

## FOREWORD

With the publication of *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [GA 65] and the four works following it (GA 66, GA 69, GA 70, GA 71), commenting on Heidegger seems to have entered a new phase. Upon availability of this pentalogy, the only viable interpretive approach to Heidegger's work entails the pathway or pathways he has traversed. Did he have in mind this approach and its concomitant relinquishing of the grammatically founded criteria when referring to the world renowned dictionary and grammar book called Duden he said, "when in doubt always take a stance against Duden"? In raising this question, we recognize that the pathway that Heidegger cleared must vigilantly be maintained by those who share his common mission.

In this spirit, we give special thanks to the 91 year old Herr Dr. Hermann Heidegger, the executor of Martin Heidegger's literary remains, for permission to publish an English translation of a previously published essay from the philosopher's Nachlaß: "Beiträge zur Philosophie—Da-sein und Das Seyn (Ereignis)," first appearing in *Heidegger Studies*, 23 (2007): 9–17. Our thanks also go to Herr Prof. Dr. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and his wife Frau Dr. Veronika von Herrmann for their invaluable help in obtaining the photo of the philosopher. Finally, we wish to thank Dr. Cristian Ciocan, the Director of Zeta Books, for his guidance in seeing this book through publication.

Parvis Emad  
Frank Schalow



## PREFACE

The following essays present the attempts I have made to step into and traverse a stretch of the pathway or pathways that Martin Heidegger has traversed before me and whose written records constitute his philosophical legacy. Unlike the 1920s and the 1930s, today this legacy is recognized as a pervasive force in philosophy and has drawn the interest, the attention, and the energies of a widespread and varied international body of scholars. The responses given to this legacy are so varied and manifold that their numbers alone seem to surpass those given so far to Nietzsche and Hegel. It would seem no exaggeration to maintain that Heidegger has elicited so much interest and reaction as to invite comparison with the multitude of responses hitherto made to Plato and Aristotle.

Since the essays appearing in this volume wily nilly refer to the same domain occupied by other works devoted to Heidegger, it would be appropriate to indicate how these essays differ from other works exploring his philosophy. For cohabitating the same domain does not preclude the need for making clear that these essays part company with other responses given to Heidegger's legacy. As a preparatory step for highlighting this parting, let me divide the hitherto given responses to that legacy according to their common traits. To address this issue, I must identify the models of thinking that have given shape to the hitherto responses to his legacy. What are these models and what are their common traits?

In the order of appearance and in terms of the popularity of its implementation the first model that comes to mind is the

model of chronological thinking. It is ironic that this model becomes predominant, even though Heidegger is the first thinker to unmask the unoriginal nature of the chronological concept of time. This model is distinguished by its unwavering and unquestioned commitment to the chronological sequence in which Heidegger's works were written and were published. All the interpretations of Heidegger's work that ensue from this model of thinking, never question the philosophical legitimacy of the chronological approach. This is nowhere more clearly evident than in the idea sustaining this model—the idea purporting that Heidegger's 'earlier' works are 'less perfect' than the works he wrote 'later'. Going through Heidegger's oeuvre with this idea as a guide, the chronological model of thinking ends up with bifurcating Heidegger's thought into a "Heidegger I" and a "Heidegger II" with a "reversal" occurring between the two.<sup>1</sup> What further distinguishes the chronological model of thinking in its application to Heidegger's works is the unacknowledged aspiration of this model to obtaining an account of Heidegger's thought as a whole. The response that is molded by the chronological model of thinking leaves nothing to chance because it wants to obtain a 'completeness of presentation' that would rival what is known in modern philosophy as the system—it wants to achieve a historical analogue of the system.

The next model of thinking that has shaped the responses to Heidegger's work and legacy is also marked by the commitment to the chronological order in which this work is written and published except that now the approach through chronology becomes totally subservient to the idea of 'historical influence.' At stake here is not primarily interpreting Heidegger's output, but determining whose influence he received first and whose influence thereafter. Heidegger's legacy is now viewed as essentially a

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<sup>1</sup> One of the outstanding examples of applying the chronological model is William J. Richardson's tome, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

patchwork of historically identifiable influences. The received historical influences become so determinative that as a consequence the question of being loses all significance and guiding power and becomes an 'ethereal question.' What in the purview of the chronological model of thinking appeared to be "less perfect" now will be identified as "the zero point" of Heidegger's philosophy. By the same token, what the chronological model of thinking considered to be "more perfect" will now gradually and steadily lead to absorbing manifold historical influences, and at the end becoming a historically well rounded philosophy completely ready to be mastered.<sup>2</sup>

The next model of thinking that has shaped some of the well-known and influential responses to Heidegger's legacy is the model of associative thinking. This model is distinguished by its irresistible predilection to associate a given Heideggerian thought-unit with a similar sounding idea or theory found somewhere in the vast repository of philosophy or literature. As long as that idea has been found embedded in a text, that idea is a candidate for being associated with a given Heideggerian thought-unit. The associative model of thinking takes on many guises some of which are sophisticated and some naïve. From the sophisticated ones I should mention the model of associative thinking utilized by the French *déconstruction*. What distinguishes *déconstruction's* use of this model is that the French *déconstruction* unilaterally and conveniently decides to forget the question of being, to set it aside and neutralize it by refusing to acknowledge that as a question the question of being does not belong to the genre of 'judgment,' 'assessment,' 'discernment,' 'discrimination,' 'perception,' and the like. Steadfastly and relentlessly agonizing over what the French *déconstruction* calls a text, this instance of associative thinking is marked by the refusal to see that when it

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<sup>2</sup> One of the most ambitious examples of this patchwork theory guided and shaped by chronology is T. Kiesel's *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

comes to the question of being and to the thinking that originates from within this question, contrary to the dogma of *déconstruction*, definitely there is something else beside the text—something that countermands the equality of status that *déconstruction* is keen to attribute to the texts whether they originate in philosophy or in literature. The decisive fact for understanding the ramifications of the associative model of thinking, as used by French *déconstruction*, is that the Heideggerian writings and the texts belonging to literature are not of equal rank and of equal birth right. In Heidegger's case, the writings at issue ensue from the question of being, and in the case of literature they do not.<sup>3</sup>

From the philosophically uninformed and naïve responses to Heidegger's legacy that are shaped by the use of the model of associative thinking, I should only mention the recent efforts that conveniently associate Heidegger's thought with Germany's National Socialism. The use of the model of associative thinking in discussing Nazism is naïve because instead of taking up the far more formidable task of interpreting Heidegger's thought, these efforts take a short cut thereby bypassing Heidegger's philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Let me conclude by mentioning the theological model of thinking. This model has shaped a considerable segment of the responses hitherto given to Heidegger's thought. What distinguishes this model is the foundational distinction to which it is committed, namely that thinking of god need not be confused with thinking of being. At its core the theological model of thinking is consumed by the assumption that to think properly about god is the prerogative of theological thinking. Viewed from the standpoint of this prerogative, the entire Heideggerian

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<sup>3</sup> The recent book of Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire, La bête et le souverain* unsurpassably exemplifies associative thinking in that here Derrida conveniently ignores the question of being and thereupon associates Heidegger's *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit* with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

<sup>4</sup> See Emmanuel Faye's *Heidegger: L'introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).

thought on the question of god becomes either discreditable or rejected as a misunderstanding, or branded as an aberration and irrelevancy.<sup>5</sup>

Having identified various models of thinking that have shaped the present responses to Heidegger's legacy, I must now ask which model of thinking has shaped the essays presented in this volume. The simple answer to this question is that these essays are not shaped by any model of thinking. The thinking that has shaped these essays is a thinking that, upon entering into and traversing a stretch of the Heideggerian pathway, has made its own the following three insights from *Beiträge*. First, the insight that being (*Sein, enowning, Ereignis*) is the most strange and non-ordinary. Intimately linked to this insight is the second one: the question of being (*die Seinsfrage*) is a question of and by being. Here the translation into English of the German genitive 'des' as 'of and by' is paramount. Inseparable from this insight is the third one: the question of being when conceived as the question of and by being, is the first decisive, telling and guiding indicator that being as the most strange and non-ordinary 'wants,' 'likes' to enter human thinking and thereby tracing a pathway in that thinking.

The essays offered in this volume do not depend on a preconceived model of thinking because having entered into the pathway that Heidegger has traversed, these essays take their orientation from the 'giving-refusal' that is the hallmark of the pathway character of the thinking that is of and by being. The thinking that has shaped these essays does not need a model, because this thinking has learned from *Beiträge* the futility of seeking short cuts, the uselessness of chronology and the waste of energy that is used up in relentlessly dissecting the words (as *déconstruction* does) after severing them from the question of *of and by* being. The thinking that has shaped these essays does not need to follow a preconceived model, because in the final analysis this thinking

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding the foundational distinction between thinking of god and thinking of being, see Jean Luc Marion's *Dieu sans l'être* (PUF, 1991).

has learned from *Beiträge* that what thinking needs is above all a “leap” into the thinking of and by being.

Let me bring this preface to close by thanking Frank Schalow for taking this volume under his care. It is with special gratitude that I remember his initial response to these essays when he offered both to edit and write an introduction to them. His generosity brings to mind Periander’s words that Heidegger placed at the very beginning of *Mindfulness*: “μελέτα τὸ παν—take into care beings in the whole.”

Winona, MN, April 2012

Parvis Emad