

# HEIDEGGER'S *CONTRIBUTIONS* TO EDUCATION (FROM THINKING)

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## **Ontotheology and destinerrancy: Thinking through the disastrous ambiguity**

Throughout Martin Heidegger's entire path of thought, "genuine or authentic education" means education in thinking being. In other words, education—understood in terms of what is most proper to it, what brings education most into its own—means readying human beings to think being. Most properly understood in turn, *thinking being* (or *worlding the earth*, to use the "middle" Heidegger's terms) means actively participating in that special kind of world-disclosure through which (1) human beings, (2) the other entities with which we deal, (3) the being of us and those entities, and (4) being itself all "come into their own" together simultaneously in a momentous "event of enowning" or *Ereignis*, a "truth event" or enduringly meaningful happening of ontological truth.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The brevity of this essay—an experiment in collaborative writing which we thank *Chiasma* for hosting—requires us to presuppose a significant amount of previous scholarly work. On Heidegger's critique of the Western tradition's understanding of metaphysics as *ontotheology* and his revolutionary vision of education as the means for leading us beyond metaphysics, see Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On how the collapse of *Being and Time*'s guiding project of fundamental ontology gave rise to the later Heidegger's critique of metaphysics as ontotheology and his post-metaphysical thinking of being, see Thomson, "The Failure of Philosophy: Why Didn't *Being and Time* Answer the Question of Being?" in Lee Braver, ed., *Division III of Being and Time: Heidegger's Unanswered Question of Being* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, forthcoming). For an articulation of his positive alternative to the nihilism of modernity, see Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), ch. 6 of which provides an orienting overview and explanation of the main text we are drawing on here.

At the same time—in the impossible diachrony of such a momentous event, a linear-time shattering, measure-bestowing “instant” (in which the future draws upon and overflows the past and present and so arrives in the finite and yet never fully comprehensible abundance of its real possibilities)—authentic education does not *only* mean education in the thinking of being. For this “of” harbours a dangerously misleading ambiguity between two different ways of understanding being: (1) as the metaphysical being of entities, or (2) as the post-metaphysical “being as such,” that *Ur*-phenomenon which has never been exhausted by the entire historical succession of epoch-grounding, metaphysical understandings of the being of entities that “it” both informs and exceeds. The middle Heidegger (most evident in the transitional writings of 1929–38), who first thinks the truth event of *Ereignis*—or for whom this long-haunting word first comes into its own, bringing Heidegger into his own as a thinker with it, albeit shatteringly—is an unstable figure, essentially in transition between these two ways of thinking being, and so *on the way* from his own “early” *metaphysical* (or doubly, ontotheologically foundationalist) ambitions to his “later” *post-metaphysical* project (the project that takes place on the far side of all such ontotheologically foundationalist ambitions).

The famous *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning)*, written between 1936 and 1938 (with the core text, the first seven “sections” or “fugues,” written between 1936 and 1937, but all withheld from publication until 1989, following Heidegger’s stipulation), powerfully documents the most tumultuous moment of transitional thinking that takes place at the end of Heidegger’s middle period. In *Contributions*, we can hear Heidegger letting go of his “early” metaphysical attempt to reach back to the first beginning of Western history in order to recover a “fundamental ontology” or unified understanding of “the meaning of being in general” (the fundamentalist metaphysical ambition that explicitly drives *Being and Time*, but inadvertently drives it beyond itself and so beyond metaphysics). Instead, we witness him undertaking to *think* (post-philosophically) an alternative-disclosing critique of the core of the Western philosophical tradition’s “first philosophy,” that is, our tradition-defining understanding and practice of “metaphysics” as *ontotheology*, which means the attempt to “doubly ground” the entire intelligible order by grasping its innermost core and outermost

expression simultaneously and linking them in a doubly foundationalist, floor-to-ceiling understanding of the being of everything that is.<sup>2</sup>

In *Contributions*, Heidegger discovers that real education is not simply education in the thinking of being, since that *of* indicates not only the essential matter to be thought (namely, *Seyn* or “being as such”) but also the ontotheological understanding of the “being of entities” (*Sein des Seienden*). In *Contributions*, Heidegger recognizes both that (1) this “disastrous” ambiguity facilitated the historical eclipse of “being as such” by “the being of entities” and that (2) this eclipse defines and determines the Western philosophical tradition of metaphysics and thereby generates the fundamental “errancy” (*Irre*) of human being. Such errancy should thus be understood as a going astray in our thinking of being, an errancy that “progressively” subordinates being to our thinking of it, and so initiates and unfolds the withdrawing of being from human being (and so from the being of all other entities, insofar as their being rests on the ontological disclosure of our *Das-ein* or “being-here,” the making-intelligible of the place in which we happen to find ourselves).

The basic historical trajectory of Western humanity (and increasingly the entire globe, insofar as the whole planet falls under the dominion of our ontotheological understanding of the being of entities) becomes a destiny of errancy—or, to employ Derrida’s brilliant neologism, a *destinerancy*. This is the “destiny”—Heidegger’s technical term for the *communal* (that is, common to human being) “fate” or historical happening—of being’s eclipse and forgetting or withdrawal. Obviously, this is also Heidegger’s phenomenological and hermeneutic *secularization* of the narrative of the Fall. Yet being should not be understood as some quasi-agential entity but rather as an apparently inexhaustible phenomenological source of historical intelligibility that has been overlooked and forgotten by every metaphysical attempt to exhaust being’s earthy abundance in a single historical world by doubly grounding that world in an unchanging ontotheological understanding of the being of entities. Ontotheology is thus the

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2 For the most extended and darkly elucidating gathering-together of Heidegger’s critiques of (1) Western philosophy as metaphysics, (2) the plights of modernity, (3) the need for an other beginning for philosophy, and (4) the *educational* preparation needed for humans to think that other beginning (and so the central text on which we focus here), see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard. Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

impossible attempt by finite human thought to secure being (all “reality”) by understanding it metaphysically, and so reductively, only as “the totality of entities as such”—as “all that is” grasped floor-to-ceiling, from the microscopic to the telescopic, from the innermost core to the outermost perspective—as if reality could finally be stabilized by being doubly anchored and so secured all the way from the most elementary particle of physics to the ultimate God’s-eye-view of the entire cosmological totality.

In one “grand unification” after another, the metaphysical tradition of successive ontotheologies stretches from Plato’s thinking of the forms as both paradigms and universals all the way to Nietzsche’s “unthought” metaphysics of “eternally recurring will to power.” The latter (Nietzsche’s unthought metaphysics) preconceives the being of entities as nothing but becoming, mere forces coming together and breaking apart with no goal beyond the maximal perpetuation of force itself. Insofar as we understand “the being of entities” in these ontologically empty terms (these terms that forget being and so empty entities of all their particular, inherent meaning), we tend to relate to everything, including ourselves, as mere “resources” (*Bestand*), on stand-by for efficient ordering and endless optimization, the mere maximization of input-output ratios. This empty and nihilistic “technological” ontotheology supplies the implicit “framework” (*Gestell*) through which we late-moderns increasingly understand, and so treat, everything that is. As a result, the symptoms of being’s withdrawal are becoming ever more obvious in the plights of our late-modern epoch, in the growing nihilism and thoughtlessness visible in our ubiquitous commodification of human existence and our unthinking homogenization of existential possibilities and occurrences. Heidegger discovers the evidence of our destitute errancy throughout the Western philosophical tradition of metaphysics as *ontotheology* and so also throughout the historical epochs on intelligibility that this ontotheological tradition focuses, “doubly grounds,” and transforms.

Let us take a step back and notice something concealed by its very obviousness. The stand on being that determines the fundamental errancy of the Western philosophical tradition is a “position.” It is a *position* toward *all* entities, toward the real, toward “the being of the totality of entities as such,” an *ontotheological* stand toward all phenomena and things, all entities, anything that in any way “is.” Every “fundamental metaphysical position” is a *stand*, a metaphysical *understanding* of “the truth about the totality of

entities as such”—in a word, an *ontotheological* stand. Heidegger discovers that the historical imposition of this position—the doubly fundamentalist, ontotheological stance at the core of every “fundamental metaphysical position”—derives from the first position that the Ancient Greeks took toward being. Thales and Anaximander already understood being reductively, in terms of the *arché* or “ground” of everything that is, albeit differently (in a proto-ontotheological difference), as the “innermost” ground unifying all entities (with Thales’s proto-ontological “water”) and as the “outermost” ground from which all reality derives and by appeal to which the meaningfulness of reality can be vindicated (with Anaximander’s proto-theological *apeiron*, the indefinite or infinite source and ultimate destination of all entities).

In other words, ontotheological position-taking already emerges within the original domains of Ancient Greek questioning and thinking—the inceptual questions and answers that become the Western tradition’s first philosophy, its *metaphysics*—and takes decisive hold in Plato’s thought. Indeed, the dual ambitions behind (1) Thales’s proto-ontological attempt to grasp the fundamental “ground” (or *arché*) of being by isolating its innermost core and unifying element as “water,” on the one hand, and (2) Anaximander’s antipodal effort to grasp the “ground” proto-theologically by taking up the God’s-eye “view from nowhere” and so encompassing and vindicating everything that is by understanding it in terms of its ultimate source and destiny as *apeiron* (the indefinite or infinite), on the other hand, both become unified metaphysically (that is, *ontotheologically*) in (3) Plato’s thinking of the forms as both the unifying ground and as the highest expression of what is. This dual, antipodal and yet unified *positionality*, Heidegger thinks, is “the basic position that presides over Western metaphysics” and so over the modern plight that Western metaphysics unfolds.<sup>3</sup> It is also the basic position for thinking being and entities that has been taught (and is still taught today) in “education” within the Western philosophical tradition (because such an ontotheological understanding of being quietly guides its age’s unifying understanding of what is).<sup>4</sup>

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3 Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, 143.

4 Heidegger’s lecture on “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” takes Plato’s cave allegory as a clear depiction of the essence of “education” and also as a proper positioning of human beings toward what is. See Martin Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” in *Pathmarks*, ed.

According to the critique of the Western philosophical tradition of metaphysics that Heidegger begins to voice in *Contributions*, humans *position* themselves to think beyond entities in their uniqueness and rarity, and instead to think toward essence, essential being. We learn to regard and represent entities by what they have in common (as *eidōs*, “Idea,” “Form”), such that the uniqueness which each entity holds is denied its presencing, its showing forth of its own inherent, dynamic, polysemic or multi-meaningful presencing.<sup>5</sup> In order to disabuse us of this metaphysical positionalization (by sublating and so transcending it from within), Heidegger thinks “position” in terms of its polysemic essence, thereby discerning the way it points toward its determining significance in the unfolding of the Western philosophical and consequent cultural tradition. Position requires a human stance, implying bodily orientation and its sustaining viewpoint. Position presumes for human being the status or advantage of coming *before*, standing over, and mastering through *ratio* (that measurement and judicious balancing of equivalences at the heart of reason) the entities it encounters. Position also implies job or role, or even ontological duty or office, the conferred power to stand toward and over what-is in order to *make* sense of it. Position is moreover an ontological posit—indeed, one paradigmatically at work, as we have heard, in that decisive, determining metaphysical ground for making sense of what-is (for regarding, thinking, understanding, and saying what-is in terms of the reigning ontotheology). Before becoming the ontological posit metaphysics presumes, then—and this is the *crucial* moment in Heidegger’s nascent efforts to undermine and so overturn the metaphysical tradition—position is initially a questioning approach to what-is, an inceptual questioning that only later devolves to the single guiding question that secures the posit as position (or as the basic, presiding, determining ground for making sense of what-is).

As Heidegger has long maintained, the single guiding and presiding question that determines metaphysics as posited within the Western philosophical tradition is: “what are entities?”<sup>6</sup> This guiding question of

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William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155–182; Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, ch. 1; and *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, ch. 1, on which we are drawing here.

5 For an initial articulation of Heidegger’s critique of Western metaphysics, see *Contributions to Philosophy*, 133–176; and Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, 169–91.

6 Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 12ff.

metaphysics (what *are* entities?) is the question *of* being as it is understood *metaphysically* (and so reductively, in terms of that dangerous ambiguity of being explored earlier). This guiding question also leads to a leading question, Heidegger maintains, one which (like all leading questions) narrows the domain of thinking by approaching entities solely with an eye to what they have in common, their common being or “beingness.” As Heidegger explains in *Contributions*, “anyone who asks about [...]the being of entities is standing in the realm of the very question that guided the beginning of Western philosophy and its history up to its end in Nietzsche. We therefore name *this* question of being (the question of the being of entities) the guiding question.” Historically, this most general form of the guiding question of metaphysics “was impressed on [the philosophical tradition] by Aristotle”; *ousia* (usually translated as “substance”) is Aristotle’s way of understanding “the beingness of entities.” For the entire subsequent metaphysical tradition, “being means *beingness*,” the being that doubly grounds entities, rather than being as such, the seemingly inexhaustible, polysemically excessive source of their dynamic, phenomenological manifestation.<sup>7</sup> With Aristotle, in other words, the questioning approach to what is that emerges from the inceptual domains of Western philosophy comes decisively to lead philosophy’s unfolding into metaphysics, misleading the question of being by directing it into the question of the being of entities (or their essential beingness). In this way, Heidegger teaches us to recognize that philosophical thinking and questioning are led away from entities themselves in their unique, inherent, and myriad presencings.

Of course, Plato already paved the way for our “destinerrancy,” in which human beings in their thinking and relating to what is pursue the metaphysical path of essential understanding by trying to see the outer look, form, or idea of the essential beingness of entities—and here Plato himself was following the doubly foundationalist moves already made by Thales and Anaximander. What is most important is that, through these decisive, first (mis)steps of metaphysics, human beings are led away from thinking the being of what is in terms of *phusis*—that is, as what issues forth in nature, what comes forth, lingers, and then returns back from whence it came. Instead of this inceptive *physical* thinking of nature in its unstillable polysemic dynamism, human beings learn instead to seek what issues

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

forth *metaphysically* by conceiving being in terms of what looks stable and unchanging beyond, above, or within the presencing of *phusis*. As Western “meta-physics” unfolds in this way (above and beyond the dynamism of nature), *phusis* gets rethought as what issues from the meta-physical beyond. For example, the entities manifesting *phusis* get conceived (that is, metaphysically grasped and so posited) as mere instantiations of paradigmatic forms which themselves issue from higher forms, ultimately from that highest form of the divine mover and creator initially posited in Plato’s metaphysics and then decisively unfolded in the metaphysical thought of Aristotle and the Church fathers.

Within this Western philosophical tradition of metaphysics, *thinking* itself gets reduced to “*ratio*—reason as the guideline and anticipatory grasp for the interpretation of beingness,” and human beings seek to see the beingness of entities in the metaphysical ideas that could conceptualize being as stable and unchanging, instead of discerning and creatively disclosing the polysemic presencing inherent to entities in their dynamic phenomenological manifestation.<sup>8</sup> Thus human beings come to regard thinking and knowledge as the representing *of* entities by conceptualizing their essences, to such an extent that those conceptual representations supersede (and eclipse) the inherent significance of the entities themselves. As the question of being thus unfolds reductively within the Western metaphysical tradition, truth becomes not the disclosing of the unique and myriad presencing of entities but rather the representation of their common or essential look, as in Plato’s ideas and in the modern theoretical conceptualizations that continue to refine this “thinking,” reducing it to ever more precise cognitive representations allegedly capable of securing a monosemic exactitude that would finally still the polysemic fullness of entities in their temporal unfolding.

### **The educational resonance of Heidegger’s “other beginning”**

Education, consequently, becomes quietly guided by this metaphysical positioning of humans toward the being of entities and so increasingly oriented to the teaching of correct representation, the correct or true beholding of the essential look of any entity or group of entities. Heidegger

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

develops this critique in “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” one of his most explicit writings on education. Here Heidegger accepts Plato’s allegory of the cave as illustrating the essence of *paideia* or real education as a passage of turning, “leading the whole human being in the turning around of his or her essence.”<sup>9</sup> Plato’s “real” education is illustrated paradigmatically by the turning of the cave-dweller, initially *positioned* toward the shadows on the cave wall, toward the light of the sun—an educational repositioning that allows him to see what has previously been positioned and posited as truth (and so see its narrowing limitations)—the correct forms of what-is, seen in the bright sunlight of the highest form. Thus, according to Heidegger, Plato “wants to show that the essence of *paideia* does not consist in merely pouring knowledge into the unprepared soul as if it were some container held out empty and waiting. On the contrary, real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it.”<sup>10</sup> At the same time, however, Heidegger subtly distinguishes his own thinking of being from Plato’s metaphysical *relating* to the beingness of entities. For Heidegger, being’s multilateral, multidimensional, burgeoning presencing withdraws (by overflowing any attempt to grasp it), and so hides itself (from any representational positing), leaving in its place merely the common look of being, metaphysical beingness.

It is thus not Plato’s description of real education that is errant for Heidegger—it is the way Plato metaphysically yokes this true pedagogical turning to a limiting idea of correctness as unchanging certainty, rather than returning it all the way back into the original domains of human thinking and questioning. In a Heideggerian reading, this would also be an emancipatory return to the domain of the cave itself, a deeper excavation of that cleft opening in the earth and its riches (which already in Plato withdraw by overflowing), concealing a darkness richer than any shadow, an earthiness in which metaphysical positioning has not yet been set up as the attempt to establish a masterful position on the beingness of entities. For Heidegger, then, real education does indeed lay hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety, first of all by leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it. But this place of our essential being—to which

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9 Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” 166.

10 Ibid., 167.

real education leads us—has withdrawn from us during the unfolding of Western ontotheology, and from Plato first of all.

Instead of the metaphysical thinking that regards entities as dumb, dark objects devoid of their own meaningful presencing until metaphysical representation comes and lights them with its ideas (alighting on or overlaying them with the content of its own representations), Heidegger aims in *Contributions* for a radically other thinking, an “other beginning” for philosophy (and so for human beings), but one that must spring from a deeper thinking of that position on beingness with which Western philosophy launched our destinerrancy in its first beginning as metaphysics. Only real education—a revolutionary reunion with that place which we are, a place from which being’s manifest abundance has not entirely withdrawn or disappeared—can prepare humans to think and question inceptually in the originating domain of an “other beginning” for philosophy. Only such real education can acclimate human thinking to its other, more original place and let essential being be—as thinking meaningful presencing.

But is such real education—a radical restart not only for education but also for the ways of existing with which education collaborates (truth, science, arts, as well as philosophy as thinking, questioning, teaching, learning)—even possible? Such real education—a revolutionary education that brings us full-circle back to the place of our essential being—is needed to reverse our destinerrancy, the plight catalyzed by the withdrawal of being’s meaningful presence from the life of contemporary late-modernity, and yet *Contributions* deems this withdrawal irrevocable. How then is such real education even possible when it requires thoughtful (and thus being-full) laying hold, turning, leading, and acclimating? *Contributions* answers: only if such an education can first call forth transitional thinking, a thinking catalyzed by a pedagogy practiced as relentless hermeneutic engagement with the ontotheological tradition, a pedagogy that repeatedly undergoes a version of Socratic *aporia*, the shocking experience of the impasse in the path of metaphysical thinking, the collision with the unmasterable that reminds one of one’s ignorance, of the unmasterability of the core philosophical problems by representational thought. Such *aporia*, properly guided, can result in the counter-knowledge that one is not yet thinking, since one is unable to answer the call of what remains most thought-provoking within the pre-existing space provided by metaphysical representations and their drive

toward monosemic exactitude. Such is the call for a leap in to a broader kind of thinking, one more capable of doing justice to the true complexity of our existential situation. This, in short, is Heideggerian *teaching*.

How then does Heidegger seek to effect that shock and catalyze transitional thinking in his audiences, in the readership of *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* particularly? (He thought this future audience would be more likely to consist of those “future ones” who had or were ready to leap from the first beginning of Western philosophy as metaphysics into the “other beginning.”) In *Contributions*, the Socratic shock happens in the section called “The Resonating” (*Der Anklang*), which catalogues a shocking list of modern plights and enacts its own shocked thinking as an engaged meditation on the essence of the contemporary plight (both his and ours, though they are not identical). These shocks are meant to resonate with and so provoke our thinking about the stultification of being at the heart of Western destinerrancy, thereby calling forth the most needful education. This most needful education is the thinking transition to an other philosophical beginning in a leap from (or, indeed, many structurally similar leaps from) the Western tradition’s first philosophy, its metaphysics conceived and practiced as ontotheology.

“The Resonating” is thus especially focused on the plight of contemporary education. Such late-modern education, Heidegger writes, has become mere preparation for our accelerating “transition to the technologized animal.”<sup>11</sup> The framework of such *technologized* education derives from our Nietzschean ontotheology of “eternally recurring will to power,” an unrecognized metaphysical understanding of the being of entities that increasingly reduces everything which human beings interact with to the status of mere *Bestand*: inherently meaningless resources on stand-by for endless optimization. The main symptoms of this technological enframing of education include speed, greatness understood only as massiveness (both mass appeal and gigantic size), calculability, and above all, human *machination*—which takes humanity to be the sole measure, maker, and master of all entities. Caught in the grip of such educational enframing, universities are becoming mere “business establishments” guided by the maximization of input/output ratios, alleged “sites of scientific research and teaching [purportedly] ever closer to reality,” but where nothing is originally questioned

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

or decided, where the shackles of our ontotheological cave continue to pass mostly unnoticed (or are celebrated almost as often as they are bemoaned).<sup>12</sup> With the burgeoning of biogenetics, the natural sciences “become components of machine technology and of business.” Meanwhile, the human sciences succumb to technological thinking, becoming newspaper sciences of gigantic scope, journalistically interpreting and publishing the current lived experience as quickly as possible in a form comprehensible to everyone (so that no one seems surprised or alarmed by the contemporary reduction of philosophy to “blogging,” with its superficial and reactionary treatment of the topics of the day, a herding of mass opinion in which the guiding acronym seems to be TL;DR: “too long; didn’t read”).<sup>13</sup>

In *Contributions*, Heidegger traces the earlier reduction of philosophy to “historiological and ‘system’-building erudition” as a reaction to the “dread of questioning,” a questioning which requires us to face our own “ignorance of the essence of truth.” Unable to endure the aporetic confrontation with the overflowing riches of a reality that exceeds and so escapes every attempt to master it conceptually, “truth deteriorates into certainty of representation and the security of calculation and lived experience.”<sup>14</sup> *Contributions* formulates the essence of our plight quite simply as *the abandonment of entities by being*. In other words, the inherently polysemic meaningfulness of what genuinely exists—a meaningfulness human beings remain called upon to creatively and responsibly disclose—has been eclipsed by the metaphysical tradition’s reduction of being to the being of entities. Owing to this metaphysical reduction at the core of the Western tradition, modern human beings conceive themselves merely as rational subjects and so regard what genuinely exists first as modern objects to be mastered and controlled and then as late-modern resources with nothing uniquely meaningful about them, thereby ignoring entities’ inherent meanings and instead projecting our pre-existing goals and projects onto them. So insidious is this plight that even our dim awareness of it is withdrawing; the greatest plight becomes “the lack of a sense of plight, [a lack that is] greatest where ‘truth’ has long since ceased to be a question [...] and even the attempt at such a

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12 Ibid., 121–22. See Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology*, chs. 3–4.

13 Ibid., 121.

14 Ibid., 38, 72, 93, 122. On the crucial importance of enduring such an anxiety-provoking confrontation with “the nothing” in order to transform it into a *poietic* disclosure of genuine meaning, see *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*, ch. 3.

question is dismissed as a disturbance and inconsequential musing.”<sup>15</sup>

Heidegger’s *Contributions* is thus his own untimely meditation, fittingly written during the years 1936-38, the most intense period of his hermeneutic altercation with Nietzsche. Heidegger’s stipulation that his untimely meditation be withheld from publication for decades (until all his public works had been published) reflects his recognition that at the time of its writing, *Contributions*’ time had not yet come. Looking out at his late-modern age (caught up in a war that has yet to end), Heidegger could not yet recognize the ready few prepared to think being transitionally, beyond metaphysics, as the real education of the future ones—the genuinely *post-modern*. But we can, perhaps, by thinking with and beyond Heidegger.

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15 Ibid., 37, 93, 99.