

Heidegger: πάθος as the thing itself

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What we do through all our waking hours (perhaps even during REM sleep) is make sense of stuff, whether of people, things, ideas, or experiences—whatever we happen to encounter.

We make sense of things even when we get it wrong, or go insane, or babble incoherently on our death beds. Antoine Roquentin in *Nausea* was making sense of things when he watched the seat on the Bouville tram turn into an animal's bloated and bleeding belly. Jean-Paul Sartre, his creator, was making sense of things when he saw pairs of crabs following him around Paris in the 1930s. (Sartre sought out therapy from a young Jacques Lacan, and the crabs went away when he finally got bored of them.)¹

Heidegger argues we cannot *not* make sense of things because sense-making—the “disclosing” of things, whether correctly or not—is a fundamental element of our nature. We are the living beings who have λόγος, and therefore “the very being of ex-sistence is to make sense of things,” not just occasionally or as an add-on, but necessarily.²

The core of Heidegger's work is about how and why we cannot *not* make sense of things. Put otherwise, his fundamental question about *der Sinn vom Sein* is about how and why we must have access not just to things but above all to the *meanings* of things, indeed, to meaningfulness or intelligibility *at all*.

But wait. Wasn't Heidegger's basic question about “being” (*Sein*) rather than meaning or intelligibility (*Bedeutsamkeit* or *Sinn*)? No, once we take the phenomenological turn with Heidegger—the turn he took between 1915 and 1919—we see that all forms of *Sein* are in fact *Sinngebilde*, formations of sense. During a course from 1919-20 he called on his students to see that their

¹ “When Sartre Talked to Crabs (It Was Mescaline),” *New York Times*, 14 November 2009: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/weekinreview/15grist.html>, based on John Gerassi, ed. and trans., *Talking With*
² GA 21: 151.4: “Weil Dasein in seinem Sein selbst bedeutend ist...” On “having λόγος”: cf. Aristotle, *De anima* III 9, 432a31, *Nicomachean Ethics* I 13, 1102b15, 1103a2; V 1, 1139a4; 1138b9; VI 1, 1139b22-23; etc.

experience has whatever it experiences *in the character of meaningfulness*. Even the most trivial thing is meaningful (even though it remains trivial nonetheless). Even what is most lacking in value is meaningful.³

And in 1924:

For a long time now, I have been designating the ontological character of existence as *meaningfulness*. This ontological character is the primary one in which we encounter the world.⁴

We identify meaningfulness as the world's primary ontological characteristic.⁵

Thus, in SZ Heidegger could declare that ontology is “the explicit inquiry into the *Sinn* of things.”⁶

What does this inevitable sense-making have to do with *πάθος*? I will argue that *πάθος*, as Heidegger interprets it, is “the thing itself,” *die Sache selbst*, of Heidegger's work. There are four steps to the argument. The first step is to nail down the *goal* of Heidegger's work. The second is to work out what “transcendence” and “intentionality” mean. The third, an interlude, briefly sketches out Heidegger's phenomenological transformation of Aristotle. The fourth shows that facticity, read as *πάθος*, is *die Sache selbst*, what I'll call the “factum,” that which is always already operative as the ultimate presupposition of everything human.

1. THE GOAL

The proper entrance into Heidegger's *Seinsfrage* is to realize he used the word *Sein* as only a provisional stand-in for *Anwesen*, the intelligibility or meaningful presence of whatever we encounter.⁷ And the next step is to remember that *Anwesen* was not the goal of his work but only the starting point. Heidegger was after what *accounts* for intelligibility, its *ἀρχή* and *αἰτία*. Like Plato, his goal lay *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας* (*Republic* 509b9), “beyond” all forms of *Anwesen*. He was after the *Herkunft von Anwesen*, the “whence” of intelligibility at all.⁸

Intelligibility occurs only in correlation with human beings. With that we have the arena within which to work out our question: the a priori, ever-operative, and ineluctable togetherness of human being as such and intelligibility as such (where “as such” means “in its essence,” and “in its essence” means “in how-it-is-and-cannot-not-be”). Did Heidegger ever get any further

³ GA 58: 104.19–24 (my emphasis): “...sehen den Sinn, in dem das faktische Erfahren sein Erfahrenes erneut und immer im Charakter der Bedeutsamkeit hat. Auch das Trivialste ist bedeutsam, nur eben trivial; auch das Wertloseste ist bedeutsam.” Also GA 61: 91.14: “erfahren in Bedeutsamkeit.”

⁴ GA 18: 300.15–17: “Ich pflege seit langem diesen Seinscharakter des Daseins als *Bedeutsamkeit* zu bezeichnen. Dieser Seinscharakter ist das Primäre, in dem die Welt begegnet.”

⁵ GA 64: 24.2–3: “Bedeutsamkeit als des primären Seinscharakters der Welt.”

⁶ SZ 12.14–15: “[Ontologie als] das explizite Fragen nach dem Sinn des Seienden.”

⁷ GA 7: 234.13–17: “nur das vorläufige Wort.” GA 15: 20.8–9: “Obwohl ich dieses Wort nicht mehr gern gebrauche....”

⁸ GA 6:2, 304.11–12: “Herkunft von Anwesen.” GA 73, 2: 984.2: “Wesensherkunft.” GA 10: 131.19–20 and .28: “Wesensherkunft des Seins.” GA 2: 53 n.: “Das Anwesen aus dieser Herkunft.” GA 73, 1: 82.15–16: “das von woher und wodurch . . . das Sein west.”

than that?

The early Heidegger said we are “prisoners of meaningfulness,” and he could equally have said that meaningfulness is the prisoner of human being.⁹ The indissoluble bond of intelligibility and human being goes by several names in Heidegger’s career. In SZ it was called *In-der-Welt-sein*, our structural engagement-with-meaning. He declares this to be our *daseinsmäßige Struktur*, which I render as “the ex-sistential structure of ex-sistence,” intentionally misspelling and hyphenating the key terms in order to capture Heidegger’s understanding of *Da-sein* as *Existenz* (Greek, ἔξ + ἵστημι, Latin, *ex + sistere*).¹⁰ Ex-sistence refers to the fact that we are necessarily (1) made-to-stand (2) out, ahead, and open as the field of intelligibility. More dynamically, human being is “thrown open” as the world of possible meaning.

To name the bond of ex-sistence and intelligibility, Heidegger in 1930s used the term *Gegenschwung*, the reciprocal sameness (the *reci-proci-tas* or back-and-forth-ness) of *Da-sein* and *Da-sein*. That is:

- we hold open and *are* the field of intelligibility (*Da-sein*, as per SZ I.1-2),
- which field determines the meaning of all we encounter (*Da-sein* as per the projected SZ I.3 and the later work).

Drawing on his translation of δόναμις as *Eignung* (coming-into-its-own) Heidegger in *Beiträge zur Philosophie* began calling this bond “*Ereignis*,” i.e., ex-sistence insofar as it has always already been ap-*propri*-ated to its proper status as the field of intelligibility. He also called the bond *Seyn* (an older spelling of the word *Sein*) and often discussed it in terms of “cor-respondence” (*Entsprechung*), a topic to which we shall return.

I call this bond the “factum,” that which is always already operative in and as the being of ex-sistence. In SZ Heidegger declared it to be a “unitary phenomenon”¹¹ that must never be split apart into “two”—ex-sistence on the one side and intelligibility on the other—which then might subsequently enter into a “relation.” Heidegger was clear: there is no such relation because there are not “two” independent entities that need to be brought into relation. There is only the inseparable unity of *Seyn*, which itself is the indissoluble sameness of ex-sistence and intelligibility.

Der Bezug ist jedoch nicht zwischen das Seyn und den Menschen eingespant, als seien beide vordem bezüglos Seyn und Mensch. Der Bezug ist das Seyn selbst, und das Menschenwesens ist der selbe Bezug.¹²

That is to say: There is no gap between ex-sistence and *Seyn* that needs to be bridged by a “relation.” Intelligibility-as-such—the possibility of there being any meaning at all—is simply ex-sistence’s way of being.

⁹ GA 58: 104.32-33: “bedeutsamkeitsgefangen,” emphasized in the German.

¹⁰ GA 83: 69.4: “Exsistentia” and *ibid.*, 72.23–24: “Das *sistere*—ex.”

¹¹ SZ 53.12–13: “ein *einheitliches* Phänomen. . . . Dieser primäre Befund muß im Ganzen gesehen werden.”

¹² GA 73,1: 790.2-8. The sentence that precedes these two reads: “Die Wahr-heit des Seyns ist das Höchste dessen, was den Menschen zu denken gegeben.”

That notwithstanding, some Americans advance the worst parody of Heidegger's thinking by sundering that unity and turning "Being Itself" into a Metaphysical Something that subsists on its own, independent of Dasein. This Super-*Sein* occasionally chooses to "give" or "send" itself to Dasein but nowadays has mostly "withdrawn itself," even "hidden itself," thereby abandoning Dasein to the depredations of metaphysics, technology and calculative rationality. This crude but deadly serious mythologizing of Heidegger's work completely misses the irony of claiming it has reached "the end of philosophy."¹³

2. TRANSCENDENCE AND INTENTIONALITY

The a priori fact of our being "pulled" or "stretched" or "thrown" open as the field of intelligibility¹⁴ is what Heidegger calls "transcendence." In turn, transcendence is what accounts for the fact that our conscious activities are necessarily intentional. Using scholastic terminology, Heidegger called transcendence the *ratio essendi* of intentionality, and intentionality the *ratio cognoscendi* of transcendence.¹⁵ That is, our thrown-openness is the fundamental principle that accounts for the fact that our conscious acts are and must be *about* something, must make sense *of* something. In what follows, the word "intentionality" always means "transcendence-based intentionality," and I'll eventually term it "minding."

What is intentionality for Heidegger? When I discuss the mind-body problem with students, I sometimes ask them to close their eyes and point to their minds. Virtually always they point to their heads, i.e., their brains. (The occasional exception are Chinese students who, in the spirit of St. Augustine, point to their chest, i.e., their 心 or heart.) On this view, the mind is "inside," and consciousness is a matter of slipping out through the senses to grab some data and drag it back into the brain.

One might be reminded of Sartre's parody of "digestive epistemology," the nutritional model of knowledge where "to know is to eat." Hungry for nourishment, our minds force us to sally forth into the world to snatch prey (think of the chameleon's projectile tongue darting out to snare a bug), which we then drag back into the closet of consciousness as into a stomach, where we steep it in gastric juices and peristaltically reduce it to mental mulch that gets absorbed as nourishment into the muscles and sinews of our minds.¹⁶

¹³ The standard-bearer of this position is Prof. Richard Capobianco of Stonehill College, Massachusetts.

¹⁴ Anzogen, erstreckt, geworfen: respectively, GA 8: 11.10; SZ 375.3; and SZ 144.12.

¹⁵ GA 24: 91.20-22. On ratio cognoscendi, cf. Thomas Aquinas, "Commentum in tertium sententiarum [‘De incarnatione Verbi’] Magistri Petri Lombardi," distinctio 14 ("Si anima Christi habuerit sapientiam parem cum Deo, et si omnia scit quae Deus"), quaestio 1, articulus 1 ("Utrum in Christo sit aliqua scientia creata"), quaestiuncula 5, solutio 4: "Ratio autem cognoscendi est forma rei in quantum est cognita, quia per eam fit cognitio in actu; unde sicut ex materia et forma est unum esse; ita *ratio cognoscendi* et res cognita sunt unum cognitum: et propter hoc utriusque, in quantum huiusmodi, est una cognitio secundum habitum et secundum actum," in Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, ed. Stanilaus Fretté and Paul Maré (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1873), IX, 215, column a, ad fin.

¹⁶ See Sartre, : "Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: l'intentionnalité." *Situations I*, Paris: Gallimard, 1947, 29-32. Also SZ 62.19-21: "das Vernehmen des Erkannten ist nicht ein Zurückkehren des erfassenden Hinausgehens mit der gewonnenen Beute in das 'Gehäuse' des Bewußtseins, sondern auch im Vernehmen, Bewahren und Behalten *bleibt* das erkennende Dasein *als Dasein draußen*."

For Heidegger, as for Aristotle, there is no “inside” to ex-sistence. We are always outside (*Draußensein*), exposed to what is other.¹⁷ But paradoxically our outsideness is our condition of being *inside meaning*. In an early lecture course Heidegger translated the title of Aristotle’s *Περὶ ψυχῆς* or *De anima* as “*Über das In-der-Welt-sein*.” But being-in-the-world is not primarily a matter of living within the universe of space and time, or merely perceiving “stuff out there.” It’s the structural condition of being thrust into the *meaning* of things, into what and how we think they currently are. Ex-sistence is necessarily *Vertrautheit mit der Bedeutsamkeit*,¹⁸ familiarity with both meaningfulness at all and the possible meanings of the specific things we encounter, with the result that we are always and ineluctably making sense of whatever we meet (*be-deuten*).¹⁹

The human *ψυχή* is not a mental closet, but rather our power to contact what is *other* than ourselves—and to be in touch with *ourselves* as *related to* whatever. We do so not by magically transubstantiating “outside things” into “mental images” that get stored “inside our minds.” Rather, we *assimilate ourselves to* the intelligible content (the *εἶδος* or *Gehaltsinn*) of the encountered other, conforming ourselves to how it is meaningfully present. The Greek verb *ὁμοιόω* means “to make something be similar to something else.” In the middle voice, *ὁμοιοῦμαι* means to make *oneself* be similar to something else (as in Plato’s *ὁμοίωσις θεῶν*, becoming like god.)²⁰ In *De interpretatione* 1, 16a6-8, a text that Heidegger frequently discussed, Aristotle says the mind has *παθήματα* of things, a word that Heidegger renders as *Erlebnisse* (“experiences”) and glosses with the Greek word *νοήματα*, *Vortellungen*. These *παθήματα* that we “undergo” (*πάσχω*, second aorist: *παθεῖν*) are “likenesses” (*ὁμοιώματα*) of things in the world—but not as “inner images” of things outside. Our experiences are directly of those things “outside” insofar as they are meaningfully present.²¹ The *παθήματα* are the ways we are assimilated to, made like unto, the encountered things.

But how exactly are we “made like unto” what we encounter? In SZ Heidegger cites Aristotle’s dictum that the human *ψυχή* is “somehow all things,” which he follows with Aquinas’s statement that the soul is *ens quod natum est convenire cum omni ente*: the nature of the soul is to “come together” with all things.²² Heidegger takes those two statements as saying not that the soul (read: ex-sistence) becomes entitatively the same as what it encounters. Rather, our “assimilation to” what we encounter is our understanding of *how* and *as what* the thing is meaningfully disclosed within a specific world of significance.

¹⁷ SZ 62.13, “immer schon ‘draußen’”; *ibid.*, 62.16-18 “auch in diesem ‘Draußen-sein’ beim Gegenstand ist das Dasein im rechtverstandenen Sinne ‘drinnen’. . . als In-der-Welt-sein”; *ibid.*, 162.26-27: “als In-der-Welt-sein verstehend schon ‘draußen’ ist.” GA 2: 216, n. glosses “Draußensein” as: “Das Da; Ausgesetztheit als offene Stelle.”

¹⁸ SZ 87.19-20.

¹⁹ SZ 87.9 and .15; also above, note 2.

²⁰ *Theaetetus* 176b1. Plotinus went him one better by declaring that our concern is *to be* god (*σπουδή . . . θεὸν εἶναι*): *Enneads* I 2, 6.3.

²¹ SZ 214.26-36.

²² Respectively *De anima* III 8, 431b21 (ἡ ψυχή τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα) at SZ 14.6, and Thomas Aquinas at SZ 14.20-21. In SZ Heidegger translated the Greek as: “Das Seele ist in gewisser Weise das Seiende alles,” omitting by mistake the word πάντα. Twenty-five years later, in his lecture course *Übungen im Lesen* (13 February 1952, ms. 45.8-9) Heidegger noted the error: “Das πάντα ist in S.u.Z. aus Versehen heraugeblieben.”

Obviously the soul will be “all things” only with regard to the *Anwesen* of things, their meaningful presence; and that occurs because (1) the soul is determined by νοῦς [“minding”] and (2) νοῦς is determined by ἀληθεύειν [“making-sense-of”]. The soul is the place where things, of and by themselves, can come-to-appearance [i.e., come-to-εἶδος and thus have intelligible content]. Thus, the soul participates in *the meaningful presence* of whatever is meaningfully present.²³

All of this comes with the important proviso that, even as we make sense of something, we may very well get it wrong. In other words, ἀληθεύειν as the bringing of something to meaningful presence is no guarantee of the *correctness* of the endeavor.

So again: What is intentionality? In its broadest and most inclusive sense intentionality is νοῦς-qua-νόησις (see the quotation above): it is the “minding” of things. And since things show up as νοήματα in correlation with νοῦς-as-minding, intentionality is “minding the meant.” In saying there is no “inside” to ex-sistence we’re saying that we are *never not* minding-the-meant.

In SZ Heidegger’s cover-all term for “minding” is *Sorge*, usually translated as “care” but more suitably rendered as “concern” or better yet as “interest.” Our concerned/interested minding has a double focus: (1) on meaningfulness, and (2) on the things that can be meaningful.

1. We hold open the field itself of possible meaning through
 - our “attunement” (*Befindlichkeit*) to that field, and
 - our “aheadness” (*Verstehen*) as possibility among the field’s meaningful possibilities.
2. We relate to things *within* that field by being
 - meaningfully present to them (*Sein bei*), i.e., making sense of them in terms of the field of possible meaning.

As regards the first piece—the holding open of the clearing—Heidegger weaves the two distinguishable but inseparable moments of *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen* into one, which can be called either “attuned minding” of the clearing (*befindliches Verstehen*) or “mindful attunement” to the clearing (*verstehende Befindlichkeit*).

Our minding is not primarily an existentiell-psychological operation that we perform only occasionally; it is hard-wired into us as an existential structure that we cannot not be. Moreover, as an existential structure, it makes possible not just theoretical-cognitive activities (thematically understanding the meaning of something) but also includes such senses as “Do you mind if I smoke?” “Mind how you speak to her,” “I’ll mind the children while you’re out,” and (in the London tube) “Mind the gap!” It encompasses all the ways we relate to things, other persons, and ourselves.

Telling students to “point to your mind” is to be understood as: “Point to what you’re minding right now and how you’re minding it.” The mind is not a “thing within,” least of all within one’s skull. Minding is the structure and the process of being ever-exteriorized, both as

²³ Heidegger, *Übungen im Lesen*, 13 February 1952, 45.16-20 (with my emphasis). The text is omitted at GA 83: 654.8. Gehaltsinn: GA 58: 261.5-12; GA 60: 90.1.

existential ability and existentiell activity.

Existentially-personally it is all the ways I relate-to-whatever (and relate to my relating-to-whatever) as

- interested in and concerned about things: *Besorgen*
- interested in and concerned for other people: *Fürsorge*
- interested in and concerned for myself: *Selbstsorge*.

Existentially-structurally it is the fundamental way I ex-sist at all

- as a self-related relating to whatever (including myself)
- while holding open the field of possible intelligibility (*In-der-Welt-sein*)
- and having ex-sistence as mine-to-become (*Jemeinigkeit, Zu-sein, Seinkönnen*)
- with a penumbral awareness of my ever-present mortality.

3. INTERLUDE: PHENOMENOLOGY

For Aristotle, the study that crowns philosophy is called πρώτη φιλοσοφία, “first philosophy.” But first philosophy has two moments, grounded in two distinct questions:

1. What counts as real? (τί τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν;))
2. What counts as the *realness* of whatever counts as real? (τίς ἡ οὐσία;).²⁴

The second question bumps the subject matter up a notch from the *onto*-logical to the *meta*-ontological: under examination now are not what we take as real but the very realness of those things. Moreover, by substituting the words “What *counts as*?” for Aristotle’s simpler “What is?” I’m following Heidegger’s lead in transforming these questions from Aristotle’s direct-realist format, where the inquirer is left out of the picture, to a phenomenological one in which the questioner—the one for whom something might “count” or matter—is back in the picture, now in correlation with what’s under discussion.

In Aristotle’s straightforward realism the subject matter of the inquiry—whether it be the real (τὸ ὄν) or realness itself (οὐσία)—is considered in independence of the inquirer. Aristotle takes the real and its realness as “outside of and apart from” (ἔξω καὶ χωριστόν) the minding that raises the question.²⁵ That is, Aristotle’s two questions ask for the *intrinsic* structure, the in-itself-ness (“inseity”) of those two subject matters. For Heidegger, on the other hand, “the one who is philosophizing belongs together with the things under discussion.”²⁶ (I can’t be aware of *what-X-is*, without being *aware* of what-X-is.) In Heidegger’s phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle, τὸ ὄν becomes τὸ παρόν, and οὐσία becomes παρουσία, where in both cases the *παρ*-piece (= *παρά* = Latin *prae* or *coram*: “in the face of”) indicates intelligible relatedness, i.e., significance, to ex-sistence.

²⁴ Respectively *Metaphysics* IV 1, 1003a21 and VII 1, 1028b4.

²⁵ Combining *Metaphysics* VI 4, 1028a 2 and XI 8, 1065a24:

²⁶ GA 9: 42.24–27: “...weil in den Wissenschaften lediglich die Forderung der Sachlichkeit entscheidend ist, zu den Sachen der Philosophie aber der Philosophierende selbst. . . mitgehört.”

Heidegger is not imposing phenomenology on ontology from without but simply rendering the Stagirite's implicit phenomenology explicit. Aristotle himself held to the convertibility of ὄν and ἀληθές: "Each thing has as much intelligibility as it has being."²⁷ Heidegger simply spells out the consequences of that principle: "Is" is convertible with "is-meaningful-as," *Wesen* comes out as *Anwesen*, *Sein* is read as *Sinn*, and to be = to be intelligible. Likewise, the two basic questions of Aristotle's metaphysics are transformed: (1) The inquiry into what something is becomes the question of what counts for us as real; and (2) the question of what realness-as-such is becomes the question of how realness is intelligible at all.

4. πάθος

Granted the correlation of thrown-open-ness and intelligibility, and given that intentionality is the phenomenological structure of minding-the-meant, what do these two have to do with πάθος? To answer the question, we turn to the lecture "What Is Philosophy?" that Heidegger gave in C erisy-la-Salle (Normandy) on 28 August 1955.²⁸

Like the lecture "What Is Metaphysics?" which he had delivered a quarter-century earlier, Heidegger's "What Is Philosophy?" directs the audience to a *personal experience* of what's under discussion. In the earlier lecture (1929) he had told his listeners not to expect a talk *about* metaphysics but rather to let themselves be "transported *into* metaphysics"²⁹ by way of a personal experience of "nothing," i.e., that which is not-a-thing, the clearing as *das Nichts*. Only with such an experience, he claimed, do we personally and responsibly answer the question "What is metaphysics?"—but again, only if we keep the experience alive and refuse to say anything about it that doesn't come from the claim that this "nothing" makes on us.³⁰

So too, in the 1955 lecture: Heidegger says we will truly answer the question "What Is Philosophy?" only if what philosophy is *about*—the basic factum—"concerns us personally, touches us deeply, and affects us in the very core of our ex-sistence."³¹ —But doesn't that make philosophy a matter of affects, feelings, and emotions? Heidegger takes what Andr e Gide said about literature—"Fine sentiments make for bad literature"—and suggests the same may apply to philosophy. If philosophy is a rational activity, it cannot be based on passions and emotions that well up from the irrational depths of the psyche.³²

But maybe it's not that simple. If what we call "reason" (*ratio*, *Vernunft*) first got established as such *only within* the historical unfolding of philosophy, can we say with full confidence that philosophy is exclusively a matter of "reason"? Moreover, since philosophy *stricte dicta* arose among the Greeks, and since asking for the "essence" of something (e.g., "What is philosophy?") stems from Greek philosophy, shouldn't we first settle what φιλοσοφία meant for them?

²⁷ *Metaphysics* 1, 993 b 30-31: ὅσθ' ἕκαστον ὡς ἔχει τοῦ εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας.

²⁸ "Was ist das—die Philosophie?" GA 11: 7-26.

²⁹ GA 9: 103.2-6

³⁰ GA 9: 113.2-10.

³¹ GA 11: 7.32-34: ". . . uns selbst angeht, uns berührt (nous touche), und zwar uns in unserem Wesen."

³² Gide made his comment—"C'est avec des beaux sentiments que l'on fait la mauvaise litt erature"—en passant in remarks about William Blake in the fifth of his six conf erences delivered in 1922 at the Th eatre du Vieux-Colombier: Andr e Gide, *Dostoievsky (Articles et causeries)*, Paris: Plon, 1923, 247.17-19.

The word φιλοσοφία does not occur in Heraclitus (fl. 500 BCE). Instead one finds only φιλόσοφος (in the plural) in fragment 35, where Heraclitus says that only those who are “learned in a great many things” merit that title.³³ Heidegger claims that the φιλέω piece of Heraclitus’ φιλόσοφος does not mean *striving* for σοφία, in the sense of an ὄρεξις or ἔρωσ. Rather, it refers to being *already attuned to* and *in harmony with* what σοφία is about. He bases this interpretation on fragments 50 and 51, specifically on the verb ὁμολογέω (“to be in accord with, to correspond to”) and the noun ἄρμονή.

50: οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι.

51: . . . διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογεῖ· παλίντροπος ἄρμονή ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης.

Roughly: If we have listened to the λόγος, we will understand that to be σοφός is to be attuned to the basic factum. Here that factum is called

- λόγος, in the sense of the ingathering
- in which all that is borne apart (διαφερόμενον, τὰ πάντα)
- is gathered up and held in the unity (ἐν)
- of a tense harmony (παλίντροπος ἄρμονή),
- that is like a tightly strung bow or lyre (ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης).

Heidegger argues that by the time of Plato and Aristotle, some two centuries later, the harmonious attunement that once defined Heraclitus’ φιλόσοφος had devolved into a *striving* for σοφία. What is more, Plato declares that the source of such striving is πάθος. After Theaetetus has expressed his wonderment at matters related to becoming, Socrates responds:

μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη. (*Theaetetus* 155d2-4)

This kind of πάθος—wondering, marveling—is the basic characteristic of the φιλόσοφος, the one who strives for wisdom. In fact, there is no other ἀρχή of philosophy than such wonder.

As the ἀρχή of philosophy, the πάθος of marveling or wondering is not just what gets philosophy going, only to be left behind. An ἀρχή is both the source and the sustaining, the origin and ordering, of something. Wonder not only kick-starts the philosophical life but also maintains it throughout.

But what is this πάθος? Is Plato saying philosophy is based on and sustained by feelings? Heidegger’s discussion moves πάθος out of the psychological realm of existential emotions and into the existential structure of ex-sistence. As he had previously done with *Beindlichkeit* (SZ § 29), here Heidegger interprets πάθος as the existential structure that he calls *Stimmung*: attunement to *Sein*. But that very phrase (“attunement to. . .”) harbors the possibility of a ruinous error, that of dividing ex-sistence from the factum by declaring “the one” (ex-sistence) to be *attuned to* “the other” (*Sein*).

³³ Fragment 35: χρὴ γὰρ εἶ μάλα πολλῶν ἱστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας εἶναι. The noun ἱστορ (here in the accusative plural; it is the etymon of “history”) is related to οἶδα, the perfect form of the presumed *εἶδω, which means to know in the sense of “having seen,” i.e., learned from experience.

The transitive verb *stimmen* (whose first meaning is “to tune an instrument”) can abet this error if we think of this existential *Stimmung* in terms of tuning in music. Before the symphony begins, the oboist sounds an A 440, and the other members of the orchestra reproduce that note at the same 440 cycles per second on their own instruments. The oboist and her instrument have thus “tuned” the orchestra. Likewise, when a tuning fork is struck, it can set another tuning fork vibrating at the same frequency. So analogously, doesn’t *Sein* “attune” our ex-sistence by sending out the ontological vibes that set us resonating in correspondence with *Sein*?

Along with the “tuning” image, Heidegger employs a call-and-response metaphor. When he reads the factum in terms of the Heraclitean λόγος and says ex-sistence cor-responds to it (ὁμολογεῖν, *entsprechen*), he seems to imply there is a separate something *to* which ex-sistence responds and *by* which is attuned. He speaks of the *Stimme* and *Zuspruch des Seyns*—the voice of Being that calls and claims (*spricht zu*) ex-sistence. This trope—*Sein* calling to Dasein (like Augustine’s *abyssus abyssum invocat*) and Dasein responding to *Sein*—reinforces the notion that there are indeed *two* moments within the factum rather than an undifferentiated singularity.

If that were the case, Heidegger’s thought would devolve into one more iteration of the subject-object split, a crypto-metaphysics structured around a mysterious Super-*Sein* that plays hide-and-seek, occasionally giving itself to Dasein, but lately (and disastrously) withholding itself.

We need to shift away from the images of tuning and cor-response and, along with that, radically revise our understanding of what Heidegger means by *Stimmung* and *Entsprechen*. In “What Is Philosophy?” he reads the single, undivided factum in terms of ex-sistence as *bestimmt*. According to the brothers Grimm, the verb *bestimmen* corresponds to the Latin *constituere* and the Greek καθίστημι, both of which, as transitive, are causative verbs: “to set something in a place, to bring it into a certain condition, to establish it.” Three remarks are in order here:

1. Ex-sistence’s *Bestimmt-sein* is its condition of having been de-*fin*-ed or de-*term*-ined, i.e., brought to its *finis/terminus/τέρμα/τέλος*. Those terms refer *not* to the point where ex-sistence breaks off and is no more, but rather to the achieved and fulfilled state of ex-sistence, its proper way of being.
2. *Bestimmt-sein* is a reinscription of what the early Heidegger had called *Geworfenheit* and later termed *Ereignet-sein*. All three terms refer to the same single factum: ex-sistence as having always already been appropriated to its *proprium*, its τέλος, to what and how it essentially is: thrown open as the clearing.
3. Just as, with *Geworfenheit/Ereignetsein*, there is no agent that throws or appropriates ex-sistence into being the clearing, so too with *Bestimmt-sein*: there is no supervenient Being that “calls,” “claims,” or “attunes” (i.e., determines or defines) ex-sistence *ab extra*, the way an efficient cause *qua* ποιητικόν would effect a change in the patient *qua* παθητικόν. And yet πάθος lies at the heart of Heidegger’s project, although it is now understood not in terms of passing emotions but as only another name for the existential structure of ex-sistence, the equivalent of *Geworfenheit* and *Ereignetsein*.

The crux of the matter lies in how Heidegger understands the word “relation” (*Bezug*), and for that we turn to the “Conversation with a Japanese Professor,” where Heidegger defines what he means by the “hermeneutical *Bezug*” of ex-sistence and *Sprache*.

By *Sprache* he does not mean either the system or elements of human communication, whatever form that might take. Rather, *Sprache* refers to Heraclitean λόγος as found in fragment 50: the clearing as the possibility of intelligibility. And Heidegger radically redefines ex-sistence’s *Bezug* or “relation to” the clearing. It is emphatically *not* about a connection between two things, and especially not a “two-sided” relation of the form “*Dasein* \leftrightarrow *Seyn*.”

Wohl dagegen möchte das Wort “Bezug” sagen, der Mensch sei in seinem Wesen gebraucht, gehöre als das Wesende, der er ist in einen Brauch, der ihn beansprucht.³⁴

That is: The word “*Bezug*” refers to our fate of being *needed and required* to sustain and in fact to *be* the clearing. This *Bezug* is not a relation between any “two,” whatever they might be, but instead indicates the *one-sided* existential fact that without us there is no in-break into the solid fullness of things, no open region for synthesizing and distinguishing, and therefore no possibility of meaning.³⁵ Our thrown-openness *as* the clearing is here expressed as the “claim” on our ex-sistence, our “fatedness” to being needed for there to be intelligibility at all.

The clearing is not something other than ex-sistence, something we could “enter into” from outside or “relate to” as other than our ex-sistence, Heidegger insists that we stop talking about “relating *to*” the clearing. (“Darum dürfen wir auch nicht mehr sagen: Bezug zur. . . .”)³⁶ There’s nothing to relate “to”—first of all because the clearing is not “something” and secondly because the clearing is nothing other than our own ex-sistence, understood in terms of “das Walten des Brauches,” the powerful “needed-ness” that has always already defined and determined us to be thrown open as the clearing.³⁷

In that sense, Heidegger says, our thrownness means we do not “belong to ourselves”³⁸ so much as we are at the service of, in thrall to, the possibility of meaning, which is—call it as you will—our *raison d’être*, our *Worumwillen*, our οὐ ἔνεκα, our τέλος, our essence, in short: what we cannot not be. In SZ Heidegger writes that “ex-sistence is thrown, [i.e.,] brought into its openness *not* of its own accord.”³⁹ Years later he wrote: “Geworfen—nicht aus sich. / Woher anders denn aus Seyn selber? / *Ereignis*.”⁴⁰ Both texts say the same thing. The condition of being thrown open or ap-propri-ated has always already been “done unto” us. By what? By the factum itself—but not as an agent *ab extra* (the hypostasized “Being” of Heideggerian mythology) but by our very facticity as πάθος.

³⁴ GA 12: 119.8-10.

³⁵ Re “in-break”: GA 9: 105.7, “Einbruch.”

³⁶ GA 12: 119.25.

³⁷ GA 12: 119.35.

³⁸ Cf. GA 11:160.26-27.

³⁹ SZ 284.11–12: “Seiend ist das Dasein geworfenes, *nicht* von ihm selbst in sein Da gebracht.”

⁴⁰ GA 78: 335.10–12.

Heidegger derives much of what he has to say about thrownness, appropriation, *Bestimmtheit* and the like from Aristotle's treatment of δύναμις τοῦ παθεῖν in *Metaphysics IX* (on δύναμις cf. *ibid.* V 12). The verb πάσχω and the noun πάθος bespeak a certain passivity (πάθησις) in a thing, in the sense of the ability to undergo, receive, or "suffer"—i.e., bear up under—some action or activity (ποίησις) that might be visited upon it.⁴¹ Aristotle's treatment of the δύναμις τοῦ παθεῖν in *Metaphysics IX* is about the being of *things*, but Heidegger radically adapts that to the structure of human being itself, where πάθος now bespeaks the fundamental facticity of ex-sistence.

We have always already "suffered" the burden of thrown-openness as the clearing. No prior agent has acted upon ex-sistence, forced facticity upon us, thrown us into being-needed for the sake of intelligibility at all. To say that facticity has always already been "done unto us" is a round-about way of saying that it is the fundamental "given" of our ex-sistence, back behind which we cannot go. Finally, therefore, πάθος is our facticity, and our facticity is itself the factum.

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⁴¹ Alternately it can also indicate the ability to *resist* a certain action or activity, but that sense is not front and center here.