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Being and Politics in Post-Hegelian Subjectivism:

The benefits and limitations of a subjectivist approach to the questions of
Being and politics.

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Contents

Introduction

The question of Being, in some form or another, has occupied philosophy since its inception. It is, as Heidegger suggests, '*the* fundamental question'[1], an approach to which has often been used as a launch site for developing theories about all elements of human existence and beyond. Of particular interest to this study will be the relationship between the responses to the question of Being and politics – the extent to which ontology and political philosophy are directly connected. Implicit to this, as we shall see, is the assumption that responses to the question of Being *are* politically important. In particular, the study will discuss philosophical responses to the objectivity of Hegelian thought. In this introduction, we shall first turn to the reasons for this focus on those writing against the tendencies Hegelianism. After this, criteria for inclusion will be discussed, followed by an introduction to those thinkers to be covered and an explanation of some notable absentees.

In explaining the reasoning for the focus upon thinkers reacting against Hegelianism, the emphasis here necessarily needs to fall upon the deficiencies of Hegelianism. At this point the qualification should be added that this should not convey the impression of the opinion that philosophy would have been better off if Hegel had never existed. Karl Popper, for instance, is utterly wrong to write of Hegel that 'his philosophy exemplifies... a terrible decline in intellectual sincerity and intellectual honesty... his philosophical arguments are not to be taken seriously'.[2] Popper seeks to connect the philosophy of Hegel to the ideologically driven barbarism of the Second World War, but such innuendo-laden slurs cannot help but suggest that Popper's own intellectual sincerity and honesty is somewhat doubtful on this subject. Yet despite this,

there are still misgivings to be had regarding both Hegel's philosophy and its consequences. The Hegelian philosophical system – here used in the most general sense – aims at encompassing the entirety of existence. The aim of this is for philosophy to finally provide a scientific objective understanding not only for the present, but for the very movement of history. There are two main issues to be raised at this point with such a worldview. The first is its inherent impersonalism – the progress of the self-realisation of the Absolute (the whole) is such a massive world-shaking event that there is little heed paid to those existents whose cumulative existence makes up this process. The second issue is the mind-set displayed by the Hegelian approach. Whilst not wanting to follow Popper's example and extrapolate from Hegel's philosophy to the evils of the modern world, the attempt of Hegelian philosophy to explain the totality of existence within a single system is a precursor of the technological worldview. These are worldviews in which all existents are resources to be manipulated in order to achieve the potentially alien objectives of a system, in which contingencies and differences are considered problems which will in time be eradicated by the gradual perfection of the system, and in which those who create and guide the development of the worldview are somehow able to stand outside the system which encompasses the whole. The philosophical tendencies which are being fought against will become clearer once we turn to the thinkers whose works will be discussed in the study.

The area of philosophy the study will discuss are the subjectivist reactions which emerged in the wake of Hegelian objectivism. Here the term "subjectivist" is being used in a loose manner to encompass those philosophers who, working in the shadow of Hegel, attempted to restate the position of the individual person within

philosophy. The scope of the study *should* become clearer after discussing the criteria for inclusion, followed by the specific thinkers to be included within the study. As with all such studies of this nature, the criteria will be rough and imperfect. Despite this, it should still begin to provide clear indication for why certain thinkers are considered to be under the purview of the study, and others are not.

Qualifiers for inclusion.

The first qualifier for inclusion is an ontological support for the formal distinction of selves. This point is important because this is how persons experience themselves to be. The best justification for insisting on the formal distinction of selves will be to briefly discuss the inherent flaws found in monistic alternatives. This is not to accuse Hegel of monism – although it is arguable that absolute idealism does have a monistic strand – but to reject a move towards monism as a corrective on Hegelianism. Schaffer indicates two main – though not sole – strands in monistic philosophy: existence monism and priority monism.[3] Existence monism, Schaffer explains, 'holds that exactly one concrete object token exists (the one).'[4] This "one" is the world. The justification for holding that the world is the sole concrete existent is derived from the argument that this position provides 'the simplest sufficient ontology.'[5] As all other potential existents are part of the world, they can tell us nothing over and above what can be explained by the world as the one concrete existent. For this reason, there is no need to posit these "parts" within the ontological theory. It is the relationship to these parts which separates existence and priority monism. Priority monism, whilst agreeing that the world is the sole basic concrete existent, accepts that 'there may be other concrete

6

objects, but these only exist derivatively… the whole is prior to its parts.'[6] This latter position is not unlike Bernard Bosanquet's arguments for absolute idealism, which we shall turn to later in the study. There are reasons for taking monistic arguments seriously, but this does not therefore imply that a form of monism should be adopted. The suggestion that the monistic position provides the simplest sufficient ontology can be challenged on two fronts. Its claims of simplicity are flawed as the world is a near-infinite object which can only be grasped as a whole in simplified terms, and secondly, to conceive the world as a single concrete object also necessarily involves an abstraction as the thinker is inescapably, inextricably part of this whole. That a non-concrete component part should be able to grasp the complexities of the Being of the whole whilst never being fully concrete in their own right is difficult to accept. The previous criticism that the approach fails to account for the ways in which individual persons experience their existence to Be is also relevant to this point. Monism is arguably at best a fascinating thought experiment, and at worst a largely meaningless abstraction from reality.

Arguments advanced in the previous section lead to the second qualifier for inclusion, namely that the philosopher's thought should be existentialist in character. The term "existentialist" can be troublesome because of the numerous varied ways in which it has been adopted – particularly in the twentieth century – as a description of others' work and occasionally as a label for self-identification. Because of this, it is important to be clear when terms like "existentialism" and its derivatives are used, precisely what is meant. In this context, the term is being used broadly, and not solely to refer to the early to mid-twentieth century existentialist movement which had Jean-Paul Sartre as its figurehead (equally, figures from this movement are not to be

summarily excluded). Instead the term is being used to highlight philosophical

positions which have a basis in, and focus on, man's existence as it is experienced. It

must be accepted that the best source of knowledge on the existence of man is through

man's existence itself and his experiences of it. Recognition must be made of the

necessarily subjective position that philosophers take when they encounter the Being of

beings. The Being of another is always viewed through the prism of one's own Being.

The third qualifier for inclusion is that the thinker ought not to engage in grand

system-building. Some of the greatest thinkers in the field of philosophy, perhaps most

notably Hegel, have set out to provide an all-encompassing completed philosophical

system. Such attempts to provide what Pringle-Pattison described as 'a closed circle'[7]

are seen by subjectivist philosophy as inevitably destined, if not to outright failure, then

to fall short of such an ambitious objective. That this is the case is due at least in part to

the subjective and temporal nature of man, and the limited nature of even the ablest

minds. This point is well illustrated by Emmanuel Mounier's lengthy elucidation of

why his philosophy of personalism is not a system. He explains,

> Personalism is a philosophy, it is not merely and attitude. It is a philosophy but not
>
> a system. Not that it fears systemisation. For order is necessary in thinking:
>
> concepts, logic, schemes of unification are not only of use to fix and communicate a
>
> thought which would otherwise dissolve into obscure and isolated intuitions; they
>
> are instruments of discovery as well of exposition… But its central affirmation
>
> being the existence of free and creative persons, it introduces into the heart of its
>
> constructions a principle of unpredictability which excludes any desire for a
>
> definitive system. Nothing could be more profoundly repugnant to it than the taste,

so common today, for an apparatus of thought and action functioning like an automatic distributor of solutions and instructions; a barrier to research; an insurance against disquiet, ordeal and risk. Moreover, a movement of original reflection should not be too quick to tie up the sheaf of its findings.[8]

As Mounier insists, to deny the desirability and utility grand philosophical systems is not to reject any and all forms of systemisation. It is rather to suggest - as Kierkegaard does with the title of his *Philosophical Crumbs*[9] - that it is better to offer up crumbs which point the way for further philosophising than to promise an illusory banquet.

The fourth qualifier for inclusion is a non-deterministic conception of man. As with systemisation, this is not to deny *all* forms of determinism. Biological, psychological and social factors, particularly as knowledge in these fields has increased, should be accepted to have a degree of determinism over human freedom. However, to deny any form of free will and to rely solely on biological, psychological and social determinants is to remove from man any responsibility for his actions. Just because we are in some way conditioned towards a certain inclination does not necessarily mean that we should or will follow it if, for example, it is something we know to be wrong (here leaving aside the categorisation of right and wrong actions). The degree of freedom an individual has over his actions has been debated, and will continue to be debated for a very long time. Whilst definitive proof of this freedom is still lacking – it is questionable whether is possible to "prove" the existence of freedom – it is best to assume that we do have at least a degree of free will. Without the ability to freely choose our actions, life becomes a spectator activity and the pursuit of knowledge would lose its appeal. Unless a fully deterministic outlook on life can be

proved beyond question, it seems for these reasons and more that it is more edifying

and more in tune with our existence as we experience it to assume that such an outlook

is mistaken.

The fifth and final qualifier for inclusion is that the philosopher ought to be

post-Hegelian. The impact of the work of Hegel on philosophy over the nearly two

centuries since his death has been immense, though his greatest influence has not been

direct. Whilst Hegel directly inspired numerous great philosophical minds, wider

groups of philosophers have set out to reject large sections of his philosophical system.

As Kaufman illustrates,

> One of the few things on which the analysts, pragmatists and existentialists agree
>
> with the dialectical theologians is that Hegel is to be repudiated: their attitude
>
> toward Kant, Aristotle, Plato and the other great philosophers is not at all
>
> unanimous even within each movement; but opposition to Hegel is part of the
>
> platform of all four, and of the Marxists, too.[10]

The first three qualifiers discussed previously are all Hegelian themes and their

counterparts are subjectivist ripostes (though it would be a mistake to accuse the great

philosopher of absolute determinism[11]). It would also be a mistake to assume that

subjectivist philosophers writing against Hegel reject each and every aspect of his

philosophy. For the sake of the post-Hegelian qualifier it may be more accurate to insist

that the philosopher in question be working in the shadow of Hegel. Hegel's

importance as a milestone in Western philosophy is even acknowledged by some of his

most vehement critics. Karl Popper's somewhat bilious rant against Hegel in his *The*

Open Society and Its Enemies decries the fact 'that Hegel's influence has remained a most powerful force'.[12] Whilst we may not agree with all the negative implications of Popper's observation, it is an example of the way in which Hegel's influence and importance is almost unanimously agreed upon. As we shall see, in the aftermath of Hegel, a number of subjectivist approaches emerged which aimed at overcoming the faults of the dominant strand of Hegelian objectivity.

Max Stirner.

The first thinker to be included is perhaps also the most idiosyncratic – Max Stirner. Max Stirner was the pseudonym of Johan Kaspar Schmidt, deriving from a nickname he received because of the peculiar shape of his forehead.[13] Stirner was an attendee of the Free, a group of Young Hegelians led by Bruno Bauer which also counted Friedrich Engels amongst their number.[14] At this time Stirner was leading what Leopold describes as a 'double life'[15] engaging with the bohemian discussion group by night and teaching at a Berlin girls' school by day. Yet even at this time, Stirner's radical and strongly atheistic views were not in tune with the mainstream of Young Hegelian thought. Leopold cites Stirner's reputation amongst the Free for 'hostility to religion, intolerance of moderation, and ability to provoke fierce argument.'[16] Stirner's first forays into writing were unspectacular pieces for the *Rheinische Zeitung* (prior to Karl Marx's arrival as editor), most notable amongst these being *The False Principle of Our Education*. *The False Principle…* focuses upon pedagogical matters, arguing that educators should bring about 'the elimination of knowledge without will and the rise of the self-conscious knowledge which accompanies the sunburst of free personality'.[17]

Despite the merits of the article, it is likely that it and Stirner himself would have been relegated to a footnote of the Young Hegelian movement were it not for his sole major work *The Ego and His Own*. In the lead up to the publication of the work, Stirner had indicated to contemporaries that he was working on a book, but few had taken much notice.[18] The arrival of *The Ego and His Own* shortly after Stirner left his teaching post and the commotion it caused suggests that in hindsight they would have been wiser to do so.

 The Ego and His Own stands as Max Stirner's single notable contribution to philosophy. Yet, the revolutionary work caused more clamour than most philosophers do in their whole careers and continues to influence philosophical and political movements to this day. Whilst the left-leaning Young Hegelians Stirner associated with rejected the conservatism in Hegel's philosophy, Stirner himself reacted against Hegel in a much more radical way. The peculiar nature of *The Ego and His Own* is reflected in its structure. After a short preface entitled "All Things Are Nothing to Me", the work is split into two sections: "Man" and "I". The first section consists of one relatively short chapter and one very long chapter, whilst the second section bookends another very long chapter with two short chapters. Stirner's writing style also betrays his individualistic approach and, as Leopold suggests, appears 'calculated to disconcert.'[19] He eschews traditional methods of philosophical exposition, a method which 'reflects a conviction that both language and rationality are human products which have come to constrain and oppress their creators.'[20] Despite these stylistic quirks, *The Ego and His Own* offers an often engaging alternative to Hegelian thought, with arguments which should not be ignored, even if they are eventually to be rejected. Stirner's criticisms of Hegelian philosophy in *The Ego and His Own* are often directed at contemporary

Hegelian philosophers who he fears are 'preparing the world for the new secular Leviathan.'[21] Whilst rejecting Hegel's conservatism, Stirner is equally unenamoured with any form of communistic alternative.[22] Stirner's work demands the philosophical and political recognition of the absolute freedom of the individual. Stirner's egoism, Scruton explains, rejects 'all institutions, all values, all religion, and indeed all relations, except those which the individual ego could appropriate to itself.'[23] His consistently anti-institutional nature dictates that whilst Stirner argues for the freedom of all, his aim is for personal uprising in place of communal revolution.[24] The non-prescriptive nature of Stirner's conception of freedom means that he necessarily avoids any temptation of providing a blueprint for an egoistic future, likening such attempts to predicting the actions of emancipated slaves.[25]

Stirner's total written output, even including the minor and largely inconsequential works which appeared after *The Ego and His Own*, was very small. This and his idiosyncrasies are not reason enough to reject the discussion of his thought in this study. Stirner's consistency in following his rejection of Hegelian institutions and his own beliefs regarding human freedom to their logical conclusion are to be applauded. Stirner's at times bizarre work has stood the test of time, and remains to this day a key intellectual precursor for the individualist anarchist movement.[26]

Søren Kierkegaard.

The second thinker to be discussed within the study is also perhaps the most prolific. Søren Kierkegaard wrote and published extensively during his lifetime, both under his own name and under a multitude of pseudonyms. Typically there is within a

philosopher's large body of work several works which are generally accepted as being "the key works", but the situation with Kierkegaard is more nuanced and complicated. Scruton describes it as being a near impossible task 'to distinguish between the central and peripheral among Kierkegaard's many and varied writings.'[27] Despite this difficulty, Kierkegaard himself indicated how his writings ought to be read in his posthumously published *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*. In the work which is described by Garff as the text of Kierkegaard's other texts, a 'meta-text'[28], the philosopher highlights that he has always been a religious author. He explains:

> my whole authorship pertains to Christianity, to the issue: becoming a Christian, with direct and indirect polemical aim at that enormous illusion of Christendom, or the illusion that in such a country all are Christians of sorts.[29]

The challenging of the state of Christendom and the denial of the assumption that one could be a Christian without personal striving are indeed the unifying themes explicit or implicit in all of Kierkegaard's works. The theme of personal choice is explicitly depicted in *Either/Or*, which explores ethical and aesthetical lifestyles through the correspondence of the fictional "A" and Judge Vilhelm in papers discovered by the fictional editor of the work Victor Eremita. Kierkegaard's pseudonymous approach stretches to include a sermon on why against God, man is always wrong and a salacious diary of a seducer by two further fictional authors. The effect brings to mind the method of the Platonic dialogues, and leaves the reader to judge the merits of the protagonists' contrasting viewpoints. Hannay cites Kierkegaard's only stipulation for the reading of *Either/Or* being that reader ought to read both *Either* and *Or*, or

neither.[30] Kierkegaard's refusal in the work to indicate that either pseudonymous

creation personifies the correct approach to life underscores his belief that the nature of

man's existence dictates that individuals must actively make decisions for themselves.

This is nowhere truer than with regards to religious matters. In works such as

Philosophical Crumbs Kierkegaard expounds the paradoxical nature of Christianity and

decries attempts to prove the existence of God as being inherently flawed.[31] In *Fear*

and Trembling, a work discussing the binding of Isaac,[32] Kierkegaard applauds

Abraham's faith and the way biblical patriarch 'believed the absurd.'[33] Lack of

personal Christian faith is to suffer from what was discussed in the work *The Sickness*

Unto Death. In this text Kierkegaard, through the pseudonym Anti-Climacus, sets out

his theory of selfhood. He explains that 'the self is intensified in proportion to the

standard by which the self measures itself, and infinitely so when God is the standard.

The more conception of God, the more self; the more self the more conception of

God.'[34] The position of man's faith as being the key to selfhood is the most important

feature of Kierkegaard's position on Being. It sets out to each individual the

responsibility for their own salvation through their own relationship with God.[35]

Kierkegaard's relationship with the works of Hegel is certainly one of reaction,

and finds its clearest expression in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Though

maintaining a respect for Hegel's thinking, Kierkegaard repudiates Hegelian mediation

as an attempt to dilute Christianity by subsuming it into philosophy rather than

correctly creating Christian philosophy *after* accepting Christianity.[36] In the *Postscript*

Hegel's system is rejected, with Kierkegaard arguing that whilst it is conceivable that

life can be understood as a system for God, it 'cannot be that for *any* existing spirit.'[37]

Kierkegaard's subjectivism leads him to reject Hegel's philosophy of history for the

reason that the individual able to systematise six-thousand years of history would still be no nearer to understanding his own existence.[38] Scruton argues that Kierkegaard's criticisms on this point rightly highlight 'the deification of history and the loss of individual responsibility towards events.'[39] Kierkegaard's writings on explicitly political matters are scarce, but political implications of his existential Christianity are present throughout his works. His *A Literary Review* appeared at a time when retirement from writing seemed imminent (this was not to be the case), and was, as the title suggests, a review of a contemporary novel *Two Ages*. Kierkegaard used the novel as a springboard to attack his own age for its lack of passion.[40] The philosopher criticises the culture of envy which followed the transition into popular government, an envy lacking in character which 'does not understand that excellence is excellence.'[41] Kierkegaard finds this envy personified in what he calls levelling.

> This self-*establishing* envy is *levelling*, and while a passionate age *accelerates, raises and topples, extols and oppresses*, a reflective, passionless age does the opposite – *it stifles and impedes, it levels*. Levelling is a quiet, mathematically abstract affair that avoids all fuss... levelling at its peak is like a deathly stillness over which nothing can raise itself but into which everything impotently sinks down.[42]

The connections between Kierkegaard's Christian existentialist ontology and his social criticism will be particularly of interest.

<u>Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison.</u>

The third thinker to be included is also the least well known, but this does not detract from the importance of his thought. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison was perhaps the greatest British advocate of personalism, a philosophy best known from the French school of Emmanuel Mounier and the Boston personalism of Borden Parker Bowne. Pringle-Pattison's personal idealism was a reaction to the Hegelianism of the wider school of British idealism. Often when describing such a reaction against a dominant philosophical trend it seems apt to use violent militaristic metaphors ("attack", "fired the first shot", "stormed the barricades of", and so on), but this would be wholly inappropriate given Pringle-Pattison's quiet, understated and wholeheartedly polite approach to philosophical discourse. *Scottish Philosophy* and *Hegelianism and Personality* contained Pringle-Pattison's two series of Balfour Lectures, delivered at the University of Edinburgh. The first series contained, as the subtitle explains, *A Comparison of the Scottish and German Answers to Hume*. Hegel is discussed in the sixth lecture entitled *The Possibility of Philosophy as a System: Scottish Philosophy and Hegel*, in which Hegelian universalism is criticised for omitting the nature of individual existence.[43] The lectures in *Hegelianism and Personality* continue the themes of this final lecture and, Barbour explains, 'had a polemical character not previously seen in [Pringle-Pattison's] writings.'[44] The term polemical here should not be interpreted in the sense of the writings of Stirner or Nietzsche, but rather indicates a new more critical tone in Pringle-Pattison's writing. Despite having been viewed as an adherent of Hegelianism, Barbour explains that Pringle-Pattison had 'a growing sense that certain tendencies in Hegel and post-Hegelian idealism imperilled those ethical and

religious positions to which he always firmly adhered.'[45] The philosopher's criticisms of Hegel expand on the comments in the final lecture of *Scottish Philosophy* regarding personal existence.

> The radical error both of Hegelianism and of the allied English doctrine I take to be the identification of the human and the divine self-consciousness, or, to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single Self… Though selfhood… involves a duality in unity… it is none the less true that each Self is a unique existence, which is perfectly impervious… in its character of self it refuses to admit another self within itself.[46]

This rejection of Hegelianism is, as we have noted, both due to the philosophical dignity Pringle-Pattison accorded to the person and the detrimental effects on the individual responsibility of these persons for their actions.

The later, and perhaps greatest, exposition of Pringle-Pattison's philosophical thinking on issues such as personal existence and responsibility is found in his Gifford Lectures which were published as *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, and in a debate with the absolute idealist Bernard Bosanquet which followed. In *The Idea of God*, the two lectures on 'The Absolute and the Finite Individual' present Pringle-Pattison's personalist conception of the self against the Hegelian notion. Pringle-Pattison insists that the finite self is, as he argued briefly in *Hegelianism and Personality*, un-mixable with other finite selves. Whilst much of the content the two minds contain may be identical and be said to "overlap" in this way – 'they can not overlap at all in existence; their very *raison d'être* is to be distinct and, in that sense,

separate and exclusive focalisations of a common universe.'[47] The Aristotelian Society

symposium *Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or an Adjectival Mode of*

Being? allowed Pringle-Pattison and Bosanquet to debate the issues raised in these two

lectures further. Mander highlights the significance of the debate as the single 'direct

head-to-head debate'[48] to have occurred between the absolute idealist and personal

idealist strands in British idealism. The outcome of the debate – consisting of an

original paper by Bosanquet, a paper by Pringle-Pattison and a reply to the symposium

by Bosanquet – has been understood differently (Mander sides with Bosanquet,[49]

Sheldon with Pringle-Pattison,[50] whilst Thomas is more neutral[51]). No matter which

philosopher's arguments were strongest, the debate actively highlights the differences

in position on the subject of existence between the explicitly Hegelian absolute

idealism of Bosanquet and the reformist personalist reaction to Hegel of Pringle-

Pattison. Pringle-Pattison's position on personal responsibility is, as we have seen,

closely tied to his religious beliefs. The closest Pringle-Pattison got to writing at length

on explicitly political issues was in the collection of essays *The Philosophical Radicals*.

He cites 'the prominence throughout of the social and political aspects of philosophical

theory'[52] as providing the link between these essays which handle topics such as

utilitarianism and the works of Herbert Spencer and Benjamin Kidd. Above all, the

importance of Pringle-Pattison's thought is that it provides a subjective response to

Hegelianism whilst still remaining within the Hegelian sphere. The successes and

failings of Pringle-Pattison's reformist approach will be of particular interest in

comparison to the more antagonistic approaches of the other thinkers.

<u>Martin Heidegger.</u>

The fourth and final thinker to be included is Martin Heidegger. Controversial both for his radical philosophy and his brief adherence to National Socialism, Heidegger has been the recipient of both immense praise and similar levels of derision. His reputation largely rests on his first book and magnum opus *Being and Time* though, as we shall see, there is much of value to be found in Heidegger's numerous writings which appeared after this. The notoriously dense and at times seemingly impenetrable *Being and Time* sets out to clear the philosophical ground in order to better address the question of the meaning of Being. This is to be achieved through the 'destruction of the history of ontology'.[53] Such destruction is necessary because of the ways in which the primordial essence of Being has been covered over by layers upon layers of previous assertions – these need to be stripped away in order to be able to approach the meaning of Being correctly. Heidegger explains that our closeness to Being – it is a reality we encounter daily – has not rescued the question of what it means to Be from being lost.[54] This loss is explained by the ascension of three prejudices about the question of Being: the universality of the question, Being's indefinable nature, and Being's self-evidence.[55] Heidegger rejects these prejudices in turn, concluding that they both indicate the lack of an answer to the question of Being and also that 'the question itself is obscure and without direction.'[56] Throughout *Being and Time* Heidegger attempts to approach the question of Being in a 'phenomenologically concrete manner'[57] by sketching a 'preparatory analysis of everyday existence'[58] in the form of Dasein (Being-there). Despite its many merits, *Being and Time* (or at least, the originally projected form of *Being and Time*) was never fully completed. The introduction

contains the layout for the envisaged whole – consisting of two parts, each containing

three sections. What exists consists only of the first two sections of the first part

interpreting Dasein 'in terms of temporality'.[59] The final section of the first part was to

offer the 'explication of time as the transcendental horizon of Being.'[60] The elusive

second part was to set out the 'basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the

history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue.'[61] That the work

remains incomplete – acknowledged as a permanent feature in a preface to the seventh

edition[62] – takes nothing away from its insight in restating the importance of the

question of Being. The relationship between *Being and Time* and Heidegger's later

works has been subject to much scholarly debate. Heidegger himself denied that there

had been a turning in his thought.[63] Krell provides some support for such an

interpretation, highlighting that whatever the philosopher's later relationship to aspects

of his magnum opus, *Being and Time* 'provides the impetus for all the later

investigations'.[64] Yet, as we shall see, there is a distinctive shift in Heidegger's

thinking between his earlier and later positions, even if the focus of this thinking

remains the same.

Heidegger's later works continue to explicitly work towards the question of

Being, though as time progresses this is now in a much less subjectivist and

anthropocentric fashion.[65] Before reaching this stage, there is a brief period – largely

coinciding with Heidegger's National Socialism – which might best be referred to as

"middle Heidegger" (as opposed to the early Heidegger of *Being and Time* and the anti-

anthropocentric later Heidegger). Most notable of these middle period works is his

Introduction to Metaphysics which was deemed by Heidegger to be a companion piece

to *Being and Time*.[66] The lectures contained in the work trace 'the gradual

impoverishment of the meaning of Being beginning in Greek times.'[67] *Introduction to Metaphysics* is particularly notorious for its allusion to Heidegger's Nazism, references to which sparked much controversy upon the work's publication in the 1950s.[68] Heidegger's later period is marked by works such as *The Letter on Humanism*, which appeared following the end of the Second World War. This work criticises Sartrean (and other forms of) humanism for its subjectivity. This attack is often cited as an example of the later Heidegger criticising the early Heidegger (of *Being and Time*) through the early-Heideggerian elements of Sartre's philosophy as stated in *Existentialism and Humanism.*[69] Heidegger's thinking has generally been classified as conservative.[70] Yet despite this, Heideggerian philosophy has influenced thinkers from all over the political spectrum. The relationship between Heideggerian thought and National Socialism has spawned a vast array of literature – much of it inspired by Victor Farías' *Heidegger and Nazism.*[71] The positions taken in these works vary from suggesting Heidegger's philosophy and Nazism are separable,[72] and suggesting that the natural conclusion of Heidegger's philosophy *is* Nazism, and therefore it must be avoided.[73] What is clear at this point is that the relationship between Heideggerian ontology and politics is of key importance in Heidegger's thought, even if the philosopher himself rarely addressed the latter directly.

The four thinkers discussed above should allow us to understand the variety of subjectivist approaches which emerged in opposition, in one way or another, to the dominant tone of objectivism in the post-Hegelian age. Max Stirner offers an anarchical alternative in which all values are transcended by the self-owning individual and the supremacy of his will. Søren Kierkegaard offers a similarly individualistic alternative, but it is an alternative with the relationship between God and each unique

individual which is achieved through faithful strivings at its heart. Andrew Seth
Pringle-Pattison offers an attempt to reform Hegelianism from the inside. He believed
that the impersonalism of Hegel's philosophy could be improved upon through
modifying, instead of rejecting, Hegelian thought. Heidegger instead insists that not
only has Hegelianism clouded over the question of Being, but that this has been a
continuous process since the time of Plato. In order to get closer to the understanding of
Being, we need to return to the insights from philosophy's pre-Socratic roots. The
strengths and weaknesses of each approach, with particular regard to Being and
politics, will be assessed in order to determine the extent to which of these
subjectivisms proffer a successful alternative to objectivism. Before turning to the
content of the conclusion, we must first address those thinkers not included within the
study.

Some thinkers not included within the study.

The study covers thinkers operating within a particular timeframe. Earlier we addressed
that the philosophers should be post-Hegelian – they are operating after Hegel. The
endpoint of this time period was not addressed then, but instead is a result of the
findings in the concluding chapter. As such, the end of the post-Hegelian age is
interpreted as coming about with the emergence of Heidegger (in particular, the later
Heidegger). We will turn to this point in slightly more detail later, for the time being it
is merely useful to acknowledge the existence of the upper temporal ceiling, with the
promise that it will later be justified.

This upper ceiling automatically disqualifies the likes of Sartre, Foucault, Marcuse, and so on, all of whose philosophies might have provided another variation on the subjectivisms covered. Schopenhauer, a contemporary of Hegel, was also one of his most vehement critics. Despite this, the overlap between the timings of Hegel's and Schopenhauer's publications marks the two men as being contemporaries, rather than suggesting that Schopenhauer is in some way post-Hegelian. Schopenhauer was once an intellectual hero to Nietzsche, who has also been excluded from the study. Sharing much of the literary prowess and insights of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche's thought has influenced the developments of Heideggerian philosophy. Pringle-Pattison's discussion of Nietzsche's thought in *Man's Place in the Cosmos* was amongst the first discussions of this in English. Whilst there are many lessons to be learnt from Nietzsche's work, its veneration of the will is already represented in the study by Stirner. Where Nietzsche will be important to this study is through Heidegger's reading of his work, which provides an important understanding of the links between earlier and later Heideggerian thought. The leaders of the French and American schools of personalism – Mounier and Parker Bowne, respectively – have been excluded as their philosophies add little to the personal idealism developed by Pringle-Pattison whose direct interaction within the wider school of British idealism makes the interrelationship between personalism and Hegelianism more explicit. Later British personalists such as John Macmurray have been excluded for similar reasons, with Pringle-Pattison's earlier personalism being closer to typical personalism as a whole.[74] Nikolai Berdyaev's form of Christian existentialist personalism offers little advance upon either the Christian existentialism of Kierkegaard or the personalism by Pringle-Pattison. Whilst certainly being an interesting figure, his somewhat informal writing style does little to assist both

the dissemination and comparison of his ideas. More orthodox reactions to Hegel, such as the British Absolute Idealists Bradley and Bosanquet are excluded as their reaction cannot easily be deemed subjectivist. Despite being less orthodoxly Hegelian, Marx similarly was in no way subjectivist despite the comparative libertarianism of his earlier writings.

Conclusion.

Earlier it was indicated that in the concluding chapter it would become clear that Heidegger marked the end of the post-Hegelian era imposed upon the study. This will be done by using the later Heidegger against both the early Heidegger, and the subjectivist approaches more generally. It will be found that whilst subjectivism *does* make positive advances against objectivity as embodied in Hegelian philosophy, we are still left with a flawed or partial approach to Being and politics. In his later writings, Heidegger realises that the anthropocentrism of subjectivist approaches remains a barrier to gaining a closer understanding of Being. In contrast to the attempt to think of Being through beings (Dasein) in *Being and Time*, Heidegger now attempts to think of Being without reference to beings. Through doing this Being is no longer thought of as merely being a characteristic of beings, but can be approached in its own right. We shall also see that the radical philosophy of the later Heidegger results in political consequences more far-reaching, and ultimately more satisfactory, than either the objectivist or subjectivist approaches.

Before turning to the first thinker, several minor but important points need to be made. Throughout the study, the words "Being" and "Be" have been capitalised when

they refer to the concept of Being wherever they appear in order to ensure a consistency throughout. This has included capitalisation even in quotations when the writer or translator has not followed this convention. This has only been done when the meaning of the quotation has not been altered by imposing the capitalisation. All biblical quotations cited in the footnotes are taken from the Oxford edition of the King James Bible.[75]

1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), p24 [H5]. Italics are author's.

2. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume Two, Hegel and Marx* (London: Routledge, 2003), p445.

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8. Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952), pxv.

9. Edward Mooney, 'Introduction' in Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition* and *Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ppxvi-xvii.

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12. Popper, Op. cit., p33.

13. James Martin, 'Introduction' in Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* (New York: Dover Publications, 2005), pviii.

14. Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Introduction' in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p140.

15. David Leopold, 'Max Stirner' in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (August 2006) [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/max-stirner/].

16. Loc. cit.

17. Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education* in Daniel Guérin (ed.), *No Gods No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), p20.

18. Leopold, Op. cit.

19. Loc. cit.

20. Loc. cit.

21. James Martin, Op. cit., pxiv.

22. Ibid, ppxiv-xv.

23. Roger Scruton, *A Short History of Modern Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2002), p195.

24. James Martin, Op. cit., pxiv.

25. Ibid, pxv.

26. Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), pp220-233 explains Stirner's place within the wider anarchist tradition.

27. Scruton, Op. cit., p305.

28. Joakim Garff, *Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p552.

29. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p23.

30. Alastair Hannay, 'Introduction' in Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or (abridged)* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p3.

31. Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs* in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p111-125.

32. Genesis 22:1-24.

33. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p54.

34. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p112.

35. Acts 4:12.

36. Alastair Hannay, 'Introduction' in Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ppxxii-xxiii.

37. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p100.

38. Ibid, p101.

39. Scruton, Op. cit., p192.

40. Garff, Op. cit., p488.

41. Søren Kierkegaard, *A Literary Review* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p74.

42. Ibid, pp74-75, italics are author's.

43. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Scottish Philosophy* Fourth Edition (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1907), p222.

44. G. F. Barbour, 'Memoir of the Author' in Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Balfour Lectures on Realism* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1933), p52.

45. Loc. cit.

46. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Hegelianism and Personality* Second Edition (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1893), pp226-227.

47. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920), p264.

48. W. J. Mander, 'Life and Finite Individuality: The Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison Debate' in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2005), p111.

49. Ibid, p130.

50. W. H. Sheldon, 'Review: Life and Finite Individuality. Two Symposia…' in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* Vol. 16, No. 19 (1919), pp523-529.

51. James Thomas, 'Analysis and Concept: The Bosanquet – Pringle- Pattison Debate' in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* Vol. 14, No. 4 (2006), pp757-764.

52. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophical Radicals* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1907), pvii.

53. Heidegger, Op. cit., pp41-49.

54. Ibid, p21.

55. Ibid, pp22-23.

56. Ibid, p24.

57. David Krell, 'General Introduction: The Question of Being' in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings* Revised and Expanded Edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p18.

58. Ibid, p25.

59. Heidegger, Op. cit., p63.

60. Loc. cit.

61. Loc. cit.

62. Ibid, p17.

63. Martin Heidegger, 'Preface' in William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought* Fourth Edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), pxxii.

64. Krell, Op. cit., p25.

65. John Wild, 'The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger' in *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 60, No. 22 (1963), p670.

66. Gregory Field & Richard Polt, 'Introduction' in Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), ppvii-viii.

67. John Wild, Op. cit., p670.

68. Jürgen Habermas, 'Martin Heidegger: On the Publication of the Lectures of 1935' in Richard Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), pp190-197, for example.

69. Anson Rabinbach, 'Heidegger's Letter on Humanism as Text and Event' in *New German Critique* No. 62 (1994), p10.

70. Jonathan Salem-Wiseman, 'Heidegger's Dasein and the Liberal Conception of the Self' in *Political Theory* Vol. 31, No. 4 (2003), p533.

71. Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p105.

72. Thomas Sheehan, 'Heidegger and the Nazis' in *The New York Review of Books* Vol. 35, No. 10 (1988), pp38-47 for example.

73. Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) for example.

74. Jan Olof Bengtsson, *The Worldview of Personalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) offers a discussion of the origins and development of personalism, including the position of Pringle-Pattison within the wider personalist tradition.

75. *The Bible: Authorised King James Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Key Concepts within the Study

Before turning to the first thinker it will be of use to clarify some of the concepts crucial to the study, namely what is meant by the use of the terms Hegelian, post-Hegelian and politics. The explanations found here must necessarily be preliminary, but should aid in the illumination of the later arguments and positions taken.

Hegelian.

Put simply, a thinker or philosophy can be considered to be Hegelian if he or it adheres to the line of thought present in the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This initial explanation opens up two further questions: what the Hegelian line of thought is and to what degree a thinker or philosophy must adhere to it in order to have the adjective "Hegelian" bestowed upon them. It may actually be of more use to address the latter point first, as from this we can ascertain the depth of understanding of Hegel's thought we require at this point in order to progress. For the sake of the study, it is necessary to differentiate roughly between two forms of Hegelianism: orthodox and unorthodox. A sliding scale of Hegelian orthodoxy is assumed, rather than a binary distinction. This scale depends upon the extent to which the Hegelian thinker sets out to either accept, reform, or reject elements of Hegel's philosophical system. As a brief illustration, within the context of this study, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison's personal idealism is an example of unorthodox Hegelianism as it aims at achieving the substantial task of reforming Hegelian thought's impersonal streak. Max Stirner is

neither an orthodox nor unorthodox Hegelian as he rejects all of the key tenets of Hegelian philosophy, even if his rejection may sometimes mirror Hegel's writings in its structure. Within the confines of the study, Bernard Bosanquet is understood to be an orthodox Hegelian as although his absolute idealism is not a facsimile of Hegel's writings, his position is comparatively closer to Hegel than is Pringle-Pattison's, just as Pringle-Pattison is comparatively more Hegelian than Stirner.

It will now be necessary to approach the not insignificant task of addressing the key tenets of Hegelian philosophy. Redding cites two differing readings of Hegel: the metaphysical and non-metaphysical.[1] The latter of these is the post-Kantian tendency to claim 'that either particular *works*… or particular *areas* of Hegel's philosophy… can be understood as standing independently'[2] of a grand metaphysical system. Redding also explains the much more controversial post-Kantian non-metaphysical reading of Hegel which insists he 'is, in fact, in no way committed to the bizarre, teleological "spirit monism" that has been traditionally attributed to him.'[3] Whilst it is utterly acceptable, and perhaps also entirely advantageous, to rescue from Hegelian thought that which is valuable, it cannot be accepted that Hegel intended his thought to be understood as such a buffet from which one can pick and choose according to one's tastes. Even if there were cause to insist that Hegel could have been persuaded to acquiesce to a non-systematic reading of his works, these works as written retain their systematic character. As such, this post-Kantian non-metaphysical reading of Hegel is rejected by the study, not because it lacks merit but because it represents an unorthodox rather than orthodox Hegelianism.

The study adheres to the metaphysical reading of Hegel. Redding distinguishes between traditional and more recent metaphysical views of Hegel – it will be useful to address both of these in order to gain as full of a picture as possible at this stage of what is being understood as being Hegelian philosophy. The traditional metaphysical view sees Hegel 'as offering a metaphysico-religious view of God *qua* "Absolute Spirit," as the ultimate reality that we can come to know through pure thought processes alone.'[4] Redding explains that 'in short, Hegel's philosophy is treated as exemplifying the type of pre-critical or "dogmatic" metaphysics against which Kant had reacted... and as a return to the more religiously driven conception of philosophy to which Kant had been opposed.'[5] What we have called the more recent metaphysical view of Hegel condemns the traditional metaphysical view in an almost identical manner as did the non-metaphysical post-Kantians mentioned above. The key noticeable difference between the two positions appears to be that the more recent metaphysical view does not see in the rejection of the traditional metaphysical view of Hegel a rejection of *all* metaphysics, but rather insists that the existing dogmatic metaphysics needs to be replaced with a non-dogmatic metaphysics.[6] Within the study, the traditional metaphysical view of Hegel's thought is understood as being orthodox Hegelianism, with the more recent approach being understood as another form of unorthodox Hegelianism.

Despite his own adherence to the more recent (unorthodox) metaphysical view, Robert Stern admits 'that Hegel can write as if he has much greater sympathy for the traditional approach [to metaphysics] than the Kantian one.'[7] He cites the passage from the introduction to the *Greater Logic* in which Hegel praises ancient metaphysics over

contemporary reflective understanding as an example of this.[8] It will be useful to quote from this section at length to gain a clearer view of the traditional metaphysical view of Hegel.

> Ancient metaphysics had… a higher conception of thinking than is current today. For it based itself on the fact that the knowledge of things obtained through thinking is alone what is really true in them, that is, things not in their immediacy but as first raised into the form of thought, as things *thought*. Thus this metaphysics believed that thinking (and its determinations) is not anything alien to the object, but rather is its essential nature, or that things and the thinking of them… are explicitly in full agreement, thinking in its immanent determinations and the true nature of things forming one and the same content.[9]

Hegel attacks the reflective trend in philosophy which 'in general… stands for the understanding as abstracting, and hence as separating and remaining fixed in is separations. Directed against reason, it behaves as ordinary common sense and imposes its view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, meaning that it is sense perception which first gives them filling and reality… In this self-renunciation on the part of reason, the notion of truth is lost.'[10] It is such reflective approaches upon which this study focusses, contrasting what Hegel disparaged as 'only subjective truth, only phenomena, appearances, only something to which the nature of

the object itself does not correspond: knowing… lapsed into opinion'[11] with the machinations of the Hegelian metaphysical system.

Post-Hegelian.

In part, the use of the term "post-Hegelian" marks the chronological period in which the study operates. Yet it does not serve solely as a temporal marker, for otherwise any arbitrary date could have been proposed instead. There are commonalities shared by the many varied philosophies which can be considered to be post-Hegelian. Here an attempt will be made to elucidate the features of post-Hegelian thought in order to clarify precisely what it is that makes the thinkers covered within the study post-Hegelian.

Post-Hegelian philosophers are those working in the aftermath of Hegel. As was described before, just as Socrates marked the end of the pre-Socratic period and Plato marked the beginning of philosophy's Platonism, the work of Hegel was so momentous as to commence a new era of philosophy: the post-Hegelian.[12] Such a claim can be supported by the ways in which after Hegel, very few philosophical schools were able to avoid taking a position for or against Hegelianism. The thinkers covered within the study are all in some way antagonistic to Hegelianism, but the term post-Hegelian ought not to be thought of as being the source of this antagonism – the more orthodox British idealists are equally as post-Hegelian as the phenomenologists and personalists. The thinkers within the study, to varying degrees, reassert the reflective philosophical approaches Hegel condemned above. Yet it will be remarked upon that these post-

Hegelians may also offer a form of metaphysics in opposition to Hegelian metaphysics. It will be useful here to explain what is meant by references to this post-Hegelian metaphysics.

As will be seen, *some* of the thinkers in the study are utterly repulsed by Hegelian metaphysics, yet their own philosophy is still metaphysical. This is not due to taking a post-Kantian metaphysical viewpoint, but rather because of the inherent difficulties in overcoming metaphysics. The later Heidegger was to remark that 'a regard for metaphysics still prevails in the intention to overcome metaphysics'.[13] For this reason, the opposition to Hegelian metaphysics is not always particularly clear-cut. As a thinker's philosophy may not be a form of Hegelian metaphysics, whilst still being metaphysical, it will be worthwhile here to attempt to provide a definition for the metaphysical.

A discussion of what precisely is meant by the term metaphysics could easily fill out the entire thesis. The term has been used throughout the history of philosophy to highlight myriad tendencies. The common use of the term as a form of abuse has placed those willing to reclaim the title metaphysics (Stern with regards to Hegel is a good example[14]) squarely in the minority. As this study deploys the term metaphysics, often negatively, it is important to show that firstly metaphysics is not a meaningless term to designate something the author disagrees with, and secondly that the term metaphysics itself has no inherent value judgement. Peter van Inwagen is correct to highlight that 'the word "metaphysics" is notoriously hard to define.'[15] We should not attempt to overcompensate for this difficulty with an overly prescriptive or limited definition. The difficulty is of key importance to understanding the successes and

failures of thinkers to transcend metaphysics (it should be added that not all the thinkers covered within this study make such an attempt or have such a wish) – to camouflage over this difficulty here would be an injustice to these thinkers. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger explains that the fundamental question of metaphysics is 'why are there beings at all instead of nothing?'[16] A metaphysical philosophy is one which seeks to render reasons or causes for beings (or Being). The causal chain implied by such a search for a first cause (often thought of as that which does not change[17]) necessarily leads to some form of systemisation of the totality of existence. Such a systemisation may be explicit as in the form of Hegelian metaphysics, or – as will become clear – may be an unstated, unintended consequence of a supposedly anti-systematic metaphysical theory.

Politics.

Finally, an explanation must be made of what is meant by the term "politics" in the context of the study. As with metaphysics, though perhaps less opaquely, politics is a term which has been subject to a number of varying uses throughout the history of philosophy. The understanding of politics within the study derives from a slightly modified reading of Robert Nozick's famous opening lines to his *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. These lines state that 'individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights). So strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do.'[18] Rather than starting with *a priori* rights, this study begins with the

assumption that it is from our understanding of the nature of Being that the state must look for its justification and direction. As a rough example, if the nature of individual Being is such that authenticity is derived from our directing of our own choices and our taking responsibility for those choices, an authentic politics must account for and adapt to this. As with Nozick's individual rights, the importance of the nature of Being to the study is such that 'the nature of the state, its legitimate functions and its justifications'[19] must flow from the source that is our understanding of our Being.

The completeness of Hegel's philosophical system led him to outline his brilliantly detailed political philosophy in his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* in which he declared that 'what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational'.[20] We must prepare at this point for the understanding that a more limited philosophy – a philosophy more modest about the limits of philosophy – may, or indeed must, result in an equally modest contribution to political theory. The absence of a detailed political theory ought not to be misconstrued as a void in need of being filled in, for it may be that for an ontology which understands individuals as self-creating no political morality is any more justifiable than any other. Neither should it be surprising if a philosopher whose focus is upon the individual's relationship with God devotes little space to the formation of parliaments or the responsibilities attached to universal suffrage. It should be accepted that what may seem to be a dearth of political theory may in fact be a deliberately apolitical stance. Within the study, references to politics should be understood to refer to both the arrangements of nation states (within and without), as well as any other grouping with a power structure mirroring that of a state from which

individuals cannot extract themselves without penalty (tribal structures for example – the family and workplace should not be considered examples of this).

The initial inspiration for the study centred upon the perceived need for the dignity of the individual person to be reasserted within the realm of philosophy. The politics to be discussed within the study are the political implications of the various forms of this reassertion. Politics is taken to be the conclusion of philosophical reasoning rather than the driving force behind this reasoning. Political positions must be moulded to fit the shape of philosophy, rather than philosophy being twisted to reflect political prejudice. As the focus of the study is upon thinkers who have reasserted the position of the person and subjectivity in the light of Hegelian objectivity, it should not be surprising that the implications of their thought tend towards political approaches which similarly respect and assert the dignity of the person and their subjectivity.

1. Paul Redding, 'Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel' in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (July 2010) [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/].
2. Loc. cit., italics are author's.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Loc. cit., italics are author's.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Robert Stern, *Hegelian Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p9.
8. Loc. cit.

9. G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1969), p45.

10. Loc. cit., italics are author's.

11. Ibid, pp45-46.

12. Such "eras" ought not to be seen as too prescriptive – one does not remove the possibility of any other. It is perfectly possible to be a Platonic post-Hegelian thinker or even a pre-Socratic post-Hegelian (as one might be tempted to label some elements of Heidegger's writings).

13. Martin Heidegger, *Time and Being* in On *Time and Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p24.

14. Stern, Op. cit., p3.

15. Peter van Inwagen, 'Metaphysics' in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (September 2007) [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/metaphysics/].

16. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p1.

17. Inwagen, Op. cit.

18. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974), pix.

19. Loc. cit.

20. G.W.F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p14.

Max Stirner: The Self-Owning Individual

The rebellion against Hegelianism to be found in Max Stirner's sole major work *The Ego and His Own* is of such a scale that, in comparison, the other thinkers discussed within this study may appear to be orthodox Hegelian idealists. Whereas Hegel's conception of freedom in his *Philosophy of Right* finds full realisation through the structures of the family, civil society and the state, Stirner rejects these structures and others as barriers, rather than routes, to individual freedom. Such a view is easy to characterise as Hegel did as a form of evil.[1] Indeed, if we were not aware of the twenty-eight year gap between the publication of *Philosophy of Right* and *The Ego and His Own*, it would seem as if Hegel had Stirner in mind when he rails against 'subjectivity which conceives itself as the final court of appeal'.[2] Hegel continues to argue that such a view 'not only substitutes a void for the whole content of ethics, right, duties, and laws… but in addition its form is a *subjective* void, i.e. it knows itself as this contentless void and in this knowledge knows itself as absolute.'[3] There are discernible echoes between Hegel's complaints of a philosophy which says 'I enjoy only myself'[4] and the statement at the end of *The Ego and His Own's* introductory chapter proclaiming 'Nothing is more to me than myself!'[5] This is a sure indication that Stirner was unconcerned with the controversy his work might provoke amongst more orthodox Hegelians, and suggests a willingness to offend those holding such views. In this chapter we shall discuss the interrelationship between Stirner's conception of individual Being, and the form and degree of political interaction he deems to be acceptable because of this understanding.

Man.

Stirner's philosophical egoism necessarily insists that when discussing Being, it is always the author's personal Being which takes centre stage. This is particularly unsurprising as to have loftily discussed the nature of the Being of Man after having separated the individual from this construct within the first few paragraphs of the work would have immediately demolished Stirner's impassioned line of argument.[6] Equally, Stirner's individual "I" ought not to be conceived of as a separation of the author from the remaining mass of mankind, but rather as a call for all individuals to free themselves.[7] The first part of *The Ego and His Own* ('Man') discusses the development of a man as an individual, and then of mankind itself from ancient to contemporary times. First, however, we must turn to Stirner's description of the transition of child into old man in the chapter 'A Human Life', a chapter during which a sense of Stirner's view of the nature of individual Being comes to the fore. Stirner describes how a child 'seeks to find out *himself* and get hold of *himself* out of its confusion in which he, along with everything else, is tossed in a motley mixture.'[8] However, the child soon finds that everything he makes contact with 'defends itself in turn against his attacks, and asserts its own persistence.'[9] In the face of these experiences the child endeavours to gain the upper hand – dominance – in battle against these external things, with the only alternative being submission. Stirner explains,

> In childhood liberation takes the direction of trying to get to the bottom of things, to
> get at what is "back of" things… we like to smash things, like to rummage through
> hidden corners, pry after what is covered up or out of the way, and try what we can

do with everything. When we once get at what is back of the things, we know we

are safe; when we have got at the fact that the rod is too weak against our obduracy,

then we no longer fear it… Back of everything we find our *courage*, our

superiority… the more we feel ourselves, the smaller is that which before seemed

invincible.[10]

This conquering of external things is referred to by Stirner as "mind". Whilst the child

overcame external obstacles by self-discovery, the next stage of development – the

youth – must battle against the enemy within, 'his own conscience.'[11] Fear of the rod is

replaced with fears of being 'unreasonable, unchristian [or] unpatriotic'.[12] The young

man, the next stage of development, is different from the youth as now he realises 'that

one must deal with the world according to his *interest*, not according to his *ideals*'.[13]

Just as the first self-discovery entailed the child getting back of external things, the

self-discovery of the young man entails getting back of his own thoughts. Whereas the

conscience led the youth into submission to ideas – be they ideas of God, nation, or

other – the young man must recognise this as being thought, and importantly, *thought

of his own creation*. Taking ownership of these thoughts, getting back of them, deprives

them of their assumed corporeity. Stirner explains how the young man declares himself

the only corporeal thing, and takes 'the world as what it is to me, as *mine*, as my

property; I refer all to myself.'[14] Stirner offers the possibility of a further stage beyond

the development of the egoistic young man, the old man, but with characteristic wit

explains that 'when I become one, there will still be time enough to speak of that.'[15]

Unfortunately no such passage ever materialised.

Developmental psychologists would undoubtedly understandably baulk at

Stirner's idealised and simplistic depiction of human development, however this short

section of *The Ego and His Own* begins to form a picture of Stirner's views regarding

individual Being in relation to both the external world and to thought. As Leopold

highlights, the stages of child, youth and man are epochs of individual realism, idealism

and egoism, respectively.[16] One could argue that these stages betray an

autobiographical content, suggesting Stirner's own worldview shifted from realist to

idealist, before settling in the egoism of *The Ego and His Own*. More importantly for

this study, and more important philosophically, is the way in which Stirner's

developmental stages of a man serve as a metaphor for the development of Western

philosophical thought. The stages of realism and idealism are discussed in the lengthy

second chapter of the first part, whilst the egoistic future is handled in the second part

of the work, 'I'. As such, Stirner's work implies that the Western philosophical

tradition had overcome the first point of self-discovery (the transition from child to

youth), but had yet to overcome and reclaim individual ownership of thought.

The ancients.

The chapter 'Men of the Old Time and of the New' is separated into three sections:

'The Ancients', 'The Moderns' and 'The Free'. The final section, Stirner explains, is

effectively a subsection of the second section, as it concerns the 'more modern and

most modern among the "moderns"'.[17] That the "free" have a separate section to the

"moderns" is due to the former grouping representing the present, the philosophy

contemporaneous to Stirner, and the latter grouping representing the recent, post-

ancient, past. The pre-Christian "ancients" is a category used by Stirner largely to discuss ancient Greek thought, whilst also making passing references to Judaism and pre-Christian Rome. Stirner associates the ancients with his metaphorical child from the previous section, yet simultaneously acknowledges their position as 'our good old fathers.'[18] Just like Stirner's child, the ancients are portrayed as being in the throes of attempting to get back of the physical world.[19] The spiritual alienation from the world of Christianity is contrasted with the ancient Greek and Jewish striving to realise the best life possible on Earth. Just as the strivings of the child led to self-discovery and the transition to youth, the development in Greek thought is shown by Stirner to have sown the seeds for the transition to the thought of the Christian moderns. The Sophists use of understanding and mind against the world is improved upon by Socrates' assertion that a pure heart is also necessary if this work of the mind is to have value.[20] Stirner contrasts the Stoics' and Epicureans' differing interpretations of the proper relationship between the man of thought and the world, with the former preferring contempt and isolation, and the latter recommending movement and engagement.[21] It is only with the Sceptics, Stirner suggests, that the decisive break from child to youth is made. The Sceptics marked the shift in Greek thought from there being an emphasis on the spirit to the truly spiritual. Stirner quotes various Sceptic figures, such as 'Pyrrho's doctrine [that] the world is neither good nor bad, neither beautiful nor ugly, but these are [only] predicates which I give it.'[22] Stirner argues that through such realisations, the ancients have got back of the world of things into the world of spirit, in which 'Christianity then begins.'[23] It is on this note that Stirner moves to discuss – at much greater length – the moderns.

<u>The moderns.</u>

In comparing the ancients and moderns, Stirner explains that whilst the former saw the world as a truth, the latter saw the spirit as a truth (just as was the case for Stirner's idealistic youth).[24] Just as the ancients were shook up by the revelations of Socrates, Stirner posits the moderns' decisive point as the emergence of Luther and the Reformation. He explains:

> as in the time of the Sophists… so the most brilliant things happened in the time of Humanism… At this time the heart was still far from wanting to relieve itself of its Christian contents. But finally the Reformation, like Socrates, took hold seriously of the *heart* itself, and since then hearts have kept growing visibly— more unchristian.[25]

It is this process Stirner charts through the remainder of the section, first discussing spirit. The egoist, he argues, is castigated by others for emphasising the personal over the spiritual, yet for the non-egoist, the emphasis on spirit is an emphasis towards a foreign power. He explains, 'spirit is your *ideal*, the unattained, the other-worldly; spirit is the name of your—god, "God is spirit."'[26] This conception of spirit leads Stirner to suggest that the non-egoist is in some way possessed.[27]

Stirner moves to discuss in greater depth the individual's relationship to spirit, and to offer evidence for his claims of possession. He metaphorically interrogates the non-egoist about his thoughts. Thoughts are not things, but spiritual entities, 'the spirit of things, the main point of all things, the inmost in them, their—idea.'[28] When one

does not err from accurately recognising the idea of the thing, this is the truth. The truth is sacred to the non-egoist, 'nothing transcends it, it is eternal.'[29] The sacred, Stirner argues, is never present for the sensual man, but only for faith and spirit.[30] Stirner suggests that it is not only the religious who defer to the sacred – an act unbecoming of the egoist – for atheists are just as guilty. In the place of God as supreme spirit, Stirner accuses the atheists of deifying Man.[31] He explains,

> Whether then the one God or the three in one, whether the Lutheran God or the *être supreme* or not God at all, but "Man", may represent the highest essence, that makes no difference at all for him who denies the highest essence itself [i.e. the egoist], for in his eyes those servants… are one and all—pious people… In the foremost place of the sacred then stands the highest essence and the faith in this essence, our "holy faith".[32]

Stirner likens the pious holding of fixed ideas about the sacredness of laws, morality and so on, to a form of madness. He argues that they are akin to fools in a madhouse, totally unaware of their captivity as the asylum covers such a wide space allowing the impression of being able to roam freely.[33] Only the egoist freed from the bounds of the sacred is truly free.

On the similarity of religious and atheistic piety Stirner attacks Feuerbach for exchanging the religious standpoint for the moral standpoint. This exchange involves the inversion of the belief that "God is love" into "love is divine" or "love is sacred".[34] The inversion has clearly replaced God with a more humanistic conception, but despite this Feuerbach is still stuck, in Stirner's view, with the fixed idea. Stirner explains that

this move has expelled God from the heavens only to be 'chased into the human breast and gifted with indelible immanence.'[35] The fixed ideas of the non-egoist do not even form an internally consistent system for, Stirner suggests, there are often times when fixed ideas come into conflict. For instance, an act may be judged to be good in its intentions *and* outcome, but yet be judged immoral if it transgresses the fixed idea of the law.[36] Stirner decries the way in which opposition parties fail to flourish due to being weighed down by the sacred fixed ideas of law and morality, suggesting they 'renounce will in order to live to love, renounce liberty—for love of morality.'[37] He also rails against those reformers who wish to have free will without having to renounce the moral will.[38] Stirner's implication is clear: choose a free will *or* a moral will. You cannot have both. This point is linked to Stirner's arguments about education which are covered in more detail in his earlier work *The False Principle of Our Education*.[39] It is not stretching too far into speculation to suggest that Stirner's previous position as a teacher highlighted the importance of education on helping to form the individual's nature.[40] Stirner argues that the tendency of education is to attempt to produce feelings in the student, a method which is in tune with the moral will. The alternative to this is for the students to be involved themselves in the production of feelings, instead of receiving them ready-made from a third party.[41] This latter model is entirely in keeping with Stirner's wider views on the freedom of the individual, albeit expressed in a less radical fashion.

To end the section on the moderns, Stirner moves to a discussion of hierarchy. After using a somewhat strained and outdated metaphor of different races as the different stages of development of spirit, Stirner explains the way in which the idea of the sacred enforces hierarchy. Sacred is, as we have seen previously, 'everything which

for the egoist is to be unapproachable, not to be touched, outside his power—above

him… every matter of conscience'.[42] What is sacred is not the thing, but the thought

about the thing. Sacredness demands objectivity as all must treat the sacred with the

same veneration and subservience. By raising the objective thought above all else,

Hegel's philosophical system is condemned as 'the extremest case of violence on the

part of thought, its highest pitch of despotism and sole dominion, the triumph of the

mind, and with it the triumph of *philosophy*.'[43] This triumph ends with the positioning

of Man at the summit of the hierarchy, with Man serving whichever sacred cause is

deemed necessary for the times, be it morality, patriotism or religiousness. Stirner's

main contention with this impersonal concept of Man is that 'he who is infatuated with

Man leaves persons out of account'.[44] The discipline necessary to maintain the stability

of the hierarchy, Stirner explains, was originally maintained through the imparting of

the fear of God into individuals. Now this same effect is achieved through the fear of

Man, this impersonal concept personifying the law, morality, country, and so on.[45]

Luther and the break from the medieval, instead of reversing this trend, internalises it.

Stirner compares the state of the individual in Protestantism to that of a man living in

an authoritarian police state.

> The spy and eavesdropper, "conscience", watches over every motion of the
>
> mind, and all thought and action is for it a "matter of conscience", that is, police
>
> business. This tearing of man into "natural impulse" and "conscience"… is
>
> what constitutes the Protestant… The Catholic finds himself satisfied when he
>
> fulfils the command; the Protestant acts according to his "best judgement and

conscience". For the Catholic is only a layman; the Protestant is himself a

clergyman… the spiritual became complete.[46]

The completion of the spiritual is achieved when the Protestant is controlled no longer

by earthly powers, but by *his own conscience* – the thought, the idea, the spiritual.

Stirner associates Hegel with the Lutheran, for just as in Protestantism, Hegel's system

carries the idea through everything. In Hegelianism, 'in everything there is reason… for

the real is in fact everything; as in each thing, for instance, each lie, the truth can be

detected: there is no absolute lie, no absolute evil, and the like.'[47]

The free.

The free, the most modern of the moderns, are separated by Stirner into three

categories: political liberals, social liberals and humane liberals. These categories form

the progressive movement in political philosophy after the end of the absolute

monarchy. Political liberalism heralded the advent of commonality (or "citizenhood")

and the rights of man.[48] In reaction to the behaviour of the nobility under absolute

monarchy, the principle is adopted that individual interest ought to be rejected and

replaced with a focus on the general interest.[49] This spirit of egalitarian commonality is

emphasised through equality of political rights.[50] The objectivity inherent in political

liberalism is heavily criticised by Stirner, who likens it to Hegel's succeeding 'in

glorifying the dependence of the subject on the object… [putting] the individual in

irons by the *thought of humanity*.'[51] Stirner decries the political liberal's zealous faith

in reason, which is just as strong and fanatical as the Christian faith which preceded

it.[52] He attacks political liberty for producing freedom for the state rather than freedom for individuals. Similarly, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience entail religion being free and conscience being free, not individuals themselves. Stirner explains, 'it does not mean *my* liberty, but the liberty of a power that rules and subjugates me… state, religion, conscience, these despots, make me a slave, and *their* liberty is my slavery.'[53] Under political liberalism, even the ruler is depersonalised. The absolute king is replaced with the impersonal constitutional monarch, and where there once were orders there is now the law.[54] Both are equally oppressive to Stirner, as one is the will of the ruler, the other is the will of Man – neither are initiated by the will of the actor. In disparaging the law, Stirner is not imagining a utopian vision in which the creativity of the individual's will is the only limit. The sole limit on the individual according to Stirner is power.[55] If the individual has the power needed to carry out a particular action he can, if the individual is not powerful enough he cannot. Qualms brought about by morality, law, the tastes of the majority of citizens, and so on, are to Stirner an anathema. Stirner finds that, as is a tendency of all social orders, political liberalism fails by its own terms of reference. Political equality fails to address the issue of labour slavery, leading to the advent of social liberalism.[56]

Social liberalism adds to the political equality of political liberalism an equality of property. Whereas in political liberalism, the property of the elite is protected from the masses by the state, social liberalism puts all property in the impersonal hands of society.[57] Stirner argues that the reshaping of society in social liberalism has its grounds in a mistaken assumption that faults in society can be solved by implementing a new model of society. 'This is only the old phenomenon – that one looks for the fault first in everything but himself, and consequently in the state, in the self-seeking of the

rich, and so on, which yet have precisely our fault to thank for their existence.'[58] The society envisaged by the social liberal has labour as its sole value. All labour for the good of society is of value – of equal value for 'he who accomplishes something useful is inferior to none'.[59] If all labourers and labours are equal, it takes no great logical leap to conclude that all wages – shares of the property of society – must also be equal.

Humane liberalism counters that political and social liberalism both maintain an unacceptable strand of egoism. Whilst social liberalism recognised and amended some of the egoism in political liberalism, the socialist labourer 'will utilise society for his egoistic ends as the commoner does the state.'[60] This is because whilst the socialist labours equally for the sake of society, in his leisure time he is an egoist. The socialist has endeavoured to equalise man's drudgery but has failed to realise that man's leisure must also be equal. For the humane liberal, the victory over egoism will only be complete when man achieves 'completely "disinterested" action, *total disinterestedness*. This alone is human, because Man is disinterested, [whilst] the egoist is always interested.'[61] Stirner counters that the humane liberal fails to account for the possibility that everything possible to a man should be considered human. By attempting to synthesise how Man should be, the humane liberal has ignored the fact that human beings *already exist*. 'I do not need to begin producing the human being in myself, for he belongs to me already, like all my qualities.'[62] Stirner continues to reemphasise his belief that Man is only an idea existing through individual men.[63] He rejects any suggestion that his egoism is based on a claim to rights not recognised by the progressive strains of liberalism. Stirner declares,

I want to be all and have all that I can be and have. Whether others are and have anything similar, what do I care? The equal, the same, they can neither be nor have. I cause no detriment to them, as I cause no detriment to the rock by being "ahead of it" in having motion. If they could have it, they would have it.[64]

Others are to Stirner objects to be utilised, if possible, for his ends. The only limits which are of any interest to the individual are his own, for 'he who overturns one of *his* limits may have shown others the way and the means'.[65] Whether the other uses this example to his own benefit is of no direct interest to Stirner – self-interest is always the egoist's one and only end.

The egoistic alternative.

Having indicated the flaws he finds inherent in the changing trends of impersonal thought, Stirner moves to explain his own egoistic alternative in the second half of the work which is entitled in a suitably egoistical fashion "*I*". Stirner describes how both spirit and body thirst for freedom, but explains that freedom alone is not enough.[66] Freedom alone is a void – a vacuum to be filled by the individual becoming an owner.[67] To Stirner the cravings for particular freedoms are cravings for new dominion. For instance, freedom from arbitrary rule led to the dominion of laws.[68] He criticises freedom for its inherent negativity – freedom is always freedom from something. Egoism, and the self-ownership it entails, 'calls you to joy over yourselves'.[69] Ownership over oneself is the state into which each individual is born, but must be

actively reclaimed.[70] Stirner explains that freedom from the external world is achieved to,

> the degree that I make the world my own, "gain it and take possession of it" for myself, by whatever might, by that of persuasion, of petition, of categorical demand, yes, even by hypocrisy, cheating, etc; for the means I use are determined by what I am. If I am weak I have only weak means, like the aforesaid, which yet are good enough for a considerable part of the world.[71]

If Stirner did not find the concept of rights completely abhorrent, his position on gaining ownership of the external world might best be summarised by the adage "might is right". He explains that 'freedom becomes complete only when it is my—might'.[72] This freedom necessary for self-ownership cannot, Stirner contends, be given as a gift or contractual right; it must be taken by the individual himself. He scathingly attacks those who might claim to give the individual his freedom. These "liberators" 'are simply knaves who give more than they have… they give you nothing of their own, but stolen wares: they give you your own freedom'.[73] Stirner is insistent that we must always remember that the freedom we must claim for ourselves with our might is no ultimate end, but only a means. All things are means to the egoist, with the only legitimate end being himself and his self-ownership.

The status of the self-owning individual – the owner – is the subject of the second section of *The Ego and His Own's* second and longest chapter. It is in this chapter that Stirner makes his brief yet tantalising reference to 'the *Union of Egoists*'[74] which offers a small insight into what political arrangements might be if Stirner's

vision for the future was enacted. As Stirner goes little further in explicitly explaining the shape and structure of human relations after the present societal configuration has been obliterated, it is unsurprising that the union of egoists has tended to receive a great deal more discussion from academics than it did from Stirner himself.[75] The lack of systematic development of the union of egoists ought not necessarily be thought of as an omission by Stirner. From the philosophical positions expounded in *The Ego and His Own* which have been discussed above (and will be discussed below), various aspects of the union are implied. As Stepelevich explains, Stirner's union of egoists would be 'a voluntary collective against an ideological communality.'[76] Any further prescription than this would be in direct contradiction of Stirner's conception of the self-owning individual. To proscribe a mandatory alternative to current societal structure would be to replace one dominion with another. If individuals are to use whatever means seem most suitable to them to reach their own individual ends, it would be an act of prophecy to assume to know what these means will be. It seems likely that individuals might collect together in a union of egoists on specific measures when this appears the most efficient manner of reaching each of their individual ends. The exact agreements these unions would be based upon would be as numerous and limitless as the myriad ideas individuals might have. This would necessitate the egoist philosopher being omniscient in order to make accurate predictions of all the private agreements self-owning individuals might consent to. Although it is likely Stirner would not wholly have agreed with the wording, Milton Friedman sums up well the problem the philosopher of individualism has in prescribing social structures.

In a society, freedom has nothing to say about what an individual does with his freedom; it is not an all-embracing ethic. Indeed, a major aim of the liberal is to leave the ethical problem for the individual to wrestle with.[77]

This is perhaps why, as we have seen and will continue to see, Stirner's emphasis for his philosophy is himself. If others choose to do otherwise it is likely to be to their detriment, but is their business to choose to do so if they have the might.

Power or might, as we have seen, is a key feature of Stirner's conception of the self-owning individual. He summarises his position in the following series of statements,

My power is *my* property.

My power *gives* me property.

My power *am* I myself, and through it am I my property.[78]

For Stirner power is the sole legitimate limit on the individual and his ambitions. If you have the might required to be something, then you have every right to be it – be this the owner of a particular thing, the holder of a certain status amongst other individuals, or the creator of a magnificent work of art or invention. As he explains, 'I am *entitled* to everything that I have in my power.'[79] Stirner tackles the ethical concerns which may arise from this proposition, in particular with regards to the issue of murder. He insists that murder ought not to be dismissed as wrong, for "wrong" is an idea – a spook – which is a barrier to the egoist's self-ownership. Stirner argues that if the egoist has the might and permits himself to murder, this is the sole permit required.[80] Stirner's

attitude, consistent with his philosophy, is that if an individual lacks the might and impetus to protect his property – including his life – from being taken by another, and another wishes to take ownership of this property, then this is what he deserves. Property belongs to the individual who is willing and able to take it.[81] This does not however mean that Stirner is averse to the act of punishment – indeed he regards it to be a sensible way to protect one's own property. Unlike Hegel, Stirner does not view punishment as being automatically the right of the criminal or murderer, for if the criminal is able to escape punishment this is his right.[82] Stirner posits punishment as the individual's right *against* the criminal.[83] Punishment is the wronged person or persons getting the upper hand against the person or persons who have tried to take away or damage their property. Whether punishment is on an individual basis, or the action taken by a union of egoists working to achieve the constituent members' mutual interests is immaterial – punishment is the use of might by the wronged upon the wrong-doer. Stirner's views on crime and punishment are probably best summarised by his pithy remark, 'defend yourself, and no one will do anything to you!'[84] Whilst for ease of discussion on these points we have utilised the term "crime" to discuss actions deigned to be infractions against the individual and his property, Stirner questions the value of the term. By being an egoist, the individual is already a criminal against sacred ideas such as state, religion and ethics from birth.[85] As such, Stirner explains how 'only against a sacred thing are there criminals: you against me can never be a criminal, but only an opponent.'[86]

Stirner continues to examine the relationships between the egoist and others in the section "My Intercourse". He heavily criticises society for being a spook which fails to satisfy the wants of the egoist whilst at most satisfying the needs of the

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human.[87] Stirner argues that societies as they currently exist can never satisfy the wants of the egoist as egoism itself is viewed as a corrupting agent within society.[88] Stirner contrasts society with his suggested union of egoists, with the former unsurprisingly coming up short.[89] Societies' overruling of the individual's needs with common needs is rejected by Stirner as the 'furthest extremity of self-renunciation',[90] as this necessarily involves the egoist accepting that there are ends higher than his own – ends for which his own ends must be sacrificed to achieve. Stirner uses the example of Socrates' refusal to escape for captivity before his execution as he recognised his society's right to put him to death. Socrates' society, like all societies, is to Stirner merely an idea – a spook. As such Stirner describes Athens' most revered thinker as a fool for his actions, and holds the position that Socrates deserved to be killed for he lacked the will and might to protect his own property – his life.[91]

Moving from society to state, Stirner rejects even the most tolerant of states as lacking the freedom required by the egoist, for this tolerance only tolerates that which is of no threat to the state.[92] The individual is free to do as he likes as long as the status of the state and the position of the individual within it remains undamaged and unchanged. The constitutionally limited state is viewed by the philosopher as being a conflict of absolutism.[93] This duality between the absolutism of the people through the constitution and the absolutism of the state is unlikely to result in much more than continuing tension. As ever, a victory for either absolutist position or the status quo of continued tension would be a defeat for the egoist for whom himself and his ends are the only recognisable absolute. This is not to suggest that Stirner envisages the egoist embarking on a war against the state wherever it exists, as this would involve placing an ideal – in this case, the ideal of all being free from the state – above his own self.

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Stirner explains, 'only when the state comes into contact with his ownness does the egoist take an active interest in it.'[94] This active interest may include involvement within a political party, but never the tribalism associated with party systems. For the egoist, the political party is a union he freely joins as a means for advancing his own purposes, and from which he can and will choose to leave whenever membership is no longer to his benefit.[95] Stirner's egoist is unpartisan, working with whichever party will at that time best serve his needs. If this party changes he has little qualms in switching sides – the egoist never binds himself to any grouping.[96]

Stirner's continual theme of refusing to recognise anything as sacred begins his extended discussion of property. He argues that the deification of property rights by civic liberals 'deserves the attacks of the Communists and Proudhon',[97] yet the basis of these attacks is fundamentally flawed. Proudhon is attacked for declaring himself as being against all property whilst simultaneously advocating some forms of property within his own theory. As Stirner summarises, 'Proudhon, therefore, denies only such and such property, not *property* itself.'[98] Even Proudhon's most renowned designation of property as theft contains within itself the presupposition of property. Without the existence of property, the accusation of theft loses not only its cutting power but also any comprehendible meaning.[99] As we have previously seen, the only right Stirner accepts over property is the might to take possession of property and the might to defend this from the might of others.[100] Cooperation with others within a union of egoists is suggested as one of the means for protecting this property. The union acts to protect its members' property from the incursions of others not because of a belief that once held, the individual's connection with his property is sacred, but because this cooperation is for the benefit of each member of the union.[101] If it is no longer the case

that the individual finds his interests best served within the union, he is free to leave and join another, or to join none at all. Stirner's riposte to Proudhon and the communists is that property 'should not and cannot be abolished; it must rather be torn from ghostly hands and become *my* property; then the erroneous consciousness that I cannot entitle myself to as much as I require will vanish.'[102] Vanish, that is, as long as the individual has the means to acquire all he requires – with infinite means the individual can satisfy infinite requirements. Stirner moves from abstract theoretical property rights in the abstract to attack what is referred to within the state as being "free competition". Free competition is anything but free according to Stirner, as the state insists that it must first qualify individuals to compete. Without the grace of the state, for instance the requisite certification to practise medicine or the appropriate permit to trade certain objects, the individual has no freedom to compete.[103] Stirner suggests that within a union of egoists, all should take an interest in the production of their requirements. If one requires bread, he should not leave this to the guild or competing producers. If the egoist does not make it his activity to actively pursue his affair (in this case bread) he 'must be *content* with what it pleases others to vouchsafe'[104] him.

Written during a time of state censorship, *The Ego and His Own's* discussion of press freedom appears to be an example of Stirner's sailing very close to the rocks. He discusses the fundamental difference to be found in press freedom granted by state and that taken from the state, namely that the latter is a truer victory for the egoist.[105] The press, as is the case with other things, is for the egoist his property. It is a means to achieving his end, over which no other is recognised as a judge regarding its utilisation.[106] For Stirner, action by the state to recognise the liberty of the press presupposes that the state has the right to decide who may and may not be thought of as

possessing a particular right. On this point the philosopher cites the example of France in which freedom of the press is viewed as being a right of man. The government does not gift this right to individuals, but solely to the spook Man. As such, the state is able to limit freedom of the press to individuals by insisting that these individuals act and think in a way which fails to correspond with the designation "Man".[107] The individual again becomes 'the retainer of mankind, only a specimen of the species'.[108]

Max Stirner's reputation for hard-nosed self-serving egoism might suggest that he had little time for matters of the heart, yet when discussing the egoist's relations with others he devotes several pages to questions of love. Stirner explains, 'I love men too—not merely individuals, but every one. But I love them with the consciousness of egoism; I love them because love makes *me* happy… it pleases me.'[109] This love for other individuals includes finding joy from their joy, and pain from their pain. Stirner rejects the conception of love as being any form of commandment, but a part of his property for which he explains he fixes 'the purchase price… quite at my pleasure.'[110] Stirner draws a distinction between what he calls egoistic love, and religious and romantic love. The latter forms of love contain a sense of obligation, whilst egoistic love is the egoist's own as the object of this love is the egoist's object – the egoist's property.[111] Stirner is under no illusions about the consequences of his view of the loved one as being the lover's property. He explains,

I would rather be referred to men's selfishness than to their "kindnesses", their mercy, pity, etc. The former demands reciprocity… does nothing "gratis", and may be won and—bought. But with what shall I obtain the kindness? It is a matter of chance… The affectionate one's service can be had only by—begging, be it by my

lamentable appearance, by my need of help, my misery, my—suffering. What can I offer him in return? Nothing![112]

For Stirner, if love is based on generosity rather than ownership, the loved one is beholden to the whims of the lover, just as the individual may be beholden to the state, family or God. The egoist's relation to others in this way lends itself to Stirner's suggestion of a union of egoists in which limitations on the liberty of the members would still be inevitable, but greatly minimised in comparison with current societal relations.[113] Perhaps the greatest single reason for this difference is that 'the society is *sacred*, the union your *own*; the society consumes *you*, *you* consume the union.'[114] Within the union of egoists the egoist's satisfaction, and nothing else, dictates his relationship with others.[115]

Stirner discusses the nature of Being of the individual, arguing that one must always be anxious not only to live, but to enjoy life.[116] He dismisses the philosophical and theological trend of searching for man's true self, insisting that what a man is now *is* his true self already.[117] The search for man's true or higher self is an attempt to replace individuals' actual existences with an idea in service of religion, humanitarianism or some other alien spook. These idealised visions of man make the individual's life a means for duty or morality, whilst for Stirner it is all other things which should be turned into the means for furthering the individual's enjoyment of life.[128] Having rejected that the egoist's life should be considered a means to fulfil duty, Stirner further denies that individuals have any form of calling or destiny at all.[119] Whilst Stirner has throughout *The Ego and His Own* implored the egoist to use his force to obtain the property to satisfy his needs, he rejects that this is a calling. The use

of might is the egoist's act, 'real and extant at all times.'[120] A calling is an ideal or possibility for the future, whilst for Stirner the egoist is real, now – what is real and now is all that matters. Stirner argues that ideals and callings for man are pure possibilities, adding that 'if something which one imagines to be easily possible is not, or does not happen, then one may be assured that something stands in the way of the thing, and that it is—impossible.'[121] Possibility, Stirner asserts, is 'nothing but thinkableness'.[122] Stirner decries the waste of life and energy throughout history spent on attempting to reach an impossible ideal, arguing that 'no sheep… exerts itself to become "a proper sheep"'.[123] The true egoist should forget all concepts of what he ought to be and focus upon being the best his might allows him to be – the former places the individual in service of a spook, the latter in service of himself. To focus on Being, Stirner explains, is to strive after an abstraction.[124] Being is always personal being, 'it is *my* being'.[125] The absolute abstract thought of Hegel is similarly rejected, for this fails to account for the personal thinker – Hegel's philosophy is the personification of thinking.[126] Both Being and thinking must be conquered and made the property of the egoist.[127]

Stirner's philosophy in *The Ego and His Own* displays a pragmatism in which the sacredness of certain objects and thoughts is never replaced with considering them as profane, for both the sacred and profane possess individuals.[128] Using the example of the Bible, which may be used differently by a believer (as the word of God), a child (as a plaything) and by a non-believer (as an object of ridicule), Stirner celebrates that each of these deals with the Bible to their heart's pleasure.[129] Just as with other objects, the Bible is used as a means for different people to achieve whichever ends they have chosen to follow. Similarly, supposedly sacred ideas such as God and truth hold no

strength for Stirner, who approaches both indifferently. He explains, 'it is very much the same to me whether God or truth wins; first and foremost I want to win.'[130] Indeed, Stirner later highlights that truth – an idea – can never truly win a victory as it is a spook. As with other ideas, other spooks, truth is merely one of many available means for the egoist to utilise to achieve his own victory.[131] Stirner rejects the idea of sin, and that certain acts and those who commit them are profane. Sinners are created by those who believe in sin, those whose lives are in service to morality. If there is no morality, there can be no sin. If there is no sin, 'there is no sinner and [hence] no sinful egoism!'[132]

For the final short chapter of *The Ego and His Own*, "The Unique One", Stirner reiterates several central points which have been made in the work. The conflict to be found in much of the history of philosophy between 'the real and the ideal is an irreconcilable one, and the one can never become the other… The opposition of the two is not to be vanquished otherwise than if some one annihilates both.'[133] This third party is the egoist, and the method of annihilation is by a shift in emphasis from the impersonal to the personal – from "it" to "I". The egoist as the unique one – for each individual is unique – turns the question from "what is man?" to "who is man?" With the former 'the concept was sought for… with "who" it is no longer any question at all, but the answer is personally on hand at once in the asker: the question answers itself.'[134] With the rejection of the ideal, Stirner imagines that as with God, the unique individual may be thought of as being perfect, with 'no calling to strive after perfection.'[135] Echoing the beginning of the work Stirner concludes stating,

Every higher essence above me, be it God, be it man, weakens the feeling of my

uniqueness, and pales only before the sun of this consciousness. If I concern myself

for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator,

who consumes himself, and I may say:

All things are nothing to me.[136]

This final section summarises Stirner's philosophy in a short paragraph, yet does not

seem to carry the philosopher's attitude as strongly as an earlier passage explaining

why he writes what he does. Stirner begins rhetorically,

Do I write out of love of men? No, I write because I want to procure for *my*

thoughts an existence in the world; and, even if I foresaw that these thoughts would

deprive you of your rest and your peace, even if I saw the bloodiest wars and the

fall of many generations springing up from this seed of thought—I would

nevertheless scatter it. Do with it what you will and can, that is your affair and does

not trouble me… not even for truth's sake do I speak out what I think… I sing

because—I am a singer. But I *use* you for it because I—need ears.[137]

Stirner expounds his philosophy of egoism not as some sort of public service, nor

because it is a truth which must be spread amongst the masses. Stirner writes because

he wishes to do so, and considers each subsequent reader in some way his object, for

each provides him with his audience from which he derives his pleasure.

Conclusion.

Despite the often extreme philosophical positions adopted by Max Stirner, his egoism

does offer a possible solution to the problems of individuality arising from

Hegelianism. Stirner's anti-systemic theory sets out to reject not only the all-

encompassing philosophical system of Hegel, but all systems altogether – not

withstanding his own system of placing self-enjoyment as the sum and goal of the

individual's actions. The value of Max Stirner's philosophy for the purpose of this

study can be divided into two sections: the extent to which Stirner recognised and

highlighted problems inherent in Hegelianism and the rest of Western philosophy, and

the extent to which Stirner's egoism provides a satisfactory solution to these problems.

Despite the lengthy and often sarcastic attack on "Saint Max" and *The Ego and His*

Own in Marx and Engels' posthumously published *The German Ideology*, Stirner's

criticisms helped shape and strengthen the communists' philosophical positions. In his

work Stirner had recognised and addressed the Hegelian tendency to dress the human

in the robes of the theological, maintaining the same levels of religiosity as many of

their hated opponents. Marx's reaction to Stirner's criticisms of the Young Hegelians in

this area has been described by Stedman Jones as the 'recourse to a thermo-nuclear

response'[138] of removing from all ideas any self-contained sacredness. This step

allowed the continuance of the communistic criticism of the religious and 'at the same

time any association between socialism and ethics could be brutally denied.'[139] Marx

and Engels' 'ingenious but disingenuous'[140] philosophical movement in response to

Stirner may have later been followed by shifts away from the undesirable consequences

of this new position (of the overemphasis of the economic above all other motivations

for communism[141]), but the existence at all of the movement highlights the strengths of Stirner's insight. The attacks on the religious tone of Hegelianism struck much more keenly against the Young Hegelians against whom it was aimed than against the Lutheran Hegel, whose aim was to reconcile religion and philosophy within his philosophical system.[142] Despite the hypothetical likelihood of Hegel being unconcerned about the accusation that his philosophy encouraged the deification of ideas and generally engaged in religiosity, this does not necessarily mean Stirner's criticisms in this area have no bearing against Hegel. The deification of the idea must lead to the denigration of the individual who becomes little more than a container for this idea. The personal and individual – the unique – is lost in the glorifying of the objective. That Stirner recognised and highlighted this throughout *The Ego and His Own* guarantees the work's value, regardless of the strengths of the philosopher's prescriptions for change.

Stirner's reassertion of the status of the individual and his relations with other individuals contains much which would be abhorrent to the other thinkers to be discussed within this study. His rebellion against the depersonalising effect of the ascendancy of ideas involves not only throwing the baby out with the bathwater, but a personal mission to destroy all baths whenever and wherever he encounters them. Stirner denies all values beyond that of self-enjoyment, yet never addresses why self-enjoyment is a measure of action more valuable than all others. Ownership of self and the consideration of all other things and people as property (or potential property) to be used as a means to achieve one's ends may be an internally consistent approach to understanding and guiding individuals' actions, yet involves a great deal of over-simplification. Leaving aside any qualms with the assumption that self-enjoyment *is*

inherently a good thing for all individuals to strive towards, Stirner's theory may well have the effect of reducing the total amount of enjoyment to be enjoyed by individuals. This, Stirner would argue, is not his concern for if the individual does not have the might to grasp and hold onto enjoyment, he does not deserve it. Stirner's philosophy continually has the appearance of being written from the perspective of one *with* enough might to satisfy his desires, never satisfactorily addressing the lot of those *without* this might. Stirner's seeming confidence in his own ability to maintain ownership over his objects seems ill fitting with his actual position as the moderate outsider former-schoolmaster. The worldview of *The Ego and His Own*, if enacted, bares closer resemblance to the Hobbesian state of nature than anything else.[143] There is nothing to suggest that a small group of the mighty elite will not group together in a union of egoists to ensure that life for everyone else remains 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.'[144] Stirner may, as we saw above, be unconcerned how his ideas effect other individuals, but his holding fast to a doctrine which may well herald the destruction of any hope of his own self-enjoyment if followed by all seems, paradoxically, to be an act of self-sacrifice in service to the egoistic ideal.

In perhaps the best book length study of Max Stirner in English so far, R. W. K. Paterson argues that he should be thought of as a precursor to atheistic existentialism in the same way that Søren Kierkegaard is accepted as the precursor to Christian existentialism.[145] Many of the problems diagnosed by Stirner in *The Ego and His Own* foreshadow the concerns raised by phenomenology and existentialism. Stirner's individual-centred philosophising – his insistence that he is writing always about himself rather than some abstract Man or mankind as a whole – has distinct similarities with Heidegger's later insistence in *Being and Time* that 'in each case Dasein is

mine'.[146] Stirner is right to highlight the tendency in Hegelian thought (and elsewhere) to depersonalise the subject of the philosophising, placing the philosopher over and above their subject matter as a disinterested spectator. Stirner is also correct to question the reverent way in which the philosophical tradition has tended to take certain values as being unquestionable, and thus without need for justification. Examples of these at various times have included morality, law, the state and Christianity. In philosophy, all elements of existence should and must be open to question. Deference to tradition ought not become a barrier to questioning. A philosopher may conclude that it is justified that something which is valued by tradition is so valued, but this justification *is* required, and must not be assumed *a priori*.

Perhaps the strongest feature of Stirner's philosophy is his insistence that each individual creates himself. There is no preordained duty for a man to complete, nor a role for him to play – he must choose himself. Whilst Stirner's over-reliance on the role of might as the tool for achieving self created goals is flawed, it does provide an acceptance that whilst each individual must choose what he is to Be, this choice is not limitless. In Stirner's theory, each man must make the most of the resources (might) at his disposal in order to satisfy his own ends. If anything, Stirner's insistence on the egoist's focus on self-enjoyment as the end to all his decisions seems much too prescriptive. For a philosopher who refuses to accept preordained status and duty, it seems inconsistent to assert a preordained goal. Either self-enjoyment is a narrow measure of success and thus restrains the individual's possibilities for Being, or it is a term so wide and vague as to lack any real meaning. As such, Stirner's self-enjoyment appears to suffer from many of the same errors as the utilitarians' insistence on measuring the utility (whatever this means) of a given action.

It has been suggested that Stirner's anti-social philosophy is a projection of his dissatisfaction with his own rather unspectacular demeanour.[147] Whether this is or is not the case is immaterial to this study in which Stirner's philosophical worldview is being considered quite apart from any autobiographical inspiration. Stirner's egoist's relations with others seem almost to be a form of reverse solipsism. Instead of being unsure of the existence of other actors within the world, Stirner suggests that the egoist should act as if he is the only actor within the world. At no point does he suggest that this is objectively the case (quite the opposite), but the egoist's treatment of others as solely an object divests them of their personality – they become just another resource within the world to be ordered and organised in order to achieve a goal which is not their own. The egoist is not immune from this depersonalising act, for if another has the might, he too can use the egoist as a tool for achieving his own goals. Rather than being beholden to a spook, every individual in Stirner's theory runs the continuous risk of being torn from the state of self-ownership, and being put to use as a disposable means to reaching a foreign end. As such it can very easily be argued that instead of arresting the process of depersonalisation which he had so skilfully diagnosed, Stirner's prescription accelerates it. Supporters of Stirner's worldview might argue that in the current arrangement of human relations, the individual is already restrained. As such, even if only the few with the very most might regain their personality in the egoist world, this is better than none. Yet a worldview in which the great mass of mankind are treated as nothing but disposable fodder for the use of an elite surely cannot be the only response to the depersonalising tendency in Western metaphysics.

Where later phenomenology and existential philosophy in the form of Heidegger greatly advances on Stirner's worldview is the assertion that it is possible

for the individual to have an authentic existence with others. Whilst 'Stirner considers all human relationships to be founded on exploitation, in one form or another',[148] Heidegger suggests that this is in no way inevitable. We will be discussing Heideggerian philosophy in detail later in this study, so we shall only briefly touch upon the subject here. Heidegger argues that it is possible for Dasein to 'become *authentically* bound together [with another Dasein], and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the Other in his freedom for himself.'[149] This greatly advances on the somewhat nightmarish vision of total war of all against all, separated by occasional agreement on matters of mutual benefit.

Stirner's conception of responsibility is also lacking. He asserts the egoist's self-ownership, and the way in which the individual creates himself, but his theory is let down by its explicit nihilism. Paterson advances a strong argument that we should interpret Stirner's philosophy as being 'philosophy at play'.[150] Stirner argues in *The Ego and His Own* that the only reason the egoist should do something is for his own self-enjoyment – the writing of a philosophical manifesto is not exempted from this. Yet what value can be attached to a work which its own creator implies has been created solely for his own amusement? Paterson refers to Stirner's philosophy as being 'a private metaphysical 'world''.[151] It is possible that in creating this private world, Stirner has raised pertinent questions (much like an artist who paints for fun, or a musician who composes for fun) which have received clearer analysis in later philosophy, but that his positive suggestions should be taken less seriously. Stirner's egoist is responsible for his actions in that he is their sole author, but here responsibility ends. There is none of the guilt or anxiety present in the works of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Instead the consistent nihilist must refuse 'to take anything or

anyone seriously'.[152] This includes both nihilism itself and the egoist himself. Not only does Stirner's egoist refuse to be held to account as responsible for actions by anyone else, he must also refuse to hold himself to account. Without this dimension, Stirner's conception of responsibility must ultimately, like all forms of nihilism, be meaningless.

Stirner's clearest lasting political influence has been upon the individualist strand of anarchism in its most extreme form.[153] Peter Marshall explains how whilst typically anarchists make 'a sharp distinction between the State and society, and reject the former in order to allow the peaceful and productive development of the latter',[154] Stirner rejects both. Marshall highlights the clearest doubt raised by Stirner's politics to be why the self-serving egoist would not make a power grab and in doing so reintroduce a form of state.[155] Despite this, Stirner's influence on individualist anarchism has given it the emphasis of the existing individual's enjoyment over the utopian abstractions and vagueness of much of anarchist theory. Stirner's understanding of human nature certainly seems more realistic and pragmatic than the hopes of many anarchists that with the state gone, society will flourish in general harmony without any coercive guiding hand. However, without the utopian romanticism of a Bakunin or a Tolstoy, what is left is much less appealing. Stirner's work may warn us explicitly of the dangers of overwhelming social control through the state and society, but implicitly it suggests (despite Stirner's intentions) that individual freedom needs to be tempered somewhat if each individual is to have the freedom to create himself. By taking individualism to its absolute extremes, Stirner has shown the importance in there being at least some form of social control – not necessarily in the form of a state – if each person is to remain free to Be themselves.
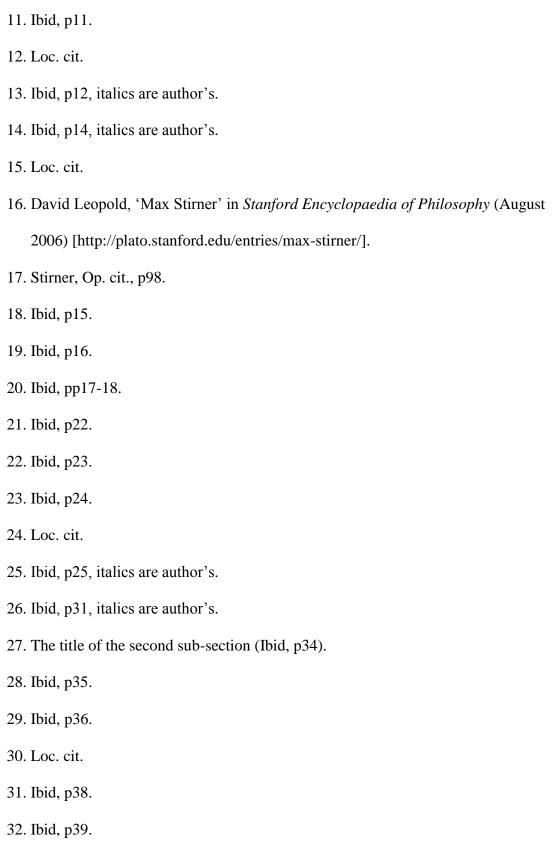
Stirner's overly simplistic conception of human existence is perhaps the source of his worst excesses. He correctly criticises the tendency to force the individual to be what he ought to be (due to morality, state loyalty, religion, etc), yet Stirner himself fails to account for individual Being as it really is. By simplifying the myriad complexities of the human condition into a form of pure hedonism, Stirner has done the individual little justice. Our friendships, work relationships, family, nation, history, and much more, all play a role in shaping our identity and providing us with the possibilities for what we can choose to Be. By focussing solely on the individual's present, and ignoring his past and future, Stirner's egoist is a two-dimensional caricature. As such, his self-owning egoist is difficult to take seriously as anything other than as a literary creation, for this is all it ever was. Despite the utter failure of his positive philosophical and political worldviews, Stirner's incisive diagnosis of the problems of Hegelianism (in particular) and Western metaphysics (in general) still form a very important part in the development of a more personalistic philosophy which better reflects human existence as it really is.

If metaphysics is that calculative thinking which seeks to ground the existence (as opposed to non-existence) of beings, it may initially appear that Max Stirner has in some way overcome metaphysics. Yet Stirner's thought remains within the realms of calculation and machination, as demonstrated by his hedonistic utilitarian politics. Whereas utilitarianism, that most calculative of creeds, usually insists upon achieving the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people, Stirner retains the utilitarians' measure of success whilst jettisoning their conception of community. This may seem to indicate a wide gulf between these two worldviews, but it is an illusion. Just as the materialist politics of the capitalists and the socialists whose opposition

revolves upon the distribution of wealth fail to question the merit of such a measurement, Stirner's great refusal of the history of metaphysics entails a similar shifting of the proverbial deckchairs. Stirner's supposed radicalism questions the distribution of those things valued by the metaphysicians of old, placing them firmly in the hands of the individual egoist, yet he fails to question why the egoist wants these things in the first place. Why does Stirner's egoist look upon the revered and think "I want these for myself" instead of rendering unto the metaphysical Caesar what is his. Only then could the egoist begin to truly overcome philosophy's two millennia travelled metaphysical detour. Stirner's egoist himself is a metaphysical construct, and as such could never be expected to achieve such a necessary task. Stirner's politics, because they derive from such a mistaken and lacklustre understanding of human interaction can be nothing other than similarly underwhelming.

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p138.
2. Ibid, p148.
3. Ibid, p149, italics are author's.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* (New York: Dover Publications, 2005), p5.
6. Loc. cit.
7. James J. Martin, 'Editor's Introduction' in Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* (New York: Dover Publications, 2005), ppxxiii-xiv.
8. Stirner, Op. cit., p9, italics are author's.
9. Loc. cit.

10. Ibid, pp9-10, italics are author's.

11. Ibid, p11.

12. Loc. cit.

13. Ibid, p12, italics are author's.

14. Ibid, p14, italics are author's.

15. Loc. cit.

16. David Leopold, 'Max Stirner' in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (August 2006) [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/max-stirner/].

17. Stirner, Op. cit., p98.

18. Ibid, p15.

19. Ibid, p16.

20. Ibid, pp17-18.

21. Ibid, p22.

22. Ibid, p23.

23. Ibid, p24.

24. Loc. cit.

25. Ibid, p25, italics are author's.

26. Ibid, p31, italics are author's.

27. The title of the second sub-section (Ibid, p34).

28. Ibid, p35.

29. Ibid, p36.

30. Loc. cit.

31. Ibid, p38.

32. Ibid, p39.

33. Ibid, p43.

34. Ibid, p48.

35. Loc. cit.

36. Ibid, pp51-52.

37. Ibid, p52.

38. Ibid, p53.

39. Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education* in Daniel Guérin (ed.), *No Gods No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2005), pp17-20.

40. Leopold, Op. cit. has more detail on Stirner's life.

41. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p66.

42. Ibid, p72.

43. Ibid, p74, italics are author's.

44. Ibid, p79, italics are author's.

45. Ibid, p82.

46. Ibid, p89.

47. Ibid, p93.

48. Ibid, p99, translator's note 96.

49. Ibid, p100.

50. Ibid, p103.

51. Ibid, p105, italics are author's.

52. Ibid, p106.

53. Ibid, p107, italics are author's.

54. Ibid, pp107-108.

55. Ibid, p112.

56. Ibid, pp113-116.

57. Ibid, p117.

58. Ibid, p118.

59. Ibid, p119.

60. Ibid, p124.

61. Ibid, p125, italics are author's.

62. Ibid, p127.

63. Ibid, p137.

64. Ibid, p138.

65. Ibid, p141, italics are author's.

66. Ibid, p155.

67. Ibid, p156.

68. Ibid, p160.

69. Ibid, p163.

70. Ibid, p164.

71. Ibid, p165.

72. Ibid, p166.

73. Ibid, p167.

74. Ibid, p179, italics are author's.

75. Loc. cit., translator's note 9.

76. Lawrence S. Stepelevich, 'Max Stirner as Hegelian' in *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 46 No.4 (Oct.-Dec., 1985), p609.

77. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* 40th Anniversary Edition (Chicago:

   The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p12.

78. Stirner, Op. cit., p185, italics are author's.

79. Ibid, p189, italics are author's.

80. Ibid, p190.

81. Ibid, p191.

82. Hegel, Op. cit., pp100-107.

83. Stirner, Op. cit., pp194-195.

84. Ibid, p197.

85. Ibid, p200.

86. Ibid, p204.

87. Ibid, pp210-211.

88. Ibid, p212.

89. Loc. cit.

90. Ibid, p213.

91. Ibid, p214.

92. Ibid, p226.

93. Ibid, p229.

94. Ibid, p234.

95. Ibid, p235.

96. Ibid, p236.

97. Ibid, p248.

98. Ibid, p249, italics are author's.

99. Ibid, p251.

100.   Ibid, p252.

101.   Ibid, p258.

102.   Ibid, p259, italics are author's.

103.   Ibid, pp262-263.

104.   Ibid, p275.

105.   Ibid, pp282-283.

106.   Ibid, p284.

107.   Ibid, p286.

108.   Ibid, p290.

109.   Ibid, p291, italics are author's.

110.   Ibid, p292.

111.   Ibid, p293.

112.   Ibid, p310.

113.   Ibid, p307.

114.   Ibid, p313, italics are author's.

115.   Ibid, p318.

116.   Ibid, p320.

117.   Loc. cit.

118.   Ibid, p324.

119.   Ibid, p326.

120.   Ibid, p327.

121.   Ibid, p329.

122.   Ibid, p330.

123.   Ibid, p331.

124.   Ibid, p339.

125.   Ibid, p340.

126.   Ibid, p351.

127.   Ibid, p340.

128.   Ibid, p337.

129.   Ibid, p336.

130.   Ibid, p343.

131.   Ibid, p354.

132.   Ibid, p360.

133.   Ibid, p362.

134.   Ibid, p366.

135.   Loc. cit.

136.   Loc. cit.

137.   Ibid, p296, italics are author's.

138.   Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Introduction' in Karl Marx and Friedrich
        Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p143.

139.   Ibid, pp143-144.

140.   Ibid, p144.

141.   Ibid, p144, note 230.

142.   David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (London:
        Macmillan, 1969), p2.

143.   Stirner himself considered society as being the individual's state of
        nature. Stirner, Op. cit., p306.

144.   Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p84.

145.   R. W. K. Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p162.

146.   Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), p68 [H42].

147.   Paterson, Op. cit., p286.

148.   Ibid, p182.

149.   Heidegger, Op. cit., p159 [H122].

150.   Paterson, Op. cit., p286.

151.   Ibid, p307.

152.   Ibid, p310.

153.   Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), p220.

154.   Ibid, p228.

155.   Ibid, p232.

Søren Kierkegaard: The Individual before God

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard is perhaps most popularly known as the "father of existentialism". His vast body of published works on myriad topics were highly influential in the development of the later school of existentialist thought, despite Kierkegaard's inherent religiousness and existentialism's typically atheistic reputation.[1] In a retrospective piece on his life's work to that point, Kierkegaard explains the guiding theme linking all his writings as being 'the task of becoming a Christian'.[2] Arguably Kierkegaard's works have also been a continuous act of individual protest against the barriers placed in the way of the individual becoming a Christian, such as the dominance of Hegelian philosophy, contemporary Danish society, the state Church, and Christendom as a whole. As will be made clear in the following discussion, Kierkegaard's philosophy, although often failing to follow many of the conventions expected of philosophic discourse, offers a compelling reaction and alternative to the totalising tendencies of Hegelian thought.

The vast and sprawling nature of Kierkegaard's written output has led to some debate over which ought to be considered the philosopher's primary works and which are of secondary interest.[3] In *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, Kierkegaard excludes his first two works[4] from what he considers to be his authorship.[5] This discussion will accept and follow this convention, with the same acceptance being granted to Kierkegaard's decision to group his writings into three distinct chronological divisions: 1. the aesthetic writings, 2. the transitional period marked by *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and 3. the solely religious writings.[6] The acceptance of Kierkegaard's divisions in no way means that works published after the writing of *The*

Point of View…, and hence excluded these divisions, should be excluded from discussion.[7] Kierkegaard also fails to mention *A Literary Review* which was published after *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and before the renewed literary activity of the third division, yet to exclude this short work from this discussion would be to exclude one of Kierkegaard's most damning and thorough critiques of contemporary society, and one of his longest continuous ruminations on explicitly political matters. The direct relation of the topics covered in *A Literary Review* to this discussion means that Kierkegaard's apparent decision to consider the work effectively apocryphal to the works of his authorship will be respectfully overruled.

Either/Or.

Kierkegaard's "official" authorship begins with one of his best known works, *Either/Or*. The work is split into two volumes, the first consisting of papers written by the aesthete "A" and the second consisting of writings in response to these papers by the moralist Judge Vilhelm. These two volumes of writings by the pseudonymous "A" and Vilhelm are introduced by the similarly pseudonymous editor, and supplemented by the works of two further pseudonyms – a diary by the seducer Johannes and a sermon by a pastor friend of Vilhelm. Even for a writer with a reputation for a vast array of intertwining identities, *Either/Or's* internal discourse has led to a great deal of debate over what Kierkegaard intended by the work, and how it should be interpreted. Hannay highlights a common modern existentialist reading of the work, which views *Either/Or* as depicting the radical and criterionless choices thrust upon the individual by life.[8] A second view is to see the work as representative of the uncertainties to be

found in the young Kierkegaard's own private life at the time of writing.[9] The latter view can be avoided – if not entirely ignored – for despite what may have influenced the writing of the work, once written, it becomes a self-contained entity on its own.[10] With the second view put to one side as largely irrelevant in the context of this study, the first view of the work as an articulation of criterionless choice must now be refuted. The discourse to be found between the protagonists in *Either/Or* in no way supports a reading of the work as an expression of valueless arbitrary choice, for both "A" and Judge Vilhelm argue passionately for their own worldview and the values which each entails. The pseudonym with whom Kierkegaard's own sympathies lay is unimportant when one considers the main message implicit in *Either/Or* – that one *must* choose how to live one's life, and that the individual is fully accountable and responsible for the decisions he makes. In a later draft work, Kierkegaard would explain that 'before the decisively religious is introduced a beginning must be made *maieutically* with aesthetic works, yet ethically oriented: *Either/Or*.'[11] Before focussing more strongly on what he felt was the individual's need for Christianity, Kierkegaard first needed to make the possibility and necessity of choice abundantly clear to his readers. His insistence that the reader must be made aware of the arguments in both volumes of *Either/Or* to fully comprehend the work is made clear in a piece he wrote in his journal in the year of *Either/Or's* publication. He explains that 'if a man begins his discourse with *Either* – and in addition does not leave the listener unaware that the preliminary part will be very long – then one owes it to him to either to request him not to begin or to hear his *Or* along with it. One cannot call for silence in the same way with a printed work titled *Either/Or*, but the issue remains the same: one must either read it in its entirety or not read it at all.'[12] Kierkegaard's existentialist approach to religion and to philosophy

insists that the individual *must* be aware of the choices at hand, and *must* choose. One cannot become a Christian purely by accident of birth into a Christian family or state; one must choose and strive to achieve this. It does not take much of a leap in order to extend the lessons of *Either/Or* to beyond the realm of adhesion to the Christian worldview. More generally, the work posits the individual as a self-creating entity whose choices are steps in this process of creation. What we choose now opens up and closes off future possibilities. We must not allow fear of this to lead us into trying to take cover from this fact of our existence – we *must* choose and we *must* live with and take responsibility for the consequences of these choices we make.

Repetition.

Repetition continues Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms as a literary device, this time being narrated by Constantine Constantius, emphasising the centrality of the constant to the work. The short work explores the theme of repetition as opposed to Platonic recollection and hope for the new. Constantius addresses "A's" assertion in *Either/Or* that 'only recollection's love is happy',[13] arguing that this is partially correct only 'if one also remembers that it first makes a person unhappy.'[14] "A" acknowledges this shortly before the section Constantius refers to. Recollection, "A" explains, 'is the most perfect life imaginable; recollection is more richly satisfying than all actuality, and it has a security that no actuality possesses.'[15] Despite this resounding toast to the pleasures of recollection, "A" describes its pitfalls. 'For me nothing is more dangerous than to recollect. As soon as I have recollected a life relationship, that relationship has ceased to exist. It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. That is very true,

but it becomes fonder in a purely poetic way… A recollected life relationship has

already passed into eternity and has no temporal interest any more.'[16] It is perhaps with

this in mind that Constantius proposes repetition as an alternative to the withdrawal

from the temporal of recollection and the step into the unknown of hope. In *Repetition*,

Constantius aims not only to theoretically extol the virtues of repetition, but to enact

and test repetition in his own life. The narrator sets out to repeat a previous trip to

Berlin, yet finds his efforts dashed – it is simply impossible to re-enact the minutiae of

past experiences. After several days, Constantius returns home 'bitter, so tired of

repetition… I made no great discovery, yet it was strange, because I had discovered

that there was no such thing as repetition. I became aware of this by having it repeated

in every possible way.'[17] Even at home Constantius discovers his love for the constant

offended, as his servant had taken to cleaning his living quarters against the narrator's

expressed will. After brief diversions into discussions of aging and happiness, the

second half of *Repetition* re-joins Constantius's theory of repetition. Constantius

describes receiving monthly letters from a young man which contain neither the

sender's name nor an address for replies. In the young man's letters Constantius is

referred to as 'My Silent Confident',[18] indicating the narrator's role as a spectator in the

man's attempts at repetition in rekindling a relationship with a lover he had previously

jilted in order to recollect her aesthetically. A recurring theme in the young man's

letters are references to the story of Job, whose faith was tested by losing everything he

held dear before eventually 'the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.'[19] The

young man's willing for such a repetition as Job's leads Constantius to the realisation

that true repetition involves a religious transcendence which he is personally unable to

make.[20] In fact, by the final letter from the young man he realises he *has* achieved

repetition, yet not by reuniting with his lost love but instead by finding out she has got married. Upon discovering this news, the melancholy to be found in his previous letters is gone, instead he declares himself to be 'back to my old self…. I understand everything, and existence seems more beautiful than ever'.[21] The young man has come to the realisation that the only repetition that matters is the *spiritual*, rather than the *worldly*. Constantius explains his discovery – 'what is a repetition of worldly goods, which have no meaning in relation to spiritual matters… Only Job's children were not returned to him twofold, because human life does not allow itself to be doubled in this way. Here only a spiritual repetition is possible, even though it cannot be so complete temporarily as in eternity where there is true repetition.'[22] *Repetition* concludes with a letter from Constantius to the reader in which he likens his relationship with the young man to a mother giving birth to a child – both he and the mother pale into insignificance once the child/poetic young man has been brought into the world.[23]

Constantius explains that he believes the young man to be an example of the exception which exists in struggle with the Hegelian universal.[24] The relation between the universal and the exception is explained in the following passage:

> The exception grasps the universal to the extent that it thoroughly grasps itself. It works for the universal in that it works through itself. It explains the universal in that it explains itself. The exception thus explains the universal and itself, and when one really wants to study the universal, one need only study a legitimate exception, because it will present everything much more clearly than the universal would itself. The legitimate exception is reconciled with the universal; the universal is at its basis polemically opposed to the exception. It will not reveal its infatuation with

the exception until the exception forces it to do so. If the exception does not have the strength to do this, then it is not legitimate, and it is therefore very shrewd of the universal not to reveal anything too quickly.[25]

Here Constantius is expounding a continuous theme found throughout Kierkegaard's philosophy – the only true route to authentic philosophical and religious understanding is existentially through the individual. Through Constantius, Kierkegaard launches a barely veiled attack on the 'interminable… boring and vapid'[26] chatter of the Hegelian mainstream, and its insistence that its grand system building is the true route to philosophical truth. It is difficult to wholly ignore parallels between the actions of Constantius's poetic young man and Kierkegaard's own calling off of his engagement with Regine Olsen.[27] Yet the work's positioning of spiritual gains over the temporal and the exceptional individual against the universal highlight key themes in Kierkegaard's thought, offering some of his first criticisms of Hegelian totalising. These criticisms themselves are not particularly strong in detail – as previously mentioned, Kierkegaard does not often engage in traditional philosophical criticism. Instead he uses the example of the striving individual who eventually attains a beneficial relationship with the spiritual to illustrate what he feels to be missing from all-encompassing philosophical systems, namely the experience of the single individual. It is not some abstract absolute which is working towards self-realisation, but individuals with their mixture of glory and failings. The exception is much more than just a contingent in relation to the universal, the exception could (perhaps paradoxically) be each and every one of us if we strove authentically for such an outcome.

Fear and Trembling.

Published simultaneously with *Repetition*, *Fear and Trembling* is less aesthetic and more explicitly religious than the former work (whilst still falling under Kierkegaard's later designation as an aesthetic writing[28]). Whilst both works take Old Testament figures as inspiration for their narrative, *Fear and Trembling* has, according to Garff, 'a very firm structure, which is to some extent attributable to the fact that Johannes de silentio (the "writer" of this piece) is not personally implicated in his work to the same degree as was Constantine Constantius.'[29] Garff continues to explain Johannes's role as that of roaming 'freely about the outer boundaries of his work, frequently uttering comments that proclaim his personal limitations with respect to the Old Testament story he is retelling.'[30] *Fear and Trembling* takes as its basis the story of the binding of Isaac from *Genesis*, in which Abraham is instructed by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac on top of a mountain in Moriah.[31] It is only at the last moment that Abraham is informed that the instruction had been a test of his faith, when a ram is provided in place of Isaac for use as a sacrifice. *Fear and Trembling* serves the two purposes of firstly reintroducing the religious terror originally associated with the binding of Isaac, and secondly exploring the necessary religious paradox associated with the story. In Kierkegaard's later writings his criticisms of comfortable bourgeois Christendom were to become more direct, whilst here there is more implication than polemic. As is typical with Kierkegaardian pseudonyms, Johannes's name indicates much about the work attributed to him. The silence implied by "de silentio" refers, according to Garff, to *Fear and Trembling's* obsession 'with the impotence of language, with nonverbal

communication, with signals, and with the far-reaching signification of the silent gesture.'[32] The work begins with the claim that 'not just in commerce but in the world of ideas too our age is putting on a veritable clearance sale. Everything can be had so dirt cheap that one begins to wonder whether in the end anyone will want to make a bid.'[33] In particular, Johannes has in mind the cheapening of faith from the demands of the New Testament to those of contemporary Christendom. The use of a commercial analogy – the "selling" of faith – is one that Kierkegaard would return to several times, with his implications becoming more and more explicit. In *The Concept of Anxiety*[34] and later, when embroiled in his final battle against the state Church, in a newspaper article entitled 'The Religious Situation',[35] Kierkegaard tells the story of a barkeeper selling his wares a penny below cost price. When asked by bewildered observers why he is engaging in such behaviour, he explains 'it is the quantity that does it'.[36] Two months later a similar analogy is used again in the article 'A Monologue', this time accusing pastors of attempting to sell eternal happiness at a rate well below the level of faith demanded by the New Testament.[37] Using Abraham as a model, *Fear and Trembling* sets out to demonstrate just how high the bar of Christian faith is truly set.

After the work's preface, Johannes sets out an "Attunement". This tells the story of a man who throughout his life maintained an interest in the feats of Abraham. As he reached old age, the man yearned to actually be a witness to the events surrounding Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Using direct description alongside the analogy of weaning a child off its mother's breast milk, several possible scenarios are described of how the events might have progressed. In one scenario Abraham attempts to horrify Isaac with tales of his sinfulness as a mother might blacken her breast with soot, in another Abraham is about to commit the deed, yet Isaac sees his father's trembling

hand and loses his faith forever.[38] Despite all these possibilities, all fall short. His

experiences lead him to the exclamation that 'no one was as great as Abraham; who is

able to understand him?'[39] After this slight detour has enabled Johannes to prepare the

reader's mind for the difficulty of the task ahead, there then follows a "Speech in Praise

of Abraham". In this the relationship between the hero and the poet is explored, with

Abraham being cited as an example of the former and Johannes implying that he has

the more humble role of the latter. The poet 'has none of the skills of the latter, he can

only admire, love, take pleasure in the hero… He is the spirit of remembrance, can only

bring to mind what has been done… he wanders round in front of everyone's door with

his song and his speech, so that all can admire the hero as he does'.[40] The remainder of

Johannes's speech does exactly this – it glorifies Abraham's actions and strength of

faith.

The speech is followed by *Fear and Trembling's* longest section, the

"Problemata". Johannes begins by arguing that unlike in the temporal world where

contingency plays a great role in the allocation of goods and ills, in the world of spirit

each gets his just desserts – 'only one who works gets bread'.[41] Johannes decries the

cheapening of the story of Abraham through downplaying the true terror involved – the

story has been made commonplace in order for it to appear more fathomable to

everyone. He emphasises that Abraham, when asked by God, was willing to sacrifice

the best he had, Isaac. The best Abraham had 'is a vague expression… one can quite

safely identify Isaac with the best, and the man who so thinks can very well puff on his

pipe as he does so, and the listener can very well leisurely stretch out his legs.'[42] The

fault of this utterly bourgeois picture Johannes paints is that all sense of anguish is

missing. He describes how 'anguish is a dangerous affair for the squeamish',[43] so the

story is toned down. To illustrate the point a tragicomic scene is used, depicting a man

being severely admonished by a priest ('loathsome man, dregs of society'[44]) for

sacrificing his son having being influenced by the binding of Isaac. Johannes notes the

irony that the same priest 'had felt no signs of heat or perspiration while preaching

about Abraham'.[45] On the gulf between the content of the sermons preached in Church

and the actions to be found in the outside world, Johannes exclaims, 'In olden days

people said, "What a shame things in the world don't go in the way the priest

preaches." But the time may be coming, not least with the help of philosophy, when we

shall be able to say, "How fortunate that things in the world don't go in the way the

priest preaches, since at least there's a little meaning to life, but none in his sermon."'[46]

That the man killing his son in order to emulate Abraham is taken to be horrific and

deranged, whilst Abraham is hailed as a hero of faith necessarily must mean that there

is some occurrence which makes Abraham an exception – Johannes cites arguments for

why this may have been the case.

For Abraham, there may have been 'a teleological suspension of the ethical.'[47]

Against Hegelian universalism, Johannes posits faith as the paradox which entails that

'the single individual is higher than the universal… having been in the universal, the

single individual now sets himself apart as the particular'.[48] If this is not the case and

this is not what faith is, Johannes continues, faith has never existed because it would be

universal rather than the exception. In such circumstances, 'Abraham is done for'.[49]

This paradox cannot be solved by Hegelian mediation, for such a process must occur

within the universal, whilst the individual in faith is positioned *outside* the universal.[50]

If the paradox were to be mediated, 'Abraham will have to admit that he is in a state of

temptation… so he must return repentantly to the universal.'[51] Johannes insists that

there is no possibility that Abraham can be thought of as a tragic-hero – 'a tragic-hero stays within the ethical'.[52] As such Abraham is either a man of faith or a murderer; there can be no mediated middle ground.[53] Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is both the will of God as a proof of Abraham's faith, and the will of Abraham to prove his faith. Abraham is not here being tempted by God, but being tempted by the ethical not to carry out his duty.[54] In the case of Abraham there has been a teleological suspension of the ethical. As the knight of faith, he walks a 'narrow path [on which]… no one can advise, no one understand.'[55]

That the ethical has been suspended in order for Abraham to carry out his duty to God leads to Johannes's second enquiry of whether there is 'an absolute duty to God.'[56] Johannes here takes the New Testament instruction that 'if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple'[57] as a basis for the enquiry. Johannes decries the softening of the passage entailed by interpreting "hate" as actually meaning "love less than God". He argues that the parallels between this and the story of Abraham 'seems to suggest precisely that the words are to be taken in as terrifying a sense as possible'.[58] Here again Johannes highlights the necessary paradox involved, for in the universal, for Abraham to murder Isaac would be to follow the duty of hating one's children, yet if Abraham hates Isaac it is no longer a sacrifice. Abraham only sacrifices Isaac 'in the moment when his act is in absolute contradiction with his feeling… but the reality of his act is that in virtue of which he belong to the universal'[59] in which his actions make him a murderer. This convinces Johannes that there must be an absolute duty to God, 'that the single individual as the particular is higher than the universal and as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute',[60] for

otherwise Abraham is not an exception – not a knight of faith – but a murderer. Now Johannes has accepted that for Abraham there was a teleological suspension of the ethical, and that there is an absolute duty to God, he moves onto his third and final enquiry: 'was it ethically defensible of Abraham to conceal his purpose from Sarah, from Eleazar, from Isaac?'[61]

Typically ethics favours disclosure, and as such it might be expected that Abraham had a duty to inform his wife, his servant and (in this case perhaps most importantly) his son about what he was going to do. That there is concealment again informs us that we are facing 'the paradox, which cannot be mediated, just because it is based on the single individual's being… higher than the universal'.[62] Abraham's silence had nothing to do with saving others from trauma as aesthetics might suggest. Aesthetics can provide no understanding of Abraham, as his 'whole task of sacrificing Isaac for his own and God's sake is an outrage aesthetically.'[63] Johannes suggests that Abraham's silence is because 'he *cannot* speak… For if when I speak I cannot make myself understood, I do not speak even if I keep talking without stop day and night.'[64] When asked by Isaac 'where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?'[65] Abraham responds 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering'.[66] Johannes argues that here Abraham is not speaking an untruth to his son with his ironic response, 'for on the strength of the absurd it is… possible that God might do something quite different.'[67] By refusing to speak – that is, talk and be understood – Abraham remains the particular apart from the universal. Johannes explains that 'here too it can appear that one can understand Abraham, but only as one understands the paradox. For my part I can in a way understand Abraham, but I see very well that I lack the courage to speak in this way, as much as I lack the courage to act like Abraham.'[68] Abraham can never be

reached by appeals to reason, but only by faith. This task may be insurmountable to the many (if not to all), yet the pure recognition of the task of faith is, for Johannes, a major step towards an authentic Being.

In *Fear and Trembling's* epilogue, the commercial metaphor returns with the tale of spice merchants dropping some of their cargo at sea to raise spice prices.[69] Johannes playfully suggests that a similar action on behalf of faith might be felicitous, for 'faith is the highest passion in a human being. Many in every generation may not come that far, but none comes further.'[70] In a world which had – according to Kierkegaard – cheapened Christian faith until it had become meaningless, *Fear and Trembling* was a one-man effort at throwing a large quantity of spice into the ocean. Beyond Kierkegaard's explicitly Christian intentions, *Fear and Trembling's* main strength is in its inherent criticism of the ways in which the contemporary age chooses comfort and ease over struggle. Philosophically it is much more comforting to agree that another great thinker has explained everything through his struggles to concoct an absolute system than it is to entertain doubts and the need for further struggle. Philosophical truth, like Kierkegaard's Christian faith, is a perhaps unreachable goal towards which we must continue to strive as individuals. No one, no matter how great, can undertake this struggle on our behalf.

Philosophical Crumbs.

Kierkegaard's next pseudonym was also to be named Johannes, this time Johannes Climacus. The name is based on the beatified monk John Climacus, whose own name (John of the Ladder) refers to his work *The Ladder of Paradise.*[71] Climacus' work

Philosophical Crumbs might be thought to offer a ladder up to a better understanding of the human condition. The title of the work has traditionally rendered in English as *Philosophical Fragments*, yet recent publications of this[72] and the later *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*[73] have used "crumbs" as being closer to the original Danish *smuler*. The work's title is a taunt at the perceived arrogance of Hegelian philosophy – instead of offering a philosophical banquet in the form of a grand, all-encompassing system, Kierkegaard's pseudonym offers a few crumbs for thought.[74] *Philosophical Crumb's* area of investigation is set out on the title page as the following question – 'Can an eternal consciousness have a historical point of departure; could such a thing be of more than historical interest; can one build an eternal happiness on historical knowledge?'[75] In the work's preface Climacus sets out his position as dancing 'nimbly in the service of thought, as much as possible to the honour of God and for my own amusement'.[76] He warns that no-one should 'attribute world-historical significance to such a modest piece… a misunderstanding [which] could happen only if the guilty party were by nature extraordinarily stupid'.[77]

Echoing Socrates, before continuing to the substantive discussion of the work Climacus declares his own ignorance, going as far as to claim that he 'does not even know what has led him to ask such a question.'[78] This echo is deliberate and apt, for Climacus first moves to discuss the extent to which the truth can be taught - 'a Socratic question, or [one that] became so with the Socratic question of whether virtue could be taught'.[79] Socrates' response to the problem is his theory of recollection – 'that the ignorant person only needs to be reminded, in order by himself to recollect what he knows.'[80] Recollection had already been rejected by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Constantius in *Repetition* in favour of a theory of repetition, but here Climacus engages

with recollection in more depth. Recollection necessarily regards the temporal point of departure as contingent.[81] No matter who is the teacher ('Socrates, or Prodicus, or a parlour-maid'[82]), the individual is recollecting knowledge they were already in possession of without being aware of it. If recollection is to be rejected then, Climacus insists, 'the moment in time must have decisive significance… because the eternal [the truth], which did not exist before, came to be in this moment.'[83] The individual lacking in the truth must be considered to be 'outside the truth… as being in error.'[84] Instead of the Socratic teacher reminding the person he is in possession of the truth, the role of the teacher is to both bring the truth to the individual and to create the condition for understanding the truth. Climacus argues this latter role is equally important 'because if the learner had himself the condition for understanding the truth, then he would need only to recollect it'.[85] This role of creating the condition for understanding is impossible for a mortal teacher to undertake and must be god-given, leading Climacus to the conclusion that 'the teacher is thus the god himself'.[86] The term "teacher" is deemed to be insufficient to wholly explain the role of a god who not only creates the condition for receiving the truth and imparts the truth, but also judges his pupil's grasping of the truth. As such, Climacus asserts that 'this teacher is thus not really a teacher, but a judge.'[87] The moment of transition from error to the truth is described as a being born again. 'A person becomes conscious in *the moment*, that he was born, because his prior state, to which he must not cling, was precisely one of non-being. He becomes conscious in *the moment* of being born again, because his prior state was one of non-Being.'[88] The movement from non-Being to Being in the moment is what heralds the importance of both transitions. Climacus admits the preposterousness of

demanding 'of a person that he should by himself discover that he did not exist',[89] but argues that its retrospective nature does not diminish its truth.

Climacus uses the story of a king in love with a peasant girl to illustrate the relationship between the god (in the *Crumbs*, not specifically the Judeo-Christian God) and the disciple. The difference in stature between the king and his potential lover might lead the peasant girl to feel always to be in a debt of gratitude to the king for choosing to marry such a lowly person, when this difference between the two is precisely what the king wishes to eradicate from memory.[90] It is for such a reason that the union between a god and a disciple cannot be brought about by an elevation. Alternatively the king might take upon the guise of a lowly servant, to enact the union by an act of descent so as to avoid any feeling of debt which would make for an unhappy love. The relationship between the disciple and the god can be enacted in the same way, but for the god 'the servant form was not a costume. The god must, therefore, suffer everything, endure everything, hunger in the desert, thirst in anguish, be forsaken in death, absolutely equal to the lowest'.[91]

Before returning to the theme central to the book, Climacus discusses the interrelated paradoxes necessarily present in trying to prove the existence of a god and in understanding a god. A god is the 'unknown thing against which the understanding… collides, and which… disturbs even a person's self-knowledge'.[92] As this unknown thing we call a god is unknown, it is foolish and impossible to even think we can prove or disprove its existence. Therefore, we can only assume a god's existence.[93] The god as the unknown is the absolutely different, yet this still gets us no closer to understanding the god, for 'the understanding cannot negate itself, but uses its own terms in order to do this and thus thinks difference in its own terms… thus

conceives this thing which transcends itself by means of itself.[94] It is with this kept in mind that Climacus turns to the lot of the contemporary disciple.

Climacus insists 'that the question of a historical point of departure exists… for the contemporary disciple'[95] as he is contemporary with the historical. As contemporary, the learner can acquire knowledge of the historical minutiae – where the god went, what the god ate, where the god slept – much more easily and accurately than a non-contemporary learner, but this brings him no closer to being a disciple.[96] The contemporary has the advantage of being able to go and see the god, 'but does he dare believe his eyes?'[97] If he does, and if he therefore believes he is a disciple, 'he is precisely deceived, because the god cannot be known immediately.'[98] If he closes his eyes to avoid such a deception, he no longer has any advantage over the non-contemporary. Climacus explains that the contemporaneous can be the occasion to acquire historical knowledge (which is of no consequence for faith), to focus upon oneself Socratically (which leads one to the eternal, where contemporaneousness has no value), or to 'receive the condition for understanding the truth from the god, and thus to see his magnificence with the eyes of faith.'[99] The latter is no longer contemporary in the immediate sense, but a contemporary with the god through the paradox of faith. Climacus suggests that the only advantage the immediate contemporary may have of achieving contemporaneousness through faith is that they have not had to endure the 'echo of the centuries'[100] which have conspired to gossip about faith and to transform faith into gossip.

Here Climacus introduces a chapter as an interlude to mark the passage of time between the contemporary learner and the non-contemporary learner. The interlude is used as a chance to enquire whether 'the possible, by having become actual, [has]

become more necessary than it was.'[101] Climacus explains that 'necessity stands

completely alone; nothing at all comes to be with necessity, just as little as necessity

comes to be, or that something by coming to be becomes necessary. Nothing is because

it is necessary, but the necessary is because it is necessary, or because the necessary is.

The actual is no more necessary than the possible, because that which is necessary is

absolutely different from both.'[102] That which is necessary is the eternal, and as such is

neither possible nor actual in a historical sense.

It is with this interlude in mind that Climacus travels 'eighteen hundred and

forty-three years'[103] to the non-contemporaneous disciple. The situation of the first

generation second-hand disciple is compared to the situation of the disciple eighteen-

hundred years later, and found to be equal. The first generation has the advantage of the

difficulty ('because it is always an advantage… when it is the difficult'[104]) of the horror

of faith being close at hand, whilst the later generation is at greater comfort. Yet once it

is realised that this comfort and ease is itself a difficulty for faith, 'the difficulty of the

horror will grip the latest generation… just as primitively as it did the first'.[105] The

contemporary disciple can relate to the non-contemporary disciple by stating their

belief that this has happened – that the god took on the form of a human servant. This is

not the same as stating that this has happened, for then, Climacus explains, 'I am

recounting something historical; but when I say "I believe and have believed, that this

has happened, *despite the fact that it is foolishness to the understanding and an offence

to the human heart*", then I have… done everything possible… to decline any

companionship, in that each individual must conduct himself in precisely the same

way.'[106] Each individual must travel the road of faith alone, for one person's historical

certainty in a matter which is eternal would be an impediment, rather than an aid, for

faith. Climacus ends by wholly rejecting the differentiation between contemporary and

second-hand disciples, arguing that they are essentially equal. That the former have

their occasion in contemporaneousness and the latter have the reports of the

contemporaneous for their occasion might be interpreted as an advantage for the

contemporaries, for they 'are not beholden to any other generation for anything.'[107]

Yet, 'if he understood himself',[108] the contemporary should wish his

contemporaneousness to end, for the recourse to the temporal and historical is a barrier

to the eternity of faith. In an oft-quoted line, Climacus talks of a potential sequel to the

Crumbs, which 'will refer to the matter by its proper name and clothe it in its historical

costume.'[109] This sequel was to be his *Concluding Scientific Postscript*, which would

clothe the problems discussed by *Philosophical Crumbs* in the proper name of

Christianity. This clothing would allow Climacus' arguments to be developed more

deeply, and also for a much wider array of philosophical topics to be covered.

The Concept of Anxiety.

Before turning to Climacus' *Postscript*, in keeping with the chronological progression

of Kierkegaard's works followed thus far, it is important not to overlook the position of

The Concept of Anxiety. The speedily produced[110] work appeared under the pseudonym

Vigilius Haufniensis, though early drafts, and clues remaining in the footnotes and

dedication to his beloved (latterly) anti-Hegelian peer Poul Martin Møller indicate

Kierkegaard's original intention to publish under his own name.[111] In a manner pre-

empting early twentieth century advances in psychology, Vigilius explores anxiety with

an emphasis on the issue of hereditary sin. Echoing the difficult and sometimes

traumatic nature of Christianity espoused in previous works, *The Concept of Anxiety* describes the necessarily interrelated nature of anxiety and faith. Anxiety is a self-created condition brought about by the realisation of 'freedom's possibility'.[112] Anxiety stems from the self and is thus not an external judgement which can be escaped by avoiding a certain person or place; it is the inescapable connection between the individual and the infinite. For faith, anxiety is 'absolutely educative, because it consumes all finite ends and discovers their deceptiveness.'[113] Vigilius argues that despite common belief of the contrary, possibility is a much heavier category than actuality, as possibility is not only the joyful utopia but also the most terrible dystopia. The horrors of possibility are such that a man 'will praise actuality, and even when it rests heavily upon him, he will remember that it is far, far lighter than possibility was.'[114] Yet in faith the true terror of possibility must be faced, as otherwise both faith and possibility have been defrauded and lose their meaning.[115] He argues that 'the pupil of possibility… in the middle of Jutland heath, where no event takes place… will experience everything more perfectly, more accurately, more thoroughly'[116] than the world-historical hero at the centre of great events, whose recourse is solely to the actual. Original sin is directly related to the possible, for it is beyond the finite sin whose guilt is judged by the temporal law courts – it is the sin of infinity.[117] Vigilius asserts that 'he who in relation to guilt is educated by anxiety will rest only in the Atonement.'[118] It is a concept of the self which offers no finite comfort, but only comfort in the infinite. Though temporally more palatable, any other option would be a cheapening of faith and, as such, would not be Christianity at all. Kierkegaard's understanding of the role played by anxiety in authentic existence was to later influence Heideggerian philosophy. Heidegger advances upon Kierkegaard on this point by his

secularising the concept of anxiety to better demonstrate the role it plays in the individual's coming to grips with his own Being. This is a subject we shall return to more deeply in later chapters.

Concluding Unscientific Postscript and the return of Climacus.

The return of Johannes Climacus to clothe the problem of *Philosophical Crumbs* 'in its historical costume'[119] was intended to be Kierkegaard's retirement from writing to take up a role in the priesthood.[120] A somewhat self-inflicted feud with *The Corsair*, a satirical newspaper, was to provide the impetus for a return to writing, yet *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* remains the conclusion of Kierkegaard's first phase of writing and heralds the latter writings.[121] The work's title is often cited as an example of Kierkegaard's wit, namely due to the absurdity of a postscript being more than four times the length of the work it is a postscript to. In the work's preface, Climacus expresses his profound joy at lack of response to *Philosophical Crumbs*, leaving the author with no literary debt to pay and no obligation to graciously receive a torchlight procession of supporters.[122] He ends the preface hoping that the *Postscript* will be similarly received, avoiding the risk of supporters or detractors fooling others into believing the work is something that it is not, which would leave Climacus himself to deal with the inevitable consequences.[123]

In the introduction which follows, Climacus explains that the *Postscript* is what was promised for the sequel of the *Crumbs*, but also contains a new approach to the problem discussed in the original work.[124] Of particular note within the introduction is Climacus' positioning of himself in relation to Christianity. He is an outsider infinitely

interested with the problem and possibility of Christianity as the point of departure for the eternal consciousness of the single individual. Climacus claims not to have understood Christianity, but claims to have grasped 'that the only unpardonable *lèse-majesté* against Christianity is for the individual to take his relationship to it for granted.'[125] That a simplified statement of the purpose of the *Postscript* is to explore how to become a Christian, it is perhaps apt that the pseudonymous author is a fellow traveller on the road to faith instead of preaching from a pedestal. As such, Climacus is neither taking his relationship to Christianity for granted, but is depicted as being engaged in a personal spiritual quest.

Concluding Unscientific Postscript is split into two parts, the second being roughly ten times the length of the first. It is in the shorter first part that Climacus produces the promised sequel to the *Crumbs*, addressing 'The objective problem of Christianity's proof'.[126] Whilst in the *Crumbs*, the relationship between objectivity and the eternal was discussed in vague terms; here Climacus directly addresses the extent to which Christian faith can be appropriately reached through an objective approach – through the historical and through speculative thought. Historically, recourse can be made to Scripture, the Church and the centuries of Christianity's existence. Whilst professing admiration for the philological examination of literature, Climacus denies that this can have any effect on his eternal happiness. This is not what the philologist publishing the works of Cicero has in mind, yet this is the aim of critical theology.[127] If the critical theologian proves beyond doubt the authenticity of the books of the Bible and their authors, proves beyond doubt that no texts have been omitted, this has no relevance to faith. The person who gains something from this objectively acquired certainty has gained nothing with regard to faith, 'rather, in this profuse knowledge…

lying at the door of faith and coveting it… much fear and trembling will be required if he is not to fall into temptation and confuse knowledge with faith.'[128] Historical knowledge is always at best an approximation, whilst eternal happiness needs a much sturdier foundation in faith. If a critical theologian were through his work to prove beyond doubt the opposite – that the books of the Bible are forgeries and their authors lack authenticity – this would also be of no consequence to faith. Christianity is not abolished by such an assertion, and the believer is unharmed and still as free to believe in the existence of Christ, for faith has no need of proof.[129] Indeed, proof might be more harmful to faith than not, as a belief based on philological concerns might be overturned by later discoveries, whilst belief based solely on the power of faith is infinite. If one were to abandon the recourse to the objective comfort of Scripture to the objective comfort of the Church, one faces similar shortcomings. Climacus argues that to prove the existence of the Church today is as meaningless as to prove the existence of a person – 'its being there is superior to any proof of its being so'.[130] Yet to prove that the Church today is the same Church as that of Saint Peter is to lose any benefit and to rely on historical approximation which can have no bearing on faith.[131] The recourse to millennia of Christianity and Christians may be an invigorating 'rhetorical shower-bath',[132] but fails to bring the sinner into faith. Christianity is only interested in the individual alone, 'it will make no difference whether he has the eighteen centuries for him or against him.'[133]

The objective speculative approach to Christianity finds as little favour with Climacus as the historical approaches discussed above. The speculative philosopher aims to approach his philosophising in an objective manner, ignoring his own subjectivity. Citing Socrates,[134] Climacus argues that 'when we assume flute-playing,

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we must also assume a flautist; similarly, if we assume speculative philosophy we must also assume a speculative philosopher'.[135] He accuses speculative philosophy of making the assumption of Christianity that all born in a specific time and place are by that merit Christians, and as such Christianity is a historical phenomenon.[136] As he asserted previously, Climacus rejects any historical method of reaching faith. If the speculative philosopher is a believer as he claims, and is thus infinitely interested in his eternal happiness, he must realise that eternal happiness can never be based on philosophical speculation. If the speculative philosopher does not come to this conclusion, 'he is comically contradicting himself, since speculative philosophy in its objectivity is wholly indifferent to his and my and your eternal happiness, whereas an eternal happiness inheres precisely in the subjective individual's diminishing self-conceit, acquired through his utmost exertion. Additionally, when making himself out to be a believer, he is lying.'[137] If the speculative philosopher does not consider himself to be a believer of Christianity, there is no comic element, but then the philosopher is not addressing the same problem as that addressed by Climacus, 'for as a speculative philosopher, he becomes exactly too objective to be concerned with his own eternal happiness.'[138] By adopting an objective position through speculation, the philosopher is unable to take the properly subjective position needed to address matters of faith. As Climacus concludes the first part of the *Postscript*, the problem of speculative philosophy is that it 'simply prevents the problem [of faith] from emerging, so its whole answer is only a mystification.'[139]

Having fully addressed the problem of the *Crumbs*, of the possibility of building eternal happiness on historical knowledge, in its proper historical clothing of Christianity, Climacus turns to 'the subjective problem. The subject's relation to the

truth of Christianity, or what it is to become a Christian.'[140] The enlightenment

philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing is the subject of the first (and considerably

shortest) of the two sections which make up the second part of the *Postscript*. It is

Lessing's introverted approach to religion which appeals to Climacus, 'that he shut

himself up religiously within the isolation of his own subjectivity [that he

understood]… the religious concerned Lessing and Lessing alone, just at it concerns

every other human being in the same manner'.[141] Through discussion of Lessing's

possible and actual theses, Climacus concludes that there can be a logical system, but

there cannot be a system for life itself.[142] By claiming to start with nothing, the

Hegelian system must involve a reflection back – an abstraction from the individual –

in order to achieve this beginning with the immediate, as the system itself does not

begin with the immediate, but only after life itself.[143] Climacus argues that this act of

reflection or abstraction from self is infinite, and therefore it is questionable how this

could be stopped objectively.[144] Indeed, it can only be stopped subjectively, and hence

it is not objective speculation itself which has ended the reflection, but the subject

whom has been abstracted from himself.[145] For God, Climacus insists that it is right and

proper to agree that life is a system, 'but [it] cannot be that for any existing spirit.'[146]

God 'is someone who is outside life and yet inside it, who in his eternity is finalised

and yet envelops life within himself',[147] as such God has both the finality to grasp the

system from without and the existence to be able to grasp the system. This paradox

necessary to understand the system excludes finite human beings, for to be finalised is

to be dead and to be living means one could never abstract from one's own place in

existence.

The task of being subjective is, as we have seen according to Kierkegaard's writings, what Christianity calls for. Climacus argues that the seemingly trivial nature of the task of being subjective is exactly what makes it so difficult. The triviality of embracing the subjective means that it 'needs an infinite effort just to discover the task, i.e. this is indeed the task'.[148] Even if a person is to reject the world-historical and devote his life to ethical striving for the truth as the individual subject, he might be rewarded by world-historical importance – the precise temptation he has been avoiding and must continue to reject.[149] The ethical exists in the world-historical, yet the ostentatious window dressing the world-historical drapes over the ethical can easily lead the individual to come into the position of an objective spectator of ethics rather than the individual subject striving towards the truth.[150] The 'truly ethical grasp of the ethical… is a matter of fasting and being sober, a matter of not longing to go world-historically to the banquet and getting drunk in amazement.'[151] The world-historical finds little of interest in the striving person in faith becoming the single individual, yet this is the highest and only true task for the individual.[152] If it was not the case that the striving of the individual in faith was the highest task, and that instead the progress of the world-historical was the highest goal, Climacus wonders why God does not get a move on to speed up the process.[153] He denounces the 'undramatic tedium… what a prosaic and boringly protracted performance… if that is all he wants, how terrible in this tyrannical fashion to waste myriads of human lives!'[154] In such a system, the individual would be nothing but an observer of the ethically meaningless process going on around him. The individual 'stares himself into that world-historical drama, he dies and disappears, nothing is left of him; or rather, he remains like a ticket in the hands of the usher indicating that the spectator has now gone.'[155] Such a view of the relationship

between God and man can in no way be conducive to any form of Christianity, even a Christianity much less personally rigorous than that of Climacus. He likens the comforting nature of the world-historic systematic approach to a Christmas tree which is raised to allow everyone to take some time off – if the task of being subjective is the most simplistic, yet the most difficult and highest task for a person, it is perhaps natural that individuals might adopt a position which avoids recognising, let alone addressing the task.[156]

In the *Postscript*, Climacus famously asserts that 'truth is subjectivity.'[157] He addresses the 'empirical definition of truth as the agreement of thought with Being [and the]… idealist definition as the agreement of Being with thought'.[158] In both definitions, Being is an empirical Being which must necessarily be understood as being in abstraction, 'or the abstract prototype'[159] of what is concrete empirical Being. Climacus accuses both the idealist and empirical positions as being tautological, for 'thought and Being mean one and the same, and the agreement in question is merely an abstract self-identity.'[160] The thought of empirical Being is derived from the experience of empirical Being, whilst the experience of empirical Being is derived from our thought of what empirical Being is. Subjective reflection on existence however avoids this issue by the inclusion of the existence of the subjective questioner, upon which the result is a deepening of the questioner's subjectivity – it is no longer a question of "what is existence", but "what is *my* existence".[161] The subject-object relationship of mediation is rejected, for this would lead the question of Being back to the abstraction which merely asserts 'that the truth *is*'.[162] The questioner has the possibility of making both an objective and a subjective reflection on existence – he must choose which of these paths to take, for it is not possible to address both at once.[163] The objective path

offers a security the subjective path is unable to offer, yet objectivity makes the subject accidental and thus existence is an indifference, for the accidental subject vanishes in objectivity – the same is true of truth, it becomes indifferent.[164] By making the objective vanish and leaving the subject as it stands, the subjective path of reflection makes 'inner absorption truth's reflection'.[165] If a person were able to come out of himself, truth would be the empirical truth of empiricism and idealism, but being as the person is always himself an existing subject, this can only ever be a theoretical abstraction with scant relevance to the existing subject.[166] Climacus argues that existence is necessarily a constraint in this way, 'and if philosophers nowadays were not pen-pushers in the service of an endless trifling with fantastical thinking, it would have been seen long ago that the only… practical interpretation of its efforts was suicide.'[167] Whilst Climacus is correct to highlight these flaws in previous understandings of truth, it is more difficult to agree with the conclusion he draws from these failings. Our apprehension of the truth may be limited by our not being able to transcend our individual Being, but this does not necessarily mean that truth is subjectivity. Instead, a more nuanced understanding of truth is needed, such as Heidegger's explanation of truth as uncovering which we shall turn to in a later chapter. Despite these misgivings, it is important to continue to follow Climacus' arguments in this area in order to understand his criticisms, even if we are not to agree with the positive elements of this part of his doctrine.

Having asserted the necessity of existence in essential knowing, Climacus insists that Hegelian mediation is an illusion. It rests on abstraction, and in abstraction there is no movement, yet it holds '*movement* as its presupposition.'[168] Mediation is an impersonal process which discounts the existence of the mediator. Climacus insists he

will have no place in, and sees no point in having, a debate based on the abstract

fantastic of whether there is or is not mediation, for there is much more of interest to

the philosopher in 'what it is to be a human being.'[169] Climacus defines subjective truth

as 'the objective uncertainty maintained through approximation in the most passionate

inwardness is truth, the highest truth there is for someone existing.'[170] It may seem

strange to posit uncertainty at the centre of a possible definition of truth which in its

empirical form is precisely reliant on certainty, but Climacus explains that in observing

the world the single individual sees things which both reflect 'omnipotence and

wisdom, but [also, much]… that troubles and disturbs.'[171] His definition of subjective

truth eschews the presumptuousness of the Hegelian system for the much more humble

Socratic maxim of proclaiming one's ignorance. This uncertainty is a necessary

requirement for faith, for if God could be grasped objectively there would be no faith,

just the recognition of empirically measurable truth – there would be no need for

striving, fear and trembling, for there would no longer exist any form of paradox to test

and tax the believer.[172] The paradox of Christian faith is the co-existence of individual

existence and eternal truth.[173] Absurdity arises when the eternal truth which is timeless

'has come about in time, that God has come about, been born, has grown up… has

come about just as the single human being'.[174] Objectively such an occurrence is

ridiculous and repulsive, yet Climacus argues it is exactly this which makes the absurd

the true test of faith. To attempt to acquire faith in an objective fashion is hence to

introduce the comical.[175] The speculative approach to Christianity accepts the existence

of the paradox, but asserts that it can be explained away – it accepts that Christianity is

truth and says that though speculation this truth can be grasped.[176] However if

speculation can suspend and overcome the paradox, 'the paradox is not the eternal

essential truth's essential relation to one who exists at the extremity of existence, but only a contingent and relative relation to weaker intellects'.[177] This would be an offence to both humankind and to God, for it asserts that some persons (the speculators) have a more equal relationship with God than others, and that God needs lackeys and interpreters to communicate with humankind. The wise man might be more aware of the paradox than the simpleminded, but he comes no nearer to understanding it.[178]

An appendix follows the chapter on truth as subjectivity in which Climacus addresses contemporary Danish literature. This turns out to be a casually worded section in which pseudonymity is maintained whilst Climacus articulates his thoughts after reading the other pseudonymous works published by Kierkegaard and the discourses the philosopher published under his own name. The section is of great interest for showing the way in which Kierkegaard's pseudonyms intertwine – particularly the suggestions Climacus makes to the other authors regarding how he would have improved their works – but offers little of interest to our discussion here which has not already been covered when discussing the works themselves above. Above all the section demonstrates the way in which Kierkegaard has used literary devices to build an on-going picture of an appropriate way to approach Christianity and Christian philosophy.

Climacus returns to the problem of abstractly enquiring about existence. In a footnote he quotes and questions a passage from Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic* in which the philosopher claims that 'Existence is the immediate unity of inward reflection and reflection-into-another. Therefore (?), it is the indeterminate multitude of existents'.[179] Climacus argues that Hegel, here and elsewhere in his *Logic*, relies on ideas informed

by the concrete despite the system's pretensions of starting from nothing.[180] Climacus

argues that the 'suspect nature of abstract thought'[181] comes to light whenever it

addresses questions of existence, as it drops the question of personal existence, a move

which removes all difficulty, considering everything to thus have been explained.

Climacus decries the absence of the ethical in the Hegelian system as the 'individual's

own ethical actuality is the only actuality'.[182] The actuality of other individuals is only

able to be grasped in thought, hence in possibility alone.[183] Climacus argues that the

individual's ethical actuality should mean more to him than all of world history, more

than all of the sciences combined, for if not, the individual 'has absolutely nothing, no

actuality at all, since to everything else he has only, at most, a relation of possibility.'[184]

The systematic attempt to scientifically view the multiplicities of human existence as

stages of development of the abstract pure human spirit instead of recognising

'existential simultaneity'[185] is to enter into a confusion. Each individual is born a child

and must undergo their own personal development, they are not automatically a

Christian having been born to Christian parents any more than being born during a

particular stage of the world-historical development of the human spirit can

automatically bestow a status of development to the child.[186] Whilst one-sided

approaches of other kinds (faith, action) are aware of their omissions, the Hegelian's

one-sided focus on thinking 'produces an appearance of having everything [he]… has

faith, has passion as transcended moments of his life, so he says – and nothing is easier

to say.'[187] To such philosophers of pure thought, the subjective thinker is an aberration,

yet for Climacus a subjective thinker is what we should become. The subjective thinker

requires 'imagination, feeling and dialectics with passion in the inwardness of

thinking'.[188] Most important to Climacus is passion, for to think about existence as an

existing being *must* arouse the passions. The efforts of the subjective thinker may enjoy 'but a meagre reward',[189] gaining none of the acclaim enjoyed by the objective system-builder, but this does not denigrate the almost Sisyphean Christian task each individual faces to 'understand oneself in existence'.[190]

With the importance of subjective thinking emphasised, Climacus returns to the problem discussed in *Philosophical Crumbs*. The reader is reminded that whilst the proper historical costume of the problem of the *Crumbs* is Christianity, this is never mentioned in the work so as 'to gain breathing-space and not to be swept immediately off into historical, historical-dogmatic, prefatory, ecclesiastical questions about what Christianity actually is and is not.'[191] The problem of the *Crumbs* relates not to what Christianity is, but how one becomes a Christian. Climacus describes his role as 'making it difficult for people to become a Christian by putting them off'.[192] At first glance, such a task might appear deeply unchristian, yet in reaction to a worldview which equates Christianity with being born within a certain state's borders Climacus is reaffirming the true difficulties associated with Christian faith. Indeed, he asserts that it is wrong to think that by making Christianity an easy endeavour devoid of personal exertion one would be doing others a favour, when he would instead be doing the opposite.[193] The problem of the *Crumbs* is restated in the *Postscript* as follows: 'The individual's eternal happiness is decided in time through the relation to something historical, which is moreover historical in such a way that it includes in its composition that which according to its nature cannot become historical and must consequently become so on the strength of the absurd.'[194] Climacus addresses the problem first with regard to pathos, and then with regard to the dialectic. Before setting out on this method, he reminds the reader that 'the difficulty lies in putting them together, that an

existing person who… expresses his pathos-filled relation to the eternal happiness in absolute passion, is to relate now to the dialectical decision.'[195]

Differentiating between existential and aesthetic pathos, Climacus highlights the failings in hymning the praises of religious figures when religiously, pathos consists in 'one's own existing; … the poetic product… is something he considers accidental… for aesthetically speaking, it is the poetic productivity that is essential, and the poet accidental.'[196] Whilst the subjectivity called for by Climacus insists on religious individuality, in a footnote he explains that this does not necessarily conclude that all religious individuality is an expression of existential pathos. He attacks the presumptuousness in many of these individualists' confidence in their God-relationship, and the way in they are 'breezily assured of… [their] own salvation, but busily occupied, and with great self-importance, in doubting that of others and offering them help'.[197] Climacus suggests the appropriate approach for the religious individual 'would be for him to say: "I do not doubt anyone's salvation, the only one I have fears for is myself."'[198] The relationship between the absolute *telos* of Christianity and relative ends is discussed at length, with particular reference to the perils of attempting to mediate (in a Hegelian fashion) between the two. Climacus concludes that the task for the individual is to maintain a relation to both at the same time, 'relating absolutely to his absolute *telos* and relatively to the relative. The latter relation belongs to the world, the former to the individual himself'.[199] Whilst simple to state, to actually ensure one is relating absolutely to the absolute *telos* at all times (so as to avoid being in a relative relation with it) whilst 'staying within the relative goals of existence'[200] is incredibly difficult, 'existence becomes exceedingly strenuous, for a double movement has constantly to be made.'[201] The individual who has made this double movement

continues to live 'in the finite, but he does not have his life in it. His life… has the diverse predicates of a human life, but he inhabits them as one who goes around in clothes borrowed from a stranger.'[202] Existential pathos finds its expression in suffering which is the mark of religious action.[203] This suffering emerges as 'essential existential pathos relates to existing essentially; and to exist essentially is inwardness… inwardness is suffering, because changing himself is something the individual cannot do, it becomes a kind of putting on airs'.[204] Unlike the individual living in immediacy, the religious individual living inwardly 'has suffering constantly with him, demands suffering… even when misfortune is externally absent'.[205] Indeed, suffering caused by accidental external events is in itself only accidental, whilst essential suffering must persist at all times – even where there is accidental external good fortune.[206] Climacus cites the humourist as he who is the closest to the religious in terms of suffering, for he also grasps that suffering essentially belongs to existence, even if he does not understand *why*. The realisation of belonging relates to the pain in humour, whilst the unknowing of the reason relates to the jest, 'this is why one both weeps and laughs when he speaks. In the pain, he touches the secret of existence, but then he goes back home.'[207] That the boundary of the religious is the humorous is, according to Climacus, the reason why 'in our day people have been quite frequently inclined to mistake the humorous for the religious'.[208] The inward essential suffering of the religious is a temptation – there to test faith and frighten the individual away from the religious.[209] The true expression of the religious is hidden inwardness, for any direct expression would be presumptuousness which would be comical (due to the contradiction of the essentially inward being expressed outwardly) – even direct expression between two religious individuals.[210] Hidden inwardness necessarily involves the eternal recollection

of guilt as the highest possible expression of the relationship between eternal happiness and consciousness of guilt.[211] This guilt cannot be atoned or forgotten by the individual himself – this would also cancel out eternal happiness – but must be continually recollected as an eternal suffering.

The movement to the dialectical decision having discussed existential pathos necessarily involves the emergence of the paradox discussed in the *Crumbs*.[212] Without the paradox, there is a religiousness which involves the individual's own transformation of existence instead of 'the paradoxical transformation of existence by faith through the relation to the historical'[213] – this former form of religiousness would be the purely human, as each human being 'viewed essentially, must be assumed to have a share in this blessedness and finally become blessed.'[214] The difficulty of Christianity and the paradox has the power to cause offence in individuals who engage in busying themselves 'with complaints about the whole world, instead of'[215] focussing inwardly on themselves. This possibility of offence is at the root of the fear and trembling the believer finds in his existence.[216] Climacus echoes the familiar Kierkegaardian theme of the cheapening of Christianity when he ponders what 'have we all become, and what has Christianity become, by our… becoming Christians without further ado?'[217] Without the paradox, the offence, the fear and trembling, Climacus fears that what is now called Christian faith is something else (and something less) entirely.

Having examined what is entailed in becoming a Christian, Climacus accepts that his work has made the task 'so difficult that the number of Christians amongst cultivated Christendom may not be very large',[218] whilst also accepting that he is in no place to judge or know whether this is the case. By understanding the task involved in

becoming a Christian, one is free to strive to become one or to decide that one would be best not setting foot on such a route – 'better candour than indecision.'[219] Climacus warns against a too strict Christian upbringing for a child (perhaps echoing Kierkegaard's own upbringing[220]), for this may be counterproductive.[221] The opposite of this, the preaching of a childlike Christianity to adults in which everyone is 'made happy in the realm of fantasy',[222] is condemned for divesting Christianity of its meaning.

After his conclusion in which Climacus retraces much of the argument of the *Postscript*, an appendix addresses an 'understanding with the reader.'[223] In it Climacus denies that he himself is a Christian, 'for he is completely preoccupied with how difficult it must be to become one',[224] and further denies that he has already become a Christian and has now gone further in a speculative fashion. He declares the work to be his own private experiment regarding how *he* can become a Christian, and hence the book itself is superfluous. With this in mind he begs that 'no-one take the trouble to appeal to it [the *Postscript*]; for anyone who thus appeals to it has *eo ipso* misunderstood it.'[225] The *Postscript* has sung the praises of subjectivity throughout, and any pretensions of it being an objective text on subjectivity would be to descend into farce. Hannay suggests that in keeping with Climacus' name (meaning ladder), the work can be thought of as a ladder to reach a better understanding of what it takes to become a Christian which, once used, can be set aside.[226] Either way, without this renunciation, Climacus would find himself sitting uncomfortably close to the speculative philosophers he had castigated throughout his writings.

In keeping with Kierkegaard's intention that the *Postscript* mark his withdrawal from the literary stage, 'a first and last declaration' is placed at the end of the work in

which he acknowledges authorship of all the pseudonymous works.[227] He declares that the use of pseudonymity was deliberate and under no intention to avoid prosecution for the content of his works (indeed, he had broken no laws). The pseudonymity was

> an essential basis in the production itself, which, for the sake of the lines and of the variety in the psychological distinctions in the individual characters, for poetic reasons required the lack of scruple in respect of good and evil, of broken hearts and high spirits, of despair and arrogance, of suffering and exultation, etc, the limits to which are set ideally, in terms of psychological consistency, and which no factual person would, or can, dare to permit themselves within the bounds of moral conduct in actuality.[228]

He claims to have created the authors, who have then in turn created the works.[229] As such Kierkegaard issues a heartfelt plea that if anyone is to quote a passage of one of these works, they should cite 'the name of the respective pseudonym, not my own… separating us'[230] – a convention adhered to within this study. He concludes by praying that 'no unseasoned hand meddles dialectically with this work but lets it stand as it now stands.'[231] With this, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous literary project was intended to have been closed.

A Literary Review: The passionate against the passionless.

A Literary Review, which appeared under Kierkegaard's own name, was written whilst Kierkegaard was waiting for the publication of the *Postscript* with the retirement from

writing still in mind.[232] A review of the novel *Two Ages* by Thomasine Christine

Gyllembourg-Ehrensvärd is used as a platform for Kierkegaard to launch a critique of

contemporary Danish society which has a directness not to be found again in his works

until his feud with the state Church towards the end of his life. Madame Gyllembourg's

novel, which was at the time published anonymously, charts the story of a family in

post-revolutionary Denmark and in the present age. Kierkegaard uses this juxtaposition

as an opportunity to contrast the passionate post-revolutionary age with the rational

contemporary age. In comparing the two ages, Kierkegaard sets his task as not being 'a

question of an ethico-philosophical assessment of validity, but of the consequences of

its special character… at the level of generality'.[233] The revolutionary age's essential

passionateness, and hence inwardness (for, as we have seen, all passion is essentially an

inwardness), is credited with creating form and culture.[234] Passion may also create the

possibility for violence and unruliness in service of the ideal, but this betrays a lack of

inwardness. If there is a unity of the many in relation to an idea which is a relation

which singles each out individually, this union 'unites ideally… the unanimity of the

singled-out is the band playing well orchestrated music.'[235] When the idea unites 'en

masse… without the individual, inward-directed singling out',[236] there is violence and

licentiousness in service of the idea. The essential passion of the revolutionary age

means it has a sense of decorum –even if it is a false sense, it still has the concept – and

immediacy.[237] This immediacy is a reactionary immediacy, which is thus provisional

and not final, yet this 'is a restoring of natural conditions, as opposed to a fossilised

formalism which by losing the originary character of the ethical has become… a petty-

minded custom and practice.'[238] The passionateness of the age of revolution means that

it is a revelation, 'a definite something which does not change perfidiously with the aid

of a conjectural criticism concerning what it is the age really wants.'[239] The passionateness of the age means it 'has not annulled the principle of contradiction and can become either good or evil'.[240] Whichever path the age follows, a choice must be made, and in this either/or passion must be discerned.

The present age, in contrast to the passionate revolutionary age, is characterised by Kierkegaard as being 'essentially sensible, reflective, dispassionate, eruptive in its fleeting enthusiasms and prudently indolent in its relaxation.'[241] The philosopher bemoans how in the present age, every tiny detail is dispassionately reflected upon again and again, with the individual eventually concluding that he would be better not acting – giving an illusion of strength through evading taking any decision.[242] The desire for money – itself an abstraction of value – replaces the envy of a person's capacities and skills which might then bring the reward of money.[243] The young man thinking thus 'will die under the illusion that had he possessed money he would have lived, maybe even done something great.'[244] To reflect instead of to act troubles Kierkegaard with respect to the impact to good and evil – the 'hazard… is not being able to tell whether it is a conclusion reached by deliberation that saves a person from evil deeds, or whether it is exhaustion brought on by the deliberation that saves him, by sapping his strength.'[245] Whilst a passionate age aims to tear down the institutions it disagrees with, the dispassionate present merely divests these things of their meaning and turns them into an illusion whilst publicly maintaining that the established order still stands. One such example of this being letting 'the entire Christian terminology stand, but in the private knowledge that it is not supposed to mean anything decisive.'[246]

Kierkegaard argues that the unifying principle of the present age is envy of excellence. This is a negative unifying principle in contrast to the positive unifying principle of enthusiasm found in the revolutionary age.[247] The philosopher describes the outcome of this envy as a process of levelling. He explains that whilst 'a passionate age *accelerates, raises and topples, extols and oppresses*, a reflective and passionless age does the opposite – *it stifles and impedes, it levels.* Levelling is a quiet mathematically abstract affair that avoids all fuss… If an uprising at its peak is like a volcanic explosion in which not a word can be heard, then levelling at its peak is like a deathly stillness over which nothing can raise itself but into which everything impotently sinks down.'[248] Whilst an uprising is an individualistic act, levelling cannot be so for it would mean the leveller was above being levelled himself. Instead 'levelling is an abstract power and is abstraction's victory over the individuals.'[249] Kierkegaard admits that the 'spontaneous combustion of the human race'[250] produced by levelling might provide the individual with the historical point of departure to eternal happiness, prompting him to 'gain the essentiality of the religious inside himself.'[251] For levelling, this victory of the abstract, to have occurred, Kierkegaard insists that 'a monstrous abstraction, an all-encompassing something that is nothing, a mirage'[252] was needed. This monstrous abstraction is the public. Kierkegaard blames the passionless nature of the age and the press for the emergence of the public. He argues that 'the less idea there is in an age, and the more it relaxes… – if we also imagined the press becoming weaker and weaker because no big event or idea gripped the age – the more readily levelling becomes a decadent urge'.[253] Far from rescuing the passionless age from its doldrums, levelling merely hastens the decline – individuality is submerged and the excellent brought down to a more acceptable common level.

Using starkly apocalyptic imagery, Kierkegaard describes the scythes of levelling swooping down to cut each individual down to size, with the only escape being 'to leap over the blade… into the embrace of God.'[254] He warns that 'the desolating abstraction of levelling will be continually kept going by its servants',[255] and that the escape into inwardness towards God can only be undergone by the individual's free choice, not by any form of compulsion by man or deity. As such, it is not unduly pessimistic to assume levelling will consume many more victims. At this point Kierkegaard breaks off from his previously ominous tone stating that 'naturally the only interest this can have is as a prank, for if it is true that every person is to work out his own salvation, then making prophecies about the world's future is tolerable and admissible at best as a form of recreation, a joke.'[256] Not that the philosopher's doom-laden vision of contemporary society reads anything close to a joke or any form of light-hearted recreation. Perhaps this recantation of the prophecies to be found in *A Literary Review* is an example of Kierkegaard reasserting the positive and optimistic thought that each single individual might gain the inwardness of Christianity (or at the very least, engage in passionate renunciation) over the pessimism that this is unlikely to happen. It may have been due to awareness he was close to becoming the presumptuous religious individualist he condemned in the *Postscript* – too occupied on judging and advising others about their salvation to focus inwardly on his own. Above all, what shines brightest in the work is Kierkegaard's romanticism. It is perhaps this romanticism which places him so squarely at odds with the comparatively clinical nature of Hegelian philosophy. Kierkegaard appears to be arguing that both life and the philosophy which aids in our understanding of this life are worthless if divested of passion. Through Kierkegaard's writings runs the hot and cold flow of life's course. In

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a well-known early entry in his journal, Kierkegaard proclaimed his need 'to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die.'[257] It is precisely this romantic passion which seems to be necessary if the perils of levelling and dissolution into the "public" is to be avoided.

The Sickness Unto Death.

Kierkegaard's return to writing after the *Corsair* affair produced works much more explicitly religious than those before. *Works of Love*, for instance, extols the Christian conception of *agape*. *The Sickness unto Death* marked Kierkegaard's return to pseudonymity, being published under the name Anti-Climacus. The pseudonym suggests an antagonism between Anti-Climacus and Johannes Climacus, the author of *Philosophical Crumbs* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Whilst Climacus was writing about Christianity from the outside, Anti-Climacus writes from the inside – he is a committed Christian. The Christian ideality of *The Sickness unto Death* is such that Kierkegaard felt unable to have it published under his own name. In a journal entry he explains, 'when the claims of ideality are set at the maximum one should above all take care not to be mistaken for them, as though one were one self the ideality.'[258] In an earlier journal entry he had described his position with regard to the two pseudonyms: 'I placed myself higher than [Johannes] Climacus, lower than Anti-Climacus.'[259]

Anti-Climacus' work begins with a preface in which he addresses concerns that his form of exposition might 'seem too rigorous to be edifying and too edifying to have the rigour of scholarship.'[260] Whilst admitting that not every reader will automatically find *The Sickness Unto Death* edifying, this does not necessarily mean it is unedifying,

and particularly not because it is rigorous – indeed, 'what edifies is seriousness.'[261] After an introduction referencing the resurrection of Lazarus, Anti-Climacus turns to explain his conception of the self. The self is described as a 'relation that relates to itself, or that in the relation which is in its relating to itself.'[262] This relation is the synthesis between 'the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity.'[263] This relation between the diametrically opposing terms is not one established by the individual person himself, thus the relation which relates to itself 'relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation.'[264] This conception of the self admits that there are two forms of authentic despair in which the self can find itself – 'not wanting in despair to be oneself, and wanting in despair to be onself.'[265] This despair is what constitutes *The Sickness Unto Death*. Anti-Climacus explains that such a sickness is typically a sickness which leads to the sufferer's death, yet 'in Christian understanding death is itself a passing into life… death is no doubt the end of sickness, but death is not the end.'[266] The sickness Anti-Climacus is referring to in the work is 'to be unable to die, yet not as though there were hope of life… this tormenting contradiction'.[267] At the bottom, both authentic forms of despair are the same – the individual wants to be rid of himself. Even the self wanting in despair to be itself wants to be a self which it is not (if the self the self despairingly wanted to be was truly itself, this would no longer be despair). In both forms of despair, the self 'wants to tear… away from the power which established it… this he is incapable of doing… that power is the stronger, and it compels him to be the self he does not want to be.'[268] The individual self may not even be aware that he is in despair, but 'eternity will… make it evident… that he cannot be rid of his self… And this eternity must do, because having

a self, being a self, is the greatest, the infinite, concession that has been made to man, but also eternity's claim on him.'[269]

Anti-Climacus explains that despair is more widespread than might commonly be thought, for unlike physical sickness, the spiritually sick may have no idea that this is their condition. Indeed, the self that knows itself to be in despair is dialectically closer to not being in despair than the self completely unaware that this is their condition – it is very rare to find any self who is not in some way in despair.[270] Anti-Climacus sets out the forms of despair based on the nature of the synthesis which makes up the self, first setting aside concerns of whether the self is aware or unaware that it is in despair. The finite and infinite, and the possible and necessary aspects of the self are in despair if they lack the quality of their opposite. To have infinitude without finitude, or possibility without necessity, or vice versa in any combination, means that the self is despairing to be a self which it is not – the true self rests in the synthesis of these opposites, without the synthesis there is no true self.[271] If one is conscious of being in despair, one might want in despair not to be oneself or want in despair to be oneself. The former of these forms of despair is characterised by Anti-Climacus as being 'the despair of weakness.'[272] It may be despair over something earthly or despair over the eternal, the latter of these being a higher form of despair as it is despair over the weakness rather than despair itself being the weakness – the self in despair over the weakness is at least aware of the weakness.[273] Yet this is still despair, for instead of 'definitely turning away from despair in the direction of faith, humbling himself before God under his weakness, he engrosses himself further in despair… over his weakness.'[274] Wanting to be oneself in despair is the despair of defiance. Whilst the former form necessarily contains a certain degree of defiance[275] this form involves 'a

raising of the level of consciousness of the self… and of one's state being one of despair.'[276] This defiant despair wants to sever the link with the higher power which established the self, or even denies that such a power exists.[277] Yet, according to Anti-Climacus, all this defiance amounts to is 'forever building… castles in the air, and… fencing with an imaginary opponent… and beneath it all there is nothing.'[278]

Having explained in the first part of *The Sickness unto Death* the way in which despair constitutes this sickness, in the second part of the work Anti-Climacus asserts that this despair is sin. The self described before is not a separate unit with God as an external figure, but is rather 'the theological self, the self directly before God.'[279] God, as the external power which established the synthesis of the self is necessarily entwined with each individual self. Anti-Climacus explains that 'since sin is not the unruliness of the flesh and blood itself, but the spirit's consent to it',[280] the inwardness of despair does not make it any less sinful than an externally enacted sin – both are committed by the self directly before God. To support his conception that whatever is not Christian faith – as despair is not – is necessarily sin, Anti-Climacus cites the biblical passage that 'whatsoever *is* not faith is sin.'[281] The writer accepts the orthodox position that sin is affirmative rather than negative even though this position is paradoxical.[282] He explains that 'Christianity proceeds to set up sin so firmly as an affirmative position that human understanding can never comprehend it; and then the same doctrine removes this affirmative position in a way that human understanding can never comprehend'[283] through atonement. As with previous Kierkegaardian pseudonyms, Anti-Climacus derides speculative philosophy's ability to grasp this paradox by diluting it until it is understandable, when it can only truly be grasped authentically by faith.[284]

To end *The Sickness Unto Death*, Anti-Climacus finally turns towards the ways in which the sin he had discussed is continued by being in the state of sin, for 'being in a state of sin is the new sin, it is the sin.'[285] Sin is continued when the individual self despairs over their sin, it intensifies it.[286] Anti-Climacus rejects the common conception that for an individual to despair over their sin is a good, arguing that this passionate self who declares he will never forgive himself for his sins 'is close to being the opposite of a contrite heart that prays to God for forgiveness'.[287] That God forgives sins may also lead to despair in the sinner offended by such a concept. Like the former self, this sinner feels despairingly over sin and finds it offensive that God can take their sin away. Offence in this way is the opposite of faith (one can believe *or* be offended by Christianity), and as such is sin.[288] The final way in which sin is dealt with by Anti-Climacus is the throwing aside of Christianity and declaring it to be a lie. Such despair is an aggressive act against God, and 'is sin against the Holy Ghost. As the Jews said of Christ, that he cast out devils with the help of the devil, so this offence makes Christ into an invention of the devil.'[289] Anti-Climacus concludes by returning to the beginning, highlighting that the way to avoid despair was present at the start of the work in the self 'relating itself to itself and in wanting to be itself… grounded transparently in the power which established it.'[290] Despite Anti-Climacus' profound Christianity, a more non-religious lesson can be taken from *The Sickness Unto Death*, namely that the authentic self must Be itself. A self may despair about this, but this despair is a barrier to authentic Being.

<u>*Practice in Christianity* and the return of Anti-Climacus.</u>

Anti-Climacus returns as the author of Kierkegaard's final pseudonymous work,

Practice in Christianity, published shortly before he engaged in battle with the state

Church, a battle which would consume him for the remainder of his life. Much of the

grounds for this battle were, as we shall see, laid out in this work. In *The Sickness Unto*

Death, Anti-Climacus had already launched a minor attack on Christendom, declaring

it 'a miserable edition of Christianity, full of misprints that distort the meaning and of

thoughtless omissions… an abuse of it in having taken Christianity's name in vain.'[291]

Practice in Christianity has Anti-Climacus expounding the 'supreme ideality'[292] of the

requirement for being a Christian without any scaling down in order to make

everything seem more palatable to modern tastes. Anti-Climacus takes the biblical

proclamation by Jesus 'Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest'[293] as the starting point for his discussion. He builds up the passage,

commenting on the amazing nature of each part and on how with each addition the

amount of amazement increases. It is amazing that instead of someone having to search

for help, the one who is able to help calls the needy to him.[294] It is amazing that the call

is to *all* and not to a select few.[295] It is amazing that the needy are called to the helper,

instead of the helper coming to see the needy, being able then to retreat away when all

becomes too much.[296] It is amazing that all who labour and are burdened are called,

with the concern that there might be a single individual might not hear the call.[297] It is

amazing that the helper offers to give the needy rest for by being the help himself, the

helper must stay with the needy at all times, and yet it is the helper himself who calls

the people to him.[298]

At this point of the work, Anti-Climacus declares a halt. The result of the

invitation is not what might have been expected, instead of there being a surge of

people coming to accept the invitation 'you eventually will see the opposite, a vast

crowd of people who shudder and recoil until they storm ahead and trample down'.[299]

He examines why this may have been the case, first asking just who the inviter was.

The inviter was Jesus, but not the Jesus commonly held in mind now – 'the Jesus Christ

who sits in glory at the Father's right hand'[300] – but the abased Jesus. To think of Jesus

as having spoken these words in glory when in fact they were spoken in abasement is to

make the words untrue.[301] As in the works of Climacus, Anti-Climacus rejects the

possibility of using historical methods to prove that Jesus was God or to know anything

about him – 'one cannot *know* anything at all about *Christ*; he is the paradox [and]…

exists only for faith.'[302] Yet despite this rejection of historical knowledge, Anti-

Climacus also rejects the notion that the result of Christ's life is of more importance

that the life itself. Even if there were no results, that God became an individual human

man would still be extraordinary.[303] If a wise person whose life results in great things

for mankind but was abased by his own age were to have been born in a different time,

it is likely that he would not have been abased – this is not the case for Christ, for he

would have been abased in any age.[304] A great literary depiction of this is Dostoevsky's

Grand Inquisitor who turns away the returning Christ for interfering with the mission of

the Church.[305] In this lies what Anti-Climacus refers to as the calamity of contemporary

Christendom, 'namely, that Christ is… neither the person he was when he lived on

earth nor the one he will be at his second coming… but is someone about whom we

have learned in an inadmissible way from history… that he was some kind of great

somebody.'[306] By loosening the paradox of Christ, 'Christendom has abolished

Christianity without really knowing it itself.'[307] *Practice in Christianity* is Anti-Climacus' protest in order to reintroduce Christianity into Christendom.

Anti-Climacus attacks what he believes is the deification of the established order, perhaps not entirely fairly singling out Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* as being part of this trend.[308] He equates this phenomenon with the established order 'ignoring its own origin [that it]… also began with that collision between the single individual and the established order'.[309] The deification of the established order is blamed for abolishing all religious fear and trembling, for the security afforded to the individual is 'to such a degree that one can calculate the probability and spinelessly exempt oneself from the least little decision of the kind in which "the single individual" has pain, for one is not a single individual.'[310] Deification of the established order is identified by Anti-Climacus as being secularisation. He agrees that in secular matters, the established order may well be the authority (though it may also be wrong in these matters also), but in deifying the established order the individual's 'relationship with God is also secularised; we want it to coincide with a certain relativity'.[311] If the single individual 'appeals to his relationship with God over against the established order that has deified itself, it does indeed seem as if he were making himself more than human.'[312] This however is not the case, as this single individual admits that each and every single individual has this relationship with God – 'he really is only making God God and himself a human being',[313] yet others not understanding this will take offence in the individual's placing his relationship over and above the totalising whole.

Practice in Christianity's third and final part draws on the biblical passage 'And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me'[314] for discussion. That this drawing of men occurs from on high should not fool one into thinking that this means

all talk of abasement is superfluous. He explains that the 'Christian's abasement is not sheer abasement; it is only a depiction of loftiness, but a depiction in this world, where loftiness must appear inversely as lowliness and abasement.'[315] Anti-Climacus argues that it is mistaken understanding in this area which has led to the illusion of the Church triumphant which 'has taken the Church of Christ in vain… a Church that wants to be the Church triumphant here in this world'[316] instead of in eternity. Christendom is the result of this fallacious Church triumphant, where instead of a becoming all is assumed to have already been established. Christendom 'assumes that the time of struggling is over, that the Church, although it is still in this world, has nothing more about or for which to struggle.'[317] Anti-Climacus opposes the Church triumphant with the Church militant, where to be a Christian 'means to express being a Christian within an environment that is the opposite of being a Christian.'[318] The Church triumphant involves the opposite – there is no difference between the Christian and his environment, hence there is no struggle. As there is no struggle, it did not take a logical leap to assume that under Christendom 'we are all Christians in exactly the same was that it is a given that we are all human beings'.[319] By forgetting the abasement of Christ and only thinking of the loftiness, the laxness of Christendom has replaced the task of being an imitator of Christ with being an admirer, which is exactly the opposite 'correlative of abasement and lowliness'.[320] To be an admirer involves a personal detachment which lacks the requirement of the personal striving an imitator needs to become more like the prototype (Christ in abasement) he endeavours to imitate.[321] In Christendom, gone is the danger involved in being a Christian, yet without the danger one cannot be a Christian.[322] In Christendom, all that will be left is the lukewarm.[323]

The final battle against Christendom and the state Church.

Kierkegaard's plea through Anti-Climacus that the state Church should become the

Church militant in place of the Church triumphant fell on deaf ears. In particular he was

disappointed that Bishop Mynster (then leader of the state Church with whom

Kierkegaard had conversed often) had failed to acknowledge this attempt to save the

established order.[324] That the Bishop had still failed to act upon his death convinced

Kierkegaard the established order was beyond saving and beyond defence.[325] Mynster's

soon to be successor Martensen delivered a sermon in which he paid tribute to the late

Bishop in terms which were to spark Kierkegaard into embarking on his most direct

and vociferous literary campaign to date – a campaign which was to continue until his

death. The first newspaper article to appear in the campaign was written before

Martensen became bishop (Mynster died 30th January 1854, the service in question was

on 5th February and Martensen was appointed bishop on 15th April[326]) but publication

was delayed until December 1854 as Kierkegaard did not wish to add to the slapdash

onslaught of articles written about the Bishops old and new which emerged at the time

of the transition.

The article entitled 'Was Bishop Mynster a "Truth-Witness", One of "the

Authentic Truth-Witnesses" – Is *This the Truth*?' attacked Martensen's characterisation

of Mynster during his memorial service as being 'one of the authentic truth-

witnesses'.[327] The phrase so irked Kierkegaard because not only did he feel Mynster's

proclamation of Christianity to be lacklustre, but that Mynster's proclamations 'over

many years'[328] had themselves already done so much to undo the understanding of

what it truly meant to be a truth-witness. Kierkegaard argues that to be a witness of

Christianity necessarily involves danger, yet this was never something comprehended by the late bishop, accusing him of 'playing at Christianity [removing]… all the dangers… to replace them with power (to be a danger to others), goods, advantages, abundant enjoyment of even the most select refinements'.[329] In a late addition to the piece, Kierkegaard explains the position of Mynster's sermons in the upbringing he received from his father, and his unease with the bishop's brand of Christianity. He exclaims 'now he is dead – God be praised that it could be put off as long as he was living!'[330] seemingly worried that his internal disdain might have overflowed whilst Mynster was still alive resulting in an undignified spectacle. After such a wait, there was no way the assault on Christendom was going to stop here.

A flurry of newspaper articles followed. 'There the Matter Rests!' repeated much of the content of the original article, accusing those who felt he had taken to attacking the dead because they cannot reply as misunderstanding his position – that he had kept publicly silent out of respect to Mynster. Kierkegaard accepts that Mynster should have lived 'out his life undiminished [and have been]… buried with full honours… but then no further… he must least of all go down in history as a truth-witness… one of the holy chain'.[331] Kierkegaard published articles addressing attacks on his position from pastors,[332] the task of putting an end to "official" Christianity,[333] the religious situation in Denmark,[334] and myriad other topics relating to his vision of Christianity as related to the state Church. One article addresses the suggestion Kierkegaard received that he now ought to "stop ringing the alarm" – the request seems to have had little impact on the philosopher's literary outpourings.[335] Kierkegaard attacked what he saw as Bishop Martensen's silence regarding his assault on the state Church. Martensen had made one reply to Kierkegaard's indignation, but had since

made no further response.[336] Martensen 'threw a garbage can of insults and abusive remarks over me – and then took off'[337] was how Kierkegaard interpreted the act. In a postscript to the same article, he asserted regarding his campaign that 'this is, religiously, the matter I must pursue; therefore I must do what I am doing, whether it personally goes against the grain or not.'[338]

Not wanting to outstay his welcome with the *Fædrelandet* in which he had now published more than twenty articles as part of his campaign, Kierkegaard began producing his own newsletter – *The Moment* – as a vehicle for his writings.[339] The philosopher was to publish nine issues of *The Moment* (with a tenth ready for publication) before his death. The newsletter addressed the themes already found in the previous *Fædrelandet* articles and in Anti-Climacus' *Practice in Christianity* in an increasingly direct fashion seemingly designed to appeal to the masses. This new direct style of delivering the same message is demonstrated in the following aphorisms from the sixth issue of *The Moment*:

> Is this the same teaching, when Christ says to the rich young man: Sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and when the pastor says: Sell all that you have and give it to me?[340]

> One cannot live on nothing. One hears this so often, especially from pastors. And the pastors are the very ones who perform this feat: Christianity does not exist at all [in Christendom] – yet they live on it.[341]

In a piece in the same issue of *The Moment*, the Kierkegaard explains this change to a more direct approach through the example of a fire chief. He explains that 'usually the fire chief is a very affable and cultured man; but at a fire he is what one calls coarse-mouthed – he says, or rather he bellows, "Hey! Get the hell out of here…"… And this is quite as it should be. A fire is a serious matter'.[342] Even though people might be offended, and feel they ought to be handled with a great deal more respect, the magnitude of the situation demands a direct approach. The same is the case for the crisis of the spirit and the individual's relationship to their eternal happiness under Christendom.

By the time of the publication of the ninth issue of *The Moment*, Kierkegaard was not just bellowing "Get the hell out of here", but going as far as to refer to pastors as cannibals. He describes how pastors and their wives and children live off eating others, 'making the most brilliant career, rolling in money'[343] instead of actually following what Christianity requires. In a three-stage argument, Kierkegaard tries to show how pastors are a more abominable form of cannibals than cannibals themselves. Unlike the savage cannibal, the pastor is cultured and university educated which makes the crime more shocking.[344] Unlike the cannibal who eats his enemies, the pastor 'gives the impression of being exceptionally devoted to those he eats'.[345] Unlike the cannibal whose act is a ferocious instant in killing his victim, the pastor's 'cannibalism is well considered, ingeniously arranged, based on the assumption of not having anything else to live on for a whole lifetime and that what one has to live on will be able to support a man with a family and will increase year after year.'[346] Kierkegaard asserts that at first the pastor may feel 'a certain embarrassment that he hears himself called a true disciple of Christ [but] as the years pass, he becomes so accustomed to hearing it that he

himself believes he is that. As such he dies, as basically corrupted as it is possible for a human being to become, and then he is buried as a "truth-witness".[347] Within two weeks Kierkegaard was taken sick and confined to hospital his legs having failed him, little over a month later he died on 11th November 1855, his condition having deteriorated during this period.[348]

The tenth issue of *The Moment*, which was eventually published posthumously contained a piece, entitled 'My Task', in which Kierkegaard sets out for one last time the reason behind his writing. He reasserts that he does not call himself a Christian, and expresses that it is unfortunate that he is 'able to make it manifest the others [in Christendom] are not either'[349] even though many fool themselves and others that this is the case. Again Kierkegaard has the pastors in his crosshairs with this remark. He assigns himself the Socratic task of auditing the definition of what it is to be a Christian, arguing that if he had made the mistaken assumption of himself having been the only true Christian, he would have immediately fallen prey to the sophists and pastors, just as Socrates would have been undone if he had mistakenly asserted himself to be the individual who knew the most.[350] Kierkegaard explains that he is the only person correctly positioned to give a true critique of his body of work as he has spent the whole of his life living and breathing it.[351] As such he ridicules the idea that 'some pastor, at most a professor, would not need more than a superficial glance at it in order to evaluate it'[352] – thankfully this view has not abated more than a century's worth of Kierkegaard scholarship, which hopefully the philosopher might accept is based on more than a superficial glance, even if he might still assert this is still not the true critique only he can deliver. Whilst rejecting the idea of himself being the sole true Christian, he argues that his task has no analogy – 'in Christendom's eighteen hundred

years there is absolutely nothing comparable',[353] no one has previously expressed that they are not a Christian and then audited what it means to be a Christian – a task from which he has not personally profited.[354] He ends the piece with a paean to the common man, to whom he claims to belong and to have lived alongside, as opposed to the elite explaining, 'I definitely have not joined them but have kept only a loose relationship to them.'[355] In relationship with the elite, Kierkegaard recommends the common man 'must at no price have money differences with [them]… lest it be said that one was avoiding them to get out of paying. No, pay them double so that your disagreement with them can become obvious: that what concerns them does not concern you at all, money, and that on the contrary, what does not concern them concerns you infinitely, Christianity.'[356] As such, Kierkegaard's campaign against "official" Christianity continues even after the philosopher himself is dead.

Conclusion.

Whether Kierkegaard had always intended his authorship to form the continuing project asserted above and elsewhere in *The Point of View…*, or whether like MacIntyre focussing on *Either/*Or,[357] one assumes that this was a later affectation is of little interest to the purpose of this study. Whether originally intended or not, Kierkegaard's authorship does follow the continuing theme of what it means to be a Christian. In his initial overt attacks on Hegelianism and his later overt attacks on Christendom, Kierkegaard is attacking the same tendency – the positioning of men in the place of God and the assumptions of grandeur of the elite. Despite his comparatively more playful and aesthetically pleasing literary style, Kierkegaard demands more of his

reader than did Hegel. He offers no comforting all-encompassing system for the reader to nod his head in admiration of, but instead insists on personal striving from each unique individual. The same is true with his relations with Christendom, with Hegel offering the comforting position that all are Christians and Kierkegaard suggesting that perhaps very few are truly Christians – none of whom will have reached this position without personal striving, anguish, fear and trembling. Kierkegaard's philosophy is a Christian philosophy, necessarily meaning that his conception of the Being of individuals must be either accepted or denied through faith instead of through logical reasoning, though this does not make it any weaker – Kierkegaard would warn us to be wary of any philosophy which claims to have proved Christianity. He asserts that each of us is a unique individual with our own personal relationship with God. On political matters, Kierkegaard occasionally betrays a hint of conservatism, but reminds his reader that politics belongs to the transitory finite temporal world, when one should instead be focussing on the infinite. One can easily conjecture whether Kierkegaard would have focussed more on more temporal difficulties if he had been born in a different time, place or class – but this would be to ignore the centrality of this *largely* apolitical stance to his life's project. If and when the established order proved to be a barrier to the understanding of what it means to be a Christian, Kierkegaard had no qualms in engaging in battle – namely against the state Church and established Christendom – but when this is not the case, Kierkegaard Christianly maintains the biblical instruction to 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.'[358] This is perhaps best echoed in the posthumous issue of *The Moment* when he recommended the common man pay twice what is demanded of him as an act of protest. Kierkegaard's existential understanding of

subjective Being and the responsibility of each person for the choices he makes – for he must choose – foreshadowed the twentieth century existential movement in philosophy. Unlike Stirner whose reaction against Hegelian totalising was to reject all values, Kierkegaard offers an alternative which asserts the primacy of the single individual, whilst maintaining a system of values. Christianity is clearly the foundation for the system of values to be found within Kierkegaardian philosophy, but this should not imply that it is not possible to draw from it non-theistic lessons, as Heidegger was to do both in *Being and Time* and beyond.

In his criticisms of Hegel and the Hegelianism of his contemporaries, Kierkegaard was not always entirely fair. Yet it is arguable that such a position is excusable. Returning to Kierkegaard's story of the fire chief, it is clear that he felt himself to be writing at a time of philosophical, spiritual and social emergency. The sheer dominance of Hegelian philosophy amongst his contemporaries meant that there would have been no lack of other writers highlighting the strengths of Hegel's thought. Just as the fire chief dispenses with social graces when attempting to evacuate a burning theatre, Kierkegaard seems to have dispensed with a more sober nuanced approach to Hegelianism in his attempt to encourage evacuation from this philosophical realm. The urgency of the situation means that the fire chief cannot afford to calmly inform the crowd of the safer and more dangerous areas of the burning room, similarly the urgency of Kierkegaard's writings is such that there seems to have been little time to discuss the more and less innocuous elements of Hegel's legacy. What we should take from Kierkegaard's philosophising in this context is his attempt to return the individual existing person to the centre of philosophy, and his insistence of the central importance of the passionate choices that each person makes to authentic

Being. The individual alone is responsible for the act of self-creation undergone over a lifetime, and in one way or another they will be held accountable for the choices they have made.

Finally we must consider the extent to which Kierkegaard's existential Christian subjectivism can be thought of as overcoming the metaphysical approach to philosophy. Kierkegaard's almost single-minded focus upon the individual's relationship with God means that whilst he ably explores each unique individual's subjectivity, he fails to entirely account for the individual's Being alongside other beings. Kierkegaard's most explicit foray into the relationships between beings was, as we saw, in his *Literary Review*. In it Kierkegaard reveals his romantic preference for passionate revolutionary ages over the passionless present in which he lived. Can such a preference be understood as being a rejection of metaphysically derived politics? Perhaps so, if by metaphysically derived politics we mean that trend towards cool, calm governance resting upon utilitarian calculations. If Kierkegaard were around to see the age of the opinion poll, focus groups and carefully targeted political advertising, he might not have thought of his own age as being so dispassionate. It is perhaps inevitable that times of peace will appear much more sober and less exciting than the tumult of war or revolution. Such a preference for quality of human life (here taking a more exciting passionate life as having greater quality) over quantity (war and revolution inevitably leads to increases in loss of life, whilst duller times tend to be safer) might imply a partiality for militarism. Yet it would be difficult to draw such a position from Kierkegaard's writings, leading to the question of where, if not from militarism, this passion is to be derived from. Kierkegaard would immediately respond that it is from the single individual's relationship with Christianity, but this leads us

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back into the isolation of subjectivity away from the wider political issues Kierkegaard himself raises in his *Literary Review*. Heidegger was to pick up many of these strands of Kierkegaard's work, both in *Being and Time* and beyond. As we shall see later, by not falling back upon the theological when it comes to questions of beings Being alongside one another, Heidegger is able to come to grips much better with the social aspects of a post-metaphysical position, even if he was for a period to mistake the need for passion with a need for militarism.

1. Other Christian existentialist thinkers include Paul Tillich, John Macquarrie and Nikolai Berdyaev. The works of Fyodor Dostoevsky are also often cited as a prime example of Christian existentialist literature.

2. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* in *The Point of View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p55.

3. Roger Scruton, *A Short History of Modern Philosophy* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), p305.

4. His review of Hans Christian Anderson's *Only a Fiddler, From the Papers of One Still Living*, and his dissertation *The Concept of Irony, With Continual Reference to Socrates*.

5. Kierkegaard, Op. cit., p29 footnote.

6. Loc. cit.

7. Of particular note being Kierkegaard's late writings in open protest against the state Church.

8. Alastair Hannay, 'Introduction' in Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or (abridged)* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp11-15.

9. Joakim Garff, *Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) provides perhaps the most thorough and readable account of Kierkegaard's life.

10. Hannay, Op. cit., pp18-19 makes a similar suggestion.

11. Søren Kierkegaard, 'Pap. X^5 B 173' in *The Point of View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p279, italics are author's.

12. Søren Kierkegaard, 'Pap. IV B 24 192' in *Either/Or: Part II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p394, italics are author's.

13. Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: Part I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p41.

14. Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition* in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p3.

15. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: Part I*, p32.

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17. Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, p38.

18. Ibid, passim.

19. Job 42:10.

20. Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, pp50-51.

21. Ibid, p74.

22. Ibid, pp74-75.

23. Ibid, p81.

24. Ibid, pp77-81.

25. Ibid, p78.

26. Loc. cit.

27. Garff, Op. cit., pp185-191 details the split.

28. Kierkegaard, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, p29 footnote.

29. Garff, Op. cit., p252.

30. Loc. cit.

31. Genesis 22.

32. Garff, Op. cit., p252.

33. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p41.

34. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp67-68.

35. Søren Kierkegaard, ''The Religious Situation' in *The Moment and Late Writings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp36-37.

36. Ibid, p36.

37. Søren Kierkegaard, 'A Monologue' in *The Moment and Late Writings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp64-65.

38. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, pp45-48.

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44. Ibid, p59.

45. Loc. cit.

46. Loc. cit., footnote.

47. Ibid, p83.

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49. Loc. cit., passim.

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55. Ibid, p95.

56. Ibid, p96.

57. Luke 14:26.

58. Kierkegaard, Op. cit., p100.

59. Ibid, pp101-102.

60. Ibid, p108.

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62. Loc. cit.

63. Ibid, pp136-137.

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66. Genesis 22:8.

67. Kierkegaard, Op. cit., p143.

68. Loc. cit.

69. Ibid, p145.

70. Ibid, p146.

71. Edward F. Mooney, 'Introduction' in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pxvii.

72. Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Crumbs* in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

73. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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147.   Ibid, p101.

148.   Ibid, p108.

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171.   Loc. cit.

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Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison: Personalist Reform of Hegelianism

The personal idealism of Scottish philosopher Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison[1] has been receiving renewed interest in recent years. Articles by Bill Mander and James Thomas appeared in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* analysing Pringle-Pattison's debate with Bernard Bosanquet at a 1918 Aristotelian Society symposium, whilst Jan Olof Bengtsson's *Worldview of Personalism* charted the origins and development of British personal idealism alongside various other strands in the development of personalist thought. Pringle-Pattison's importance to this study is due to his attempt to reform what he felt to be the impersonal elements of Hegelian idealist philosophy from the inside, instead of adopting the position of outright rejection taken by the likes of Stirner and Kierkegaard. In particular on this point, the Aristotelian Society debate and the distinction it draws between the personalist and absolutist strands of idealism will be of key interest to the study, and as such will be discussed at length later within the chapter. First we will discuss Pringle-Pattison's early criticism of orthodox Hegelianism in his *Hegelianism and Personality*, followed by his later positions in *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, particularly as demonstrated in the aforementioned debate. The final focus shall be the philosopher's political meditations in *The Philosophical Radicals*. Pringle-Pattison's philosophical method is one of constructive criticism. As such, we shall see his philosophical positions emerge in opposition to the works of other (largely Hegelian) philosophers.

The Balfour Lectures: *Scottish Philosophy* and *Hegelianism and Personality.*

Hegelianism and Personality was the publication of Pringle-Pattison's second series of Balfour Lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh, the first series being published as *Scottish Philosophy* two years previously. *Scottish Philosophy's* final lecture 'The Possibility of Philosophy as a System: Scottish Philosophy and Hegel' offered a clear suggestion that the philosopher often assumed to be an orthodox Hegelian idealist was not all he seemed.[2] The lecture defends Hegel's Absolute against Hamilton's depiction of it as '"not under relation" – "the absolute negation of all relation."… the very abstraction against which we find Hegel inveighing at every turn.'[3] Despite this spirited defence, the lecture concludes by questioning the 'vague answers of Hegelianism'[4] regarding immortality and, most importantly for our purpose here, 'what we may call the individual in the individual – those subjective memories, thoughts and plans which make each of us a separate soul.'[5] Pringle-Pattison suggests that such deficiencies require not the total rejection of Hegel's thought, but 'to repair the omissions… in respect of the individual and the nature of the existence that belongs to it.'[6] The ground was thus cleared for Pringle-Pattison's extended thoughts on these matters in *Hegelianism and Personality*.

After two lectures on neo-Kantianism and Fichte respectively, *Hegelianism and Personality's* remaining lectures deal directly with the flaws and merits of Hegel's philosophy (with a particular focus on the former). Several times during the lectures, Pringle-Pattison commends Hegel for not shrinking from anthropomorphism in utilising self-consciousness as the 'key to the ultimate nature of existence as a whole.'[7] Pringle-Pattison's insistence that this is the appropriate entry point to understand

existence is explained by the assertion that philosophy *must* necessarily involve the explanation of the lower by the higher, and it is arguable that 'self-consciousness is the highest fact we know'.[8] Pringle-Pattison explains however that Hegel tends to suppress the importance of experience within his philosophy. 'He presents everything synthetically, though it must have been got to analytically by an ordinary process of reflection upon the facts which are common to every thinker.'[9] This point is expanded later to explain that although Pringle-Pattison is in absolute agreement with Hegel's positioning of self-consciousness as 'the ultimate category of thought... through which alone the universe is intelligible to us',[10] Hegel's journey to this conclusion is unnecessary. It is through Hegel's *own* experience of his *own* existence that this conclusion becomes clear, it 'is not really reached by any "high *priori* road"'.[11] It is this Pringle-Pattison is referring to when he accuses Hegel of suppression, for in this instance Hegel has entered the realms of logic to expound a position which is much more easily accessible through direct human experience. Hegel's Absolute Idea, Pringle-Pattison insists 'is simply the notion of knowledge as such'.[12] It 'is no more than an ideal drawn by Hegel from his sole datum, the human self-consciousness, and does not lift us beyond our starting point.'[13] Despite the attempts to stand above human self-consciousness in the form of the Absolute self-consciousness, Pringle-Pattison argues that such an achievement is beyond the scope of any philosophical system – Hegel's or any other. The realisation of Absolute self-consciousness in God 'remains a belief or faith, not something which is attained in actual knowledge' [14] by human persons.

Beyond the Absolute Idea – the self-consciousness of the Absolute – is the Absolute Spirit, described by Pringle-Pattison as 'the one ultimately real existence'[15] in

Hegel's philosophical system. Pringle-Pattison cites the supreme category in Hegel's *Logic* as a description of this Absolute Spirit. The transition from Hegel's Logic – in what are commonly referred to as the Greater Logic (*Science of Logic*) and Lesser Logic (volume one of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*) – to the second and third volumes of the *Encyclopaedia* (*Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Mind* respectively) troubles Pringle-Pattison deeply. The *Logic*, he explains, is 'is ostensibly a logic and nothing more; but in the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of [Mind]* we are offered a metaphysic or ontology'.[16] The philosopher's trouble with Hegel on this point is due to the blurring of the distinction between logic and metaphysics, which he argues results in Hegel 'offering us *a logic as a metaphysic* [which is not]… merely an implication of his views [but]… is often presented by Hegelians as the gist and outcome of the system.'[17] Pringle-Pattison argues that Hegel's presentation of an absolute Logic necessarily results in this identification. Pringle-Pattison accepts that Hegel meant his philosophy to be understood by being read backwards, thus meaning the Absolute Idea never existed separately from Absolute Spirit.[18] There is no actual leap from the logic of *Logic* to the metaphysic of *Nature* and *Mind,* as 'it might be said we are merely undoing the work of abstraction and retracing our steps towards concrete fact.'[19] Yet this, Pringle-Pattison explains, 'implies the admission that it is our experiential knowledge of actual fact'[20] which drives the move from the wholly abstract Logic to the semi-abstract Nature, and finally to the absolute reality of Mind, the Absolute Spirit. Pringle-Pattison suggests that the 'clumsy stride from Logic to Nature'[21] is in part due to Hegel's ambition to produce an absolute philosophy which must strive to overcome reliance on facts derived from self-conscious existence.[22] Hegel's insistence that Being is the least we can say about a

thing – that we must then proceed to discuss the mode of this existence – is accepted by Pringle-Pattison.[23] Yet in Hegel's identification of Logic with metaphysic, he has failed to account for the experiential assurance we first gain of a thing's existence. Only once we have datum from our experience that a thing exists, Pringle-Pattison claims, can we move beyond this basic level of Being.[24]

Pringle-Pattison hypothetically allows Hegel to take what he describes as 'this impossible leap from Logic to Nature'[25] to discuss Hegel's conception of Nature itself in which he finds great fault in the downgrading of existence and existents into logical categories. He accepts the use of categories to speak of 'the realisation or manifestation of reason'[26] in the world, but such an approach, Pringle-Pattison insists, must 'recognise the quasi-metaphorical nature of the language used'.[27] We must recognise that whilst we can use the information from our experience to categorise existents in Nature, even the most minor of these existents 'has a life of its own, unique and individual'[28] which can only be partly understood by such categorisation. Here Pringle-Pattison is not asserting an abstract individuality against the whole of which it is a part, but urging that the myriad finite existents within the whole have their dignity as individual existents respected.[29] Hegel is forced to recognise this plethora of differing existents, none of which are exactly identical to their notional type, but this is contingency as opposed to the necessity of the Notion.[30] Pringle-Pattison shows that to counter the problem of contingency, Hegel 'endeavours to turn the tables upon reality.'[31] Nature is effectively blamed for running riot, with contingency being caused not by reason but by accident.[32] Pringle-Pattison discusses two solutions Hegel seemingly offers for the problem of contingency, the first being to include contingency as a category. This is dismissed as 'the most transparent fallacy',[33] for the very nature

of contingency is that no rational reason can be given for what is the product of accident – if reason could be given, it would not be contingency. The second solution, to blame nature and the way its impotence gives a limit to the realm of philosophy is an acceptable position, but as Pringle-Pattison argues, this recourse is not available to Hegel whilst attempting to offer an absolute system of philosophy.[34]

The Absolute Idea as the sole concrete existent in Hegel's philosophy is criticised by Pringle-Pattison for denying both God and man's true natures of existence. This is highlighted by the suggestion that throughout his philosophy Hegel never refers to human self-consciousness or divine self-consciousness, just self-consciousness.[35] Pringle-Pattison argues that the uniting of God and man within the concrete Absolute is at the price of 'eviscerating the real content of both.'[36] When the Absolute is being used by Hegel to depict man we lose hold of God, and vice versa when used to depict God, 'we never have the two together [though]… the alternation is so skilfully managed by Hegel himself that it appears to be not alteration but union.'[37] Hegel's logical step from the position that each Ego contains within itself a Non-Ego (which Pringle-Pattison supports) to the identification of God's Non-Ego with Nature is contested by Pringle-Pattison.[38] Such a step would necessarily do away with the self-consciousnesses of finite selves, transforming them into 'the still mirror in which the one Self-consciousness contemplates itself.'[39] The flaws found in this step are but one more example of Pringle-Pattison's criticisms of Hegel's logic as metaphysics. Hegel's conception in this area leads to the following process of human advancement described by Pringle-Pattison. 'Out of the conflicting passions and interests of men there is built up – built up *by* them, acting as the unconscious instruments of reason – that stable system of law and custom which sets bounds to individual lawlessness and caprice.'[40]

This development of the Absolute Idea and its external form the rational state is profoundly impersonal when understood in this way, and hence unsurprisingly countered at length by the personalist Pringle-Pattison in the final lecture of *Hegelianism and Personality*.

Previously Pringle-Pattison had highlighted the flaws inherent in conceiving the Absolute as God. Towards the beginning of the final lecture, through criticising the work of the Left Hegelians, Pringle-Pattison discusses the polar opposite – conceiving the Absolute as man. The profoundly religious philosopher rightly deduces that if the Absolute is man, and therefore nothing is higher, man is put in the place of God.[41] Yet this deification of man would still result in the same impersonal consequences seen when identifying the Absolute with God. It is not individual persons raised to the position of Absolute, but "Man" the impersonal subject of abstract thought. The individual human persons 'are, as it were, the foci in which the impersonal life of thought momentarily concentrates itself, in order to take stock of its own contents.'[42] Human existence has no further meaning than to be, effectively, the temporary container for the impersonal thought of the Absolute. The Left Hegelian attempt to 'construct reality out of the logical Idea [has no other result]… than that both God and man, as real beings, would vanish back into their source, leaving us with the logical Idea'[43] alone. Pringle-Pattison introduces the idea of a thought without a thinker to demonstrate the fallacy involved in the Left Hegelian approach, but argues that such an approach *does* have Hegel's system on its side. He argues that it has been mistaken to 'identify the Absolute with our knowledge of the Absolute, and take the process of human development as in the very truth of the evolution of God.'[44] Instead, Pringle-Pattison suggests that it would be more correct to understand that it is 'not the

evolution of God [we trace], but of man's thoughts about God – a development, therefore, which does not affect the existence of their object.'[45] This religious attitude is the prism through which Pringle-Pattison's criticisms of Hegelian ethics and politics should be viewed.

The religious approach of continuous striving to be closer to the will of God does not mean that man claims to know God in His entirety, for as we saw above, man only has an idea of God. As such, the current state of things is – according to Pringle-Pattison – almost always 'painted in the darkest colours'.[46] This is the motivation of the religious attitude to attempt to make the world a better place, both ethically and politically – it is man's responsibility to do so. Pringle-Pattison contrasts this with Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in which 'the circle is closed… the ideal is real, and we see that it is so.'[47] The criticism that Hegel's declaration that 'what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational'[48] is little more than the result of the optimistic conservatism of a man with a comfortable life is rejected by Pringle-Pattison.[49] Instead of caricaturing Hegel as a political opportunist in hock to the status quo, Pringle-Pattison sketches out the difference between "the actual" – what is, and "the really actual" – that justifiable by reason. With such an understanding Hegel does not argue, as it may have appeared, that any particular being or occurrence in existence is by its very existing necessarily rational. Instead, Hegel's position can be understood as being 'in short, the real, so far as it is rational, is rational; the rest we leave out of account.'[51] However this, he counters, 'is to reduce the position to an empty tautology.'[52] Again Pringle-Pattison argues that what is effectively another retreat to contingency, this time in the form of 'exceptions, misgrowths [and] positive evils'[53] is not a position which an absolute philosopher like Hegel can occupy. Pringle-Pattison argues that the

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relationship between existence and reason in Hegel's thought is flawed in a similar way to that of Plato – 'Nature or existence, says Hegel, is the home of Contingency, and so it fails of truth – fails that is, to body forth the notion. Necessity, says Plato, is mingled with Reason in the origin of the world, and Reason cannot quite subdue Necessity to itself. The very form of words is almost the same, in which the two thinkers record their own failure in the attempt to conceal it.'[54] Pringle-Pattison takes exception to what he perceives as *Philosophy of Right's* 'externalisation of morality.'[55] The person is expected to meet the standard of their society – 'do as others do; perform the duties of your station; be a good citizen'[56] – and no more. This is not due to an inner personal responsibility to fulfil this duty, but 'an automatic adaptation to an external mechanism of observance and respectability.'[57] This can in no way accommodate the moral progression and maintenance Pringle-Pattison argues is needed. On this point Pringle-Pattison cites T. H. Green's divergence from Hegel, in which he insists 'upon "an ideal of virtue" as "the spring from which morality perpetually renews its life."'[58]

Pringle-Pattison's conclusion to the final lecture perhaps best summarises his thoughts on the failings of Hegelianism. He explains the synthesis of the universe to be the property of God, though man can get closer through 'faith in reason and faith in goodness.'[59] Hegel's faith in reason is held by Pringle-Pattison to be both his strength in creating a new world for those who enter his thought, and his weakness when faith in reason is 'reduced to system, and put forward as demonstration'.[60] Absolute philosophical systems, Pringle-Pattison suggests, sap 'the springs both of speculative interest'[61] by presenting philosophy as closed 'and of moral endeavour'[62] by exteriorising morality. Hegel's system is placed by Pringle-Pattison amongst those of Aristotle and Spinoza from which future philosophers will 'draw inspiration and

guidance from its successes [and]… warning by its mistakes.'[63] Yet Pringle-Pattison is

aware that his approach in the lectures may appear to 'contain only unmitigated

condemnation of Hegel and his system.'[64] His own intellectual debt to Hegel means

this is looked on as being regrettable. He praises Hegel's work in phenomenology and

logic, and his anthropomorphism in insisting on the value of self-consciousness.[65] Yet,

he argues that Hegel's system breaks down and sacrifices itself 'to a logical abstraction

styled the Idea, in which both God and man disappear.'[66] Hegel's systematising is thus

seen by Pringle-Pattison as turning a philosophy which champions humanity into a

philosophy in which humanity is dissolved and submerged in the Absolute.

D. G. Ritchie's contemporary review of *Hegelianism and Personality* for *Mind*

offers several Hegelian responses to Pringle-Pattison's criticisms. Ritchie questions

Pringle-Pattison's assertion that the 'individual alone is real',[67] particularly that the

individual is nowhere distinctly defined in the work.[68] This point was picked up later in

a piece titled 'What is Reality?' in *Philosophical Review*, in which Ritchie accuses

Pringle-Pattison of nominalism. Ritchie suggests that it is mistaken to equate self-

consciousness with self-identity, for this involves an inference.[69] In the article Ritchie

also questions the argument advanced by Pringle-Pattison that thought must imply a

thinker. Though true at this level, Pringle-Pattison is said to imply a thinking substance,

whilst Ritchie insists this should be a thinking subject[70] – the need for a thinker does

not necessarily support the existence of finite individuals. A similar point is made by

Ritchie in his review in which he asks, 'does consciousness testify to anything more

than the existence of the subject?'[71] Pringle-Pattison replies in part to the criticisms in

Ritchie's *Philosophical Review* article in a footnote added to the second edition of

Hegelianism and Personality.

Surely Mr Ritchie cannot seriously mean that his own existence, for himself, is no more than a cluster of abstractions. As all knowledge consists of universals, it is obvious that, however far we may penetrate into the essence of any individual thing, our account of it will be a set of universal attributes. But the attributes do not meet, *as universals* in the real thing; no number of abstracts flocking together will constitute a fact. In this sense, there is a complete solution of continuity between the abstractions of knowledge and the concrete texture of existence.[72]

As always in Pringle-Pattison's thought, the mode of being of the finite individual person is defended without recourse to philosophical egoism. This shall be clear again in the Aristotelian Society debate between the personal idealist Pringle-Pattison and the absolute idealist Bernard Bosanquet.

The Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison debate.

The title of the symposium in July 1918 is accurately described by Mander as being 'somewhat obscure'.[73] Yet despite this obscurity, the title 'Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or Adjectival Mode of Being?' refers to a disagreement between the philosophers' thought which, as Mander explains, had recently come to the fore in their respective Gifford Lectures.[74] Bernard Bosanquet's lectures were delivered in Edinburgh University in 1911 and 1912 under the general title 'Destiny and Individuality', with the first series published as *The Principle of Individuality and Value* and the second as *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*. In his Gifford

Lectures delivered in the University of Aberdeen between 1912 and 1913 (published as *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*), Pringle-Pattison included two lectures critiquing the treatment of the finite individual in absolute idealism, particularly focussing on Bosanquet's *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*. Bosanquet, he argued, had crudely mischaracterised alternative views of the individual. Pringle-Pattison explained the personal idealist view as being between the self-transcendence of absolute idealism and the unrelated persons of the extreme egoism criticised by Bosanquet. This middle ground insists upon the formal distinctness of selves, whilst insisting with equal fervour that these selves are necessarily interrelated in society which is organic to the individual.[75] Bengtsson highlights the integral nature of this view of unity-in-diversity to personalist thought, explaining that although both absolute and personal idealists have deployed this term, what they mean by it is very different. For personalists, 'both the unity itself, and the diversity within it, were ultimately personal.'[76]

Unity-in-diversity is not the only term interpreted differently by the personal and absolute idealists, thus it is unsurprising to find parts of the debate between Pringle-Pattison and Bosanquet focussing upon the semantics of certain terms and even on whether certain terms can be used in certain contexts. This is illustrated by Pringle-Pattison's complaint that,

Confusion [is] introduced into the debate by the Spinozistic use of the term substance and the description of all "provisional subjects" (things or persons) as "predicates" or "adjectives" of "the one true individual Real." My conviction of the forced and misleading nature of such terminology was amply confirmed by the

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difficulty I had in persuading the compositors and readers of the Clarendon Press [who published *The Idea of God*] to accept the word "adjectival" in this connection at all; it evidently to them made nonsense of the sentence in which it occurred.[77]

In his reply, Bosanquet counters this with a defence of his original word usage.

In grammar any content can be an adjective and any a substantive, especially in inflected languages which possess a neuter adjective. A proper name can be an adjective – "a Solon." Still, in becoming an adjective a name indicates a change in the status of its object. The object becomes *ad hoc* only intelligible as attached and dependent. An adjective has a meaning without its substantive, but a meaning which becomes self-contradictory if we try to conceive it without attachment to something more nearly existent in its own right.[78]

The disagreements regarding the use and misuse of the English language seem to be grounded less in the words themselves, but instead the symbolic nature of allowing certain words to be used in certain contexts. For Bosanquet the term adjectival has a metaphorical value for if one accepts, as he explains, that an adjective has a meaning without its substantive, but needs to be conceived attached to something more existent, his view of the finite individual as possessing an adjectival mode of Being starts to appear more acceptable. As such, an individual has meaning, but must be attached to something more existent (the Absolute) for this meaning not to become self-contradictory. Hence, Pringle-Pattison's complaint that the usage of adjectival in this context is forced and misleading ought to be viewed as a result of his concern about the

philosophical implications of accepting such a use, as opposed to the grammatical implications alone.

Mander describes the philosophers' respective positions on the substantive or adjectival nature of the self as being 'just pegs'.[79] Whilst the debate is important for showing that there is more than one form of idealism, perhaps its greatest importance comes from revealing that the relationship between absolute and personal idealism is not as straightforward as some characterisations would imply. In a debate, attention is often solely paid to differences between the views of the parties involved. It is therefore of great use to those attempting to understand where Pringle-Pattison and Bosanquet stand in relation to one another that both philosophers take time to emphasise the matters on which they agree. Another effect of stating points of agreement is to neutralise the effectiveness of misrepresentation. In order to avoid such a fault here, it will be of use to first discuss these similarities in Pringle-Pattison's and Bosanquet's philosophies.

When discussing common ground, Bosanquet cites directly from Pringle-Pattison's Gifford Lectures,

Our common ground, as stated by Professor Pringle-Pattison himself, involves a negation and an assertion. We both *reject* "the old doctrine of the soul-substance as a kind of metaphysical atom." We both believe that the mere individual nowhere exists; "he is the creature of a theory." "Both his existence and his nature (his 'that' and his '*what*') are derived. It is absurd to talk of him as self-subsistent or existing in his own right." I need not multiply citations. Again, we both *assert* that if we could *possess* ourselves entirely "we should be... either the Absolute *in propria*

persona, or Browning's 'finite clod untroubled by a spark.'" "All this, then, is common ground."[80]

Bosanquet's statement is an acceptance that Pringle-Pattison equally rejects the extreme individualism which fails to accept that individuals are necessarily interrelated. The issue of soul-substance is related to what Bosanquet refers to as the first set of arguments resulting from the topic of the symposium which appeal 'to the fact of existence.'[81] This argument rests on the premise that by showing that finite individuals are *things* (by proving their *thinghood*) one can deduce they are substantive. This line of argument is weak, as Bosanquet explains, for *things* can be parts of other things.[82] Pringle-Pattison's refusal to use this argument at any length to prove the substantive nature of finite individuals can be taken as an agreement with Bosanquet that an argument with such a basis is deeply flawed.[83]

Further agreement beyond those cited directly by Bosanquet are confirmed when he states that the two are 'arguing on common ground, a ground much narrower than that on which… discussion has so far moved',[84] adding later that his statement for the symposium could have been modelled 'into an almost complete agreement with Professor Pringle-Pattison, for the explicit difference… is one of proportion and degree.'[85] This is not the case, he explains, as he was 'not asked to open this discussion in order to gloss over a radical discrepancy of feeling, but, I suppose, in order to make it explicit.'[86] Thus, it is likely to have been the limitations of context and space which prohibited Bosanquet from expanding greatly on the points of concurrence he highlighted.

Pringle-Pattison confirms Bosanquet's criticism of the first line of arguments, stating that 'the term thing or substance is commonly applied to innumerable objects, animate and inanimate, to which we should never dream of attributing the status and destiny which have been claimed for the human individual.'[87] Another agreement emerges on the subject of immortality of the finite individual. Alongside Bosanquet, he rejects any notion of 'inalienable immortality'[88] for the finite selves, linking the concept back to the previously discussed notion of soul-substance ('a piece of covert materialism'[89]). The routes to which Pringle-Pattison and Bosanquet reach this similar conclusion are, however, certainly different and will be dealt with at a later stage. At the end of his paper, Pringle-Pattison explains how the end section of Bosanquet's paper 'resembled the very doctrine which I have supported. But this runs counter to the general tenor of his article elsewhere that I am doubtful as to his precise meaning.'[90] He hopes Bosanquet will elucidate his statements regarding 'the eternity of all spirits in God.'[91] in his reply to the symposium. In the reply, Bosanquet concludes that this apparent agreement was not as it seemed (Bosanquet viewed it as 'not a conception which could support a pluralism or individualism.'[92]). This theme of mistaken agreement can found elsewhere in the reply, though less explicitly.[93] Due to the limited space available for his reply, Bosanquet focuses on defending his positions from attack instead of finding further commonality.

As Bosanquet stated, the main purpose of the debate is to focus on the differences in the philosophers' positions. Returning to his lines of argument arising from the topic of the symposium, the second line of argument Bosanquet states is that appealing 'to the intentional character of spiritual finite beings'.[94] Unlike the first line of argument, the second line is an issue on which he and Pringle-Pattison differ. 'It

deals with such matters as the self in morality and religion, with its pretension to assert a unity which it does not find existent, to be free and responsible, to remain itself even in the social bond or in oneness with God.'[95] Unlike the first line of argument, conclusions from which lacked validity, Bosanquet states that 'a conclusion from such considerations would be strictly applicable to the finite spiritual individual.'[96] Whilst Bosanquet is referring to the points he advances rather than the points Pringle-Pattison and others might advance against him, this does at least confirm this territory of argument as being a valid philosophical battleground. After discussing the first line of argument at length, Bosanquet turns to the second in the same detail. He accuses Pringle-Pattison of lowering the meaning of the word substance by the way he uses it whilst guarding 'against applying Spinozistic self substance, or self-subsistence.'[97] Through doing this, Bosanquet explains, Pringle-Pattison moves towards the first line of argument by 'resting upon distinguishable existence or concrete thinghood, taking no account of what is special to a finite spiritual being.'[98] He believes that whilst guarding against the perils of asserting a form of extreme individualism, Pringle-Pattison has failed to maintain the finite individual's status. Yet Bosanquet stresses that as this 'amounts to little more than an argument from distinct existence',[99] any philosophical conclusion drawn from it in favour of either position has little validity.

After dealing with criticisms of his rejection of 'the notion of the membership of finite spirits... in the Absolute'[100] (as this would commit to an acceptance of eternal substances), Bosanquet states that the other points to be discussed with Pringle-Pattison 'amount to the problem of free self-determination on the part of the spiritual finite individual, and the conceivability of confluence between such individuals, or their transmutation and absorption in the Absolute.'[101] He discusses these points through

looking at different attitudes to the issues. He describes the first attitude as being pluralist, 'alike in contemplating the natural and the human world, it models itself on the apparent self-identity of the movable and self-coherent body... The apparent self-completeness of our bodies, and their external repetition of a single type, side by side, as free figures devoid of material co-adaptation or connection, occupy our vision, blinding us to the moral and spiritual structure which lies behind the visible scene.'[102] Bosanquet argues that this flawed approach is mirrored in religious individualism (linked to the concept of soul-substance), brought about by 'natural bias and prolonged tradition'.[103] He exclaims that such an approach ignores the inescapable fact that consideration of the finite individual necessarily involves an abstraction from the whole. Such an approach relying only on the numerical identity of the finite individual can be used to prove thinghood and little else. As such, according to Bosanquet, it is untenable.

The second attitude handled by Bosanquet 'comes to us partly through the experience of life, as in morality and religion, partly through science and philosophy.'[104] Under this attitude, particularly through science and philosophy, we become aware of the abstraction involved in discussing the finite individual and it is 'completely undone'.[105] Despite strong urges to assert one's individuality ('We are confident of our individual unity... it is in our nature to be a single self. We claim it as a right, and accept is as a duty.'[106]), this is not reflected in our reality ('Our unity is a puzzle and an unrealised aspiration. It is demanded by thought and action, but we cannot find it in existence.'[107]). The closest a finite individual gets to being substantive in their own right is through this mistaken interpretation of a false appearance. As Bosanquet suggests, 'I seem to myself, perhaps, to be the King, and I am the fool.'[108]

Bosanquet questions the extent to which the finite individual has free will. He takes a Rousseauean approach in arguing that man's freedom is through the universal. Disparaging the view that 'freedom is most strongly felt in mere choice',[109] Bosanquet instead argues a finite individual experiences freedom 'in so far as he wills the universal object.'[110] The explanation for this position, he claims, is very clear. 'It is only what is universal that is free from self-contradiction. It is only what is free from self-contradiction that can be willed without obstruction. Every contradiction in my world of experience obstructs my action and embarrasses my will; and every pain or defeat or confusion of which I am aware, in any subject or object apprehended by me, is a contradiction in my world… it is only in a will above my own that I can find my own will and my freedom and independence.'[111] Bosanquet addresses potential uncertainties about where the communal will is derived from. He explains that the communal will is 'revealed in a number of individuals, [but] is a single thing as much as external nature, which is revealed in the same way.'[112] Such a move, he argues, involves recognising the existence of linear and lateral identity. Linear identity is the form of identity experienced and possessed by finite individuals, and as such involves little in the way of philosophical controversy. An acceptance of lateral identity is linked to a confluence of selves. Failure to accept this confluence, Bosanquet argues, leads us to 'unnaturally narrow down the basis of our self.'[113] He criticises Pringle-Pattison's misconception of the ego as contributing to his rejection of the confluence of selves. 'If the ego has a prior content, apart from what it unifies, unification becomes impossible. If the self is to be free and self-modelling, the ego must be a mere spirit of unity working in and throughout experiences. Otherwise, it must bring with it some character or nature which would be an antecedent condition biasing and restricting the

development of the soul or self.'[114] This relates back to Bosanquet's notion that it is only through the communal – the confluence of selves – that the finite individual can reach his potential level of freedom.

Bosanquet addresses criticisms regarding his perceived level of appreciation of the self. He aims to make it clear where he agrees with, as well as where he departs from, regular opinion on the issue. He agrees that the self exists ('as a function which is a system of functions… not a mere adjective in the sense in which P is so taken in the formula S is P.'[115]), but adds the caveat that 'existence of the self is not adequate to its implied unity, which is a pretension inherent in a thinking being.'[116] Bosanquet explains that the self which he agrees exists 'has no content and can originate nothing.'[117] He continues to argue that the self 'is the utterance of his place and time – a sub-variant of the content of his age, and a derivative of his family stock like a bud on a plant. And, if we abstract from these conditions, he is nothing.'[118] He relates this back to freedom of will, showing how whilst his love and hate are beyond the control of others, they are also beyond his control ('No one, I think, has said that you can love and hate as you wish. How easy life would be, if you could!'[119]). He uses his philosophy as an analogy of how attaining perfection would necessarily involve a confluence of selves, explaining that 'if my philosophy were made complete and self-consistent, I am sure my critics would admit, it could no longer be identified with that which I profess as mine; but would probably amalgamate with that of someone else, and in the end with that of all. I do not know why the same should not be the case with my self.'[120] Such an argument is consistent with his view of selves as being adjectival or functions.

Bosanquet discusses the existence of finite individuals, the reasons for their existence and the duration of their existence. He explains that 'the reality of the finite

individual is not confined to his temporal existence as a soul or self… It seems impossible to hold that men who have lived in the past are not real so far as their thoughts and characters are present and operative today. They are not here in full personality, but their reality would be diminished if its activity of today were subtracted from it.'[121] As previously mentioned, this is in no way an acceptance of everlasting soul-substance. The content of the finite individual continues to exist as an adjective of the communal, the Absolute, even after the finite individual as an apparent centre of experience has long gone. 'Thus, individuals not merely exist for a brief space in the world, but characterise it as permanent qualifications.'[122] For this final section of his statement, Bosanquet emphasises several times the minute and brief nature of the finite individual when compared to the Absolute.

The differences in opinion cited by Pringle-Pattison begin with the previously mentioned disagreement over word usage. He criticises the Spinozistic nature of Bosanquet's 'conception of the universe as a continuum of interconnected content within, or referred to, the one ultimate subject.'[123] Pringle-Pattison argues that just like Spinoza, Bosanquet fails to adequately account for the finite individual being a 'separate centre of thought and action'[124] when he views such experience as merely appearance. Such a view 'ignores entirely the concrete texture of existence as distinguished from the abstractions of intellect.'[125] He accuses Bosanquet of having an 'inorganic view of the physical world'[126] due to his failure to interpret this as 'organic to the world of life and consciousness.'[127] This appears to have been a particularly calculated attack, as Bosanquet was keen to emphasise the organic nature of his philosophy.

Pringle-Pattison further accuses Bosanquet of dealing in abstractions when dealing with content as apart from finite individuals in suggesting a confluence of individuals. 'Truth, beauty, love – all the great values – what meaning have they apart from their conscious realisation in a living individual, finite of infinite?'[128] Despite Bosanquet's insistence to the contrary, Pringle-Pattison argues that Bosanquet's theory truly lacks a conception of the self. Instead, 'the world is dissolved into a collection of qualities or adjectives which are ultimately housed in the Absolute.'[129] The self cannot, Pringle-Pattison explains, mix with others in the way Bosanquet suggests. 'A self may be largely identical in content with other selves, and in that sense we may intelligibly talk of "overlapping", but to speak as if their common content affected in any way their existential distinctness is to use words to which I can attach no meaning. So, again, a self may cease to be, but it cannot coalesce with another self; for the very meaning of its existence is that it is a unique focalisation of the universe.'[130] He holds that this argument is equally valid when discussing finite individuals being transmuted in the Absolute, a suggestion which would necessarily result in the elimination of any individuality. Bosanquet's analogy for the confluence based around the ownership of philosophical systems is also contended by Pringle-Pattison. He explains, 'I could not desire any better illustration of the confusion against which I am contending than this comparison between the piecing-out of an impersonal system of thought and the life-course of a moral personality which, however it may bud and blossom and ripen to maturity, must grow always from its own root.'[131] This particular point is perhaps indicative of much of the difference between personalist and absolutist forms of idealism, condemning the notion of a single homogenous idealist doctrine.

Pringle-Pattison discusses the immortality of the soul. As previously mentioned, like Bosanquet, he rejects any notion of the soul being an eternal substance. For Pringle-Pattison, this immortality is something to be achieved by the individual and is awarded by God alone. He explains further that 'it is difficult to conceive of anyone claiming immortality as a right *for himself* on purely personal grounds; indeed the idea of a "right" in such a reference is so incongruous that to make such a claim might almost be said to disqualify the claimant.'[132] Little of this would cause disagreement with Bosanquet, but is related to Pringle-Pattison's criticism of the role of God as a self in the former's theory. Bosanquet's failure to 'realise the elementary conditions of selfhood [means]… in his theory there is no real self at all, either of God or man, but only a logical transparency called the Absolute.'[133] Pringle-Pattison suggests that this mistaken view is due to a tendency on Bosanquet's part to view selves from the outside, 'from the point of view of a spectator momentarily concentrating attention upon them in abstraction from the social whole which is their setting.'[134] As he explains, 'because a mind cannot be extracted and exhibited as a self-contained whole apart from the "moral and spiritual structure" in which it is rooted, it does not follow that the mind or self is simply a punctual centre in which a system of moral and social relations reflects itself into unity as rays of light are concentrated in a focus.'[135] This is yet another area in which Pringle-Pattison accuses Bosanquet's theory of being weakened through dealing in abstractions.

Pringle-Pattison criticises Bosanquet's handling of free will, which fails to account for the importance of this element of the finite individual. He explains,

The authorship of our own acts and our responsibility for them – this is the inmost meaning of our freedom and independence, and any theory is self-condemned which can find no room for this elementary certainty. Professor Bosanquet evades this issue when he talks disparagingly of "mere choice" and makes play with the familiar equivocation between freedom meaning the capacity of choice between good and evil, and freedom in the sense of willing "the universal object," accepting "a will above my own," in a word, the achieved harmony of the perfect moral will.[136]

Pringle-Pattison further criticises the moral ambiguity of Bosanquet's theory citing the latter's somewhat glib remark that 'in error and in sin'[137] is the closest he gets to being a substantive in his own right. The great flaw in this statement, Pringle-Pattison explains, is that if Bosanquet's theory is followed to its logical conclusion there can be no such thing as error or sin. Pringle-Pattison argues the contradiction lies in how someone could 'take up this attitude of opposition',[138] which would be necessary to make errors or commit sins, if he had no 'kind of existence over and against the spirit of the whole',[139] of the Absolute or communal. The denying of the individual authoring and baring responsibility for their own actions, Pringle-Pattison explains, would cause great problems for Christian belief, for 'the surrender of the selfish will implies the power to assert it.'[140] He continues to ask Bosanquet, 'where is the merit or value in the self-surrender if the whole process is a make-believe on the part of the Absolute?'[141]

Error and sin are related to the problem of evil, the attainment of perfection and the wider issue of God's relationship with man. In Bosanquet's theory, Pringle-Pattison explains that evil comes to be seen 'as simply good in the wrong place.'[142] As such, he

suggests that Bosanquet's theory will lead to a Nietzschean transcendence of values, for as the only agent, the Absolute must necessarily be perfect. In Pringle-Pattison's theory, the only perfect self is God. For all other selves, perfection is an ideal, rather than something readily attainable. Pringle-Pattison clarifies his position, explaining 'because I desire to be made more and more in the likeliness of God, I do not therefore desire to *be* God.'[143] Pringle-Pattison suggests that Bosanquet's Absolute might share characteristics with the Hindu conception of Brahman, but this would still allow the view of the finite world as 'a game of make-believe which the Absolute plays with itself.'[144] For Pringle-Pattison, 'the reality of both God and man depends on the reality of the difference between them.'[145] Such a difference is incompatible with Bosanquet's philosophy which displays indifference to the finite individual. Pringle-Pattison asks:

> Are we to attribute to the divine Friend and Lover of men a levity of attitude which we find offensively untrue of our ordinary human fidelities? Are we to liken Him to a military commander, who is content, if fresh drafts are forthcoming to fill his depleted battalions? To the military system, men are only so much human material, so many numerable units; but a chance encounter with one of the men in the flesh, a touch of human-heartedness, is sufficient to dissolve the abstraction which so regards them.[146]

The omniscient Christian God has a relationship with each finite individual much greater than this described encounter. As such the indifferent attitude associated with Bosanquet's theory must be the antithesis to the view of God as all-loving. He ends his paper with the previously discussed discussion of the end of Bosanquet's paper.

Bosanquet's statement in reply to the symposium's papers unsurprisingly focuses upon addressing points of criticism raised by the other participants, and restating points he felt had either been misunderstood or overlooked. He begins with his previously mentioned defence against Pringle-Pattison's attack over word usage. He counterattacks by criticising Pringle-Pattison's attachment to the term "finite individual", claiming that the two words are incompatible. 'A finite individual then is a positive unit, limited by a mere negation. But this is a contradiction. A thing's limit expresses its nature, and a bare negation cannot be the nature of anything. If the contradiction is to be removed, the limit must not merely be shifted (for that leaves the bare negation as before), but turned into a positive expression of the unit's nature, by becoming a distinction and no longer a bare negation.'[147] If we follow this argument through, what is individual (meaning 'indivisible, and indivisible not as atom, as the least that can have being, but as a whole, as what loses its essence if divided.'[148]) must be infinite. He argues that 'finiteness is fatal to individuality… nothing can be individual except as infinite, nor infinite except as part of a systematic whole in which its contradictions are at least relatively solved and harmonised. It is plain then that the finite individual is by definition adjectival. It is attached, included, subordinate, not merely interrelated on equal terms.'[149] Bosanquet explains that it is not merely due to some 'verbal issue'[150] or misunderstanding that Pringle-Pattison disagrees with him, but that there is a genuine difference between the two philosophers. In a somewhat backhanded compliment, he explains that between writing his original statement and this reply he had taken the time to re-read Pringle-Pattison's *Idea of God*. As a result of this, he asserts a view that Pringle-Pattison 'does himself less justice in his paper [for

the symposium] than in the original work',[151] though he does note that the areas of disagreement were present there too.

Bosanquet reiterates his theory of the communal mind. He explains that it 'is not a ghost hovering over a nation; it is the minds of individuals in which the common stuff gives varied expression to the qualities and functions of the whole.'[152] He rejects any notion that his theory involves the dissolving of individualities in the Absolute, as these abstract individualities have never truly existed. Again he explains how the finite individual attains perfection through the Absolute. 'Each "mind" finds its completion in the other, its purposes supported and corrected, its contradictions removed, its tendencies and inclinations represented, reinforced, systematised.'[153] This is linked into Bosanquet's previously discussed assertion that lateral as well as linear identity should be embraced and understood. He contrasts his own view with Pringle-Pattison's 'reflective morality [in which]… good is to be realised, by the successive strivings, in time, of the finite individual intent upon self-improvement',[154] though true perfection is out of the reach of the finite individual. For Bosanquet, this striving is in vain; these finite individuals must accept their state of self-contradiction. Discussing this matter, Bosanquet cites the issue at the heart of the Christian Reformation; whether faith or deeds are the route to God. He aligns himself with the former (which does not exclude the latter) and seems to align his critics with the latter (which does exclude the former).[155]

Bosanquet addresses Pringle-Pattison's criticisms of his comments regarding error and sin. He rejects the argument that such manifestations would be detrimental to the unity of the Absolute. 'Above all things, it is successful in maintaining that unity. No disintegration of the personality could be so hopeless or so final as a doctrine which

should recognise in it an evil which has nothing of good, or an error which has nothing of truth. The individual would be split up from top to toe, and no possibility of improvement or deterioration would remain to him.'[156] Bosanquet also disagrees with Pringle-Pattison's criticism that the connection of content in the Absolute disparages the connection of content in the finite individual. He likens it to 'recognising its relation to the reality from which it came, and out of which it is continually nourished and renewed',[157] failure of which to recognise would involve treating the finite individual as an abstraction.

Towards the end of his reply, Bosanquet readdresses a point in his paper which he feels was either ignored or overlooked by the other participants in the symposium, despite the importance and weight Bosanquet felt the assertion had. He argues,

the discussion should not turn exclusively on the soul or self, but it should be remembered that the individual has a reality beyond either, first in the more immediate not-self – as, for instance, in his possessions and connections, apart from which it is clear that he is not fully realised – and, secondly, in all that survives his temporal existence on earth. Is it, I am far from being the first to ask, a mere metaphor to say that Plato teaches us to-day through a thousand channels and influences? And if you say "But we can we take these biased interpretations an impure traditions as Plato's authentic voice?" we should ask you to consider the misinterpretations and prejudices to which a great man is exposed in his lifetime, and to determine whether if in one sense he speaks less directly to-day, yet in another he does not speak to us more authentically and completely than he ever spoke to mankind before.[158]

This point opens up many potential areas of discussion between the philosophers on what makes up the identity and reality of the finite individual. Bosanquet asserts that such considerations are of the utmost importance when asserting the substantive or adjectival nature of finite individuals within the Absolute. He also reasserts the nature of the Absolute itself, that 'it is never itself a subject, or a predicate or a logical transparency, or a monad or an other or a spectator or a knower. It is always the whole… though divisions and conditions have relative being within it.'[159] Such relative Being is the Being experienced, according to Bosanquet, by the adjectival finite individuals. Bosanquet concludes his reply with the previously discussed matter which also made up the conclusion of Pringle-Pattison's paper: Bosanquet's comments in his original paper about 'the eternity of all spirits in God'.[160]

The polarising nature of the Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison debate has meant that dispassionate judgement over which philosopher "won" is nigh-on impossible. The obscurity of the debate, particularly in modern times, has meant that it is encountered and studied only by those with a prior interest in idealist philosophy. Those with a prior interest in idealist philosophy are very likely to have made prior judgment between personal and absolute idealist arguments (arguments which Bosanquet and Pringle-Pattison's contributions to the symposium are representative of). A review contemporaneous to the symposium by W. H. Sheldon illustrates this point, being largely based upon the weaknesses of absolute idealism than in Bosanquet's arguments themselves.[161] It should be noted at this point that the expositions by Mander and Thomas to be dealt with here are certainly more balanced than Sheldon's review.

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In his study of the Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison debate, Mander argues that it was Bosanquet with the stronger arguments.[162] In discussing the philosophers' accusations that the other is dealing in abstractions, he accuses Pringle-Pattison of failing to address key points, misunderstanding some of Bosanquet's positions and philosophical naivety. He argues that 'Pringle-Pattison badly misunderstands Bosanquet's conception of universality… in correcting the faults of the finite self as we experience them, we need to move towards a conception which is more universal.'[163] For Pringle-Pattison, the result of this movement is a movement towards greater abstraction. For Bosanquet, the opposite is true; it is a move towards concretisation. The result of this, a concrete universal which, Mander explains, 'is absolutely central to Bosanquet's thought'[164] and is left unaddressed by Pringle-Pattison's paper.[165] Mander's accusation that Pringle-Pattison is being naive relates to his belief 'that in experience he has a direct and unmediated contact with reality.'[166] He argues that this is flawed because:

> experience comes to us already screened or filtered through our theories and concepts, disregarding a variety of aspects and sides to a thing's being as 'inessential' or 'irrelevant'… In view of this, veneration for immediate experience… begins to seem like the attitude of a rather over-cautious preservation society refusing to countenance any alteration or modernisation whatsoever to an ancient building which only came to have its current fine look through a continual process over the years of precisely such alteration and modernisation.[167]

Whilst Mander is correct to suggest that we must be aware of the limitations of experience, it is difficult to agree that this necessarily means that experience must be

eschewed as philosophy's primary data. Even the most abstract of abstractions must surely be grounded to some degree in our experiences in order to be comprehendible to human understanding. Mander continues to cite three further points in the debate in which he believes Bosanquet's arguments are victorious over the arguments of Pringle-Pattison. These points are Bosanquet's views regarding the confluence of selves, arguments over immortality and the value of the finite individual.

James Thomas's discussion of the debate – focussing largely upon the merits and weaknesses of Mander's previous article – comes to a much more neutral conclusion, arguing that truth lies somewhere between the positions of Bosanquet and Pringle-Pattison. Bosanquet is seen as being guilty of emphasising the concept independent of experience, whilst Pringle-Pattison is found to have done the opposite.[168] Thomas seems to suggest that Mander has been too emphatic in his support of Bosanquet in his article.

The Philosophical Radicals: Pringle-Pattison and politics.

Earlier, Pringle-Pattison's response to the political philosophy of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* was discussed. In his collection of essays *The Philosophical Radicals*, Pringle-Pattison's relationship with other schools of political philosophy is made clearer. The eponymous first essay in the collection discusses utilitarianism in wake of the publication of Leslie Stephens' *The English Utilitarians*. Taking in the works of Bentham, and James and John Stuart Mill, Pringle-Pattison argues the movement lacks originality, for 'hedonism is as old as ethical speculation'.[169] He traces what he refers to as 'the greatest-happiness principle'[170] through the works of Palsey, Hume, Hutcheson

and Locke. Not only is the originality of the utilitarian school doubted by Pringle-Pattison, but also the school's profundity, accusing Bentham of 'extending the principles which he found sufficient to solve his own practical problem, and [using] them as ultimate principles of explanation in psychology, ethics and sociology.'[171] Pringle-Pattison's personalism, resting on a fundamental belief in the dignity and moral responsibility of human persons, could never be fully compatible with the utilitarian creed. Utilitarianism effectively downgrades the person into a container for utility, not entirely different from the Hegelian tendency to envisage individuals as containers for the attributes of the Absolute. Despite Pringle-Pattison's unflinching criticisms of utilitarian principles, he argues that utilitarianism did serve a beneficial purpose in the nineteenth century. Utility was a practical test of rationality of 'laws and customs which, useful in their day, have survived their usefulness and become… a harmful restriction or a crying injustice.'[172] Utilitarianism's strength as a negative movement of reform was not matched by a strong positive nature. Pringle-Pattison argues that the school's 'strength departed from it just in proportion as its critical attack was successful.'[173] By failing to recognise the dignity of the person beyond the hedonistic measurement of happiness –itself difficult to quantify – its philosophical basis was flawed, and hence doomed to fail.[174]

The political conclusions of Herbert Spencer's individualism are similarly criticised in an essay discussing his autobiography in *Philosophical Radicals*. Pringle-Pattison's brief comments on this point highlight that despite his metaphysical insistence that the individual person's mode of Being be respected and recognised, this does not result in an individualist form of politics. Pringle-Pattison describes the individualism found in *Man Versus the State* as being 'as unhistorical as it is

unphilosophical'.[175] Spencer's 'pre-social unit with his natural rights never existed',[176] for such free individuals are the goal of politics rather than its starting position. Pringle-Pattison describes Spencer's arguments in favour of such political individualism as having the air 'of one crying in the wilderness.'[177] At the time of writing, he insists, all but a small number of (largely Nietzschean) anarchists recognise the 'conception of man as essentially social, and of the State as the organ of the general will'.[178] As such, it is clear to see that Pringle-Pattison's reaction to Hegel in the area of politics is far from mirroring the radicalism to be found in the works of the likes of Max Stirner.

Conclusion.

Pringle-Pattison's attempts to reassert the importance of personality within the confines of Hegelian thought are at least partially successful. In response to the abstract tendencies of contemporaries such as Bosanquet, Pringle-Pattison correctly insisted upon the role of lived experience in any successful philosophy. That his personal idealism ought not to be thought of as a violent attack on Hegel and Hegelianism is clear from Pringle-Pattison's reformist stance. In *Hegelianism and* Personality, he insists that this is the case in his concluding paragraph, stating that if the impression has been gained from the lectures that they 'contain only unmitigated condemnation of Hegel and his system'[179] it is deeply regrettable. Indeed Pringle-Pattison highlights his own 'great personal obligations to Hegel, which would make such a condemnation savour of ingratitude [and]… the great debt which philosophy in general owes to Hegel, and the speculative outlook which is got by studying him.'[180] Pringle-Pattison's religious attitude with regards to the dignity of the person and the need and

responsibility to strive to make the world – and, ethically, individuals themselves – closer to the ideal of God undoubtedly forms the backbone of his philosophy. It is the conscious and unconscious attempts of Hegelian thought to submerge God within the absolute which appear to drive many of his positions. Yet even if we are to take a more secular approach, there is still merit in Pringle-Pattison's personalism. The dignity of the person, and the need for this dignity to be respected by any successful philosophy, need not necessarily be derived from the person's relationship with God. To turn the focus away from religious argument towards Pringle-Pattison's insistence on the importance of recognising and accounting for lived experience, and the dignity which follows from our experiences of ourselves as separate, distinct, yet interrelated units would not greatly weaken the structure of his philosophy. Despite this, it would be fallacious to insist that Pringle-Pattison's thought is without flaw.

Whilst able to identify and correct many of the flaws in the Hegelian approach, Pringle-Pattison's thought is weakened by his own approach to Hegelian thought. Despite recognising and criticising Hegelian impersonalism, Pringle-Pattison's insistence on taking a reformist approach – an insistence that these flaws can be ironed out – keeps him from turning further afield for a more satisfactory approach. As he remains within the confines of Hegelianism, albeit unorthodoxly, more radical solutions to the problems he diagnoses remain outside his grasp. Perhaps the greatest weakness of Pringle-Pattison's personalism, as well as wider personalist thought in general, is its failure to satisfactorily define precisely what constitutes a "person". It may be possible to argue that we cannot expect a definition of what is meant by "God" because gods are inherently unknowable, but the same cannot be said of persons. Pringle-Pattison correctly insists that a person is what we experience ourselves to be,

yet never truly attempts to grasp what this means. This is clearly related to Pringle-Pattison's failure – a failure of the philosophical tradition since Platonism – to directly address the question of Being, of what it means to Be. The only way to distinguish what it means to be a person (a particular form of Being), is to explore what it is which separates the form of Being experienced by persons from Being in general. Pringle-Pattison's adherence to Hegelianism stops such a point drawn from his philosophy from being followed to its logical conclusion.

Pringle-Pattison's relationship with metaphysically derived politics is complicated by his reformist philosophy. As with his personalist reform of Hegelian absolutism, Pringle-Pattison fails to entirely follow through on his political criticisms. As we saw, Pringle-Pattison's political *bête noire* was the hedonism he felt was inherent in both utilitarianism and Spencerite individualism. It is perhaps unsurprising that the consistently sober personalist would find any creed which might place base pleasure above thoughtful contemplation invalid. Ironically considering the reasoning behind his rejection of utilitarianism, Pringle-Pattison's political outlook gets no further than ably highlighting many of the errors of a utilitarian worldview. His taste for political radicalism appears to be as limited as his taste for philosophical radicalism. He is willing to give both a fair hearing, but inevitably always sides with the moderate approach. Just as Pringle-Pattison failed to follow his criticisms of Hegelianism to the point that he fully ceased to be a Hegelian, his politics betray a similarly pragmatic attachment to the status quo. Pringle-Pattison's refusal to consider the radical conclusions of his criticisms means that neither his philosophy nor his politics can provide a satisfactory alternative to the failings of a metaphysical approach.

1. Andrew Seth changed his name to Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison in 1898 as a stipulation of receiving a bequest from the wife of a distant cousin. For a detailed description of these events see, G. F. Barbour 'Memoir of the Author' in Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Balfour Lectures on Realism* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1933), pp83-92. For the sake of consistency and clarity, the name Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison will be used throughout rather than varying with Andrew Seth for those works published under the philosopher's original name – particularly as later editions of those earlier works were to be published under the Pringle-Pattison moniker. In the references, the name under which the particular edition cited was published will be used.

2. Ibid, p52.

3. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Scottish Philosophy* Fourth Edition (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1907), p189.

4. Ibid, p221.

5. Loc. cit.

6. Ibid, p222.

7. Andrew Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1893), p95.

8. Loc. cit.

9. Ibid, p96.

10. Ibid, p104.

11. Loc. cit.

12. Loc. cit.

13. Ibid, p106.

14. Ibid, p109.

15. Loc. cit.

16. Ibid, p110 [for the sake of consistency, Pringle-Pattison's rendering of

   Philosophy of Spirit has been altered to *Philosophy of Mind* which is the title

   now commonly used for the work].

17. Loc. cit.

18. Ibid, p114.

19. Ibid, p115.

20. Loc. cit.

21. Ibid, p116.

22. Ibid, pp116-117.

23. Ibid, p124.

24. Ibid, pp125-127.

25. Ibid, p127.

26. Ibid, p131.

27. Loc. cit.

28. Ibid, p133.

29. Ibid, pp135-136 note 4.

30. Ibid, pp142-143.

31. Ibid, p143.

32. Ibid, p143-144.

33. Ibid, p146.

34. Ibid, pp146-148.

35. Ibid, p159 – capitalisation of Self for God and for Hegel's Absolute, but not for man, is deliberate.

36. Ibid, p164.

37. Loc. cit.

38. Ibid, p171.

39. Loc. cit.

40. Ibid, p186.

41. Ibid, p195.

42. Ibid, p199.

43. Ibid, p200.

44. Ibid, p203.

45. Ibid, pp203-204.

46. Ibid, p208.

47. Loc. cit.

48. G. W. F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p14.

49. Andrew Seth, Op. cit., pp209-210.

50. Ibid, p212.

51. Loc. cit.

52. Loc. cit.

53. Ibid, p213.

54. Ibid, p218.

55. Ibid, p219.

56. Loc. cit.

57. Loc. cit.

58. Ibid, p220.

59. Ibid, p224.

60. Loc. cit.

61. Loc. cit.

62. Loc. cit.

63. Loc. cit.

64. Ibid, p241.

65. Ibid, pp241-242.

66. Ibid, p242.

67. Ibid, p135.

68. D. G. Ritchie, 'Review: *Hegelianism and Personality*' in *Mind* Vol. 13, No. 50 (1888), p257.

69. D. G. Ritchie, 'What is Reality?' in *Philosophical Review* Vol. 1, No. 3 (1892), p280.

70. Loc. cit.

71. D. G. Ritchie, Op. cit., p258.

72. Andrew Seth, Op. cit., p136 note 4 – italics are Pringle-Pattison's.

73. W. J. Mander, 'Life and Finite Individuality: The Bosanquet/Pringle-Pattison Debate', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 13, No.1 (2005), p111.

74. Ibid, p112.

75. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God* Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920) pp257-258.

76. Jan Olof Bengtsson, *The Worldview of Personalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p204.

77. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, 'Symposium: Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or an Adjectival Mode of Being?' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XVIII 1917-1918 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1918), p507.

78. Bernard Bosanquet, 'Reply to Symposium: Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or an Adjectival Mode of Being?' in *Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume I* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1918), p179.

79. Mander, Op. cit., p114.

80. Bernard Bosanquet, 'Symposium: Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or an Adjectival Mode of Being?' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XVIII 1917-1918 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1918), p489, italics are author's.

81. Ibid, p479.

82. Loc. cit.

83. Pringle-Pattison, Op. cit., p507.

84. Bosanquet, Op. cit., p488.

85. Ibid, p492.

86. Loc. cit.

87. Pringle-Pattison, Op. cit., p507.

88. Ibid, p514.

89. Loc. cit.

90. Ibid, pp529-530.

91. Bosanquet, Op. cit., p506.

92. Bosanquet, 'Reply to Symposium…', p194.

93. Ibid, p182.

94. Bosanquet, 'Symposium…', p480.

95. Loc. cit.

96. Loc. cit.

97. Ibid, p489.

98. Loc. cit.

99. Ibid, p490.

100.   Loc. cit.

101.   Ibid, p493.

102.   Ibid, pp493-494.

103.   Ibid, p494.

104.   Ibid, p495.

105.   Loc. cit.

106.   Ibid, p496.

107.   Loc. cit.

108.   Ibid, p497.

109.   Ibid, p498, note †.

110.   Ibid, p498.

111.   Ibid, p499.

112.   Loc. cit.

113.   Ibid, p500.

114.   Ibid, p501.

115.   Loc. cit.

116.   Loc. cit.

117.   Ibid, p502.

118.   Loc. cit.

119.   Loc. cit.

120.   Loc. cit.

121.   Ibid, p504.

122.   Ibid, p505.

123.   Pringle-Pattison, Op. cit., p509.

124.   Loc. cit.

125.   Ibid, p510.

126.   Ibid, p511.

127.   Loc. cit.

128.   Ibid, p512.

129.   Ibid, p513.

130.   Loc. cit.

131.   Loc. cit.

132.   Ibid, p516, italics are author's.

133.   Ibid, p517.

134.   Loc. cit.

135.   Ibid, pp517-518.

136.   Ibid, p518.

137.   Ibid, p519.

138.   Loc. cit.

139.   Loc. cit.

140.   Loc. cit.

141.   Loc. cit.

142.   Ibid, p521.

143.   Ibid, p525.

144.   Ibid, p523.

145.   Loc. cit.

146.   Ibid, p528.

147.   Bosanquet, 'Reply to Symposium…', p181.

148.   Loc. cit.

149.   Ibid, pp181-182.

150.   Ibid, p182.

151.   Loc. cit.

152.   Ibid, p185.

153.   Loc. cit.

154.   Ibid, p186.

155.   Ibid, pp189-190.

156.   Ibid, p191.

157.   Ibid, p190-191.

158.   Ibid, p193.

159.   Ibid, p194.

160.   Bosanquet, 'Symposium…', p506.

161.   W. H. Sheldon, 'Review: Life and Finite Individuality. Two
Symposia…' in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*,
Vol. 16, No. 19 (Sep. 11, 1919), pp523-529.

162.   Mander, Op. cit., p130.

163.   Ibid, p123.

164.   Loc. cit.

165.   Robert Stern, 'Hegel, British Idealism, and the Curious Case of the
Concrete Universal' in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* Vol. 15,
No. 1 (2007), pp115-153 offers a discussion of the Concrete Universal.

166. Mander, Op. cit. p124.

167. Loc. cit.

168. James Thomas, 'Analysis and Concept: The Bosanquet – Pringle-Pattison Debate' in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* Vol. 14, No. 4 (2006), pp757-764.

169. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophical Radicals* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1907), p6.

170. Loc. cit.

171. Ibid, p17.

172. Ibid, pp44-45.

173. Ibid, pp45-46.

174. Ibid, p46.

175. Ibid, p128.

176. Loc. cit.

177. Ibid, p129.

178. Loc. cit.

179. Pringle-Pattison, *Hegelianism and Personality*, p241.

180. Loc. cit.

Martin Heidegger: The Reintroduction of the Question of Being

Martin Heidegger is widely accepted to be one of the most insightful and ground breaking philosophers of recent times, yet he is also one of the most controversial. Thomas Sheehan succinctly summarises that there are 'two facts about… Heidegger [which are]… as incontestable as they are complicated: first, that he remains one of the [twentieth] century's most influential philosophers and, second, that he was a Nazi.'[1] The relationship between these two sides of Heidegger has spawned a vast array of literature, particularly after the publication of Victor Farías' *Heidegger and Nazism* in the late 1980s.[2] The so-called "Heidegger controversy" regarding the philosopher's engagement with National Socialism is of relevance to this study, but ought not to overshadow the discussion of the complex and multi-faceted nature of Heidegger's philosophical thought. So as not to get too swamped in the controversies relating to Heidegger's politics, we will first discuss Heidegger's handling of the question of Being (particularly in *Being and Time*), before turning to Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism and the wider political implications of Heideggerian philosophy. Despite Heidegger's temporary support for National Socialism, it will be argued that this is not the logical conclusion of his philosophy. Instead it will be argued that positive political lessons can be taken from it.

The structure of *Being and Time*.

Being and Time is a work that is famously unfinished. In the work's introduction, Heidegger sets out the two parts of the project: '*Part One*: the Interpretation of Dasein

in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of Being. *Part Two*: basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue.'[3] These two parts were then to be divided into three distinct divisions.[4] What we must now accept is the complete (incomplete) version of *Being and Time* only contains the first two divisions of the first part (lacking the third division on time and Being), and none of the divisions focussing on Kant, Descartes and Aristotle respectively which were to have formed the second part. It is perhaps testament to the work's strengths that a project lacking two-thirds of its projected content could still make such a dramatic philosophical impact. The reason for *Being and Time's* emergence in such an incomplete fashion seems to have been due to the practical rather than the purely philosophical – Heidegger needed to publish a major work in order to be accepted by the Ministry of Culture for promotion to a full professorship at Marburg University.[5] In the preface inserted in the seventh edition of *Being and Time*, Heidegger concludes that the work will never be completed, as 'the second half could no longer be added unless the first were to be presented anew.'[6] We should not take from this the impression that Heidegger had by this point entirely rejected the progress made by *Being and* Time, as he argues 'the road it has taken remains a necessary one, if our Dasein is to be stirred by the question of Being.'[7] Of the two divisions that exist, Heideggerian scholars differ in their evaluations of which of these truly heralds Heidegger's brilliance. For instance, Hubert Dreyfus considers the first division to be 'the most original and important section of the work',[8] whilst he views the second division as 'much less carefully worked out [having]… some errors so serious as to block any consistent reading.'[9] Dreyfus's view is supported by *Being and Time's* hasty publication against Heidegger's

prior intentions. Piotr Hoffman however finds much more of value in what he believes

is the more subjectivist Heidegger of the second division against the first division, the

entirety of which he argues 'must be considered profoundly incomplete, since it has

failed to give us the required insight into both the *totality* and the *authenticity* of

Dasein.'[10] That *Being and Time* can open up such divergent pathways in the dense

forest of philosophy is perhaps the greatest indication of the work's brilliance and

reason for its continuing influence on myriad intellectual fields to this day.

The introduction to *Being and Time.*

We have already briefly touched upon Heidegger's introduction to *Being and Time*

when mentioning the work's intended structure. To leave the matter here would be to

do Heidegger a great disservice. David Farrell Krell likens Heidegger's introduction to

Hegel's celebrated preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* 'which came to serve as an

introduction to Hegel's entire philosophy.'[11] Krell argues that all of Heidegger's

philosophy from *Being and Time* and beyond is to be found along the paths first opened

by *Being and Time's* introduction. The introduction reintroduces the question of Being

into philosophy, or at least the question of the question of Being. Heidegger asserts that

not only are we unable to explain what we mean by the term Being, but we also lack

any realisation or perplexity regarding this inability. What is needed is thus to

'reawaken an understanding of the meaning of the question [of Being].'[12] Western

philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel has trivialised the question of Being,

allowing it to 'subside… as a theme for actual investigation.'[13] This turn away from the

question is excused by Being's universality, indefinability and self-evidence.

Heidegger, unsurprisingly, disagrees with this diagnosis arguing that 'if it is said that 'Being' is the most universal concept, this cannot mean that it is the one which is clearest… It is rather the darkest of all';[14] 'the indefinability of Being does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands we look the question in the face';[15] and 'within the range of basic philosophical concepts… it is a dubious procedure to invoke self-evidence.'[16] Heidegger approaches the question of Being through Dasein – taken literally, "Being-there" – which is the manner of Being of human individuals. Dasein has an awareness of Being which is lacking in other entities. Dasein 'does not just occur among other entities… it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it.'[17] It is the nature of Dasein's very Being that it has an understanding of Being, meaning it 'is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological.'[18] Heidegger does not intend to argue by this that Dasein has an inbuilt perfected philosophical ontology innately present awaiting some sort of Socratic recollection, but rather that Dasein's Being has a self-awareness of its Being, which means it cannot be thought of as being solely ontical.

In approaching the question of Being in general from the specific Being of Dasein, Heidegger warns that any analysis of this entity which is overly hasty due to relying on 'dogmatic constructions',[19] even if these are commonly seen as self-evident, will be inherently flawed. Instead he insists 'we must rather choose such a way of access and such a kind of interpretation that this entity [Dasein] can show itself in itself and for itself.'[20] This is to be achieved by viewing Dasein in its everydayness, for 'in this… there are certain structures… essential ones which, in every kind of Being that factical Dasein may possess, persist as a determinative for the character of its Being.'[21] At this early stage, Heidegger asserts that his study will point to temporality as the

meaning of the Being of Dasein – this will provide a step towards obtaining an answer to the meaning of Being in general by providing a ground for further analysis.[22] Heidegger's introduction sets out 'the task of destroying the history of ontology'[23] – a reference to those dogmatic constructions mentioned before. The philosophical tradition has become so rigid and built up that it has often been seen as 'material for reworking, as it was for Hegel.'[24] Heidegger's task of destruction is one of unconcealment of 'those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being'[25] which have long since been overlooked. The positive nature of this destruction is indicated by Heidegger's tracing the bringing together of the phenomenon of time and an interpretation of Being back from Kant, to Descartes, to Aristotle.[26] Heidegger is not throwing the history of ontology onto the fire, but advocating going back to philosophy's primordial roots to clear away the bad in order to maintain the good.

Heideggerian phenomenology and Husserl.

Heidegger ends the introduction of *Being and Time* by discussing the methodology he will use – namely a form of phenomenology. Edmund Husserl, arguably the lead figure in the foundation of phenomenology, effectively played the role of Heidegger's mentor at the University of Freiburg early in the latter's academic career.[27] The relationship between the two men's phenomenologies is complex and, perhaps unsurprisingly, complicated. Much could (and has been) written on the subject, but for our purposes here, a brief overview must suffice. Carman explains Husserl's 'injunction to philosophers to return "To the things themselves!"… Not physical things or empirical

facts in contrast to ideal types or essences, but any immediately accessible matters susceptible to concrete description, as opposed to hypothesis or explanation.'[28] Passmore suggests Husserl's phenomenology owes an intellectual debt to the tradition of German idealism, arguing it was an attempt to put 'idealism on a scientific basis for the first time.'[29] According to Carman, from idealism as well as from rationalism, Husserl adopted 'a conception of philosophy as rigorous discipline or science.'[30] It was this strict methodological ideal which Heidegger was to blame for distorting 'Husserl's view of the phenomena from the outset, contrary to his own stated aims.'[31] Heidegger's own hermeneutic phenomenology was effectively an attempt to follow Husserl's battle cry towards "the things themselves" without making the same methodological errors. In the introduction Heidegger rejects any method of ontology which 'merely consult[s] those ontologies which have come down to us historically.'[32] He describes his phenomenology as being 'opposed to taking over any conceptions which only seem to have been demonstrated [and]… opposed to those pseudo-questions which parade themselves as 'problems' often for generations at a time.'[33] In keeping with his stress upon the primordial, Heidegger – in a way which will become common throughout his career – approaches the term "phenomenology" through analysing the primordial (i.e. classical Greek) origins of its constituent parts, namely "phenomenon" and "logos".[34] Phenomenon is taken as something encountered as 'showing-itself-in-itself',[35] whilst logos is taken as 'letting-something-be-seen'.[36] Together, Heidegger takes the terms to mean 'to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.'[37] He admits that in this explication of the term "phenomenology", what we have arrived at is the Husserlian call for philosophy to return to the things themselves.[38] The phenomenological method allows those things

which are hidden, have been covered up, or are disguised be encountered as they are in-themselves – Heidegger has in mind particularly the Being of entities.[39] He argues 'phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology… *Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible*.'[40] For Heidegger, ontology and phenomenology are the same, for 'these terms characterise philosophy itself with regard to its subject and its way of treating that object. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which… has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*.'[41]

The entities to be analysed.

At the beginning of the first part of *Being and Time* Heidegger reminds the reader that 'we are ourselves the entities to be analysed.'[42] He takes steps to distance his phenomenological ontological inquiry from the sciences usually related to human existence – namely, biology, psychology and anthropology.[43] Heidegger criticises the 'anthropology of Christianity and the ancient world'[44] for providing an inadequate foundation for any accurate sort of ontology. He highlights two key aspects of this anthropology, the first being that man is taken as being a "rational animal" – something occurring amongst the other things in the world. This fails to account for the Being of Dasein which is, as Heidegger will argue, much more than Being present-at-hand. Secondly, the Christian anthropological tradition has the biblical maxim 'And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness'[45] as its point of departure, which 'in modern times [has tended to have]… been deprived of its theological character.'[46] This

Christian conception of man is clearly more than as a thing which has intelligence, but 'the question of his Being has remained forgotten… this Being is rather conceived as something obvious or 'self-evident' in the sense of the *Being-present-at-hand* of other [God] created Things.'[47] Heidegger finds similar flaws in psychology ('whose anthropological tendencies are today unmistakable'[48]) and biology, which again only deals with the present-at-hand. Heidegger is insistent that despite these criticisms, there are positive aspects to these scientific ventures.

> In suggesting that [they]… all fail to give an unequivocal and ontologically accurate answer to the question about the *kind of Being* which belongs to those entities which we ourselves are, we are not passing judgement on the positive work of these disciplines. We must always bear in mind, however, that these ontological foundations can never be disclosed by subsequent hypotheses derived from empirical material, but that they are always 'there' already… If positive research fails to see these foundations… this by no means proves that they are not problematic in a more radical sense than any thesis of positive science can ever be.[49]

Far from being crudely anti-scientific, Heidegger is merely suggesting that there are aspects of human existence which cannot be gleaned from the solely present-at-hand. Due to these criticisms of the human sciences, Heidegger rejects the idea of using information about primitive human societies as a window to the primordial Being of Dasein. This information comes from 'ethnology [which] operates with definite preliminary conceptions and interpretations of human Dasein, even in first 'receiving'

its material, and in sifting it and working it up.'[50] Instead, Dasein is to be encountered in its everydayness as Being-in-the-world.

Being-in-the-world.

Heidegger here attempts to sketch out a preliminary picture of what he means by "Being-in-the-world". In keeping with his hermeneutic approach, the understanding here gleaned of Being-in-the-world must necessarily be incomplete without being illuminated by the later stages of *Being and Time's* methodological approach. Heidegger explains that Being-in-the-world is 'a *unitary* phenomenon.'[51] Yet whilst this means it 'cannot be broken up into contents which may be pieced together, this does not prevent it from having several constitutive elements in its structure.'[52] Heidegger posits three constitutive elements of Being-in-the world: 'First, the '*in-the-world*'… Second, that *entity* which in every case has Being-in-the-world [and]… Third, *Being-in* as such'.[53] Each of these is examined in detail in the chapters which follow in *Being and Time*. At this preliminary stage Heidegger is keen to insist that his references to Dasein being "in-the-world" have nothing to do with spatiality. Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein does indeed have a spatial element – not to do so would surely have been a fatal blow to the credibility of his philosophy – but maintains that this 'is possible only *on the basis of Being-in-the-world in general*... Being-in is not to be explained ontologically by some ontical characterisation.'[54]

　　Heidegger moves to discuss the first of his constitutive elements of Being-in-the-world, the "in-the-world", under the heading of "the worldhood of the world". He sets out three steps in the analysis of worldhood: '(A) the analysis of environmentality

and worldhood in general; (B) an illustrative contrast between our analysis of worldhood and Descartes' ontology of the 'world'; (C) the aroundness of the environment, and the 'spatiality' of Dasein.'[55] In dealing with the first step, Heidegger explains that 'the Being of those entities which we encounter as closest to us can be exhibited phenomenologically if we take as out clue our everyday Being-in-the-world, which we also call our "*dealings*" *in* the world and *with* entities within-the-world… The kind of dealing which is closest to us is… not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use.'[56] Heidegger calls these entities equipment. He warns against taking "equipment" too literally as a single entity hovering in a void, for 'to the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is.'[57] Equipment which is used by Dasein in its everydayness towards a task – for example, a hammer – which is proximally ready-to-hand is not grasped by Dasein in a theoretical fashion. Heidegger suggests that for a tool (equipment that we use in order to do something) to be ready-at-hand it must 'withdraw in order to be ready-to- hand quite authentically.'[58] Heidegger explains that this is so because 'that with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves [but]… the work – that which is to be produced at the time.'[59] The work or task being completed by Dasein provides the 'referential totality within which the equipment is encountered.'[60] That which is produced by our hypothetical hammering follows the same pattern, with the product being ready-to-hand to complete a task – the hanging up of my coat provides the referential totality within which my newly made coat stand is encountered. Heidegger is careful to differentiate between "present-at-hand" and "ready-to-hand". He explains, 'readiness to hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves'

are defined ontologico-categorically. Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, 'is there' anything ready-to-hand.'[61] Despite this, Heidegger dismisses the notion that we can get nearer to understanding by reducing everything to variations of the present-at-hand any more than we can understand the world by making a list of all the things occurrent within it.

Continuing his perceptive analysis of those entities which are ready-to-hand to Dasein, Heidegger introduces the occasions during which the smoothly flowing process described above does not work out. He suggests that it is possible 'the tool turns out to be damaged, or the material unsuitable. In each of these cases *equipment* is… ready-to-hand. We discover its unusability… not by looking at it and establishing its properties, but rather by the circumspection of the dealings in which we use it.'[62] When equipment which is unusable is conspicuous in this way, its Being does not in some way degrade into the merely present-at-hand, even though its readiness-to-hand in this context has the appearance to this conspicuousness of being unready-to-hand.[63] Unusable equipment is not the only possible barrier to Dasein's concernful dealings – the equipment might be missing altogether, and hence genuinely unready-to-hand. A third problem might be equipment that gets in the way of the task I wish to perform. Even this third case is not just a "thing" which is present-at-hand, but still equipment ready-to-hand albeit 'in the sense of something which one would like to shove out of the way.'[64] Such problems causes there to be 'a break in… referential contexts which circumspection discovers.'[65] Heidegger continues to explain that when an equipment is missing 'our circumspection comes up against emptiness, and now sees for the first time *what* the missing article was ready-to-hand *with*, and *what* it was ready-to-hand *for*. The environment announces itself afresh. What is thus lit up is not itself just one

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thing ready-to-hand among others; still less is it something *present-at-hand* upon which equipment ready-to-hand is somehow founded: it is in the 'there' before anyone has observed or ascertained it.'[66] Heidegger later continues to explain that 'if the world can, in a way, be lit up, it must assuredly be disclosed. And it has already been disclosed beforehand whenever what is ready-to-hand within-the-world is accessible for circumspective concern. The world is therefore something 'wherein' Dasein as an entity already *was*, and if in any manner it explicitly comes away from anything, it can never do more than come back to the world.'[67] To continue this line of inquiry more deeply, Heidegger moves to discuss reference and signs.

Within his initial discussion of the ready-to-hand, Heidegger had already touched upon the referential property of equipment ready-to-hand. Here he discusses equipment which has the towards-which of indicating as a sign. Heidegger rejects the conception of a sign as being one thing which stands for another thing, preferring to understand it as 'an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection so that together with it the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself.'[68] Heidegger gives the examples of a certain wind direction being taken as a sign by a farmer that rain is coming, and tying a knot in a handkerchief as a sign to remind oneself of something to show that differing circumspections of Dasein allow the differing Beings of equipments ready-to-hand be discovered in their Being as a sign. In the first case, 'the circumspection with which one takes account of things in farming'[69] is required to discover the Being as a sign of the wind direction. That the handkerchief knot in the second example can stand as a sign for numerous different things – of my need to go to a shop after work, of a need to telephone a relative, of a need to remember a promise to a loved one to stop smoking, and so on –

and as such, the intelligibility and usefulness of the knot as a sign can diminish.

Heidegger explains that 'not only is it, for the most part, ready-to-hand as a sign only

for the person who 'establishes' it, but it can even become inaccessible to him, so that

another sign is needed if the first is to be used circumspectively at all.'[70] If one has used

the knot to signify numerous differing things in the past, a secondary sign may be

necessary to remind oneself of what the knot is to signify this time around. This

confusion regarding the knot in my handkerchief does not mean for Heidegger that it

has ceased to have the character of a sign, but that 'it acquires the disturbing

obtrusiveness of something most closely ready-to-hand.'[71] Signs, even somewhat

confusingly ambiguous ones, are thus a further way in which the worldhood of the

world is encountered by Dasein.

After continuing the discussion of Dasein's involvement with entities within the

world (the ready-to-hand, the present-at-hand, and so on) and the way in which this

involvement is made possible by Dasein's Being-in-the-world, Heidegger turns to

contrast the differences between his conception of worldhood and Descartes'. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, he finds the latter to be lacking. Descartes' philosophy is accused of

failing to either 'seek the phenomenon of the world at all [or to]… at least define some

entity within-the-world fully enough so that the worldly character of this entity can be

made visible in it.'[72] Heidegger's aim of usurping groundless modern metaphysics is

undoubtedly the motive for this attack on its Cartesian foundations.

Returning to more positive contributions to philosophy, Heidegger turns to the

final part of his elucidation of the worldhood of the world – the spatiality of Dasein.

Heidegger rejects that Dasein can be thought of as having the spatiality of occurring in

some position like something Being-present-at-hand or Being-ready-to-hand. Yet

'Dasein… is 'in' the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity.'[73] Heidegger characterises Dasein's spatiality as consisting of '*de-severance* and *directionality*.'[74] De-severance being 'a circumspective bringing close – bringing something close by, in the sense of procuring it, putting it in readiness, having it to hand.'[75] Bringing close does not mean for Heidegger that Dasein moves something into a spatial position nearer to itself, for it may be what is physically closest (Heidegger gives the examples of spectacles, a telephone receiver and the floor on which we walk) which is the furthest from our circumspective de-severing.[76] Heidegger's explanation of directionality is somewhat brief, being largely made up of a critique of Kant's view regarding the phenomenon of orientation. Kant is taken as wanting 'to show that every orientation requires a 'subjective principle'. Here 'subjective' is meant to signify that this principle is *a priori*.'[77] Heidegger explains that Kant's position is flawed as 'the *a priori* character of directedness with regard to right and left is based upon the 'subjective' *a priori* of Being-in-the-world, which has nothing to do with any determinate character restricted beforehand to a worldless subject.'[78] Dasein is always already Being-in-the-world, as is each and every entity (present-at-hand and ready-to-hand) Dasein encounters. The wordless subject is a meaningless abstraction, and as such any philosophy which has this as a basis is groundless abstraction.

Being-with-Others.

Now Heidegger's philosophy has been grounded in the worldhood of the world and has described much of Dasein's interaction with inanimate entities with the word, the next

step is to introduce the others with whom Dasein dwells within the world. This chapter of *Being and Time* is identified by Dreyfus as being one of the most problematic in that there is a discrepancy between what on the one hand readers such as Sartre have understood by it, and on the other hand what Heidegger actually meant. Dreyfus is blunt in apportioning blame for this divergence, arguing that if 'careful readers like [Heidegger scholar Frederick] Olafson and Sartre have missed Heidegger's point… it is mostly his own fault.'[79] The problem seems to lie in that Heidegger's chapter appears to fall into the transcendental solipsism which was a feature of Husserlian thought. Dreyfus explains that both Husserl and Sartre 'claim that philosophy must start with a separate sphere of ownness, a self contained source of intentionality that first gives meaning to transcendental intersubjectivity and finally to a common world.'[80] Dreyfus maintains that Heidegger has avoided this position, even if it is unclearly explained in *Being and Time*. He explains that the confusion is perhaps caused by an attempt to synthesise the thought of Dilthey and Kierkegaard in this area. 'Heidegger takes up and extends the Diltheyan insight that intelligibility and truth arises only in the context of public, historical practices, but he is also deeply influenced by the Kierkegaardian view that "the truth is never in the crowd." If Heidegger had explicitly distinguished these opposed views and *then* integrated them, this could have been a rich and coherent chapter.'[81] Instead, as we shall see, these strands of thought intertwine in this section of *Being and Time* in a sometimes unseemly mess. However, just because Heidegger's articulation of this point is ungainly this should not lead us to the immediate conclusion that his attempt has been unsuccessful.

Heidegger earlier maintained that Dasein is I myself – it is not an alien object or being that I encounter. That there are others for whom the mode of Being is also Dasein

requires no leap of faith for Heidegger's phenomenological method. Previously he had

mentioned the equipment a craftsman encounters ready-to-hand, for instance a hammer.

In the work directed towards producing something with the equipment, 'those Others

for whom the 'work' is destined are 'encountered too'… Similarly, when equipment is

put to use, we encounter its producer or 'supplier' as one who 'serves' well or badly.'[82]

Heidegger explains that these 'Others who are thus 'encountered' in a ready-to-hand,

environmental context of equipment, are not somehow added on in thought to some

Thing which is proximally just present-at-hand; such 'Things' are encountered from

out of the world in which they are ready-to-hand for Others – a world which is always

mine too in advance.'[83] It is around this point in his discussion that Heidegger rejects

the Husserlian notion that a phenomenological philosophy of existence needs to begin

with an isolated subject. He explains that in speaking of Others, no subject-object

dualism is implied. When Heidegger refers to Others, he insists this does not mean

everybody else who exists outside of the concernful "I", but that 'they are rather those

from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom

one is too.'[84] Dasein is 'Being-there-too with'[85] Others. Heidegger explains that the use

of the word "too" implies that there is 'a sameness of Being as circumspectively

concernful Being-in-the-world'[86] between the Dasein which I am myself, and the

Others whose way of Being is also Dasein which each is themselves. For Dasein,

Being-in-the-world is always a Being-with-Others-in-the-world – the world is always

shared with Others, for 'the world of Dasein is a *with-world*.'[87] As such it would be

nonsense to infer that Dasein exists, then in a first step discovers the world, followed

by a second step in which Others are discovered – Dasein is always already Being-in-

the-world, and always already Being-with-Others-in-the-world. Heidegger rejects that

his conception of Being-with should be interpreted as stating that for Dasein, Others are always proximally 'present-at-hand or perceived.'[88] Even if there is no Other perceived at all, Dasein is still Being-with.

Heidegger describes the Being-towards the Others whom Dasein is Being-with as '*solicitude*'.[89] He differentiates between positive and negative forms of solicitude, turning to the latter first so as to avoid misunderstanding solicitude in an overly narrow sense. Negative solicitude are the forms of Being-with-one-another which are deficient and indifferent, namely 'passing one another by, not "mattering" to one another'.[90] Heidegger suggests that such deficient solicitude could easily be mistaken for 'the mere Being-present-at-hand of several subjects… yet ontologically there is an essential distinction between the 'indifferent' way in which Things at random occur together and the way in which entities who are with one another do not "matter" to one another.'[91] This essential difference is that Dasein's Being is always Being-with – this is not changed in any way if a particular person takes up a stance of indifference towards the Others with whom he is Being-in-the-world.

The positive form of solicitude is split into two possibilities. Firstly, solicitude can 'take away 'care' from the Other and put itself in his position of concern: it can *leap in* for him.'[92] The opposite extreme is for solicitude to '*leap ahead* of [the Other]… not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time.'[93] For Heidegger, the authenticity of the second form of positive solicitude derives from it pertaining 'to the existence of the Other, not to a "*what*" with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it.'[94] Put more plainly, the first form of solicitude addresses the care – perhaps work task needing to be performed – as a

burden for the Other, a burden for which it matters not *who* endures the burden as long as it is endured. The second form recognises that Dasein's way of Being is care (as we shall see later in *Being and Time*), and thus recognises the importance of the Other's care to the Being of the Other. It would be a mistake to interpret Heidegger's point here as being that one should never aid another in the completion of a task – he explains that in such a situation it is possible to 'become *authentically* bound together [in a way which]… makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the Other in his freedom for himself.'[95] Heidegger associates the first form of positive solicitude as being a form of domination, whilst the second is a form of liberation. By taking over the care of the Other, we dominate him and make him dependent upon us – this dilutes his ability to live authentically as Dasein. It does not take too much of a leap from this point to arrive at the kind of criticisms expressed by modern critics of an overbearing welfare state. Heidegger explains that 'everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes.'[96] Different degrees of each are possible, yet he goes no further on this point so as not to deviate too far from the main thrust of his work. Heidegger explains that just as concern with the ready-to-hand is guided by circumspection, positive 'solicitude is guided by *considerateness and forbearance* [whilst negative solicitude is guided by]… *inconsiderateness* or the perfunctoriness for which indifference leads the way.'[97] This leads into Heidegger's contested depiction of the "they".

The "they" is for Heidegger the depersonalised subject (in German, *das Man*). He differentiates this from other possible interpretations, explaining it 'is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all.'[98] Similarly, Heidegger rejects that the "they" is 'a 'universal subject' which a plurality of objects

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have hovering above them.'[99] He explains that 'in utilising public means of transport and in making use of information services like the newspaper, every Other is like the next. This Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the kind of Being of 'the Others', in such a way, indeed, that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the 'they' is unfolded.'[100] Here Heidegger's problem is not with public transport and newspapers as such – he makes similar remarks about taking pleasure, art appreciation and reading literature[101] – but what he calls "publicness". Publicness is a collective term for the Being of the They's tendency towards 'distantiality, averageness and levelling down.'[102] With echoes of Kierkegaard, Heidegger decries the 'averageness with which [the They]… prescribes what can and may be ventured [and]… keeps watch over everything exceptional'.[103] He condemns the covering up of the primordial and the appropriation of all gained through the struggle of great men. This is perhaps the most explicit piece of social criticism to be found in *Being and Time*, pitting Heidegger's conservative elitism against stultifying egalitarianism.

Whilst we shall turn to Heidegger's politics in detail later, at this point it will be useful to further examine the social criticism expressed here. Most importantly, it is necessary to explore whether these social criticisms are connected to Heidegger's understanding of the Being of Dasein, or are instead tagged on with little in the way of a philosophical basis. Heidegger's concept of the inauthentic solicitude which focusses upon the care instead of the individual and their relationship with the care is clearly related to his critique of levelling. In attempting to create a more egalitarian society, the means through which this greater spread of equality is achieved can be overlooked as a

secondary concern. Yet Heidegger would correctly argue that there is a vast difference between authentic and inauthentic solicitude on this point. If the care the person if concerned with is a need for money, inauthentic solicitude would support a hand-out as this would immediately take away the care from the person. Authentic solicitude would instead support assisting the person with their care through, for example, passing on training which might lead to work or offering work in return for the money. Levelling down can be seen as another example of inauthentic solicitude in action. If, for example, some ideas or concepts in society are too complex for a number of persons to grasp, for inauthentic solicitude the aim would be to remove this difficulty from the person, perhaps through a form of "dumbing down" the ideas so that even the least able is able to access them. Authentic solicitude instead would advocate assisting the person to increase their knowledge and understanding in order to achieve their goal of grasping the complex issue. It is clearly easier to bring public discourse down to the lowest level than to attempt to raise each and every person to the level of the exceptional (be this, for example, in philosophy, science, literature or political understanding). As such, it should not be surprising that in the modern world it seems that the utilitarian calculation has been made in favour of the levelled masses against the outstanding exceptions. Yet despite this ease and apparent fairness, levelling is antithetical to authentic Being as understood by Heidegger, and he is therefore philosophically correct to oppose it within the context of *Being and Time*.

<u>Being-in.</u>

Heidegger next moves to discuss "Being-in as such". Already Being-in-the-world has been discussed, but Heidegger now turns to other aspects of Being-in beyond Dasein's knowing the world. Being-in is taken to be 'the Being of the "there"'.[104] The 'there' of Dasein is a reference to its disclosedness, for Heidegger explains that '*Dasein is its disclosedness* [which means]… that the Being which is an issue for this entity in its very Being is to be its 'there''.[105] More plainly, Being-in as such is the Being of the "there" in its everydayness – it is Dasein's disclosedness (Dasein must be disclosed in order to be Dasein) in its everydayness. Heidegger suggests that there are two equiprimordial ways of Being the "there" – 'in *understanding* and *state-of-mind*'.[106] Heidegger will use these phenomena to discuss 'the existential Constitution of the "there" [before turning to]… the everyday Being of the "there", and the falling of Dasein'.[107]

Heidegger explains that "state-of-mind" is the ontological term for what is ontically given the term "mood".[108] Although they may 'deteriorate or change over time… in every case Dasein always have some mood.'[109] Heidegger speaks of Dasein being assailed by moods. He suggests it would be wrong to envisage these as emanating from either outside or inside, but explains that instead a mood 'arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being.'[110] In particular, Heidegger examines fear as a possible state-of-mind, analysing '(1) that in the face of which we fear, (2) fearing, and (3) that about which we fear.'[111] Together these make up the constituent elements of fear as a mode of Dasein's state-of-mind. Heidegger begins by explaining that in line with his theory of Dasein, that in the face of which Dasein fears is encountered within-

the-world. As such, 'the 'fearsome'… may have either readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, or Dasein-with as its kind of Being.'[112] The fearsome's form of involvement within-the-world is detrimentality, the target and source of this detrimentality are both known to Dasein, as is the veracity of the detrimentality of the fearsome. Heidegger describes the fearsome as being outside of the possible striking distance, but at the same time drawing-close – a drawing-close which may result in the fearsome becoming detrimentally involved with Dasein, but may also end with the fearsome passing by with no such occurrence. This unknown element is for Heidegger what makes the fearsome even more feared.[113] He explains that Dasein does not first notice something drawing close and then fear it, but that what is drawing close is discovered in its fearsomeness. Heidegger describes fearing as being 'a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world in a state-of-mind [which]… has already disclosed the world, in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close.'[114] That which Dasein fears about is Dasein itself. Heidegger explains that 'fearing discloses [Dasein]… as endangered and abandoned to itself.'[115] He rejects that fearing about one's house, for example, disproves his understanding, for 'Dasein is in every case concernful Being-alongside',[116] meaning that a detrimental action towards what we are concernfully Being-alongside is detrimental towards Dasein itself. Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein can fear for Others. Yet even this form of 'fearing-about is "being-afraid-for-oneself".'[117] It is a fear that the Other with whom Dasein is Being-with 'might be torn away',[118] with this having a detrimental effect on Dasein itself. As was previously stated, fear is but one of the possible states-of-mind of Dasein, and it may exist in numerous variations of that expounded by Heidegger. Heidegger's point here has not been to provide a definitive illustration of fearing in all its myriad forms, but to

demonstrate how fearing is 'an existential possibility of the essential state-of-mind of Dasein in general'.[119] Dasein's state-of-mind as fearing is just one of many ways of Dasein Being the "there".

Heidegger aims to provide a similar example in his discussion of understanding. As previously mentioned, state-of-mind and understanding are equiprimordial for 'state-of-mind always has its understanding [and]… understanding always has its mood.'[120] This remains true even when suppressed. Heidegger differentiates between understanding as a competence over a task and over 'Being as existing.'[121] The latter is unsurprisingly what Heidegger has in mind, linking this to possibility. He describes Dasein as being 'primarily Being-possible[, meaning it]… is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility.'[122] Here it is possible to see Heidegger's conception of Dasein as time-oriented, though this is not the first such hint in *Being and Time*. Already when discussing the ready-to-hand in relation to tasks we have implicitly accepted that Dasein works towards future goals, yet here the importance of time to Heidegger's thought is becoming more explicit. The possibilities for Dasein are in no way infinite, nor does Heidegger reject the importance of actuality and necessity. Dasein has 'definite possibilities'[123] which it may make the most of, allow to pass by or mistakenly handle – each of these opens up and closes off access to later possibilities. Understanding is Dasein's authentic knowing of what it can and cannot be in its 'thrown possibility'.[124]

Interpretation is for Heidegger how understanding 'becomes itself. [It is]… the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding.'[125] He rejects groundless conceptions of interpretation, reminding the reader that 'whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-

having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never…

presuppositionless'.[126] This is what Heidegger refers to as the "fore-structure" in which

interpretation operates. Here Heidegger adds the what at first appears paradoxical

explanation that due to the necessity of this fore-structure, 'any interpretation which is

to contribute to understanding, must already have understood what is to be

interpreted.'[127] Heidegger suggests it would be amiss to despairingly characterise this

as a vicious circle which needs to be avoided. Instead, 'in the circle is hidden a positive

possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing.'[128] In reawakening awareness of

the primordial basis of the understanding we might take to be common sense, a deeper

and fuller understanding can come about. Assertion is a derivative form of

interpretation – 'a pointing-out which gives something a definite character and which

communicates.'[129] For communication to occur, the existence of Others (as we have

already discussed) is necessary in order for Dasein to have someone with whom to

communicate his assertion. Also necessary for communication of an assertion is

language which Heidegger moves on to discuss in one of its everyday modes as idle

talk.

Idle talk is the first topic in the second part of Heidegger's discussion of Being-

in as such – the everyday Being of the "there" and the falling of Dasein. Heidegger is

keen to distance himself from the negative value judgement normally implied, instead

insisting 'it signifies a positive phenomenon which constitutes the kind of Being of

everyday Dasein's understanding and interpreting.'[130] The importance of Dasein's use

of language in discourse to communicate is that 'its tendency of Being is aimed at

bringing the hearer [the Other or Others] to participate in disclosed Being towards what

is talked about in the discourse.'[131] The reference to "the hearer" should not in any way

lead to the inference that Heidegger fails to recognise or account for other forms of discourse, but instead is his recognition that for the most part Dasein's everyday discourse tends overwhelmingly to be conducted verbally. It is mistaken to assume that what is talked about in the discourse is understood totally, for Heidegger explains it 'is understood only approximately and superficially. We have the same thing in view, because it is in the same averageness that we have a common understanding of what is said.'[132] Despite Heidegger's insistence of avoiding a disparaging initial understanding of the term "idle talk", he goes on to condemn the averageness entailed. Idle talk does not let the entity being talked about 'be appropriated in a primordial manner, [yet]… what is said-in-the-talk… spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character.'[133] Heidegger equates this type of groundless gossiping with its written form, "scribbling". Here Heidegger continues his devastating critique of the levelled masses. Scribbling 'feeds upon superficial reading. The average understanding of the reader will never be able to decide what has been drawn from primordial sources with a struggle, and how much is just gossip. The average understanding, moreover, will not want any distinction, and does not need it, because, of course, it understands everything.'[134] This passage, sarcasm seemingly dripping from the pen, appears almost as a rejoinder against his philosophical critics before they have even emerged. Not all discourse undertaken by Dasein is the groundless covering up (as opposed to disclosing) that is idle talk, but idle talk remains a possibility for Dasein in its Being. When Heidegger complains of the 'obviousness and self-assurance of the average ways in which things have been interpreted',[135] it is not difficult to see parallels with the ways in which the question of Being has been covered up by two millennia of

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philosophy. Dasein has for the most part been uprooted from its primordial ground, and yet in its everydayness tends to be completely unaware that it is floating.[136]

Ambiguity is the result of everybody having something to say about something, for 'it soon becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding, and what is not.'[137] This ambiguity is the nemesis to the early Heidegger's decisionist action-based philosophy. He complains that in the ambiguity of the way things have been publicly interpreted, talking about things ahead of the game and making surmises about them curiously, gets passed off as what is really happening, while taking action and carrying something through gets stamped as something merely subsequent and unimportant.'[138] The curiosity Heidegger is talking about here is not curiosity in general, but the tendency to want to see things for the sake of seeing them, instead of in order to understand.[139] This curiosity, along with ambiguity and idle talk, makes up 'the way in which, in an everyday manner, Dasein is its 'there' – the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world.'[140] In them is revealed Dasein's falling.

"Falling" is another term into which Heidegger is insistent that no necessarily negative undertones should be read. Instead it signifies 'that Dasein is proximally and for the most part *alongside* the 'world' of its concern… mostly [with] the character of Being-lost in the publicness of the "they"'.[141] It is here that Heidegger introduces a more detailed account of inauthentic Being. This is when Dasein 'is completely fascinated with the 'world' and by the Dasein-with of Others in the "they"[, but is] Not-Being-its-self'.[142] In this way Dasein 'has fallen into the *world*, which itself belongs to its Being.'[143] Heidegger describes the ways in which idle talk, ambiguity and curiosity result in this inauthenticity.

Idle talk discloses to Dasein a Being towards its world, towards Others, and towards itself – a Being in which these are understood, but in a mode of groundless floating. Curiosity discloses everything and anything, yet in such a way that Being-in is everywhere and nowhere. Ambiguity hides nothing from Dasein's understanding, but only in order that Being-in-the-world should be suppressed in this uprooted "everywhere and nowhere".[144]

Heidegger sketches out the temptation Dasein has towards falling and how noticing the seemingly authentic lives led by the "they" has a tranquilising effect.[145] Yet what this results in is alienation, self-entanglement and turbulence.[146] If falling is Dasein's Being inauthentic, the final chapter of the first division of *Being and Time* will set out Dasein's possibility for authentic Being – Being as care.

Heidegger cites anxiety as a way in which Dasein is disclosed in its primordial structural whole (for Dasein is always whole). For Heidegger anxiety is both 'anxiety in the face of something [and]… as a state-of-mind… also *anxiety about* something.'[147] That which Dasein in anxiety is anxious in the face of and what Dasein in anxiety is anxious about is the same thing – Being-in-the-world. He explains that 'here the disclosure and the disclosed are existentially selfsame in such a way that in the latter the world has been disclosed as a world, and Being-in has been disclosed as a potentiality-for-Being which is individualised, pure, and thrown; this makes it plain that with the phenomenon of anxiety a distinctive state-of-mind becomes a theme for interpretation.'[148] Heidegger argues that 'the entire phenomenon of anxiety shows Dasein as factically existing Being-in-the-world.'[149] Through anxiety, the totality of Dasein can be grasped. Here anxiety plays a similar role for Heidegger as it did for

Kierkegaard in *The Concept of Anxiety*, in which anxiety as a state-of-mind is educative towards the individual getting a greater understanding of his own existence.[150]

Care.

Dasein's temporal nature is raised again by Heidegger, with its future-orientation being associated with its potentiality-for-Being. Heidegger here equates it with Dasein '*Being-ahead-of-itself*'.[151] Taking this together with what we already know of Dasein's Being-in-the-world and Being-with, Heidegger explains that 'the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-already-in(- the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world).'[152] This long definition is what Heidegger means by the term "care" and when he explains that the meaning of Dasein's Being is care. Heidegger argues that 'care, as a primordial structural totality, lies 'before' every factical 'attitude' and 'situation' of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*; this means that it always lies *in* them.'[153] It 'is essentially something that cannot be torn asunder; so any attempts to trace it back to special acts or drives like willing and wishing or urge and addiction, or to construct it out of these, will be unsuccessful.'[154] Care is ontologically prior to all of these, thus any attempt to ground Dasein's Being in the will, for example, shall necessarily be inauthentic and incomplete.

Heidegger turns to discuss Reality and its relationship to Dasein's Being as care. He begins by handling the question of whether the external world can be proven to exist. In particular, Heidegger challenges Kant's assertion in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that 'idealism, which… pleads our inability to prove any existence except our own by means of immediate experience, is reasonable and is in accordance with a

sound philosophical mode of thought; namely, it allows no decisive judgement before a sufficient proof has been found.'[155] In a note to the preface to the second edition of the work, Kant had decried the 'scandal to philosophy, and to human reason in general, that we should have to accept the existence of things outside us… merely **on trust**, and have no satisfactory proof with which to counter any opponent who chooses to doubt it.'[156] It is undoubtedly this Heidegger has in mind when he counters that 'the 'scandal of philosophy' is not that this proof is yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again.*'[157] Heidegger attributes this to the inherently flawed philosophical starting point of a worldless subject. The tendency has been, as we have seen, to introduce a worldless subject and then to attempt to reconstruct a world around them. As Dasein is always Being-in-the-world, and Being-with-entities-within-the-world, there is no need to construct convoluted theories and arguments to disprove solipsistic worldviews. Heidegger argues that it is 'only as long as Dasein *is* (… only as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible), 'is there' Being.'[158] As such, just as 'Being (not entities) is dependent upon the understanding of Being…, Reality (not the Real) is dependent on care.'[159] By this Heidegger means that one can only conceive of Reality because each of us is Dasein which is, as we have seen, ahead-of-itself-already-in(- the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world).

Truth.

Finally for this chapter, and the first division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger discusses truth. He begins with the ontological foundations of the traditional conception of truth.

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He cites 'three theses which characterise the way in which the essence of truth has been traditionally taken.'[160] These are:

(1) That the 'locus' of truth is assertion (judgement)

(2) That the essence of truth lies in the 'agreement' of the judgement with its object

(3) That Aristotle… not only has assigned truth to the judgement as its primordial locus but has set going the definition of "truth" as 'agreement'.[161]

Heidegger finds all three to be lacking, preferring, perhaps unsurprisingly, a more primordial conception. He explains that '"Being-true" ("truth") means Being-uncovering.'[162] That this is the primordial understanding of truth is supported by Heidegger's citing of Heraclitus' first fragment.[163] As is typical in Heidegger's works[164] his rendering of the fragment differs somewhat from traditional interpretations, yet not so much that the meaning has been changed – rather the importance of certain aspects has been enhanced and highlighted. In Heidegger's rendering, he explains how Heraclitus contrasts those that speak and understand *logos* (discourse) with those who do not understand. For the latter, understanding of *logos* remains hidden, whilst for the former it is unhidden.[165] The truth, which is imparted in the discourse, is thus equated with being unhidden, or uncoveredness. Heidegger thus states that 'the most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering.'[166] All this is intrinsically related to Dasein's Being that we have discussed up to this point. This relationship is summarised by Heidegger as being that 'Dasein is in the truth'.[167]

Heidegger returns to four characteristics of Dasein's Being – that disclosedness (the phenomenon of care), thrownness (that Dasein is thrown into an already existing world alongside other existing entities), projection (Dasein's Being-possibility) and falling (Dasein being lost within its world) all belong to Dasein's state of Being.[168] He describes the way in which Dasein has to wrestle the truth from entities, and to pull them out of their hiddenness, for 'the factical uncoveredness of anything is always, as it were, a kind of *robbery*.'[169] With the need for (metaphorical) violence for Dasein to uncover truth, it is perhaps unsurprising that Heidegger suggests that Dasein is in untruth. To disentangle the possibly paradoxical suggestion that Dasein is in both truth and untruth, Heidegger again turns to pre-Socratic philosophy, this time in the form of Parmenides. In his great poem *On Nature* (of which only fragments survive), Parmenides describes the Goddess of Truth who describes two pathways.[170] Heidegger interprets the two pathways as being 'one of uncovering [and] one of hiding… this signifies nothing else than that Dasein is already both in the truth and in untruth.'[171] Dasein must choose which pathway to go down.

To end the first division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger finally turns to discuss the kind of Being of truth. He asserts that 'Dasein, as constituted by disclosedness, is essentially in the truth.'[172] That is, in disclosedness, Dasein has chosen the Goddess' path of uncovering. Heidegger argues that the existence of Dasein is a prerequisite for there to be truth. He explains that 'before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be after Dasein is no more.'[173] This is because if we accept that truth is uncoveredness, there needs to be a Dasein in order to do the uncovering. Heidegger further explains this point with reference to Newton's laws of motion.

To say that before Newton his laws were neither true nor false, cannot signify that before him there were no such entities as have been uncovered and pointed out by those laws. Through Newton the laws became true; and with them entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein. Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand they already were. Such uncovering is the kind of Being which belongs to 'truth'.[174]

Until a truth has been uncovered by being wrestled from hiddenness, it is neither true nor false. After it has been uncovered – in this case by Newton – the entities become accessible to Dasein now. Dasein is also able to access what entities in the past already were, even though it was hidden at the time. Whilst truth is reliant on the existence of Dasein, Heidegger rejects the Kierkegaardian notion that truth can be understood as being subjective. He explains that 'if one interprets 'subjective' as 'left to the subject's discretion', then [truth is not subjective]… For uncovering… takes asserting out of the province of Dasein's discretion, and brings the uncovering Dasein face to face with the entities themselves.'[175] The entities are what they are, and if Dasein uncovers what the entities themselves are, this is the truth. A subjective interpretation of the entities not grounded in the Being of the entities themselves would not be uncovering, but rather an act of obscurification (willing or otherwise) making the entities *less* not *more* disclosed. Heidegger argues that 'we *must* presuppose truth'[176] because of the kind of Being Dasein has – it is in the truth. He denies that the existence of truth can be proven and that sceptics arguing against this can be disproved, for – as when writing against Kant above – such proof is neither possible nor required.

At the end of the first division of *Being and Time* Heidegger summarises what he claims to have achieved up to this point in the discussion. He explains that 'the answer to the question of the meaning of Being has yet to be given.'[177] What has been achieved is that 'by laying bare the phenomenon of care, we have clarified the state of Being of that entity to whose Being something like an understanding of Being belongs.'[178] As well as clarifying the state of Being of Dasein, Heidegger has also distinguished this 'from other modes of Being (readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, Reality) which characterise entities with a character other than that of Dasein.'[179] The first division of *Being and Time* does not describe the Being of Dasein in its entirety, but it does provide the foundations for Heidegger's later attempts to add further explanations both in the second half of the work and in his subsequent works. It is these further explanations that we shall now discuss before turning to the issue of Heidegger's politics.

Being-towards-death.

The second division of *Being and Time* often finds Heidegger in a much more existential (in the Sartrean sense) mode than in any of his other writings. He begins by characterising Dasein as Being-towards-death. Hoffman explains that it is only in Being-towards-death that 'Dasein's totality can be revealed [for]… as long as a human individual is alive… his identity is not a sealed matter'.[180] Whilst an individual Dasein is alive, its Being is still thrown possibility. The decisions Dasein makes shape the further possibilities it will then have – only in death are there no more possibilities to be enacted. Heidegger explains his position in his lecture course held two years before

the publication of *Being and Time*, later published as *History of the Concept of Time*.

'The utmost possibility of death is the way of Being of Dasein in which it is *purely and simply thrown back upon itself*, so absolutely that even Being-with in its concretion of "to be with others" becomes irrelevant. Of course, even in dying, Dasein is of its essence Being-in-the-world and Being-with with others, but the Being is now transposed directly to the 'I am.' Only in dying can I to some extent say absolutely, 'I am.''[181] Dying is perhaps the only certain possibility in Dasein's existence, and is the possibility to end all possibilities. In death Dasein is whole, yet 'upon reaching its wholeness and precisely in it, it becomes no-longer-Dasein. Its wholeness makes it vanish.'[182] Incompleteness is a fundamental characteristic of Dasein – its Being-possibility. When 'nothing more is outstanding for it as an entity… it is also no longer Dasein.'[183]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger differentiates between authentic and inauthentic Being-towards-death. Inauthentic Being-towards-death is the tendency which, whilst not denying the certainty of the death of Dasein, envisages it in an 'ambiguous manner just in order to weaken that certainty by covering up dying still more and to alleviate its [Dasein's] own thrownness into death.'[184] Just as in its everydayness, Dasein engages in idle talk which covers over what has been gained primordially by struggle. The everyday approach to death covers over the certainty of death – Dasein's own death – with a film of platitudes and generalities, which hides the possibility of authentic Being-towards-death from view. Heidegger explains that in its inauthentic form, Dasein's certainty of death is a certainty which betrays its inauthentic ground in the "they". He argues that 'one says, "Death certainly comes, but not right away." With this 'but…', the "they" denies that death is certain.'[185] This putting aside of the

immediate possibility of death by general opinion 'covers up what is peculiar in death's certainty – *that it is possible at any moment*.'[186] Heidegger associates this tendency with the way in which the "they" covers over Dasein's Being-ahead-of-itself. He condemns the way in which 'the phenomenon of the "not-yet" has been taken over from the "ahead-of-itself"… this "ahead-of-itself" is what first of all makes such a Being-towards-the-end possible.'[187] Authentic Being-towards-death is thus possible if Dasein avoids this 'everyday evasion *in the face of* death'.[188]

Heidegger explains that '*authentic* Being-towards-death can *not evade* its ownmost non-relational possibility, or *cover up* this possibility by thus fleeing from it, or *give a new explanation* for it to accord with the common sense of the "they".'[189] Dasein's Being-towards-death is '*Being towards a possibility*… towards a distinctive possibility of Dasein itself.'[190] Death is a possibility for Dasein that it is Being-towards which is neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand. If Dasein were to set about actualising this possibility concernfully (such as the possibility of producing a bench on which to sit or the possibility of learning to speak German), 'Dasein would deprive itself of the very ground for an existing Being-towards-death.'[191] Camus famously asserted in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* that 'there is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide.'[192] If he had made more careful study of *Being and Time*, he might have found that Heidegger had already here provided philosophical argument for authentic existence against self-destruction. Although he lacked Camus' more accessible philosophical prose, Heidegger had already shown that the individual should choose life over death, even though this death is possible at any moment. The only remaining justification for suicide would be if each and every possibility Dasein is Being-towards were so unbearable that Dasein's only option to

avoid these is the termination of its own Being as Dasein. Unless if the near infinitude

of possibilities had been closed off by a previously enacted possibility, there seem to be

few situations in which such a position could be considered authentic. The problem of

suicide may remain for specific exceptions, but taking into account Heidegger's

understanding of authentic Being, it is difficult to accept that suicide is as general a

philosophical problem as Camus insists. Heidegger summarises the importance of

understanding Dasein's Being-towards-death for an understanding of Dasein's Being:

'anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face

with the possibility of being itself, primarily unsupported by concernful solicitude, but

of being itself, rather, in an impassioned freedom towards death – a freedom which has

been released from the Illusions of the "they", and which is factical, certain of itself,

and anxious.'[193] The anticipation of one's own death (*my own death*, not that of a

hypothetical other) personalises what in everydayness is something thought about in

generalities and is experienced as something happening to others. This anticipation

owes nothing to any other Dasein, but is something which I can only be myself – only I

will die my own death. Authentically Dasein will naturally be anxious about its demise

which may occur at any unexpected moment. Yet authentically Dasein should not

respond to this anxiety by retreating into the "they" and covering over this certainty

with generalities.

Conscience.

The second division of *Being and Time* also contains a discussion by Heidegger of

Dasein's conscience which he characterises as being 'Dasein's everyday interpretation

of itself'.[194] Conscience is a form of discourse in which Dasein's Being is disclosed.[195] The discourse of conscience is a call which appeals 'to the they-self in its Self; as such an appeal it summons the Self to its potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, and thus calls Dasein forth to its possibilities.'[196] Heidegger describes how this is the way in which 'conscience summons Dasein's Self from its lostness in the "they"'.[197] He addresses the possibly problematic nature of the way in which Dasein is here both caller *and* called. He explains that though I myself am the caller, the call is 'something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed… 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will.'[198] Yet it would still be meaningless to assert that the call of conscience emanates from anyone but myself. As Heidegger asserts, 'the call comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me*.'[199] Heidegger rejects explanations founded upon both theological and biological powers (that the call emanates from God or body chemistry) for passing 'over the phenomenal findings too hastily'.[200] Instead he argues that whilst '*that* it is factically, may be obscure and hidden as regards the "*why*" of it… the "*that-it-is*" has *itself* been disclosed to Dasein.'[201] Heidegger's phenomenological method – the focus upon the things themselves – means that whilst there may be no clear reason for there to be a conscience, that we experience being called by conscience means it cannot be dismissed. Despite this, Heidegger is quick to refute 'that the ordinary ontical way of understanding conscience must be recognised as the first court of appeal for an ontological Interpretation.'[202]

Heidegger describes the identification of Dasein's conscience as 'the call [which] either addresses Dasein as 'Guilty!', or, as in the case when the conscience gives warning, refers to a possible 'Guilty!' or affirms… that one is 'conscious of no guilt''.[203] Yet by asserting that the call of conscience is related to guilt, Heidegger

argues that we have not yet fully uncovered what is called in the call of conscience. He explains that Being-guilty can be understood 'in the sense of 'owing', of 'having something due on account' [and also]… of '*being responsible for*' – that is, being the cause or author of something, or even 'being the occasion for something.'[204] Heidegger describes the two senses of guilt – owing something to someone and being responsible for something – as being 'a kind of behaviour which we call '*making oneself responsible*''.[205] As such Heidegger asserts Dasein's responsibility for its own actions (taken in the widest sense), and asserts Dasein's role as the judge of its own actions. He describes that 'wanting to have a conscience is, as an understanding of oneself in one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being, a way in which Dasein has been *disclosed*.'[206] Again it is important to remember here that Heidegger has rejected the possibility that the call of Dasein's conscience is controlled by the will. By stating that Dasein *wants* to have a conscience, Heidegger means that Dasein has a readiness for conscience which itself 'becomes readiness for anxiety.'[207] The cause of anxiety is that in the call of conscience, 'Dasein is brought face to face with its own uncanniness'[208] – its thrownness into the world. Heidegger explains that 'this distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience – *this reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety* – we call "*resoluteness*".'[209] Resoluteness is for Heidegger '*authentic Being-one's-Self*, [which] does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating "I".'[210] Dasein in resoluteness is still Being-in-the-world and Being-with-others, but through the call of conscience (a call in Dasein itself, not an erroneous world-conscience emanating from without) it is disclosed to itself, and as such is able to authentically Be-its-Self.

<u>Time.</u>

In the final chapters of *Being and Time*, Heidegger finally turns to discuss time in detail. Temporality is not something merely bolted on to the end of Heidegger's discussion, but is related to his ongoing discussion of Dasein's potentiality-for-Being-a-whole. Heidegger criticises the inauthentic temporality from which 'the conceptions of 'future', 'past' and 'Present' have first arisen'.[211] Yet he argues that this 'inauthentic temporality has its source in temporality which is primordial and authentic'.[212] This primordial, authentic temporality is what makes the resoluteness ('the mode of authentic care'[213]) discussed above possible. Heidegger reminds us that 'Dasein's totality of Being as care means: ahead-of-itself-already-being-in (a world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)… The primordial unity of the structure of care lies in temporality.'[214] Dasein's Being-ahead-of-itself – Dasein's Being-its-possibility – 'is grounded in the future.'[215] Its already-being-in must mean that 'the character of "having been" is made known.'[216] That Dasein is Being-alongside entities within-the-world only 'becomes possible in making present.'[217] Heidegger argues that this does not mean that care should 'be conceived as an entity which occurs and runs its course 'in time' [as then]… Dasein would become something [merely] *present-at-hand*.'[218] Heidegger aims to discuss 'everydayness and historicality temporally [so as to]… get a steady enough view of primordial time to expose it as the condition which makes the everyday experience of time both possible and necessary.'[219] We shall move to these discussions next.

Heidegger begins his discussion of the temporality of everydayness by turning to the temporality of Dasein's disclosedness, through looking at the temporality of its component parts of understanding, state-of-mind, falling and discourse. He summarises his position on these, arguing that:

Understanding is grounded primarily in the future (whether in anticipation or awaiting). States-of-mind temporalise themselves primarily in having been (whether in repetition or in having forgotten). Falling has its temporal roots primarily in the Present (whether in making-present or in the moment of vision). All the same, understanding is in every case a Present which 'is in the process of having been'. All the same, one's state-of-mind temporalises itself as a future which is 'making present'. And all the same, the Present 'leaps away' from a future that is in the process of having been, or else it is held on to by such a future.[220]

What is growing is a verbal picture of a unity of time, much more complex than the everyday notion of the line of time in which an entity present-at-hand is either in the present, has been in the past or will be in the future. Heidegger uses the term "ecstasis" to refer to 'the phenomena of the future, the character of having been, and the present'.[221] He argues that through looking at the temporality of Dasein's disclosedness 'we can see that in every ecstasis, temporality temporalises itself as a whole; and this means that in the ecstatical unity with which temporality has fully temporalised itself currently, is grounded the totality of the structural whole of existence, facticity, and falling – that is, the unity of the care-structure.'[222] The unity of Dasein's Being as care

is only possible because of ecstatical unity (the interrelated unity of past, present and future), and thus Dasein's Being-a-whole is only possible because of time.

Historicality is a term Heidegger uses to describe Dasein's relationship with history. He describes the connectedness of the whole of Dasein's life as being a movement, or stretching-along. This 'specific movement in which Dasein *is stretched along and stretches itself along*, we call its "historicising".'[223] Heidegger argues that the common understanding of history is flawed. The term history is often used to describe things that are '"no longer present-at-hand", or even "still present-at-hand... but without having any 'effect' on the 'Present'".'[224] The term history is also used to signify 'a 'context' of events and 'effects', which draws on through 'the past', the 'Present', and the 'future''.[225] With this usage 'the past has no special priority'[226] over the development of the thing which is said to have a history. A further common use of the term history is to signify 'the totality of those entities which change 'in time', and indeed the transformations and vicissitudes of men, of human groupings and their 'cultures', as distinguished from Nature, which likewise operates 'in time'.'[227] A final usage is to describe 'whatever has been handed down to us',[228] whether it is something we acknowledge to be so or something which has passed into the realm of common sense. Heidegger addresses these common uses of the word history through a discussion of historical artefacts of the sort typically found in museums. This equipment is something '*not yet* past'[229] as it is still present-at-hand, yet we still deem it to be something historical. Heidegger questions precisely what it is about such equipment that makes us decide that it is now "historical". He rejects that it is because these items have changed over time and have now become weakened. He suggests that what makes us call these things historical is that the '*world* in which they belonged to a

context of equipment and were encountered as ready-to-hand and used by a concernful

Dasein who was-in-the-world'[230] is no longer. That we say the world in which these

items were ready-to-hand is no longer is because 'a world *is* only in the manner of

existing Dasein, which *factically* is as Being-the-world.'[231] Heidegger argues that this

shows that it is 'Dasein that is what is primarily historical',[232] and that other entities are

conceived of as being historical only in relation to this.

Heidegger introduces the concept of "fate" for Dasein's authentic historicality.

He defines fate as being 'that powerless superior power which puts itself in readiness

for adversities – the power of projecting oneself upon one's own Being-guilty, and of

doing so reticently, with readiness for anxiety.'[233] Heidegger argues that 'only if death,

guilt, conscience, freedom, and finitude reside together equiprimordially in the Being

of an entity as they do in care, can that entity exist in the mode of fate… only then can

it be historical in the very depths of its existence.'[234] Dasein that exists in an inauthentic

mode of Being is still historical, yet, Heidegger suggests, it may be 'Dasein's

inauthentic historicality that has… blocked off our access to authentic historicality and

its own peculiar 'connectedness''.[235] Dasein existing authentically in the mode of fate

is able to engage in repetition of possibilities of existence. This does not mean that

Dasein brings 'again something that is 'past', nor does it bind the 'Present' back to that

which has already been 'outstripped'.'[236] Heidegger explains that instead, '*repeating is

handing down explicitly* – that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein

that has-been-there.'[237] It is being aware of previous possibilities encountered by

Dasein, and applying these to itself. It is here that Heidegger suggests that 'Dasein may

choose its hero',[238] a great Dasein that has-been-there, whose possibilities Dasein can

be handed down through authentic historicality – though of course this does not mean

to actualise the same outcome. Heidegger contrasts this with inauthentic historicality which 'in awaiting the next new thing… has already forgotten the old one.'[239] Lost in the they-self, 'Dasein makes present its 'today'… The "they" evades all choice. Blind to possibilities, it cannot repeat what has been'.[240] Unlike inauthentic historicality which 'understands the 'past' in terms of the 'Present'… the temporality of authentic historicality… *deprives* the "today" of its character *as present*… it understands history as the 'recurrence' of what is possible'.[241]

For the final chapter of *Being and Time*, Heidegger discusses the way in which the ordinary conception of time is grounded in Dasein's temporality. He describes how Dasein's 'concern, as concernfully reckoning up, planning, preventing, or taking precautions, always says (whether audibly or not) that something is to happen '*then*', that something else is to be attended to '*beforehand*', that something that has failed or eluded us '*on that former occasion*' is something that we must '*now*' make up for.'[242] Heidegger explains that 'the 'now', the 'then', and 'on the former occasion' [which are implied by this]… have a seemingly obvious relational structure which we call '*datability*'.[243] This dating may refer to an actual date (the eleventh of June 1983, for example), or may be much less specific whilst still being 'dated more or less definitely.'[244] Heidegger asserts that whilst inquiries into the ground of this datability might (like the question of Being) seem unnecessary because it is something everybody already knows, datability 'has 'time' itself in mind, and how this is possible, and what 'time' signifies… are matters of which we have no conception in our natural understanding of the 'now' and so forth.'[245] He argues that in using such significations as "now that…", Dasein is 'the making-present which awaits and retains, interprets *itself*.'[246] Making-present authentically is the bringing of something into vision to be

understood. When Dasein interprets something authentically, 'it expresses *itself* too [because by doing so]… it expresses its *Being alongside* the ready-to-hand'[247] which it is interpreting. Heidegger explains that 'the fact that the structure of datability [is thus]… becomes the most elemental proof that what has thus been interpreted has originated in the temporality which interprets itself.'[248]

Heidegger criticises Hegel's understanding of time, referring to his assertion in *The Philosophy of History* that 'history in general is… the development of Spirit in time'.[249] Heidegger explains that Hegel does not aver 'that the within-time-ness of spirit is a Fact, but [instead he] seeks to understand how it is *possible* for spirit to fall into time'.[250] Heidegger discusses this by turning first to the essence of time in Hegel, followed by the essence of spirit. Heidegger finds the former to be expounded in the second part of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (*Philosophy of Nature*), in which time is discussed alongside space.[251] Heidegger explains that for Hegel 'space 'is' time; that is, time is the 'truth' of space… [The] Being of space unveils itself as time.'[252] Space is taken by Hegel to be 'the abstract multiplicity of the points which are differentiable in it. Space is not interrupted by these; but neither does it arise from them by way of joining together.'[253] Hegel's understanding of time follows in a similar fashion, in line with the common understanding, as a series of connected "nows". As such, 'only the Present is; the "before" and "after" are not',[254] though this does not imply they are entirely unrelated. The relationship between time and spirit in Hegel is shown in the previous quotation regarding the way in which the spirit develops over time. Heidegger argues that 'just as Hegel casts little light on the source of the time which has thus been levelled off [in his theory], he leaves totally unexamined the question of whether the way in which the spirit is essentially

constituted [by him] as the negating of a negation, is possible in any other manner than on the basis of temporality.'[255] Against the Hegelian position Heidegger states that his 'existential analytic of Dasein, on the contrary, starts with the 'concretion' of factically thrown existence itself in order to unveil temporality as that which primordially makes such existence possible. 'Spirit' does not first fall into time, but it *exists* as primordial *temporalising* of temporality.'[256] Without the acceptance that temporality and the existence of Dasein are equiprimordial, philosophies such as those of Hegel will always inherently misconstrue the nature of Dasein's Being.

To end *Being and Time*, Heidegger looks back on what has been achieved thus far, and sets his sights on what might have been achieved if his vision of the completed work had come to fruition. He rejects any methodology which would 'carry on researches into the source and possibility of the 'idea' of Being in general simply by means of the 'abstractions' of formal logic'.[257] Such an approach would lack the secure ground provided by the phenomenological approach. Heidegger suggests that 'something like 'Being' has been disclosed in the understanding-of-Being which belongs to existent Dasein as a way in which it understands.'[258] Yet, the task of asking the question of Being is not near completion. What has been worked out in *Being and Time* is a preliminary, non-conceptual disclosure of Being. Whether philosophy can go further than Heidegger has done in *Being and Time* is for later philosophising to show. Indeed it will be argued later that Heidegger himself was able to advance upon his early success, whilst using the discoveries of *Being and Time* as a foundation, in his later writings. What seems certain is that by returning to questioning the primordial understanding of Dasein's Being, Heidegger shifted the ground of philosophy to an extent arguably not done so since Hegel.

The rectorship and National Socialism.

Nothing has done more to dampen the flame lit by Heidegger in *Being and Time* than the philosopher's involvement with National Socialism. Too often, discussion of Heidegger's politics is used as an effortless way of discrediting his philosophical achievements. It seems as though, as long as one can discredit the man, there is no need to go to the effort to discredit the philosophy. However, particularly in a study in which the relationship between ontology and politics is central, it would be an act of unsubtle self-censorship if no mention were to be made of Heidegger's political actions during the early days of National Socialist rule. Heidegger's official engagement with National Socialism began at the time he was elected as rector of Freiburg University. The previous rector, the Social Democrat von Möllendorff, had been forced to resign after only a few days in the job in the face of overwhelming political pressure.[259] Heidegger was elected nearly unanimously as von Möllendorff's successor. Hugo Ott reports that by the time of Heidegger's ascension to the top of the university, Jewish members of the governing body had already been removed. Of those still legally eligible to vote, a number were absent at the time of Heidegger's election.[260] These cracks in the seemingly unanimous support for Heidegger's rectorship would conspire to ensure that although Heidegger lasted considerably longer in the post than von Möllendorff, his time as rector would still be brief. Shortly after becoming rector, Heidegger joined the NSDAP at a time and in a way designed to achieve maximum publicity value, as discussed with party authorities.[261]

As rector, Heidegger enacted the Führerprinzip (leader principle) at the university before such university reforms were officially introduced by the Party. Safranski describes the way in which as rector, Heidegger 'for months on end failed to call the academic senate and thereby brought about its emasculation. His memorandums and circulars to the faculty bodies and departments were drafted in the shrill tone of command. Heidegger, a man without front-line experience in the World War, was fascinated by the notion of introducing a military spirit to the teaching staff.'[262] He introduced an honour code based on that of the officer corps in order to cleanse the university of those with 'inadequate professional and character qualifications'.[263] The main tenets of his proposed university reform were set out in his rectorship address entitled *The Self-Assertion of the German University* which was delivered upon his inauguration as rector on 27th May 1933. The reforms suggested in the address are much more subtle than the crudeness normally implied by National Socialism, and as such deserve closer attention here.

In *The Self-Assertion of the German University* Heidegger describes the assumption of the rectorship as committing himself 'to leading [the]… university *spiritually.*'[264] He explains that we should 'regard the German university as the advanced school which from science [in the broader German sense] and through science educates and disciplines the leaders and guardians of the fate of the German people.'[265] Heidegger proclaims that 'the will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as the will to the historical, spiritual mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state.'[266] Here Heidegger seems to be equating the state with the essence of the German people – a particularly National Socialist idea. In *Being and Time* Heidegger called for a return to ancient Greek thought. In his rector's

address he makes a similar call, proclaiming that science can exist '*for* us and *through* us… only when we submit to the power of the *beginning* of our spiritual-historical experience'[267] He connects all forms of science to the origins of Greek philosophy, arguing that it is from here that the strength of the essence of science emanates. Heidegger concedes that the transitions of science through the Christian-theological and the modern mathematical-technical interpretations of the world may 'have removed science from its beginnings both temporally and with regard to its objects.'[268] Yet in spite of this, he asserts that 'the beginning still *exists*. It does not lie *behind* us as something long past, but rather stands *before* us. As the greatest moment, the beginning has in advance already passed over all that is to come and thus over us as well.'[269] This point relates back to the instruction in *Being and Time* that authentic Dasein should aim to repeat the possibilities of past heroes. The great heights of Greek thought stand as the great possibilities for our future, if only we are open to repetition. What Heidegger is aiming at is nothing less than that 'science must become the fundamental event of our spiritual existence as a people.'[270] To achieve such an aim, Heidegger employs his now infamous conception of "knowledge service".

Whether Heidegger's attempt to place the activities of the universities on a par with the activities of industry and the military is a cheapening or exaltation of the possibilities of academia is perhaps down to one's own vision of the university's place in wider society. Heidegger reminds his audience of the importance of labour service and military service within the National Socialist state. The former 'obligates one to share cooperatively in the toil, the striving, and the abilities of all classes and members of the nation.'[271] The latter 'demands the preparedness, secured in knowledge and ability and firmed up through discipline, to follow one's duty to the end.'[272] University

students are to have no special dispensation from these duties, and should expect to contribute to the health of the nation just as much as those not fortunate enough to receive a university education. Heidegger introduces knowledge service, describing it as 'the bond… that binds students to the spiritual mission of the German people.'[273] He explains that 'this people [the German people] shapes its fate by placing its history into the openness of the overpowering might of all the world-shaping forces of human existence, and by capturing its spiritual world anew. Thus exposed to the extreme questionableness of its own existence, this people has the will to be a spiritual people. It demands of itself and for itself, and of its leaders and guardians, the harshest clarity that comes from the highest, broadest and richest knowledge.'[274] Nurturing and conveying this highest, broadest and richest knowledge will be the duty of the university community. Heidegger describes 'the three bonds [as being]… equiprimordial aspects of the German essence.'[275] He confirms that in his view the university should hold no privileged position in the reinvigorated National Socialist society. Labour, military and knowledge service 'are equally necessary and of equal rank.'[276]

Heidegger emphasises the struggle to come in the reinvigoration of the German universities. It is difficult not to consider Heidegger's numerous uses of the term struggle (*kampf*) throughout the address as being a nod towards Nazi terminology. Although Heidegger later claimed never to have read through the whole of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*[277], even the most politically unaware German must at this point have been aware of the importance of struggle to National Socialist rhetoric. In the address, whilst discussing the university's teachers' and students' wills towards the essence of science, Heidegger argues that 'both wills must prepare themselves for mutual struggle. All

capacities of will and thought, all strengths of the heart, and all capabilities of the body

must be developed *through* struggle, must be intensified *in* struggle, and must remain

preserved *as* struggle.'[278] Yet in amongst this politically appropriate call to struggle,

Heidegger makes a call towards a level of freedom antithetical to traditional National

Socialist doctrine as it was to develop. He asserts that 'all leadership must allow its

following to have its own strength. All following carries resistance within it. This

essential opposition between leading and following must neither be covered over nor,

indeed, be obliterated altogether. Struggle alone will keep this opposition open and

implant within the entire body of teachers and students that fundamental mood out of

which self-limiting self-assertion will empower resolute self-reflection to true self-

governance.'[279] Although Heidegger is explicitly referring to the relationship between

university teacher and university student, it does not take any sort of leap to extend his

argument to cover the relationship between party leadership and party followers.

Heidegger later claimed that his disillusionment in the NSDAP had come about after

the Röhm putsch.[280] Heidegger's distaste towards the party leadership's ruthless

obliteration of the internal dissention of the SA is completely in line with his belief in

the necessity of opposition between followers and the followed.

Heidegger's time as rector of Freiburg University was to last for less than a

year. During this time the führer-rector seems to have thrown himself into his role with

gusto. In the summer and autumn of 1933, Heidegger presided over a series of

academic camps – quite how many is uncertain. One of the camps in Todtnauberg was

described by Heidegger in a posthumously released piece. In his description, Heidegger

aims to show that factional clashes at the camp were caused by his desire to swim

against the official party structure.[281] Despite Heidegger's retrospective attempts to

paint himself as a rebel against the National Socialist establishment, documents

unearthed by various biographers have demonstrated that he was more than willing to

use the party structure in an attempt to destroy other academics' careers if he felt they

were politically unsuitable. Safranski describes the way in which Heidegger denounced

Eduard Baumgarten whom he felt was only superficially loyal to National Socialism

for careerist reasons. In a letter Heidegger argues that:

> By family and spiritual attitudes, Dr. Baumgarten comes from that liberal-
>
> democratic circle of intellectuals gathered around Max Weber [who was
>
> Baumgarten's uncle]. During his time here [in Freiburg] he was everything but a
>
> National Socialist… After disappointing me, he became closely tied to the Jew
>
> Fränkel who had been active at Göttingen and was later expelled…. I deem it
>
> impossible to bring Baumgarten into the SA as well as to bring him into the
>
> teaching body. Baumgarten is a gifted speaker. In his philosophy, however, I think
>
> he is pompous and without solid and true knowledge.[282]

Safranski explains that even the recipient of this denunciation regarded Heidegger's

intervention to be '"charged with hate" and… "useless"'.[283] Heidegger made similar

moves against the later Nobel Prize winning chemist Hermann Staudinger for his

pacifism during the First World War. This attempt was just as successful at that against

Baumgarten.[284] In 1935, just over a year after resigning the rectorship, Heidegger was

to place it alongside his struggle with Catholicism as 'the two great thorns in my

flesh'.[285] Heidegger's shame even then at his failure to enact his grand vision to

reinvigorate the university perhaps, at least in part, explains Heidegger's withdrawal

from frontline politics (he himself would of course point towards his growing disillusionment in the Party, as opposed to disillusionment in his own abilities). Despite this withdrawal, Heidegger was to remain a card carrying member of the NSDAP until the end of the war. This is not to suggest Heidegger remained totally in favour with party authorities – he later claimed to have been put under constant surveillance.[286]

We have already seen that in his letter denouncing Baumgarten that Heidegger was willing to play the "Jewish card" in order to blacken the name of others. Yet this does not in any way definitively prove whether Heidegger was himself anti-Semitic, or just willing to play to others' anti-Semitism in order to get his own way. There have been reams of studies dedicated to this question – this is not the place to add much more to this. It does seem that if Heidegger was at all anti-Semitic, it was more likely to be for cultural chauvinistic reasons, than crude racial biologism. His close relationships with Jewish students and colleagues such as Hannah Arendt suggest that Heidegger did not harbour an irrational hatred and distrust of all Jews. The breakdown in the relationship between Heidegger and his philosophical mentor Edmund Husserl is often cited as an example of Heidegger's anti-Semitism, yet this seems to be clouded in much rumour and supposition. One particularly scurrilous rumour which has been repeated as fact is that as rector, Heidegger banned Husserl from using the university's library. Hugo Ott confirms that, despite repetition in scholarly publications, 'Heidegger did not issue a ban of any kind on the use of the university library or the departmental library. This oft-repeated charge is without foundation'.[287] On the philosophical level, it is clear that Heidegger believed that even as early as *Being and Time* that he was writing against Husserl's brand of phenomenology – he confirmed this in a letter to Karl Jaspers.[288] Yet it is difficult to argue against the position that Heidegger's

philosophical position owed more to Husserl than he was willing to acknowledge as he was trying to escape from his mentor's shadow.[289] On a human level it is difficult to offer any sort of justification for Heidegger's behaviour. Relations between the two philosophers were broken off shortly after Heidegger had been appointed to Husserl's philosophical seat at Freiburg (on Husserl's retirement) in 1928. Husserl had actively supported Heidegger's appointment – the cooling of relations within the next few months that followed seems to have deeply troubled Husserl.[290] By the time of Husserl's death in 1938, Heidegger did not attend the funeral. Ott reports that only 'a pathetically small number of Faculty members [did so, demonstrating]… how very few dared to show their last respects to a man who had been outlawed by Hitler's Germany.'[291] In the interview he gave to *Der Spiegel* in 1966 to be published posthumously, Heidegger explains that 'In May 1933 [the start of the rectorship], my wife wrote a letter to Mrs. Husserl in both our names, expressing our "unchanging gratitude"… it is a human failure of mine not to have expressed my gratitude once again at Husserl's sickbed and death.'[292] He also claims to have expressed this later regret in a letter to Husserl's widow. Even during the darkest days of National Socialism, when Heidegger was forced to have the dedication to Husserl 'in friendship and admiration'[293] removed from the front of *Being and Time*, he ensured the dedication remained as a more subtle footnote.[294] Would Heidegger have gone to this effort to state his gratitude to a Jew – a Jew he hardly now spoke to – at a time where all positive references to Jewish writers were being purged if he had been an all-out anti-Semite? Heidegger actions can clearly be interpreted as being rather thoughtless towards his great benefactor Husserl, but it does seem that this is more due to one

philosopher trying to stake out an individual position away from another, rather than evidence of racial prejudice.

Introduction to Metaphysics and the Heidegger controversy.

The conflicted relationship of Heidegger and National Socialism is perhaps best demonstrated in two works based on lectures delivered during the National Socialist period, but only published later: *Introduction to Metaphysics* and the four-volume *Nietzsche.* In the preface to the seventh edition of *Being and Time* where Heidegger concedes that the work will never receive its concluding sections, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (which was being published at the same time as this edition) is cited as offering an elucidation of the question of Being.[295] The lectures delivered in 1935 that make up *Introduction to Metaphysics* were to reignite the controversy surrounding Heidegger and Nazism when they were published in 1953. The focus of this storm of controversy was a reference in the text to 'the inner truth and greatness'[296] of National Socialism. A young Jürgen Habermas – until then an ardent Heideggerian – wrote a review essay attacking the way in which he saw Heidegger bringing the question of Being together with the success of the National Socialist revolution. As this had not been expunged from the 1953 publication, he argues that 'it may be supposed that they reproduce unchanged Heidegger's view today.'[297] The full quotation in the 1953 publication is in the context of an attack by Heidegger on the Kantian tendency in philosophy to surmount Being with "the ought". Instead of philosophy studying Being as it is, it instead focuses on how beings ought to be. Values are introduced as 'the ground of the ought. But because values stand opposed to the Being of beings, in the

sense of facts, they themselves cannot *be*. So instead one says that they are valid.'[298]

Heidegger describes the way in which 'in order to prop up… the ought which has been

raised to the level of values, one attributes a Being to values themselves… With the

Being of values, the maximum in confusion and deracination has been reached.'[299] He

suggests that because of an overuse of the term "values", this was then replaced with

"totalities". After suggesting that the number of works expounding such an approach

has increased massively of late, Heidegger then makes the infamous remark:

> All this calls itself philosophy. In particular what is peddled about nowadays as the
>
> philosophy of National Socialism, but which has not the least to do with the inner
>
> truth and greatness of this movement (namely, the encounter between global
>
> technology and modern humanity), is fishing in these troubled waters of "values"
>
> and "totalities".[300]

The section in parentheses makes up what is perhaps the most contested phrase in the

whole of Heidegger's works. Heidegger insisted that the reference to global technology

was present in his manuscript from the beginning, later explaining 'the reason that I did

not read this passage aloud was that I was convinced of my audience's correct

understanding. The idiots, spies, and snoopers [party observers at his lectures]

understood it differently—but they wanted to.'[301] Despite Heidegger's protestations,

this is now generally accepted to be untrue. Not only is it almost certain that the

parenthetical addition was added much later than 1935, but the original lecture when

delivered used the phrase "National Socialism" instead of the vaguer "this

movement".[302] Richard Wolin explains that around the time of Habermas' article,

Heidegger confirmed the view expressed by Christian Lewalter that the use of the word "greatness" should not be understood as containing a positive value judgement. That instead 'the Nazi movement is a symptom for the tragic collision of man and technology, as such a symptom it has its 'greatness' because it affects the entirety of the West and threatens to pull it into destruction.'[303]

Whilst it may be almost certain that Heidegger added the remark about technology discussed above (that the original manuscript page is missing adds to the mystery), this is not the only reference to technology to be found in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Earlier in the work Heidegger paints the picture of Europe besieged. 'This Europe, in its unholy blindness always on the point of cutting its own throat, lies today in the great pincers between Russia on the one side and America on the other. Russia and America, seen metaphysically, are both the same: the same hopeless frenzy of unchained technology and of the rootless organisation of the average man.'[304] Here Heidegger associates the groundlessness of modern man with the unquestioning faith in technological progress:

When the farthest corner of the globe has been conquered technologically and can be exploited economically; when any incident you like, in any place you like, at any time you like, becomes accessible as fast as you like;… when time is nothing but speed, instantaneity, and simultaneity; and time as history has vanished from all Dasein of all peoples; when a boxer counts as the great man of the people; when the tallies of millions at mass meetings are a triumph; then, yes then, there still looms like a spectre overall this uproar the question: what for? – where to? – and what then?[305]

Whether intentionally or not, much of this could very easily be construed as a criticism of National Socialist Germany, as well as the rest of the West. Heidegger denies that his worldview should be thought of as a form of cultural pessimism, 'for the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the reduction of human beings to a mass, the hatred and mistrust of everything creative and free has already reached such proportions throughout the whole earth that such childish categories as pessimism and optimism have long become laughable.'[306] If Heidegger's 1950s interpretation of *Introduction to Metaphysics* adds meanings to the lectures he had never intended at the time as his critics allege, then it is passages like this that suggest this interpretation is still a credible one. It is difficult to read Heidegger's attack on the exultation of athleticism over intellectualism, and the cult of the mass meeting (surely an example of Dasein being lost in the they-self) without seeing some sort of criticism of the way National Socialism had veered from what Heidegger seems to have hoped it could be.

The Question Concerning Technology.

Heidegger's concern about the unquestioning everyday view of technology is a theme which became more prominent in his later writings. The essay *The Question Concerning Technology* questions the essence of technology. What follows is not an immediate rejection of all but the most basic technology, such as is found in the writings of Theodore Kaczynski[307] and the anarcho-primitivists,[308] but something more nuanced. Heidegger questions the common assumption that the essence of technology

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is something technological. Because of this misunderstanding, he suggests we 'remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it.'[309] Heidegger suggests that the everyday answers to the question of what technology is asserts that it is 'a means to an end [and]… a human activity… [These can] be called the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology.'[310] Heidegger does not deny that there is truth to these definitions, but argues that there is more to the essence of technology than just this. All technology, he suggests, 'is a way of revealing.'[311] Modern technology is a way of revealing too, but this revealing 'is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such.'[312] He contrasts the way in which a windmill's motion leaves the wind's blowing as it is with the way in which mining a piece of land and a hydroelectric plant on the Rhine affect these natural phenomena.[313] We should leave aside here the fact that the wind *is* affected (albeit only slightly) by the imposition of the windmill, and also the somewhat scientifically awkward notion of "unlocking energy" from natural sources. Heidegger's main point seems to be against the assumption in modern technological discourse that everything is a potential resource to be used up.

Heidegger warns that 'the essence of modern technology lies in enframing'.[314] Enframing (*Ge-stell*) is the term Heidegger uses to describe modern technology's tendency towards encompassing all beings as resources towards technological ends. Enframing endangers 'man in his relationship to himself and everything that is [and]… banishes man into the kind of revealing that is an ordering.'[315] This prevents Dasein from the revealing necessary for authentic Being. Enframing is dangerous to Dasein, yet Heidegger suggests that all is not hopeless. He quotes Hölderlin's assertion from

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the hymn *Patmos* that 'where danger threatens, that which saves from it also grows'.[316] In the mysterious essence of technology lies Dasein's possible salvation from the danger of enframing. Enframing itself 'lets man endure – as yet inexperienced, but perhaps more experienced in the future – that he may be the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the essence of truth.'[317] Heidegger argues that 'human activity [and]… achievement alone can never banish'[318] the danger of enframing. This can only be achieved by human reflection. Heidegger suggests that 'because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection on technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it.'[319] Art – painting, poetry, music, and so on – is to be the vehicle for this questioning. This is not to say Heidegger viewed the essence of art to be any less mysterious than that of technology (he discusses the essence of art in *The Origin of the Work of Art*[320]).

Two controversial later remarks in philosophical context.

Heidegger's concerns about the modern technological ordering of people in *Introduction to Metaphysics* may be less elaborate than the discussion in *The Question Concerning Technology*, but these concerns are still present. Heidegger has often been reproved for his lack of comment about the holocaust after the war.[321] In a lecture in 1949, Heidegger remarked that:

Agriculture is now a motorised food industry, in essence the same as the manufacture of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps, the same

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as the starvation and the blockade of the countryside, the same as the production of hydrogen bombs.[322]

When this statement was made public it, perhaps unsurprisingly, was considered rather controversial.[323] Yet if read with an understanding of Heidegger's conception of enframing (the lectures which later were reworked into *The Question Concerning Technology* were first delivered in 1949), the remarks seem less flippant than they first appear. Heidegger seems to be suggesting that all of the phenomena listed are the effects of technology's enframing – all involve a conception of beings as nothing more than resources to be ordered, used and/or destroyed. It is possible that Heidegger considered the condemnation of the Nazi death camps to be so inherent in his philosophy as to not need stating. In a reply to questioning by Herbert Marcuse over why after 1945 he did not apologise for his conduct in supporting the National Socialists (at least at first), Heidegger argues that 'a confession after 1945 was impossible for me, because the Nazi partisans demonstrated their change of heart in a disgusting manner, and I have nothing in common with them.'[324] Heidegger seems to be suggesting that words are too easy to have any meaning on such a grave matter.

Similar controversy to the agricultural analogy surrounds remarks made in another 1949 lecture which although lengthy, are worth quoting in full. Directly referring to the fate of those in the concentration camps, Heidegger questions:

Hundreds of thousands die *en masse*. Do they die? They perish. They are put down. Do they die? They become supply pieces for stock in the fabrication of corpses. Do they die? They are liquidated unnoticed in death camps. And also, without such –

millions in China sunken in poverty perish from hunger. But to die means to carry

out death in its essence. To be able to die means to be able to carry out this

resolution. We can only do this if our essence likes the essence of death. But in the

middle of innumerable deaths the essence of death remains unrecognisable. Death

is neither empty nothingness, nor just the passage from one state to another. *Death*

pertains to the Dasein of the man who appears out of the essence of Being. Thus it

shelters the essence of Being. Death is the loftiest shelter of the truth of Being, the

shelter which shelters within itself the hidden character of the essence of Being and

draws together the saving of its essence. This is why man can die if and only if

Being itself appropriates the essence of man in to the essence of Being on the basis

of the truth of its essence. *Death is the shelter of Being in the poem of the world.* To

be able toward death in its essence means to be able to die. Only those who can die

are mortals in the apposite sense of the word.[325]

Critics have taken this somewhat dense and cryptic explanation as clear example of

Heidegger's sheer inhumanity towards the victims of the holocaust even after the war

and the National Socialist reign had ended. Foremost amongst these critics recently has

been Emmanuel Faye, in whose *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into*

Philosophy it is claimed that 'this text surpasses anything the National Socialists could

assert… *According to Heidegger, no one died in a death camp, because none of those*

who were exterminated there bore within their essence the possibility of death.'[326] He

accuses Heidegger of not just 'revisionism but… total negationism… It is impossible

to go further in the negation of the human being than Heidegger does.'[327] According to

Faye, Heidegger has denied the very humanness of the concentration camp victims. Yet

an alternate interpretation remains, even if it is refused by Faye himself,[328] namely that the victims of the holocaust were denied an authentic death by the situation in which they were placed. They were not only denied the status of being a citizen, their very Being itself as Dasein was denied.

A similar point to this interpretation of Heidegger is made in a much clearer and less cryptic way by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* She explains:

Murder is only a limited evil. The murderer who kills a man – a man who has to die anyway – still moves within the realm of life and death familiar to us… The murderer leaves a corpse behind and does not pretend that his victim has never existed; if he wipes out any traces, they are those of his own identity, and not the memory and grief of the persons who loved his victim; he destroys a life, but he does not destroy the fact of existence itself… The very horror of the concentration and extermination camps lies in the fact the inmates, even if they happen to keep alive, are more effectively cut off from the wold of the living than if they had died… Here murder is as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat… it is as if there were a possibility to give permanence to the process of dying itself and to enforce the condition in which both death and life are obstructed equally effectively.[329]

It does seem that this was the meaning Heidegger intended to impart in the contested remarks. That, as Arendt argues, 'there are no parallels to the life in the concentration camps. Its horror can never be full embraced by the imagination for the very reason that it stands outside of life and death.'[330] The victims of the holocaust could not die, in Heidegger's turn of phrase, because the extermination camps themselves had already

removed the very possibility of Being. We should not follow Faye's conclusion that this is a judgement on those innumerable victims, but rather it is a judgment on the technological enframing which lies behind the justification of the camps, and the impersonal murder which followed.

Politics in *Nietzsche* and *Contributions to Philosophy.*

After the war, Heidegger always pointed to his lectures on Nietzsche delivered between 1936 and 1940 as proof of his protest from the lectern. When speaking to *Der Spiegel* he asserted that 'anyone with ears to hear heard in these lectures a confrontation with National Socialism.'[331] Farías disagrees that Heidegger's opposition was as clear as he claimed, arguing that 'the "distancing" of Heidegger from National Socialism ended in a "spiritual" restoration of the very fundamentals of the National Socialist worldview.'[332] David Farrell Krell, in his introduction to the English translation of *Nietzsche* identifies four areas in which 'Heidegger's involvement in or resistance to National Socialism comes to the fore… Heidegger's *nationalism*, his… *decisionism*, his protracted and difficult discussion of *nihilism*, and his ambivalent position vis-à-vis Nietzsche's alleged *biologism*.'[333] We shall address each of these in turn to try discover more about Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism at this time.

Heidegger's nationalism is more complex than crude generalisation might depict. Krell explains that it is 'a nationalism of high cultural expectations and intellectual demands, shaped by Hölderlin's and Nietzsche's challenges to the German people.'[334] Apart from the occasional timely disparaging reference to Germany's war enemies (Heidegger criticises Britain's 1940 bombing of the French fleet at Oran[335]),

Krell explains that for the most part Heidegger's nationalist flourishes in *Nietzsche* are rather subtle. Equally subtle is the nationalism inherent in Heidegger's criticising 'Nietzsche by suggesting that his primary motivation in metaphysical matters was Latin, Roman, or Italianate, rather than pristinely Greek [and]… more worryingly [in]… Heidegger's suppression of Nietzsche's acerbic anti-Germanism and his positive pan-Europeanism.'[336] Elsewhere in Heidegger's works, his German nationalism is quite explicit. In particular, throughout his philosophical career, Heidegger emphasised the importance of the German language. In his interview with *Der Spiegel* Heidegger agrees that the Germans have a special task in thought, a task for which they are qualified because of the German language. He explains that he 'has in mind the special inner relationship of the German language with that of the Greeks and their thought.'[337] He compares this with the weakness of the French language, suggesting that from his experiences and discussions with French academics, 'when they begin to think, they speak German, assuring that they could not get by with their own language.'[338] John Macquarrie, one of the English translators of *Being and Time* explains that when he and Edward Robinson were working on the translation, they 'were given the impression by the German publishers that Heidegger did not care much whether [*Being and Time*]… got translated into English or not… [Yet] as time went on, we gathered Heidegger was becoming more interested in the translation.'[339] In a letter Macquarrie later received from Heidegger, he expresses his pleasure at the fact *Being and Time* has been so competently translated despite the language difficulties involved, acknowledging the need for such a translation.'[340] This all suggests that despite the hallowed place the German language held for Heidegger, his opinion was nothing of the sort of "German or nothing". He would undoubtedly have been aware of the hypocrisy of such a stance

from a philosopher who argued that Classical Greek was the language of thinking, yet wrote in German (surely a second best, even accepting the two languages' close affinity). Heidegger is certainly a German Nationalist, but nothing in his work or behaviour suggests that this nationalism is in anyway dangerous or harbours any wishes to enslave or eradicate any other nationality (or nationalism).

Decisionism is a term perhaps most closely associated with Heidegger's academic contemporary Carl Schmidt. The political philosopher was another of the major academic figures to join the NSDAP, but unlike Heidegger supported the Röhm-putsch.[341] In his *Political Theology*, Schmitt asserts that 'sovereign is he who decides on the exception.'[342] Schmitt argues that no matter how intricate a legal framework may be, there will always be exceptional cases for which there is no clear cut response dictated by the legal code. The sovereign is the one willing and able to make a decisive decision on such questions. Heidegger's decisionism stretches beyond the purely legalistic. Krell highlights the intimate connection between decision and thinking in Heidegger's thought.[343] In *Nietzsche*, Heidegger asserts that 'in a time of decline, a time when all is counterfeit and pointless activity, *thinking in the grand style* is genuine *action*, indeed, action in its most powerful – though most *silent* – form. Here the actual distinction between "mere theory" and useful "praxis" makes no sense.'[344] This position seems far from the National Socialist preference for praxis over thought.

Heidegger's discussion of nihilism makes up the whole of his fourth volume of lectures on Nietzsche. As such, like Krell, it would impossible to claim to do justice to the complexities of Heidegger's position in such brief discussion. Krell explains that 'Heidegger is concerned to show that all the sundry diagnoses and proffered therapies of nihilism are bound to fail [and may even]… aggravate our situation by dangling

hopes of facile solutions before our eyes.'[345] He describes Heidegger's diagnosis that 'nihilism results from our persistent failure to *think the nothing*, to confront in our thought the power of the *nihil* in human existence, which is mortal existence, and in history, which is the history of the oblivion *of* Being and the abandonment *by* Being.'[346] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger characterised authentic Dasein's Being-towards-death, that is Being-towards the annihilation of Dasein. It is perhaps such "dangerous" views that led to Ernst Krieck, the favoured Nazi pedagogue, to accuse Heidegger in 1934 of being a nihilist. Krieck, who was one of the lead academics in National Socialist Germany, argued that 'the fundamental ideological tone of Heidegger's teaching is determined by the concept of concern and anxiety, both of which aim at nothingness. The meaning of his philosophy is downright atheism and metaphysical nihilism of the kind that used to be represented in our country by Jewish literati – in other worlds, an enzyme of decomposition and dissolution for the German people.'[347] Krieck either could not see, or chose not to see, that instead of fermenting nihilism, Heidegger's philosophy was a challenge to the nihilism inherent throughout the history of Western metaphysics. Krieck's interjection certainly suggests that Heidegger's views regarding nihilism were entirely different from the "official" National Socialist view.

Krell reports that in his lectures, Heidegger on occasion treats the issue of biologism with sarcasm, but that this does not fully explain Heidegger's relationship with this issue.[348] Around 1934/1935, he mocked a writer who suggested 'that poetry "is a biologically necessary function of the Volk" [suggesting that]… Digestion too is an essential biological function of a people – especially a healthy people.'[349] Yet in his lectures on Nietzsche, Heidegger's position at times seems to be more ambiguous. Krell argues that when Heidegger caricatures Nietzsche's 'overman as a product of

technological mechanisation and machination, Heidegger avoids levelling the charge of biologism'.[350] Yet with or without the charge of biologism, Heidegger's concerns regarding enframing from his later works are surely here in early form in his discussion of the 'total "mechanisation" of things and the breeding of human beings.'[351]

Krell cites Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, which was written around the same time as the Nietzsche lectures, but was only posthumously published in 1989, as a work in which 'Heidegger's nationalism and decisionism remain profoundly disconcerting.'[352] As Krell accepts, the Heidegger found in this work which was not monitored by party officials (unlike his lectures at the time) takes a more robust position against the biologism central to National Socialist doctrine. One example of this is his use of biologism as an example of the 'renewed variations of "metaphysics" which become increasingly more crude, more without ground and aim'.[353] Elsewhere in the work, Heidegger disparagingly questions the pseudo-scientific biological and ethnological approaches to race.[354] Yet despite this, *Contributions to Philosophy* certainly does not mark any sort of "road to Damascus" conversion to the political left. Heidegger's references to liberalism throughout are disparaging.[355] Unsurprisingly given Heidegger's ardent anti-communism, Bolshevism is similarly vilified throughout. For instance, at one point he refers to Bolshevism as being a barely disguised form of 'crude nihilism'.[356] In a section appearing in parentheses, Heidegger addresses the oft-cited connection between Bolshevism and Judaism.

Bolshevism is originally Western, a European possibility: the emergence of the masses, ethnicity, the dying off of Christianity; but insofar as the dominance of

reason, the equalisation of people is merely the consequence of Christianity and Christianity is fundamentally of Jewish origins… Bolshevism is actually Jewish; but then Christianity is fundamentally Bolshevist! And what decisions become necessary from this point on?[357]

The Bolshevik revolution seemed to point to many rabid anti-Semites as proof that the plan to gain 'sovereignty over all the world'[358] in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was being enacted. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had warned of the dangers of Bolshevism to Germany, arguing that 'in Russian Bolshevism we must see the attempt undertaken by the Jews in the twentieth century to achieve world domination.'[359] Whilst seeming to agree about the threat to humanity posed by Bolshevism, Heidegger seems to be questioning the simplistic parallels between Bolshevism and Judaism. If the poison of Bolshevism comes from its Jewish roots, then surely Christianity must similarly be poisoned. Yet despite the difficult relations between the NSDAP and the Christian Churches, and the attempts to purge Christian influence from Germany, there had been no step to purge Germany and German life of *Christians* themselves. This must surely be the "necessary decisions" to which Heidegger is referring to. Even Heidegger at his most unchristian (his religiousness seems to have ebbed and flowed at various points throughout his life) would surely never have supported the deportation of Christians from Germany. For Heidegger Judaism, like Christianity, like liberalism, like most of the history of Western philosophy, has been a pernicious influence on our understanding of our own Being, leading to it being more and more concealed. The task for each Dasein to overcome this is to regain our primordial understanding of our own

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Being, not ethnic cleansing. This seems implicit in Heidegger's works, and it is a deep pity that he never said so explicitly.

Conclusion.

It is common when discussing Heideggerian politics to bring up the tale of Thales of Miletus who was so busy looking at the stars, he fell into a well.[360] In his poetic work *The Thinker as Poet* from 1947, Heidegger includes the line 'he who thinks greatly must err greatly.'[361] He expresses similar thoughts in a letter, stating that 'greater men have made such mistakes – Hegel saw Napoleon as the World Spirit, and Hölderlin saw him as the prince of the feast to which the gods and Christ had been invited.'[362] So why should such attention be paid to Heidegger's politics? Is it not possible for Heideggerian ontology to be great thought, and Heideggerian politics to be great error? Heidegger himself makes the best argument for why this cannot be the case. In his essay *The Age of the World Picture* he argues that,

> Metaphysics grounds an age in that, through a particular interpretation of beings and through a particular comprehension of truth, it provides that age with the ground of its essential shape. This ground governs throughout all phenomena distinctive of the age. Conversely, in order for there to be an adequate reflection on these phenomena, their metaphysical ground must allow itself to be recognised in them.[363]

To try to separate Heidegger's philosophy from the rest of the world is to make a mockery of it. The whole point of the phenomenological method was to reconnect philosophy and the "things" that are being philosophised about. It is thus such a deep shame that Heidegger attached himself (for whatever length of time) to a political movement completely at odds with his conception of Dasein's Being. In the conclusion which follows, it will be argued that Heidegger's insights into the nature of our Being lead to a much more radical conclusion than he might have been willing to admit. The above quotation refers to the grounding power of metaphysics – the later Heidegger was to move far away from such a designation. Before turning to this, it will be useful to briefly reiterate Heidegger's achievements to this date.

Through the analyses of *Being and Time* Heidegger achieved what the philosophies of the other thinkers discussed in this study had attempted – to reintroduce the individual person and his experiences of Being into philosophy. Much of this success comes from Heidegger's return to the inception of philosophy – to the question of Being – in order to rebuild from sturdier foundations, as opposed to the absolute rejection of Stirner, Kierkegaard's role as the aloof outsider and Pringle-Pattison's position as reformer. By building up the description of Dasein's Being from the start, Heidegger was able to avoid the misconceptions and irrelevancies which have accrued throughout the history of the philosophical tradition. In many ways it can be argued that through Heidegger, in particular through *Being and Time*, subjectivism reached its limits. Heidegger's early approach enables us to better understand the nature of Dasein's Being, but we are still some distance away from grasping Being itself in general. For this, subjectivism needs to be transcended, not back into objectivism, but into a new realm altogether. The start along this path is achieved, as we shall see, in

Heidegger's later thought. Heidegger's early (pre-Nazi) political thought already places the anti-levelling conservatism of Kierkegaard on a surer footing, his later thought would point towards a politics much more radical than anything he seems to have suggested before – a politics much more suitable to the nature of Being because of this radicalism.

1. Thomas Sheehan, 'Heidegger and the Nazis' in *The New York Review of Books* Vol. XXXV, No. 10 (June, 1988), p38.

2. Victor Farías, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

3. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), p63 [H39], italics are author's. Number following "H" in squared brackets in this and following references to *Being and Time* refer to the German edition in keeping with the conventions of Heideggerian scholarship.

4. Ibid, p64 [H39].

5. Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and* Evil (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p143.

6. Heidegger, Op. cit., p17.

7. Loc. cit.

8. Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), pvii.

9. Ibid, pviii.

10. Piotr Hoffman, 'Death, time, history: Division II of *Being and Time'* in Charles Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p223, italics are author's.

11. David Farrell Krell, 'Introduction to Being and Time: Introduction' in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings* Revised and Expanded Edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p38.

12. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p19 [H1].

13. Ibid, p21 [H2].

14. Ibid, p23 [H3].

15. Ibid, p23 [H4].

16. Loc. cit.

17. Ibid, p32 [H12], italics are author's.

18. Loc. cit., italics are author's.

19. Ibid, p37 [H16].

20. Loc. cit.

21. Ibid, p38 [H16-17].

22. Ibid, p38 [H17].

23. Ibid, p41 [H19].

24. Ibid, p43 [H22].

25. Ibid, p44 [H22].

26. Ibid, pp45-49 [H23-27] – This section may offer some hints of what might have been the tone of the work's elusive second half.

27. Safranski, Op. cit., pp83-85.

28. Taylor Carman, 'The Principle of Phenomenology' in Charles Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp98-99.

29. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (London: Penguin, 1968), p194.

30. Carman, Op. cit., p98.

31. Loc. cit.

32. Heidegger, Op. cit., p49 [H27].

33. Ibid, p50 [H28].

34. Loc. cit.

35. Ibid, p54 [H31].

36. Ibid, p56 [H33].

37. Ibid, p58 [H34].

38. Loc. cit.

39. Ibid, p59 [H35].

40. Ibid, p60 [H35], italics are author's.

41. Ibid, p62 [H38], italics are author's.

42. Ibid, p67 [H41].

43. Ibid, p71 [H45].

44. Ibid, p74 [H48].

45. Genesis 1:26.

46. Heidegger, Op. cit., p74 [H49].

47. Ibid, p75 [H49], italics are author's.

48. Loc. cit.

49. Ibid, p75 [H50], italics are author's.

50. Ibid, p76 [H51].

51. Ibid, p78 [H53], italics are author's.

52. Loc. cit.

53. Ibid, pp78-79 [H53].

54. Ibid, p82 [H56], italics are author's.

55. Ibid, p95 [H66].

56. Ibid, p95 [H66-67], italics are author's.

57. Ibid, p97 [H68].

58. Ibid, p99 [H69].

59. Loc. cit.

60. Ibid, p99 [H69-70].

61. Ibid, p101 [H71].

62. Ibid, p102 [H73].

63. Ibid, pp102-103 [H73].

64. Ibid, p104 [H74].

65. Ibid, p105 [H75].

66. Loc. cit., italics are author's.

67. Ibid, pp106-107 [H76].

68. Ibid, p110 [H80].

69. Ibid, p112 [H81].

70. Loc. cit.

71. Loc. cit.

72. Ibid, p128 [H95].

73. Ibid, p138 [H104].

74. Ibid, p138 [H105], italics are author's.

75. Ibid, pp139-140 [H105].

76. Ibid, pp141-142 [H107].

77. Ibid, p144 [H110].

78. Loc. cit.

79. Dreyfus, Op. cit., p143.

80. Ibid, p142.

81. Ibid, p143, italics are mine.

82. Heidegger, Op. cit., p153 [H117].

83. Ibid, p154 [H118].

84. Loc. cit., italics are author's.

85. Loc. cit.

86. Loc. cit.

87. Ibid, p155 [H118], italics are author's.

88. Ibid, p156 [H120].

89. Ibid, p157 [H121].

90. Ibid, p158 [H121].

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223.   Ibid, p427 [H375].

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The Later Heidegger: Beyond Subjectivism

In the discussion of Heidegger's philosophy in the previous chapter, the main focus was on the revolution inaugurated by *Being and Time*. It is difficult to overstate the philosophical importance of this work: it is arguable that in the century following its publication, we have been operating in the post-Heideggerian age, with Heidegger´s philosophy having influenced myriad later trends such as Sartrean existentialism, Derridian deconstructionism, as well as figures working outside of continental philosophy such as Richard Rorty. Yet Heidegger himself was to later move away from the approach he took in *Being and Time*, particularly after his involvement with National Socialism. The question of Being (or the question of the question of Being) remains the focus of Heidegger's attention from beginning to end, yet the approach to this problem taken in the later works is both stronger and more radical than that found in *Being and Time*. Before turning to the radicalism of the later works, it will first be of use to return to the early Heidegger discussed previously. Before, much was made of the many strengths of the approach to the question of Being in *Being and Time*. Here this acknowledgement should not be presumed to have diminished, but it will be important to discuss the work's flaws in order to show precisely why a more radical approach was needed, before turning to the later works in which this more radical approach is provided. In particular, Heidegger's later works will be read through the prism of the deconstructionist approach found in the works of Reiner Schürmann which conclude that after Heidegger, philosophy can no longer be thought of as providing the ground for practical action.

Heidegger's approach in *Being and Time* is undoubtedly anthropocentric. At the time he was of the opinion that in order to approach the question of Being in general, it would be necessary to approach the Being of human individuals in particular (Dasein). Gaining an understanding of Dasein's Being was hoped to provide the entrance to the realm in which the question of Being in general would become clearer. There is certainly a logical line of reasoning to such an approach as Dasein is the only being for which its own Being is a question. Dasein's unique level of self-awareness and ability for self-interpretation surely places it in a privileged position above other beings in being able to ask the question of Being. Yet Heidegger was to later recognise the pitfalls of such an approach, as is particularly made clear in his *Letter on Humanism* from 1946/47. Written as a response to questioning by Jean Beaufret in the wake of Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism*, the short work warns against the hasty adoption of philosophical humanism. He asks his correspondent whether 'the damage caused by all such terms [is] still not sufficiently obvious… "-isms" have for a long time now been suspect.'[1] Heidegger depicts the public clamour for a new "-ism", suggesting that such terms (logic, ethics and physics included) 'begin to flourish… when original thinking comes to an end.'[2] Here Heidegger embarks upon a theme common in his later writings: the opposition of thinking and philosophy. Using terms which foreshadow his later *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger describes how 'thinking comes to an end by slipping out of its element [replacing]… this loss by procuring a validity for itself as *technē*, as an instrument of education and therefore as a classroom matter and later a cultural concern. By and by philosophy becomes a technique for explaining from highest causes. One no longer thinks; one occupies oneself with "philosophy". In competition with one another, such occupations publicly offer themselves as "-isms"

and try to offer more than the others.'[3] Heidegger equates this tendency with the modern 'dictatorship of the public realm'[4] – the "they" of *Being and Time*. Turning his aim towards Sartre, Heidegger asserts that he could never approve of a humanism which is an existentialism resting upon the premise that 'we are precisely in a situation where there are only human beings'.[5] Instead the alternative premise that 'we are precisely in a situation where principally there is Being'[6] is posited. It is perhaps this sort of misinterpretation of the position in *Being and Time* found in Sartre which spurs the later Heidegger to move further away from anthropocentrism. Equally relevant to this is Heidegger's position during his involvement with National Socialism.

Break with the will in the *Nietzsche* lectures.

During Heidegger's brief but career-staining official association with Nazism, he was to adhere to a controversial but persuasive reading of Nietzschean philosophy. In Nietzsche, Heidegger found above all else a veneration of the will. That such an opinion was formed was certainly aided by the general acceptance at the time that the posthumous *The Will to Power* was 'Nietzsche's crowning systematic achievement'[7] instead of the selectively edited pastiche of Nietzsche's thought it actually was. That Heidegger subscribed to this prevailing view is clear from the central role *The Will to Power* plays in his Nietzsche lectures from the mid-to-late-1930s which were published in 1961 alongside additions from the early-to-mid-1940s: in one he directly refers to it as Nietzsche's 'major work'.[8] As was noted before, Heidegger held up this set of lectures as his covert protest from the lectern against the National Socialist state. This protest largely takes the form of a turn against the will, with *The Will to Power* being

taken as the culmination of Western metaphysics. If Heidegger's protestations are to be believed, through criticising the supremacy of the will in Nietzschean thought he is attacking the National Socialist state through its foundation in latter-stage metaphysics. Yet before this point, whilst Heidegger remained in a status of reciprocal favour with the party authorities, he had no qualms in using the terminology of *Being and Time* whilst exalting the importance of a strong will to authentic Being. One such example of this is when early in *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger defines questioning as 'willing-to-know'.[9] He contrasts willing-to-know with wishing-to-know, which appears to be questioning but 'does not get beyond saying the question'.[10] Using heavily romanticised language Heidegger implores that 'whoever wills, whoever lays his whole Dasein into a will, *is* resolute. Resoluteness delays nothing, does not shirk, but acts from the moment and without fail. Open resoluteness is no mere resolution to act; it is the decisive inception of action that reaches ahead of and through all action.'[11] In an addition from around the time of publication in 1953, Heidegger attempts to explain this passage in a way which dilutes its original force. He claims that 'the essence of open resoluteness lies in the de-concealment of human Dasein *for* the clearing and by no means in an accumulation of energy for "activity"… the relation to Being is letting.'[12] This refocus upon "letting" is certainly in keeping with the later Heidegger, yet it is difficult to view this as anything other than blatant and not particularly successful revisionism on Heidegger's part. This reinterpretation of his conception of the will from this period would make nonsense of the multiple references to the will in his rector's speech, such as the importance of the will of the German people in averting the collapse of the spiritual strength of the West.[13] It is inconceivable that references to 'our will that our people fulfil its historical mission'[14] could mean anything like letting.

Heidegger's break with the adulation of the will in his Nietzsche lectures

coincides with the coming to the fore of the critique of technology which continues

throughout his later work. Heidegger is accused by Kaufmann and others of having

wilfully misinterpreted Nietzsche in these lectures for his own ends.[15] Whilst it is

undoubted that Heidegger himself would have strenuously denied such an accusation,

there is an element of truth to the view of Heidegger using what are ostensibly

discussions of other philosophers as a stage from which to project his own vision. In

this context, Schürmann is correct to assert that whilst 'Heidegger's texts on

Nietzsche… speak *formally* about Nietzsche... *materially* [they speak] about

technology'.[16] Schürmann's view is that in his Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger used

Nietzschean terminology to ruminate on the technological. Rather than taking this point

out of context, it will be of more use to follow Schürmann's argument from the start so

as to better assess his radical reinterpretation of the consequences of the later

Heidegger's thought.

Broken hegemonies.

In his posthumous masterwork *Broken Hegemonies*, Reiner Schürmann traces the

history of philosophy as being a series of dominant ideas which gained hegemony

before collapsing and being replaced by another dominant philosophical idea.

Schürmann's work details three successive rises and falls – the final of which is

relevant to our purposes here.[17] This final hegemonic idea is the importance of the role

of the consciousness which is found in the works of Luther and Kant. As Schürmann

explains:

Self-consciousness is the philosophical terrain where the moderns believe
themselves to be at home. Here they find a certitude capable of assuaging their
pangs of doubt, an achievement sufficiently neutral to lend itself to being
concretised in a moral conscience, a strategic instrument with a view to critical and
revolutionary emancipations, also as a guarantee of an enclosed garden, interior
and ultimate, and finally, as a source of new sciences.[18]

In this study the focus has been upon philosophers offering various subjectivist
alternatives to the objectivity of Hegelianism. In Schürmann's understanding, both the
Hegelians and the likes of Stirner, Kierkegaard and Pringle-Pattison are operating
within the hegemony of self-consciousness – the same can also be said of the
Heidegger of *Being and Time*. This does not mean that Schürmann interprets the
Hegelian position ('the world spirit disjointing all things as it creates them, but
reconciling all things as it thinks them'[19]) and the subjectivist approaches discussed
here as being more or less philosophically the same. Each hegemonic idea is thought to
contain within its development the seeds of its own collapse, and as such the progress
within each of these philosophical epochs can be thought of as the gradual (perhaps
unnoticed) decay of the hegemonic idea which frames the epoch. It is certainly a
persuasive view to see the subjectivist writings against Hegelianism as part of the
process of the epoch of self-consciousness nearing its logical conclusion (echoing the
Kierkegaardian maxim, it seems clear that philosophy like life is best understood in
reverse). It is perhaps best to view Schürmann's vision of the history of philosophy as
being illustrative of a general point, namely the rise and fall of dominant ideas once

their inherent flaws become apparent in application, rather than seeing it as a literal explanation of progression of the totality of philosophy. To take the thesis of *Broken Hegemonies* too seriously would be to risk falling back into Hegelian historicism, in which history (in this case the history of philosophy) progresses and nears completion with little heed paid to the beings whose existence makes up this progression. What Schürmann's epochal view of philosophy does illustrate is the revolutionary nature of the later Heidegger's thought, and the way in which it supersedes Hegelian objectivity and anti-Hegelian subjectivist positions, as well as the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, to arrive at a position at which the goal set out in *Being and Time* to advance beyond metaphysics starts to be achieved.

In discussing the radical approach beyond both objective and subjective in the later Heidegger, the argument of Reiner Schürmann in his *Heidegger on Being and Acting* will be a constant presence implicitly at first, before we turn to it in detail. The thesis of Schürmann's *Heidegger…* is, briefly put, that after the revolution of thought instigated by the later Heidegger, philosophy can no longer provide a ground for practical action – including politics. This view of Heidegger is supplanted into his later *Broken Hegemonies* to argue that the later Heidegger brings to an end the epoch of self-consciousness and, instead of replacing this hegemonic idea with another, leaves us with no hegemonic philosophical idea. Whilst Schürmann's arguments will not be adhered to entirely, they will play an important role in illuminating Heidegger's later work.

The far-reaching nature of the later Heidegger's thought is perhaps best introduced through his *The Principle of Reason*. The work is a compilation of Heidegger's lectures and a standalone address bearing the same title and covering the same topic – namely, the principle of sufficient reason in Leibniz. Heidegger had already touched upon the principle of reason during his 1933 course *The Fundamental Question of Philosophy*, delivered during his rectorship of Freiburg University.[20] In many ways the lectures making up *The Principle of Reason* can be considered to be an extension and expansion of Heidegger's brief musings on this topic from the midst of his overtly National Socialist period. Over the course of thirteen lectures, Heidegger builds up a response to Leibniz which at times reveals a radicalism with consequences Heidegger himself may not have been willing to admit. Leibniz's principle is '*nihil est sine ratione*; nothing is without reason.'[21] Heidegger insists that positively Leibniz's principle must assert that 'everything that in any manner is necessarily has a reason'.[22] He explains that 'philosophy includes [the principle of reason]… among the supreme fundamental principles'.[23] It is one of the fundamental principles, if not *the* fundamental principle, which has informed the history of Western philosophy. Despite the important role the unspoken principle of reason played in the development of philosophy, Heidegger explains that 'it took two thousand three hundred years [for it to be]… expressly stated as a principle'.[24] Heidegger later states that elsewhere Leibniz was to extend his original definition of the principle of reason to assert that 'for every truth… the reason can be rendered'.[25] This rendering, 'the demand that reasons be rendered, [Heidegger explains] now speaks unabatedly and without surcease across the modern age'.[26] In

typical Heideggerian fashion, the connection between the principle of reason (particularly in its longer form) and the technological enframing of the modern age is explained as being more subtle than a simple cause and effect relationship. Heidegger insists that science, the driving force behind the technological ordering in society, 'responds to the demand [to render reasons, but]… it nevertheless does not *hear* it in such a way that it can meditate upon it.'[27] If science were to truly *hear* what it called for by the principle of reason, and were to *meditate* upon what it says, a much more authentic mode of Being for modern man might follow. Heidegger suggests that 'there is an enigmatic interconnection between the demand to render reasons and the withdrawal of roots.'[28] The forward march of technological reasoning and its inherent utilitarianism leads to a disconnection from the traditions which would enrich our mode of Being – undoubtedly Heidegger has the insights of the pre-Socratic masters firmly in mind here.

The difficulty of unthinkingly accepting that for everything that is, a reason can rendered is illustrated by Heidegger through a fragment from Angelus Silesius' *Cherubinic Wanderer*:

The rose is without why; it blooms because it blooms,

It pays no attention to itself, asks not whether it is seen.[29]

The first line is of particular interest for it appears to directly contradict Leibniz's principle of reason. Leibniz insists that nothing is without reason, whilst Silesius suggests that the rose is precisely this – it is without why. The second half of the first line of the fragment complicates matters further. The first half appears to deny that

there is a reason for the rose's blooming, but the second half's "because" then appears

to provide a reason. Heidegger suggests that these two positions may not be as

contradictory as they initially seem when they are viewed superficially. He explains

that the rose in the fragment 'is indeed without why, yet it is not without a ground.

[They]… are not equivalent.'[30] As something that is the rose falls under Leibniz's

principle of reason, yet, as Heidegger explains, 'the way it belongs within this orbit is

unique and thereby different from the way we humans, who also reside within the orbit

of the principle of reason, belong there.'[31] It might seem that from this Heidegger is

arguing that there is an inherent fundamental difference between the ways in which

human beings and roses dwell under the principle of reason – and indeed there is a

difference between modern man under technological enframing who is certainly "with

why" and the rose which is "without why". Yet Heidegger leaves open the radical

proposition that human beings might not only be able to dwell under the principle of

reason without why, but even that this might be a more authentic mode of Being. He

writes:

> What is left unsaid in the fragment – and everything depends on this – instead says
>
> humans, in the concealed grounds of their essential Being, first truly are when in
>
> their own way they are like the rose – without why. We cannot pursue this thought
>
> any further here.[32]

Unlike Heidegger, we can and will pursue this thought further here.

Schürmann highlights in Meister Eckhart an almost identical position to that in

Silesius' fragment, except in this case the link to human praxis is explicit instead of

implicit. Eckhart suggests that 'if you were to ask a genuine man who acted from his own ground, "Why do you do what you are doing?" if he were to answer rightly, he would say no more than, "I do it because I do it".'[33] Eckhart's genuine man, like Silesius' rose, is without why, but still has ground. For a brief moment Heidegger appears to suggest a vision of authentic Being that is synonymous with Eckhart's genuine man. If this one sentence of Heidegger's was the only sign of his reaching towards such conclusions, it would be perhaps foolish to devote such time to discussing it. Yet as we shall see, such a position remains implicitly below the surface throughout Heidegger's later writings, and it is because of this that they provide a welcome corrective against the flaws inherent in both Hegelian objectivity and its subjectivist critics.

For human beings to have an authentic relationship with the principle of reason, Heidegger insists that a leap needs to be taken. He outlines the four steps his discussion of the principle took before the fifth step which is the leap.

1. The incubation of the principle of reason.

2. The setting up of the principle of reason as one of the supreme fundamental principles.

3. The claim of the principle of reason as the claim of the mighty Principle that determines our age.

4. Ground/reason as "why" and as "because".

5. The change of tonality in the principle of reason.[34]

This change in tonality is described by Heidegger as the 'free and open possibility of thinking'.[35] It is the leap from the history of Western thinking where the principle of reason is interpreted as 'the supreme fundamental principle about beings into [a realm where the interpretation of] the principle of reason as an utterance about Being occurs.'[36] As will be discussed shortly, one of the clearest dividing lines between the Heidegger of *Being and Time* and the later Heidegger is the shift from the interrogation of Being through beings (namely Dasein) to the interrogation of Being apart from beings. After the leap, instead of understanding the principle as meaning that all beings have a ground/reason, the principle of reason now asserts that Being is the same as ground/reason.[37] Much earlier in his lectures Heidegger was insistent that his audience understand the difference between equality and identity. He explains that 'equality is something other than identity… Identity can mean that something is the same and nothing more than the same… but something is equal only where there is a multitude.'[38] This differentiation is relevant for when Heidegger writes 'Being and ground/reason: the same.'[39] He does not mean that "Being" is identical or a synonym for "reason" or "ground" – the relationship is more complex. He also writes 'Being: the a-byss [*ab-grund*].'[40] The two positions seem mutually incompatible – how can Being be both ground and abyss? Heidegger explains that 'this is what shows itself as what is to be thought now, namely, Being "is" the a-byss insofar as Being and ground/reason: the same. Insofar as Being "is" what grounds, and only insofar as it is so, it has no ground/reason.'[41] In the 1933 lecture mentioned earlier, Heidegger had already touched upon this idea when discussing the principle of Being. There he questions 'under which principle… can Being be put? Is there anything that stands even *above* Being, that accordingly is *non*-"Being"? What could that *be*? Can such a thing still even *be* at all?

Obviously not, for *if* it *is*, then it is a *being*, and *as* a being it *stands beneath* Being.'[42]

He continues to ponder the possibility that the principle of Being is nothing, addressing criticism about how such a principle could be grasped:

> Can the nothing be grasped as the principle of Being at all? Can *anything* be delimited by the nothing? One would like to counter this in advance by pointing out that *if* the nothing is grasped at all – however it may be grasped, if it is simply *grasped at all* – then it is already something, and never is nothing. But inasmuch as the nothing is *not* graspable *at all*, then the question of *through what* and *how* it should be grasped also *becomes superfluous*.[43]

Heidegger's position in this area was certainly deepened in this area since the early 1930s, but this does illustrate how the seeds of his later radicalism were already present during his ardently National Socialist period. His points regarding the superfluous nature of attempting to grasp the nothing also foreshadow the difficulties and often convoluted prose when attempting to discuss the abyss in the later works.

Heidegger's thinking about the abyss is certainly far from traditional metaphysical thinking. Instead of the firm grounding of the atomic age where all beings can seemingly be grounded in the interactions of minute invisible chemical elements and the subatomic particles of which they are composed, we are left with beings grounded by Being which is itself the abyss because it is ungrounded. The importance of the introduction of the abyss should not be overlooked, for it appears to leave our way of Being without a form of external validation through some form of timeless truth. A passionate decisionism is still called for, but there is no objective criterion

against which to judge the decision. The introduction of the abyss and the anarchy which follows this introduction heralds a radical freedom of possibility for Dasein, but also introduces a great deal of uncertainty. Where once metaphysics could be seen to provide the tools with which to judge our decisions, there is now a profound loneliness – a void, an abyss. Despite the discomfort this realisation may cause, it should certainly not cause us to turn back here in order to retreat to "safer" ground.

Thinking is at this point in the leap from the history of Western thinking. Heidegger responds to the hypothetical query of whether by taking this leap we therefore fall into the fathomless. He answers 'yes and no. Yes – insofar as Being can no longer be given a basis in the sense of beings and explained in terms of beings. No – insofar as Being is now finally to be thought *qua* Being.'[44] As such, thinking is able to move closer to the authentic truth of the question of Being. The implications of this shift in thinking are radical, and return us to the previous discussion of Silesius' rose and Eckhart's genuine man. In the closing stages of the closing (thirteenth) lecture on the principle of reason, Heidegger introduces the importance of play. Here there are echoes of another piece from Meister Eckhart, this time his sermon *Woman, the Hour is Coming*. In the sermon Eckhart discusses the detachment needed in order to come closer to God. He rejects the seeking of God for one's own advantage, for in such a case 'you are not looking for God at all.'[45] The good man, when questioned as to why he is living would respond '"My word, I do not know! But I am happy to be alive."'[46] This precisely is living without why. Heidegger cites a fragment from Heraclitus which in his characteristically idiosyncratic translation states that 'The Geschick [sending, destiny] of Being, a child that plays.'[47] This playing is something new and alien. Heidegger explains that 'so far we have barely experienced this play and have not yet

considered its nature, which means, what the play plays and who plays it, and how the playing is to be thought'.[48] Returning briefly to the importance of death which was such a key aspect of *Being and Time*, Heidegger deftly illustrates the role of death as the 'yet unthought standard of measure of the unfathomable, which means, of the most elevated play in which humans are engaged in on earth, a play in which they are at stake.'[49] Play, like Silesius' rose, like Eckhart's good and genuine men, is without why. Closing his lectures, Heidegger asserts that 'the "because" withers away in play… it plays since it plays… The question remains whether and how we, hearing the movements of this play, play along and accommodate ourselves to the play.'[50] The "without why" of play is difficult to describe both because it is alien to the traditional modes of Western thinking, and also due to the issues in trying to adequately describe an intangible absence as mentioned in the 1933 lecture. In an aside from the final lecture on the principle of reason, Heidegger perhaps best illustrates the area in which his thought is leading us:

> Is it not merely a playful act if now, at the close of the lecture course on the principle of reason, we almost violently haul in thoughts about play and about the belonging-together of Being and ground/reason with play?[51]

Heidegger thinks not. Yet there is a degree to which Heidegger's later thought might be equally or even better suited to the designation of "philosophy at play" which Paterson used to describe the work of Max Stirner.

<u>*The Principle of Identity.*</u>

The Principle of Identity from the collection *Identity and Difference* explains the way

in which man and Being belong together. In *The Principle of Reason*, the idea of Being

as the abyss was introduced. Here Heidegger defines this abyss as being 'the event of

appropriation.'[52] The event of appropriation is Joan Stambaugh's translation of the

word *Ereignis* which plays a key role in much of Heidegger's later writings. She

usefully defines it as 'the realm in which man and Being reach each other in their very

core. They lose the determinations placed on them by metaphysics.'[53] Another attempt

to render the term into English is as "enowning" by the English translators of the

posthumously published *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*[54] – this

perhaps gets us closer to the strangeness of Heidegger's use of the term, but still leaves

its meaning rather opaque. The difficulty of understanding precisely what Heidegger

means by *Ereignis* is such that Blackwell's Heidegger companion assigns the term its

own chapter.[55] We cannot take too much of a diversion into the discussion of the term

here, but a very brief summary of Richard Polt's investigation of *Ereignis* should

enable us to better understand the term in this context. According to Polt, Heidegger's

use of the term *Ereignis* differed over the course of his writings. Around the time of the

writing of his *Contributions to Philosophy* in the mid-1930s, Heidegger depicts

Ereignis as something 'extremely rare'.[56] By the time of the texts we are discussing

here, *Ereignis* has become 'an ultimate that we think without reference to particular

beings'.[57] This understanding of *Ereignis* is in keeping with the insistence of the later

Heidegger of the need to think Being without reference to beings. Polt raises the

objection to such a conception of *Ereignis*, arguing that 'it becomes very difficult to

connect it to our own experience'[58] – this is something that shall be addressed as the discussion here progresses. For our purposes here we shall maintain Stambaugh's definition of *Ereignis* as the event of appropriation, but with the caveat of keeping the numerous difficulties in grasping Heidegger's fluid understanding of the term in mind.

Before the brief detour into terminology, we had approached Heidegger's understanding of the abyss of Being as the event of appropriation. In *The Principle of Reason* the abyss of Being had been reached by the leap in thought away from the thinking of metaphysics. In this new tonality of the principle of Being brought about by the leap, Being grounds beings, but is simultaneously itself the abyss. Heidegger has now defined this abyss as being the event of appropriation – the realm in which the belonging together of Being and man is achieved. Through the event of appropriation, technological enframing – the way in which the technological conception of the world conceives of and orders all beings as the means for reaching technological ends – is overcome. Technology returns 'from its dominance back to servitude'.[59] Heidegger's brief veneration of the will is a distant memory as he describes the relationship between Being and man as 'a *belonging* together… in which the letting belong first determines the manner of the "together" and its unity.'[60] Gone are the violent metaphors of wrestling with beings to bring them into uncoveredness.[61] Now instead there is the sense of letting beings Be. There is certainly here a sense of the mystical, but we should not yet acquiesce to Polt's concerns that later Heideggerian philosophy has lost all connection with human existence.[62] Heidegger's later thought may separate itself from the moorings of our traditional metaphysical understanding of our existence, but it is still grounded in our experience, albeit in a radically different way.

<u>*Time and Being.*</u>

On Time and Being contains two complementary pieces which mark the culmination of the later Heidegger's thought – the near synonymously titled *Time and Being* and *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*. The former piece shares the title with the projected third section of the first half of *Being and Time*, but this should not be mistaken as a sign of Heidegger's returning to the philosophical positions of his earlier work. At the beginning of *Time and Being* Heidegger addresses the lack of immediate intelligibility of poetry, works of art and theoretical physics. He suggests that it might therefore be amiss to expect immediate intelligibility from 'the thinking that is called philosophy… which must give thought to matters from which even the painting and the poetry we have mentioned and the theory of mathematical physics receive their determination.'[63] This assertion should be considered carefully to avoid misinterpretation. Heidegger here does not assert that it is philosophical thinking which determines poetry, artworks, theoretical physics, and so on, but that the proper subject for thinking is the matter from which these (and not these alone) receive their determination, namely Being.

Time and Being continues the later Heidegger's theme of the need to think Being without reference to beings. He explains this need as being 'necessary because otherwise, it seems to me, there is no longer any possibility of explicitly bringing into view the Being of what *is* today all over the earth, let alone adequately determining the relation of what has been called "Being" up to now.'[64] Unfortunately, Heidegger does not explain more clearly the reasoning behind the "it seems to me". As such it is necessary that here an attempt should be made to sketch out the possible reasoning for

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the necessity to think Being without reference to beings before moving forward.

Thinking of Being with reference to beings – for instance with reference to Dasein in *Being and Time* – will always necessarily result in a partial view of Being. We only get closer to seeing and understanding the elements or characteristics of Being which are elements or characteristics of beings. Using Heidegger's descriptions in *The Principle of Reason* for example, we learn of Being that it is the reason/ground of beings when we inquire of Being with reference to beings. This insight will always only describe the relationship between beings and Being – neither can be explained by this without reference to the other. Being is the ground/reason for beings – beings have their ground/reason in Being. Yet when we come to the assertion that Being is the abyss, and later that this abyss is the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*), these are insights into Being that can only be reached by inquiry into Being without reference to beings. This position can only be reached by the attempt to think Being without beings.

Returning now to *Time and Being*, Heidegger begins by questioning why it is that time and Being are thought of together. He explains that neither Being nor time can be thought of as a thing. Heidegger uses the example of the lecture hall: 'This lecture hall *is*. The lecture hall *is* illuminated. We recognise the illuminated lecture hall at once and with no reservations as something that is. But where in the whole do we find the "is"? Nowhere among things do we find Being.'[65] Time similarly is not something which can be found as another "thing" amongst beings. The interrelation of time and Being is complex and seemingly paradoxical. 'Being is not a thing, thus nothing temporal, and yet is determined by time as presence. Time is not a thing, thus nothing which is, and yet it remains constant in passing away without being something temporal like the beings in time.'[66] All beings are in time, yet Being is not a being (a

thing) and so is not in time. Being is presencing – it is what lets beings be present (letting-presence). Presence is necessarily determined by time – presencing makes no sense without reference to time – and thus Being is determined by time without being temporal (in time). Time constantly passes away, as do beings in time. Yet whilst constantly passing away, 'time remains as time. To remain means: not to disappear, thus, to presence.'[67] Being is what lets beings be present, yet whilst time is present it is not temporal and not a being (a thing). Heidegger rejects a dialectical approach to addressing the contradictory nature of the relation between Being and time for the dialectic 'would be a way out which evades the matters and the issues in question'.[68] With the "easy" option discounted, Heidegger's analysis continues to progress.

In order to better understand the relation between Being and time, Heidegger first proceeds to think of each separately. He asserts that 'we do not say: Being is, time is, but rather there is Being and there is time.'[69] In translation, Heidegger's point is easily lost. The German "there is" (es gibt) is more literally "it gives" – Heidegger had previously said that this "it" which gives is Being.[70] It is this conception of Being which Heidegger returns to when he attempts to think Being separately. Instead of the thinking of Being with reference to beings which was discussed above, Being is to be thought of 'as the gift of this It gives, Being belongs to giving.'[71] As letting-presence, Being is the gift of unconcealing ('Being as the unconcealing of presencing'[72]). Heidegger cites the many ways in which presencing has been understood in the history of Western thinking:

as the *hen*, the unifying unique One, as the *logos*, the gathering that preserves the All, as *idea*, *ousia*, *energeia*, *substantia*, *actualitas*, *perception*, *monad*, as

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objectivity, as the being posited of self-positing, in the sense of the will of reason, of love, of the spirit, of power, as the will to will in the eternal recurrence of the same.[73]

Heidegger interprets these stages as being the history of Being. He does not deny any form of insight to these understandings of Being, but insists that Being has remained obscured by the various imperfect understandings. Heidegger argues that 'only the gradual removal of these obscuring covers… procures for thinking a preliminary insight into what then reveals itself as the destiny of Being.'[74] This removal of obscuring covers is precisely what Heidegger had diagnosed as being needed when he called for the destruction of the history of ontology.[75]

In order to pursue the "it" which gives Being (in "there is – it gives – Being"), Heidegger turns to time. He returns to his understanding of time as the necessary ecstatic interrelation of the past, present and future (in contrast to the ultimately flawed conception of time as a series of fleeing "nows"). Whilst we have come to the position that time is not a thing, Heidegger warns that we should not therefore assume that time is nothing, hence the assertion that "there is (it gives) time" instead of "time is".[76] He warns of equating "present" in the sense of presence and "present" in the sense of now – the former is what is at stake here, explaining that 'to presence means to last. But we are too quickly content to conceive lasting as mere duration, and to conceive duration in terms of the customary representation of time as a span of time from one now to a subsequent now.'[77] After discussing the interplay of the three dimensions of time (past, present and future), Heidegger introduces a fourth dimension – 'the giving that determines all.'[78] The giving, which Heidegger in this context calls '"nearing nearness"

[or] "nearhood"',[79] has a complex relation with the other three dimensions. Nearing nearness 'brings future, past and present near to one another by distancing them.'[80] The giving that is nearing nearness provides the structure for the ecstatic nature of time, 'it grants the openness of time-space and preserves what remains denied in what has-been [the past], what is withheld in approach [the future].'[81]

Heidegger warns that when we think of the "it" which gives time and the "it" which gives Being, we must not 'arbitrarily posit an indeterminate power which is supposed to bring about all giving of Being and time.'[82] After an interesting discussion about the role of the "it" – whether it is significant or whether it is something merely thrust upon us by grammar which has little importance to our understanding of the "it gives" – Heidegger turns to discuss *Ereignis*. It is appropriation which 'lets the two matters [Being and time] belong together, what brings the two into their own and, even more, maintains and holds them in their belonging together'.[83] He insists that it is a mistake to think of the relationship between Being and time is something imposed upon the pair sometime after they come into existence as completely separate entities. To use the language of *Being and Time* – time, Being and the relationship between time and Being are equiprimordial. Heidegger admits that there is one clear question arising from this explanation – 'what is the event of appropriation?'[84] We earlier encountered the unclear nature of the abyss when discussing *The Principle of Identity*. In *Time and Being* things are *somewhat* clearer, but difficulties remain.

The remainder of *Time and Being* is devoted to the question of what the event of appropriation is. In typically Heideggerian style, this involves a questioning of the question. Heidegger questions what is entailed by answering a question, responding that 'answer means the Saying that co-responds to the matter at stake'.[85] The matter at

stake here is appropriation, and hence in response to the question "what is the event of appropriation" there is needed to be a Saying which corresponds to this. The question seems to be asking about the essence or Being of appropriation but, Heidegger suggests, 'if Being itself proves to be such that it belongs to appropriation and from there receives its determination as presence, then our question takes us back to what first of all demands its own determination: Being in terms of time.'[86] We seem to be stuck in a bit of a loop – time and Being are inseparably related, appropriation is what maintains this, and in order to question appropriation we must ask about its Being. Heidegger attempts to slightly clarify thinking regarding appropriation, suggesting that it would be a grave misunderstanding to take the word "event" in "event of appropriation" to mean 'an occurrence and happening [instead of]… as the extending and sending which opens and preserves.'[87] Heidegger also rejects as 'too cheap'[88] the possibility of inverting the relationship between Being and appropriation, explaining away the difficulties by having appropriation as some sort of meta-concept into which both Being and time can be subsumed. Eventually Heidegger suggests the following explanation: 'appropriation appropriates.'[89] Heidegger is not unaware that this has the appearance of being a glib and meaningless way of avoiding explaining precisely what has been spoken about. 'It does indeed say nothing so long as we hear a mere sentence in what was said, and expose that sentence to the cross-examination of logic. But what if we take what was said and adopt it unceasingly as the guide for our thinking.'[90] We are clearly here in a position where Heideggerian thinking is differentiating itself not only in content, but also in method from traditional metaphysical thinking.

Heidegger explains that his aim of thinking 'Being without beings means: to think Being without regard to metaphysics. Yet a regard for metaphysics still prevails in the

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intention to overcome metaphysics. Therefore our task is to cease all overcoming, and leave metaphysics to itself.'[91] The inability of *Time and Being* to move us much closer to gaining a working definition of what is meant by the event of appropriation is acknowledged at the end of the lecture. Heidegger insists that the attempt to say the meaning of appropriation in the context of the lecture was an obstacle to its saying – 'the lecture has spoken merely in propositional statements.'[92] The tools of metaphysics are still being used to explicate what is the proper matter for non-metaphysical thinking. In the final lecture of Heidegger's we shall discuss, the task for thinking at the end of philosophy will be made clearer.

The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking.

In *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* Heidegger openly expresses the lineage between the task he set himself in *Being and Time* and his task nearly four decades later. He explains that since 1930 he has attempted 'again and again… to shape the question of *Being and Time* in a more primal way… to subject the point of departure of the question in *Being and Time* to an immanent criticism.'[93] In this context, Heidegger formulates his inquiry into two interrelated questions: '1. What does it mean that philosophy in the present age has entered its final stage? 2. What task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?'[94] The separation into two questions helps indicate the two logical steps at play, namely what the end of philosophy is and what the task for thinking is now that we have reached the end of philosophy. Either question alone would be lacking its partner; merged together the distinction would be lost. As such, we turn first to Heidegger's depiction of the end of philosophy.

By the philosophy which is at an end Heidegger means metaphysics which 'thinks being as a whole – the world, man, God – with respect to Being, with respect to the belonging together of beings in Being.'[95] Metaphysical thinking 'thinks beings as being in the manner of representational thinking which gives reasons.'[96] It sets out to ground the ground of beings, and in doing so 'departs from what is present in its presence, and thus represents it in terms of its ground as something grounded.'[97] Heidegger explains that philosophy as metaphysical thinking is at and end not because it has stopped, but because it has been completed. This clearly is not because metaphysics has been perfected. Heidegger indicates that this would be impossible to assert because we 'lack any criterion which would permit us to evaluate the perfection of an epoch of metaphysics as compared with any other epoch… Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity… It is not our business to prefer one to the other'.[98] Instead, by "end" Heidegger means 'the place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its most extreme possibility. End as completion means this gathering.'[99] Philosophy (which is metaphysics, which is Platonism) enters its final stages in the reversals of metaphysics in Marx and Nietzsche.[100] The development and independence of the sciences (most recently anthropology, psychology, sociology, and so on) from philosophy 'looks like the mere dissolution of philosophy, and is in truth its completion.'[101]

Heidegger foresees 'that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and guided by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics.'[102] His warnings here are perhaps now even more strongly prescient at the beginning of the twenty-first century than they were when first delivered in the 1960s. Heidegger's previous warnings about the position of man under technological enframing again

come to the fore, perhaps more directly than before, in his explanation of the coming reign of cybernetics. 'This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being. For it is the theory of the steering of the possible planning and arrangement of human labour. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information.'[103] For Heidegger the technological and cybernetic modes of thinking ('representational-calculative thinking'[104]) are synonymous and dominant. He argues that the origins of the sciences in philosophy can still be heard today – they 'still speak about the Being of beings in the unavoidable supposition of their regional categories. They just don't say so.'[105] For Heidegger, 'the end of philosophy proves to be the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world and of the social order proper to this world. The end of philosophy means: the beginning of world civilisation based upon Western European thinking.'[106] Despite these almost eschatological overtones, Heidegger believes that there is a task for thinking which remained concealed in the history of philosophy. A thinking which is separate both from metaphysics and the numerous sciences which have branched out from philosophy.[107] It is this task of thinking which we shall turn to next.

The possibility of thinking is not, as a cruder analysis might suggest, the absolute overthrow and destruction of the scientific/technological worldview. Rather it is the 'thinking of the possibility that the world civilisation which is just now beginning might one day overcome the technological-scientific-industrial character as *the sole criterion* of man's world sojourn.'[108] The three words "the sole criterion" do much to indicate that the technological worldview does have its place – it is its absolute dominance which is being questioned. Heidegger is less clear about precisely what

thinking entails. He returns to the discussion of *alētheia* (unconcealment), emphasising the role of opening to unconcealment. Returning to his favourite metaphor of the forest, Heidegger describes the way in which an opening or clearing allows the light in so what is in the clearing can be seen. He is insistent that we not misunderstand the relationship between the openness and the light – 'light never first creates openness. Rather, light presupposes openness.'[109] Instead of dragging beings into unconcealment, Heidegger seems to be suggesting that the proper role of thinking is to experience the light which shines when beings open themselves up for us. He acknowledges that technological scientific thinking can successfully demonstrate what is true, yet we are reminded that truth (the traditional translation of *alētheia*) and unconcealment (Heidegger's translation) are not the same. Heidegger asks, 'is the manifest character of what-is exhausted by what is demonstrable? Doesn't the insistence on what is demonstrable block the way to what-is?'[110] He illustrates this point using a quote from Aristotle which has appeared elsewhere in his writings: 'For it is uneducated not to have an eye for when it is necessary to look for a proof, and when this is not necessary.'[111] The scientific worldview may be able to demonstrate why it is that a person enjoys a particular piece of music, finds a particular scenery to be beautiful or savours a particular food's flavour, but by doing so gets no nearer to the enjoyment, beauty or savouring. Being able to demonstrate the neurone pathways which trigger a particular emotion can only ever partly get us closer to what-is that emotion – be it love, hate, terror or boredom. In reflection of the task of thinking in waiting for beings to open themselves up to us in their presence, Heidegger wonders if the task 'read instead of *Being and Time*: Opening and Presence'.[112]

<u>The benefits of the later Heidegger's approach.</u>

Before turning to the political consequences of this new position, it will be useful for our purposes to explicitly examine why the position taken by the later Heidegger is more successful than both the objectivity personified by the Hegelians *and* the subjectivism of the thinkers discussed previously. Turning to the latter first, the later Heidegger is more successful because of his recognition that trying to gain an understanding of Being through the interrogation of (human) beings is methodologically flawed. Heidegger's discussion of Dasein came closer to responding to the question of Being than any of the other thinkers discussed, but was only ever able to mention Being as a characteristic of Dasein (human beings). As the arguments in *The Principle of Reason* demonstrated, the assertion that Being is what grounds beings says very little about Being. It comes nowhere near acknowledging that whilst Being grounds beings, it is itself without ground – it is the abyss. As the subjectivist position never recognises that Being is the abyss, it certainly never even recognises that this abyss is the event of appropriation (or encounters the profound difficulties of explaining what appropriation is). The subjectivist approaches also fail to realise that technological enframing, and the dangers which follow from it, cannot be escaped without escaping the boundaries of metaphysics. Pringle-Pattison was criticised for his reformist approach towards the Hegelianism of British idealism, but the more antagonistic approaches of Stirner, Kierkegaard and even the early Heidegger get not much further. Having escaped the shell of Hegelian objectivism, the philosophers are still operating within – even advancing the progression of – the history of Western metaphysics which, it would seem, necessarily results in the ascendency of cybernetics.

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As the later Heidegger realised, even in engaging with metaphysics in order to overcome it, one is still stuck in metaphysical thinking. What is needed is a thinking which is neither metaphysical nor scientific. Precisely what this thinking entails is still as yet unclear but, as Heidegger suggests at the end of *The End of Philosophy*, 'the task of thinking would then be the surrender of previous thinking to the determination of the matter of thinking.'[113]

It is certainly possible to argue that the argument of the study has come full circle. We started off by rejecting the abstract universal "Absolute" of Hegelianism, and then went through various forms of subjectivism which were each in turn rejected, only in order to adopt another abstract universal – "Being". This argument can be rebutted by citing the major difference between the Hegelian Absolute and Heideggerian Being, namely that the latter respects the dignity of the beings which have their ground in Being. As was highlighted earlier through the debate between Pringle-Pattison and Bosanquet, the component parts of the Hegelian Absolute are attributed little more than adjectival status. They are the containers into which the content of the Absolute is distributed, with minuscule lasting importance to the progression of the Absolute. Later Heidegger speaks of letting beings Be – of allowing beings to open up in order for the light to flow in so that we may better experience them in their Being.

In our adoption of the positions taken by the later Heidegger, there has been little or nothing said about practical matters (apart from brief mention of the misgivings of Polt). The philosophical positions taken certainly have the appearance of having a touch of the mystical about them. Caputo highlights the criticism of Hühnerfeld that 'Meister Eckhart would never have taken the mystical step if he had believed that he

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was leaping into Nothingness instead of into the arms of God.'[114] Yet surely this leap into nothingness – into the abyss – is the only way in which we can live life "without why". When there is still some external purpose, we are still not living because we live. It is because of this that Schürmann characterises the later Heidegger's thought as being an-archic. Schürmann's analysis in his brilliant *Heidegger on Being and Acting* is at times incredibly dense, but that should not dissuade us from engaging with it for our purposes here. In the work Schürmann uses Heidegger's writings (particularly the later writings) in order to deconstruct the traditional philosophical relationship between ontology and praxis. He explains: 'I would like to show what happens to the old problem of the unity between thinking and acting once 'thinking' no longer means securing some rational foundation upon which one may establish the sum total of what is knowable, and once 'acting' no longer means conforming one's daily enterprises, both public and private, to the foundation so secured.'[115] In our discussions of the later Heidegger's works, we have already reached the point of the new post-metaphysical thinking which is without why. As such, we can move directly to Schürmann's suggestions about how this affects practical action and politics.

Politics/practical action and the later Heidegger's approach.

Schürmann explains that 'the way Heidegger displaces the received issues of norms, standards and commands for action – the 'rules', 'holds', and 'injunctions' – is the most striking proof that his thinking… has moved beyond the mere deconstruction of transmitted referential edifices.'[116] Heidegger has not done this in order to rebuild another structure in his own image. Schürmann insists that neither does Heidegger

'declare anything [in the history of Western thinking] valueless. What he prepares is more modest than any value assessment… it is what he calls simple dwelling.'[117] Heidegger's conception of dwelling is developed in his lecture *Building Dwelling Thinking*. In the lecture Heidegger explains that dwelling is the way in which mortals exist in the fourfold, 'on earth, under the sky [and] before the divinities.'[118] When writing about the fourfold of earth, sky, divinities and mortals, Julian Young decried 'the almost total absence by Heidegger scholars to explain what it is.'[119] With this in mind, and to enable us to better understand Heidegger's conception of dwelling, we must address the fourfold.

Heidegger's conception of dwelling is directly related to the way in which mortals (human beings) interact with the fourfold, of which they are a part. Firstly, 'mortals dwell in that they save the earth'.[120] Heidegger is insistent that we understand that 'to save properly means to set something free into its own essence… Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it'.[121] This is entirely in keeping with the Heideggerian critique of technological enframing. Not only does Heidegger decry the ordering of human beings as resources, this concern stretches to all "things" within the world. Secondly, 'mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky.'[122] Whilst it may not currently be scientifically possible to do otherwise, dwelling entails allowing all celestial bodies to go about their path. Heidegger's concerns about turning night into day could be taken as a criticism of the overabundance of artificial lighting which thrusts a large proportion of the Western world into eternal daylight. Thirdly, 'mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities.'[123] This injunction may seem strange from a philosopher whose writings are consistently secular, and who never retreats to theological explanations of difficulties. Yet Heidegger's position is

consistent, as he implores that dwelling mortals 'wait for intimations of their [the gods'] coming and do not mistake the signs of their absence. They do not make their gods for themselves and do not worship idols.'[124] Heidegger is warning against the tendency of projecting the ideally human into the heavens, or mistake the earthly for the divine. This position was echoed in Heidegger's posthumous *Der Spiegel* interview, in which he famously proclaims that:

> Only a god can still save us. I see the only possibility of salvation in the process of preparing a readiness, through thinking and poetising, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god in the decline. We will not "croak", to put it bluntly, but rather, if we go under, we will do so face-to-face with an absent god.[125]

As mortals dwell, they must prepare in thinking for the coming of the god or the absence of the god – only through such thinking can mortals be prepared for either eventuality. The final interaction of mortals with the fourfold is with themselves – 'mortals dwell in that they initiate their own essential Being - their being capable of death as death – into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death.'[126] Death is not the goal for mortals, but mortals should have an authentic relationship with their own death of the sort depicted in *Being and Time*.[127] Heidegger describes the way in which 'dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the essence of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold *only when* they themselves *as* things are let Be in their essence.'[128] When mortals as beings are allowed to Be they can dwell – dwelling is not possible if this is not the case.

Heidegger's conception of the fourfold is central to his understanding of dwelling. Schürmann explains that Heidegger's thought assigns to man 'his finite economic site... the truth of Being.'[129] The escape from the realm of metaphysics into the realm of thinking which is neither metaphysical nor scientific allows man to dwell in the truth of Being, that is in his own essence, in communion with sky, earth and divinities. With the edifices of metaphysics from which actions could derive grounds displaced, and with no constructions devised to replace them, thinking and acting can no longer have philosophically derived ends or goals.[130] The result is what Schürmann calls economic self-regulation. He explains that 'every economy of presence is self-regulated... But not every economy of presence is self-regulated by one identity held to be its ultimate regulator – a principle.'[131] The economies of presence of the metaphysical epochs were all regulated by a guiding principle – be it the one, nature or self-consciousness.[132] The philosophy of the later Heidegger marks a break from the history of metaphysics precisely because it displaces the guiding principles of the prior epoch without positing an alternative guiding principle as a replacement. With no ultimate regulating principle, the later Heidegger's thought is truly anarchic.

The later Heidegger, perhaps unsurprisingly, explicitly commented very scarcely on the issue of politics. In the *Der Spiegel* interview, during a discussion of the way in which global technology determines political systems both capitalist and communist, Heidegger elucidates his later political position:

It has become evident in the last thirty years that the global movement of modern technology is a force whose scope in determining history can hardly be overestimated. It is a decisive question for me today how any political system can

be assigned to the current technological age – and if so, which system? I do not have an answer to this question. I am not convinced it is democracy.[133]

Just as the metaphysical systems of old have failed to hold back the dominance of the technological worldview, traditional political systems have also failed to moderate the continuous drive forward of the consequences of this worldview. Traditional political systems have failed because, as with the metaphysical system, they all rely upon an ultimate principle – capitalism on the functioning of the market, communism on the equality of all men, socialism on the redistribution of wealth, conservatism on the value of tradition, and so on. These may be over-simplified caricatures used in order to illustrate the point, but all political systems are guided by principles derived from metaphysical reasoning. In order to dwell authentically within the world, a change needs to be made. It is unlikely that the conservative Heidegger would greatly appreciate his thought being pulled in this direction, but it is a testament to his thinking that he never shrank back from following his thought to the destination where it led. The anarchical thinking of the later Heidegger can only be expressed in equally anarchical politics.

It is incredibly important at this point to raise a distinction very carefully made by Schürmann regarding the difference between economic anarchy and anarchy of power. He insists that 'economic anarchy is opposed to the anarchy of power as lawfulness is to lawlessness, as thinking is to the irrational, and as liberty is to oppression.'[134] It would make little or no sense after numerous citations of the importance of letting-Be and dwelling to the later Heidegger's thought, to then force upon this thinking some sort of neo-Stirnerite politics which had been so resoundingly

rejected several chapters early. Stirner's philosophy is metaphysical, despite all his protests. The dangers of technological enframing can find no better expression than in Stirner's guiding principle of utilising all other beings as means towards reaching the end of self-enjoyment. Schürmann reminds us that the anarchical nature of Heidegger's thought is not of the sort found in the writings of the classical anarchist thinkers, who aim to replace the dominant idea of the society at the time with a guiding principle of their own.[135] The anarchical conclusions of the later Heidegger are perhaps better contrasted with the anarchical tendency inherent in Buddhism.

The affinities between Heidegger's writings and Buddhism have often been commented upon, but this has not tended to be connected to the anarchical nature of both. Michael Zimmerman traces the connections between Heidegger's thought and Zen Buddhism. Amongst the similarities he explains are that 'both Heidegger and the Zen tradition maintain that once one is released from the constricted self-understanding associated with dualistic egocentrism, other people and things in the world no longer appear as radically separate and threatening, but instead as profoundly interrelated phenomena.'[136] Both also 'emphasise the importance of human existence, without hereby promoting a narrow anthropocentrism.'[137] In his unsurpassed chronicle of the history of anarchism, Peter Marshall charts the anarchical themes present in Zen Buddhism. He describes how it has 'a strong libertarian spirit. [It rejects]… hierarchy and domination. [It seeks]… growth in self-disciplined freedom and assert[s] that all are capable of enlightenment. [It is]… concerned with personal autonomy and social well-being [and recognises]… that each person is not only part of society, but of organic nature itself'.[138] It would not be too difficult to extend such a description so as to cover the later Heidegger. Zimmerman recognises this anarchical similarity,

suggesting both Heidegger and Zen Buddhism were susceptible to the same flaws. He suggests that 'zeal for the mystical idea of anarchy, which allegedly brings forth boundless compassion, must be tempered by insight into humanity's enormous capacity for self-delusion.'[139] He has in mind the way in which both the Japanese Zen masters and Heidegger embraced their own national authoritarianisms during the second world war. This brings us back to Schürmann's insistence on the difference between economic anarchy and anarchism of power. The National Socialist movement was an example of the latter with its guiding principle of the 'superiority of a race'.[140] If Heidegger's philosophical views were at this time nearing his later position at this time (as we have seen from 1933's *The Fundamental Question of Philosophy* this may well have been the case), Heidegger's Nazism would be a precise example of what Zimmerman is referring to when he speaks of man's enormous capacity for self-delusion.

Perhaps the most obvious criticism which will be levelled against the sort of political anarchism deriving from the philosophical anarchism of the later Heidegger is that it is utopian. It is all well and good calling theoretically for economic anarchy, but can such a thing be implemented in reality? Not in such a way that other beings within the world are manipulated and used in order to reach this new reality – to "implement" the economic anarchy found in the writings of the later Heidegger would be a contradiction of terms. What is needed is for the each individual to leave the realm of the metaphysical/scientific/technological and to enter the realm of thinking via a leap. We are not too far here from the task of becoming a Christian expressed in the writings of Kierkegaard – no one may be forced into undertaking the task of thinking, they must take on the task themselves. In keeping with the link between Heideggerian and Zen

Buddhist thought, this point is perhaps best illustrated by the Zen master Wumen Huikai who wrote:

> Do not fight with another's bow and arrow.
>
> Do not ride another's horse.
>
> Do not discuss another's faults.
>
> Do not interfere with another's work.[141]

If we are to enter into the thinking which has the motto "letting-Be" engraved above the door, it would be entirely inappropriate to drag others along against their will. Surely this is a better antidote against the self-delusion of man than anything else – if it is only yourself you are deluding, there is not so much likelihood of this resulting in the industrial-scale slaughter which so stained the history of the twentieth century.

Silesius' (and Eckhart's) exaltation of the "without why" and Heidegger's own suggestion that life should be a kind of play are both positive and unprescriptive. Instead of yet another philosophical instruction on how one should think and how one must act, there is possibility. Clearly this is not absolute unqualified possibility – the importance of letting-Be through dwelling is key – but it still represents a radical alternative to the way in which we have lived together and thought about the world for over two millennia. The various environmental crises facing mankind today would no longer be so threatening if we had an authentic relationship with the earth in the fourfold. Yet despite all this, one cannot help but be as pessimistic as Heidegger was in his *Der Spiegel* interview. In the technological worldview lies the possibility for entering into post-metaphysical thinking, but it is unclear when or if this possibility will

become an actuality. Maybe Heidegger is correct when he suggests that only a god can save us.
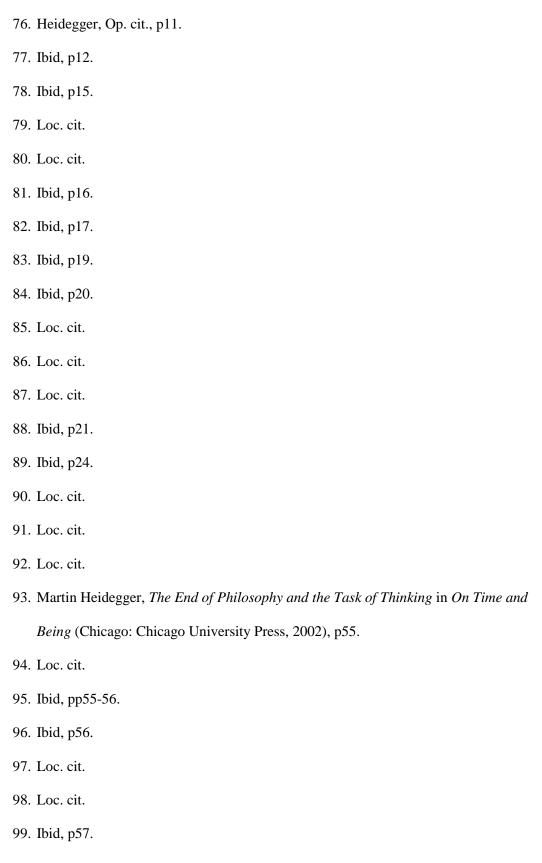
1. Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism* in *Basic Writings* Revised and Expanded Edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p219.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Ibid, p221.

4. Loc. cit.

5. Ibid, p237.

6. Loc. cit.

7. Walter Kaufmann, 'Editor's Introduction' in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pxiii.

8. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Vol. I: The Will to Power as Art* in *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p25.

9. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p22 [H16].

10. Loc. cit.

11. Loc. cit., italics are author's.

12. Ibid, pp22-23 [H16], italics are author's.

13. Martin Heidegger, *The Rectorship Address: The Self-Assertion of the German University* in *The Heidegger Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p116.

14. Loc. cit.

15. Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre* Revised and Expanded (New York: Meridian, 1975), pp33-40.

16. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990), p182, italics are author's.

17. The first era discussed is the rise of the idea of all existence being one in Parmenides and its fall in Plotinus. The second era is the rise of nature in the works of Cicero and Augustine, before the fall in the mysticism of Meister Eckhart.

18. Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), p353.

19. Loc. cit.

20. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Question of Philosophy* in *Being and Truth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp50-51.

21. Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p10 [from G. W. Leibniz, *Primary Truths* in *Philosophical Essays* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), p31].

22. Ibid, p11.

23. Ibid, p10.

24. Ibid, p4.

25. Ibid, p22 [from G. W. Leibniz, *Letter to Coste, on Human Freedom* in Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, p194].

26. Ibid, p24.

27. Ibid, p30, italics are mine.

28. Ibid, p31.

29. Ibid, p35 [from Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubinic Wanderer* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p54].

30. Ibid, p38.

31. Loc. cit.

32. Loc. cit.

33. Meister Eckhart, cited in Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p260.

34. Heidegger, Op. cit., pp57-58.

35. Ibid, p93.

36. Loc. cit.

37. Ibid, p100.

38. Ibid, p8.

39. Ibid, p110.

40. Ibid, p111.

41. Loc. cit.

42. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Question of Philosophy*, pp43-44, italics are author's.

43. Ibid, p44, italics are author's.

44. Heidegger, Op. cit., p111.

45. Meister Eckhart in Reiner Schürmann, *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy* (Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), p54.

46. Loc. cit.

47. Heidegger, Op. cit., p113 [Another translation is 'Time is a game played beautifully by children.' Heraclitus, *Fragments* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p51].

48. Ibid, p111.

49. Ibid, p112.

50. Ibid, p113.

51. Ibid, p112.

52. Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Identity* in *Identity and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p39.

53. Joan Stambaugh, 'Introduction' in Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p14.

54. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

55. Richard Polt, 'Ereignis' in Hubert Dreyfus & Mark Wrathall (eds.), *A Companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp375-391.

56. Ibid, p390.

57. Loc. cit.

58. Loc. cit.

59. Heidegger, *The Principle of Identity*, p37.

60. Ibid, p38, italics are author's.

61. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p265 [H222].

62. Polt, Op. cit., p390.

63. Martin Heidegger, *Time and Being* in On *Time and Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp1-2.

64. Ibid, p2, italics are author's.

65. Ibid, p3, italics are author's.

66. Loc. cit.

67. Loc. cit.

68. Ibid, p4.

69. Ibid, p5.

70. Joan Stambaugh, 'Footnote 1' in Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, p5.

71. Heidegger, Op. cit., p6.

72. Loc. cit.

73. Ibid, p7, italics are author's.

74. Ibid, p9.

75. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp41-49 [H19-27].

76. Heidegger, Op. cit., p11.

77. Ibid, p12.

78. Ibid, p15.

79. Loc. cit.

80. Loc. cit.

81. Ibid, p16.

82. Ibid, p17.

83. Ibid, p19.

84. Ibid, p20.

85. Loc. cit.

86. Loc. cit.

87. Loc. cit.

88. Ibid, p21.

89. Ibid, p24.

90. Loc. cit.

91. Loc. cit.

92. Loc. cit.

93. Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* in *On Time and Being* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), p55.

94. Loc. cit.

95. Ibid, pp55-56.

96. Ibid, p56.

97. Loc. cit.

98. Loc. cit.

99. Ibid, p57.

100.   Loc. cit.

101.   Loc. cit.

102.   Ibid, p58.

103.   Loc. cit.

104.   Ibid, p59.

105.   Loc. cit.

106.   Loc. cit.

107.   Loc. cit.

108.   Ibid, p60, italics are mine.

109.   Ibid, p65.

110.   Ibid, p72.

111.   Aristotle in Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, p72 ['for not to know of what things one should demand demonstration, and of what one should not, argues want of education. For it is impossible that there should be demonstration of absolutely everything'. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), p737].

112.   Heidegger, Op. cit., p73.

113.   Loc. cit.

114.   Hühnerfeld in John Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1978), p245.

115.   Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p1.

116.   Ibid, p231.

117.   Ibid, p232.

118.   Martin Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking* in *Basic Writings* Revised and Expanded Edition (London: Routledge, 1993), p352.

119.   Julian Young, 'The Fourfold' in Charles B. Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p373.

120.   Heidegger, Op. cit., p352.

121.   Loc. cit.

122.   Loc. cit.

123.   Loc. cit.

124.   Loc. cit.

125.   Martin Heidegger, *Der Spiegel Interview* in *The Heidegger Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p326.

126.   Heidegger, Op. cit., p352.

127.   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp279-311 [H-235-267].

128.   Heidegger, Op. cit., p353, italics are author's.

129.   Schürmann, Op. cit., p232.

130.   Ibid, p257.

131.   Ibid, p282.

132.   Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies* cites these metaphysical epochs.

133.   Heidegger, *Der Spiegel Interview*, p324.

134.   Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p290.

135.   Ibid, p292.

136.   Michael Zimmerman, 'Heidegger, Buddhism and Deep Ecology' in Charles B. Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p309.

137.   Ibid, p311.

138.   Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), p65.

139.   Zimmerman, Op. cit., p311.

140.   Schürmann, Op. cit., p291.

141.   Wumen Huikai in Paul Reps (ed.), *Writings from the Zen Masters* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p57.

Conclusion

In the philosophies of Max Stirner, Søren Kierkegaard, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison and Martin Heidegger we have seen various responses of differing success to the problems inherent not only in the Hegelian tradition, but more the widely throughout the history of Western metaphysics as a whole. It was argued before that Martin Heidegger's earlier philosophy was the most successful of these responses, bringing about in many ways the culmination of the subjectivist approach to philosophy. Yet even at its most successful, the subjectivist approach remains limited. It allows us to get closer to understanding the kind of Being of human individuals, but Being in general still seems distant and foreign. It is only in Heidegger's later philosophy that the problems of both the objective *and* subjective approaches are transcended, allowing us to better appreciate Being without recourse to beings. After the revolution of thought in the later Heidegger, philosophy can no longer be relied upon to provide the ground for practical action. The post-Heideggerian age should therefore be thought of as being anarchical. Before turning to the radicalism of the later Heidegger, we shall first return to the approaches discussed before. Particular reference will be made as to why these approaches, despite their strengths, are comparatively weaker than the approach taken by the later Heidegger.

Max Stirner.

As was argued earlier, the great strength of Max Stirner's philosophy lies in its willingness to question (almost) everything. In particular, his condemnation of the

philosophical habit of considering human existence as a pristine laboratory sample instead of the awkward, messy and often bewildering thing it really is marks a great leap forward philosophically. His insistence that the philosopher must always be aware and acknowledge that he is himself the subject of his philosophising provides a much-needed antidote against the abstracting tendencies present in much of the so-called "scientific" philosophies. In *The Ego and His Own* Stirner challenges and deconstructs every relationship the unique individual has with the external world. He is correct to question the often unquestioned allegiances the individual is expected to adhere to. If our loyalty to state, family, God, and so on, cannot be explained and justified, it would be entirely correct for these connections to be eschewed. Yet whilst correctly holding that everything needs to be questioned, Stirner always has the same answer: the thing in question is a "spook", a means of dampening the unique individual's true potential. At no point does Stirner address or accept that there might be positive aspects to social relations. His proposed union of egoists might account for the cooperation between individuals to achieve a mutual goal such as security, but it does not account for the complexities of the myriad variations of human relations. At the heart of this flaw is the absolute hedonism central to Stirner's philosophy.

It might be tempting to label Max Stirner's philosophy as nihilistic (as R. W. K. Paterson did[1]), yet this claim must be examined in greater detail. Taking the term literally, Stirner is not a nihilist. As Stirner expounds the importance of self-enjoyment as the guiding motive for the unique individual's actions, it cannot be convincingly argued that his philosophy lacks values. A true nihilist would surely be indifferent as to whether or not the individual is gaining pleasure from their actions. Perhaps it might be better to think of Stirner's philosophy as being an extreme form of individual

utilitarianism. Everything is tested for its utility to the unique individual as they move towards their goal of self-enjoyment, with anything seeming to be a barrier to this goal being cast aside. Yet despite this, it is certainly arguable that Stirner's philosophy is part of the general trend towards nihilism of the sort Heidegger was to later criticise in the final volume of his Nietzsche lectures.[2] Like Nietzsche, it could be argued that instead of heralding the beginning of a post-metaphysical age, Stirner's philosophy marks the culmination of the history of metaphysics. Nietzsche's veneration of the will and Stirner's call to self-enjoyment both celebrate the mastery of the elite individual over other existents encountered within the world. Neither philosopher seems particularly concerned whether or not these other beings (human or otherwise) should only be thought of as material to be manipulated in order to reach goals which are not their own. Taken to their logical conclusion, Stirner's ideas seem utterly dystopian – a potential war of all against all. His conception of human beings as being purely hedonistic, with all their actions driven solely by self-enjoyment, is an oversimplification which would be both offensive and ridiculous if it were not for the suspicion that Stirner is being rather playful. Paterson's characterisation of Stirner's work as being 'philosophy at play'[3] may be an obscurification which allows a multitude of flaws to be overlooked, but at the same time it is utterly in keeping with Stirner's stated intentions within his work. If Stirner is staying true to his own principles, there is no reason why writing a philosophical tract should be exempted from the criteria of self-enjoyment.

Whether or not *The Ego and His Own* is an outlet for Stirner's self-enjoyment, or a seriously intended manifesto for asocial individuals with passive-aggressive tendencies, is immaterial. What we must applaud Stirner for are the questions he asks.

By challenging everything except his own narrow criterion of value, Stirner in some ways makes steps towards the Heideggerian task of the destruction of the history of metaphysics. For Stirner, no tradition was too lofty and no thinker too renowned or respected to be immune from criticism. Whilst his answers leave much to be desired, Stirner's impassioned questioning of all the features of existence echo the key feature of successful philosophy since its inception: to ask questions about everything.

Søren Kierkegaard.

Søren Kierkegaard's thought, particularly after its popularisation during the twentieth century, has provided inspiration for countless thinkers. His penetrating glances into the human condition have furnished the philosophy of the last century with much of its vocabulary and source material. Kierkegaard is at his best when examining the inner workings of the individual. The passionate decisionism demanded by *Either/Or* introduces the theme of personal responsibility which runs throughout Kierkegaard's writings. His continuing focus on the steps needed in order to become a Christian led him to emphasise struggle over comfort, and the inner over the outer in order to lead an authentic life. Just like Stirner, Kierkegaard abandons any pretence of being a neutral commentator on existence, using his brilliant web of pseudonyms to personalise every element of the discussions in which he engages. Instead of considering points of view abstractly, Kierkegaard attributes these to a more or less fully rounded character whose way of living reflects the philosophical argument.

Kierkegaard's psychological insights are perhaps unrivalled in the whole of the history of philosophy – even if his skills seem to have mostly been applied to exploring

the darker side of the human psyche. Through *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard introduced the concept which would become central to the later existentialist movement. The importance of this step cannot be overstated. For Kierkegaard anxiety is a moment of self-awareness. It is through anxiety that the individual self becomes aware of the nature of its own Being. Anxiety is only possible due to the temporality of man's Being – in a draft of *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard highlights this by stating how 'natural scientists agree that animals do not have anxiety because by nature they are not qualified as spirit.'[4] As animals lack, as far as Kierkegaard is aware, any form of presentiment and only fear what is present, they are unable to be anxious in the same way that human selves can be. For there to be the possibility of anxiety it is absolutely necessary that the anxious self is comported towards future possibilities (about which the self is anxious). This anxiousness must also be comported towards the self's past – its successes, failures, wasted possibilities, and so on. As such it is not too much of a leap to move from Kierkegaardian anxiety to the Heideggerian ecstasis discussed earlier. For Kierkegaard, anxiety's role is as a step up the ladder towards Christian faith. It makes man aware of his relationship with the finite and infinite, extolling the possibility of renouncing the former in order to achieve eternal happiness in the latter. It 'is freedom's possibility, and only such anxiety is through faith absolutely educative, because it consumes all finite ends and discovers all their deceptiveness.'[5] As Heidegger was to do in *Being and Time*, Kierkegaard celebrates possibility as 'the weightiest of all categories.'[6] For Kierkegaard it is precisely through possibility that the self has its connection with the infinite.

Kierkegaard's criticisms of contemporary society in *A Literary Review* were, as mentioned earlier, an unacknowledged source for much of the early Heidegger's social

criticism. Parallels can also be drawn between Kierkegaard's criticisms of societal

levelling and the later Heidegger's warnings about technology and the process of

enframing. Kierkegaardian criticism of levelling centres on the ways in which all

passionate and exceptional people and things are watered down by the contemporary

age in order to achieve a bland equality. Levelling cares not for the myriad possibilities

open to Being, but only that all are condemned to the same unspectacular

everydayness. Yet despite the pertinence of his criticisms, Kierkegaard's philosophical

solution is perhaps just as flawed because of his general failure to account satisfactorily

for the individual person's relationships with other individual persons.

Kierkegaard's subjectivism is much more satisfactory as Christian philosophy

than as a secular philosophy removed from all theological moorings. His form of

religious individualism, whilst not entirely orthodox, is easily supported by his readings

of Christian scripture. Citing biblical passages such as the instruction to 'hate… father,

and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea… life also'[7] in order

to gain an authentic relationship with God, Kierkegaard's thought largely focuses on

this relationship between God and the single individual. This is not to say that he

endorsed a nihilistic attitude towards the other single individuals within the world, but

that the individual's relationship with other individuals is infinitely less important than

their relationship with God. His *Works of Love* is perhaps the best refutation of any

misunderstanding of Kierkegaard as a philosopher preaching loathing for other

individuals within the finite world. The work explores the duty Christians have to love

others.[8] If the two positions seem incompatible or paradoxical, this is more due to the

biblical source material than to any philosophical erring by Kierkegaard. He goes some

way towards reconciling these two positions by making a distinction between interested

and disinterested love.[9] Interested love is the love which discriminates – it judges who is deserving of love, whether due to actions, familial ties, beauty, need, and so on. Disinterested love is the love Kierkegaard understands to be required by the New Testament, as it is a love which is directed at all, whether or not they are deemed deserving of it. It is a non-judgemental love. Yet it is questionable whether there is a great deal of difference between this levelled form of love, and the other forms of levelling Kierkegaard had argued against. If love is gained solely by the very fact of being human, does love maintain any meaning? In this area, it does seem that Stirner's support of interested love is more satisfactory and meaningful than Kierkegaard's disinterested love.

The philosophical problems of Kierkegaard's subjectivism are nowhere more apparent than in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in which he argued that truth is subjective. This was discussed at some length earlier, but it will be useful to briefly return to Kierkegaard's explanation here in order to better highlight the inherent problems. Truth is subjective for Kierkegaard because of the individual's inability to abstract from himself. Whenever an individual ascertains a truth, it is always through the prism of his self. He can never be a dispassionate observer, because in one way or another he is always passionately involved. As such, Kierkegaard argues that whilst it is conceivable that truth is objective for God, for finite human individuals it can only be subjective. Kierkegaard's penchant for the paradoxical undoubtedly informs his definition, but it is questionable whether complex philosophical questions can or should be brushed aside in such a manner. Heidegger in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* appears to have this Kierkegaardian theme in mind when he attacks 'all the effete latecomers, with their overly clever wit, [who] believe they can be done with the

historical power of seeming by explaining it as "subjective", where the essence of this "subjectivity" is something extremely dubious.'[10] Whilst attempting to combat the pretensions of scientifically grounded knowledge found in the works of contemporary Danish Hegelians, Kierkegaard seems to have denied philosophy any sort of understanding of what truth is. Whilst he is correct to criticise the rampant anthropocentric assumptions in metaphysical proclamations of the truth, Kierkegaard is still mired in the same subject-object dualism from which these mistaken assumptions arise. Whilst admitting that man is not the receptacle for all knowledge (this role is played by God), Kierkegaard still understands truth as being when a subject processes sensory data about an object. He rejects the realist and idealist positions on truth, but only to assert the fallibility of the subject in making judgement on the correspondence between Being and thought (and vice versa). Heidegger's understanding of truth as unconcealment (*alētheia*) provides a much more satisfactory response to this problem.

Kierkegaard's extreme subjectivity, whilst making sense in the context of his religious individualism and providing a corrective for much of the objective pretensions to be found in the history of metaphysics, means that his philosophy can never fully broach the question of Being. In keeping with his Christianity which informed the entirety of his philosophical work, Kierkegaard places man in a privileged position above all other beings.[11] This necessarily leads to the understanding of non-human beings as a resource for achieving human ends. Kierkegaard might not explicitly expound this view in such a blunt manner, but throughout his writings man is the only one of God's creations he exalts (albeit in an incredibly lowly fashion when compared to the glory of God Himself). Yet it is not only non-human beings who receive a less than effusive coverage in Kierkegaard's thought, he also seems to have

little time for his interactions with other human beings. We have already discussed this briefly above. As his only focus (as he explicitly states) is the question of how the individual is to become a Christian and his only interest is the eternal happiness promised by becoming a true Christian through faith, Kierkegaard only strays into questions of the relationships between men when they have a bearing on these matters. His most direct interventions on worldly matters – his attack on levelling in *A Literary Review* and the prolonged campaign against the state Church towards the end of his life – are both defences against tendencies in society leading individuals astray from the difficulties and resultant eternal happiness of Christian faith. Kierkegaard's writings have little time for discussing other earthly difficulties, interactions or entanglements. Such concerns are in many ways just obstacles to be avoided on the path towards faith. Kierkegaard thus manages to achieve a philosophy which is both anthropocentric *and* largely disinterested in earthly human matters (or any other earthly matter). Whilst being fully consistent with his existentialist form of Christianity, Kierkegaard's philosophy cannot be satisfactorily translated into a more secular worldview without both losing sight of Kierkegaard's original intentions and ending up with an irrationalist's charter. Without the guiding theme of the struggle towards Christian faith, what would be left would be criterionless free choice and asociality in the pursuit of the individual's own happiness. Put more bluntly, Kierkegaard stripped of Christianity comes very close to being Max Stirner. Removing Kierkegaard's thought from the very impetus for those writings, as some of those operating under the umbrella of existentialism have undoubtedly been tempted to do, is to make a mockery of his intentions. Kierkegaard's writings certainly contain myriad insights to enrich a more secular philosophy (his criticisms of Hegelianism for instance), but to utter his words

whilst withholding the word "Christianity" would be to make Kierkegaard meaningless. Even if one were to acknowledge and accept fully Kierkegaard's Christian worldview, his hyper-subjectivity means that within his thought one will never be able to find a truly satisfactory approach to the question Being, even if many of the tools to be used towards this end are still to be found here.

Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison.

Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison´s personal idealism was of particular interest because of the way in which he engaged directly in debate with his contemporaries in the largely orthodoxly Hegelian school of British idealism. Particularly in his Aristotelian Society debate with Bernard Bosanquet, Pringle-Pattison's personalistic objections to the objective pretensions of absolute idealism come to the fore. Pringle-Pattison is adamant here, and throughout his writings, that when ordering beings into their place as components of the Absolute, one ought not to forget that these beings are individual centres of existence. As a thought experiment it is entirely possible to abstract the "content" of the Absolute from the beings in which it resides, but this cannot provide any sort of satisfactory basis for a philosophy. Pringle-Pattison is correct on this matter to insist upon the formal separateness of individual beings whilst simultaneously acknowledging that to abstract these beings from the social whole in which they exist would be meaningless. Despite the way in which Pringle-Pattison's thought provided a successful corrective against many of the excesses of absolute idealism, his own positive contributions remain weighed down by the inadequacies found throughout the personalist school of thought.

Although Pringle-Pattison can boast a much greater academic rigour than the more famous leading figures of the personalist movement, Mounier[12] and Bowne,[13] he is not immune from being guilty of making similar philosophical omissions. Heidegger succinctly summarises the problem of personalism in *Being and Time* when he complains that for such philosophies of life, ''life' itself as a kind of Being does not become ontologically a problem.'[14] Particularly in personalism, the concept of the "person" tends to get slipped in with little in the way of explanation of justification. Mounier, for instance, introduces man as being 'wholly body and wholly spirit'[15] with no attempt at justification of this except for the briefest of attacks on a dualistic, antagonistic conception of this pairing. Pringle-Pattison similarly appears to have accepted his similar conception of the person *a priori*. Undoubtedly Pringle-Pattison's Christianity – a Christianity much more sober than that of Kierkegaard – informs his understanding of the person, but personal faith cannot be used to excuse the avoidance of philosophical questions. In the conclusion to *Hegelianism and Personality*, Pringle-Pattison attributes selfhood to a synthesis of subject and object, and attacks the idea that because each self has a universal element that it is logical to conclude 'that it is one universal Self that thinks in all so-called thinkers.'[16] This is clearly a step forward from the avoidance of Mounier, but still does not approach the ontological problem cited by Heidegger. Pringle-Pattison is utterly correct, as he does after the above quotation and elsewhere, to insist on the formal distinctness of selves. He is correct also to attack philosophical realism, but seems still to be stuck in the realism/idealism dualism. Both positions have strengths, but both are ultimately flawed ways of approaching the question of Being. Pringle-Pattison's reformist approach to idealism leaves his philosophy trapped both within Hegelianism and, more widely, within metaphysics.

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Pringle-Pattison's personalism is unashamedly anthropocentric. This is unsurprising given the focus in his thought upon the dignity of the person, and the person's relationship with God. In the latter case, Pringle-Pattison describes his approach as being a critical anthropomorphism which avoids 'transferring to God all the features of our own self-consciousness'[17] even if we must rely on the data of our own self-consciousness to gain even a cursory understanding about the self-consciousness of the deity. As has been mentioned above and shall be argued in detail below, the anthropocentric approach necessarily results in an only partial and incomplete approach to the question of Being. Anthropocentrism also fuels the tendency in philosophy to consider non-human beings as being of secondary importance, and a resource to be used and ordered to achieve human ends. This is clearly not Pringle-Pattison's intention and no doubt he would be appalled at the suggestion, yet this does not alter that this is a consequence of this kind of philosophising – a consequence recognised by Heidegger in his later writings.

Conclusion.

The journey through subjectivist reactions to Hegelian objectivity to the anti-anthropocentrism of the later Heidegger saw many twists and turns along the way. In order to conclude it may be useful to reiterate the position we are in at the end of the study. Particular reference will be made to direction in which the study commenced and how this relates to the final destination. In the beginning the aim was to discuss and evaluate a number of subjectivist philosophies with regards to their approach to the question of Being, as well as the political consequences of these approaches. Before

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briefly returning to the specific approaches covered, we must first return to *why* it was that the subjectivist approaches were ever needed. As the study focusses upon the post-Hegelian period, it was inevitable that Hegelian philosophy came to represent all that was being acted against, yet it might be more accurate to think of Hegelianism as marking the culmination of an ongoing trend throughout metaphysics to aim to achieve an objective philosophy. Subjectivist philosophies were necessary to counteract the phasing out of the role of the individual person in metaphysics. Objective philosophers seemingly believed that they could abstract from their own subjectivity to pass judgement on the machinations of the whole, simultaneously belittling the role of any single individual within the movement of the whole and failing to remember that they themselves are just this kind of single individual. Finite individuality should not be seen as limit to the understanding of anything beyond one's self, but any philosophy which fails to account for the status of the philosopher himself is built upon less than sturdy foundations.

Max Stirner's writings portrayed the resurgent individual at war with anything and everything which stands in the way of this individuality. Despite the bravery in his unflinching questioning, Stirner fails to adequately account for social relationships and other such complexities of existence, seemingly preferring crude sketches in the place of a more detailed exposition. Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy adds to Stirner's myriad details which were lacking. His perceptive writings enable us to gain a much clearer picture of the individual's inner existence in all its complexity. Similarly to Stirner, Kierkegaard failed to provide a satisfactory account for the individual's outer existence – his dealings with others. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison's thought is certainly less radical than that of Stirner and Kierkegaard, attempting to develop a reformed

personalist Hegelianism. Despite clearly recognising many of the faults in the philosophies of his more orthodoxly Hegelian contemporaries, Pringle-Pattison's refusal to entirely step outside the Hegelian umbrella closes him off from following the consequences of his criticisms to where they lead. The Heidegger of *Being and Time* was certainly the most successful of the subjectivist approaches discussed. Heidegger's understanding of individual human existence was able to achieve a balance between explaining the individual's inner existence *and* explaining the ways in which the individual lives amongst other individuals whose ways of Being are similar to his own. Through this explanation of Dasein's way of Being, Heidegger had hoped to be able to gain a better grasp of Being itself, yet this was not to be the case. For this, an anti-anthropocentricism would be needed as provided in Heidegger's later writings.

Earlier it was remarked that it may seem that by embracing Heidegger's later anti-anthropocentric writings, we have returned to the impersonal objectivity of the Hegelians. In place of the abstract Absolute we have substituted the equally abstract "Being". Such objections could not be further from the truth. The later Heidegger's attempts to think of Being without recourse to beings is precisely the opposite of the Hegelian Absolute. The Absolute is the whole in which all finite individuality is dissolved; the relationship between individual beings and Being is more complex. As we saw earlier in the later Heidegger's thought, beings are grounded in Being, but Being itself is without ground: it is the abyss. To attempt to think of the Absolute without reference to its constituent parts would be nonsense, but Being *is* quite separate from the sum of existent beings. The later Heidegger does not provide a clear and easy answer to this question of Being, but does provide suggestions of the direction in which this new non-metaphysical thinking might head, highlighting the importance of

appropriation/*Ereignis* and Being's relationship with time. Heidegger's earlier achievements regarding the individual's existence are not washed away by his later works. Anti-anthropocentrism does not in any way mean that Heidegger's explanations of Dasein no longer stand, but rather that there is more to understanding Being than understanding the kind of Being of human individuals. Human existence does not cease to Be, but rather loses its centrality to philosophy allowing for a far less blinkered view of Being. The recognition of the limited nature of Dasein with regards to Being in general is best illustrated in Nietzsche's early writings, perhaps ironically given Nietzsche's role in Heidegger's philosophy as marking the culmination of humanistic metaphysics:

> In some remote corner of the universe… there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the haughtiest and most mendacious minute of "world history" – yet only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths the star grew cold, and the clever animals had to die. One might invent such a fable and still not have illustrated sufficiently how wretched, how shadowy and flighty, how aimless and arbitrary, the human intellect appears in nature. There have been eternities when it did not exist; and when it is done for again, nothing will have happened.[18]

In the grand scheme of Being, Dasein is of limited importance. Yet it is this limited nature which in the end heralds our freedom of possibility.

It is difficult to read Heidegger's later philosophy without sensing a degree of pessimism not present in his earlier work. Where *Being and Time* made a great deal of

Dasein's openness to possibility, the later works seem to be more interested in chronicling Dasein's limitations. Pessimism is too strong a term, and certainly one Heidegger himself rejected. Instead in the later works, Heidegger displays a modesty about Dasein's importance. This modesty provides an adequate shield against the projects of metaphysical philosophy which always harboured some design or other about how man should live and what his mission should be. Heidegger's later thought does away with such hegemonic ideas, leaving a void in their place. This anarchism may deprive the individual of the apparent certainty of philosophical grounding and the sense of a calling higher than oneself, but in its place is left freedom. This freedom is modest due to the limited nature of Dasein – it is because of this that Heideggerian anarchism is perhaps best thought of as a kind of conservative anarchism – but it is a freedom against which nothing may trespass. Government is always grounded explicitly or otherwise in a philosophical ideal, an ideal from which government acquires its legitimation to coerce individuals who are in opposition to the government's philosophically grounded mission, be this mission economic equality, racial purity, utilitarian calculations or *any other purpose for claiming coercive authority against those who do not consent*. By removing from philosophy its ability to ground and therefore justify particular actions, Heidegger has removed all legitimacy from any form of coercion. Governments can no longer legitimately coerce the unwilling to obey in order to achieve a philosophically validated goal. Consensual cooperation for mutually agreed upon ends is perfectly acceptable, but after Heidegger's leaps forward in his later works, any government which lacks an acceptance of individuals seceding from being governed can no longer be acceptable. The later Heidegger still demands a passionate and yet modest decisionism, but no

individual's decision is any stronger or valid than any other individual's, and as such it cannot be acceptable for any individual to coerce another into any action or inaction.

Thinking does not and should not come to an end with the later Heidegger. Much can still be done to extend upon Heidegger's attempts to think of Being without recourse to beings, as well as to elucidate Dasein's limited role within anti-anthropocentric philosophy. In place of the arrogance which claims to have explained scientifically the processes of totality, we have arrived at a modest position which not only makes radically modest claims regarding the reach of philosophy, but also makes modest claims about man's place in the context of Being. It seems unlikely after millennia of metaphysical thinking that the later Heidegger's advances will be mirrored anytime soon outside of academia. Yet rather than end another chapter with a note of pessimism, it seems more appropriate to conclude by sharing for a moment in the optimism of Angelus Silesius:

God dwells in light supreme, no path can give access;
Yourself must be that light, if you would there progress.[19]

1. R.W.K. Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

2. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Vol. 4: Nihilism* in *Nietzsche Volumes Three and Four* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

3. Paterson, Op. cit., pp286-310.

4. Søren Kierkegaard, 'Entries from Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers' in *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p185.

5. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p155.

6. Ibid, p156.

7. Luke 14:26.

8. Matthew 22:39, for example.

9. George Pattison, 'Foreword' in Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), pxiv.

10. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp110-111.

11. Genesis 1:26.

12. Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1952).

13. Borden Parker Bowne, *Personalism* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1908).

14. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), p72 [H46].

15. Mounier, Op. cit., p3.

16. Andrew Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality* Second Edition (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1893), p227.

17. Ibid, p235.

18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* in *The Portable Nietzsche* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), p42.

19. Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubinic Wanderer* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p42.

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