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Body and Time: The Temporality of Human Embodiment

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**BODY AND TIME: HEIDEGGER ON THE TEMPORALITY
OF HUMAN EMBODIMENT**

By

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B.A., Liberal Arts, Bennington College, 2007
M.A., Philosophy, University of New Mexico, 2011

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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Dedication

For my mom—in more ways than one.

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I hope to shed further light on Heidegger's thought-provoking claim that "We do not "have" a body; rather, we "are" bodily."¹ After discussing the problem of the body in the context of *Being and Time* in chapters one and two, I move to Heidegger's later lectures and seminars in chapter three to articulate a specifically Heideggerian account of the bodying of the body. I hope to show that Heidegger's understanding of the ontological difference can effectively help us to understand bodily difference in its corporeal, lived, and existential dimensions. From a Heideggerian standpoint, the existential dimensions of embodiment are inevitably overlooked when the discussion becomes limited to subject-object formulations. Nietzsche thus serves as the culmination of metaphysics within Heidegger's history of being in the sense that he effectively carries the *Leib-Körper* distinction to its most thorough logical conclusions while simultaneously pointing the way forward to a new conception of the body in its temporal dimensions. Human identities are better understood in

¹ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99.

terms of the tripartite unity of thrownness, fallenness, and projection because it is too simplistic to reduce questions of bodily identity to binaries such as mind and body.

Table of Contents

1. Heidegger on the Question of the Body.....	1
1.1 The goal of the dissertation.....	1
1.2 The tasks of the dissertation.....	6
1.3 The history of metaphysics and the body	7
1.4 Heidegger’s aversion to the bodily: Chanter	10
1.5 Heidegger’s deferral of the hidden problematic of the body: Cerbone	16
1.6 Toward a Heideggerian account of the body: Levin.....	24
1.7 Further toward a Heideggerian account of the body: Aho.....	28
1.8 Unfinished tasks for a Heideggerian account of the body	29
2. Heidegger on Being Dasein	32
2.1 The structure of the question of being	32
2.2 Phenomenology.....	39
2.3 Dasein	48
2.4 Dasein’s spatiality.....	51
2.5 Dasein’s temporality	58
2.6 Dasein’s way of finding itself in the world.....	66
2.7 The body (Körper), the lived body (Leib), and the bodying of the body (leiben)	69
2.8 The neutrality of Dasein’s sexuality	77
3. Bodying with Nietzsche.....	90
3.1 Nietzsche’s inversion of Plato	90
3.2 Nietzsche as the pivot of the history of being.....	93
3.3 Nietzsche on the body.....	100
3.4 Living as bodying	105
3.5 Bodying as chaotic.....	108
3.6 Bodying and the rapture of art	116
3.7 Bodying with Descartes, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty.....	119
4. Body and Time	130
4.1 Synopsis of the dissertation	130
4.2 Body and Time.....	130

5. Works Cited.....	135
5.1 Works by Heidegger	135
5.2 Works by Others	136

1. Heidegger on the Question of the Body

1.1 The goal of the dissertation

In his discussion of the spatiality of being-in-the-world in his 1927 text *Being and Time*, Heidegger enigmatically writes that our bodily nature “hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.”² This admission raises two obvious questions: In what sense does the body “hide a whole problematic of its own,” and why shall this problematic remain untreated “here?” In later texts written in the 1950’s and 60’s Heidegger repeatedly insists that the questions pertaining to Dasein’s bodily nature constitute “the most difficult problem,” yet it is unclear whether Heidegger makes much headway in shedding light on what this problem even *is*, yet alone how it might be addressed or resolved by Heidegger’s own phenomenological method of analysis.³ In contrast, we have some understanding of the sense in which the body poses a “problem” for other philosophers such as Plato and Nietzsche, or Aristotle and Husserl, because each wrote extensively about bodies, but in what ways is the body a problem for Heidegger’s philosophy? Despite proclaiming repeatedly that the body is the most difficult problem of them all, Heidegger seems to write remarkably little about the ontological or existential or philosophical significance of what it means to “have” or “be” a human body.

My goal in this dissertation is to make sense of Heidegger’s limited remarks about embodiment, thus attempting to make headway in answering the two questions above. The first question essentially asks about the body: In what sense is the body a problem that hides itself? By what devices does the body hide its very own problematic nature? What is the

² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 108. All footnotes are references to pages in Heidegger’s texts, unless otherwise noted by reference to author’s surname.

³ *Heraclitus Seminar*, 146.

problem with the body, why is this problem itself hidden, and how might we go about revealing this hidden problematic? On my reading of Heidegger's texts, the hidden problematic of the body lies in the fact that *the body presents itself spatially*, as a static thing and visible object extended in three-dimensional space, even though the *body exists itself temporally and in each case is potentially mine*, as an ecstatic entity existing by way of what Heidegger in his later years will call four-dimensional temporality. In other words, my body is never reducible to something merely given and presented to me or others as a spatial thing; instead, it always already takes time to come to the position where one can be said to "have" a body. Predominant interpretations of the body define the bodily in terms of its extension in space and in contrast from the unifying temporal entity that "has" that body, for instance, the I or mind or soul or person. But for Heideggerian phenomenology everything hinges on making sense of ourselves from the perspective of our whole sojourn, which is to say, from the standpoint of what it is like to stay somewhere temporarily. It is not simply that human beings stay in places for various periods of time, but rather that our very "staying in place" itself is a primarily temporal affair. Each bodily "stay" or stance or position or identity is always already a temporary stay somewhere, such that clearing a space for oneself always takes time. Heidegger's account of what it is to be human in time unearths a hidden problematic that radically throws into doubt any supposedly self-evident recourse to a "body" that "is" "mine." To speak of grammar ungrammatically, me having a body is the wrong way to talk about the subject matter of what it is like for me to have a body, because the event of "me having a body" involves through and through what is primarily a temporary stay. Propositional statements, however, inappropriately split the subject matter of this temporary stay into a subject and its matter, and thereby also into something temporary and something

permanent. The claim that “I have a body” has an ambiguous and paradoxical sense depending on whether I am emphasizing the relative permanence of the self in relation to the chaos of its body (“I have a body”) or the relative permanence of the body in relation to the chaos of the self (“I have a *body*”). Thus, I might bemoan my bodily existence by emphasizing its being as permanently temporary, or I might dance in exuberance over this same fact and celebrate the temporary permanence granted to me by my body. But for Heidegger, we misunderstand what it is to be a human bodily self in both cases, because in both cases we misunderstand time by reducing it to something temporary in opposition to something permanent, regardless of whether I conceive of this body as the relatively permanent site of my objectivity or of my subjectivity.

Following Heidegger’s lead in texts such as *Being and Time* and *Time and Being*, I suggest that “what we call dimension and dimensionality [of the body] in a way easily misconstrued, belongs to true time and to it alone.”⁴ Put otherwise, in order to properly understand our embodiment without misconstruing the matter spatially, we must learn to rethink the body on the basis of its unique form of temporality that Heidegger calls “true time:”

We cannot attribute the presencing to be thus thought to one of the three dimensions of time, to the present, which would seem obvious. Rather, the unity of time’s three dimensions consists in the interplay of each toward each. This interplay proves to be the true extending, playing in the very heart of time, the fourth dimension, so to speak—not only so to speak, but in the nature of the matter. True time is four-dimensional.⁵

The hidden problematic of the body lies in its enigmatic character as a four-dimensional temporal entity, despite its appearance as a three-dimensional spatial entity. The second

⁴ *Time and Being*, 15.

⁵ *Time and Being*, 15.

question essentially asks about Heidegger's insistence that "we shall not treat [the body] here:" Why "shall" the body not be treated within Heidegger's discussion of our manner of existing in space in *Being and Time*? If not "here" in this text, where else within Heidegger's collected works must we turn to discern a more thorough Heideggerian interpretation of bodies? My answer to this second question follows from my answer to the first question: Given Heidegger's explication of "true time" in *Time and Being*, it makes sense that Heidegger needed to defer treatment of the body within the discussion of space and spatiality in *Being and Time*: "For true time itself, the realm of its threefold extending determined by nearing nearness, is the prespatial region which first give any possible "where.""⁶ As we will see, Heidegger insists that this four-dimensional conception of "true time" is neutral in respect to bodily difference, such that the same temporal structure of past, present, future, and their dynamic interrelation is always already at work for us all, despite the undeniable fact that we each have different bodies and different relations to our own bodies. Heidegger contributes to phenomenology of embodiment by pointing us away from a binary and static-spatial model of embodiment and sex, and toward a four-dimensional and ecstatic-temporal model of "the body." The Heideggerian model of embodiment emphasizes that this body which is "in each case mine" must be understood in terms of the dynamic interrelations between four different dimensions of the "the body:"

1. "the body" as visible, perceived, objective reality (*Körper*),
2. "the body" as lived, perceiving, subjective reality (*Leib*),
3. "the body" as neither subject nor object, but considered instead as our bodily being-in-the-world-with others or "bodying" (*Leiben*), and

⁶ *Time and Being*, 15.

4. “the body” as the temporally dynamic existing interplay between each “body” conceived in terms of the past (*Körper*), present (*Leib*), and future (*Leiben*) dimensions of our embodiment.

The goal of the dissertation is to show that this four-dimensional conception of bodies allows us to make sense of complex bodily phenomena that confusingly become reified when lumped together by single words, such as the multitude of phenomena pertaining to “sex.” On Heidegger’s temporal account of our embodied existence in the world, references to sex differ for each individual because each is capable of making sense of its own time, and thereby its own body and its own relationship to sex, differently. Being sexual is multidimensional in a temporal and bodily sense.

1. “sex” as fixed biological property (“sex”)
2. “sex” as lived current reality determined by and determining the present (“gender”)
3. “sex” as desire for what is to come or arrive in the future (“sexual desire”)
4. “sex” as the way we exist as the entity who cares about sexuality, which pertains to the manner in which “sex,” “gender,” and “sexual desire” exist in a dynamic temporal interplay which potentially differs for each human being.

While “sex” tends to be reduced to one or more of the above characterizations, the Heideggerian point is to emphasize is that the interrelations between one’s past, present, and future – or between one’s sex, gender, and sexual desire – is an individual matter open to constant transformation and transfiguration, rather than a fixed property of the body considered merely in its spatial and objective sense as a visible entity considered from the third-person perspective. The goal of a Heideggerian phenomenology of embodiment, then, is to set into relief the conceptual resources required for a nonreductive description of each

individual Dasein's bodily sojourn(s) in the world. If we hope to describe our embodiment in a way that truly accounts for the actual phenomena of our bodily existence, I believe we should explore and begin to articulate a Heideggerian account of the body.

1.2 The tasks of the dissertation

My task in this dissertation is to articulate a specifically Heideggerian account of the body. According to Heidegger, the body hides a problematic of its own because the body presents itself within human experience as ambiguously both a subject and an object, such that the body can be conceived alternatively from either a first-person, subjective interior experience of a body, or from a third-person, objective, exterior experience of a body. This distinction between the body understood as a corpse-like object (*Körper*) and "the lived body" (*Leib*) has played a significant role in the history of philosophy of the body, but for Heidegger the more important distinction to be drawn is between "the lived body" (*Leib*) and "bodying" (*leiben*). This Heideggerian distinction is not the same as the difference between the body as an objective corporeality and subjective bodily life. The lived body (*Leib*) refers in each case to the body for which a plethora of ontic sciences already exist, such as psychology, biology, and anthropology, all which set out to understand the lived experiences of human beings. It is this sense of "body" that Heidegger has in mind when he writes,

Most of what we know from the natural sciences about the body and the way it embodies are specifications based on the established misinterpretation of the body as a mere natural body. Through such means we do find out lots of things, but the essential and determinative aspects always elude our vision and grasp.⁷

Conversely, bodying (*Leiben*) is the name Heidegger reserves for the being of a body, or what we might also call being-a-body, or the ontological dimension of the body, which, Heidegger claims, has not been discussed by philosophers and scientists at all. Heidegger's

⁷ Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 99-100.

concept of bodying (*leiben*), to be distinguished from both the body (*Körper*) and the lived body (*Leib*), helps us to rethink our bodily nature along the lines of the existential, ontological, and tripartite dimensions of our temporality. My primary task in this dissertation is to argue along Heideggerian lines that we cannot understand bodily difference as such without first understanding the difference between bodily entities, on the one hand, and the *being* of these entities, on the other. In other words, I am suggesting that Heidegger's account of ontological difference provides a conceptual framework for rethinking bodily identity without reducing embodiment to spatial metaphors of containment, exclusion, and separation.

Another task of the dissertation is to show that the familiar dichotomy of *Körper* and *Leib* gains its ontological grounding in a way of being that is less familiar, namely, *leiben* or "bodying." Unlike objective appeals to *Körper* and subjective appeals to *Leib*, *leiben* does not refer to a specific entity but rather to the way or being of an entity. There is a crucial distinction to be drawn "the body" as a bodily thing (i.e. subject or object or both) and "the body" as a way of being bodily, a difference not merely of degree but of kind that becomes eclipsed, conflated, and forgotten by the history of metaphysics, according to Heidegger.

1.3 The history of metaphysics and the body

The human body has occupied a primarily negative role throughout the history of Western philosophy. From silence and uneasiness to subordination and denial, embodiment tends to be brought up only to be put down. This can be gleaned by the metaphors which give rise to our understanding of what the body is; for example, in a variety of ways the body has been conceived as an obstacle and danger to reason, an unfortunate anchor binding the self to finitude, and a chaotic element of our being that must be contained, repressed, and

subjugated to the demand and authority of rational thought. Socrates even suggests in the *Cratylus* that the very word “body” (*soma*) was introduced by Orphic priests “with the idea that the soul is undergoing punishment for something.”⁸ Throughout the history of philosophy, the body is seen to hide the deeper truth of the real. This negative conception leads Jean-Luc Nancy to claim that “There has never been any body in philosophy,” only the shadow and sign of a thing that is strangely not us.⁹

This is not to say that philosophers do not mention or refer to the body. Since the time of Plato, philosophy has been fixated on questions regarding the body and, especially since Descartes, concerns regarding the body and the question of its access to knowledge have taken a central place on the Western philosophical itinerary. To borrow from Foucault, what characterizes the last several centuries is not a silence about the body, but rather “the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it.”¹⁰ The Western tradition has not so much neglected or forgotten the body as it has constantly interpreted and reinterpreted the manner of our physicality as what is “mine” but “other” than my true self, which is conceived alternatively in terms of my soul, spirit, mind, or subjectivity. It appears that we cannot help but refer to the body according to these interpretive schemas, which entail specific assumptions about what the body is and how it is to be described and explained. When we talk about the body we have already in advance decided upon an historically specific way of speaking and thinking the matter, and typically in a way that splits object from subject and matter from thinking.

⁸ Plato, *Cratylus*, 63.

⁹ Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, 193.

¹⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, 34. Here Foucault is referring not to the body specifically, but to sexuality as embodied.

Given the preponderance of references to the body in the history of philosophy, Heidegger's *Being and Time* stands out in its explicitly stated refusal to treat "the problematic of the body" in any detail. Heidegger's acknowledgement that the body is not being acknowledged does not appear to jibe with the explicitly stated goal of *Being and Time*, which is to dismantle or "deconstruct" the Western philosophical tradition of disembodied subjectivity by asking the question of being concretely. It is on such grounds that Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* criticized Heidegger for the fact that there are barely six lines on the body in the 437 pages of *Sein und Zeit*, leading many philosophers to question Heidegger's emphasis on our self-understanding considering his utter silence regarding the specific nature of our body.¹¹ On the surface, it seems that Heidegger repeated the same philosophical tendencies he hoped to overcome, specifically, the dichotomization and consequent fragmentation of the human being into mind and body in a way that prioritizes the mind and devalues the body.

Thinkers in an increasingly wide array of disciplines continue to pinpoint the disastrous effects this ideal of disembodiment and denigration of the body has had, especially for those many "others" who have historically been defined primarily in relation to their bodies. Heidegger's downplaying of embodiment has led many scholars to take up the absence of the body as a critical problem, both in the negative sense that the absence poses problems for Heidegger's account, and in the positive sense that the absence provides grounds for rethinking the human body in a different manner. For example, Chanter interprets the absence of the body in *Being and Time* as a point of neglect and denial due to Heidegger's methodology, whereas Cerbone tries to show that Heidegger has good

¹¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 231.

methodological reasons for deferring the account because his goal is to reconceive of the body along the lines of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Despite the appearance of an insoluble opposition here, both sides of the debate essentially agree with Heidegger's contention that "the body hides a whole problematic of its own;" where Chanter and Cerbone disagree is the extent to which Heidegger's thinking is amenable to addressing that problematic.¹² Chanter contends that the problem is "not only that Heidegger neglects feminist concerns when treating certain topics, but also how his philosophy is formulated in such a way as to render such concerns irrelevant."¹³ Cerbone, conversely, argues that "only given the existential analytic can one begin to offer a proper account of ourselves in bodily terms."¹⁴ In this dissertation I take the latter path in trying to show how Heidegger's thinking might be relevant for understanding our bodies. Nonetheless, Chanter's thought-provoking critique in "The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger's Ontology" insightfully explores some of "the most fruitful sites of enquiry" for "a feminist critique of Heidegger," raising several objections to *Being and Time* that we must seriously consider.¹⁵ Let us now consider Chanter's critique of Heidegger.

1.4 Heidegger's aversion to the bodily: Chanter

Much has been said about Heidegger's failure to speak about certain topics. Probably the first to call for this critical approach to Heidegger was Heidegger himself. Heidegger maintained that the proper philosophical task consists in a careful and systematic attempt to think through the unthought and unquestioned moments of philosophical discourses. It is perhaps not unsurprising, then, that many sympathetic and unsympathetic readers of Heidegger's

¹² *Being and Time*, 108.

¹³ Chanter, "The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger's Ontology," 74.

¹⁴ Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?," 209.

¹⁵ Chanter, "The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger's Ontology," 73.

texts come away with the sense that there is something important missing in Heidegger, and this can mean many things. It can mean that Heidegger never develops an explicit, thematic account of a topic or problem; that Heidegger's work evades real philosophical problems that he should have addressed; that Heidegger is not only silent about but also effectively silences something we care about; that Heidegger is guilty of forgetting or ignoring or repressing or undermining valuable discussion. In short, it is said again and again that Heidegger should have said something but said something else or nothing at all. For these sorts of reasons Heidegger's work can provoke us precisely because it disappoints and frustrates us. Thinking with and beyond Heidegger thus requires a decision as to *which* topics neglected by Heidegger constitute his most important and problematic silences.

Chanter offers a thought-provoking critique of Heidegger that takes issue with Heidegger's treatment of three issues in *Being and Time*: bodies, others, and temporality.¹⁶ While "the first two topics yield a largely negative picture," Chanter emphasizes that "Heidegger's radical reworking of Western metaphysical assumptions concerning time, history, and death make good some of the impasses that are reached in an attempt to make his account of Dasein amenable to bodies and others."¹⁷ Despite a limited number of concrete references to our bodies and our relations with others in Division One of *Being and Time*, Chanter contends that Heidegger's analysis of time in Division Two "foreshadowed certain gestures that have been taken up and developed in various strains of feminist theory and race theory."¹⁸ Chanter's nuanced critique of Heidegger gains its traction from a close reading of Heidegger's interpretation of time, one which remains close while nonetheless keeping a

¹⁶ Chanter, *Time, Death, and The Feminine: Levinas with Heidegger*, and "The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger's Ontology," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*.

¹⁷ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 76.

¹⁸ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 76.

critical distance from Heidegger in light of his noted failure to account for the bodily differences of others, such as those along the lines of sex:

The recent attempts of feminist theory to engage bodies reflect an ambiguity that characterizes so much contemporary thought: on the one hand, Heidegger's influence has been indispensable in formulating many influential feminist inquiries and projects, and in this sense his importance for feminism is a given; but on the other hand, feminist theory must dispense a great deal of energy in setting straight the record of neglect and denial. Feminists must avoid succumbing to the continuing temptation of repeating an inherited aversion to bodily significance. As a result, Heidegger's influence on feminist thought remains enigmatic and obscure.¹⁹

First, if we are to "set straight the record of neglect and denial" in Heidegger's texts, we must ask: Is Heidegger's analysis operating at a level of metaphysical generality that renders his philosophy incapable of accounting for bodily differences? Chanter claims not only that the body is absent from *Being and Time* but that it is due to the "nature of his critique" that Heidegger is led astray and away from sustained consideration of lived bodily experience.²⁰ It is not simply that Heidegger ignores issues surrounding gender, race, and other cultural differences that are marked on or by bodies, but more importantly, that Heidegger's way of thinking renders such issues irrelevant to his phenomenological ontology. The criticism that Heidegger effectively turns a blind eye to difference is especially troubling given Heidegger's explicit, undeniable allegiance to Hitler and the Nazis in 1932-33 (and indefinitely beyond then, too, one might highlight), not to mention questions regarding the extent to which Heidegger appealed to or thoughtfully embraced anti-Semitism over the course of his professional career and philosophical body of work. According to Chanter, Heidegger's philosophy "operates in a way that exhibits a systematic blindness not only to its

¹⁹ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 77-78.

²⁰ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 79.

own gender bias, but also to a range of other normative assumptions it makes.”²¹ To argue for this claim, Chanter brings attention to the many places in *Being and Time* where Heidegger emphasizes abstract analysis over concrete description, correctly pointing out that “there is almost no effort to produce a positive experiential account of the lived body” in *Being and Time*.²² But again, it is not merely that Heidegger ignores the body; more critically, Chanter contends that with his prioritization of time over space, Heidegger “deprives himself at the structural level of the opportunity to elaborate fully the complexities of bodily experience and the ways in which humans negotiate lived space.”²³ Summarizing this position, Chanter writes:

My point is that in *Being and Time*, there is a progressive move away from the concrete starting point of Dasein’s world and towards a disembodied understanding of Dasein. Heidegger’s project thus errs on the side of the intellect, or the mind, rather than that of the materiality of the world, reinforcing the Western tendency to prioritize the abstract over the concrete that Heidegger would discredit.²⁴

It is hard to deny Chanter’s interpretation of *Being and Time* as belonging to a tradition of thinking that glosses over bodily difference; as we will soon see, Heidegger mentions in passing in *Being and Time* that our “‘bodily nature’ hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.”²⁵ But above, Chanter makes the further, more questionable claim that Heidegger’s neglect of embodiment leads Heidegger to thereby embrace “a disincarnate intellect,” “a privileging of the theoretical,” and a move “towards a disembodied

²¹ Chanter, “The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger’s Ontology,” 74.

²² Chanter, “The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger’s Ontology,” 76.

²³ Chanter, “The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger’s Ontology,” 82.

²⁴ Chanter, “The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger’s Ontology,” 81.

²⁵ *Being and Time*, 143. The parentheses surrounding this remark in English translations of *Sein und Zeit* are the product of translation. Because the parentheses might imply to English readers that Heidegger not only sets aside the body but also sets aside the very claim that he is setting it aside, it should be noted that the parentheses do not appear in Heidegger’s original text. The scare quotes (‘bodily nature’), however, do appear in Heidegger’s text, so it remains the case that Heidegger not only sets aside the body explicitly with his remark, but moreover while setting it aside in saying that “it won’t be treated here” he refuses to even use the phrase “bodily nature,” thereby casting doubt doubly on the ontological-existential legitimacy of unclarified interpretations of our bodily nature.

understanding of Dasein” that “errs on the side of the intellect, or the mind.”²⁶ Heidegger would insist that Dasein is not definable in terms of theory or practice, but must be conceived as “care,” which “so primordially and wholly envelops Dasein’s being that it must already be presupposed as a whole when we distinguish between theoretical and practical behavior; it cannot first be built up out of these faculties....”²⁷ To suppose Dasein needs a body is to mistake Dasein for a different being than the one that we each are.

Despite his attempt to provide an original and fundamental ontology that differs from all his predecessors, Chanter argues that Heidegger’s thinking is rather a latecomer in the history of Cartesian and Kantian metaphysics.

[N]o matter how far Heidegger imagines having departed from the Cartesian notion of the subject as a thinking being... the legacy of the disincarnate intellect remains. Although Heidegger makes a point of refusing the salience of the distinction between *praxis* and *theoria*, preferring instead his governing distinction between the ontic and the ontological, the fact remains that his ontological project remains bound to that of theoretical clarification.²⁸

There are undoubtedly clear disadvantages in raising feminist concerns to a philosopher whose fundamental ontology alleges the neutrality of sexual difference and explicitly privileges death over birth, and time over space, and possibility over actuality. Over the course of the dissertation I hope to show that that are some ideas in Heidegger’s thinking that could contribute to a variety of projects attempting to rethink our bodies in their ontological dimensions, including that of several feminist attempts to rethink bodily experience. Despite this difficulty, the account of Dasein’s bodying can be expanded when placed within the context of Dasein’s specific mode of temporality and Heidegger’s subsequent deconstruction of the history of metaphysics. I understand Heidegger’s existential analysis and its grounding

²⁶ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 84.

²⁷ *Being and Time*, 348.

²⁸ Chanter, “The Problematic Normative Assumptions of Heidegger’s Ontology,” 81.

in temporality as an attempt to describe the ways in which each of us exist in the world and care about others without reducing the experience to an inappropriate binary conception, a conception that would be “inappropriate” on phenomenological grounds to the extent that it fails to appropriate the phenomena in question *for each existing Dasein*. It is Heidegger’s explicitly stated intention to give a preliminary account of the sort of being which is in *in each case* mine, and to attempt to do so without recourse to presuppositions of sciences such as biology and psychology. So, it is not without reason that Heidegger eschews appeals to sexual difference in *Being and Time* in favor of a more general description of the structures by which the human being as such (*Dasein*) exists in the world. We will be returning to this complex problem in the next chapter.

By discussing Chanter’s Heideggerian critique of Heidegger on bodies, others, and time, I hope to make clear that it is Chanter’s critique of Heidegger on these three topics that helps set the point of departure for this dissertation. By discussing Heidegger’s goal and methodology in *Being and Time* and showing how this project enables an understanding of *Dasein* without positive recourse to the body or the mind, I hope to clarify what Chanter characterizes as the “enigma and obscurity” of Heidegger’s “aversion to bodily significance.”²⁹ Then, by turning to his more detailed discussions of embodiment in later texts such as the *Nietzsche* lectures and *Zollikon Seminars*, we can begin to discern in more detail a Heideggerian account of embodiment along the lines of his unique account of temporality. In the final chapter, I return full-circle to Chanter’s excellent suggestion that “Heidegger’s radical reworking of Western metaphysical assumptions concerning time” enable us to “make good some of the impasses that are reached in an attempt to make his

²⁹ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 77-78.

account of Dasein amenable to bodies and others.”³⁰ In particular, I will show that these later lectures and seminars allow us to make some headway in understanding Heidegger’s enigmatic remarks about embodiment and Dasein’s sexual “neutrality” in earlier texts such as *Being and Time* and *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. I conclude the dissertation by discussing how Heidegger’s tripartite account of ecstatic temporality can be fruitfully employed in service of an understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality that gives voice not only to the essential interrelationships and differences between these concepts and realities, but also to a wider range of sexed, gendered, and sexual experiences and identities than has been traditionally rendered possible by the conceptual schemas of mind-body and nature-culture so predominant within the history of metaphysics.

1.5 Heidegger’s deferral of the hidden problematic of the body: Cerbone

Throughout *Being and Time*, Heidegger explicitly and repeatedly insists that Dasein is not a theoretical subject and that fundamental ontology takes shape from the concreteness of our everyday lives. So, although Heidegger undoubtedly defers treatment of Dasein’s body, it does not seem quite right to say Dasein is disembodied. Heidegger’s explicit references to the body in *Being and Time* are almost entirely negative, repeatedly asserting that Dasein is not a body, that Dasein does not have properties like subjects do, and that the concepts of the body (*Körper*) and the lived body (*Leib*) do not provide proper access to the phenomena of existence delimited by the analysis of Dasein. Why does Heidegger have next to nothing to say about the importance or unimportance of the body in this text? Is there something about his method or the nature of his analysis that leads Heidegger to avoid the body, as pointed out by Chanter? More along these lines, David Cerbone provides a sympathetic account of

³⁰ Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine*, 76.

Heidegger's non-treatment of the body. In his essay, Cerbone considers Heidegger's deliberate omission of the body to be "particularly frustrating given the character of the 'existential analytic' of Dasein, to which Division I is devoted," a project which is to overcome the paradigm of the detached, disembodied ego by showing how Dasein is always in-the-world.³¹ Consequently, Cerbone writes,

Whereas Descartes during his *Meditations* can declare himself to be identified solely with his mind and can doubt that he even has a body, on Heidegger's account of Dasein, one would expect the body to occupy a more central role. Thus, Heidegger's unwillingness to engage in the task of addressing the 'whole problematic' in Dasein's 'bodily nature' appears to be more than just a casual oversight: either it constitutes a serious error on Heidegger's part, or he has good reasons for deferring consideration of the body.³²

Despite this suspicion, Cerbone resists negative assessments and instead tries to understand "what it is about the project of *Being and Time* that dictates a deferral or postponement of talk about the body."³³ On Cerbone's reading,

Explicit consideration of the body, or Dasein's 'bodily nature,' may be seen to be at odds with the kind of investigation Heidegger takes himself to be engaged in, namely a transcendental investigation of those features which are distinctive of Dasein's (our) way of being.³⁴

Heidegger's fundamental ontology works to identify the conditions necessary for there to be any experience whatsoever. In *Being and Time*, this involves a "laying bare" of a fundamental, *a priori* structure of Dasein: being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is primordial in the sense that all of Dasein's ways of being presuppose it. Heidegger writes,

Being-in is not a "property" which Dasein sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and *without* which it could be just as well as it could with it. It is not the case

³¹ Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?," 209.

³² Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?," 210.

³³ Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?," 212.

³⁴ Cerbone, "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?," 212.

that man ‘is’ and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-being towards the ‘world’ – a world which he provides himself occasionally.³⁵

There is a metaphysical tendency to ground human being in either theoretical reflection (as typical of the rationalist tradition) or sensory experience (as typical of the empiricist tradition), or the necessarily intertwined nature of mind and world (as in much Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy). Heidegger contends, however, that both knowing the world and sensing the world are made possible by the more primordial phenomenon of being-in-the-world. While Heidegger does not thematically discuss the body in any explicit detail in *Being and Time*, a proper understanding of being-in-the-world allows us to understand the human body in a new way, which Cerbone characterizes as “a locus of Dasein’s way of being.”

Cerbone summarizes his position:

The broader structure into which the body must be placed in order to be properly characterized as a *human* body is nothing other than the *world* in Heidegger’s ‘ontological-existential’ sense, namely that world which is constitutive of Dasein’s way of being. Thus, in order to sort out which features of the body are open to explanation and interpretation, the structure of the world must first be made clear, which is just what Division I of *Being and Time* sets out to do. In this way, we see again why Heidegger insists on developing the existential analytic of Dasein, and so his account of world, *first*: until that’s completed, the whole problematic of Dasein’s bodily nature must remain hidden.³⁶

In direct opposition to Chanter’s claim that the body is completely absent from *Being and Time*, Cerbone’s account shows how the body resonates throughout Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, albeit a body awaiting ontological clarification.

Both Chanter and Cerbone agree that the nature of Heidegger’s methodology leads us away from sustained consideration of the human body. Whereas Chanter argues that such a move is an irrevocable point of neglect, Cerbone tries to show that reintroducing the body

³⁵ *Being and Time*, 170.

³⁶ Cerbone, “Heidegger and Dasein’s ‘Bodily Nature’: What is the Hidden Problematic?,” 225.

must wait until a phenomenological account of worldhood has been completed. What interests me is that, while Chanter and Cerbone appear to take opposing stances on the absence of the body in *Being and Time*, both presuppose that the human body can and should be placed within the existential structure of Dasein's being-in-the-world. In fact, most scholars pose the question in terms of "Dasein's body" or "bodily being-in-the-world" in a way that appears to simply assume that Dasein's way of being needs to be supplemented by an account of embodiment. But why do we expect Heidegger to provide an account of the body in the first place? Rather than blame or excuse Heidegger for not providing an account of the body, we should instead investigate Heidegger's reasons for refusing to claim, let alone emphasize, that Dasein "is embodied" or "has a body."

I believe that the desire to situate the body in fundamental ontology is grounded in a misinterpretation of Dasein's being, and ultimately serves to undermine the originality and philosophical force of Heidegger's existential analytic. The expectation that we can and should identify the body in or between the lines of *Being and Time* is triggered by the same metaphysical tendencies that Heidegger uncovers and seeks to replace. To interpret the absence of the body as a sign of disembodiment is to assume that Dasein did not already inhabit a place. Heidegger defers analysis of what has been called the physical and the psychical because he believes the subject matter most proper to Dasein's unitary way of being-in-the-world is overlooked when we think dualistically in these terms; that is why Heidegger continuously asserts that his methodology requires an altogether different approach. As Heidegger explicitly emphasizes,

*The Being-present-at-hand-together of the physical and the psychical is completely different ontically and ontologically from the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.*³⁷

On my view, the only way to see this difference is by thinking of Dasein not as a subject with certain capacities, but rather in terms of being-in-the-world. As Heidegger will put the point in his *Contributions to Philosophy*,

Whether personality is understood as the unity of “spirit-soul-body,” or whether this hodge-podge is reversed and, merely assertorically, the body is placed first, nothing changes with regard to the confused thinking which rules here and which evades every question.³⁸

Rather than criticize Heidegger for refusing to address embodiment, then, I contend that the “problem of the body” emerges only in the context of metaphysical prejudices that Heidegger seeks to overturn. What Chanter called Heidegger’s “systematic blindness,” I take to be a deliberate attempt on Heidegger’s behalf to see in our embodiment something other than the body as it has been traditionally conceived within the history of metaphysics. For this reason, the absence of body is not something that can or should be filled in; as we will see, Heidegger will insist that the task for understanding being-in-the-world involves protecting and maintaining this absence as an attempt to avoid the reductive interpretation of bodily *being* to nothing more than a bodily *entity*. Dasein’s inextricability with the world precludes the possibility of tracing Dasein’s being to traditional notions of embodiment such that projecting this unclarified concept of “the body” onto Dasein’s way of being-in-the-world conceals the originality of Heidegger’s thinking of human being.

As Cerbone points out, there are good philosophical reasons for Heidegger to insist on postponing a detailed discussion of the body at this point in his questioning of being. One reason why Heidegger defers a more detailed description of our bodily nature is because his

³⁷ *Being and Time*, 248.

³⁸ *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, 43.

analytic of Dasein sets out to reject the following dualist presuppositions. The first assumption is that the body is to be understood primarily as an object of knowledge for the natural sciences and for the social sciences and humanities. On this reading, the body is taken to be a mass with quantifiable properties, an object for the natural sciences, something that can be measured, and a thing that is reduced to sheer inert matter. In Heidegger's terminology, this conception takes the body to be present-at-hand. But in the first two pages of the first chapter of *Being and Time*, Heidegger repeats no less than seven times that Dasein is not present-at-hand.

[1] Ontologically, *existentia* is tantamount to *being-present-at-hand*, a kind of being which is essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein's character. ... [2] Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand of some entity which 'looks' so and so ... [3] When we designate this entity with the term 'Dasein,' we are expressing not its what (as if it were a table, house, or tree) but its being. ... [4] Dasein is never to be taken ontologically as an instance or special case of some genus of entities as things that are present-at-hand. ... [5] Dasein *is* its possibility, and it 'has' this possibility, but not just as a property, as something present-at-hand would. ... [6] Dasein does not have the kind of being which belongs to something merely present-at-hand within the world, nor does it ever have it. ... [7] Neither is it to be presented thematically as something we come across in the same way as we come across what is present-at-hand.³⁹

Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes that Dasein is not the sort of thing that has properties as a subject would, nor is the sort of thing that looks this or that way; to the extent that we reduce Dasein's bodily nature to the visibility of a determinate thing, "as if it were a table," we have missed out on the true phenomena proper to Dasein's unique manner of being. While we can on certain occasions take our bodies to be wholly like tables, for example, by understanding the body solely in terms of its weight or number of legs, such quantitative approaches overlook the phenomenal dimensions of what it is like to be Dasein. Furthermore, if Dasein does not exhibit 'properties,' a term that Heidegger sets in scare quotes rather than directly

³⁹ *Being and Time*, 67.

employs, then it is unclear in what sense Dasein could “have” a body. In the final years of his life in the 1960’s and 70’s, Heidegger will continue to warn readers of the dangers of reducing bodily being to its sheer presence-at-hand:

The human being’s bodily being can never, fundamentally never, be considered merely as something present-at-hand if one wants to consider it in an appropriate way. If I postulate human bodily being as something present-at-hand, I have already destroyed the body as body.⁴⁰

If we want to understand the being of the body, or “body *as* body,” we must refuse at the outset any interpretation that reduces embodiment to its mere presence in space or time.

On a second reading, the body is essentially something that “I have” that allows me to perform various tasks in the service of various plans. In Heidegger's terminology, this approximates a view of the body as ready-to-hand. Heidegger writes,

Taken strictly, there ‘is’ no such thing as *an* equipment. To the being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially ‘something in-order-to...’ A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the ‘in-order-to’, such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability.⁴¹

If we accept this conception of the body, we move beyond the idea of the body as static and cut off from the world and can describe the ways in which the body is useful to us. In some sense, it does seem like the body is something *with which* I am able to move around a room *in order to* get my work done. In this sense we might think that the body is best understood as Dasein’s closest form of equipment, as if bodies were merely the tools we use to handle and manipulate the world around us. Again, on certain occasions my body *can* be seen in its readiness-to-hand in terms of its manipulability and usability, as when my lap serves the useful purpose of a surface for my laptop or when my partner uses my stretched arm as a

⁴⁰ *Zollikon Seminars*, 170.

⁴¹ *Being and Time*, 68.

headrest. While my arm can indeed be taken to be a headrest in some quite specific scenarios, this ready-to-hand interpretation again tends to overlook the structures of Dasein's comportment towards the world.

On a third reading, the body is understood as mediator between the interiority of a conscious self and the external world surrounding it. The body is understood in terms of a vehicle that mediates between two disparate but related phenomenal realms of impressions and expressions, which somehow manages to bridge the gap between the interiority of the ego and the external world, or the inside and the outside, false dichotomies that Heidegger rejects from the outset. As for the notion of the human being's "inside," Heidegger writes,

But when one asks for the positive signification of this 'inside' of immanence in which knowing is proximally enclosed, or when one inquires how this 'being inside' which knowing possesses has as its own character of being grounded in the kind of being which belongs to a subject, then silence reigns.⁴²

Regarding an "external" world surrounding the interiority of the self-contained ego, Heidegger writes,

Even if one should invoke the doctrine that the subject must presuppose and indeed always does unconsciously presuppose the presence-at-hand of the 'external world,' one would still be starting with the construct of an isolated subject.⁴³

Whether we refer to the body as present-at-hand, ready-to-hand, or as a medium, each interpretation in its own way remains tied to the same Cartesian ontology of self and world that Heidegger rejects. Instead, Heidegger aims to show that the inside/outside dualism of Western thinking, in all its manifestations, rests upon a failure to see the more primordial, unitary phenomenon of being-in-the-world. Heidegger's avoidance of the body is not due to neglect; rather, his concern is that our ordinary everyday interpretation of the body

⁴² *Being and Time*, 60.

⁴³ *Being and Time*, 205-206.

presupposes the very dichotomies which Heidegger seeks to uproot and replace. In this qualified sense, Dasein cannot be properly understood to “have a body,” but this need not entail the form of disembodied subjectivity that we find at work in Descartes’ rationalism or Kant’s transcendental idealism. Instead, Heidegger insists that unclarified appeals to “the body” (or “the mind,” for that matter) overlook the being of the human being who is said to “have” a body and mind in the first place. What is needed is an ontology of the body, which is to say an account of the body not in relation to mind or soul or spirit, but rather a description of body in relation to being and the myriad of ways in which we experience our existence.

1.6 Toward a Heideggerian account of the body: Levin

In “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” David Michael Levin provides a helpful discussion that tackles the issue of Heidegger on the body. Rather than find Heidegger at fault for his scant treatment of the bodily in his works, Levin turns his criticism back onto the critics who, on his view, wrongly believe the description of being-in-the-world to be disembodied. According to Levin, critics of Heidegger on this topic have fallen prey to a false impression:

The false impression, the confusion, comes, I think, from a peculiarly restricted conception of the body – or, say, of that which constitutes a discourse on the body.⁴⁴

While the question of Dasein’s ‘bodily nature’ is explicitly set aside in Heidegger’s discussion of our spatiality, Levin emphasizes that *Being and Time* is packed with reflections on perception, the phenomenology of lived space, the activity of the hands, etc. The confusion of critics stems from the fact that

⁴⁴ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 125.

“body” is thought in such a way that discussions about seeing and hearing, posture and gesture, bearing and handling, standing and falling are not regarded as discussions about the body. This, I submit, is a fatal mistake.⁴⁵

Critics looking for a thematic account of the body in *Being and Time* fail to recognize that embodiment, or bodily comportment, cannot be approached as a singular thing. The project of fundamental ontology takes up the question of Dasein’s being in terms of its “ways of being,” rather than a consideration of “what” it is. According to Levin, the task is “to begin thinking embodiment ontologically – thinking it, that is, in terms of its ontological dimensionality, its relationship to being.”⁴⁶ This involves thinking embodiment in terms of

our bodily felt experience of an ongoing breaching, opening and carrying-forward manifesting through appropriately disclosive hermeneutical gestures, movements, and organs of perception in relation to the ongoing (abyssal) questioning and measuring of our existence by the presencing of being.⁴⁷

The body as object, as thing, is rooted in a pre-objective experience of being, and the task is to trace the static body back to its source of dynamic, lived movement. Metaphysics takes the body to be an unfortunate anchor that blocks or otherwise impedes the philosopher’s access to things, to truth and knowledge, as that which closes us off from what matters in the world. Conversely, Levin argues for a conception of embodiment in terms of “its openness to the otherness of all that is other.”⁴⁸ The body serves as the way in which we are open and exposed to beings that are neither mine nor me.

In one sense the very notion of otherness is predicated on the fact that the “external” world manifests itself at the boundaries of our bodies. As Levin writes, “It is this question of openness – openness to alterity – that constitutes the ontological dimension of our

⁴⁵ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 127.

⁴⁶ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 128.

⁴⁷ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 135.

⁴⁸ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 135.

embodiment.”⁴⁹ It is not that the body is a thing with properties, among which includes the option of being open to otherness. Instead, it seems that our embodiment *is* openness as such, albeit “openness” in a sense awaiting ontological clarification. We do not exist as a thing that opens things up. Rather, *we exist as this very openness* to otherness. Lived bodily existence is openness, such that when we demise, it is not that the body no longer is, but that the body no longer exists as openness. Dasein does not *have* a clearing because Dasein itself always already *is* the clearing:

Dasein is in such a way as to be its “there.” To say that [Dasein] is illuminated means that *as being-in-the-world* it is cleared, *not through any other entity, but in such a way that it is itself the clearing.* ... If it lacks its ‘there,’ it is not factually the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all. *Dasein is its disclosedness.*⁵⁰

Conceiving the body *as* openness suggests that embodiment is identical to this openness. With “openness” and “clearing” we attempt to articulate the fact that we *are* the openness or the clearing, and not “through any other entity.” Dasein does not require a physical medium to get into the world precisely because it is already there in the world. Because we are thrown to the world *as* this very openness, it is a mistake to assume that Dasein must “have” a body to get by in the world. We cannot adequately interpret the being of the human being if we initially posit an unclarified notion of subjectivity or selfhood or body. Instead, for Heidegger the point is always that we need to think the way of our being from temporality, which in the context of Division I of *Being and Time* means from the everydayness of our practical engagement with the world. For these reasons, Levin points out that the term “embodiment”

⁴⁹ Levin, “The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger’s Thinking of Being,” 136.

⁵⁰ *Being and Time*, 133.

jibes better with Heidegger's intent than "the body" to the extent that it helps us to resist our "inveterate tendency to reify what we are trying to think and understand and engage."⁵¹

Levin's essay directs us toward a Heideggerian account of the body, but aspects of Levin's account can be criticized on Heideggerian grounds. Levin writes,

According to our tradition of metaphysics, the human body is not capable of thinking. Thinking takes place only in the "mind." And this "mind" is contingently located in the region of the head – which, for that reason, is often not counted as part of the human "body." If we want ever to break out of this tradition, we must first of all acknowledge that we can think (for example) with our hands.⁵²

The metaphysical tradition of mind-body dualism generally conceives of the mind as non-bodily or immaterial and the body as non-mental or wholly physical. Levin argues on this basis that one way to "break out" of this tradition is to reverse the matter and ascribe thinking to the body, for example, to the hands. By showing the ways in which thinking is somehow embodied and the body is somehow able to think, Levin intends to invert or move beyond metaphysical thinking about the human being. But is this Heidegger's goal in *Being and Time*? As Gover insightfully explains,

What is important to Heidegger, and also what is distinctively tragic about this, is that the overcoming of metaphysics, such that it is one, cannot itself operate according to a metaphysical logic. That is, it is not a matter of going beyond (*meta-*) metaphysics, of leaving it behind or having done with it, but rather of *undergoing* it more essentially.⁵³

Metaphysics denies thinking to the body, so Levin performs the opposite thought by ascribing thinking to the body. But Heidegger emphasizes time and time again that his project does not involve the shift from one end of a dualism (as in disembodied eternal beings) to the other extreme (as in embodied finite beings). Instead, Heidegger aims to show

⁵¹ Levin, "The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger's Thinking of Being," 128.

⁵² Levin, "The Ontological Dimension of Embodiment: Heidegger's Thinking of Being," 137.

⁵³ Gover, "Tragedy and Metaphysics in Heidegger's 'The Anaximander Fragment,' 41.

that mind and body as such are derived from the more primordial phenomenon of our way of being-in-the-world, which constitutes our existence. As we will see in subsequent chapters, Heidegger believes for good reasons that how we exist “is not spirit as a synthesis of soul and body; it is rather existence.”⁵⁴

1.7 Further toward a Heideggerian account of the body: Aho

In the one full-length manuscript devoted to this topic, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body*, Aho explicates some of the sticking points that prevented Heidegger from elaborate discussion of the body. Aho's main point is not that Heidegger neglects the body but, instead, that “the criticisms of Heidegger regarding his neglect of the body hinge largely on a misinterpretation of the word “Dasein.””⁵⁵ Aho's book serves as a helpful guide for navigating not only Heidegger's path of thinking regarding embodiment but also some of the key ways in which this path was to some extent followed or abandoned by subsequent thinkers. Aho situates Heidegger's project as a critique of Descartes' metaphysics, with special attention to how phenomenology attempts to dismantle the mind-body distinction through a description of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Aho points out that “Heidegger was particularly troubled by Descartes's project, because it regarded humans as essentially free ‘individuals,’ as self-contained subjects with no roots to a shared, historical lifeworld.”⁵⁶ Aho reads Heidegger's critique of Descartes as a deep response to Max Weber's 1918 speech “Science as a Vocation,” particularly Weber's claim that

increasing intellectualization and rationalization... means that there are no more mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in

⁵⁴ *Being and Time*, 153.

⁵⁵ Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body*, 3.

⁵⁶ Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body*, 9.

principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is *disenchanted*.⁵⁷

Weber suggests that this “iron cage” of scientific progress both perpetuates and is perpetuated by a theoretical disenchantment with ourselves and the world. Heidegger picks up where Weber left off, turning “to a way of being more primordial than detached theorizing, which is disclosed in our average everyday practices,” but for Heidegger the common root of body and mind is to be found in our being-in-the-world.⁵⁸

Aho begins to facilitate a dialogue between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (which I will later attempt to deepen through an examination of Merleau-Ponty’s remarks about Heidegger). In his *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger makes repeated reference to French phenomenology of the body but singles out only Sartre and never refers specifically to Merleau-Ponty. As Aho indicates, “This is frustrating, given the fact that Heidegger’s account of the body in the Zollikon seminars is strikingly similar to Merleau-Ponty’s.”⁵⁹ Aho marks several points of convergence between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: both accept Husserl’s conception of phenomenology as a description of “pre-objective experience” as well as his emphasis on “intentional directedness” as essential to this experience. Aho only sketches these connections between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, thus opening a door for a more thorough Heideggerian articulation of what it means to “have” or “be” a body.

1.8 Unfinished tasks for a Heideggerian account of the body

Notwithstanding the strides already made by the Heidegger scholars previously discussed, there remain important questions and tasks for a specifically Heideggerian conception of the body. In chapter two, I set the stage by discussing Heidegger’s central question, his method

⁵⁷ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 139. Cited by Aho, *Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body*, 9.

⁵⁸ Aho, *Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body*, 11.

⁵⁹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 29.

for going about answering it, and some essential results of his analysis of the human being understood as Dasein. In chapter three, I examine Heidegger's references to the body in his *Nietzsche* lectures, which have garnered little attention by scholars working on the body problem in Heidegger, even though they contain some of Heidegger's most interesting and thought-provoking remarks about the body. I also turn to the *Zollikon Seminars* to show that Heidegger's later thinking of the body can enter productive dialogue concerning embodiment, despite his own notoriously one-sided refusal to wholly accept any analysis of the human being other than his own. While this philosophical chauvinism is not unique to Heidegger in the history of philosophy, it is at odds with Heidegger's own understanding of our being-historical and it prevents others from being able to see themselves reflected in his texts. My thesis is that Heidegger's temporal account of the difference between the body and what Heidegger calls "bodying" is an improvement upon mind-body dualism in its ability to account for and describe the experiences of those for whom "having a body" is an especially complicated existential matter. With each stance we stand within a dynamic self-understanding of our bodies as bodies unfolding themselves in time within a world determined from without and saturated by hierarchical differences and ungrounded valuations. For Heidegger, the essential point pertaining to bodily difference is that it remains ontologically unclear what it might mean to "have" a sex, gender, sexuality, race, or ability until we have clarified the way in which human beings take time to become who they most genuinely are. That is, an elucidation of our temporal bodily engagement with the world helps us to understand bodily identity and difference as open to transformation and transfiguration, rather than as fixed spatial references to visible properties of bodies. In the

final chapter, I discuss bodily difference in general and try to sketch a to conception of bodily difference in terms of what Heidegger calls ontological difference.

2. Heidegger on Being Dasein

2.1 The structure of the question of being

In this dissertation I hope to use the word “Dasein” in a way that is synonymous with “human beings.” This is not only because I believe that we are human beings, but because I believe that Heidegger’s account of being helps us to do a better job of describing the existence and experiences of human beings. Here and throughout, I hope to be discussing something about “who we are as human beings.” I realize that this phrase is not uncontroversial today, as many readers may hesitate to accept my use of the word “we.” Before I have even said who or what it is that I think we might be, I already begin to hear the excellent objections from a variety of imagined interlocuters, each presenting a version of a similar overriding concern: “Who do you think you are, saying who we are, who I am, as if I were like you?” My response to this objection is that I do not intend to exclude *any* potential readers with my use of the word “we.” If I do use “we” in a way that somehow in principle excludes *you* then I will feel that I have failed to do what I am setting out to do, which is to articulate and defend a specifically Heideggerian account of embodiment that is general enough to illuminate a variety of bodily phenomena and lived experiences that potentially pertains to us all. I should be explicit that I mean to refer to a kind of analysis and description that makes reasonable sense of “our” bodily comportment toward the world, regardless of bodily difference. One exception regarding my use of “we” which may be obvious to some readers but perhaps not so to others is that my references to “philosophy” are for the most part intended in the restrictedly one-sided sense of canonical texts central to the academic discipline “Western philosophy.” I will be employing the term “we” throughout this

dissertation and we will return to these issues regarding the “we” in more detail in the final chapter.

Despite these caveats, I assume most readers will agree that “we are human beings.” But from the standpoint of Heidegger’s philosophy, whenever we say that we are human beings, more is always said than we intend to say. A key lesson of *Being and Time* is that, in its very familiarity to us, the concept of being has become strange. We see this interplay between the familiar and the strange at the very outset of *Being and Time*, which begins not with a remark from Heidegger but rather from within the middle of a conversation between Socrates and an unnamed interlocuter who in the text simply goes by “Stranger.” Rather than begin with the presupposition of a principle, Heidegger’s opening move in his major work is to direct our thoughtful attention to the words of a Stranger:

For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression “*being*.” We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed.⁶⁰

From the outset Heidegger returns to a question that bewildered the Ancient Greeks, those individuals who, as we say, brought philosophy into being. Heidegger does not aim to repeat the same old question Plato asked, but to work through the question of being for ourselves, not to answer the question or to explain it away, but to rekindle an understanding for the meaning of the question, that is, to reawaken a sense for the questionable nature of being. How does being become questionable for one? Heidegger’s insinuation at the outset of *Being and Time* is that sometimes it takes a conversation with a perplexed stranger to jog our memories and help us to recognize that it is we who know not what we say.

⁶⁰ *Being and Time*, 40.

According to Heidegger, this forgetfulness of being pervades every era of philosophy, from the time of Plato to the work of Heidegger's own mentor and teacher, Husserl.

Heidegger writes,

On the foundation of the Greeks point of departure for the interpretation of being a dogmatic attitude has taken shape which not only declares the question of the meaning of being to be superfluous but sanctions its neglect.⁶¹

By assuming being to be indefinable, self-evident, and the most universal of all concepts, the Western philosophical tradition has failed to see the questionability of being.⁶² A hidden enigma underlies the positive results of every period of philosophy's history, and it is this enigma which Heidegger attempts to unearth in *Being and Time*.

The question of the meaning of being is peculiar in that we *are* the *being* who *is* asking a question about what it means *to be*. Thus, just in being able to ask the question about being we find ourselves already having some sense of what being means. Similarly, we could not ask if it is raining outside unless we were already somewhat familiar with rain and with is-ness and therefore with being. So, our inability to offer a clear definition of "being" does not entail that being is unfamiliar to us. To formulate the question of the meaning of being, Heidegger claims that we must first think about what a question *is*, or the being of a question. What exactly are we doing when we ask a question? What is the nature of a question? Heidegger claims that there are three essential elements in every question: "what the question asks about" (*sein Gefragtes*), "what is interrogated by the question" (*sein Befragtes*), and "what is to be ascertained by the question" (*sein Erfragtes*).⁶³ These three structural aspects

⁶¹ *Being and Time*, 42.

⁶² *Being and Time*, 42-44.

⁶³ *Being and Time*, 24.

of the question can be discerned in every question, including Heidegger's: What is the meaning of being?

The first structural aspect of the question is *what the question asks about*, which in our case is being. Heidegger defines being initially as "that which determines beings as beings" and "that in terms of which beings have always been understood no matter how they are discussed."⁶⁴ When we speak of being, we tend to automatically turn it into a being in the sense of an entity or thing, but according to Heidegger, "The being of beings "is" itself not a being."⁶⁵ We tell certain various stories about being which trace all beings back to one all-important being or kind of being; for example, it is commonly said that all beings can be traced back to God, or to the mind, or to subatomic particles, or to vibrations, or to language, or to some other principle and model of explanation. Each of these is only a being, not being itself, which thus "requires its own kind of demonstration which is essentially different from discovery of beings."⁶⁶

So, *what the question asks about* is being. Heidegger claims that *what is interrogated*, alternatively, are beings "insofar as being means the being of beings."⁶⁷ Although we are *asking about* being, it is entities that must be *interrogated* if we are to ask about being. Being is not a universal, abstract, or self-evident being that hovers above or beyond entities; to think like this would be to transform being into a being. This begs the question of which entities must be investigated to glean clues regarding the meaning of being. Heidegger's answer is that it is the entity who cares about its own being and is capable of questioning

⁶⁴ *Being and Time*, 46.

⁶⁵ *Being and Time*, 46.

⁶⁶ *Being and Time*, 46.

⁶⁷ *Being and Time*, 47.

being, *Dasein*, a term that Heidegger employs to refer to the being that we each *are* ourselves. A potential objection arises here:

But does not such an enterprise fall into an obvious circle? To have to determine beings *in their being* beforehand and then on this foundation first ask the question of being—what else is that but going around in circles? In working out the question do we not presuppose something that only the answer can provide?⁶⁸

Heidegger's response to this objection is to say, "But in fact there is no circle at all" because "beings can be determined in their being without the explicit concept of the meaning of being having to be already available."⁶⁹ We need not fully grasp being just to ask about being. In fact, if we fully grasped being then there would no need to question it in the first place, nor could we question it, if to fully grasp means to no longer question. Heidegger is not attempting to ground the meaning of being in one determinate answer; instead his task is one of "laying bare and exhibiting the ground."⁷⁰ This means that Heidegger is not so much interested in proving anything as he is in showing something or allowing something to show up; because being is not a being, it is not really "something." Heidegger writes,

A "circle in reasoning" does not occur in the question of the meaning of being. Rather, there is a notable "relatedness backward or forward" of what is asked about (being) to asking a mode of being of a being."⁷¹

The essential point here is that in *interrogating* ourselves we are not *asking about ourselves*, but we are *asking about* being; the converse also holds true, as we can neither immediately *interrogate* being nor can we directly just *ask about* ourselves. The human being must be reconceived in terms of its relation to being, but at the same time being is always the "being

⁶⁸ *Being and Time*, 48.

⁶⁹ *Being and Time*, 48.

⁷⁰ *Being and Time*, 49.

⁷¹ *Being and Time*, 49.

of an entity.” It is in this sense that Heidegger asserts that “the being that has the character of Dasein has a relation to the question of being itself, perhaps even a distinctive one.”⁷²

Heidegger states that the third and final structural component of a question is *what is to be ascertained*, which presumably would be to ascertain an answer to the question, so that we would be able to say what being means. But a closer look at the first page of *Being and Time* indicates otherwise: “Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of *being* and to do so concretely.”⁷³ A concrete working out of the question of being thus requires a working out of the concrete structures of our own being as human beings, as Dasein. What distinguishes us as Dasein from other sorts of beings lies in the fact that we embody understandings of being, according to which we comport ourselves toward entities by way of always already dwelling in an understanding of being. We care about *how* we are existing in such a way that we are always somehow relating to our existence. “We come to terms with the question of existence always only through existence itself.”⁷⁴ For Heidegger this will mean that we become who we most genuinely are only through the temporal event of existing. It is in this light that we should understand Heidegger’s declaration of *what is to be ascertained* by the question of being: “[T]he answer provides a directive for concrete ontological research, that is, a directive to begin its investigative inquiry within the horizon exhibited—and that is all it provides.”⁷⁵ What exactly this “concrete ontological research” entails specifically for Heidegger is unclear until we have followed along Heidegger’s path

⁷² *Being and Time*, 49.

⁷³ *Being and Time*, 19.

⁷⁴ *Being and Time*, 53.

⁷⁵ *Being and Time*, 62.

of thinking.⁷⁶ The answer to Heidegger's question will involve nothing more than a direction for future questioning and further re-searching that continuously attempts to look anew at how the being of entities shows itself to us entities who care about being. "Concrete" research "begins its inquiry within the horizon [of the understanding of being that is] exhibited" by way of "an original explication of time."⁷⁷ In one way this kind of research requires a completely new approach, but Heidegger clearly points out that it "is of no importance" whether the research arrives at a "novel" answer: "What is positive about the answer must lie in the fact that it is *old* enough to enable us to learn to comprehend possibilities prepared by the "ancients."⁷⁸ We need to recover this history in the sense of a going back that looks forward from out of our present. Such a recovery takes the form of a "deconstruction" (*Destruktion*) of the history of ontology.

When Heidegger claims that fundamental ontology "must be sought in the *existential analysis of Dasein*," he means that the only way to ask about the meaning of being is to begin with an analysis of the structures that constitute our ways of being.⁷⁹ It is only by examining the structure of our being – that which makes us who we are – that we can pose the question of the meaning of being. Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* consists in an interrogation of a being with respect to its being, and Heidegger claims that this project "is nothing else than the radicalization of an essential tendency of being that belongs to Dasein itself."⁸⁰ We are always already beings concerned with our being; the task of fundamental ontology is to "radicalize" this tendency of ours so that we can come to a deeper understanding of the

⁷⁶ In this dissertation, I am suggesting that such research would entail a concrete elaboration of the modes of temporality that constitute Dasein's existence.

⁷⁷ *Being and Time*, 60.

⁷⁸ *Being and Time*, 62.

⁷⁹ *Being and Time*, 55.

⁸⁰ *Being and Time*, 57.

meaning of being. Heidegger's point here is that each of us in a way embodies an answer to the question of the meaning of being, and that we can disclose the "answer" we each *are* by way of an analysis of the very structures of our embodied experience of the world. Such a project takes shape by way of what Heidegger, following Husserl, calls "phenomenology."

2.2 Phenomenology

If fundamental ontology is an interrogation of Dasein, which is simultaneously an asking about being, then we need to determine the appropriate manner for going about this interrogating and asking. We are asking about ourselves, with which we are already familiar. And yet, "precisely for this very reason, it is ontologically what is farthest away."⁸¹ The fact that we *are* Dasein, such that we are the very being that we are interrogating, makes it difficult to see the structures of Dasein since we always already exist in and through these very structures. They are so close that it is more accurate to say either that we are these structures or that they are us, rather than saying that "we" are somehow "in" them. The beings that are closest to us in our ontic everyday engagements are ontologically farthest away from our understanding. Given the lack of ontological self-clarification concerning the nature of our own being, a central challenge for *Being and Time* is to gain access to Dasein's way of being without appealing to so-called "self-evident categories."⁸² It may seem "self-evident" that the human being is, for instance, a body with a mind, or a soul with a body, or a rational animal, or a creature created by God, or a conglomeration of atoms, or any other number of definitions of the human being. But according to Heidegger, it is illegitimate to justify such definitions by saying that they are "self-evident" or that they somehow prove themselves "just by being." Instead, appeals to self-evidence are a sure sign that one has

⁸¹ *Being and Time*, 58.

⁸² *Being and Time*, 59.

either stopped thinking or otherwise forgotten about the matter at hand altogether. Recall Heidegger's critique of attempts to explain away the question of being by saying that being is self-evident: "this average comprehensibility only demonstrates the incomprehensibility."⁸³ With common sense comes a certain failure to see, let alone understand, the questionable character of what is common. He is not here advocating for philosophers to write in obscure or esoteric prose; rather, he is reminding us that we cannot hold ourselves out into questioning if we are forced to conform to what is ordinarily held to be already intelligible.

In this light it bears noting Heidegger's important distinction between "history" and "historicity." Here history refers primarily to historiography, that ontic science which deals with historical occurrences of past times. Historicity, however, refers to an ontological structure of Dasein's being such that Dasein *is* its past.⁸⁴ By virtue of being Dasein, even the most ahistorical of human beings who attempt to pass over the past cannot evade *being* this past. As Heidegger explains it,

Dasein 'is' its past in the way of *its* own being, which, to put it roughly, 'historicizes' out of its future on each occasion. While history sees the past as something behind or before us, historicity sees the past as something that we always *are* and as something that "always goes already ahead of" us.⁸⁵

It is common to say that we are defined by history, but this would not be possible if we ourselves were not historical beings that *are* their pasts. We cannot cultivate history because history is a thing of the past, but we *can* cultivate our historicity by coming to understand how we *are* historical and how this historicity can become a task for us to take up as we move into the future. If Dasein were not historical in the sense of historicity, then there could be no such thing as history. We tend to define all three aspects of time in terms of the

⁸³ *Being and Time*, 44.

⁸⁴ *Being and Time*, 63.

⁸⁵ *Being and Time*, 63.

present, such that the past is defined as a no-longer present, the future is defined as a not-yet present, and the present is defined as an ever-fleeting present. Such pictures of time picture time along the lines of timelines. One of Heidegger's fundamental tasks in all his works is to dismantle and deconstruct this traditional interpretation of time. On the one hand, tradition is a problem because "what has been handed down it hands over to obviousness" and "bars access to those original "wellsprings" out of which the traditional categories and concepts were once drawn."⁸⁶ On the other hand, Heidegger maintains that a "productive appropriation" of tradition is possible. This deconstruction does not involve "destroying" history as much as "stak[ing] out the positive possibilities of the tradition, and that always means to fix its *boundaries*."⁸⁷ Heidegger explicitly points out that this project has a "positive intent" which concerns "today," and I take this as one good reason to translate Heidegger's *Destruktion* into English as "deconstruction" rather than "destruction," which carries primarily negative and past-oriented connotations and is thus a misleading translation of what Heidegger calls *Destruktion*.⁸⁸

In sketching his positive deconstruction of the history of philosophy, Heidegger writes,

With the *cogito sum* Descartes claims to prepare a new and secure foundation for philosophy. But what he leaves undetermined in this "radical" beginning is the manner of being of the *res cogitans*, more precisely, *the meaning of the being of the "sum."*⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Being and Time*, 65.

⁸⁷ *Being and Time*, 66.

⁸⁸ *Being and Time*, 67. For a defense of this translation of *Destruktion* as "deconstruction," and the importance of differentiating this concept from the unrelated connotations of *Zerstörung* as "destruction," see Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 141ff.

⁸⁹ *Being and Time*, 68.

Descartes takes himself to have proven his existence, but he fails to clarify what “existence” means. The cogito’s being is implicitly understood according to a specific mode of time, the present, so that what Descartes proves on the basis of the “I think” is that “I currently undoubtedly exist but only for “as long as” I am thinking.” Descartes thus comes close to posing the question of the meaning of being, but because he fails to see the temporality of being as a problem, he also fails to discuss the meaning of the *sum* as a problem to be pursued and clarified. The being that we each are is determined to consist of two radically different types of substance, a body (*res extensa*) and a mind (*res cogitans*). But exactly what substance is, and the specific character of the sort of being that is composed of both mental stuff and physical stuff, remain undetermined and in need of clarification.

For Heidegger phenomenology is neither a “standpoint” nor a “direction” but only a “method.”⁹⁰ Phenomenology “does not characterize the “what” of the objects of philosophical research in terms of their content but the “how” of such research.”⁹¹ Whereas biologists study certain types of objects, living ones, and psychologists study certain types of objects, psychical ones, phenomenologists are not restricted to a determinate, pre-defined type of objects. Rather, phenomenology is a *way* of doing research that tries to “set in relief the being of beings and to explicate being.”⁹² The task is not to study this or that type of thing but rather to set in relief the things themselves which initially guide all the positive sciences.⁹³ In attempting to determine what phenomenology is in distinction from other “ologies,” Heidegger characterizes the meaning of phenomenology through a discussion of its

⁹⁰ *Being and Time*, 72.

⁹¹ *Being and Time*, 72.

⁹² *Being and Time*, 72.

⁹³ For a clarification of how Heidegger’s political affirmation of Nazism is best understood within the context of his understanding of the distinct roles of philosophy and the positive sciences within the university, see Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 101-114.

two components, phenomena and logos, and then ends with a discussion of what a logos of phenomena might look like. Heidegger begins by drawing distinctions between three possible meanings of “phenomenon:” 1. what shows itself in itself: the “positive and original meaning” of phenomenon; 2. what shows itself in its failure to show itself in itself: semblance, which depends on (1) as its negations; and 3. what fails to show itself altogether, such that it cannot even seem to show itself, which Heidegger calls “appearance.” A semblance is a kind of phenomenon. For instance, a stick may show itself momentarily as a snake. The stick’s ability to seem like a snake depends on its ability to show up as anything at all in the first place, i.e. the semblance of the stick as a snake depends on the phenomenon or self-showing of the stick. In other words, the stick’s showing itself as a snake is an example of semblance because this is just one of many ways in which the stick can show itself. We could not err about there seeming to be a snake unless there was a stick capable of showing itself as a stick. All failures to perceive that which shows itself in itself depend on there being that which shows itself in itself in the first place. “Only because something claims to be a phenomenon, *can* it show itself as something it is *not*, or *can* it “only look like...””⁹⁴

Semblances and phenomena are thus two ways in which what shows itself can show itself. “But what *both* terms express has at first nothing at all to do with what is called “appearance” or even “mere appearance.”⁹⁵ Instead Heidegger indicates that “phenomena are *never* appearances, but every appearance is dependent on phenomena.”⁹⁶ Heidegger is attempting to clarify that his method of phenomenology as a science of phenomena is

⁹⁴ *Being and Time*, 74.

⁹⁵ *Being and Time*, 74.

⁹⁶ *Being and Time*, 75.

completely different from an approach that merely goes along with how things happen to appear given our predetermined ways of looking. Because the word “appearance” is so ambiguous and unclear, Heidegger chooses the word “phenomenon.” Heidegger asserts that it is only through a clarification of “phenomena” that we can clarify the philosophical confusions brought about by the language of “appearances.”⁹⁷

Heidegger’s next step is to argue that the structure of *logos* lies in *apophansis*, a Greek word that Heidegger translates as “speech.” The structure of *logos* does not lie in just any kind of speech, but only speech “in the sense of letting something be seen by indicating it.”⁹⁸ To understand Heidegger’s point here we need to get clear about what he means by “letting” and “indicating.” We often speak in such a way as to cover up what we are really thinking, or to cover up the fact that we don’t know what we’re talking about, choosing our words carefully so as to avoid certain responses or interpretations. Such instances do not count as speech as *apophansis* because in such instances we are precisely *not* letting something be seen; instead, we colloquially call such instances “putting on appearances” or “covering up the truth.” Heidegger opposes these forms of non-apophantic speech on the methodological grounds that such speech impedes the very path that is *phenomenology*: a *logos* of phenomena, or a letting be seen of that which shows itself in itself.

Heidegger notes that “we are struck by an inner relation” between *phenomena* and *logos*. A *logos* of *phenomena* means “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself,” which can be expressed in the form of the Husserlian maxim of phenomenology, “To the things themselves!”⁹⁹ Phenomenology is descriptive and requires

⁹⁷ *Being and Time*, 76.

⁹⁸ *Being and Time*, 78.

⁹⁹ *Being and Time*, 81.

“that we avoid all nondemonstrative determinations;” we must stop ourselves from interpreting beings according to categories unless we can demonstrate that these categories really do pertain to the phenomena in question.¹⁰⁰ The phenomenological task is to describe what shows itself, which requires a “prohibition” against explaining what shows itself according to conceptual schemes not already drawn from the things themselves. Description tries to let matters speak for themselves, rather than forcing such matters into a predefined framework that already has an answer for everything. Description thus allows us to hold ourselves out in the questionable nature of a subject matter. If I can provide an explanation then this means that I have it “all” figured out in my head, but it is altogether unclear whether such explanations are satisfactory unless and until I can demonstrate that I am referring to how matters stand, which cannot be done until I have engaged in a phenomenological form of description that attends to the things themselves.

What is it that phenomenology sets out to describe and to let be seen? In a way the answer is obvious: if a phenomenology is a letting be seen, then phenomenology is a study of phenomena that are somehow not seen or concealed, which Heidegger identifies as the being of beings. “*Ontology is possible only as phenomenology*” because the study of beings (ontology) is not possible unless one have some understanding of being in general (deconstructed and developed through phenomenological description).¹⁰¹ “The phenomenological concept of phenomenon...means the being of beings” in the sense that “nothing else stands “behind” the phenomena of phenomenology.”¹⁰² Phenomena can be hidden, however, even if nothing is in the way of our seeing it. Heidegger goes on to describe

¹⁰⁰ *Being and Time*, 81.

¹⁰¹ *Being and Time*, 82.

¹⁰² *Being and Time*, 82.

the different ways in which phenomena can be covered up. A phenomenon can be not yet discovered, buried over, or distorted. According to Heidegger, much of common sense involves a distortion of phenomena, and so phenomenology of Dasein must take on the work of “hermeneutics” or interpretation that is guided by description.¹⁰³ Philosophy must take on the form of a “universal, phenomenological ontology” that aims for a transcendental knowledge of being as “the *transcendens* pure and simple.”¹⁰⁴

Heidegger famously writes, “Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility.”¹⁰⁵ What is actual is usually taken to be the standard against which all questions and answers are measured, but Heidegger’s path of thinking dwells in a realm of discovering possibilities for rethinking what it means to be human as well as the meaning of being in general. Heidegger writes, “The question of the meaning of being is the most universal and the emptiest. But at the same time the possibility inheres of its keenest particularization in every individual Dasein.”¹⁰⁶ The question of being is the most general question one can ask, and it is for this very reason that the only way to pose the question is to do so oneself for the sake one’s self. Each of us can learn much from our teachers, but the path of thinking requires that we ourselves take the steps necessary for becoming more carefully attentive to the meaning of how beings -- human beings included -- show themselves to us, each in their own ways.

For Heidegger the meaning of primordially consists in the need to repetitively rethink, reread, and rewrite our understandings of ourselves and our presuppositions:

¹⁰³ *Being and Time*, 84

¹⁰⁴ *Being and Time*, 84.

¹⁰⁵ *Being and Time*, 85-86.

¹⁰⁶ *Being and Time*, 86.

The meaning of primordially does not lie in the idea of something outside of history or beyond it; rather, it shows itself in the fact that thinking without presuppositions can itself be achieved only in a self-critique that is historically oriented in a factual manner. An incessant actualizing of a certain worry about achieving primordially is what constitutes primordially.¹⁰⁷

If there is nothing more to primordially than “an incessant actualizing of a certain worry about achieving primordially,” then we might see the primordial as akin to a regulative ideal – or perhaps *the* regulative ideal for philosophy as phenomenological ontology – which serves to remind us of the worry that we have not yet achieved what we hope to achieve. We might here think of Wittgenstein’s claim that “One keeps forgetting to go right down to the foundations. One doesn’t put the question marks down deep enough.”¹⁰⁸ What Heidegger means by primordially turns out, then, to be opposed to common conceptions of foundation, ground, depth, and primacy, which complicates how we must understand *fundamental* ontology. Throughout *Being and Time* Heidegger highlights the fact that this project, despite being fundamental, always remains necessarily incomplete, preliminary, and wholly subject to revision. Heidegger insists that this text “only brings out the being of [Dasein], without interpreting its meaning.”¹⁰⁹ That is, the primary aim of the text is to reveal the structures of Dasein’s experience of the world, without passing judgment on what it *means* to be Dasein. Nearly a decade after the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger will write,

Fundamental ontology transitional. It exposes the ground of all ontology and overcomes all ontology but must necessarily proceed from what is familiar and ordinary. Therefore fundamental ontology always stands in a *twi*-light.”¹¹⁰

In other words, the analysis of Dasein occupies an indeterminate and intermediate position somehow somewhere “between” the familiarity of past interpretations of being on the one

¹⁰⁷ *Supplements*, “Karl Jaspers’ Psychology of Worldviews,” 74.

¹⁰⁸ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Being and Time*, 38.

¹¹⁰ *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, 241.

hand, and the uncertainty and strangeness of thinking being otherwise on the other. As we see from the very outset of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's project sets into dialogue a conversation between someone we know in Socrates and someone who is simply "stranger." We proceed from what is familiar only to return to it with a renewed sense of the strange complexities that were initially concealed from our view due to that limited vantage point, thus laying bare the unique structures which constitute our Dasein as a being-in-the-world. "Once we have arrived at that horizon," Heidegger insists, "this preparatory analytic of Dasein will have to be repeated on a higher and authentically ontological basis."¹¹¹

2.3 Dasein

The only way into questioning being is from within the familiar horizon of our own being. The question of the meaning of being becomes posed in terms of the being who asks after being: we ourselves. Thus, the question for fundamental ontology becomes: Who is that? Who is questioning being? The question seems too easy; we might immediately point to ourselves. As Heidegger writes,

Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it – *all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry*, and therefore are modes of being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves.¹¹²

How are we to characterize the human being's peculiar manner of being? What is the way of being human that we associate with the human being? Heidegger begins by answering this question negatively. According to Heidegger,

One of our first tasks will be to prove that if we posit an "I" or subject as that which is proximally given, we shall completely miss the phenomenal content of Dasein. ... All these terms [the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the person] refer to definite phenomenal domains which can be 'given form:' but they are never used without a notable failure to see the need for inquiring about the being of the entities thus

¹¹¹ *Being and Time*, 38.

¹¹² *Being and Time*, 26-27.

designated. So we are not being terminologically arbitrary when we avoid these terms - or such expressions as 'life' and 'man' - in designating those entities which we are ourselves.¹¹³

When describing the entities that we are, Heidegger argues that we need to avoid metaphysical terminology. To begin from the phenomena of our everyday ways of being, we cannot simply postulate some conception of subjectivity or consciousness. Historically, our way of being has been described in terms of a subject, soul, consciousness, person, thinking substance-plus-body, or me. Heidegger, however, tries to persuade us to see ourselves in a novel way by considering the human being in terms of *Dasein*. "This entity which each of us is... and which includes inquiring as one of its possibilities of its being, we shall denote by the term "*Dasein*.""¹¹⁴ *Dasein* is that entity for whom questioning is a possibility. Although *Dasein* is an *entity*, it is not an entity which simply occurs among other entities. Rather, Heidegger writes, *Dasein* "is ontically distinctive by the fact that, in its very being, that being is an *issue* for it."¹¹⁵ *Dasein* is that being for whom being is constantly at issue. Our very being - the fact that we are - matters to us, and it is being directed toward and concerned for being that constitutes being human. In this way, our way of existing is distinct from the way that a stone exists. A stone does not care about its being because it is incapable of caring, or indeed, of encountering anything in any way. A stone is not concerned with its being a stone, or its being hard or located on the street, because a stone exists in such a way that it is incapable of interpreting itself as anything at all. Stones are there but do not take themselves to be there. A human being, on the other hand, is a being concerned with its very being. For example, when a stone is thrown or falls into an abyss, it does not care about this state of

¹¹³ *Being and Time*, 46.

¹¹⁴ *Being and Time*, 26-27.

¹¹⁵ *Being and Time*, 12.

affairs because it cannot care, whereas human beings care quite deeply about being thrown or falling, and indeed in more than one sense and in such a manner that is this caring that constitutes our human being. The question of the meaning of being is posed within the horizon of that entity for whom being can be meaningful.

One initial obstacle here involves Heidegger's insistence that Dasein is not a "what" and does not fit the determination of an object or thing. Instead, Dasein is a "who." Dasein is only in the manner of its very being, in the dynamic, temporal sense of existing, thinking, etc. Heidegger writes,

*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand of some entity which 'looks' so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that. ... So when we designate this entity with the term 'Dasein,' we are expressing not its "what" (as if were a table, house or tree) but its being.*¹¹⁶

Heidegger restricts the meaning of "Dasein" to possible ways for it to be. Human being is not a static thing, substance, or object. In this sense, Dasein cannot be understood as a fixed or fully actualized actuality, but only in terms of its possibility and its possible ways of being. We cannot think of Dasein's way of being by analyzing ourselves as a thing made up of aspects, parts, or sides. Instead, the difficulty lies in seeing ourselves in terms of our *way of being*. We experience ourselves and the world in such a way that we are involved and engaged with this or that aspect of the world, and in such a way that this is always and already the case. Heidegger describes this unitary phenomenon in terms of our *being-in-the-world*, that "primary datum" which is always whole.¹¹⁷ Being-in-the-world is unitary in the sense that it undercuts dualistic ways of talking about human beings, and it is primary or

¹¹⁶ *Being and Time*, 42.

¹¹⁷ *Being and Time*, 53.

primordial in the sense that dualisms presuppose this unitary nexus. In other words, being-in-the-world cannot be ascertained by piecing together two entities, a human being and the world; rather, human being and the world belong together essentially to the extent that neither is intelligible except by reference to this essential relation.

Thus, we have the singular term being-in-the-world (*In-der-welt-sein*) rather than a being in the world. Furthermore, we cannot understand the unitary nature of being-in-the-world if we continue to think of ourselves as a combination of entities (as in body, mind, and soul). Instead, Heidegger writes, “The critical question cannot stop here. It must face the being of the whole man, who is customarily taken as a unity of body, soul, and spirit.”¹¹⁸ Heidegger writes,

A discussion of the Cartesian ontology of the ‘world’ will provide us likewise with a negative support for a positive explication of the spatiality of the environment and of Dasein itself.¹¹⁹

By contrasting his own analysis of worldhood with Descartes’ interpretation of the world, Heidegger provides “negative support for a positive explication” of the spatiality peculiar to Dasein. Since this section contains Heidegger’s previously discussed deferral of the body in *Being and Time*, it makes sense for our purposes to begin our discussion of Dasein’s manner of being there.

2.4 Dasein’s spatiality

Heidegger’s account of spatiality might well constitute one of the most radical rethinkings of space since that of thinkers such as Galileo and Newton. When we talk about the human being and space, we often say that we are in space, and more specifically, that our bodies are in space. But a radical rethinking of being requires a radical rethinking of the sorts of things

¹¹⁸ *Being and Time*, 50.

¹¹⁹ *Being and Time*, 89.

in space, including our own bodies, which is why Heidegger resists the tendency since Descartes to equate space with body and body with space. In contrast to this tradition, Heidegger begins his discussion of spatiality by distinguishing between two senses of “in,” categorical and existential. The categorical sense of “in” refers to the ordinary interpretation of space along the lines of physical bodies extended in the world, while the existential sense signifies Dasein’s inextricable involvement with the world and the “in” of care-full dwelling. In his initial discussion of being-in, he immediately distinguishes his conception of spatiality from that of the body:

Being-in, on the other hand, is a state of Dasein’s being; it is an existiale. So one cannot think of it as the being-present-at-hand of some corporeal Thing (such as a human body) ‘in’ an entity which is present-at-hand.¹²⁰

The very first thing that Heidegger says about being-in in *Being and Time* is that it cannot be understood in terms of a human body in a world. When we read the expression “being-in” for the first time, we inevitably want to understand the term as “a being in,” but Heidegger foresees this likely reading, and claims that it fails to arrive at the phenomenon of being-in:

In connection with our first preliminary sketch of being-in, we had to contrast Dasein with a way of being in space which we call ‘insiderness.’ This expression means that an entity which is itself extended is closed round by the extended boundaries of something that is likewise extended.¹²¹

Dasein is to be contrasted with that entity that is “closed round” by extended boundaries and surfaces. This move is crucial for understanding Heidegger’s conception of the way human beings exist in the world. The “in” of being-in-the-world cannot be encountered if we look for something in an objective, three-dimensional space. Heidegger writes,

[Dasein’s] spatiality cannot signify anything like occurrence at a position in ‘world-space,’ nor can it signify being-ready-to-hand at some place. Both of these are kinds

¹²⁰ *Being and Time*, 54.

¹²¹ *Being and Time*, 101.

of being which belong to entities encountered within-the-world. Dasein, however, is 'in' the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity.¹²²

Dasein's way of being, being-in, is a qualitative condition of its being; what it is like for Dasein to be is to be-in-the-world. "In" does not signify spatial inclusion in the way that a quantity of water is "in" a glass. Rather, Heidegger draws our attention to the etymology of this word:

'In' is derived from "*innan*" – "to reside," "*habitare*," "to dwell." 'An' signifies "I am accustomed," "I am familiar with." "I look after something."¹²³

Dasein is "in" the world as a theorist is "in" academia. To be "in" academia means to be familiar with scholarly practices, skills, conversations, guidelines, and daily schedules, for example. Of course, we do not say that someone is "in" academia simply when their body is present in an academic hall. Rather, someone is in academia to the extent to which her identity is constituted by her involved engagement with academic matters. In this sense, Dasein's being is to be sought in the understanding of being with which it is familiar, in terms of the realm of possibilities within which it dwells.

By distinguishing his account of Dasein's spatiality from that of a body already conceived as flesh and bones contained by the skin, Heidegger's thinking explicitly opposes and seeks to deconstruct the most common image that comes to mind when we hear about "the body." Given this existential sense of the way we are "in" the world, Heidegger insists that being-in-the-world demands a wholly original understanding of spatiality.

If spatiality belongs to Dasein in any way, that is possible only on the basis of being-in. But its spatiality shows the characters of *de-distancing* and *orientation*.¹²⁴

¹²² *Being and Time*, 104.

¹²³ *Being and Time*, 54.

¹²⁴ *Being and Time*, 105.

Heidegger specifies that Dasein's spatiality is possible only on the basis of being-in, which means that Dasein's spatiality must be understood within the horizon of the structural whole of being-in-the-world. To do this, Heidegger describes two features of Dasein's way of being in space: de-distancing and orientation.

Dasein's spatiality cannot be quantified as distances between various points; to quantify Dasein's spatiality is to fail to see Dasein's specific way of being as being-in-the-world. Instead, Heidegger writes,

We use the expression "de-distancing" in a signification which is both active and transitive. It stands for a constitutive state of Dasein's being... De-distancing amounts to making the farness vanish - that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close.¹²⁵

Bringing close, or making the farness vanish, refers to the way in which Dasein "lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is."¹²⁶ On a first reading, we might consider the instance of picking up a book and the way in which we bring it close to read what it says. It seems obvious that picking up the book and bringing it closer to our face is an instance of bringing-close, but the matter is not so simple, for "bringing-close" refers to a different phenomenon. Heidegger again begins his discussion by clarifying what the phenomenon is not.

When we speak of de-distancing as a kind of being which Dasein has with regard to its being-in-the-world, we do not understand by it any such thing as remoteness (or closeness) or even a distance.¹²⁷

Heidegger again insists that Dasein's spatiality should not be confused with bodies in space:

Bringing-close is not oriented towards the I-Thing encumbered with a body, but towards concerned being-in-the-world – that is, towards whatever is proximally encountered in such being.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ *Being and Time*, 105.

¹²⁶ *Being and Time*, 105.

¹²⁷ *Being and Time*, 105

Putting entities to use is first and foremost *not* a strictly physical, bodily phenomenon.

Instead,

Proximally and for the most part, de-distancing is a circumspective bringing-close – in the sense of procuring it, putting it in readiness, having it to hand.¹²⁹

Initially, having something to hand might seem equivalent to holding something in the hand, such as a book or a hammer or a steering wheel. Indeed, it is difficult *not* to think of the handiness of the ready-to-hand in terms of entities that are already there ready for our physical hands, but Heidegger's reference to hands is more complicated than this. In an earlier passage, Heidegger writes,

The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work – that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too.¹³⁰

The essence of the ready-to-hand is such that it must withdraw to be ready-to-hand. For the hammer to *work as a hammer*, the hammer as a singular, physical entity must withdraw in the sense that it must become subsumed by Dasein's circumspective familiarity with the act of hammering.

Here Heidegger is attending to what we might call the equipment's "transparency." In one sense, there is no getting around the fact that hammering is a bodily phenomenon. In a typical case, the carpenter holds a hammer in his hand, keeps his eye on the nail, maintains a steady stance, lifts his arm, and hits the nail. But on Heidegger's view, focusing on these physical characteristics misses the point of what it means to hammer. The being of the hammer is to be understood in terms of its toward-which, that is, the work to be produced by

¹²⁸ *Being and Time*, 107.

¹²⁹ *Being and Time*, 105.

¹³⁰ *Being and Time*, 69.

the hammer as its “toward-which.” When we hold the hammer in hand, we are directed toward the work to be produced, not an isolated hammer. For Dasein, the hammer must become invisible, as it were, for us to engage in hammering. Heidegger’s famous example is that of someone wearing glasses. Insofar as the Dasein brings-close the pair of glasses and lets it be encountered for what it is, the physicality of the frames and lenses withdraws from Dasein’s understanding of being.

When, for instance, a man wears a pair of spectacles which are so close to him distantly that they are ‘sitting on his nose,’ they are environmentally more remote from him than the picture on the opposite wall. Such equipment has so little closeness that often it is proximally quite impossible to find. Equipment for seeing - and likewise for hearing, such as the telephone receiver - has what we have designated as the inconspicuousness of the proximally ready-to-hand.¹³¹

Although they are “sitting on his nose,” glasses cannot be defined as something sitting on the nose but rather must be conceived in terms of the way in which Dasein sees through them toward the picture on the opposite wall.

We have seen that Dasein de-distances entities by bringing them close. Dasein is spatial in that it comports itself de-distantly toward entities.¹³² Heidegger refers to our spatial comportment toward in terms of directionality.

As de-distant being-in, Dasein has likewise the character of *directionality*. Every bringing-close has already taken in advance a direction towards a region out of which what is de-distanced brings itself close, so that one can come across it with regard to its place.¹³³

It is within this elaboration of directionality that Heidegger interrupts his account to mention the spatiality of Dasein’s body, only to mention that “we shall not treat it here:”

Out of this directionality arise the fixed directions of right and left. Dasein constantly takes these directions along with it, just as it does its de-distances. Dasein’s

¹³¹ *Being and Time*, 107

¹³² *Being and Time*, 108.

¹³³ *Being and Time*, 108.

spatialization in its 'bodily nature' is likewise marked out in accordance with these directions. (*This 'bodily nature' hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.*)¹³⁴

The remark in parentheses mentions the body by saying that it will not be mentioned in any detail. As we have already seen, the important question here is why Heidegger chooses to defer an account of the body at this point in the text.

Dasein's spatiality is not to be defined by citing the position at which some corporeal Thing is present-at-hand. Of course we say that even Dasein always occupies a place. But this 'occupying' must be distinguished in principle from being-ready-to-hand at a place in some particular region. Dasein occupies space in a way much different than the way corporeal things 'occupy space.'¹³⁵

Our spatiality is such that we exist beyond an "I-here" point in three-dimensional space and, moreover, it is only from this being "beyond" or "yonder" that we can come back to our physical bodies. The human being as a physical here-point is only a deficient mode of the Da of Da-sein, of our there-ness. It is not that my body is right here, and the book is over there, but rather as a reader I am already there in the middle of the book.

Dasein, in accordance with its spatiality, is proximally never here but yonder; from this "yonder" it comes back to its "here;" and it comes back to its "here" only in the way in which it interprets its concerned being-towards in terms of what is ready-to-hand yonder.¹³⁶

Dasein's way of being, being-in-the-world, cannot be interpreted in terms of a subject that comports itself toward a world. Instead, being-in-the-world *is* the general situation from which a present-at-hand subject (whether mental, bodily, or both) and world (whether conceived as intelligible, physical, Nature, etc.) can emerge. The difficulty of thinking of Dasein's being as the event of disclosedness stems from the fact that we cannot understand the event in terms of its individual steps or aspects. Dasein, by definition, is its there.

¹³⁴ *Being and Time*, 108, emphasis added. Parentheses are not present in the original text.

¹³⁵ *Being and Time*, 142.

¹³⁶ *Being and Time*, 107-108.

Because Dasein is its disclosedness, it is a misinterpretation to claim that Dasein is an entity *in* a situation. Dasein cannot be interpreted in terms of the disclosive capacities, powers, or possibilities of a physical body in this or that situation. To understand the basic state of being-in-the-world, we must move beyond the “I-thing” that is “I-here,” for wherein we dwell remains beyond our physical location. I am not an encapsulated I-thing that is here; instead, I am absorbed in the world. I am not a subject surrounded by three-dimensional objects and human subjects; rather, I am existingly as being-there (Da-sein), and to be there is to be-in-the-world, not a thing inside a world space. As Heidegger will later put the point in the 1951 lecture “Building Dwelling Thinking,” “I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it.”¹³⁷ Thus, it makes sense why Heidegger postpones further examination of the problem of the body within the discussion of left and right in *Being and Time*; the very difference between left and right only make sense for a being who has a front and back and thus can move forward and backward, not only in space but also in time.

2.5 Dasein’s temporality

Time and temporality are matters of the utmost philosophical concern to Heidegger. Heidegger distinguishes “time” from “temporality.” He explains that what we ordinarily call “time” is just one way of interpreting temporality. Heidegger claims that our understanding of time dates to Aristotle’s account of time in Book IV of his *Physics*. It is only thanks to Aristotle that we think of time as that which is measured by clocks, and that which can be divided into past present and future, and that which consists of a constant stream of nows. Heidegger suggests that this interpretation of time is only one way of understanding

¹³⁷ “Building Dwelling Thinking,” 157.

temporality, and he believes that we can come to call into question ‘time’ by Dasein in terms of its temporality, which is already marked by the verbal sense of the word “being” when emphasized as *be-ing*.

A crucial concept for understanding Dasein’s temporality is *Jeweiligkeit*, a German word elucidated by Ingo Farin in the endnotes to his translation of *The Concept of Time*:

Heidegger’s use of the German word *Jeweiligkeit*, a nominalization of the adjective *jeweilig*, draws on two components: 1) the passing of time: *je eine Weile* [= for a while], whiling away time, and 2) the particularity of this passing of time, in each case a particular while. ‘While-ness’ or ‘whiling away time’ is used to translate *Jeweiligkeit*. The point is that Dasein is not only in each case ‘mine,’ but also in each case passing its own time, which belongs to no one else.¹³⁸

Macquarrie and Robinson render *jeweilig* alternatively as “current,” “at the time,” “particular”, and “any” in *Being and Time*, whereas Farin decides on “in each case:” “Dasein is in each case one’s own [*jeweilig das meinige*].”¹³⁹ John van Buren’s glossary has *Jeweiligkeit* as “the awhileness (of temporal particularity).” These all remain correct translations of *jeweilig*, but they also seem to suggest a more static and punctuated conception of time than Heidegger intends. As Farin notes, Dasein is not only in each case mine, but Dasein is also in each case mine for a while. It is not simply that I am “in” time, or that I “have” time, or that I cannot help but “intuit” things temporally. Instead, Heidegger’s point is that I “am” time in the sense that I exist as the disclosive site that continuously “whiles” or breaks forth from out of an indeterminate but particular (*jeweilig*) past into the future.

I am Dasein but only for an indeterminate time – only for “awhile” – in the vague but sufficiently clear sense of the common phrase that “It’s been awhile.” As Dasein I exist as a

¹³⁸ *The Concept of Time*, 91.

¹³⁹ *The Concept of Time*, 38.

whiling for a while; I am temporarily the temporal stretching between the throw of birth and projection toward death. The metaphor of stretching implies that I do not exist at a given time understood in terms of seconds, minutes, and hours; rather I live in stretches of time that I experience and understand qualitatively rather than quantitatively, and this is a core component of what it means to be a while that whiles for a while. Heidegger attempts to reveal this feature of time in his lengthy discussion of boredom in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* where he attempts to invoke in his students the experience of time passing by slowly, that phenomenon when a student becomes bored “to death” by the professor who goes on and on about seemingly “nothing” at all, all while there is nothing to do other than just being there. The actual length of the lecture may be quantitatively short, and yet to the bored student the time can seem to last (speaking colloquially yet in a way that delimits a determinate phenomenon) “like, forever.” This qualitative dimension of time is emphasized by Aristotle in Book IV of *Physics*. As Aristotle there points out, “[W]henver our thoughts do not change at all, or we do notice the change, it does not seem to us that time has passed...; “For we notice time if and only if we notice motion [or change of any sort].”¹⁴⁰ The motion essential to the being of time comes to be reinterpreted by Heidegger as ecstatic.

One might explain Heidegger’s ecstatic conception of time as consisting in the claim that the now is always caught between the past and the future in such a way that the now always already stands out into the past and future; the now has the tendency to annihilate itself, as is shown differently by Hegel’s discussion of “Sense Certainty” in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.¹⁴¹ While the now must be conceived ecstatically this is equally true of the past and the future. It is thus important to see that the past never just was but is and

¹⁴⁰ *Physics*, 218b23-25 and 219a3-4, my clarification of Aristotle’s point in brackets.

¹⁴¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 60ff.

will continue to be, and the future never just will be but also already was and currently is. In each instance we must resist the inadvertent tendency to spatialize time by thinking of the past as somehow “behind” or the future as somehow “ahead” of us. To think on these terms is to fail to recall that we *are* time. As Heidegger insists, “To appreciate and study time, one must genuinely ask: ‘Am I time?’”¹⁴² As Heidegger writes in two essential statements: “The meaning of the being of that being we call Dasein proves to be *temporality*.”¹⁴³ “In order to demonstrate this we must recover our interpretation of those structures of Dasein...as modes of temporality.”¹⁴⁴

As Dasein not only am I time; I am time such that I can either own up to my thrown-projecting-whiling and *be* my time, or I can while my time away in the monotony of what one tends to do, thus failing to be the determinate whiling that I am. Regardless of whether I am authentic or inauthentic, whiling is in each instance mine, and mineness is always in each instance a whiling. The question is whether I own up to resolutely *living* my *Jeweiligkeit* according to my *Jemeinigkeit*. Temporality and mineness must be thought together, but it is difficult to think either precisely because we *live* this whiling mineness. Mineness whiles and whiling mines as we discover ourselves to exist as the sort of entities capable of self-ownedness. When in the second Meditation Descartes claims that “I am, I exist – that is certain. But for how long? For *as long as* I am thinking,” he unearths but fails to properly cultivate the idea that the self is in each case temporal, and is so only temporarily.¹⁴⁵ For Heidegger *Jeweiligkeit* and *Jemeinigkeit* belong together; whiling is always in each instance

¹⁴² *The Concept of Time*, 71.

¹⁴³ *Being and Time*, 60.

¹⁴⁴ *Being and Time*, 160.

¹⁴⁵ *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 18.

mine, and mineness is always in each instance a whiling. Extrapolating on Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty clarifies:

We are not saying that time is *for* someone, which would once be a case of arraying it out, and immobilizing it. We are saying that time *is* someone, or that temporal dimensions, insofar as they perceptually overlap, bear each other out and ever confine themselves to making explicit what was implied in each, being collectively expressive of that one single explosion or thrust, which is subjectivity itself. We must understand time as the subject and the subject as time.¹⁴⁶

As we have seen, Heidegger would insist upon using the term “Dasein” in place of “the subject” and “subjectivity;” that crucial caveat notwithstanding, both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty attest that the stretch between birth and dying must be understood ontologically, as constituting the essential dimensions of our very being. The self is never simply something at some point between life and death; rather, Dasein exists as the *betweens* of time itself, not only torn between birth and death in general but also caught more specifically in the tensions between present and past, past and future, and present and future. It is through recognizing that we are temporal in this ecstatic sense that we can begin to glean the possibilities for a genuinely postmodern rethinking of and comportment toward entities in their being. In an interlude between sections 18 and 19 of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger summarizes the “essential results” of *Being and Time*, which had been published only earlier that year:

The outcome of the existential analytic, the exposition of the ontological constitution of the Dasein in its ground, is this: *the constitution of the Dasein's being is grounded in temporality. ... The ontological condition of the possibility of the understanding of being is temporality itself. Therefore we must be able to cull from it that by way of which we understand the like of being. Temporality takes over the enabling of the understanding of being and thus the enabling of the thematic interpretation of being and of its articulation and manifold ways; it thus makes ontology possible.*¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 490.

¹⁴⁷ *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 228.

As early as 1927 Heidegger already begins to recognize that even a “fundamental” ontology is made possible by the temporality of a more original event that first makes possibly an inquiry into beings at all. If ontology is made possible by temporality, then this calls into question the extent to which an ontology can be fundamental in any transcendental sense of the term.

In this summary of *Being and Time*’s “essential results,” Heidegger emphasizes that it is by way of understanding our temporality that we can interpret being in its “manifold ways.” This result should not be surprising given the manifold and ecstatic character of temporality. Temporality never just *is*, but in fact *temporalizes itself*, so that each “in-stance” of time is always already an “out-stance” or standing-out. As Heidegger puts the point,

The now as such is already in transit. It is not one point alongside another point so that some mediation would be needed for the two. It is intrinsically transition. ... The *now*—and that means time—is, says Aristotle, *by its essential nature not a limit*, because as transition it is open on the sides of the not-yet and the no-longer.¹⁴⁸

The idea that time must be understood in terms of transition goes back to Aristotle’s discussion of time as inherently related to motion and “the soul,” a term that we might risk thinking as interchangeable with “Dasein”:

As long as we do not have an adequate concept of the soul or the understanding – of the Dasein – it remains difficult to say what “time is in the soul” means.¹⁴⁹

Aristotle comes close to but falls short of recognizing Heidegger’s insight that “Each Dasein is itself ‘time’” when he says that “it is impossible for there to be time unless there is soul.”¹⁵⁰ One of the key moves of the early Heidegger, then, will consist in a reversal of this statement; time, for Heidegger, stands higher than Dasein, just as possibility stands higher

¹⁴⁸ *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 249.

¹⁴⁹ *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 236-7.

¹⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Physics*, 377 [223a26].

than actuality. Heidegger's insight into temporality as the primordial ground of Dasein, then, already points the way to Heidegger's later hope for a non-reductionist comportment to beings that recognizes our comportment to always already be guided by a specific understanding of the being of beings in its historical character, which collectively Heidegger will name "the history of being." Heidegger deconstructs philosophical texts to show how they all gesture toward but never fully realize the temporal truth of human being in the unique way that Heidegger does, which is that because Dasein *is* time such that it also can become *its* time.

In addition to this me-ness and mine-ness of temporality as sketched above, a third and final structural feature of Dasein's temporality that bears mentioning here is its tripartite structure. Threefold distinctions have already been at work above, for example, in our elaboration of the question as having three interrelated dimensions: what is questioned, what we are interrogating, and what we hope to ascertain. We have seen it as well in Heidegger's distinction between the three ways an entity can be: present-at-hand, ready-to-hand, and existence. And we will see it again and again in the next section. The tripartite will also continue to be a guiding schema for us in our attempt to distinguish sex and gender and sexuality in non-binary and Heideggerian ways.

Just as I believe the rest of us do, Heidegger conceives of time in terms of the past, the present, and the future, but his manner of doing so is unique, he thinks, due to two theses: "*Temporality is the primordial 'outside-of-itself' in and for itself,*" and "*The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future.*"¹⁵¹ In these corresponding definitions of Dasein's temporality Heidegger claims two primordialities, the 'outside of

¹⁵¹ *Being and Time*, 377-378.

itself' and the future. Considering first the 'outside of itself,' in the following line Heidegger introduces his concept of the "ecstases" of temporality. Ecstasy for Heidegger refers to its original meaning as that which stands outside itself.¹⁵² Heidegger calls the past, the present, and the future "ecstases" to highlight the fact that past, present, and future are never separable, self-contained, "static" stretches of days and years. Instead, each dimension of time always already stands out into the other two, such that its very standing is constituted only in and through its relation to the other two. This means that each can stand out as a one only in relation to the other two, which is to say that each one (past, present, and future) can stand out only in relation to the ecstatic union of the three. What is past is always what we here now have passed, and our concern with passing in the first place is grounded in a concern for the future. What is present always shows itself as already having presented itself, and our concern with presencing is again grounded in the future. What is futural refers to what has not yet been passed and what is not currently presenting itself. This is to say that the past, present, and future must be understood as equally necessary for each other's being what it is, or put another way, the three ecstases of Dasein's temporality are equiprimordial.

When Heidegger asserts the second thesis that the phenomenon of authentic temporality is the future, he means that it is primarily due to the possibilities which characterize my future, rather than the actualities which characterize my past and presence, that I am capable of becoming who I most truly am (*Eigentlichkeit*), or I can declare of myself and the world "it is what it is" and exist within a time that is never mine (*Uneigentlichkeit*), choosing or otherwise falling into the choice instead to drift along with the tides and dominant trends of the day. Rather than be inauthentic in this way, Heidegger

¹⁵² We will return to this concept of ecstasy in later sections pertaining to Dasein's rapturous way of finding itself in the world.

believes a more complete life requires us to take the resolute stand whereby I no longer disown time as something to while away. The possibility of authenticity in *Being and Time* is meant primarily meant in this temporal sense as sketched above; that is, the possibility of making this life mine (*Eigentlichkeit*) is due to a recognition that I *am* time in such a way that I can continue to become myself on the way to becoming who I know not yet. For our purposes, this is how we are to understand Heidegger's ecstatic and futural determination of the temporality that characterizes our everyday lives. "The fundamental ontological task of the interpretation of being as such thus includes the elaboration of the *temporality of being*."¹⁵³ Such a project requires us to consider the structures of our existence as "modes of temporality," which are ways in which the human being is always already existing in time.

2.6 Dasein's way of finding itself in the world

Heidegger understands Dasein as a *thrown falling projection*. We are always *thrown* in the sense that to be in the world is always to have already been in a world. Our *falling* for Heidegger refers to the way that we always "belong to everydayness" to the extent that who we are is always "entangled" (*verfänglich*) with everyday habits and assumptions in such a way that our lives are marked by temptation, tranquillization, and alienation.¹⁵⁴ Like thrownness and projection, *falling* is an ontological concept pertaining to the structures of our being which make possible our apprehension of entities in the first place. It is in this non-theological sense that Heidegger intends our falling to refer to the manner in which coming to identify ourselves is always a matter of everyday maintenance and interdependent negotiation with a world whose current norms and practices and contexts of intelligibility have been determined in advance. Finally, each Dasein is projection in the sense that it

¹⁵³ *Being and Time*, 62.

¹⁵⁴ *Being and Time*, 224.

always *must be* projecting itself toward various possibilities of being to be who they are. We have been thrown naked into a world, within which we necessarily negotiate and maintain our sense of who we are, and toward which we direct the projects determining each of our futures. Together these three moments co-constitute Dasein's primordial openness to being, and it is within this openness that we find ourselves having always already found ourselves to be in some way or other.

In the Marburg lectures from 1924-1925 devoted to Plato's later dialogue, the *Sophist*, Heidegger discusses Socrates' distinction between "the body of what is without a soul" and "the body of what is alive:"

a distinction must be made between, on the one hand, (227a3) "the body of what is without a soul," what does not live, the non-living, what is merely material, and, on the other hand, the (227b7), "the body of what is alive." Such a body, one partaking of life, we call "flesh." It is characteristic of such a body to be given not only from the outside... but to be given from the inside, as we say, i.e., given as a body for the living body whose body it is. My relation to my body is therefore one that is specifically psychic, i.e., this relation includes the possibility of my being "disposed" in relation to my body. This is why we speak of a bodily disposition. Only a body having the character of flesh contains in its objective content this structure of one's being disposed toward it in some way or another. A chair and a stone, although they are bodies, have no bodily disposition. Therefore the possible ways of influencing a body are different, depending on whether the body is flesh of a mere physical thing.¹⁵⁵

This bodily connection to disposition or mood becomes more obvious in Heidegger's texts of the mid-to-late 1930's. Heidegger writes,

Mood is never a way of being determined in our inner being for ourselves. It is above all a way of being attuned, and letting ourselves be attuned, in this or that way in mood. Mood is precisely the basic way in which we are outside ourselves. But that is the way we are essentially and constantly. In all of this the bodily state swings into action. It lifts a man out beyond himself or it allows him to be enmeshed in himself and to grow listless.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ *Plato's Sophist*, 250.

¹⁵⁶ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99.

Here again emphasizes that as a thrown-projection Dasein always stands in the ambiguous position of being capable of both transcendence (“being lifted out beyond ourselves”) and immanence (“being enmeshed in ourselves and growing listless”), and Heidegger underscores the fact that “in all of this the bodily state swings into action.”

That which is visible and graspable from the outside, the body, which we sense from inside, seems to be the properly main thing in the present-at-hand human being. With its help, we stand with both legs firmly on the ground. The body, not the dangling in exposedness through mood, counts thus as supporting ground. However, what do legs, body and other extremities mean here? If we were to have a dozen or more legs, we would not then stand firmer on the ground. We would not stand at all, if this standing were not attuned-through by moods, by virtue of which earth, ground; in short, nature first bears, preserves and threatens us.¹⁵⁷

Given the foregoing discussion in this chapter regarding his question, his method, and my partial discussion of the fundamental structures of his account of Dasein’s being-in-the-world under the three headings of space, time, and mood, we should at this juncture become perplexed what Heidegger might mean here in the reference to “the bodily state” because, after all, we have already seen time and time again that his analyses mention the body only to say that it will be not be mentioned any longer or that traditional understandings of both the body and the mind must be radically rethought and restructured on the basis of Heidegger’s new account of Dasein’s temporal-spatial-mooded existence as being-in-the-world. Because traditional concepts of embodiment such as “the body” (*Körper*) and the lived body (*Leib*) carry metaphysical connotations that prohibit the reader from a clear understanding of the unique bodily phenomena pertaining to our everyday existence as Dasein, Heidegger introduces a third term, bodying (*Leiben*), to refer to the being of the body as understood according to the analysis of human being in *Being and Time*.

¹⁵⁷ *Logic as the Essence Concerning the Question of Language*, 126.

2.7 The body (*Körper*), the lived body (*Leib*), and the bodying of the body (*leiben*)

As we have seen, there is an important distinction to be drawn between the body as a corporeal thing and the body as a lived site of bodily experience. This distinction is often attributed to Husserl, but we already find a version of it in Descartes' argument for the "real distinction" between mind and body, or more precisely, between things that think and things that are extended in space. Various arguments for the distinction are to be found in Descartes' canonical texts *Meditations on First Philosophy* and *Discourse on Method*, as well as a later unfinished text that Descartes was working on in the final years of his life in 1647 and 1648, "The Description of the Human Body, and All Its Functions, those that do not depend on the soul as well as those that do. And also the principal cause of the formation of its parts." In this text Descartes writes,

When we make the attempt to understand our nature more distinctly, however, we can see that our soul, in so far [sic] as it is a substance distinct from body, is known to us solely from the fact that it thinks, that is to say, understands, wills, imagines, remembers, and senses, because all these functions are kinds of thoughts.¹⁵⁸

It is all too easy to pass over Descartes' claim that sensing is a "kind of thought." In his second Meditation Descartes clarifies what he means by sensing:

Lastly, it is also the same 'I' who has sensory perceptions, or is aware of bodily things as it were through the senses. For example, I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat. But [imagine] I am asleep, so all this is false. Yet I certainly *seem* to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false; what is called 'having a sensory perception' is strictly just this, and in this restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking.¹⁵⁹

Here Descartes clearly distinguishes between one's being "aware" of how bodily things "seem" to us, and one's present bodily perception of things in the world existing independent of our thoughts of them. Judgments regarding how things seem to me "cannot be false,"

¹⁵⁸ Descartes, "The Description of the Human Body..." in *The World and Other Writings*, 170-171.

¹⁵⁹ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 83.

Descartes writes, while I could always be in the wrong when making judgments about how those same things indeed exist in the world. We tend to say that we see beings themselves, but in such instances Descartes warns that “the actual words bring me up short, and I am almost tricked by ordinary ways of talking.”¹⁶⁰ We tend to say that we see each other, for example, “But then,” writes Descartes,

if I look out the window and see men crossing the square, as I just happen to have done, I normally say that I see the men themselves.... Yet do I see any more than hats and coats which could conceal automatons? I *judge* that they are men. And so something which I thought I was seeing with my eyes is in fact grasped solely by the faculty of judgment which is my mind.¹⁶¹

This philosophically loaded passage prefigures many of the problematics that fall under the heading of “modern philosophy.” Prominent mobilizations and critiques of the distinction are also to be found in the works of de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, and Butler, to name just three major figures discussed in contemporary Continental philosophy circles who, to be sure, go much further and deeper in their discussions of the distinction than Heidegger in his relatively brief treatments in the *Zollikon Seminars*.

Although the distinction between *Körper* and *Leib* has played a significant role in the history of philosophy of the body and, I think, remains the primary distinction that is discussed today when philosophers discuss bodies. The importance of Heidegger’s contributions to contemporary philosophy of the body, however, lies in the distinction he draws between the lived body (*Leib*) and bodying (*Leiben*). This Heideggerian distinction is not the same as the difference between the body as a corporeal entity and the lived body. *Leib* refers in each case to the body for which a plethora of ontic sciences already exist, such as

¹⁶⁰ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 85.

¹⁶¹ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 85.

psychology, biology, and anthropology, all which set out to understand the lived experiences of human beings. It is this sense of “body” that Heidegger has in mind when he writes,

Most of what we know from the natural sciences about the body and the way it embodies are specifications based on the established misinterpretation of the body as a mere natural body. Through such means we do find out lots of things, but the essential and determinative aspects always elude our vision and grasp.¹⁶²

Conversely, bodying (*Leiben*) is the name Heidegger reserves for the being of a body, or what we might also call being-a-body, or the ontological dimension of the body, or “the bodying of the body.” This form of locution is akin to turns of phrase such as “the being of a being,” “the worlding of the world,” “the thinging of the thing,” and “the working of art in the artwork.” In each case Heidegger is emphasizing the active, temporal, dynamic unfolding of the thing at hand, or the *way* in which what presents itself comes to take its stand, rather than the entity itself as somehow devoid of this context and composed instead of various components:

The essence of the human being has long been determined with respect to components: body, soul, spirit. There are different ways the components are said to be arranged, to interpenetrate, and to have priority over one another. What likewise changes is the role assumed at any time by one of these “components” as the guideline and point of reference for the determination of the rest of beings (cf. consciousness in the *ego cogito* or reason or spirit or, for Nietzsche, the “body” or the “soul,” according on his *intention*).¹⁶³

Thinking in this manner requires us to radically transform the value of the body and thereby how we value our bodies as well as those of those of others, all of which have been historically devalued by ascetic ideals that define the good and the true as disembodied.

Da-sein can never be exhibited and described like something objectively present. Only to be grasped hermeneutically, i.e., according to *Being and Time*, in the thrown

¹⁶² Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 99-100.

¹⁶³ Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event), 247.

projection. Therefore not arbitrarily. Da-sein is something completely un-usual and is *sent* on far ahead of all knowledge regarding the human being.¹⁶⁴

In the decade following the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes this strangeness of Dasein's way of being. When Heidegger passes over explicit thematic discussion of "Dasein's body" in *Being and Time* it is because he is trying to distinguish his account from those that uncritically appeal to unclarified notions of being and body.

The primary site of Heidegger's brief analysis of the bodying of the body takes place during the decade from 1959 to 1969 in a text titled *Zollikon Seminars* during which Heidegger engaged in a series of annual two-week meetings at the home of Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss in Zollikon, Switzerland. In one seminar Heidegger explicitly tries "to move somewhat closer to the *phenomenon of the body*."¹⁶⁵ Heidegger writes,

In any case, the body is not a thing, nor is it a corporeal thing, but each body, that is, the body as body, is in each case my body. The bodying forth of the body is determined by the way of my being. The bodying forth of the body, therefore, is a way of Da-sein's being.¹⁶⁶

Here Heidegger makes several suggestions regarding how to broach the question of Dasein's body. First, insofar as we look for a thing or a corporeal thing, we fail to see the phenomenon of the body. We cannot see the phenomenon of the body if we take it to be a thing that "has" life. Second, Heidegger believes that "the body" is better understood in terms of "the bodying of the body." As bodying, Dasein is always beyond itself, and *is* "existingly" as its there. Third, the bodying of my body is determined by "the way of my being," which is to say being-in-the-world. We are not looking to discover or create a picture, metaphor, or representation of the body. Instead, we are trying to think in such a way that the body can

¹⁶⁴ *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, 254.

¹⁶⁵ *Zollikon Seminars*, 105.

¹⁶⁶ *Zollikon Seminars*, 113.

show itself in itself from being-in-the-world. The task is not to describe what the body is, but rather, the way in which the body is, or to use Heidegger's terminology, the way in which the body bodies as body: namely, bodying.

Bodying is not itself a body but is in each case the bodying of a body. Bodying, then, refers to a description of the human body in terms of its relation to being, which is also to say the history of being. If the bodying of the body is determined by Dasein's way of being, this is to say that bodying is determined by being-in-the-world. As we know from *Being and Time*, being-in-the-world is a way of being that is primordially unitary and whole. Part of the difficulty of seeing this phenomenon lies in the fact that we cannot reach the totality of this whole by building it up out of elements. We fail to see ourselves so long as we think of ourselves as a mind or spirit somehow combined with a body. To be able to perform calculations such as this, Heidegger writes, "we would need an architect's plan."¹⁶⁷ But the predicament for human beings is precisely that no such blueprint is given, such that this investigation "turns out to be an impossible one, not because its consequences lead to inextricable impasses, but because the very entity which serves as its theme is one which, as it were, repudiates any formulation of the question."¹⁶⁸ How then are we to conceive of soul and body along Heideggerian lines?

Heidegger begins a 1965 lecture by citing two quotations from Nietzsche's *Will to Power*: "The idea of the body is more astonishing than the idea of the ancient 'soul.'" And: "The phenomenon of the body is the richer, the more distinct, the more comprehensible phenomenon. It should have methodological priority, without our deciding anything about its

¹⁶⁷ *Being and Time*, 181.

¹⁶⁸ *Being and Time*, 206.

ultimate significance.”¹⁶⁹ Heidegger approves of the first but claims that “the opposite is the case” regarding the second.¹⁷⁰ That is, since the body is less rich, distinct, and comprehensible than the soul, it should not have methodological priority, which Heidegger offers here as the reason why he explicitly opts not to deal with it in *Being and Time*.¹⁷¹ It seems that Heidegger’s opposition to Nietzsche would also extend to the last part of Nietzsche’s claim, such that Heidegger recognizes a need that Nietzsche does not, namely the need to make a decision on the question: What is the ultimate significance of the phenomenon of the body? Heidegger will admit at the start of one seminar, “In our previous sessions we tried to familiarize ourselves a little more with the problem of the body. We did not make much progress.”¹⁷²

How are we to understand Heidegger’s apparent inability to make progress on the problem of the body? What is it about the body that makes it the most difficult problem for Heidegger to understand? At this later juncture of his career we see Heidegger struggling to describe Dasein’s body as an absence that is “not nothing” or not merely a lack of presence, but Heidegger appears to lack the language for describing and bringing out this phenomenon. As we saw above, Heidegger confesses that he “was unable to say more at that time [of *Being and Time*].”¹⁷³ And yet, as late as 1972 he still claims that “the bodily is the most difficult to understand.”¹⁷⁴ We are left with the sense of a thinker caught in mid-air who recognizes that he needs to say something that he cannot say.

¹⁶⁹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 80. Heidegger cites Nietzsche’s *The Will to Power*, notes numbered 659 and 489.

¹⁷⁰ *Zollikon Seminars*, 80.

¹⁷¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 80.

¹⁷² *Zollikon Seminars*, 85.

¹⁷³ *Zollikon Seminars*, 231.

¹⁷⁴ *Zollikon Seminars*, 231.

But as we saw in our discussion of Cerbone's development of the hidden problematic, Heidegger defers consideration of concepts such as "consciousness" or "body" due to his phenomenological method, which attempts to think our being as we experience ourselves to be, which is neither purely conscious nor entirely bodily. Indeed, an etymological analysis of "experience" as an *ex-peritus* already reveals the duality of a being who can stand out from the experience (*ex-*) and the experience itself (*-peritus*). This dual sense of experience parallels the duality of ex-sistence (*ex-sistere*) as referring to both a being that "stands out" and the being itself; the concept of "existence" in the original sense of the word thus refers to an outstanding being who stands out by way of its standing out into being. And this duality of both "experience" and "existence" runs parallels to that of "substance" (*sub-sistere*), which again refers to a spatial distance (*sub*) from a stance (*sistere*). Existence, Experience, Substance: If we listen to these words with a genealogical ear bent toward the historical world which brought them into being, we can begin to discern another methodological reason for Heidegger's reluctance to discuss the body: when we try to think of ourselves as something like an *existing experienced substance*, such as a "*lived body*," lurking in the background which allows this figure to emerge is an ontotheological and tripartite structure of dualities that, in each instance, splits our "standing" into both a stance and an out-stance, an inside and outside, a being here and another being standing over there. But from the opening page of *Being and Time*, Heidegger emphasizes that his starting point is to emphasize that "the whole of this structure [of being-in-the-world] always comes first."¹⁷⁵ This methodological insistence to begin thinking from out of wholeness and unity, rather than from interpretations of the phenomena as always already split, persists through to

¹⁷⁵ *Being and Time*, 65.

Division Two where it is the *unity* of the tripartite ecstases of Dasein's temporality that becomes the theme of Heidegger's analysis. Thus, he attempts to provide the necessary grounding for a proper account of the body in its relation to being and time, rather than in distinction or, as is more usual, in contradistinction from the mind or world or soul or spirit. Dichotomous thinking overlooks not only the unitary phenomenon of being-in-the-world, Heidegger thinks, but it also makes it extraordinary difficult for us "to accept the phenomenon of the body as such in its intact being."¹⁷⁶

The phenomenon of the body is wholly unique and irreducible to something else, for instance, irreducible to mechanistic systems. One must be able to accept the phenomenon of the body as such in its intact being.¹⁷⁷

Heidegger repeats the claim from his *Nietzsche* lectures that current interpretations of the body fail to see it for what it really is. Is it really the case that we have not thought about what bodying is? Who counts as "we" here? Physicians: "The phenomenon of the body as such is especially concealed to physicians because they are concerned merely with body as a corporeal thing."¹⁷⁸ Scientists as such: "The problem of method in science is equivalent to the problem of the body. The problem of the body is primarily a problem of method."¹⁷⁹ Biologists and zoologists: "The bodily in the human is not something animalistic. The manner of understanding that accompanies it is something that metaphysics up till now has not touched on."¹⁸⁰ Other phenomenologists: "There is actually no phenomenology of the body because the body is not a corporeal thing. With such a thematic approach, one has already missed the point of the matter."¹⁸¹ The problem for each of these accounts,

¹⁷⁶ *Zollikon Seminars*, 186.

¹⁷⁷ *Zollikon Seminars*, 186.

¹⁷⁸ *Zollikon Seminars*, 186.

¹⁷⁹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 93.

¹⁸⁰ *Heraclitus Seminar*, 146.

¹⁸¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 184.

Heidegger claims, is that “The phenomenon of the body is wholly unique and irreducible to something else, for instance, irreducible to mechanistic systems. One must be able to accept the phenomenon of the body as such in its intact being.”¹⁸² What Heidegger means here by “the phenomenon of the body as such in its intact being” is initially unclear, but one way to understand his point is to think of the body’s multiple character of being in terms of the unity of the three dimensions of Dasein’s temporal ways of “being bodily”, as Heidegger does in the following example concerning phantom limb pain:

As for phantom limb pains, one must say that they are precisely the testimony for ecstatic bodiliness [*Leiblichkeit*]. My relationship to my toes is a bodily one [*leiben*] and not a [*körperlich*] corporeal one. The feeling of something through my toes was earlier understood as the mere presence-at-hand of the toe. Yet this understanding does not reach far enough. Sensitivity to pain goes beyond the toes.¹⁸³

2.8 The neutrality of Dasein’s sexuality

Before turning to Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche, which I believe contains the crux of the problem of the body for Heidegger, we should of course note that the analysis of Dasein as explicated by Heidegger in *Being and Time* was met with immediate criticism from numerous philosophical perspectives. A common and general concern among readers was Heidegger’s insistence upon the neutrality of his fundamental ontology in *Being and Time*. If the goal is to unearth only the general structures necessary for any Dasein to care about the sense “it” (qua Dasein) makes of “its” world (qua being-in-the-world), Heidegger’s approach seems from the outset to foreclose a more thoroughly concrete investigation into how our being-in-the-world-with-others shapes and is shaped by bodily difference. This of course is an unfortunately recurring theme in Western philosophical accounts of “man” whereby predominantly male philosophers have described their experiences of mind and body on the

¹⁸² *Zollikon Seminars*, 186.

¹⁸³ *Zollikon Seminars*, 221.

basis of the presupposition that all human beings, to the extent that they are undoubtedly human, ought to be able to see themselves reflected equally well by the philosopher's account of what it is to be human in general. As Murphy writes, objectionable appeals to neutrality remain ubiquitous across a wide range of phenomenological projects:

Objections to assumptions of sexual neutrality and universality that have tended to pervade many phenomenological accounts of experience are ubiquitous. Notwithstanding these criticisms, it would be impossible to trace the history of sexuality studies, and indeed what has come to be known as queer theory, without making recourse to these traditions.¹⁸⁴

This apparent predilection for overlooking bodily difference is especially troubling from a Heideggerian standpoint given that his explicit goal, announced on the very first page of *Being and Time*, is to “work out the question of *being* and to do so concretely.”¹⁸⁵ By emphasizing *being* here, is Heidegger eclipsing the concrete specificities of bodies that are “here” but are so in *different* ways?

This question has led philosophers such as Marcuse to cite Heidegger's silence as symptomatic of an even more problematic refusal in his thinking; perhaps at the end of the day Marcuse was right that “Heidegger's concreteness was to a great extent a phony, a false concreteness.”¹⁸⁶ Perhaps here we also might notice that in each case when Heidegger refers to the body as “the most difficult” for him to think through, he admits so in conversations, as if to confess the need for others to intervene and guide the discussion forward.¹⁸⁷ Heidegger, then, not only belongs to a phenomenological tradition which takes for granted a rather objectionable position of sexual neutrality; to whatever extent phenomenological ontology

¹⁸⁴ Murphy, “Sexuality,” _.

¹⁸⁵ *Being and Time*, 19.

¹⁸⁶ Marcuse, “Heidegger's Politics,” 166.

¹⁸⁷ To Fink: “The body phenomenon is the most difficult problem” (*Heraclitus Seminar*, 146). To Boss: “[T]he bodily is the most difficult [to understand]” (*Zollikon Seminars*, 230).

after Heidegger remains indebted to the formal structural analysis of Dasein as “in *each* case mine” in *Being and Time*, we might see Heidegger as one of this tradition’s most problematic founding fathers. Heidegger’s relationship to gender theory is undoubtedly muddled by Heidegger’s own refusals to explicate the primary phenomena that are in question. As Derrida writes,

Of sex, one can readily remark, yes, Heidegger speaks as little as possible, perhaps he has never spoken of it. Perhaps he has never said anything, *by that name or the names under which we recognize it*, of the “sexual-relation,” “sexual-difference,” or indeed of “man-and-woman.”¹⁸⁸

Despite the lack of any sustained discussion of anything resembling sexual experience or sexual difference within the Heideggerian corpus, Derrida hints that perhaps Heidegger *does* refer to the being of sexuality but only under “unrecognizable names,” such that Heidegger’s texts might still be mined for clues on how to think sexuality differently. For example, we might reconceive of various sex acts as relationships of being-with-each-other in a bodily way that may or may not pertain to each of the body’s three primary temporal dimensions for each individual (*Körper*, *Leib*, and *Leiben*).

This more nuanced Heideggerian account of the temporality of bodily sexuality appears especially promising in contrast to those subject-object formulations which in their crudest and most misogynistic form limit sex solely to *Körper* and the male subjective penetration of a female object, an all too common trope in the history of philosophy, religion, and science. Derrida again writes,

Whether it be a matter of neutralization, negativity, dispersion, or distraction (*Zerstreuung*), indispensable motifs here [in Heidegger’s *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*], following Heidegger, for posing the question of sexuality, it is necessary to *return to Sein und Zeit*. Although sexuality is not there named, its motifs are treated

¹⁸⁸ Derrida, “Geschlecht: sexual difference, ontological difference,” 65. My emphasis.

in a more complex fashion, more differentiated, which does not mean, on the contrary, in an easier or more facile manner.¹⁸⁹

In this final section of “Heidegger on Being Dasein” we shall follow Derrida in turning to this text written the year after *Being and Time*, the 1928 lecture course titled *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where Heidegger addresses some of the criticisms of his supposedly neutral analysis of Dasein. In a section within this text titled “The Problem of *Being and Time*,” Heidegger sets out several thought-provoking theses pertaining to the sexual neutrality of Dasein’s being:

The term “man” was not used for that being which is the theme of the analysis. Instead, the neutral term *Dasein* was chosen....The peculiar *neutrality* of the term “Dasein” is essential, because the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factual concretion. This neutrality also indicates that Dasein is neither of the two sexes. But here sexlessness is not the indifference of an empty void, the weak negativity of an indifferent ontic nothing. In its neutrality Dasein is not the indifferent nobody and everybody, but the primordial positivity and potency of the essence.... Neutrality is not the voidness of an abstraction, but precisely the potency of the *origin*, which bears in itself the intrinsic possibility of every concrete factual humanity.¹⁹⁰

Three times Heidegger repeats that neutrality is *not* indifference; instead he goes on to suggest that neutrality is rather what allows for there to be difference as such. At least three times Heidegger repeats Dasein’s being “neither of the two sexes” is not something negative, not a void, not nothing, but instead “the primordial positivity and potency of the essence” or “the potency of the origin.” As we see in the following exchange with Boss, Heidegger appears to have stood by this rather esoteric account of the origins of sexuality into the final decade of his life:

Medard Boss: Why has it been so impossible for all psychologists, including Freud, to determine the essence of masculinity and femininity?

¹⁸⁹ Derrida, “Geschlecht: sexual difference, ontological difference”, 79-80.

¹⁹⁰ *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 136-137.

Martin Heidegger: This is due to man's innate blindness for the unfolding [historical] essence.¹⁹¹

But here we must ask: what is this original unfolding [historical] essence of sexuality, this essential unfolding of the sexual origin from which each sexual being supposedly departs? How does the sexual essentially unfold itself, according to Heidegger? In a passage that is crucial for our purposes, Heidegger writes,

As such, Dasein harbors the intrinsic possibility for being factually dispersed into bodiliness and thus into sexuality. The metaphysical neutrality of the human being, inmost isolated as Dasein, is not an empty abstraction from the ontic, a neither-nor; it is rather the authentic concreteness of the origin, the not-yet of factual dispersion. As factual, Dasein is, among other things, in each case dispersed in a body [*Leib*] and concomitantly, among other things, in each case disunited in a particular sexuality. "Dispersion," "disunity" sound negative at first, (as does "destruction"), and negative concepts such as these, taken ontically, are associated with negative evaluations. But here we are dealing with something else, with a description of the multiplication (not "multiplicity") which is present in every factually individuated Dasein as such. We are not dealing with the notion of a large primal being in its simplicity becoming ontically split into many individuals, but with the clarification of the intrinsic possibility of multiplication which, as we shall see more precisely, is present in every Dasein and for which embodiment presents an organizing factor.¹⁹²

By attending to Heidegger's insistence that "multiplicity belongs to being itself" and "embodiment presents an organizing factor" for the "possibility of multiplication [that is] present in every Dasein," we can conceive of modes of being-in-the-world other than those reified identities taken to be the only "normal" options available.¹⁹³ "Dasein is neither of the two sexes" not because Dasein is a disembodied subject but rather because there are more than two concrete ways in which Dasein can come to own, disown, or remain indifferent to its bodily being. Theorists studying gender find an unexpected ally in Heidegger's fundamental ontology of Dasein's fundamentally openness to the world, allowing us to

¹⁹¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 167.

¹⁹² *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 137-138.

¹⁹³ *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 138.

reconceive sex, gender, and sexuality without reducing these fundamentally open structural dimensions of being-in-the-world to nature or necessity. As Heidegger points out, explanations of sexuality often arbitrarily privilege one form of sexuality over others, such that the multiplication inherent in each Dasein is “pushed” in one direction, for instance, into conceiving of sex as no more than biological reproduction:

But this basic metaphysical characteristic of Dasein can never be deduced from the species-like organization, from living with one another. Rather, factual bodiliness and sexuality are in each case explanatory only—and even then only within the bounds of the essential arbitrariness of all explanation—to the extent that a factual Dasein’s being-with is pushed precisely into this particular factual direction, where other possibilities are faded out or remain closed.¹⁹⁴

The all too common explanations that Dasein must be either a man or a woman all carry an air of the arbitrary; as bodily beings, the possible ways in which we might exist with each other or with ourselves always outstrip and exceed those particular directions in which we find ourselves to have been pushed. Conceiving of Dasein’s sexuality in terms of multiplication rather than division allows us to reconceive of sexuality as neither an either-or nor a neither-nor, but rather as being an event that unfolds itself in a potentially unique manner for each of us at a given time in our lives. Understanding Heidegger’s point in this manner brings him in closer proximity to the thought of Merleau-Ponty, who writes, “To have a body is possess a universal setting, a schema of all types of perceptual unfolding.”¹⁹⁵ This pre-heterosexualized experience of the body points to the open character of Dasein’s sexuality as polymorphous and capable of undergoing transformation, as never wholly reducible to just one of its sexual ecstases; from the settings of our bodies “all types” of perceptual worlds are capable of unfolding depending on the way each Dasein *is* this bodily

¹⁹⁴ *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 139.

¹⁹⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 144.

time and becomes *their* time by actively engaging with it. The neutralization of sexuality is not a neutering of difference as such, but rather involves the attempt to think through what it is to be sexual without merely recapitulating the already dominant interpretations of sexuality and the bodily.

It is crucial to note that Heidegger stipulates that we never actually find ourselves in this primordially neutral position in regards to sexuality; as Dasein I always already find myself existing concretely within determinate situations and embodied in quite particular ways:

Neutral Dasein is never what exists; Dasein exists in each case only in its factual concretion. But neutral Dasein is indeed the primal source of intrinsic possibility that springs up in every existence and makes it intrinsically possible.¹⁹⁶

As a sexual entity, I always already find myself as sexualized in some way or other just by virtue of being bodily, Heidegger thinks. But underlying this body which I may or may not say that “I have” is a “primal source of intrinsic possibility that springs up in every existence.” Within this context, I believe Heidegger’s project can help us to deconstruct and replace the many binaries at work in how we conceive of the three disparate categories of *sex*, which is primarily a biological matter generally marked by concern for the presence or absence of genitalia, breasts, and hair in and on the body, all predicates belonging to a determinate subject and thus not essentially applicable to Dasein; *gender*, which is primarily a psychological or cultural matter concerning the feminine and the masculine, a social matter regarding the degree to which one’s experience and presentation of oneself conforms to certain ideals and norms determined by one’s society, all predicates determined by the extent of our conformity to givens in the world and thus not essentially applicable to Dasein; and

¹⁹⁶ *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 137.

sexuality, which is primarily an experiential matter regarding the nature of one's (futural) desires and pleasures, particularly in relation to our interests in others. Along the lines of this model, a preliminary definition of *heteronormativity* might be any thought or action that assumes that there should be an equivalence between *sex*, *gender*, and *sexuality*, such as the classical corresponding heteronormative ideals that females ought to be feminine and desire men while males ought to be masculine and desire women. The Heideggerian point to be made about heteronormativity in general is that this model groundlessly presupposes that there ought to be an immediate and static linkage between one's thrownness into the world (our being-past), fallenness amidst the world (our being-present), and projection throughout the world (our being-futural); for Heidegger, each Dasein is capable of relating to each of these dimensions of its temporality by either owning up to it, disowning it, or remaining indifferent to it, such that my relation to my sex, gender, and sexuality unfolds itself in time in a way that may essentially differ from how sexuality unfolds in time for others. Although Heidegger does not make this specific threefold distinction between sex, gender, and sexuality in his writings, I am suggesting that there *is* a tripartite distinction within *Being and Time* that provides the ontological underpinnings for contemporary discussions of sex, gender, and sexuality, especially to the extent that these three categories are understood as standing in relation to but essentially outside one of another as ecstatic dimensions of an underlying phenomenon we ambiguously call "the sexual." Our "being-in as such," as we have seen, is determined by past, present, and future, and here this means that sex is determined by facticity and thrownness, gender is determined by ambiguity amid fallen

everydayness, and sexuality is existential projection and “the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding.”¹⁹⁷

It bears noting that this tripartite distinction of past, present, and future corresponds to the three distinct conceptions of the body that we discussed in the previous section: First, *Körper* refers to “the body” as it is corpse-like. To conceive of the body as no more than *Körper* is to one-sidedly reduce sex, gender, and sexuality to the past temporal ecstatic dimension of biological sex. Along the lines of this dimension the body is conceived as being fully actual in its presence, existing without possibility. Second, *Leib* refers to “the lived body” as alive and living-in-the-world. To conceive of the body as both *Körper* and *Leib* is to acknowledge that gender and sex intersect through our present experience of the world. Along the lines of this dimension the body as being the site of ambiguity, existing as both actuality and possibility, as relation between the present and the past. And third, *leiben* refers to “bodying” as the being of *Leib*. Along the lines of this dimension, bodying is that ecstatic lived phenomenon where sex, gender, and their interaction can be reconceived along the lines of futural and potentially unforeseeable possibilities. When bodily existence is conceived ecstatically and temporally as ecstatic relations within and between the past, present and future, we begin to discern the structures of *Dasein*'s body, rather than the sort of body that can be said to belong to a subject or an object, according to its ways of bodying and being-in-the-world. To speak of the body as if everyone always already had one is to overlook the process of what Salamon has referred to as the lived, ongoing, and transformational process of “assuming a body,” a process Heidegger rethinks on the basis of the full temporal being of the body, which, as we have seen, Heidegger calls “bodying.”

¹⁹⁷ *Being and Time*, 188-189.

Given the foregoing analysis of Heidegger's understanding of the body, it is clear that one crucial issue for Heidegger throughout his entire philosophical trajectory pertains to how we employ and comprehend basic prepositions, such as "in." In fact, we might say that Heidegger has a borderline obsession with how his use of prepositions should be interpreted. Heidegger's fixation on the meanings words denoting the relations *between* subjects and predicates is a direct consequence of the centrality of the question of being. On the first day of the semester in a typical Logic class, the very enterprise gets off the ground by directing the student's attention away from the copula binding subjects and "their" objective predicates within each logical proposition, direct all focus instead to the relations amongst sentences or between subjects and predicates. By the end of the first day of Logic, students have already effectively been taught to overlook, if not forget, any questions pertaining to the unclarified verbal sense of being at work in the copula; indeed, it is this unclarified meaning of being which allows for us to accept as self-evident the assumption of a subject and its predicates in "simple" sentences such as "It is raining" and "The sky is blue."¹⁹⁸ In the introduction to the 1934 *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, aptly titled "Structure, Origin, Meaning, and Necessary Shaking Up of Logic," Heidegger notes that "logic determines grammar, and grammar determines logic, up to the present day."¹⁹⁹ If logic and grammar determine each other, we must attend to the grammar of seemingly simple sentences such as "I am a woman" or "I am a man." Here I suggest that Heidegger's tripartite account of ecstatic temporality can be fruitfully employed in service of an understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality that gives voice not only to the essential interrelationships and differences between these concepts and realities, but also to a wider range of sexed,

¹⁹⁸ *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, 1ff.

¹⁹⁹ *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, 4.

gendered, and sexual experiences and identities than has been traditionally rendered possible by the conceptual schemas of mind-body and nature-culture so predominant within the history of metaphysics.

According to Heidegger, “Real metaphysical generalization does not exclude *concreteness*, but is in one respect the most concrete, as Hegel had seen, though he exaggerated it.”²⁰⁰ Each in their own way, Hegel and Heidegger attempt to trace the contours of a pervasive temporal trajectory that undergirds and motivates the realm within which seemingly concrete subjects and objects first come into play. Metaphysics, understood as “the history that we are,” involves neither a lofty fleeing from social-political realities nor a simple affirmation of the status-quo, but rather a recognition that what presents itself in immediacy is always the effect of a process that exceeds the possibilities of particular subjectivities and objectivities.²⁰¹ Thus metaphysicians must strive for a neutrality that is indifferent to the particularity of individual subjects, Heidegger believes, but this need not imply an eschewal of ethics altogether. Heidegger notes that it is only within “the domain of the metaphysics of existence” that “the question of an ethics may be properly raised for the first time.”²⁰²

An understanding of what Heidegger calls Dasein’s “essential tendency towards closeness” can be deepened by recognizing that what constitutes existential closeness is conceived differently depending on one’s age, gender, race, nationality, and other factors.²⁰³ Recognizing these differences also leads us to consider the fact that not every Dasein is

²⁰⁰ *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 140.

²⁰¹ *Nietzsche: Vol. 3*, 20. See especially Iain Thomson’s helpful discussion of this formulation in the opening chapter of *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*.

²⁰² *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 17.

²⁰³ *Being and Time*, 140.

equally capable of actively and decidedly “making farness vanish”; rather, if the world is already “structured around hierarchical and exclusionary discursive practices,” as Aho points out, then bringing-close is often primarily a matter of closing-off rather than the opening-up that Heidegger’s texts so often privilege.²⁰⁴

In the case of the normal subject, a body is not perceived merely as any object; this objective perception has within it a more intimate perception: the visible body is subtended by a sexual schema, which is strictly individual, emphasizing the erogenous areas, outlining a sexual physiognomy, and eliciting the gestures of the masculine body which is itself integrated into the emotional totality.²⁰⁵

Salamon points out that this account of the sexual schema is gestural and individual, rather than categorically one (“presumptively masculine”) or two (“parsed between masculine and feminine or male and female”).²⁰⁶ Merleau-Ponty does appear here to move away from conceiving of sexuality and gender along the line of binary categories, and toward a spectrum of multiple individual possibilities that are always revealed and actualized in concretely specific circumstances. Yet, in the very same sentence, he problematically invokes the categories of “the normal subject” and “the masculine body,” inadvertently implying that the “normal” subject is either masculine, feminine, or some other individual manifestation of the sort of identities that can show up on *that* spectrum. The model of a spectrum or continuum allows for infinite variation and is thus better suited for ambiguity, difference, and complexity than is a binary model. But even here the idea of variation presupposes a standard, and it makes no sense to speak of a spectrum without presupposing the existence of polar categories between which there can be said to be many between cases. Rather than insist on the existence of many possible takes on a singular sexual schema – as if everyone

²⁰⁴ Aho, *Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body*, 51.

²⁰⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 180.

²⁰⁶ Salamon, *Assuming a Body*, 48-49.

could line up together, as if difference were a matter of mere degree instead of real categorical identification – Merleau-Ponty’s above claim is more modest. Not only are there different strokes for different folks, but what counts as a stroke differs for each folk, depending on the schema of my sexuality, the timing of my situation, and the way I am, have been, and expect to be approached by the other, whose sexual schema(s) might always outstrip what I imagine to be properly “sexual.” Following Freud (and Heidegger, too), Merleau-Ponty insists that neither sexuality nor gender are to be located in the corporeal entity’s genitalia, but rather in how our past shapes our present and how our present is individualized by the sexual desire of a future to come. The bodily phenomena of sexuality come about on the basis of time; the most significant features of our bodily existence refer to the ways in which we find ourselves stretched between the various tensions of past, present, and future. To understand our bodies on this model is to reinterpret the being of the bodily on the basis of its temporal character: bodying, a concept Heidegger develops in detail in his lectures on Nietzsche.

3. Bodying with Nietzsche

3.1 Nietzsche's inversion of Plato

Critics of Heidegger tend to position his reluctance to discuss the body in terms of his critique of Descartes, but it is more revealing to understand Heidegger's hesitations with respect to his longstanding confrontation with Nietzsche, whose metaphysics attempts to overturn not only the mind-body dualism of Cartesianism but also its deeper ontological roots in the otherworldly metaphysics of Platonism. Nietzsche famously attempts to overturn the Western philosophical devaluation of the body, with its disembodied selves and truths and gods, by affirming throughout his writings his belief that we *are* our bodies. Nietzsche genealogically traces these metaphysical tales of disembodiment back to their source, which he identifies as the ascetic, life-denying, other-worldly philosophy of Plato. To the extent that the body indeed refers to the entity that we are, Heidegger agrees with Nietzsche's suggestion that the history of philosophy since Plato "is merely an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding* of the body." Heidegger disagrees, however, with the sensuous-bodily metaphysics that Nietzsche stakes out in its place.²⁰⁷ On Heidegger's account, such a directly oppositional inversion of Platonism will always have one foot firmly planted in Platonism, Heidegger thinks, such that Nietzsche's thinking is susceptible to falling prey to the very nihilism it opposes. Yet, at the same time, Heidegger also believes that Nietzsche takes an effective step in the right direction by way of bringing Platonism to its logical conclusion, not only completing that historical epoch but also issuing forth the agenda for another.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 34.

²⁰⁸ My interpretation of the role of Nietzsche in Heidegger's history of being is grounded in Iain Thomson's innovative reading of "ontotheology" in chapters one and two of *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, and chapters one

In this sense, we will see that Nietzsche plays a fundamentally ambiguous role in Heidegger's history of being, which demonstrates itself by way of two dueling yet intertwined interpretations of this Nietzschean philosophical agenda that Heidegger sets forth in his reading, such that for Heidegger the only path out of nihilism must first proceed through nihilism itself. This effectively means for our purposes that to develop a genuinely post-Nietzschean or postmodern account of our bodily nature we must proceed through the passages of Nietzsche's nihilistic reduction of the body to its ontic, biological and physiological functions on our way toward an ontological account of our bodily existence. It is in the *Nietzsche* lectures, I would argue, where Heidegger for the first time begins to describe our embodiment ontologically, which he does in poetic yet philosophically rich and revealing ways through a double reading of the Nietzschean concepts of "life," "rapture," and "chaos." Even though to date these lectures are for the most part forgotten in secondary literature on this topic, we will see that Heidegger's rethinking of these Nietzschean motifs offer thought-provoking clues for rethinking our bodily being-in-the-world in a way that resists falling prey to physiologically reductionist interpretations of the phenomena. Because the biological and physiological presuppositions sometimes attenuating Nietzsche's thinking leave it susceptible to presupposing an unclarified interpretation of the very ontological dimension of our bodies that Nietzsche seeks to genealogically unmask, it is crucial for Heidegger to clarify the extent to which Platonic neglect of the body remains effectively in play even in Nietzsche's most direct affirmations of his body. The move with and beyond Nietzsche thus involves for Heidegger the unearthing of the being of the entity that Nietzsche

and seven of *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*. For a more thorough account of Heidegger's understanding of historical epochs and the centrality of Nietzsche therein, see especially *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 52-57, and *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 7-39.

takes to be all that there is, the body, by way of an ontological elaboration of the structures of this bodily entity that are overlooked by Nietzsche, which is to say, those of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Heidegger names this ontological dimension of the body, reconceived in hindsight of the analysis of Dasein's being-in-the-world, "bodying" (*Leiben*), a name that is not identical to the body but always already essentially related to it as being the *being* of the body, which is to say the *bodying* of a body. This concept refers to the ontological and temporal dimensions of our embodiment, but in a way that Heidegger thinks is distinct from previous conceptions in the history of being. To consider together the danger and the promise of Nietzsche's bodily and perspectival ontology it is most fruitful to conceive of the Nietzschean epoch within this contextual history of being.

The names "Plato" and "Platonism" denote for Nietzsche an ascetic, life-denying understanding of things whereby "the highest values devalue themselves," and he defines the way this devaluation of life occurs as "nihilism."²⁰⁹ One revealing way to understand this history of nihilism as Nietzsche sees it is in terms of his "large view" of philosophy that he provokingly explains in *The Gay Science*:

The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes to frightening lengths – often I have asked myself whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body and a misunderstanding of the body.²¹⁰

Nietzsche's insight here is profound, and perhaps even more so considering its proximity to Heidegger's conception of the history of being. Nietzsche's implicit call for a different interpretation of bodies and thereby a different philosophy altogether is strikingly similar to Heidegger's quite central position that the history of philosophy should be understood in its

²⁰⁹ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 9.

²¹⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 34.

singularity as a repetitive failure to properly conceive of the entity that we each are. The difference, we will see, is that Heidegger wants us to analyze and interpret this entity in its relation to being, which is also to say time, while Nietzsche nihilistically asserts that being is ultimately nothing and that time is best understood in terms of a theory of eternity, a pair of beliefs demonstrating once again Nietzsche's ambiguous ties to Platonism.

3.2 Nietzsche as the pivot of the history of being

As we will see nearing our approach to the end of this chapter, despite the many shifts and changes amongst and between epochs, Heidegger and Nietzsche (like Hegel before them) regard the entire history of philosophy in a singular manner as caught up within the same context of intelligibility, which since Plato has determined our understandings of what it means for something to be.²¹¹ Within this singular history, our understanding of being stabilizes itself for stretches of time, often measures measured out in centuries if not millennia. Following Thomson, we can productively think of these historical epochs and contexts of intelligibility as "ontotheologies."²¹² The stability of an individual ontotheology can be discerned in the longstanding beliefs shared among a set of thinkers within a proximately given period.²¹³ According to Heidegger, what provides stability and cohesion to each epoch is the shared understanding of being underlying its problems and disputes. Despite the obvious disparities among thinkers in every generation, there remain deep similarities among the dominant trends determining each thinker's understanding of being. In

²¹¹ Why not "ever since the pre-Socratics?" Because Nietzsche and Heidegger each believe that it is Platonism that has determined our history of being and that the pre-Socratic fragments serve as subterranean and thought-provoking clues for thinking being otherwise than Platonism.

²¹² Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 7-11.

²¹³ Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 25.

fact, it is also thanks to these shared epochal commonalities that we can think of philosophy's history as a successive narration of dialogues and missed connections.

What ties together each stretch of historic time into a singular epoch, Heidegger thinks, is a given era's shared presuppositions regarding the nature of being and time, which is to say, that epoch's undergirding ontology and theology. Being and time are interpreted differently across history, but in a singular manner such that we can discern overlapping similarities among the conceptual couplings which dominate the philosophical agenda for a time. Constantly in his many readings of the history of philosophy, Heidegger seeks to unearth the interdependency of unclarified ontological and theological presuppositions at work in the texts. This leads Heidegger to understand the history of being as a stretching forward of conceptual conflicts springing forth primarily from a Platonist wellspring, such as the philosophical contradictions that appear to emerge when understanding being in conjunction with time, or essence with existence, or content with form, or the immanent with the transcendent, or, as we will soon see in the case of the Nietzschean ontotheology, when we attempt to think will-to-power with eternal recurrence.²¹⁴ When philosophers understand being and time according to the history of metaphysics rather than *Being and Time*, Heidegger believes that in each instance they inevitably pursue their philosophical projects oblivious to the underlying and intertwined ontological and theological presuppositions guiding not only their philosophical beliefs and conclusions but, more important to Heidegger, also guiding the very methods that set them to work. The articulation of a line of questioning always already betrays a certain lineage demonstrating that the supposedly autonomous existence of the question makes sense only along the lines of lines of

²¹⁴ See Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, especially 11-23.

questioning drawn long ago, for different purposes than our own. As Heidegger will soon point out, we remain guided by Platonist presuppositions regarding the highest and the realest even when we attempt to invert this picture by revaluating what Platonism in its many forms has always devalued.

Within his all-inclusive philosophical history (an apparently classical German philosophical gesture) Heidegger tends to read philosophical texts with a knack for drawing out what is present there in the texts despite their being constantly overlooked or otherwise forgotten. Following Heidegger, Thomson points out that at any given time in history certain general theoretical and methodological trends emerge in which we can discern overriding similarities in how philosophers go about ontology, understood according to its traditional concept as a study of what there is in its entirety, and theology, as traditionally conceived to be a study of the highest being that there is. Heidegger explicitly makes this position clear with the title and content of his 1957 lecture, “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics:”

When metaphysics thinks of beings with respect to the ground that is common to all beings as such, then it is logic as onto-logic. When metaphysics thinks of beings as such as a whole, that is, with respect to the highest being which accounts for everything, then it is logic as theo-logic. Because the thinking of metaphysics remains involved in *the difference which as such is unthought*, metaphysics is both ontology and theology, by virtue of *the unifying unity of perdurance*.²¹⁵

The unthought is not reducible to what is forgotten, marginalized, or silenced in a text, but refers instead to an overwhelming positivity which gives way to the thinking itself. “The unthought is the greatest gift that thinking can bestow,” Heidegger says.²¹⁶ The point often missed in this context, but clarified at length in both *Heidegger on Ontotheology* and

²¹⁵ *Identity and Difference*, 70-71. My emphasis.

²¹⁶ *What is Called Thinking?*, 76.

Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity, is that the unifying feature overriding those intergenerational differences that sometimes make philosophy feel like little more than battlefields is to be found in the implicit and undergirding unification and inextricable interlinking of a given era's ontology and theology. As Heidegger will explain this essential ingredient to Heidegger's unique understanding of philosophy's history, what Nietzsche refers to as "nihilism," then, must be understood in relation to this ontotheological history. Breaking this history down as simply as we can while remaining within the Nietzschean worldview, we might pay heed to the following two mutually reinforcing and legitimizing theses: First, theologically, the history of nihilism acts itself out concretely by way of the "frightening lengths" philosophers continuously travel in their affirmation of "the objective, ideal, purely spiritual" which, despite the definite historical differences among such concepts, always appears to conceive of the highest in a manner that disguises the ontological truths of the situation. Second, at each stage of philosophy's history the dominant understanding of what is most high parallels and reinforces that period's ontology, which, despite the obvious appearance of internal conflicts therein, is for our purposes best conceived in its singular failure to interpret and understand the body on its own basis.

When we begin to see this singularity of thought undergirding the Western denial of embodiment, it becomes increasingly apparent that the being of the body is invariably understood within this history of ontology in contradistinction from a theological term that always seems to denote something that appears solely to us in its invisible and permanent presence – and thus bearing qualities not unlike common traits attributed to God – such as the mind, spirit, soul, subject, or some combination of these, whom we generally take ourselves to most truly be. Nietzsche believes that all preceding philosophy up to but not including his

own (again, an apparently classical German philosophical gesture) share in their ontological devaluation and denigration of the bodies that present themselves to us in nature, including most importantly our own. Ontotheology in this context thus refers to the unique way, already partially discerned here by Nietzsche and developed in relation to the question of being for the first time by Heidegger, in which philosophy's theology historically serves the purpose of concealing the phenomena most proper to philosophy's ontology, all while legitimating itself as the sole invisible and eternal measure of value against which inevitably inferior bodies must take their lowly position down the hierarchical chain. It is we who produce those theological ideologies which prohibit a more careful ontological query into our bodily nature. As Nietzsche describes this historical concealment in his early essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,"

Does nature not conceal most things from him—even concerning his own body—in order to confine and lock him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers! She threw away the key.²¹⁷

If we understand Heidegger's structural history of being as ontotheology in the sense of a mutually reinforcing concealment between the *ontos* and the *theos* of our *logos*, then this should remind us of Marx's philosophy of history. The proximity between the two historians should of course be no surprise given Heidegger's uncharacteristically wholly positive remark regarding another thinker when he embraces Marx in his "Letter on Humanism:"

Because Marx by experiencing estrangement attains an essential dimension of history, the Marxist view of history is superior to that of other historical accounts.²¹⁸

If we accept Heidegger's history of ontotheology as sketched above and developed further by Thomson, then we can begin to make sense of how and why the true nature of our

²¹⁷ Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," 80.

²¹⁸ "Letter on Humanism," 243.

ontological bodily being is historically concealed in life-denying ways by corresponding theologies, which, at every juncture in philosophy's history, conceive of the highest possible being as that which is most disembodied, and of disembodiment as the highest ideal toward which we should strive. By considering Heidegger's history of being as ontotheology, we can discern the true import of Nietzsche's contentious view of the history of philosophy as perhaps little more than a misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the body.

It is only from the vantage point of "taking a large view" historically that we can discern the true meaning of the effects of nihilism by reference to their historical origins in Plato. On Nietzsche's reading, the figure of Socrates inaugurates a way of life whereby "despisers of the body" decry their own finitude and seek salvation and validation in a time to come only after death. This is how we see Socrates portrayed, for example, in texts such as

Twilight of the Idols:

Socrates *wanted* to die: -- Athens did not give him the poisoned drink, he took it *himself*, he forced Athens to give it to him... 'Socrates is no doctor', he said quietly to himself: 'death is the only doctor here...Socrates was only sick for a long time....'²¹⁹

We might identify this sickness as being at work in *Phaedo*'s arguments for the immortality of the soul, for example, which through an especially sharp Nietzschean lens might be seen more critically as a dying man's ironic attempt to deny the body at precisely the moment the body is denying him, a denial of bodily death which is also always already denial of bodily life, a defining element of what we are here with Nietzsche and Heidegger calling Platonism.

Nietzsche's thinking constitutes the end of Platonic metaphysics in the twofold sense that it represents its ultimate fulfillment and in the sense that every end is already a new beginning. His philosophy thus serves as the pivot of Western thought in the same sense that

²¹⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, 166.

a basketball player pivots, with one foot firmly positioned in its previous place and the other free to move about in search of better possibilities. Heidegger attempts to think both with and against Nietzsche – against Nietzsche’s own nihilistic gestures, but nonetheless with Nietzsche in recognizing that we are living in a pivotal time that requires a radical rethinking of what it means to be a human being. At each step of his Nietzsche interpretation we can discern Heidegger attempting to perform this ambiguous double reading of Nietzsche’s texts. On the one hand,

[W]hat is decisive for the *essence* of metaphysics is by no means the fact that the designated distinction is formulated as the opposition of the suprasensuous to the sensuous realm, but the fact that this distinction—in the sense of the yawning gulf between the realms—remains primary and all sustaining. The distinction persists even when the Platonic hierarchy of the suprasensuous and sensuous is inverted and the sensuous realm is experienced more essentially and more thoroughly—in the direction Nietzsche indicates with the name *Dionysus*.²²⁰

Acknowledging and embracing our bodily nature does nothing to address the problem so long as we continue to imagine a “yawning gulf” to exist between body and soul. On the other hand,

What is needed is neither abolition of the sensuous nor abolition of the nonsensuous. On the contrary, what must be cast aside is the misinterpretation, the deprecation, of the sensuous, as well as the extravagant elevation of the supersensuous. A path must be cleared for a new interpretation of the sensuous on the basis of a new hierarchy of the sensuous and nonsensuous. The new hierarchy does not simply wish to reverse matters within the old structural order, now reverencing the sensuous and scorning the nonsensuous. It does not wish to put what was at the very bottom on the very top. A new hierarchy and new valuation mean that the ordering *structure* must be changed.²²¹

At this juncture Heidegger finds in Nietzsche *not* merely an inversion or reversal of the mind’s precedence over the body, but rather a radical interruption or deconstruction of this very dichotomy such that a new hierarchy may come into fruition. As Heidegger understands

²²⁰ Nietzsche: Vol. 2, 230.

²²¹ Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 209.

Nietzsche's project here, the post-nihilistic distinction is no longer between the sensuous and the mental or the spiritual, but between the sensuous and the nonsensuous. It is in this sense that Heidegger thinks "the ordering *structure* must be changed." What we need, according to Heidegger, is a new distinction for the body, a new term other than "the soul" against which we can carve out a new sense and value for our bodies. This is largely what Heidegger attempts to do in a preliminary fashion throughout the four volumes of his *Nietzsche* lectures.

3.3 Nietzsche on the body

Before turning to Heidegger's unique interpretation of Nietzsche's claim that all that we have is bodily, it is instructive to recall some of the passages where Nietzsche appears to take this position. To begin, the reading of Nietzsche sketched above as an inversion of Plato is explicitly and unequivocally confirmed by he himself in one of his earliest notebooks from 1870 when he states, "My philosophy is an *inverted Platonism*."²²² In other notebooks from this same time we already find Nietzsche calling for the philosopher to become a "cultural physician" who "opposes hatred of the body."²²³ The primacy of physicality is clearly at work throughout Nietzsche's first published work, the 1872 *Birth of Tragedy*, where dance and song become the primary means for uncovering "the mysterious primordial unity" that remains concealed from us to the extent that we remain alienated from our bodies.²²⁴

Referring to the Dionysian dithyramb, a choral song sung by the original cult of Dionysus, Nietzsche writes,

²²² Nietzsche, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, 52.

²²³ Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth*, 73.

²²⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 18.

The essence of nature is bent on expressing itself; a new world of symbols is required, firstly the symbolism of the entire body, not just of the mouth, the face, the word, but the full gesture of dance with its rhythmical movement of every limb.²²⁵

In the dancer the ordinarily conspicuous expressions of individual body parts become integrated into the significance of the entire figure of a bodily unity dancing. Current symbolic systems hide and forget this primordial Dionysiac bodily dance, Nietzsche argues, but he sees promise in music and dance as bringing these dimensions back to life.²²⁶ Through dance we find the individual human being in its holistic character as a unified bodily activity which by its very movement overcomes “the popular and entirely false opposition of soul and body.”²²⁷ Likewise music transposes us to its world, letting us see ourselves on its terms as “rhythm, dynamics, and harmony.”²²⁸ Nietzsche’s Dionysian fascination with dance and song emerges out of his desire to overcome the same old song and dance of fundamentally Apollonian forces denying the sensuous and the temporary in favor of the orderly and systematic. Nietzsche defines “the character of Dionysian music (and thus of music generally)” as “the power of its sound to shake us to our very foundations, the unified stream of melody and the quite incomparable world of harmony.”²²⁹ Del Caro succinctly summarizes the Nietzschean position here:

The body is the first thing, the closest incarnate, and yet due to the long tradition of denial of the senses supported by Platonism and Christianity, the body is unfortunately the least known, the least respected aspect of human being. This helps to explain why Nietzsche was immediately attracted to the Dionysian and never lost his fascination for it: the Dionysian is a cult based on the senses...²³⁰

²²⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21.

²²⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21.

²²⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 103.

²²⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21.

²²⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21.

²³⁰ Del Caro, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth*, 31-32.

Nietzsche's life-affirming reversal of philosophy's history thus consists in rethinking what has been denigrated by this tradition and raising it to its proper dignity.

It is with this goal in mind that he calls for a physiological approach to art and aesthetics, one that we find at play in his critique of Wagnerian music:

My objections to the music of Wagner are physiological objections; why should I trouble to dress them up in aesthetic formulas? My "fact" is that I no longer breathe easily once this music begins to affect me; that my foot soon resents it and rebels; my foot feels the need for rhythm, dance, march; it demands of music first of all those delights which are found in *good* walking, striding, leading, and dancing. But does not my stomach protest, too? My heart? My circulation? My intestines? Do I not become hoarse as I listen? And so I ask myself: What is it that my whole body really expects of music? I believe, its own *ease*: as if all animal functions should be quickened by easy, bold, exuberant, self-assured rhythms; as if iron, leaden life should be gilded by good golden and tender harmonies."²³¹

Just as the dancer gives voice to Nietzsche's "mysterious primordial unity" by virtue of its "symbolism of the entire body," while listening to music we belong with our whole body to an encounter with the sound, which causes a movement within us that determines the pitch of our attunement to its tune, either by way of variously drawing us in or thrusting us away from what emerges out of the song as it is played. Listening to music does not take the form of a listening subjective apprehending objective sound waves but rather, if understood from the perspective of Dasein rather than the thinking objective subject, is a form of ecstatic bodily existence that is performative and therefore potentially transformative. We will return to this physiological manner of aesthetic evaluation below, as it is in part Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's aesthetics that leads him beyond Nietzsche toward formulating his own conception of the body in its bodying. On Nietzsche's own reading, these affirmations of the body must be understood as inversions of Platonism.

²³¹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 325.

Nietzsche's inversion of Platonism affirms what has been denied – and what in Plato is denied more than the bodily? – as we find throughout Nietzsche's texts. "The abdomen is the reason why man does easily take himself for a god."²³² In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's protagonist characterizes the Übermensch, Nietzsche's fictional role model for humanity who in a word teaches us to strive to become "more than human" rather than remaining "human all too human," as the bridge to "a higher body" that "speaks the meaning of the earth."²³³ In a passage of central importance for our purposes here, Zarathustra also claims that "the awakened, the knowing one says: body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something on the body."²³⁴ Zarathustra continues,

Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a powerful commander, an unknown wise man – he is called self. He lives in your body, he is your body. There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom. And who knows then to what end your body requires precisely your best wisdom?²³⁵

Finally, we might conclude this brief synopsis of Nietzsche's account of the body with three late notes that appear in *The Will to Power*:

Essential: to start from the *body* and employ it as a guide. It is the much richer phenomenon, which allows of clearer observation. Belief in the body is better established than belief in the soul.²³⁶

Nietzsche's call here to "employ the body as a guide" might serve as an early forerunner to what becomes known as phenomenology of the body after Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.²³⁷

²³² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

²³³ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 22.

²³⁴ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 23.

²³⁵ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 23.

²³⁶ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 289.

²³⁷ In this context I'm reminded of another remark from Nietzsche's early notebooks: "The properties of things considered in themselves are no concern of ours; we are concerned with them only to the extent that they affect us...The overwhelming human consensus regarding things proves the complete homogeneity of men's perceptual apparatus." Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth*, 37.

These methodological remarks regarding the body are sprinkled throughout his writings; one in particular perhaps summarizes his position regarding the body:

The phenomenon of the body is the richer, clearer more tangible phenomenon: to be discussed first, methodologically, without coming to any decision about its significance.²³⁸

Nietzsche's methodological requirement that we attempt to bring out the richness of the body "without coming to any decision about its significance" again remarkably parallels Heidegger's stated intention to "bring out the being of [Dasein], without interpreting its meaning."²³⁹ With one final word from Nietzsche on the body, let us consider a third passage from *Will to Power*, a portion of which Heidegger will quote in his *Zollikon Seminars*. I have italicized the portion omitted from Heidegger's manuscript to begin to make clear the distinction between the "good" Nietzsche Heidegger embraces and the "bad" Nietzsche that propels Heidegger to think differently than Nietzsche about the body:

*The human body, in which the most distant past and most recent past of all organic development again becomes living and corporeal, through which and over and beyond which a tremendous stream seems to flow: the body is a more astonishing idea than the old "soul."*²⁴⁰

Perhaps we should not be surprised that Heidegger accepts the idea that the body is more astonishing than the soul; as we saw at the outset of the dissertation and will see again when we get to *Zollikon*, Heidegger confesses that for him "the bodily is the most difficult."²⁴¹ And perhaps it is equally unsurprising that Heidegger would also distance himself from the apparent reduction of human bodily being to ontologically unclear categories such as the "organic," the "living," and the "corporeal." If we do not have a body in the ordinary sense of

²³⁸ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 270.

²³⁹ *Being and Time*, 38.

²⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 347-348.

²⁴¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, 230.

these terms, though, how are we to describe our bodily comportment towards the world? A specifically Heideggerian account of the way in which the body comes into being, the very process whereby we become the bodily beings that we are, can be discerned via the double reading of Nietzsche at work in Heidegger's *Nietzsche* lectures.

3.4 Living as bodying

According to Heidegger, "We live as we body," which is to say, "We live, in that we body" (*Wir leben, indem wir leiben*).²⁴² He utters this thought-provoking phrase in many places throughout his later writings including the *Heraclitus Seminar*, *Zollikon Seminars*, *Interpretation of Nietzsche's Second Untimely Meditation*, and a couple of instances in the *Nietzsche* lectures.²⁴³ The play on words between life (*leben*) and body (*leiben*) seems clear enough until we notice the grammatical positioning of the body as a verb rather than a noun. The most direct translation is probably "We live as we body," but similar renderings might be: "We live in that we are embodied," "We live in that we are bodying," and "We live as we body-forth." Heidegger also explains this interconnection between living and bodying in terms of life itself: "Life *bodies forth insofar as it lives; it lives insofar as it bodies forth*" (*Das leben leibt, indem es lebt; lebt indem es leibt*).²⁴⁴ As we will see in a moment in Krell's translation, he construes the phrase differently at one point in Heidegger's text as "we are some body who is alive." On this reading, to which we return in a moment, every somebody who is a someone is also at the same time just some body.

I have four reservations regarding Krell's translation of this phrase as "we are some body who is alive," a quick discussion of which will begin to clarify the phenomenon in

²⁴² *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99.

²⁴³ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99.

²⁴⁴ *Interpretations of Nietzsche's Second Untimely Meditation*, 204

question: *leben* as *leiben*. First, this translation problematically drops the verbal and temporal sense of bodying that Heidegger wishes to employ with the term *leiben* in contradistinction from *Leib*. As we will see, everything hinges for Heidegger on recognizing a fundamental difference between the body as an entity (*Leib*) and the being of this entity (*Leiben*). Second, this translation problematically drops the sense of the important conjunction *indem*, which is usually translated by “as” or as “by.” We know of course that prepositions matter greatly for Heidegger; without them we would have only being-the-world, rather than the analysis of their interaction as marked by the “in” that constitutes much of Heidegger’s historically grounded originality. It should be, “We live *as* we body” or “We live *by way of* our bodying.” Third, for Heidegger the human body is never just some body but rather is in each case mine, as indicated by the collective “we” (*wir*), which also drops out of this formulation. To describe my body by reference to it being just some body holds its own legitimacy in certain limited contexts, such as when I step onto a scale to calculate my weight or use a thermometer to calculate its temperature. But such reductionist readings of the body taken from a quantitative or third-person perspective fail to see the structures determining the being of this entity, for example in terms of the existentially lived experience of the me for whom that body is never just some body because “the” body is in each case mine. To say we are just some body that is alive sounds particularly odd given Heidegger’s repeated reminders that Dasein neither “is” nor “has” some body, and just as Heidegger affirms Kant’s position that being is not a predicate, Heidegger similarly would insist that life cannot be reduced to a “property,” even that of what we know to be a “lived” or “living” or “biological” body. My fourth and final reservation pertains to use of the word “somebody” as intended by Krell to denote the ecstatic ambiguous interplay at work between – what only casually or

anonymously we would ever refer to as with this use of “some” – “some body” and “someone.” We are of course already swimming in deep metaphysical waters by defining somebody as simultaneously a what and a who, a mine and a me, an object and a subject. Krell notes in a footnote his excellent reason for this perhaps jarring phrase: “Heidegger plays with the German expression *wie man lebt und lebt*, “the way somebody actually is,” and I have tried to catch the sense by playing on the intriguing English word “somebody.”²⁴⁵ But if the goal is refer to the way that *Dasein* actually is, referring to the human as somebody with some body is misleading because it misses out on the phenomenal content of our being-in-the-world.

Translation issues aside for the moment, we are now in good position to turn to the passage in question:

We are not first of all “alive,” only then getting an apparatus to sustain our living which we call “the body,” but we are some body who is alive [*Wir leben, indem wir leiben.*]. Our being embodied is essentially other than merely being encumbered with an organism. Most of what we know from the natural sciences about the body and the way it embodies are specifications based on the established misinterpretation of the body as a mere natural body. Through such means we do find out lots of things, but the essential and determinative aspects always elude our vision and grasp. We mistake the state of affairs even further when we subsequently search for the “psychical” which pertains to the body that has already been misinterpreted as a natural body.²⁴⁶

We should note Heidegger’s double reading at work in this passage. On the one hand, Heidegger affirms Nietzsche’s belief that we live as we body, but on the other hand, he refuses to accept the natural scientific interpretation of the body often taken for granted by Nietzsche. Heidegger opposes scientific approaches such as biology and psychology because what is most essential to human bodily phenomena cannot be directly observed, quantified,

²⁴⁵ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99.

²⁴⁶ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 99-100.

measured, or calculated. Such approaches produce innumerable results that often make the world a better place – Heidegger never questions that – but

Life lives in that it bodies forth. We know by now perhaps a great deal—almost more than we can encompass—about what we call the body, without having seriously thought about what *bodying* is.²⁴⁷

Not only do we overlook bodying; Heidegger’s claim is that we have not even thought about what bodying is. Whereas Nietzsche wonders “whether, taking a large view, philosophy [is] merely an interpretation of the body and a misunderstanding of the body,” we will continue to see that Heidegger sets himself precisely this task in the *Nietzsche* lectures: to reinterpret our bodies based on the lived temporal structures of bodying.²⁴⁸ As we will see, Heidegger explains that bodying is not the same as “carrying a body around with one”; instead, bodying is a word for

that in which everything that we ascertain in the body of a living thing first receives its own process-character. It may be that *bodying* is initially an obscure term, but it names something that is *immediately* and *constantly* experienced in the knowledge of living things, and it must be kept in mind.²⁴⁹

3.5 Bodying as chaotic

We previously saw that Nietzsche’s Dionysian fascination with dance and song emerges out of his desire to overcome the fundamentally Apollonian forces which deny the sensuous and the temporary in favor of the orderly and systematic. It is within this context that we should understand Nietzsche’s own understanding of chaos. Nietzsche makes two explicit references to chaos in *The Gay Science*; in the first he writes,

²⁴⁷ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 79.

²⁴⁸ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 34-35.

²⁴⁹ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 79.

The total character of the world, by contrast, is for eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called.²⁵⁰

On this reading, “chaos” does not pertain to disorderly or disorganized states of affairs within the world, but instead serves as a word for “the total character of the world... for eternity.” It is not simply that the world often is or seems chaotic for some of us; Nietzsche’s appeal to the “total” and “eternal” character of the world *as* chaos directs our attention to the character of the being of the world as such as being constituted by a lack. What does the world lack? Nietzsche insists that it lacks what we suppose ourselves to have contributed to it. The world, as understood in its total and eternal character, always already exceeds the categories and forms of experience that we attempt to impose upon it. Despite the pride with which we supposedly discover order within the chaos of the world, the world’s character, its way of being, remains for eternity in the same basic state of chaos; on Nietzsche’s reading, the order or form we find in the world is nothing more than a product of our own anthropomorphizing.

A central target of Nietzsche’s critique here is Kant’s transcendental philosophy. Whereas Kant’s transcendental aesthetic shows that all objects of our experience must conform to the pure forms of intuitions, space and time, Nietzsche insists that there is nothing within the form of our experience that guarantees that objects must be a certain way for us to apprehend them in the ways that we do. That Nietzsche is here criticizing Kant becomes especially clear in the second reference to chaos in the *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche gives us the following “parable:”

Parable. – Those thinkers in whom all stars move in cyclical orbits are not the deepest; he who looks into himself as into a vast space and bears galaxies within also

²⁵⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 109.

knows how irregular galaxies are; they lead into the chaos and labyrinth of existence.²⁵¹

Here we might contrast Kant's famous remark from the conclusion of his second *Critique*, inscribed on his tombstone:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe the more often and more enduringly reflection is occupied with them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.²⁵²

To seek and find some order in the "starry heavens above me" is a rather ordinary experience which has spurred many human beings over time to wonder about being: What *is* there? Put too simply, for Kant the basic experience of wonder led him to find something heavenly in the stars and someone responsible within himself. Kant's epitaph is not some kind of final insistence upon the primacy of cosmological and ethical concerns within philosophical discourse; instead the point is that, for him, reflection became self-reflecting and self-perpetuating most "enduringly" when he would reflect upon the overarching *logos* that binds together in an essential unity the *theological* structure of what is out there ("the starry heavens above me") along with the *ontological* structure of who we discover ourselves to most truly be ("the moral law within me"). In this famous remark, Kant effectively describes the essential movement of his thinking as involving theological awe corresponding to an ontological self-reflection wherein we begin to question who it is that we are; as being the kind of beings capable of finding order there, how shall we order our lives here? For Kant both questions are made possible by the fact that we discover ourselves to be in the world as beings whose very capacity for self-reflection catches us in a double bind between nature and freedom, such that we are always bound to being a certain way *and* also already bound to an

²⁵¹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 180.

²⁵² Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason*,

innate capacity for being different. The remark from Kant's epitaph thus serves as an essential summarized statement of his fundamental onto-theo-logical position.

Nietzsche's parable, conversely, accuses Kant's epitaph of shallowness. In direct contrast to Kant, Nietzsche argues that "truly deep thinkers" begin by looking into themselves and, recognizing the existence of multiple galaxies within oneself while also recalling the irregularity of galaxies within the universe, thereby become capable of an intergalactic or universal perspective from which there appears something absurd and arbitrary about our contingent capacities to discover circles and other orbital structures wherever we happen to look. Nietzsche says that truly deep thinkers are capable of bearing multiple galaxies within themselves while simultaneously recognizing that each of these gravitationally bound systems, which give weight to human being and make us be here in the ways that we are, are in fact quite irregular structures that find little bearing in things as they really stand. Nietzsche's parable tells of a way of looking that begins not with a gaze toward the starry heavens eventuating in a self-evident sense of absolute duty to be a certain way; rather, by beginning by looking within we bypass moral self-investigation in favor of reflection upon "the chaos and labyrinth of existence" as such. More precisely, it is not that we are led to merely reflect upon existence; Nietzsche points out that it is somehow the galaxies themselves which lead us into the chaos, such that we always already find ourselves as being of this chaos, of belonging to this chaotic labyrinth of the world rather than merely representing it in thought. With his parable Nietzsche aims to piss on the gravitas of Kant's philosophical project in more ways than one; whether it be Kant's grave moral sense of being an autonomous thinking subject, or Kant's basic acceptance of the Newtonian theory of gravity underpinning this same entity's status as a dependent physical object, or the way

these two dimensions of our being become intertwined in Kant's final reminder to look high up *and* deep within, Nietzsche thoroughly opposes Kant by suggesting that there is nothing ultimately "grave" regarding the awe-some and awe-full experience of thought thinking and potentially becoming its own being. For Nietzsche, the gravedigging work of genealogy shows instead that the "being" of a "body" comes about only by means of a historical series of "mistaken and arbitrary" misidentifications with external measures and appearances that are imposed from without and thus essentially foreign to this body's own essence:

The reputation, name, and appearance, the worth, the usual measure and weight of a thing – originally almost always something mistaken and arbitrary, thrown over things like a dress and quite foreign to their nature and even to their skin – has, through the belief in it and its growth from generation to generation, slowly grown onto and into the thing and has become its very body: what started as appearance in the end nearly always becomes essence and *effectively acts* as its essence.²⁵³

On this reading, bodies *become* male and female only by means of repeated generational "belief in it," of people essentially "buying it" and "wearing it" enough so consistently over time that it *becomes* natural to think of it as necessary and necessary to think of it as natural, despite neither being truly the case.

It is within this confrontation between Kant and Nietzsche that we should situate Heidegger's development of the concept of "chaos" as an ontological concept in Volume III of the *Nietzsche* lectures. Heidegger begins his discussion by zeroing in on a fragmented aphorism in *Will to Power* where Nietzsche appears to define his own conception of knowledge as a "schematizing" of chaos:

Will to power as *knowledge*, not 'to know' but to schematize, to impose upon chaos enough regularity and form to satisfy our practical needs.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 69-70.

²⁵⁴ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, aphorism 515.

Nietzsche invites us to think of knowledge differently, such that knowledge has nothing to do with knowing anything either about or on the basis of what there is, but instead has everything to do with the practical ways in which we cannot help but “satisfy our practical needs” by actively imposing regularity and form upon what there is. And what there is, as we have already seen above, when we understand “the total character of the world” as such, “is for eternity chaos.” Nietzsche thus refuses to accept Kant’s claim in the transcendental aesthetic that space and time are pure *a priori* forms of sensible intuition. Yet, as Heidegger points out, Nietzsche essentially follows Kant by continuing to conceive of knowledge as a kind of *schema*; just as Kant’s schematism in the first *Critique* tries to show that the categories of our understanding must be applicable to objects of sensation, Nietzsche’s remark in *Will to Power* appears to make a transcendental case of its own. Heidegger writes,

Obviously, there lies in Nietzsche’s determination of the essence of knowledge, as in the essential determinations that other thinkers—we are reminded of Kant—have posited about the essence of knowledge, a return to something that makes possible and supports that initial and for the most part familiar representing of an ordered and structured world. Thus the attempt is ventured—knowingly to get behind knowing. Knowing, understood as schematizing, is derived from practical life-needs and from chaos as the condition of the possibility and necessity of those needs.²⁵⁵

Over the course of his reading of Nietzsche Heidegger develops a concept of “chaos” as a name for “the concealment of unmastered richness in the becoming and streaming of the world as a whole.”²⁵⁶ Following Nietzsche rather than Kant, Heidegger notes that this “unmastered richness” is not something separate and apart from us; understanding knowing as schematizing rules out this possibility of separation in the first place. Instead, Heidegger makes the rather remarkable remark that, insofar as we are bodily beings, we ourselves *are* this excessive richness that Heidegger calls “chaos:”

²⁵⁵ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 74.

²⁵⁶ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 80.

If we thus venture a few steps in the direction indicated, behind, so to speak, what appears so harmlessly and quietly and conclusively to us as an object, such as this blackboard or any other familiar thing, we do meet up with the mass of sensations—chaos. It is what is nearest. It is so near that it does not even stand “next” to us as what is over against us, but we ourselves, as bodily beings, are it.²⁵⁷

Chaos not only surrounds us but, as bodily beings, Heidegger says, it constitutes our very being. We experience bodying “immediately and constantly such that bodying “is just as simple and just as obscure” as gravity, “though quite different and correspondingly more essential.”²⁵⁸ As Heidegger explains, “That chaos of our region of our sensibility which we know as the region of the body is only *one section* of the great chaos that the “world” itself is.”²⁵⁹ In a note from the same period Heidegger points to the active character of human bodily sensibility:

Sensibility seen only in a *Christian* way by Kant, i.e. on the basis of *thinking* and the latter taken as “spontaneity.” Thus sensibility merely “receptive.” Entirely wrong—the body is “active”...henceforth the body lives while configuring a world and creating in the empowerment of the essence.²⁶⁰

In style and tone Heidegger is perhaps here at his most Nietzschean, insisting that the living body is never merely a passive receptacle ensnared by the spectacle of nature but exists instead as an active figure out in the world that exists by way of figuring out that world.

If chaos is not something imposed from without onto our bodies, then in what sense *am* I chaos *as bodily*? Heidegger explicitly differentiates the modern meaning of chaos in Nietzsche (“the jumbled, the tangled, the pell-mell”) from the primordial Greek sense of *khaos* (“the gaping” which “points in the direction of a measureless, supportless, and

²⁵⁷ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 79.

²⁵⁸ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 79.

²⁵⁹ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 80.

²⁶⁰ *Ponderings II-VI: Black Notebooks 1931-1938*, 64.

groundless yawning open”).²⁶¹ Heidegger attempts to think the latter by thinking through Nietzsche’s conception back to its original Greek meaning. The neat distinction between order and chaos emerges only from the modern metaphysical picture of the world; chaos in this sense refers to the unordered “jumble of something in shambles.”²⁶² Writing at a time in 2018 when so much *is* in shambles, we must recall that this ordinary sense of chaos as the merely chaotic is not the sense employed by Heidegger; this common understanding of chaos is precisely what Heidegger invites us to think differently, which is to say, ontologically, at the heart of what it is to be bodily as a human being: “Chaos is the name for bodying life, life as bodying writ large....”²⁶³ As a word for bodily being, Heidegger stipulates that “chaos” refers to the ways in which we are pushed and pulled by various streams of the world:

“Chaos,” the world as chaos, means beings as a whole projected relative to the body and its bodying. In laying this foundation for world projection, everything decisive is included.... What is to be known and what is knowable is chaos, but we encounter chaos bodily, that is, in bodily states, chaos being included in these states and related back to them. We do not first simply encounter chaos in bodily states; but, living, our body bodies forth as a wave in the stream of chaos.²⁶⁴

Thinking bodying as wavelike allows us to rethink our physical nature and its physicality according to the original Greek sense of *phusis* as the temporal unfolding of the “ups and downs” of life, that continual process of getting up and going down that pertains not just to each day but to the entirety of bodily life as such. Heidegger even speculates that what he is here calling bodying could be the “most certain” truth of our existence and constitutive of what was formerly called “the soul:”

²⁶¹ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 77.

²⁶² Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 77.

²⁶³ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 80-82.

²⁶⁴ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 80-2.

Perhaps this body as it lives and bodies forth is what is “most certain” in us, more certain than “soul” and “spirit,” and perhaps it is this body and not the soul about which we say that it is “inspired.”²⁶⁵

Following Nietzsche, Heidegger believes we can understand our bodily being as the inspired-expiring of our bodily being and that we must attempt to think this “physical” character of Dasein without recourse to the existence of a soul which manages to linger before eventually passing. Heidegger reads Nietzschean chaos as a de-deification of the body which de-deifies not only by removing the soul from the equation *but also* by eliminating that appearance of an overarching godlessness which would supposedly remain after the Nietzschean death of god:

The most fundamental point to be made about Nietzsche’s notion of chaos is the following: only a thinking that is utterly lacking in stamina will deduce a will to godlessness from the will to a de-deification of beings. On the contrary, truly metaphysical thinking, at the outermost point of de-deification, allowing itself no subterfuge and eschewing all mystification, will uncover that path on which alone gods will be encountered—if they are to be encountered ever again in the history of mankind.²⁶⁶

Heidegger’s paradoxical formulation clearly raises more questions than answers, but his point seems to be that even within the chaos an encounter with something like “gods” remains a possibility to the extent that we remain meta-physical thinkers, which means to think *and* be of chaos, a word for the dynamic unfolding of bodily existence as such. The true teacher of what it means to belong to chaos, Heidegger and Nietzsche believe, is the artist.

3.6 Bodying and the rapture of art

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche summarizes his fundamental belief, if he can be said to have just one:

²⁶⁵ Nietzsche: Vol. 3, 79.

²⁶⁶ Nietzsche: Vol. 2, 94.

What do you believe in? – In this: that the weight of all things must be determined anew.²⁶⁷

But who teaches us *this* lesson and how is it *learned*? If not according to gravity, how are we to understand the “weight” of our bodily being? One important concept in this context is *der Rausch*, sometimes translated in Nietzsche’s texts as “intoxication” but better rendered as “rapture,” which Nietzsche defines as the essential element of art: “If there is to be art, if there is to be any aesthetic doing and observing, one physiological precondition is indispensable: *rapture*.”²⁶⁸ Nietzsche expands upon this point with his description of the manner of life most proper to the artist: “Artists should see nothing as it is, but more fully, simply, strongly: for that, a kind of youth and spring, a habitual rapture, must be proper to their lives.”²⁶⁹ In the *Nietzsche* lectures, Heidegger develops “rapture” as an ontological concept pertaining to the bodily way of being in which we rise beyond ourselves and become capable of new states of being, as opposed to intoxication, which serves better as a description of how we might be said to sink into ourselves.

Of someone who is intoxicated we can only say that he “has” something like a rapture. But he *is* not enraptured. The rapture of intoxication is not a state in which a man rises by himself beyond himself. What we are here calling rapture is merely -- to use the colloquialism -- being “soused,” something that deprives us of every state of being.²⁷⁰

Here Heidegger points out that Nietzsche’s understanding of rapture as the basic artistic state must be understood differently than the romantic conception of art that we find in Wagner:

Rapture does not mean mere chaos that churns and foams, the drunken bravado of sheer riotousness and tumult. When Nietzsche says “rapture” the word has a sound

²⁶⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 152.

²⁶⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, VII, 122-123. Cited by Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 96.

²⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 421. Cited by Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 116.

²⁷⁰ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 100.

and sense utterly opposed to Wagner's. For Nietzsche rapture means the most glorious victory of form.²⁷¹

The beauty of art lies in its ability to enrapture us within an aesthetic encounter with its entities; encountering a work of art is essentially a unitary phenomenon which "explodes" both the subjectivity of the subject and the objectivity of the object by bringing both into a more "essential and original correlation" than could ever exist between a subject and an object:

Rapture as a state of feeling explodes the very subjectivity of the subject. By having a feeling for beauty the subject has already come out of himself; he is no longer subjective, no longer a subject. On the other side, beauty is not something at hand like an object of sheer representation. As an attuning, it thoroughly determines the state of man. Beauty breaks through the confinement of the "object" placed at a distance, standing on its own, and brings it into the essential and original correlation to the "subject." Beauty is no longer objective, no longer an object. The aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective. Both basic words of Nietzsche's aesthetics, rapture and beauty, designate with an identical breadth the entire aesthetic state, what is opened up in it and what pervades it.²⁷²

It is through the discovery of beauty that we are reopened to the world in such a way that erases the difference between subject and object by showing them to belong to an aesthetic state which opens up the very dimension within which we distinguish subjects and objects in the first place. The fundamental problem of nihilism for Heidegger is that we begin to see even ourselves according to its reductive and dehumanizing logic, as subjects always already subject to processes of objectification. Thomson explains the problem at hand in unambiguous terms:

[W]e late moderns come to treat even ourselves in the nihilistic terms that underlie our technological refashioning of the world: no longer as conscious subjects standing over against an objective world (as in the modern worldview Heidegger already criticized in *Being and Time*), but merely as one more intrinsically meaningless

²⁷¹ Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 119.

²⁷² Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 123.

resource to be optimized, ordered, and enhanced with maximal efficiency, whether cosmetically, psychopharmacologically, genetically, or even cybernetically.²⁷³

Heidegger recognizes in Nietzsche both a dangerous repetition of nihilism, whereby our bodies are treated as intrinsically meaningless resources to manipulate, as well as the possibility of a new path out of nihilism, one which allows us to conceive of our bodies as opportunities to artistically cultivate ourselves through bodying in life-enhancing ways. Heidegger points out that the enhancement of life that emerges from the encounter with art always potentially leads us to *feel* different about things:

Every feeling is an embodiment attuned in this or that way, a mood that embodies in this or that way. Rapture is a feeling, and it is all the more genuinely a feeling the more essentially a unity of embodying attunement prevails.... Rapture is feeling, an embodying attunement, an embodied being that is contained in attunement, attunement woven into embodiment.²⁷⁴

Art in its essence always involves the attempt to “lift... what has become fixed, stable, and congealed over and beyond to new possibilities.”²⁷⁵ Nietzsche and Heidegger agree in their assessment of the history of philosophy as a repeated failure to properly make sense of the chaotic, rapturous, and ecstatic dimensions of everyday embodied existence. It is for these reasons that Heidegger insists upon the importance of that which he names into being as “bodying,” a rapturous temporal dynamic by which Dasein always already exists as a bodily entity in the world.

3.7 Bodying with Descartes, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty

As we have seen, Heidegger attempts to describe our bodily being-in-the-world without falling into the mind-body dualism of Descartes, whose arguments for the real distinction

²⁷³ Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, 56.

²⁷⁴ *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 100, 105.

²⁷⁵ *Nietzsche: Vol. 3*, 79.

between thinking things and extended things serve as the impetus and departure point for most modern philosophical accounts of embodiment. Heidegger writes,

One often hears the objection that there is something wrong with the distinction between a corporeal thing and a body. This is raised, for instance, because the French have no word whatsoever for the body [*Leib*], but only a term for a corporeal thing, namely, *le corps*. But what does this mean? It means that in this area the French are influenced only by the Latin *corpus*. This is to say that for them it is very difficult to see the real problem of the phenomenology of the body.²⁷⁶

It is difficult to square this provocative but linguistically chauvinistic claim with close readings of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty's texts on the body. Even if "the French" that Heidegger arrogantly lumps together are influenced only by the Cartesian interpretation of the body as no more than *corpus*, might not Sartre's distinction between the for-itself and the in-itself allow for a description of the body in its ecstatic temporal-intentional relations to the world? Moreover, might what Merleau-Ponty refers to as "the metaphysical structure of my body" be discernable within the analysis of Dasein as the entity who exists by way of its thrown-falling-projecting?

According to Sartre the body needs to be understood as comprising three distinct ontological dimensions:

If then we wish to reflect on the nature of the body, it is necessary to establish an order of our reflections which conforms to the order of being: we cannot continue to confuse the ontological levels, and we must in succession examine the body first as being-for-itself and then as being-for-others.... we must keep constantly in mind the idea that since these two aspects of the body are on different and incommunicable levels of being, they cannot be reduced to one another. Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness; it cannot be united with a body. Similarly being-for-others is wholly body; there are no "psychic phenomena" there to be united with the body. There is nothing behind the body. But the body is wholly "psychic."²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Zollikon Seminars, 89.

²⁷⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 305.

On the one hand, Sartre distinguishes between the subjective and objective dimensions of embodiment in terms of the body as it is *for me* as opposed to the body as it shows up *to others*.²⁷⁸ On the other hand, Sartre also goes on to refer to a third dimension of the body that describes bodily experience from the ambiguous standpoint of existing as both subject and object simultaneously, where “I exist for myself as a body known by the Other.”²⁷⁹ When we come to understand these three ontological dimensions of the body – the subjective, the objective, and the subjective *as* objective – Sartre claims “we shall have exhausted the question of the body’s modes of being.”²⁸⁰ But according to Heidegger, the appeal to the lived body and lived experience is not enough to overcome a Cartesian picture of the body:

It is one of the ironies of history that our age has discovered—admittedly, very late—the need to refute Descartes, and takes issue with him and his intellectualism by appealing to “lived experience,” whereas lived experience is only a base descendent of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*.²⁸¹

Opposing this Cartesian tradition of thought, Heidegger’s focus is not on the subjective and objective aspects of the body but rather on the *being* of the body; thus Heidegger explicitly disagrees with Sartre’s claim to have exhausted the question of what the body really is. The *being* of human entities cannot be ascertained by assuming a split between subjectivity and objectivity and then somehow synthesizing the two back together:

When we come to the question of man’s being, this is not something we can simply compute by adding those kinds of being which body, soul, and spirit respectively possess—kinds of being whose nature has not as yet been determined.²⁸²

“Sartre’s primary error,” Heidegger writes, “consists in the fact that he sees being as something posited [*Gesetztes*] by the human being’s subjective projection.”²⁸³ Heidegger and

²⁷⁸ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 401.

²⁷⁹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 460.

²⁸⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 460.

²⁸¹ *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, 129.

²⁸² *Being and Time*, 74.

Sartre fundamentally agree that an interpretation of our bodies must be wary of the language of “having.” The concept of “having” is problematic for Heidegger to the extent that it effectively plays the role of an unclarified copula by way of binding a subject to its objective properties, which for Heidegger is precisely the wrong way to go about an investigation into the being of a body. Heidegger writes, “From “having,” we can turn to “having-a-body,” or rather “being a body”—in order to remove a great obstacle in this way....”²⁸⁴

Heidegger’s critique of Sartre above mirrors that of Merleau-Ponty who, in *The Visible and the Invisible*, writes,

Cartesianism, whether it intended to do so or not, did inspire a science of the human body that decomposes that body also into a network of objective processes and, with the notion of sensation, prolongs this analysis unto the “psychism.” These two idealizations are bound up with one another and must be undone together. It is only by returning to the perceptual faith to rectify the Cartesian analysis that we will put an end to the crisis situation in which our knowledge finds itself when it thinks it is founded upon a philosophy that its own advances undermine.²⁸⁵

Like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty wants to think of embodiment without recourse to either mechanism or psychism, the two categories of being instituted by Descartes as comprising the being who we are. According to Merleau-Ponty, “The experience of our own body... reveals to us an ambiguous mode of existing”²⁸⁶ because “ambiguity is the essence of human existence”²⁸⁷ and this “existence realizes itself in the body.”²⁸⁸

The “amorphous” perceptual world that I spoke of in relation to painting—perpetual resources for the remaking of painting—which contains no modes of expression and which nonetheless calls them forth and requires all of them and which arouses again with each painter a new effort of expression—*this perceptual world is at bottom being in Heidegger’s sense*, which is more than all painting, than all speech, than

²⁸³ Zollikon Seminars, 221.

²⁸⁴ Zollikon Seminars, 271.

²⁸⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 26.

²⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 230.

²⁸⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 196.

²⁸⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 192.

every “attitude,” and which, apprehended by philosophy in its universality, appears as containing everything that will ever be said...²⁸⁹

For both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger their early accounts of being-in-the-world seem at times to overlook the difficulties faced daily by differently bodied individuals. In their later works Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger each begin to articulate revised conceptions of the body to deconstruct the subject-object dualism so prominent in the history of Western metaphysics. Askay nicely summarizes the primary difference between from Merleau-Ponty the following summary of Heidegger’s position on the body:

Bodily being is necessary for us to be related to the world in any situation. Being-in-the-world is necessary for there to be *any relations at all* since it is primarily an understanding of being in which anything else is possible, i.e., existence is ontologically more primordial than bodily being.²⁹⁰

On Askay’s reading Heidegger avoids the problem of body in *Being and Time* because “to concentrate on bodily being without always recognizing its groundedness in being, tempts one to become stuck within the Cartesian dualism Heidegger accuses the French of falling into.”²⁹¹

Neither the body *nor existence* can be regarded as the original of the human being, since they presuppose each other, and because the body is solidified or generalized existence, and existence is perpetual incarnation. The same reason that prevents us from ‘reducing’ existence to the body or to sexuality, prevents us also from ‘reducing’ sexuality to existence: the fact is that existence is not a set of fact (like ‘psychic facts’) capable of being reduced to others or to which they can reduce themselves, but an ambiguous setting of their inter-communication, the point at which their boundaries run into each other, or again their woven fabric.²⁹²

Heidegger opposes French conceptions of the body to the extent that they reduce our embodiment to the presence of a corpse, refusing from the outset to see the body in terms of

²⁸⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 170. My emphasis.

²⁹⁰ Askay, “Heidegger, the body, and the French philosophers,” 33.

²⁹¹ Askay, “Heidegger, the body, and the French philosophers,” 33.

²⁹² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 166.

the way it actually lives and exists in the world, and instead looking at the thing in its mere extension.

No one of time's dimensions can be deduced from the rest. But the present (in the wide sense, along with its horizons of primary past and future), nevertheless enjoys a privilege because it is the zone in which being and consciousness coincide.²⁹³

This is in direct contrast to Merleau-Ponty, for whom "It is always in the present that we are centered, and our decision starts from there."²⁹⁴ By the time of his Working Notes to *The Visible and the Invisible*, however, Merleau-Ponty appears to concur with Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian presuppositions continuing to attenuate phenomenology of the body: "The problems posed in *Phenomenology of Perception* are insoluble because I start there from the "consciousness"- "object" distinction."²⁹⁵

Like Heidegger, Descartes believes that the temporality of the human being – the "I" that I know must exist as long as I am thinking – can be gleaned by way of a meditative questioning that attempts to give ground to our claims about the world. Unlike Descartes, as we have seen in texts such as *Being and Time*, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, the *Nietzsche* lectures, the *Heraclitus* seminar, and the *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger refuses to identify bodily being with extension in space. When understood on the basis of Dasein as the entity who *is* time, it becomes clear that the true being of the body consists in an unfolding event that Heidegger calls "the bodying of the body," a way of being in time that is never fully reducible to spatial extension. But in light of Heidegger's analyses of Dasein, how are we to now understand extension itself? Here I suggest we might risk rethinking the Cartesian concept of "extension" in a Heideggerian way as "ecs-tension," a word that refers to the ecs-

²⁹³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 492.

²⁹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 497.

²⁹⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 200.

static character of Dasein's ecs-sistence as a bodily being who exists only by way of standing within a series of continuous tensions by which our temporal being requires us to constantly stand outside ourselves. According to Descartes, there is no more to the idea of "body" other than the being of an entity which exists by way of length, breadth, and depth in space:

After this examination we will find that nothing remains in the idea of body, except that it is something extended in length, breadth, and depth; and this something is comprised in our idea of space, not only of that which is full of body, but even of what is called void space.²⁹⁶

Descartes goes so far as to suggest that there is no difference in reality between space, body, and extension, for these are three ways of conceiving one and the same being:

Space or internal place, and the corporeal substance which is comprised in it, are not different in reality, but merely in the mode in which they are wont to be conceived by us. For, in truth, the same extension in length, breadth, and depth, which constitutes space, constitutes body; and the difference between them lies only in this, that in body we consider extension in particular, and conceive it to change with the body; whereas in space we attribute to extension a generic unity, so that after taking from a certain space the body which occupied it, we do not suppose that we have at the same time removed the extension of the space, because it appears to us that the same extension remains there so long as it is of the same magnitude and figure, and preserves the same situation in respect to certain other bodies around it, by means of which we determine this space.²⁹⁷

Where Heidegger appears to drastically diverge from the Cartesian legacy is in Heidegger's insistence that the true being of the body lies in a clarification of the temporally ecstatic modes of its openness to the world, rather than Descartes' insistence that the terms "body," "space," and "extension" all refer essentially to the same one being. Although Descartes insists there is no more to bodily space than extension, how are we to understand extension itself as "length, breadth, and depth"? Are not these three interrelated concepts each *already* spatial in a sense that makes it questionable to define space by reference to these dimensions?

²⁹⁶ Descartes, *The Meditations and Selections from the Principles of Rene Descartes*, 182.

²⁹⁷ Descartes, *The Meditations and Selections from the Principles of Rene Descartes*, 181.

What *are* length and breadth and depth, and why do they seem to belong essentially together? A turn to etymology shows that length, breadth, and depth each refer to a kind of distance; length is “the distance along a line,” breadth is “the distance between sides,” and depth is “the distance from top down or from without inward.” When I try to picture something like this I see something in space; it seems impossible to think of the distances between lines, sides, tops, bottoms, insides, and outsides without picturing something extended in space. But if length and breadth and depth belong to each other as different forms of “distance,” how are we to understand distance itself? Thinking distance in a temporal Heideggerian sense as the dis-stance of ecs-tension, we might think of distance differently by tying it back to the primordial Greek sense of *khaos* as “the gaping” which “points in the direction of a measureless, supportless, and groundless yawning open”.²⁹⁸ Extension in a Heideggerian sense consists, then, in the unity of its ecs-tensions, those dis-stances between past, present, and future which constitute our temporal *and* spatial being. At its naked core, ecs-tension is bodily and the bodily is ecs-tension as the being with “extends” itself as corporeal and objective due to our being-past, lived and subjective due to our being-present, *and* existing and living as the being which can only be by *extending itself* into the future. For Heidegger, the task is to rethink true extending on the basis of “true time:”

We cannot attribute the presencing to be thus thought to one of the three dimensions of time, to the present, which would seem obvious. Rather, the unity of time’s three dimensions consists in the interplay of each toward each. This interplay proves to be *the true extending*, playing in *the very heart of time*, the fourth dimension, so to speak—not only so to speak, but in the nature of the matter. True time is four-dimensional.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ *Nietzsche: Vol. 3*, 77.

²⁹⁹ *Time and Being*, 15. My emphasis in italics.

In this sense, perhaps Heidegger's word for "bodying" refers to same phenomenon indicated by Descartes with the term "extension." This Heideggerian interpretation of the ecs-tension of bodying comes close to merging yet again with some of Merleau-Ponty's core insights:

What I "am" I am only at a distance, yonder, in this body, this personage, which I push before myself and which are only me least remote distances; and conversely I adhere to this world which is not me as closely as to myself, in a sense it is only the prolongation of my body—I am justified in saying that I am in the world.³⁰⁰

Rethinking of the body in terms of its multiple types of ecs-tending dis-stancing allows us to unearth many depths at play in bodily existence:

Carnal being, as a being of depths, of several leaves or several faces, a being in latency, and a presentation of a certain absence, is a prototype of Being, of which our body, the sensible variant already lies in every visible. For already the cube assembles within itself *visibilia*, as my body is at once phenomenal body and objective body, and if finally it is, it, like my body, is by a tour de force. What we call a visible is, we said, a quality pregnant with a texture, the surface of a depth, a cross section upon a massive being, a grain or corpuscle borne by a wave of Being.³⁰¹

Just as Heidegger conceives of our bodily sojourn as a temporal clearing of pathways, such that the body exists "as a wave in the stream of chaos [wherein chaos is understood ontologically as a word for bodily being as such]," Merleau-Ponty also describes the "tour de force" of the body as "a wave of Being." Understood in this manner, "bodying" serves as word for what Merleau-Ponty provocatively rethinks under the name of "flesh":

The flesh is not matter, in the sense of corpuscles of being which would add up or continue on one another to form beings. Nor is the visible (the things as well as my own body) some "psychic" material that would be—God knows how—brought into being by the things factually existing and acting on my factual body. In general, it is not a fact or a sum of facts "material" or "spiritual." Nor is it a representation for a mind: a mind could not be captured by its own representations; it would rebel against this insertion into the visible which is essential to the seer. The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term "element," in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of

³⁰⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 57.

³⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 136.

incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an “element” of Being.³⁰²

Just as Heidegger insists that “bodying” has been unthought within the history of philosophy,

Merleau-Ponty asserts the same of flesh:

What we are calling flesh, this interiorly worked-over mass, has no name in any philosophy. As the formative medium of the object and the subject, it is not the atom of being, the hard in itself that resides in a unique place and moment: one can indeed say of my body that it is not *elsewhere*, but one cannot say that it is *here* or *now* in the sense that objects are; and yet my vision does not soar over them, it is not the being that is wholly knowing, for it has its own inertia, its ties. We must not think the flesh starting from the substances, from body and spirit—for then it would be the union of contradictories—but we must think it, as we said, as an element, as the concrete emblem of a general manner of being.³⁰³

Like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Husserl for privileging the field of presence over the entire “system of indices” that are time as openness upon being:

Husserl’s error is to have described the interlocking starting from a *Präsensfeld* considered as without thickness, as immanent consciousness: it is transcendent consciousness, it is being at a distance, it is the double ground of my life of consciousness, and it is what makes there be able to be *Stiftung* not only of an instant but of a whole *system of temporal indices*— —time (already as time of the body, taximeter time of the corporeal schema) is the model of these symbolic matrices, which are openness upon being.³⁰⁴

Heidegger, as we have seen, conceives of the ultimate truth of bodily being as a wave within chaos. Merleau-Ponty appears to point to this same phenomenon with his references to “vertical” and “wild” Being:

The essential is to describe the vertical or wild Being as that pre-spiritual milieu without which nothing is thinkable, not even the spirit, and by which we pass into one another, and ourselves into ourselves in order to have *our own* time. It is philosophy alone that gives it — — Philosophy is the study of the *Vorhabe* of Being, a *Vorhabe*

³⁰² Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 139.

³⁰³ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 147.

³⁰⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 173.

that is not cognition, to be sure, that is wanting with regard to cognition, to operation, but that envelops them as Being envelops the beings.³⁰⁵

For both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, being, properly understood as wild and chaotic in the ontological sense of these terms, is ultimately inexhaustible by our representations of it:

What I want to do is restore the world as a meaning of Being absolutely different from the “represented,” that is, as the vertical Being, which none of the “representations” exhaust and which all “reach,” the wild Being.³⁰⁶

Finally, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger both are ultimately after an understanding of “dimensionality” that is irreducible to the Cartesian interpretation of extension:

There is a body of the mind, and a mind of the body and a chiasm between them. The other side to be understood not, as in objective thought, in the sense of another projection of the same flat projection system, but in the sense of an *Ueberstieg* of the body toward a depth, a dimensionality that is not that of extension, and a transcendence of the negative toward the sensible. The essential notion for such a philosophy is that of the flesh, which is not the objective body, nor the body thought by the soul as its own (Descartes), which is the sensible in the twofold sense of what one senses and what senses.³⁰⁷

Perhaps this “universal dimensionality” of being that fascinates Merleau-Ponty throughout *The Visible and the Invisible*, which he insists is “a dimensionality that is not that of extension,” is what Heidegger has called “bodying,” and what I have begun here to rethink in terms of our “bodily ecs-tension.”

³⁰⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 204.

³⁰⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 253.

³⁰⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and The Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, 259.

4. Body and Time

4.1 Synopsis of the dissertation

In this dissertation I hope to have shed further light on Heidegger's thought-provoking claim that "We do not "have" a body; rather, we "are" bodily."³⁰⁸ After discussing the problem of the body in the context of *Being and Time* in chapters one and two, I moved to Heidegger's later lectures and seminars in chapter three to articulate a specifically Heideggerian account of the bodying of the body. In this final section, I hope to show that Heidegger's understanding of the ontological difference can effectively help us to understand bodily difference in its corporeal, lived, and existential dimensions. From a Heideggerian standpoint, the existential dimensions of embodiment are inevitably overlooked when the discussion becomes limited to the *Leib-Körper* distinction. Nietzsche serves as the culmination of metaphysics within Heidegger's history of being in the sense that he effectively carries *Leib-Körper* to its most thorough logical conclusions while simultaneously pointing the way forward to a new conception of the body in its temporal dimensions. All identities are better understood in terms of the tripartite unity of thrownness, fallenness, and projection because it is too simplistic to reduce questions of bodily identity to binaries such as mind and body.

4.2 Body and Time

It is time to bring the dissertation to a close. So far, I have tried to show in a general sense that *how we body* is determined by the tripartite character of time. In this final section, I hope to show that *how we think* is also determined by the tripartite character of time. I also hope to indicate the way in which being itself is determined by the temporalization of time.

³⁰⁸ Nietzsche: Vol. 1, 99.

The history of Western philosophy appears to consist in an eternally recurring form of questioning that, when attending to the things themselves as they most essentially are, always unfolds itself by way of a triple investigation into its inner nature. To summarize a primary lesson of the history of philosophy in three words: Being *is* three. According to this tradition, whatever absolutely is, should be thought as essentially threefold. I follow Heidegger in suggesting that being is time but perhaps I go beyond Heidegger in offering the following interpretation of philosophy's history: We already know that the history of philosophy unfolds itself in time, and we already know that the history of philosophy is in some sense constituted by the three dimensions of time: Past, Present, and Future. If the meaning of being is time, and time is tripartite, then the meaning of being is tripartite. Everyone already has some sense of how time is tripartite, but how is *being* tripartite? It is tripartite in the sense that its history, the history of being, is wholly and completely structured by an event that always unfolds itself as threefold.

So, we have three conceptions of body, and a fourth if we think of our embodiment in both its unity and its multiplicity:

(1) *Körper* or "the body"

(2) *Leib* or "the lived body"

(3) *leiben* or "bodying" or "flesh"

Heidegger thinks that the being of the body has been understood historically in terms of the relationships between (1) and (2). But these relationships emerge due only to oblivion of the true nature of (3). So, if we are to properly understand the being of (1) and (2) in their interrelation, then we must first recall their ontological grounding in (3). Before we can become fully aware of (3), the only way to approach an understanding of (3) is by way of

setting into motion a conversation (*Gespräche*) or confrontation (*Auseinandersetzung*) between (1) and (2). This is because it is only due to the interrelations between (1) and (2) that there can be a (1) and a (2) in the first place. Although the difference between (1) and (2) tends to become the sole focus, the difference that matters most to Heidegger, the ontological one, is the one between (3) and the other two considered as a pair. Despite the prominence of the *Leib-Körper* distinction within philosophical discussions about the body, it is only by way of a descriptive ontological analysis of *Leiben* that we can truly understand the intertwined objectivity of *Körper* and subjectivity of *Leib*. The only way we can discern the true meaning of the difference between bodily life and bodily death – which is to say, between life and death – is by reference to the bodying of the body in its ecstatic-being-historical dimensions. Until we have comprehended the difference between being and entities – or between the being of the body (*Leiben*) and bodily entities (viewed objectively as *Körper* or subjectively as *Leib*), we will never have a true understanding of the historically and metaphysically ambiguous natures of our bodies. In order to properly understand our embodiment without misconstruing the matter spatially, we must learn to rethink the matter of the body on the basis of its unique form of temporality that Heidegger calls “true time:”

We cannot attribute the presencing to be thus thought to one of the three dimensions of time, to the present, which would seem obvious. Rather, the unity of time’s three dimensions consists in the interplay of each toward each. This interplay proves to be the true extending, playing in the very heart of time, the fourth dimension, so to speak—not only so to speak, but in the nature of the matter. True time is four-dimensional.³⁰⁹

The hidden problematic of the body lies in its enigmatic character as a four-dimensional temporal entity, despite its appearance as a three-dimensional spatial entity.

³⁰⁹ *Time and Being*, 15.

When Heidegger claims that “temporality temporalizes itself as a whole,” it is now clear what he means: To be a being in time means to be temporality, but temporality temporalizes itself. Therefore, to be a being in time means nothing more than to *be* this very tripartite unfolding of temporality temporalizing itself. The charge of temporality temporalizing itself is a driving force behind the history of Western thinking. This history of being as three explains why the question of must be posed in a threefold manner:

1. what is to be questioned, which has long been forgotten (being)
2. what is to be interrogated (beings), which present themselves to us every day, and
3. what is to be ascertained (future research), which is yet to come.³¹⁰

In other words, we must comprehend the difference between being and beings, which is to say the ontological difference, *as* future research. If we understand this tripartite nature of the question as being in ecstatic interrelation with the history of questioning – perhaps according to the schematization I have merely sketched in the chart above – then it becomes clear why all philosophical texts are structured in a tripartite manner: the inner essence of the question itself sends us on a path that is only truly understood along the lines of a singular pathway that is – always already, here and now – essentially not one but rather three intertwined paths. We now know why questioning always appears to already find itself on the way to the question of the essence of time; it is because, in three words, *we are time*. Given the temporal nature of our question, the only way out of this history of being, it would thus appear, is to stop asking questions.

Following gestures to be discerned in the works of Nietzsche and Heidegger, I believe that philosophy can be understood as an eternally recurring reiteration of the same exact

³¹⁰ *Being and Time*, 21ff.

tripartite structure. Throughout history philosophers have repeatedly, and for the most part unknowingly, schematized the world in a tripartite manner which, *always and in each case*, corresponds to the ecstatic temporal dimensions of past, present, future. There appears to be an eternally recurring structure in play here, where each will is guided by a power that has today been forgotten: being, which is to say, time. It is now clear why the history of philosophy seemed so repetitive to Nietzsche and Heidegger: because it was, and it is. And will be?

Perhaps Descartes was right in his belief that to be bodily is to be extension, but what if the being of extension turns out to be not space, but rather more primordially time? If we are to begin to think of embodiment in new ways, perhaps it is time to think of our physical character as did the Greeks, and Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, too: in terms of the elemental, “physical,” and temporal tensions of Dasein’s ecstatic “extension,” or in other words, as the bodily being *in* the world that we each most fundamentally *are*.

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