

HEIDEGGER'S GRAND (PASCALIAN) STRATEGY: ON THE PROBLEM OF REINTERPRETING THE EXISTENTIALIA

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In writings published after the Second World War, Martin Heidegger reinterpreted the ontological concepts by means of which he had characterized human existence in *Sein und Zeit* (1927), and he claimed that his new definitions revealed the real meaning of these "existentialia." One might wonder what justifies or explains Heidegger's surprising procedure. According to the solution to this problem proposed here, *Sein und Zeit* and the later works belong together as the two stages of a unified grand strategy of religious apologetics.

Many interpretative studies on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger suffer from one of the following two defects. Either they consist of learned summaries of Heidegger's writings, using an idiom and a style of argument akin to those of Heidegger himself (Biemel, Greisch, Grondin, Kisiel, Kockelmans, Werner Marx, Pöggeler, Richardson, Schirmacher, Thomä, von Herrmann, etc.), or they try to clarify Heidegger's thought by assimilating it to more familiar positions, such as that of the later Wittgenstein (Dreyfus), a verificationist transcendental philosophy (Okrent), or Pragmatism (Rorty). In the first case, very few problems of interpretation are really solved, whereas with regard to the latter type of studies one often wonders whether Heidegger's real intentions are not covered up by the interpretative model adopted.

These defects can be avoided only by introducing more rigorous methods of interpretation into Heidegger scholarship. Problems of interpretation must be constructed explicitly and with care on the basis of a survey of all relevant texts. Several interpretative hypotheses that purport

to solve a problem must be examined and tested by exploring their explanatory power. Then the best hypothesis will be selected, using criteria of clarity, charity, historical plausibility, and textual adequacy. Without a meticulous historical interpretation of Heidegger's works the attempt to make up our minds about his philosophy is futile: we simply do not know whether we have Heidegger himself in view.

In this paper I shall try to apply somewhat sketchily such a more rigorous historical method of interpretation in order to solve a problem that has bothered Heidegger scholars for the last forty years: the problem of Heidegger's reinterpretation of the *existentialia*. The proposed solution contains the key to understanding Heidegger's problematic notion of a *Kehre* (turn), and it gives an account of the unity of Heidegger's *Denkweg* (path of thought) from long before *Sein und Zeit* to the last works.

I. CONSTRUCTING THE PROBLEM

Both in *Sein und Zeit* (1927, *Being and Time*) and in the later works that have been published after the Second World War, Heidegger insisted that his thought focuses on one question only, the celebrated *question of being*. In the two published divisions of *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger tried to elaborate this question by sketching a fundamental ontology of *Dasein* or human existence, using the mutually incompatible methods of phenomenology and hermeneutics. He claimed that traditional categories of philosophy were not adequate for understanding the ontological constitution of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world, and he tried to develop a new system of categories for human existence, the so-called "existentialia." *Sein und Zeit* has a distinctive transcendental flavor, which was strengthened in the final draft of the book.¹ Heidegger's tenets that the analysis of *Dasein* has primacy in elaborating the question of being (SZ, §§ 2 and 4), and that there are "truth" and "being" only as long as *Dasein* exists, seem to suggest that *Dasein* is the transcendental agent in human beings.² Only because *Dasein* projects a transcendental and global framework of significant relations as a background of intelligibility ("being"), can individual entities show up for us as available (*Zeug*), as occurrent (*Vorhanden*), or as belonging to nature as a mysterious force. In sections 12–24 and especially 69b Heidegger explicitly argues that scientific investigations and scientific facts depend on such a projected transcendental framework, and that the framework of science is secondary and impoverished in relation to our primary and meaningful world of everyday life. Pseudo problems such as the problem of the external world would arise only if we overlooked this primordial phenomenon of "world" and erroneously regarded scientific conceptions as fundamental (§ 43a).

In the later works, Heidegger's question of being shows quite another aspect. "Being" is now introduced as a transcendent agency or event, that sends (*schickt*) us humans historical epochs as our fate (*Geschick*), and that conceals itself in the Process. The history of these epochs is the deep history of Being (*Seinsgeschichte*). Heidegger stresses that Being is not God, and, indeed, not a being at all, but yet there are many striking analogies between what Heidegger says about Being and what traditional Christian theologians tell us about God. For example, Heidegger's theme of the "oblivion of Being" resembles the Christian doctrine of the *deus absconditus*, which was stressed by Pascal. And Heidegger's later "preparatory" thought, which aims at opening up human existence to Another Beginning (*Andere Anfang*), resembles the Christian preparation for the Second Coming and for divine grace. Whereas in *Sein und Zeit* there is a priority of Dasein in relation to *Sein*, because *Sein* depends on Dasein as a transcendental agent, in the later works this relation of priority is reversed: Dasein is said to depend on *Sein* as an agent or event which is radically transcendent to the totality of beings, and the former term is defined merely in relation to the latter. In Heidegger's later philosophy, the methods of phenomenology and hermeneutics are abandoned, and the systematic style of exposition of *Sein und Zeit* gives way to other and more impressionistic styles: there are essays, dialogues, elucidations of poetry, occasional lectures, and letters.

One of the most crucial interpretative questions concerning Heidegger's philosophy is what explains and justifies such a reversal or "turn" (*die Kehre*) from a purely secular ontology of human existence to a style of thinking that strikingly resembles traditional monotheist thought without being identical with monotheism. I shall address this overwhelming issue via a detour, by tackling a more specific problem of interpretation. In many writings published after the Second World War, notably in *Brief über den "Humanismus"* (1947, *Letter on Humanism*) and in the introduction of 1949 to the inaugural lecture of 1929, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (*What is Metaphysics?*), Heidegger proposed an authoritative auto-interpretation of several central existentialia of *Sein und Zeit*, such as *Wahrheit* (truth), *Entwurf* (projection), *Welt* (world), *Lichtung* (clearing), *Da* (the "there"), *Existenz* (existence), *Sorge* (concern, care), and *Sinn* (sense). By integrating the existentialia of *Sein und Zeit* into his later works, Heidegger forged a terminological bond between his *chef-d'oeuvre* of 1927 and the writings published twenty or more years later. At first, a number of "faithful" commentators, such as P. Fürstenau, Heinrich Ott, O. Pöggeler, W. Richardson, and F. Wiplinger, endorsed as historically correct Heidegger's auto-interpretations of the existentialia

of *Sein und Zeit*. If a philosopher of Heidegger's stature interprets his own works, should we not accept his auto-interpretations as normative and definitive?

However, more critical readers of Heidegger, such as Karl Löwith, soon discovered a discrepancy between the meaning which the existentialia had in *Sein und Zeit* and Heidegger's later definitions.³ What is more, the new definitions seemed to contradict those of *Sein und Zeit*. In 1927, the existentialia that I mentioned had a clear transcendental meaning. According to *Sein und Zeit*, "truth" in the transcendental sense is Dasein's being-uncovering, which is a condition for the possibility that things show up for us. "World" is a structure of significant relations, projected by Dasein, and Dasein is the transcendental projecting agent. Sense is defined as the "upon-which" of primary projection, and the *Da* of Dasein is the ultimate light-giving source, the "clearing," which enables things to appear and to be meaningful. In 1947 and 1949, Heidegger gave a very different interpretation of these existentialia, which is incompatible with the definitions of 1927. Truth is now called "the truth of Being" and Being is the ultimate light-giving source. Projection (*Entwurf*) is redefined as the ec-static relation of Dasein to the clearing of Being, and what throws in projecting is not Dasein but Being itself. Whereas in *Sein und Zeit*, project(ion) (*Entwurf*) and thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) were opposite existentialia, they are identified after the War and denote the fact that man is thrown into existence by Being. Finally, sense is redefined as the "truth of Being," so that Being and not Dasein is the ultimate source of sense and significance.

In a long-winded study of 1964, von Herrmann confirmed Löwith's thesis that the existentialia had been reinterpreted by Heidegger.⁴ But neither von Herrmann nor, as far as I know, anyone else solved the urgent problem of interpretation that this confirmation raised: how could Heidegger masquerade his reinterpretation of the existentialia as an authentic and authoritative interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*? Of course an author is permitted to redefine the key concepts of his earlier work. But it seems to be misleading, and even perverse, if the author pretends that the reinterpretation is a correct and authoritative interpretation of the original concepts.⁵ Clearly, Heidegger's auto-interpretations cannot be normative for our exegesis of *Sein und Zeit*; they rather belong to the texts to be interpreted. What, if anything, justified Heidegger's procedure? What was its point? These are the questions to which I refer as "the problem of reinterpreting the existentialia."

II. SOME RIVAL HYPOTHESES

The problem of reinterpreting the existentialia is not easily resolved. Löwith could not discover a philosophical justification of Heidegger's procedure. He argued that Heidegger tried to conceal the abyss between *Sein und Zeit* and the later works by recycling the existentialia after the War, thereby suggesting a greater unity of his *Denkweg* than in fact there is. In particular, Löwith was not able to understand why Heidegger claimed after the War that *Sein und Zeit* still remained a necessary road to the question of Being as understood later on, if the later notions of Dasein and Being are opposites of those of *Sein und Zeit*.⁶ Why would a preparatory analysis of Dasein still be necessary, if man does not exist independently but only as a project of Being (*Wurf des Seins*)?⁷ As I shall argue, Löwith touched upon the truth when he mentioned a religious yearning as Heidegger's deepest philosophical motive.⁸ But his explanation of Heidegger's procedure is not a justification and it has to be rejected as uncharitable.

In the literature we find a number of other proposed solutions to our problem. It is argued, for instance, that *Sein und Zeit* and the later works simply describe one and the same relation between Dasein and Being from two different perspectives, first from Dasein's point of view and later from Being's perspective.⁹ This solution fails, because it is not the case that the same relation is described: as the *relata* are defined differently in *Sein und Zeit* and in the later works, the relations that hold between them will be different. A third view is that Heidegger's later interpretation of the existentialia is justified by his conception of *Seinsgeschichte*. From the vantage point of the later Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* might be interpreted as an abortive attempt to break free from the modern subjectivist metaphysical tradition.¹⁰ At many places, Heidegger seems to suggest such a view, but it does not solve our problem either: interpreting *Sein und Zeit* as an abortive attempt to transcend subjectivist metaphysics would leave the original definitions of the existentialia intact. A fourth view takes Heidegger's early notion of hermeneutics as a lead. According to the hermeneutic doctrine, all interpretations are historically situated. As a consequence, the ontology of Dasein and Being in *Sein und Zeit* "is itself characterized by historicity."¹¹ This insight allegedly necessitates a later hermeneutic auto-interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*, in which the book is situated historically, for instance as a stage in the development of transcendental philosophy after Kant and the Neo-Kantians. But again, such an account neither explains nor justifies Heidegger's drastic reinterpretation of the existentialia.

The same criticism rules out further theories that explain the transition to the later works by pointing out shortcomings of *Sein und Zeit*, for instance that human finitude is not described in a radical way.¹² And finally there are the quitters, such as Jürgen Habermas, who argue that no internal reconstruction of the transition from *Sein und Zeit* to Heidegger's postwar publications is possible. Hence this transition has to be explained by external factors, such as Hitler's defeat.¹³ This is an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. As we will see, an internal reconstruction is possible, and the methodology of interpretation prescribes that internal reconstructions have priority over explanations on the basis of external circumstances.

I want to propose a very different hypothesis, which, even though it may seem utterly implausible at first sight, is very probably true because it fully explains and justifies Heidegger's reinterpretation of the existentialia, and because the evidence for it is compelling. According to this hypothesis, *Sein und Zeit* and the later works are related to each other as the two stages of a Pascalian Strategy. Let me first explain what a Pascalian Strategy is. After his religious experience of 23 November 1654, the gifted mathematician, physicist, and dandy Blaise Pascal decided to write an apologia of Christianity, the unfinished manuscript of which was in part published posthumously as *Pensées*.¹⁴ Being versed in logic and having studied the art of persuasion, Pascal realized that the traditional proofs of God's existence are ineffective as an apologetic strategy. Moreover, as a Jansenist, Pascal rejected the philosophical theology of Descartes and the Schools for the same reasons as Luther used against Aristotle: that it was concerned with the God of the philosophers and not with "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Pascal wanted to convince the unbeliever by appealing to reasons of the heart, reasons which Reason cannot grasp. He invented a two-stage strategy of Christian apologetics.¹⁵

In the first stage, which is a secular analysis of human existence without God, Pascal attempts to demonstrate that man without God is miserable and an enigma to himself. In order to convince unbelievers who enjoy life, he argues that whenever we are happy or engaged in fulfilling activities, we are on the run from ourselves and live in diversion (*divertissement*). As soon as we see ourselves as we really are, we grasp the misery of worldly life. In the second, theological stage, Pascal then attempts to show that Christianity explains man's puzzling nature and makes him happy, holding out the prospect of eternal bliss. The first stage of Pascal's apologetic strategy is effective if the reader is filled with disgust for life in the world and ready for something radically different which, however, only God's grace can bestow upon her or him.

From a worldly perspective, this Other Possibility is of course nonexistent, a "nothing."

Heidegger read Pascal early in his life. According to Löwith, Heidegger had portraits of Pascal and Dostojewski on his desk in his Freiburg period of 1918–1923.¹⁶ It is my hypothesis that from his earliest sketch of a hermeneutics of Dasein in 1922 onwards, Heidegger wanted to elaborate a more systematic version of Pascal's secular analysis of human existence, which would prepare himself and his readers for divine grace.¹⁷ In 1927, he finally published a more or less final version as *Sein und Zeit*. Indeed, there are striking parallels between *Sein und Zeit* and Pascal's analysis of the human condition. For instance, both Pascal and Heidegger generalize the commonsensical idea that we sometimes divert ourselves (*divertissement*) or that we are sometimes not ourselves (*uneigentlich*) into the doctrine that this is *nearly always* the case, thereby suggesting that our life-in-this-world is fundamentally flawed.

If *Sein und Zeit* was meant as a first stage of a Pascalian Strategy, what is the second stage in Heidegger's *oeuvre*? I suggest that this second stage went through at least two and perhaps three different phases. First, there was a metaphysical and Christian phase, starting with the inaugural lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?* (*What is Metaphysics?*) of 1929, in which Heidegger summons us in true mystical fashion to "release ourselves into Nothingness."¹⁸ Second, whereas Heidegger in 1929 still longed for the Grace of the Christian God, although he had rejected the "system of Catholicism" and the traditional Protestant doctrines, he discovered in 1932–1933 that God is dead, and he stressed this Nietzschean doctrine in his rectoral address of 1933.¹⁹ It now seemed to him that the German Revolution of the Nazis was like a revelation, and he stressed that Hitler alone was the "present-day and future German reality and its law."²⁰ Third, during 1936–1938 Heidegger forged his later philosophico-religious terminology, writing the 933 pages of his second main book, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Contributions to Philosophy)* which functioned as the inspirational source of the later writings.²¹ The Christian God is now seen as an idol that obscured the real transcendent source of meaning and history: Being (*das Seyn*). This latter phase may be called post-monotheist, because Heidegger wanted to replace Christianity by his Thinking of Being (*post-monotheist*) whereas Thinking of Being retains striking features of Christianity (*post-monotheist*); for instance, Being is One and Unique.

There are many problems of interpretation concerning Heidegger's post-monotheist Thinking of Being that remain unresolved and have to remain unresolved here. For example: what was its point and what was its relation to Nazism? Did Heidegger's Thinking of Being as

formulated in *Beiträge* imply a total rejection of Nazism, as Silvio Vietta and others have argued, or was it rather an attempt, in the tradition of Paul Delagarde and other German nationalist theologians, to back up the Nazi revolution with an authentic German religion? The latter hypothesis would explain many features of Heidegger's new philosophical religion, such as the fact that in his reconstruction of the Western metaphysical tradition, Heidegger stressed the Greco-German axis and played down the importance of Judeo-Christian influences.

III. CORROBORATION

In order to corroborate this interpretative hypothesis of a Pascalian Grand Strategy in Heidegger's *Denkweg*, a strategy that links *Sein und Zeit* to the later works, we have to show first how the hypothesis solves the problem of reinterpreting the existentialia. As the reinterpretation supposedly belongs to (the third, (post-)theological phase of) the second stage of Heidegger's Pascalian Strategy, the problem fits in with a larger issue: what is the relation between fundamental ontology in the sense of a secular philosophical hermeneutic of Dasein on the one hand, and theology on the other hand? In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger did not raise this problem explicitly, even though it is implied by the text. As is clear from section 3 of that book, he considered theology as a "positive science" and claimed that all positive sciences have to be based upon a priori regional ontologies of their domain, in which the relevant fundamental concepts are developed. These regional ontologies must be grounded in their turn by a fundamental ontology, which comprises the transcendental ontology of Dasein. In other words, the secular fundamental ontology of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit* functions as a foundation for theology. It is difficult to square this foundationalist view with the Paulinian and Lutheran notion of faith and theology that Heidegger also endorsed in 1927. As he says, Christian dogmatic theology should seek "a more primordial interpretation of Man's Being towards God, prescribed by the meaning of faith itself and remaining within it."²² The reason is that God is present to us only in faith, and that faith is a gift from God. How can such a dogmatics be also based upon a purely secular ontology of Dasein? Is this secular ontology not incompatible with theology?

In a crucial lecture delivered on 9 March 1927, "Phänomenologie und Theologie" (*Phenomenology and Theology*), Heidegger elaborated and solved the problem by distinguishing two levels.²³ He argued that on the level of actual human existence, philosophy and faith are "deadly enemies": philosophy as a form of life is "free questioning by a Dasein that stands on itself" whereas life in faith is "not in its own power." If God

bestows grace upon an individual Dasein, it "becomes a servant because it is brought before God, thereby being reborn." Dasein's rebirth in faith is a transformation (*Umstellung*) of human existence by God's mercy. However, on the level of the intellectual disciplines that conceptualize these opposite forms of life, the ontology of Dasein and theology, there is a much more positive relation. The ontology of Dasein develops concepts which capture the fundamental structures of secular or worldly human existence, the existentialia. Theology has the task of conceptualizing human life as transformed by faith, that is, life-in-relation-to-God as experienced by the believer. Because it is *human life* that is transformed by faith, theology has both to rely on the existentialia as developed by philosophy and it has to transform them in accordance with the new situation of the believer, whose life is experienced as a gift from God. In other words, Heidegger's conception of the relation between a philosophical phenomenology of Dasein and a theology rooted in faith implies *that the existentialia developed by philosophy will have to be reinterpreted and turned upside down by theology*: the view of Dasein as an independent source of meaning and significance will be transformed into a view of Dasein as dependent upon God or Being. From the perspective of the believer, this latter view is the true view, so that the theological reinterpretations of the existentialia will be put forward as the true interpretations. I conclude that Heidegger's view on the relation between philosophy and theology of 1927 fully explains and justifies his later post-theological procedure of reinterpreting the existentialia, and this fact corroborates the Pascalian interpretation of Heidegger's *Denkweg*. In the second, theological stage of the Pascalian strategy, the existentialia developed in the first, secular stage will have to be turned upside down, and this drastic reinterpretation will be presented as the authentic interpretation.

Of course it may have been the case that Heidegger unified his *Denkweg* only after the Second World War, reading a Pascalian Strategy into *Sein und Zeit*.²⁴ In order to exclude this possibility, we have to substantiate the view that Heidegger saw *Sein und Zeit* as the first stage of a Pascalian Strategy already in 1927. This is not an easy task, because an ontology of Dasein cannot function as such a first stage unless it is completely secular. If the religious objectives are expressed explicitly, the unbeliever will not be seduced. How are we to show, then, that the secular ontology of Dasein was intended as the first stage of a Pascalian Strategy? Two kinds of argument may be used. First, the religious objectives of a secular ontology of Dasein will cause certain tensions and anomalies in the existential analysis, because its point is to show that secular human life in-the-world is fundamentally vitiated. Second, there may be telling

circumstantial evidence in other writings of Heidegger. Let me select two examples of each type of argument.

At least two conspicuous tensions in *Sein und Zeit* are accounted for by the Pascalian interpretation. A first tension regards Heidegger's conception of *das Man* (the one, the they, the anyone-self). In sections 25–27 Heidegger argues that “I” am not the subject of my daily life in the world; this subject is rather *das Man*. What he seems to mean is that because I am socialized into preexisting social roles, my behavior typically is not fully individualized. Usually, we behave as “one” behaves in the relevant situation. But if this is the case, and inevitably so, why does Heidegger go on to identify *das Man* with inauthenticity? As Dreyfus complains, Heidegger confuses the conformity which is constitutive of social practices with *conformism*.²⁵ The Pascalian interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* explains and justifies this “confusion”: it was Heidegger's aim in the book to show that there is something deeply flawed in our inevitable daily forms of life-in-the-world, and characterizing our role-governed behavior as inauthentic does the trick. From a religious perspective, this role- and rule-governed behavior is indeed inauthentic, because it means that we are absorbed in worldly life instead of paying heed to the transcendent, which is our most authentic possibility.

A second tension has been pointed out by Paul Edwards. In his analysis of being-towards-death, Heidegger says that death is absolutely final, because it “gives . . . Dasein nothing to be actualized, nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself be.”²⁶ If this is the case, how can Heidegger also claim that his analysis of being-towards-death “does not imply any ontical decision whether ‘after death’ still another mode of being is possible,” and that the analysis of being-towards-death is a necessary preparation for asking what is “after death?”²⁷ Edwards avows that he is “endlessly astonished that many Christians . . . are followers of Heidegger and have expressed their total acceptance of his teachings on death”: how can they endorse the view that death is absolutely final if they believe in an afterlife?²⁸ Again, the Pascalian interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* solves the difficulty. It is inherent in traditional Christian rhetoric about death to try to intensify *Angst* concerning our demise by stressing that death is a total annihilation, for if our *Angst* is intense, we will be longing for the afterlife which Christianity promises us and risk the jump into Nothingness which faith requires. This explains that Heidegger regards *Angst* as the only authentic attitude *vis-à-vis* death and condemns Stoic equanimity as inauthentic.

Let me finally mention two of the many instances of circumstantial evidence that substantiate the Pascalian interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*.²⁹ First, there are two telling footnotes, one of 1922 and one of 1929. In

1922 Heidegger claims that the philosophical hermeneutic of Dasein is atheistic in the sense that, having still a sense of God, it refrains from all "mere talk" about God: this would be the only way to stand honestly before God.³⁰ The note is explained by Heidegger's Lutheran notion of faith: because faith is a gift from a hidden God and because God only reveals himself *in* faith, a philosopher who longs for God but has not received this gift is not capable of talking about God in an adequate way. The only thing he can do is to analyze the human condition in a purely secular manner, thereby opening up for grace. In the note from 1929 Heidegger claims that with the ontology of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit* he obtained for the first time an adequate conception of Dasein on the basis of which we might wonder what ontological relation obtains between Dasein and God.³¹ If Heidegger interpreted the hermeneutic ontology of Dasein as a preparation for faith both in 1922 and in 1929, it is warranted to assume that he did so in 1927 as well.

The second piece of circumstantial evidence that I want to mention is even more decisive. In a letter to his friend Elisabeth Blochmann of 12 September 1929, Heidegger wrote that the "truth of our existence" escapes rational considerations and needs its own day, in which we "have our Dasein as a whole." Then we experience "that in all that is essential, our heart must keep itself open for grace," because "God . . . calls each of us with a different voice."³² As Heidegger made clear in sections 45–53 of *Sein und Zeit*, we "have our existence as a whole" only when we authentically anticipate death in *Angst*. The letter to Blochmann proves that Heidegger saw such an anticipation of death as a preparation for the leap into Nothingness which is a prerequisite for faith.

There is much more to *Sein und Zeit* than its hidden religious agenda, for the book is also a discussion with the philosophical tradition from Aristotle to Husserl in which Heidegger attempts to solve many important problems, and the same holds for Heidegger's later works. Yet the Pascalian interpretation is a fruitful guideline for interpreting the book and, indeed, Heidegger's *Denkweg* as a whole, which is unified in a radical way by the hypothesis of a Pascalian Grand Strategy. The interpretation sheds light on Heidegger's obscure notion of a *Kehre* (turn), which means primarily that Being turns to man again in the Other Beginning, and which is a post-monotheist analogue of Lutheran grace. As it is impossible to do justice to the complexity of Heidegger's philosophy in a short paper, I refer the reader to my book *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* for a fuller treatment of the many different *leitmotifs* in Heidegger's question of being.³³

Let me finish by answering an objection. According to my hypothesis of a Pascalian Grand Strategy, which unifies Heidegger's *Denkweg*

by linking *Sein und Zeit* to the later works as the first and the second stage of a religious enterprise, there is a hidden religious agenda in *Sein und Zeit*, which should not emerge explicitly in the text because if it did, the unbeliever would not be taken in. The purely secular and “atheist” nature of the hermeneutics of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit* is now interpreted as an ingenious religious ploy, which aims at confounding the unbeliever by putting him off guard. One might protest that this is a hypothesis of negligible testability and one might reject the evidence that I presented above as inconclusive. Is the very idea that a philosopher has a hidden agenda not in conflict with important maxims of sound interpretation? How to test an interpretative hypothesis according to which the author of the text will try to suppress all evidence of his real intentions? According to the objection, such a hypothesis is a priori illegitimate because it cannot be refuted.

I do not think that such an objection should carry any weight. First, the hypothesis of a Pascalian strategy has great problem-solving power. It is fully justified if there is no better explanation of Heidegger’s reinterpretation of the existentialia, and I hold that the circumstantial evidence which I presented is conclusive. But there is also a second reason for rejecting the objection. In a number of texts which Heidegger did not publish during his lifetime, he clearly states that there is a hidden religious agenda in his works. Let me quote only two of these passages. In section 259 of *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Contributions to Philosophy)*, written in the years 1936–1938, we read the baffling sentence: “To make oneself understood is suicidal to philosophy.”³⁴ As Heidegger explains, the rationale of this horrendous statement is that his post-theological thinking of Being can never be understood by secular thought, so that it would be suicidal to the Heideggerian philosopher if he would try to convince the unbeliever by argument and reference to “facts.” Consequently, as long as we think that we understand Heidegger’s philosophy in terms of common sense, as a variety of pragmatism for instance, we may be sure that we misunderstand him altogether.

The second text that I want to quote dates from the same period. Impressed by the fact that Nietzsche combined his philosophical development with continuous autobiographical reflections, Heidegger wrote in 1937–1938 a brief autobiographical sketch called “Mein bisheriger Weg” (“My Way Up To This Moment”), which was published in 1997 in a volume called *Besinnung (Reflection)*. From this important text, in which Heidegger describes his philosophical development starting with his dissertation on the doctrine of judgement in psychologism (1913) up to *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936–1938) I cite the most revealing passages:

But who would want to deny that on this entire road up to the present day the discussion (*Auseinandersetzung*) with Christianity went along secretly and discretely (*verschwiegen*)—a discussion which was and is not a “problem” that I picked up, but both the way to safeguard my ownmost origin—parental home, native region (*Heimat*), and youth—and painful separation from it, both in *one*. Only someone who has similar roots in a real and lived Catholic world may guess something of the necessities that were operative like subterranean seismic shocks (*unterirdische Erdstöße*) on the way of my questioning up to the present day . . .

It is not proper to talk about these most inner confrontations (*innersten Auseinandersetzungen*), which are not concerned with questions of Church doctrine and articles of faith, but only with the Unique Question, whether God is fleeing from us or not and whether we still experience this truly, that is, as creators (*als Schaffende*) . . .

What is at stake is not a mere “religious” background of philosophy either, but the Unique Question regarding the truth of Being, which alone decides about the “time” and the “place” which is kept open for us historically within the history of the Occident and its gods . . .

But because the most inner experiences and decisions remain the essential thing, for that very reason they have to be kept out of the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*).³⁵

These passages reveal that Heidegger's religious quest was always the core of his question of Being, and that he kept this quest out of the public sphere, because “the most inner experiences and decisions remain the essential thing.” As I said, Heidegger's real agenda was a hidden one, and what Heidegger produced in the public sphere as publications has to be interpreted against the background of this hidden religious inspiration.

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NOTES

1. Cf. Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 409: “The seminar experience of reading Kant's first critique and Hegel's *Logik* thus came as a precipitous creative shock to Heidegger. It had an immediate impact on the final draft of BT” Of

course there was already a dialogue with Husserl's transcendental idealism in earlier drafts.

2. *Sein und Zeit* 11th ed., (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), § 43c, 212 and § 44c, 230. Cf. also *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929), where Heidegger consistently speaks of *Dasein in man*.

3. Karl Löwith, *Heidegger, Denker in dürftiger Zeit* 3rd ed., (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), chap 1.

4. Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Die Selbstinterpretation Martin Heideggers* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1964).

5. Cf., for instance, Heidegger's *Einleitung* (1949) to *Was ist Metaphysik?* 10th ed., (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), 10: "Das Denken auf einen Weg zu bringen, durch den es in den Bezug der Wahrheit des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen gelangt, dem Denken einen Pfad zu öffnen, damit es das Sein selbst in seiner Wahrheit eigens bedenke, dahin ist das in *Sein und Zeit* versuchte Denken unterwegs." Heidegger's claim to give an authentic interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* is completely unqualified.

6. *Sein und Zeit* 7th ed., *Vorbemerkung*, p. v: "Deren Weg [the road of *Sein und Zeit*] bleibt indessen auch heute noch ein notwendiger, wenn die Frage nach dem Sein unser Dasein bewegen soll."

7. Löwith, *op. cit.*, 30f.

8. *Ibid.*, 24f.

9. Cf., for instance, W. Bretschneider, *Sein und Wahrheit* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1965); P. Fürstenau, *Heidegger. Das Gefüge seines Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1958); M. Müller, *Existenzphilosophie im geistigen Leben der Gegenwart* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1949, 1958, 1964), esp. 215–8 of the third enlarged edition (1964); J. van der Meulen, *Heidegger und Hegel oder Widerstreit und Widerspruch* (Meisenheim am Glan: Westkultur Verlag, Anton Hain, 1953); and O. Pugliese, *Vermittlung und Kehre* (Freiburg: Alber Verlag, 1965).

10. Cf. E. Fraentzki, *Die Kehre* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985); C. F. Gethmann, *Verstehen und Auslegung* (Bonn: Grundmann/Bouvier, 1974); E. Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976); and von Herrmann, *op. cit.*

11. *Sein und Zeit*, § 6, 20–21.

12. Cf. J. Grondin, *Le tournant dans la pensée de Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987).

13. Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991), 185.

14. Cf. for the complicated publication history: Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Louis Lafuma (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1963), 493f.
15. One finds more implicit versions of such a strategy in many Christian authors from St. Paul to Kierkegaard. As Pascal elaborated the strategy systematically, I name it after him.
16. Karl Löwith, *Der europäische Nihilismus, Sämtliche Schriften II* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1983), 517.
17. This first version of 1922 is Heidegger's "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles," published in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989): 235–69.
18. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, 42.
19. *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1983), 13.
20. Address to the German students of 3 November 1933, published in Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger. Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: private edition, 1962), 135f.
21. *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989).
22. Cf. SZ, § 3, p. 10: "Die *Theologie* sucht nach einer ursprünglicheren, aus dem Sinn des Glaubens selbst vorgezeichneten und innerhalb seiner verbleibenden Auslegung des Seins des Menschen zu Gott."
23. "Phänomenologie und Theologie," published in the second edition of *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1978), 47–77.
24. Cf. the quote in note 5. According to Hugo Ott, Heidegger proposed in 1945 to organise a seminar on Pascal in order to appease the French occupational authorities and to make himself popular with the French public. See Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1988), 304.
25. Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World. A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 154.
26. *Sein und Zeit*, § 53, 262.
27. *Sein und Zeit*, § 49, 247f.
28. Paul Edwards, *Heidegger on Death: A Critical Evaluation*, Monist Monograph no. 1 (La Salle, Ill.: The Hegeler Institute, 1979), 45.
29. There are many pieces of circumstantial evidence. Cf. for instance Heidegger's course of 1928, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 26 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1978), 177: "Der existenzielle Einsatz der Fundamentalontologie führt mit sich den

Schein eines extrem individualistischen, radikalen Atheismus . . . Gleichwohl darf man nicht aus dem Blick verlieren, daß mit einer solchen fundamentalontologischen Klärung noch nichts entschieden wird, vielmehr ja gerade gezeigt werden soll, daß so nichts entscheidbar ist." This text of 1928 is explained by Heidegger's Lutheran notion of faith as Grace.

30. Heidegger, "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles," 246.

31. "Vom Wesen des Grundes," note 56, in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1967), 55.

32. Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Storck (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1989), 31f.

33. To be published by Princeton University Press in December 1998.

34. *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989), 435: "Das Sichverständlichmachen ist der Selbstmord der Philosophie."

35. "Mein bisheriger Weg," *Besinnung, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 66 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1997), 415f: "Und wer wollte verkennen, daß auf diesem ganzen bisherigen Weg verschwiegen die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum mitging—eine Auseinandersetzung, die kein aufgegriffenes 'Problem' war und ist, sondern Wahrung der eigensten Herkunft—des Elternhauses, der Heimat und der Jugend—und schmerzliche Ablösung davon in *einem*. Nur wer so verwurzelt ist in einer wirklichen gelebten katholischen Welt, mag etwas von den Notwendigkeiten ahnen, die auf dem bisherigen Weg meines Fragens wie unterirdische Erdstöße wirkten . . . Es ist nicht schicklich, von diesen innersten Auseinandersetzungen zu reden, die nicht um Fragen der Dogmatik und der Glaubensartikel sich drehen, sondern nur um die Eine Frage, ob der Gott vor uns auf der Flucht ist oder nicht und ob wir selbst dieses noch wahrhaft und d. h. als Schaffende erfahren. Es handelt sich aber auch nicht um einen bloß 'religiösen' Hintergrund der Philosophie, sondern um die Eine Frage nach der Wahrheit des Seins, die allein über die 'Zeit' und den 'Ort' entscheidet, der uns geschichtlich aufbehalten ist innerhalb der Geschichte des Abendlandes und seiner Götter . . . Aber weil die innersten Erfahrungen und Entscheidungen das Wesentliche bleiben, deshalb müssen sie aus der Öffentlichkeit herausgehalten werden" (Heidegger's italics).