger’s view on the contemporary world as one of “utter pessimism.”<sup>101</sup> This might be true of Heidegger in the months after the Rectorship (evident in some of the bitter language of GA38, when Heidegger has not yet seen what Nazi National Socialism would become and thinks that a National Socialism that educates the *Volk* society who are the German nation is the right political movement for the German university and Heidegger’s deep commitment to the university as the place to answer the needs of the *Bildungsfrage*), and it may too have

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<sup>101</sup> See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 261.

been true of him during his breakdown after his 1945 banishment from teaching, but Sheehan's "utter pessimism" is not a right characterization for an educator of Heidegger's stripes. While plight is rife in *Contributions to Philosophy*, plight is, as Heidegger makes very clear, necessary for the future need. Throughout the *Fugen of Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger is not merely ranting or musing in a 'negative key.' And as much as Heidegger might be pessimistic about his contemporary present, he is not so utterly pessimistic about the future that he isn't thinking very hard about how to serve that future need, and more specifically in *Contributions to Philosophy*, about how to educatively prepare human beings for it. "Plight," says Heidegger, "must never be taken superficially and hastily as deficiency, misery, or the like. It stands outside the possibility of all 'pessimistic' or 'optimistic' evaluation. The basic disposition that disposes toward the necessity is in each case correlative to the primordial experience of the plight" (CP 37/GA65: 46).

Even in the context of Heidegger's thought of the historical unfolding of the western philosophical tradition and its ending; and even in the context of Heidegger's thought the "history of being" unfolding toward nihilism and toward the emptying of beings of their meaningful presence until only beings-as-objects (objects regarded only as resources useful to production and power) remain; and even in Heidegger's effort to turn thinking 'back' toward the Greeks and the inception of the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics, Heidegger's thinking of contemporary plight is not a philosophical pessimism that views the progression of time to be more negative than positive or increasingly negative, leaving behind a 'golden age.' Instead, Heidegger's engagement with plight is hopeful: it is a stage in an educative movement of passage that

prepares human beings to leap from nihilism, from the receding of meaningful presence from our contemporary world (all that is τὰ ὄντα ‘under’ or within metaphysics.).

Is such genuine education and radical restart not only of education but also of the ways of existing or happenings with which education collaborates—truth, science, arts, and philosophy as thinking, questioning, teaching, learning—possible? Is such real education, education that is most needful amidst the modern plight of the withdrawal of being—meaningful presence—from all aspects of modern life, a plight of withdrawal Heidegger deems irrevocable, at all possible when such a real education requires thoughtful, thus beingful, laying hold, turning, leading, and acclimating? Is such education possible when modern education itself seems irrevocably plighted?

Maybe. And maybe so if an education can first call forth what Heidegger calls “transitional thinking,” thinking which Heidegger envisions in his *Contributions to be catalyzed by a pedagogy practiced within and decisive for the western philosophical tradition: a version of Socratic *aporia*, the shock of the experience of stultification in thinking, the shock of one’s ignorance, of the impenetrability of certain philosophical problems, and the shock that one is not thinking, is unable to answer the call of what is thought provoking.*

To effect that shock and catalyze transitional thinking in his audiences, in the readership of *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* particularly, an audience more likely to hold rare “future ones,” humans willing to leap thinking from the first beginning of western philosophy as metaphysics now plighted with nihilism into the other beginning of western philosophy as thinking not yet happened or happening. Heidegger envisions the fundamental contributions of *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* to

be the event—*Ereignis*—the happening, of thinking that may lead to the real education that turns human thinkers out of plighted metaphysical thought and into human learners-as-thinkers-essentially-being within the essential domains of questioning and thinking of the new beginning. In *Contributions* he outlines a ground plan “still-unmastered” of “the temporal-spatial playing field which the history of the transition first creates as its own realm in order to decide, according to its own law, . . . about the future ones, i.e. those who occur only once,” for they are mortal, rare, and unlike the common, customary metaphysical thinkers ‘educated’ by the turning of Plato’s ‘real education,’ who have recurred through and throughout the unfolding of the first philosophy as metaphysics, the future ones occur only once, each unique, its thought burgeoning from within and not tried to form from without (CP 8/GA65: 7). The Socratic shock of stultification—or the Heideggerian encounter with plight, with the abandonment of meaningful presence in human being’s encounters with entities and phenomena—happens on the “playing-field” that is *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* in the section called “The Resonating” (*Der Anklang*). Therein, Heidegger puts forth a shocking catalogue of modern plights and shocking thinking as meditation on the essence of plight, shocks intended to resonate and provoke thinking about plight’s stultification and the most needful education-as-preparation to initiate transition to an other philosophical beginning, that leaps from—and must leap from—the western philosophical tradition’s first philosophy, ontology practiced as metaphysics.

“The Resonating” is a sizable catalogue of modern plights, notably and especially focused on plight in education and its concerns. Modern education, Heidegger says, is preparation for “transition to the technologized animal” (CP 78/GA65: 98). Its resonating

themes are speed, greatness as massiveness (as mass appeal and gigantic size), calculability, and human machination, wherein man is measure, maker, and master of all that is. Universities become “business establishments,” “sites of scientific research and teaching... [purportedly] ever closer to reality,” but where nothing is originally—that is, *ontologically*—questioned or decided (CP 121-22/GA:65 156). The natural sciences “become components of machine technology and of business”; the human sciences become newspaper sciences of gigantic scope, interpreting and publishing the current lived experience as quickly as possible in a form comprehensible to everyone (CP 121/GA65: 15). Philosophy is understood as “historiological and ‘system’-building erudition” (CP 122/GA65: 156), modern plight itself is taken superficially to be nihilism, a symptom of cultural psychology, and in “dread of questioning” and in “ignorance of the essence of truth...that, prior to everything true, truth and its grounding must be decided,”// “truth deteriorates into certainty of representation and the security of calculation and lived experience” (CP 38, 72, 93, 122/GA65: 47, 91, 118, 156).

The essence of plight, as Heidegger sees it in *Contributions*, can be said rather simply: the essence of modern plight, Heidegger says in *Contributions* and elsewhere, is *the abandonment of beings by being/beyng (Sein/Seyn)*. In other words, the presence of what genuinely exists (beings, entities, phenomena), and the meaningfulness they bring forth to humans, is disappearing. Humans as rational subjects, as modern subjective I or we, thinks Heidegger, increasingly regard what genuinely exists as objects with nothing inherently, uniquely present or meaningful about them, endowing them instead with representational concepts or theoretical essences beheld beyond the beings themselves. So insidious is modern plight that even its meaningful presence is withdrawing,

disappear, as humans take it “superficially and hastily as deficiency” (CP 37/GA65: 46). The greatest plight then becomes “the lack of a sense of plight,...greatest,” Heidegger writes in *Contributions*, “where ‘truth’ has long since ceased to be a question...and even the attempt at such a question is dismissed as a disturbance and inconsequential musing” (CP 99/GA65: 124)

Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* is Heidegger’s ‘untimely meditation,’ written during the years 1936-38 and, fittingly, during Heidegger’s Nietzsche period. His stipulation that his untimely meditation be withheld from publication until the indicates that at its writing, its time had not yet come. What had not yet arrived is readiness even among few rare philosophical thinkers to think being transitionally, preparing the way for the real education of future ones.

In 1951-52, Heidegger delivered the lecture series *What is Called Thinking? (Was Heisst Denken?)* at Freiburg University, Heidegger’s first teaching lectures at Freiburg after the reinstatement of his teaching license, which had been revoked in 1946 by the French military government’s denazification committee. The opening lectures of *What is Called Thinking?*, as does “The Resonating” section or ‘joining’ (*Fugen*) of *Contributions to Philosophy*, call their audience into thinking on modern plight, specifically the plight of not thinking, of not hearkening to what is “most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time...that we are still not thinking (WCT 6/GA8: 9). And it is a call, like that of “The Resonating” of *Contributions to Philosophy*, seemingly intended first to identify the stultification of thinking, then to provoke catalyzing shock, and then further to call his audience toward what is most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time: that we are still not thinking.

Heidegger's *Contributions* calls for education as preparation, again a laying hold of the essential human being as that which beholds beings and presence, and a transforming of the formation of human being by education within metaphysics and educational plight. This educational preparation is Heidegger's vision for human return to the place of our essential being as belonging to beings. It is preparation or educational turning that happens in stages, first the resonating of plight, a recognition of lack, of the withdrawing of meaningful presence. The second stage is interplay—thinking presence within the history of the meaningful presence, as one might in the decisive events of great thinkers' thinking and questioning, preserved in our great books, great art, great structures. The third stage is the leap into the abyssal possibility of presence and meaning, letting go of thinking as forming essential representation, And the fourth is a collaborative finding and founding, through the truth-event of *Ereignis*, of presence in beings overlooked by the conceptualization of metaphysics, metaphysical thinking, and its position on truth.

Chapter 4 explores this collaborative finding and founding in practice, as *paideia* and as *Ereignis*, in Heidegger's philosophical dialogue and later work "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," and in Derrida's vision for an educational site or place wherein *Ereignis* may happen, and in St. John's College, formatively shaped by Heidegger's student Jacob Klein.

**EREIGNIS IN PRACTICE: HEIDEGGER’S “A DIALOGUE ON  
LANGUAGE,” DERRIDA’S *KHORA*, KLEIN’S ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE**

**4.1 Heidegger’s Mature Philosophy of Education: *Paideia* as *Poiesis*,  
Educating as *Ereignis***

In “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*,” Iain Thomson restates one of the important hermeneutic theses of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, that Heidegger “developed and refined his educational views in important ways between 1911 and 1940, while working toward...his ‘mature’ philosophy of education first presented in his 1940 article, “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” which Thomson wants insightfully to rename Heidegger’s “Teaching on teaching.”<sup>102</sup> While I think it right that “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” does introduce significant aspects of Heidegger’s mature vision of ontological education, the pedagogy that leads us to become who we are as being as Thomson argues, I aim to advance a hermeneutic thesis of my own: that the ‘mature’ philosophy of education we first see in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” is what Heidegger’s later work “A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer” calls a “construction site” (*Baustellen*) on the way to a more mature understanding of education and philosophy, a more mature understanding that we see implicitly in “A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer.” “Dialogue on Language” exemplifies (and performs) Heidegger’s mature teaching on teaching, on learning, and on education’s interdependent relationship with truth, being, and language.

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<sup>102</sup> See Iain Thomson, “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*,” 440.

“A Dialogue on Language” does not supplant “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” or negate what “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” discloses of Heidegger’s philosophy of ontological education. “A Dialogue on Language” does not negate Heidegger’s hermeneutic thesis in reading Plato’s cave allegory, that education and truth are linked “together into an original and essential unity” or its speaking what Heidegger takes to be Plato’s unsaid teaching of “a change in what determines the essence of truth,” or that “real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it” (P 167/GA9: 218). Instead of being negated or overturned, I take “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” to be “an earlier standpoint,” which, as Heidegger says in “A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer” about an earlier standpoint on hermeneutics taken in *Being and Time*, he has left “not in order to exchange it for another one, but because even a former standpoint was merely a way-station (*Aufenthalt*) along a way” (OWL 12/GA12: 98). In keeping with the later Heidegger’s view that “the lasting element in thinking is the way”—and that what lasts and does not change or get left behind is journeying itself, even if the way or mode of movement—I want to show that “A Dialogue on Language” is not Heidegger’s *most* mature vision of ontological education, but more mature, more fully realized, than “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” and that in seeing “A Dialogue on Language” as more mature, we can see more of what Heidegger took to be the way of the kind of education that is a most significant concern throughout Heidegger’s thinking.

As Thomson shows in Chapter 4 of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, Heidegger’s mature views of education emerge from Heidegger’s leaving behind fundamental ontology for an understanding of metaphysics as ontotheology, historically successive

understandings of the being of entities.<sup>103</sup> Heidegger's view in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" that there can be "a change in what determines the essence of truth" is possible only if there is no one truth, no one fundamental ontology, but truths, a sequence of fundamental and ultimate ontological positions—ontotheologies—that determine the essence of truth for a time and then fall away as another emerges. The essential unity, then, between education and truth is that education teaches what is true within a given ontotheological epoch, teaches the essence of truth for that epoch, and has the power to transform "everything that has heretofore been manifest to human beings, as well as the way in which it has been manifest (P 168/GA9: 219).

In Chapter 3 of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, Thomson shows that Heidegger's move from fundamental ontology to epochs of ontotheologies means for education that Heidegger's education project would no longer be merely to *revitalize* universities by restoring the *uni-* to the university, bringing its diverse departments and forces to realize the fundamental ontological project they shared and that all of their teaching and research disclosed. Instead, as Thomson shows, Heidegger's move from fundamental ontology to ontotheology means for Heidegger's education project that in its mature form it aims to *turn* students, making them aware of their age's ontotheology and its place in the historical sequence of past ontotheologies. Their education leads and turns them to be aware that our age's fundamental conceptual parameters and standards for what is legitimate will that we are *Bestand*, resources to be optimized. In this way, "real education," that which "lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it," leads us to the place that is the temporal and historical being-here of our age's ontotheology and

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<sup>103</sup> See Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 146.

accustoms us to our ontotheology's fundamental conceptual parameters so we may be open to the possibility of seeing ourselves as other than resources to be optimized, and may then be open to realizing other modes of being (P 167/GA9: 218).

Transformation or conversion reflect the Nietzschean aspect of Heidegger's educational thought, the aspect that interprets "revolutionary" as polysemic in what Thomson calls "the revolutionary return of the self to itself...at the very heart of Heidegger's mature *ontologization* of education."<sup>104</sup> Revolutionary is polysemic in the sense of forcible political overthrow of revolve or roll back, a return to the radical or root of being; of dramatic change in the way something works or the way people think about it; and of the completion of a cycle. In one sense, all of these speak to Thomson's thesis that Heideggerian education aims to unify us around the project of confronting and overcoming our ontotheology; and by this same take, Heideggerian education compels a self-overcoming. This self-overcoming is Nietzschean in character. The language of transformation, force, and violence in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" and Heidegger's emphasis in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" of the "force" mentioned in Plato's cave allegory support Thomson's reading that the ontological education it advances is revolutionary in a Nietzschean sense of overthrow and overcoming. And it seems right to say that Heidegger, in 1940, influenced by his reading of Nietzsche, as he would be for the next decade, was offering in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," his teaching on teaching, a vision of education influenced by Nietzschean and Platonic/Christian ideas of revolution.

While I think it right to say that Heidegger remains committed to a radical revision of education throughout his career, and that this radical revision has as part of its project, an overthrow and roll back, a self-overcoming on the part of human being, or

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<sup>104</sup> See Iain Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*," 457.

human being, so we may return toward the radical or root of being, this is not where Heidegger's radical revision alights and rests. And while Heidegger's practical project for ontological education includes turning students to make them aware of their age's ontotheology and its place in the historical sequence of past ontotheologies, liberating them from blind acceptance of its shadows of truth, Heidegger's practical project for ontological education does not merely graduate its students to return to them to the cave in order to be optimal teaching resources there or to be enlightened, optimized and optimizing participants in cave living amidst others who are, and are not, so optimized.

Paul Standish criticizes Thomson's reading of "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" for failing to offer us understanding of the "dynamism in the stages through which the learner moves on the path to understanding."<sup>105</sup> But the failing, I'd say, is rightly Heidegger's, if not Plato's. Though Thomson takes "Plato's Doctrine on Truth" as giving us explicit ways for how such Heidegger's mature ontological education is to work, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" remains a description from the outside. In it, we see the stages meant to be accomplished and reached, but are shown very little about how transformation from one stage to the next takes place within the student. Though the narrative that is Plato's cave allegory and Heidegger's appropriation of it for "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" both characterize education as movement or passage through a series of four stages, each stage depicting and grounded in a different kind of *aletheia*, a different kind of unhiddenness or truth that is "normative at each level" and "dominant at each stage," both Plato's account and Heidegger's appropriation of it remain only description of this movement. Neither depicts or indicates or explains how pedagogy—how learning—compels this education's movement. Neither identifies the force that

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<sup>105</sup> See Paul Standish, "Essential Heidegger: Poetics of the Unsaid," 153.

compels transformation, or indicates the essence or nature of this force. Though Heidegger's account of the allegory does speak a couple of the questions that the student/prisoner of the cave allegory *might* be asked in order to think about and realize the truth of what is, we are not shown, do not hear, the questions that turn; we are not shown, do not follow, the thinking that turns. Heidegger asks compelling questions to provoke our thinking about the process of passage and movement—"What happens in these movements of passage? What makes these events possible? From what do they derive their necessity? What issue is at stake in these passages?" (P 165/GA9: 216)—but "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" does not illuminate response to these questions as mature as the illumination of them that emerges from "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer." We do not see inside the classroom of the cave allegory, really, and we do not see inside its student, do not see the student in thinking, in thought. We are told that it happens, that it happens is described for us, but we do not see *into* how it happens.

By way of introduction to "A Dialogue on Language," Heidegger gives the name "Heidegger" to the Inquirer, the *Fragenden*, of "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer," but in the way that we should hesitate to assume that the *Canterbury Tales* character "Chaucer" is the same as its author, Chaucer, we should not assume that the *Fragenden* Heidegger and the dialogue's author, Martin Heidegger, are the same. Theodore Kisiel, in "Heidegger's Apology" (*Heidegger's Way of Thought*), calls "A Dialogue on Language" "quasi-fictional," noting that while the reminiscences of the Inquirer, "Heidegger," that open the dialogue appear to draw from the facts of the

author, Heidegger's, biography, these reminiscences are not wholly factual.<sup>106</sup> For example, Kisiel says, the biographical excursus that "yields the central fictionalized 'fact' which introduces the central concepts that govern the entire dialog" was not a part of the conversation between Heidegger and Tomio Tezuka, on which "A Dialogue on Language" is based. Kisiel views the dialogue's "Heidegger" to be the same as the author, Heidegger, and sees their conflation as part of Heidegger's strategy for autobiographical revisionism, for guiding his philosophical biography. Kisiel says, "clearly then, Heidegger is construing his own biographical facts in order to guide the line of thought he wishes to pursue in this dialogue. Call it what you will—irony, poetic license or whimsical playfulness—this play between fact and fiction, this creative use of biography to promote thought, suggests a whole host of structural parallels and exchanges (Germany/Japan, West/East...teacher (grown old)/student (died young)..."<sup>107</sup>

While I agree with Kisiel that Heidegger is appropriating and manipulating his own biography to guide the line of thought in the dialogue, Kisiel views this manipulation to be more insidiously self-interested than I do. In a reading probably now outdated, Kisiel takes the line that "A Dialogue on Language" is a "major autobiographical statement" and that Heidegger practices "autobiographical slanting" in the dialogue, construing his own biographical facts less to serve the truth of thought, thinking, and being than to serve with self-interest his reputation and image. Kisiel's interpretation seems to me too cynical.<sup>108</sup> It eclipses the richness of the creative use of biography to promote thought in the dialogue. While I think it true that as Heidegger's career advances, Heidegger is plenty aware of his work as a whole body of thought and is

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<sup>106</sup> See Theodore Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, 10ff.

<sup>107</sup> See Theodore Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, 12.

<sup>108</sup> See Theodore Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, 10.

aware that any work added shapes the whole as *whole thought*, such that he crafts its additions carefully and purposefully, I do not think it right to suggest that the dialogue's purpose is especially to make autobiographical statement or revision. Even if the revision aims purposefully to suggest that the later Heidegger's concentration on language was present in the Heidegger's early work in a way that serves Heidegger's thinking on language and is conveyance, rather than the revision serving to offer defensive "apology" for Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism" as Kisiel suggests, autobiographical revision is but a sidecar to the dialogue as vehicle for thought. "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer" is mainly a thinking on language, and offers, as I will emphasize, as one of its significant purposes, a thinking and example of how language conveys and conducts learning.

"A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer" offers a phenomenology of how ontological education happens, from the inside. It shows step-by-step, and stage-by-stage, question-by-question, response-by-response, thought and thinking by thought and thinking, the transformation of the two learners, the "Inquirer" (*Fragenden*) and the Japanese, as they engage in genuine research into the essence of language. The dialogue is richly and deeply polysemic. It is poetry, it is educational phenomenology, and it is many kinds of theory—aesthetic, ontological, epistemological, metaphysical, linguistic, hermeneutic, historical, educational. Its polysemic purpose may even include, as Theodore Kisiel says, autobiographical slanting and revision, as part of Heidegger's effort to direct his reputation and legacy and repair his notorious disloyalty to Husserl.

In its opening, the “Dialogue” reverses the ordinary order of student honoring teacher and teaching deserving more honor than the student’s learning, when as its first insight of memorable reflection it observes, via the Japanese’s remark, that Kuki’s teacher spent a year writing an epitaph of “supreme tribute” to his student. The Japanese also notes that Kuki studied also with the *Fragenden*, “Heidegger.” With this opening, Heidegger establishes one of the principles of his mature vision for education, that the teacher be a learner, “the teacher must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices,” and if “the relation between the teacher and the taught is genuine, therefore, there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all of the authoritative sway of the official” (WCT 15/GA8: 18). The pedagogical relation in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth” is one of authoritative sway, “force.” The pedagogical relation in “A Dialogue on Language” is one of mutual, interdependent questioning. Though the *Fragenden* takes the lead in the questioning initially, and seems then to be in the position of teacher, he is, as Heidegger says of the teacher in *What is Called Thinking?*, “far less assured of his ground than those who learn are of theirs,” because the Japanese knows about the ‘luminous presence’ of Japanese art, for which the *Fragenden*’s aesthetic concepts, which would afford him the scholarly, the metaphysical mastery of a teacher’s knowledge, authority, and upper hand, are useless (WCT 15/GA8: 18). Halfway through the dialogue, the Japanese asks the questions, becomes the questioner, the *Fragenden*, so that even in their nominal distinction, the place of questioner or teacher, learner or listener, is not authoritatively certain. One is not transforming, attuning, or turning the other, as is true of Heidegger’s early philosophic pedagogy and the pedagogy of “Plato's Doctrine of Truth”; instead, they come to transform, attune, and turn one another.

This reciprocal turning is a mark of *Ereignis* and, then, Heidegger's more mature educational vision. The later Heidegger includes this reciprocal turning as one of the meanings for his polysemic and crucial term, *Ereignis*. *Ereignis* is a reciprocal relation: phenomenological presence (which may include other human being or texts or ideas, in addition to phenomena of the physical world) is available for human being to engage with and make intelligible, and phenomenological presence is meaningfully present and intelligible because human being makes it so.<sup>109</sup> Heidegger terms the dynamic of this reciprocity as *Kehre*, a "turn," to emphasize the dynamic forces of appeals, inclinations, engagement, and withdrawal between human being and presencings. *Ereignis* is the opening of a "clearing," for Heidegger in which entities can appear as this or that, because of the turn operative in *Ereignis*. This turn is the back and forth, give and take, reciprocity of the relationship of phenomenological presencing and human being. This back and forth reciprocity, this place of *Ereignis*, is a mark of Heidegger's more mature educational vision.

In *Introduction to Metaphysics*—from 1935 and of the stage in Heidegger's education thought that includes *Contributions to Philosophy* and "Plato's Doctrine of Truth"—Heidegger approaches, by means of an image, an aspect of what happens in the happening of *Ereignis*. The image of a back and forth reciprocity is akin to the violent back and forth of a human craft (human being) pressing into the sea's (being) unrelenting swell and roil (myriad phenomena, which again may include other Dasein, texts, or ideas). The sea is there to be ridden, broken into, and survived and man exists to enter on to it. The sea gives itself in awful, violent swell and sway; the man takes, does violence to

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<sup>109</sup> Iain Thomson astutely calls it a "rapprochement" to name the reciprocity of *approach* between phenomenological presencing and Human being. See Thomson, "The Philosophical Fugue: Understanding the Structure and Goal of Heidegger's *Beiträge*," 61.

the sea, by breaking in, laying hold, laying claim. The sea gives to be taken; man takes in order to offer *a take* on the given, a taking, a *logos*, that gives form and meaning to the given sway. The give and take is sometimes less violent, when man's craft rides into the swell with relative ease, because the craft is appropriately strong and the sea fits it, but is terribly violent when the sea overwhelms man's craft, swamping it, busting it up, proving it foolish or when man's craft "disturbs the calm of growth, the nourishing and enduring of the tireless one" (IM 164/GA40: 118). There is much here to be explored. The reciprocity in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) is palpably violent, revolutionary in tone, a violence echoed in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" in the "force" compelling the liberated prisoner into the light outside the cave, light painful because his eyes are not accustomed to it, and 'violence' as strife in the tension between *apaideia* and *paideia*, where Heidegger's educational philosophy is not yet most mature.<sup>110</sup> Strife, confrontation, Heidegger shows in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," and in later works such as the essays of *On the Way to Language* and *Poetry, Language, and Thought* is vital to *Ereignis*, ontological turning, and to the later Heidegger's *poietic* thought, but the vital violence of the later Heidegger is less palpably violent in the conventional sense, is less conventionally revolutionary in tone or action. Its violence and revolution have overcome conventional violence and revolution, have overcome Nietzschean self-overcoming, have overcome conventional politics and

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<sup>110</sup> Though "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (1940-1) shows Platonic *paideia* of the Cave Allegory to involve force done from leader to learner, and a violently imposed turning, the Platonic dialogues as a whole suggest that reciprocal turning is an unspoken vision—target, really—of Socrates, whose conversations aim to make, *poietically* we might say, interlocutors who can come to transform, attune, and turn him reciprocally. The Platonic dialogues and Socratic pedagogy do not depict reciprocal turning, except as myth. Plato's great work on education, *Republic*, does not offer reciprocal turning as practically possible—in political education, at least. Given Socrates' character, his self-reflections and activities, that Socrates would aim for a conversational situation, a symposium, like that in Heidegger's "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer," and relish its education as *Ereignis* and ontological transformation is credible.

politicizings and moved toward an apolitical polis, place. A mark of Heidegger's more mature education thought is that ontological education takes place through gentle violence, apoliticized revolution, in a political situation.

The Japanese of "A Dialogue on Language" might call this violence "gracious"—gracious violence—as he comes to *Koto*—*Koto ba*, the Japanese word for language—in the progress of his conversation with the *Fragenden*. *Koto* is "the source from which the mutual interplay of the two comes to pass"; it is "the happening of the lighting message of the graciousness that brings forth" (OWL47/GA12:144). Language, reckonings, accounts, intelligibilities—which in its purest forms are poetries—are the petals that stem from *Ereignis*. The making of language, reckonings, accounts, intelligibilities, poetries is *poiesis*. Their making in the reciprocal ontological dialogue and learning and teaching that is "A Dialogue on Language" is philosophizing as ontological educating as *poietic* education, which I take to be Heidegger's most mature educational vision. The problem of how to begin in this poietic education—the problem of its beginning—is resolved in the dialogue's showing *from the inside*, from inside the practice of this education, how it begins, happens, continues.

Beginning with its commemoration of Kuki, the great meditator on *Iki*, and evocation of his death as reminder of the human inevitability of not-being, and then the attunement of its mood, "A Dialogue on Language" depicts and performs a paradigm for the memorial and meditative thinking that the mature Heidegger puts forth as the way for ontological transformation, a thinking activity that is, then, ontological education. In beginning with Kuki's death (and its ending Kuki's living mediations on *iki*), Heidegger reminds us, those who will sit with and between the dialogue's interlocutors, that the vital

violence present in *Kehre* that is *Ereignis*—gentle but no less vital in the mature Heidegger—can cease: “there is only *one* thing against which all violence-doing directly shatters, that is death. Here there is no breaking forth and breaking up, no capturing and subjugating. (IM 168-9/GA40: 121). Death too is vital to *die Kehre*, *Ereignis*, and ontological education. Heidegger says in “Memorial Address,” which also begins in memorial thinking (though far less evocatively, and with less powerful transformative results), paraphrasing the poet Heber: “what the poet means to say: For a truly joyous and salutary human work to flourish, man must be able to mount from the depth of his home ground to the ether” (DT 47/GA16: 521). The *Fragenden* and the Japanese evoke, without naming it in their memorial thinking of Kuki, both the earth of the home ground where he lies in death and death itself. From the depth of this ground shared together as their conversation begins, they will mount to the ether of ontological transformation through thought thinking. Learning, they will approach together the essence of language, and Being, and the relation between language and Being, which the *Fragenden* says was “veiled and inaccessible” to him as a young theologian (OWL 10/GA12: 97).

Their opening question is whether or not European aesthetics—a polysemic indicator of a systemic, conceptual metaphysics, cheekily rendered as “artful concepts”—is suitable to give higher clarity to *iki*?<sup>111</sup> They might as well be asking—and in other words they are—whether or not, metaphysics can give higher clarity to Being, or, in other words still, whether or not logos can give clarity to Being. What’s at stake in this question for the interlocutors is *iki*-logical or ontological understanding. What they seek from one another is *iki*- and onto- logical learning and *iki*- and onto- logical education.

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<sup>111</sup> For in-depth discussion of Heidegger’s critique of modern aesthetics, see Iain Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 40ff.

Along the way, inquiring into *iki* and into Being, whether these are or are not two names for the same. What is at stake includes their leading one another to each be able to make intelligible the essence of *iki*, which requires of them to also make intelligible the essence of language, which also requires of them to make intelligible the essence of truth, which also requires them to make intelligible the essential way of leading one another to these intelligibilities, and so to make intelligible also the essence of education (P 167/GA9: 217). As Thomson rightly says, in identifying ontological education as “[laying] hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it,” what is at stake, and what emerges, are our essential beings themselves.

In *What is Called Thinking?* (1954), and Heidegger’s most explicit mature work on education), Heidegger writes, “To learn means to make everything we do answer to whatever essentials address themselves to us at a given moment” (WCT 14/GA8: 17). This saying echoes Heidegger’s understanding of *Ereignis*; it seems a variation on a theme. Learning is correlate to, if not the same as, *Ereignis*. Learning is opening to answering the essentials that present themselves; *Ereignis* is the opening of human being to answer the phenomenological presencings that present themselves. *Answering* is making intelligible, is responding to the essential given with a *take*, an answer. Crucial to this answering in learning is that it not be static, that it not be a mode of answering which closes off learning, closes off the address of the essentials, for if answers *answer*, in the conventional sense, so as to end or resolve inquiry, the essentials’ address is no longer heard. From the opening of “A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer” in its recognition of Kuki’s death, through its unfolding opening of its

philosophizing inquiry into and through *iki*, language, Being, hermeneutics, and man, the Japanese and the *Fragenden* learn by a practice that means to make everything they do answer to whatever essentials address themselves to them at a given moment in the dialogue. Their exchange together addresses, questions, and answers these essentials.

There is in this mode of answering, as there is in human being's making intelligible the phenomenological presencing in *Ereignis*, a need for incompleteness, imperfection, or more pointedly, a need to own—to own up to—the fact that when human being answers, the phenomenological presencing—the essentials—continue to address themselves, to presence, to human being, if—and this is a crucial if—human being answers or makes intelligible the essentials so as to prevent learning from stopping. If anyone in the dialogue merely answers, and closes the opening that is *Ereignis*, the making—the *poiesis*—that is the making intelligible, the ontological learning, the ontological education ceases. Perfecting—or bringing to fullness—human being in *Ereignis* and *poiesis* requires a learning, or we might say an education, that would not perfect in the sense held commonly philosophical perfectionist philosophy since Plato.<sup>112</sup> Such an education would aim to *imperfect*, or better said, to enown the imperfection, the incompleteness, of human being answering or making intelligible the essentials of phenomenological presencing. The Japanese acknowledges something of this later in the dialogue after he and the *Fragenden* have together made intelligible that hermeneutics and language belong together to bring about a transformation of thinking, that “the transformation that occurs as a passage...in which one site is left behind in favor of another...and that requires that the sites be placed in discussion. One site is metaphysics.

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<sup>112</sup> See Thomson “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education In *Being and Time*,” 439-467.

The other they will leave unnamed” (OWL 42/GA12: 138). Jacques Derrida realizes an image, and then a name, for such an other site: *khôra*.

#### 4. 2 Derrida’s *Khôra*

On the occasion of the inauguration of a doctoral program in philosophy at Villanova University, Derrida spoke of his own “struggle to enlarge the space for philosophical teaching and philosophical research.”<sup>113</sup> Derrida has in mind enlarging space for a particular kind of place and happening. I take this place, which Derrida names *khôra*, to be Derrida’s version (and revision) of Heidegger’s open clearing (*Lichtung*), an image and a place that Heidegger associates with *paideia* and pedagogy and its happening, most explicitly in “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth.” This place, *khôra* for Derrida, is the place where discourse can happen, where new returns to the origins take place, where new and replacement names and sayings are lodged, and where the responsibility both to keep and to renew flourishes. This place, Derrida writes, “gives place to all the stories, ontologic or mythic, that can be recounted on the subject of what she receives and even of what she resembles but which in fact take place within her.”<sup>114</sup> These qualities are the ones Derrida wants for education and his university project, such that we might say of the university as Derrida says of Socrates in his essay, “*Khôra*,” that the university, like Socrates, “is not *khôra*, but... would look a lot like it/her if it/she were someone or something.”<sup>115</sup> *Khôra* is, for Derrida, “not just a place among others, but perhaps place itself, the irreplaceable place. Irreplaceable and unplaceable place from which he [a student, perhaps] receives the word(s) of those before whom he effaces himself but who

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<sup>113</sup> See “The Villanova Roundtable” in John H. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 18.

<sup>114</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “*Khôra*,” 111.

<sup>115</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “*Khôra*,” 111.

receive them from him, for it is he who makes them talk like this.”<sup>116</sup> Socrates is Heidegger’s “purest thinker of the West” and, we may assume, one of the purest instantiations of human being (WCT 17/GA8: 21). In such a place for the later Heidegger happens *Ereignis*, or *event*. Where there is *Ereignis*, the myriad and human being (as student or not) confront one another, giving presencings and taking intelligibility. Where there is *Ereignis*, human being in its fullness, maturely educated, is completely open, opening, and receptive engagement with all phenomenological presencing in its environment. As Socrates is such a place, as Heidegger’s human being, truly and maturely educated, is such a place, so, intends Derrida, following the later Heidegger, can be the university, and its classes, and its community of learners, such a place.

Like Heidegger, Derrida resists that philosophical discourse proceed by the ordering and structure of such rational binaries as “sense/intelligible,” “*logos/mythos*,” “being/nonbeing,” “subject/object,” “ontology/theology,” “thesis/antithesis” or any of the oppositional pairs familiar within philosophical tradition. Like Heidegger, he aims for there to be a place where there can be the disorder of a third alongside these oppositional pairings or can be the insertion of a third into the middle of these oppositional pairings so as to put them into question. Derrida wants his *khôra* to be that “place... which disturbs and undermines any system, all the couples of opposition which constitute a system.”<sup>117</sup>

Not repeating the given institution—not self-affirming by repetition—not repeating specifically the university structure that gives or withholds place to philosophy as research, writing, and teaching is Derrida’s political and pedagogical project, the one we could say, as Derrida does, “runs through all my works and all my politico-

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<sup>116</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “*Khôra*,” 111.

<sup>117</sup> See “The Villanova Roundtable” in John H. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 5-6.

institutional engagements.”<sup>118</sup> Not repeating the given philosophical institution also means, for Derrida, not repeating the mistakes of Heidegger at Freiburg, where Heidegger allowed the temptation of a totalizing *logos*—fundamental ontology—and the opportunity for such a *logos* to structure a university’s discipline, research, and teaching to compel him toward an untenable and terrible philosophical mistake, political mistake, and pedagogical mistake. For Derrida, as for the early Heidegger, philosophy, politics, and pedagogy come together in his educational thought and practice. All of Derrida’s writings, including those on educational themes, pulse with political language, purpose, and positions. In educational writings, his taken position is often more administrative, more mission commander, more political negotiator, than teacher. In the 1987 interview “Negotiations,” Derrida says that it is important “now even more than ever,” to “negotiate a relation—which I call, for convenience and brevity’s sake, deconstructive—to put philosophy in a philosophical place but also a place where philosophy will be put into question.”<sup>119</sup>

By way of conclusion, I will suggest in the next section that we can find such an irreplaceable place exemplified in St. John’s College, located rather ironically in America. Heidegger thought America to be an intellectual youngster and the place that most unequivocally instantiated what Heidegger took to be the “danger” of late-modern life. Heidegger saw America as bereft of history and a nation of mostly uncultivated people unified by the conquering capitalism, technology, machinations, size, and “Jewish rootlessness” that was unearthing the world. But Heidegger mistook that in the uninterrupted American political tradition of freedom and equality there was the

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<sup>14</sup> See Denise-Eg a-Kuehne, “The Teaching of Philosophy: Renewed rights and Responsibilities,” 21.

<sup>119</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971-2001*, 18.

possibility for openness, for the very meaningful clearing that Heidegger's mature thinking on education realizes is human being's essential being-at-work.

### 4.3 Jacob Klein's Ontological Seminary

Why bring St. John's College into a study of Heidegger? For many reasons, one of which is the intersection and divergence of Heidegger and the formative dean and tutor of St. John's, Jacob Klein. Klein and Heidegger shared significant intellectual rootstock as students and contemporaries at the universities of Freiburg and Marburg in the 1910s and 1920s. Their intersection was quite literal in the middle 1920s, when Klein regularly attended Heidegger's lectures on Ancient Greek Philosophy, Aristotle, the question of truth, and human beings' *a priori* need to make sense or meaning. Klein's friend Leo Strauss, who also attended Heidegger's lectures, wrote later of himself and Klein, "Nothing affected us as profoundly in the years in which our minds took their lasting directions as the thought of Heidegger."<sup>120</sup> I wonder about the 'lasting directions' taken by Jacob Klein's mind from the thought of Heidegger, even though Heidegger's and Klein's individual trajectories in philosophical education are astonishingly different.

Leo Strauss offers some insight into what may be an aspect of the lasting direction taken by Klein from Heidegger. Praising young Klein's intellectual independence, unique among the young people of Marburg who were "completely overwhelmed by Heidegger," Strauss writes, "Klein alone saw why Heidegger is truly important: by uprooting and not simply rejecting the tradition of philosophy, [Heidegger] made it possible for the first time after many centuries—one hesitates to say how many—to see the roots of the tradition as they are and thus perhaps to know what so many merely

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<sup>120</sup> See Leo Strauss, "An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John's," 31.

believe, that these roots are the only natural and healthy roots.... [Klein] was thus compelled to disinter the roots, to bring them to light, to look at them with wonder.” We see in Strauss’ metaphor of root—and in the portrait of Klein it illuminates—an image of liberal learning practiced and lived as radical inquiry, liberal because open to wonder and thinking; liberal because free to question the inherited tradition and its experts; and radical because its questioning goes to origins, to what is fundamental, in the ongoing human project of making sense or meaning of our worlds.

After Marburg Heidegger and Klein diverged substantially. Heidegger went to Freiburg and its Rectorship; Klein went to America and appointments as tutor and dean at St. John's College. I see them diverging on *collateral* paths in philosophical education. Heidegger, teaching as professing through lecture in a German research university, guarding a legacy of written work, much of it for education or on education, explicitly or implicitly; and Klein, teaching as tutoring through conversation in an American liberal arts college, seemingly indifferent to the legacy of his few but substantial written works, but passionately committed to his mostly unwritten work for education and on education at St. John’s. Both Heidegger and Klein accepted opportunities to lead and shape their respective educational institutions, pursuing in practice their thinking about education. Heidegger failed notoriously; Klein succeeded eminently. Heidegger’s philosophical work for education was confined to theoretical written work and lecture after his failure in practice at Freiburg in 1933, while Klein’s flourished in practice and dialectical learning at St. John's as Klein “remade the school in his image,” apparently including the senses of liberal learning as radical inquiry indicated in Strauss’s image of the root.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Seth Benardete. *Encounters and Reflections: Conversations with Seth Benardete*, 75.

The different shapes of Klein's and Heidegger's philosophical work for education and human being juxtapose evocatively: Klein wrote more than Socrates but far less than Heidegger. The legacy Heidegger defended to a fault, perhaps, was his written work, including written records of his teaching lectures. Failed in practice, Heidegger's understandings on liberal education are mostly theoretical, explicitly and implicitly recorded in his sizable body of written work. Successful in practice, Klein's understandings on liberal education are, for the most part, recorded in practice, and in the college, its program and ways of liberal learning, and its community of liberal learners, present and emeritus. Diverging but collateral—Heidegger theorizing in his hut on the Todtnauberg earth, Klein shaping liberal education and liberal learning in practice at the *American* St. John's College—*worlds* away, yet in moments uncannily consonant.<sup>122</sup> Both accept the premise that liberal education is good for overcoming the plights of late-modernism, and both understand liberal education as preparation for and practice of radical inquiry and liberal learning.

Klein took lasting directions from Heidegger, I imagine these directions have branched innumerable, added to and redirected by Klein's own wonderings and his colleagues and students at his college. Nevertheless, we may see growth rings that echo Heidegger—or not. It is possible to see an interesting interplay between Klein's college and Heidegger's thinking on education, such that both may be seen to be thinking what is

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<sup>122</sup> Even though Heidegger thought America to be an intellectual youngster, bereft of history, perhaps Heidegger would have found consolation in knowing that the American college he influenced is itself the third oldest college or university in the United States and locates its two campuses in cities with as much indigenous rootedness as America offers. St. John's College is located in Annapolis, Maryland, settled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and former capitol of the United States, and in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a settlement dating to 1050 and the oldest territorial and state capital in the United States.

unthought in the other's thought—if we may take the college's community as a thinker manifesting its thought its practice of liberal education and liberal learning.

Hannah Arendt said that people followed Heidegger “in order to learn thinking.”<sup>123</sup> What Jacob Klein, Heidegger's student at Marburg in the middle 1920's, set up at St. John's College was a site, a place, where people learn thinking, where thinking is practiced by its quietly self-characterized “community of learners,” and where, as J. Glenn Gray described Heidegger's view, “questioning and thinking are not a means to an end; they are self-justifying.”<sup>124</sup> Heidegger's most mature vision for educational institution was for a space and place I am tempted to call *ontological seminary*, which practices a pedagogy that plants the seeds of ontological *paideia* in a small clearing promising deep ground, a place of ontological education. St. John's College is an ontological seminary, realizing Heidegger's mature vision for education. Perhaps, as Heidegger's mature vision for education would entail, through *Ereignis* in its ways of practice, St. John's College has extended and developed Heidegger's mature vision, maturing it further.

Leo Strauss, who shared a lifelong friendship with Jacob Klein that began before they heard together Heidegger lecture at Marburg and lasted until Strauss's death, wrote in a tribute to Klein intended to be spoken before Strauss delivered a lecture at St. John's, bits of which I have quoted above:

Nothing affected us as profoundly in the years in which our minds took their lasting directions as the thought of Heidegger. This is not the place for speaking of that thought and its effects in general. Only this much must

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<sup>123</sup> See Hannah Arendt. “Martin Heidegger At Eighty,” 297.

<sup>124</sup> See J. Glenn Gray, “Introduction” in Martin Heidegger's *What is Called Thinking?*, xiii.

be said: *Heidegger, who surpasses in speculative intelligence all his contemporaries and is at the same time intellectually the counterpart of what Hitler was politically, attempts to go a way not yet trodden by anyone, or rather to think in a way in which certain philosophers at any rate have never thought before. Certain it is that no one has questioned the premises of philosophy as radically as Heidegger.* While everyone else in the young generation who had ears to hear was either completely overwhelmed by Heidegger, or else, having been completely overwhelmed by him, engaged in well-intentioned but ineffective rear-guard actions against him, Klein alone saw why Heidegger is truly important: by uprooting and not simply rejecting the tradition of philosophy, he made it possible for the first time after many centuries—one hesitates to say how many—to see the roots of the tradition as they are and thus perhaps to know what so many merely believe, that these roots are the only natural and healthy roots. . . . he was thus compelled to disinter the roots, to bring them to light, to look at them with wonder. *Klein was the first to understand the possibility which Heidegger had opened without intending it: the possibility of a genuine return to classical philosophy, to the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, a return with open eyes and in full clarity about the infinite difficulties which it entails. He [Klein] turned to the study of classical philosophy with a devotion and a love of toil, a penetration and an intelligence, an intellectual probity in which no contemporary equals him [italics mine].*”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> See Leo Strauss, “An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John’s,” 31. Strauss sent this

I quote Strauss at length because in its entirety it confirms Heidegger's influence on his students, and his "profound" influence on Klein, without Klein's "being overwhelmed," which I take to mean without Klein's losing his ability to see beyond Heidegger as a teacher, think beyond Heidegger as a teacher, or to know his own mind and pursue his own way, even as he took Heidegger's teachings with him. Though Strauss may be praising Klein's bringing about "a genuine return to classical philosophy" at St. John's for how that return might fit Strauss's agendas, he also conveys Klein's unusual stand as Heidegger's student, and as learner, thinker, and educator. Strauss confirms that the radical in Heidegger's approach to the tradition of philosophy, to its practice as philosophizing, and to its teaching as philosophizing, is both literal and profound. He confirms that Klein understood this and that Klein may have understood more about radical education than even Heidegger himself.

Klein's shaping influence on St. John's College was decisive. Seth Benardete, whose first academic job was at St. John's—hired by Klein—said, "it was amazing the way Klein remade the school in his image. It already had a great books program, based on the influence of Thomism.... But when Klein came he told them what the program meant."<sup>126</sup> Though Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, two followers of Robert Hutchins, initiated a Great Books Program at St. John's in 1937, it was Jacob Klein who brought the college into its essential being and *made* it, unfolding its ethos, its particular ways of practice, and its curricular program. St. John's still respectfully acknowledges its

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statement to Klein on April 7, 1960. Strauss had written it in honor of Klein's sixtieth birthday and intended to deliver it as spoken prologue to Strauss's lecture at St. John's in 1960. The editor of Strauss's book, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, speculates that the tribute was not spoken "due to the urgent and specific request of Klein, who suffered from an 'idiosyncratic [that is, extreme] abhorrence of publicity'" (451, n.1).

<sup>126</sup> See Seth Benardete. *Encounters and Reflections: Conversations with Seth Benardete*, 75.

Great Books origins, but the college has long outgrown those origins and stands far from Mortimer Adler's Great Books enterprises and its kin at the College of University of Chicago and the Core Curriculum at Columbia University.

Adler's Great Books enterprises aim to make the books and ideas designated as "great" palatable and pat for the general citizenry (to transform Heidegger's "*das Man*" to no longer be an unthinking herd or public). We might even go so far as to say that Adler's "Great Books" is a brand, an enterprise, a marketing vehicle, for it lends its trademark to many publishing, pedagogical, and lifestyle products. "Greatness" itself is then branded, harnessed as a resource to be optimized in the marketplace. St. John's College, by contrast, 'brands' and markets itself very reluctantly and very judiciously, refusing for example to participate in *U.S. News and World Report's* college rankings. (For much of the past decade, St. John's College was the first 'ranked' college to stand against this process by denying information to *U.S. News and World Report*.) The books the college considers great are resources and sources, but resources and sources for conversation not consumption, for the books are the college's "most important teachers...timeless and timely," expressing "most originally and often most perfectly the ideas by which contemporary life is knowingly and unknowingly governed"<sup>127</sup>

For Adler, "The Great Books" yield what he designated "The Great Ideas," and these—significantly—are for Adler exhaustible. "It was Adler," says the preface to Adler's book *The Great Ideas*, "who first understood that there are a limited number of Great Ideas which form the core of the thought of Western Civilization and the keys to the Great Books."<sup>128</sup> At St. John's College, there is no designated set of great ideas and

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<sup>127</sup> See *Statement of the St. John's College Program*, 6.

<sup>128</sup> See Mortimer Adler, *The Great Ideas*, xi.

no fixed or *branded* set of “Great Books.” Instead, greatness is characterized by inexhaustibility as question-worthiness, elucidating power, and meaningful presence. Eva Brann, Jacob Klein’s colleague, the college’s former dean, and the most perspicuous reporter on the pedagogical practice of the college Klein so influenced, writes, “‘greatness’ has real significance for us....Greatness shows up as inexhaustibility.”<sup>129</sup> Along with being ‘no-thing’—that is, not an entity, an essential characteristic of being/beyng (*Sein/Seyn*), for Heidegger is inexhaustibility: being shows up as inexhaustible. Further, the college teaches and practices *lingering* in inexhaustibility—“pedagogical lingering,” Brann calls it—particularly lingering in the inexhaustibility of the books. The books read by all and in learning community at St. John’s College are an inexhaustible source of the matters (*Sachen*) of concern among the college’s community. The books’ being (*Sein*), their meaning as books, unfolds and unconceals in time spent with them, living with them, lingering in encounter with them, or in Heidegger-speak, ‘dwelling’ with them. In this way the books, as inexhaustible source of matters, are analogous to Heidegger’s inexhaustible being/beyng (*Sein/Seyn*).

St. John's College was more a “Great Books” school in the Adler sense during the first decade of the New Program (roughly 1937-1947), when Adler’s lifelong friend from University of Chicago, Scott Buchanan was the college dean and pedagogical leader. Adler and Buchanan shared fundamental educational principles—such as the belief that education should be democratic and practical in preparing students for active participation in democratic citizenship. In keeping with these principles, the mission of the college during that first decade, like that of Adler’s later pedagogical projects (for example, Paideia Program and the Great Books Foundation), was to bring liberal

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<sup>129</sup> See Eva Brann, “A College Unique and Universal,” 21

education to the many and common man. During the first decade of the New Program, the pedagogical principles, method, tools, and goals of the college were similar to those Adler would continue to advocate in his “Great Books” pedagogical projects. Adler later advocated a method, sometimes called a “Socratic method,” and viewed the Great Books and the Great Ideas that he canonized to be both the matter worked upon by this method and the tools by which it worked. Adler represented his method and his pedagogy as a *technē*; he does so explicitly in his book *The Paideia Program*. Adler’s take on greatness is that greatness—greatness of book or idea—is a resource to be harnessed for the practical goal of bringing so-called liberal education to the masses. “Greatness,” interestingly, is not a “Great Idea.”

When Heidegger’s student Jacob Klein became the dean of St. John’s College in 1949, Klein, as Seth Benardete remarked, told the college what the college program “meant.” Eva Brann observes that Klein effected a second founding of the New Program, “placing under the inspiredly practical Program a philosophical grounding” and leading the college to reflect more radically on its practices and principles and terms of engagement than it had under the “Great Books” leadership of Buchanan and Chicagoans such as Adler.<sup>130</sup> She said further of Klein, “His spirit informed the college. While dean, he was a fierce defender of his conception of this remarkable community of learning.”<sup>131</sup> “Greatness,” for example, was no longer an answer but became a question to be asked and lived in the college community. Pedagogical method was no longer patly described as “Socratic” and was not considered *technē*. “Whatever it is we do,” writes Eva Brann, “it’s not according to any method. A method is, properly, a rule-governed process, and

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<sup>130</sup> See Eva Brann, “A College Unique and Universal,” 10.

<sup>131</sup> See Eva Brann, “Jacob Klein’s Two Prescient Discoveries,” 5.

we adhere to none such. And it isn't Socratic.... The reason our teaching is not a method is that it's just a bit of nature. We do what comes naturally: encourage people by asking (everyone here knows that you can't 'teach people to think'; such taught thinking is just simulacrum of thought, rule-driven reason."<sup>132</sup> Whatever the college does in its conversation with greatness, it is not Adlerian *technē* and it is not to optimize, exhaust, or market that greatness. The college makes of these great books, as Ehrmantraut says of Heidegger's "identification of the will to know with the demand for 'experience'" as "living philosophy," a "seeking to experience what is 'great.' 'Greatness' is conjoined with the 'essential.'"<sup>133</sup>

It is ironic that, given Heidegger's disdain for America, Heidegger's vision for education may have left Germany with his student Klein as its carrier, been laid in and established at St. John's College, Annapolis, under Klein's watch, and fostered carefully by others after Klein to flourish according to the ways, principles, and *poiesis* he guided. This flourishing includes refinement of what Klein shaped, for the college's way is a living philosophizing and its program is a living program, even as it is ever safeguarding and mindful of its radical traditions. What's further remarkable is that Klein, fleeing the Nazis, left Germany in the mid-1930's and left access to much of Heidegger's middle and later work, including Heidegger's more mature educational thought, yet the college Klein shaped instantiates and developed, found its own way to, the dialectical *poiesis* in education that I take to be Heidegger's most mature vision for education.

The St. John's seminar, for example, as the college's "Statement of Program" carefully articulates, is the "heart" of the St. John's program and pedagogical ways.

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<sup>132</sup> See Eva Brann, "A College Unique and Universal," 16.

<sup>133</sup> See Michael Ehrmantraut. "Heidegger's Philosophic Pedagogy," 142n., 143.

“Heart” is here to be taken commonly, even in the approachable hackneyed sense, but is also meant to be considered further, calling forth the question of what means “heart,” and thinking and conversation about it. In the thinking and conversation of the seminar,

all opinions must be heard and explored, however they may sharply clash;...[and] every opinion must be supported by an argument—an unsupported opinion does not count. [Beginners] may tend to express their opinions with little regard for their relevance to the question or their relation to the opinions of others. Gradually, in their interplay with one another, the students learn to proceed with care.... The progress of the seminar is not particularly smooth; the discussion may sometimes branch off and entangle itself in irrelevant difficulties. Only gradually can the logical rigor of an argument emerge within the sequence of analogies and other imaginative devices by which the discussion is kept alive.<sup>134</sup>

This statement might describe seminar pedagogy in general, might be declared by any one of a number of liberal arts colleges or universities as their purported practiced, and it could be said to describe a Socratic dialogue or conversation, or even a Heideggerian dialogue, such as “A Dialogue on Language” or the three dialogues written in 1944-45 and collected as *Country Path Conversations* (GA77). However, as anyone, learner or teacher knows, there is an awful difference between what happens commonly in seminar classrooms of most colleges and universities and in a Socratic dialogue’s conversation, and there is a marvelous difference between the empty lip-service to such a statement and the truly meaningful presencing of it that happens at St. John’s. As its community of learners and practice re-ontologize “heart,” call forth the sense of that

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<sup>134</sup> See *Statement of the St. John’s College Program*, 8-9.

word in its especially meaningful senses, so does the college's community and practice re-ontologize what has become hackneyed and empty in pedagogical statements. The heart of the St. John's seminar is like that of Heidegger's "A Dialogue on Language: between a Japanese and an Inquirer": in both, tutors face one another in dialectic sometimes across the table, and between them sit those who are learning to enter the dialectic and do eventually, in an educational space that is an open clearing, a *khôra*, and where, on a good night, *Ereignis* admits the presencing of Being.

## CONCLUSION

By way of endings for this study, and moving toward conclusion, it seems appropriate to hearken to Heidegger's 1964 address, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," composed and delivered near the end of his working life and a work that I take to be one of Heidegger's few, final explicit or implicit thinkings on education and contributions to our thinking of what is most needed in education in our late modern age.

With this address, as with most of his speaking opportunities of the middle and later 1960s (including the controversial *Der Spiegel* interview of 1966, unpublished until Heidegger's death in 1976), Heidegger is trying his hand again, for the sake of future need, to open a way into what most concerns him and what he takes to be most question-worthy in our late-modern age. What concerns Heidegger in "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" and what he takes to be especially question-worthy (as he does in *Contributions to Philosophy* and explicitly in *What is Called Thinking?*) is human beings' preparation for, readiness for, the task of thinking at the end of philosophy, or more specifically at the end of philosophy as metaphysics. This preparation, this readiness, is for Heidegger a matter of education.

What Heidegger means by 'the end of philosophy' is not a doomsday scenario or an end in the sense of "a mere stopping, or lack of continuation, perhaps even as decline into impotence" (TB 56/GA14: 70). What Heidegger means by "end" is the *coming to completion* of a way of thinking, specifically the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics "turns into the empirical science of man" and completes its development of separate and independent sciences, such as psychology, cultural anthropology, and the

new cybernetics (TB 57-8/GA14: 72). It is a completion evident “today in all regions of beings” (TB 57/GA14: 72). With this coming to completion also come to completion the modes of thinking that metaphysics has unfolded (such as its distinction of rationality and irrationality) and metaphysical standpoints toward entities and being itself (*Sein/Seyn*). With this coming to completion also comes to completion an epoch in the history of human intelligibility and that epoch’s intelligibility’s thinking of being itself (*Sein/Seyn*), entities, and phenomena. Further, by this coming to completion, thinks Heidegger, the whole history of philosophy as metaphysics is “gathered into its most extreme possibility,” Platonism as “reversed Platonism” in the thought of Marx and Nietzsche (TB 57/GA14: 71).

Though philosophy as metaphysics is in its “final stage” in the thought of Marx and Nietzsche, Heidegger says it would be “premature” “to conclude” that the end of philosophy is “a cessation of its way of thinking” (TB 57/GA14: 71). He expects the future to hold attempts at “epigonal renaissance” of metaphysics, which we might envision as neo-neo-Platonism or reversals of reversed-Platonism, but as is the essence of epigones, what is epigonal is imitative and less distinguished than its predecessors. If eventually in the history of being—the history of what-is as it shows up in human intelligibility—philosophy as metaphysics were to diminish to absence, would another philosophy, a mode of thinking other than those of metaphysics and another standpoint than that of human intelligibility over entities, emerge?

In “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” Heidegger wants to think, yes, that another philosophy and modes of thinking other than those of metaphysics and another standpoint than that of human intelligibility over entities, would emerge. He has

wanted to think so 1) since the failure of his attempt, as Iain Thomson's *Heidegger on Ontotheology* elucidates, to reunify the independent university sciences by means of their common origin in the metaphysical philosophy that developed them; and 2) since his realizing by that failure that manifestations of the inevitable end of metaphysics were the university's refusal of a philosophical transformation of its ontic empirical sciences—a transformative re-essentializing and unifying regrounding of the sciences in their philosophical origin—and the university's refusal of philosophy as anything other than its becoming empirical science too. It is after the failure of his attempt *for* education to reunify the university fragmented by its independent sciences and their concerns that Heidegger, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, takes up the questions indicated by the title of the 1964 address "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking." Those questions are "what does it mean that philosophy in its present age has entered its final stage?" and "what task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?" Heidegger's educational project in *Contributions to Philosophy* was to prepare "future ones" for readiness to think at the end of philosophy.

*Contributions to Philosophy* and its project for educational transformation, turning or shift, in the thinking of those who would be and could be future ones was not yet published or public in 1964. However, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" speaks the need for such a project and presents reason for that need in its unfolding of the questions indicated by its title. As Heidegger tells his audience, "the title designates the attempt at a reflection, which persists in questioning. The questions are paths to an answer. If the answer could be given, the answer would consist in *a*

*transformation of thinking*, not in a propositional statement about a matter at stake [italics mine]” (TB 55/GA14: 69).

That transformation or turning in thinking, as Heidegger’s thinking in the address realizes, is a transformation *away* from the propositional statements of metaphysics, its direction toward “the things [entities] themselves,” its empirical stand over them, and its realization of truth as correct representation of the common look of entities. It is a transformation *away* from the thinking—and its teaching—as depicted in Heidegger’s poetizing thinking, “Plato's Doctrine of Truth.” The transformation in thinking called for by “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” is the same as that intended by Heidegger’s educational project in *Contributions to Philosophy* and is a transformation *to* thinking free of metaphysics and its “light.” Such thinking, Heidegger says, is thinking in an open clear of, free of, the tradition of metaphysical knowing and its modes of thinking, proof, and truth. Philosophy as metaphysics, Heidegger says, “knows nothing of [this] opening.” Instead, in compelling correctness of look and encounter with what-is (as empirical, rational, encounter), metaphysics compels the ‘closing’ of thinking ‘space,’ a denial of *khôra* and a restriction of *Ereignis* to metaphysical truth happenings.

Such a transformation, such a turning and shift in the form and forming of human thinking and its intelligibility, is for Heidegger a matter of education. He says explicitly as he brings “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” to completion,

we all still need an education in thinking, and before that first of knowledge of what being educated and uneducated in thinking means. In this respect, Aristotle gives us a hint in Book IV of his *Metaphysics* (1006a ff.). It reads: For it is uneducated not to have an eye for when it is

necessary to look for a proof, and when this is not necessary. (TB 72/GA14: 89)

Looking for proof is a mode of thinking unfolded by metaphysics, as is the designation and distinction of what is rational and irrational. In an educative calling of his audience toward what Heidegger thinks to be preparatory or transitional thinking on the way to the possibility of other modes of thinking and other philosophies, Heidegger asks, “doesn’t the insistence on what is demonstrable block the way to what-is? (that is, to being-itself (*Sein/Seyn*)?),” and wonders, “perhaps there is a thinking which is more sober than the irresistible race of rationalization and the sweeping character of cybernetics” (TB 72/GA14: 89).

Reflecting—thinking—into the opening opened by his question and wondering, Heidegger continues, “For it is not yet decided in what way that which needs no proof in order to become accessible to thinking is to be experienced. Is it dialectical mediation [like that of “A Dialogue on Language”] or originary intuition or neither of the two?” (TB 72/GA14: 89) Heidegger continues, “philosophy [as metaphysics] does speak about the light of reason, but does not heed the opening of Being [being-itself (*Sein/Seyn*)]. The *lumen naturale*, the light of reason, throws light only on openness. It does concern the opening, but so little does it *form* it that it needs it in order to be able to illuminate what is present in the opening.” (TB 66/GA14: 83). The *forming* of the opening that metaphysics’ “light of reason” does little to form is the essential forming of Heideggerian education, and it is a forming that happens in—and as—the essential being, the ownmost being, of human being. Becoming open, or more specifically, becoming an opening in

which, and by which, thinking—within and without metaphysics—happens, as *Ereignis* is genuine educational transformation, is *paideia*, for Heidegger.

Such educational transformation is a liberating education and is the essence of liberal education as Heidegger thinks it. This is not liberal education as education concerned with bringing forth the subjective I of metaphysical modernism or the liberalism or liberal democracy that modernism unfolds. Instead it is liberal education allowing for, as that Jacob Klein's St. John's College does, a liberation as re-opening of essential human being from its narrowing through metaphysics' fundamental ontology, a liberation from the view of human being only as the rational animal thinking beyond beings to their beingness and, then, forgetting being-itself.

To consider the matter of 'Heidegger and education' only in light of Heidegger's becoming the first Nazi rector of Freiburg University is to miss Heidegger's prescient insight into the plights of our late-modern 70,000 student universities, insight that Heidegger realized in *confrontation* with Nazism and its expression of our late-modern Nietzschean ontotheology, will-to-power. It is also to miss too Heidegger's efforts in *Contributions to Philosophy* especially to think the task of thinking apart from the metaphysical philosophy and tradition that unfolded to late-modern Nietzschean nihilism and its plights, including the plights of late-modern education, its institutions, and its practices. To realize genuine education, to allow for it, thinks Heidegger we must think through, but also apart from, the western philosophical tradition as metaphysics, its ontotheologies, and the worlds it has realized, including those of its education. Thinking with Plato and Plato's Cave Allegory, as Heidegger interprets it, genuine education is not filling an opening with what is presumed known or 'proven': genuine education does not

consist in merely pouring knowledge into the unprepared soul as if it were some container—a jug—held out empty and waiting.” “On the contrary, thinks Heidegger through Plato, but also apart from Plato in “Plato's Doctrine of Truth,” “real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it.” That essential being, as Heidegger thinks it in *Contributions to Philosophy* and reiterates it in “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” is an open clearing wherein human being encounters what-is.

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- BT *Being and Time*. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
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