

# The Negativity of Time-Space

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In the title of Heidegger's initial project, the entire course that its demonstrative analyses will traverse is delimited. For it is through the increasingly more explicit analyses of time that the question of the meaning of being comes to be developed. Though time goes largely unconsidered in the articulation of the existentials that constitute the being of Dasein, the unveiling of temporality as their ground is merely deferred. Thus, once the ecstatic character of temporality has been exposed, the analysis of the existentials must be repeated so as to display their grounding in temporality.

It turns out, then, that the progression from being to time has as its complement a regression from time to being. This circle traces the limits of – that is, delimits – Heidegger's initial project in its broadest expanse.

The unveiling of time as grounding the being of Dasein extends, then, from the beginning to the end of *Being and Time*. Yet, in addition, there is to be found at the beginning and at the end, respectively, two unique and very different results that are to be – or that come to be – achieved. At the beginning the result is merely anticipated, namely, in the statement that the preliminary goal of *Being and Time* is the interpretation of time as the horizon of the understanding of being. Since, in the analyses within the work, meaning will be shown to have the character of horizon, this statement is tantamount to declaring that the goal is to interpret time as the meaning of being.

At the other extreme the result is quite different and conveys a sense of time that does not readily cohere with the initial statement. In the final chapter of *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes a certain kind of reckoning with time that contrasts both with the orientation

to the question of being and with the analysis of the ecstatic character of time. It is a reckoning that is turned concretely to things. It is by virtue of this reckoning that things are revealed as “within time.” Yet, this, in turn, presupposes another kind of reckoning, which Heidegger describes as the “concern with time that we know as astronomical and calendrical time-reckoning” (GA 2: 544/SZ 411, em).<sup>1</sup> He observes that, as thrown, Dasein is submitted to the rising and setting of the sun, that is, to the day as the most natural measure of time. It follows that the articulation of the day, hence of natural time, is determined by the course of the sun. Such is the context in which Heidegger puts forth a statement regarding time that appears to fall entirely outside the bounds of his ontological project. Most likely it is this externality, this displacement, that is marked by the reservation with which he writes the word: “‘Time’ [‘die Zeit’] first shows itself precisely in the sky, that is, there where one comes across it in directing oneself naturally according to it, so that ‘time’ [‘die Zeit’] even becomes identified with the sky” (GA 2: 554/SZ 419).

A similar reference is found later in *The Event* (dated 1941–42), though what is referred to is space rather than time. What is especially pertinent is that the reference is again to the sky. Heidegger declares that mundane space – the space occupied by things (*Dingraum*) – “is accessible to us only by way of the space in which the stars exist” (GA 71: 216–17/186).

In *Being and Time* the two results regarding time border on opposition, though this opposition is not at all simply symmetrical. On the one hand, time is oriented to being; indeed, as the projected meaning of being, it is cast even beyond being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) (See GA 24: 399/282). On the other hand, it is referred to beings such as the sun and to the space of such beings, the sky. Time is thus oriented both to being and to beings, in particular, to the space of those beings that we share “under the same sky” (GA 2: 546/SZ 413). To be sure, Heidegger attempts to rein in the latter result, to demonstrate that astronomical time is grounded in ecstatic temporality. Yet, regardless of whether this effort succeeds or not, the results of the analyses serve

to pose two comprehensive and fundamental tasks. The reference of time to the space of the heavenly bodies poses the task of thinking through the cohesion of time and space, of doing so in a manner that surpasses Heidegger's effort to found Dasein's spatiality on temporality, an effort that he later confesses was inadequate (GA 14: 29/23). But, in turn, in the oppositional relation between the two results there is posed the further task of thinking cohesive time and space in their relation to being, to the meaning of being, to what will come to be thought as the truth of being.<sup>2</sup>

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In the thinking that, thus protended, opens beyond *Being and Time*, a decisive – even the most decisive – role is assumed by the concept of negativity, though, in the course of this thinking, negativity will prove to limit the very provenance of the concept as such. Yet, already in *Being and Time* negativity enters into several of the most extensive and fundamental analyses. Three such analyses are especially pertinent.

The first is the analysis of anxiety. Here Heidegger forges a connection between this distinctively disclosive disposition and the experience of the uncanny (*Unheimlichkeit*). Expressing literally a not-being-at-home (*Nicht-zuhause-sein*), the word is taken to signify the indefiniteness in which Dasein finds itself in anxiety, “the nothing and nowhere,” as Heidegger calls it (GA 2: 250/SZ 188). In being exposed to this nothing and nowhere, Dasein encounters a distinctive mode of negativity.

In the second analysis, that of death, the indication is still more direct. It lays out the various forms in which negativity enters into being-toward-death. The analysis begins with the observation that in death “Dasein is no longer there [*ist . . . zum Nicht-mehr-da-sein geworden*]” (GA 2: 315/SZ 236). At a deeper level of the analysis, Heidegger describes the character of death in these – so often repeated and recast – words: it is “the possibility of *the impossibility of existence as such*” (GA 2: 348/SZ 262). Most telling is his declaration that death, as a possibility to which, from birth, Dasein comports itself, gives Dasein *nothing* – nothing that it could aim at actualizing, nothing even that

one could imagine actualizing. Being-toward-death gives *nothing*; it is pure negativity.

A decade later, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger radicalizes the connection between being-toward-death and negativity, while, in this very move, he broaches a concurrence of negativity and being, which by then will have proved to constitute the center – if there be a center – of his discourse. He declares that one of the fundamental determinations harbored in being-toward-death is that in it “there is concealed the essential belongingness of the *not* to being as such” (GA 65: 282/222).

The analysis of being-toward-death developed in *Being and Time* already tacitly reveals a connection between negativity and time. For the projection upon death as possibility is, like all projective understanding, grounded on temporality. Hence, the negativity that haunts being-toward-death leads back to temporality as its ground.

In the third of the analyses, that of guilt, Heidegger displays still more openly the specific form in which negativity enters into this phenomenon. He declares that in the very idea of guilt “there lies the character of the *not*” (GA 2: 376/SZ 283). More specifically, he writes: “we determine the formal existential idea of ‘guilty’ as: being the ground of a being [*Sein*] that is determined by a not – that is, *being the ground of a negativity* [*Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*]” (GA 2: 376/SZ 283). In the course of the analysis that follows, Heidegger identifies the ways in which, both in understanding and as thrown, necessarily guilty Dasein is the ground of a negativity. In understanding, a projection on certain possibilities entails that other possibilities are excluded, negated – that Dasein does *not* take up these other possibilities. In its thrownness, the negativity lies in Dasein’s inability to bring itself into its *Da*, that it cannot come back behind its thrownness so as to release from itself its being-thrown. In other words, the *Da* exceeds the range of what Dasein can take in hand and control.

Since in and through its constitutive moments Dasein is intrinsically guilty, negativity proves to be operative at its very core. Thus it is that Heidegger goes on to attribute negativity to care as such, that is, to

the very being of Dasein. He is explicit, indeed emphatic: “*Care itself, in its essence, is permeated through and through with negativity.*” Still more directly, more explicitly, he writes that care “means ... : being the (negative) ground of a negativity” (GA 2: 378/SZ 285). Furthermore, since temporality is the ontological meaning of care – the meaning of the being of Dasein – temporality cannot be devoid of the negativity that permeates care. Negativity cannot but be intrinsic to time.

Following the analysis by which is exposed the negativity within guilt and within care, there is a remarkable series of admissions and questions by which Heidegger attests to the incompleteness of his analysis. He grants that “the ontological meaning of the notness [*Nichtheit*] of this existential negativity [*Nichtigkeit*] remains obscure” (GA 2: 379/SZ 285, em). More expansively, he declares that the ontological essence of the *not* in general remains obscure. There follows a series of questions that effectively extend the range of the interrogation that needs to be brought to bear on negativity. Is it obvious, Heidegger asks, that every negative has the sense of a lack and that what positivity it has goes no further than the mere idea of passing over something null and void? In other words, is it obvious that in negating something one marks it as a nullity and through the negation passes on beyond it to something else? Equally portentous is Heidegger’s reference to dialectic. Why is it, he asks, that dialectic constantly resorts to the negative without, however, being able to ground it dialectically? Here Heidegger’s encounter with Hegel appears on the horizon. In that encounter he will take up the very questions that he will have posed in *Being and Time* regarding negativity.

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In Heidegger’s 1929 inaugural lecture “What is Metaphysics?” he takes up again the question of negativity, traversing along somewhat different lines much of the same terrain as in the corresponding analyses in *Being and Time*. Especially prominent is the account of anxiety as the attunement in which Dasein is brought, in the starkest manner, before the nothing. The lecture also recasts the description of the being of Dasein – that is, of care – as permeated with negativity.

In this regard Heidegger writes: “Da-sein means: being held out into the nothing” (GA 9: 115/91).

The most conspicuous advance in the lecture is broached by Heidegger’s contention that, were Dasein not held out into the nothing, it could never be related to beings or even to itself. In other words – words that indeed leap ahead – “The nothing is what makes possible the openness of beings as such for Dasein” (GA 9: 115/91). In words that leap even farther ahead: the nothing is not merely the indeterminate opposite of beings but “reveals itself as belonging to the being of beings” (GA 9: 120/94). Heidegger’s account entails that the nothing – that is, negativity – is not the opposite either of beings or of being itself. Rather than being the opposite of being – even in the dialectical sense – negativity belongs to being. Now, even more prominently, Hegel comes upon the scene. It is highly appropriate that at precisely this point Heidegger cites from Hegel’s *Logic*, namely, the statement that being and nothing are the same. Needless to say, everything depends on the sense assumed by the word *same*.

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Heidegger’s encounter with Hegel regarding negativity is inscribed in a text from 1938–39 entitled “Negativity: A Confrontation with Hegel Approached from Negativity” (GA 68: 1–60/3–47). Heidegger’s strategies in this text are to some degree governed by his acute awareness that any opposition to Hegel’s system risks becoming merely symmetrical therewith, in which case it cannot avoid being reabsorbed into the system. In the case most significant for Heidegger, the counter position cannot succeed by positing being and nothing as opposites, counter to Hegel’s assertion that being and nothing are the same. For in Hegel’s *Logic* this assertion comes about as the *Aufhebung* of the assertion that they are opposed. Since the assertion of opposition is, as *aufgehoben*, nonetheless preserved in the dialectical result, it is already incorporated into the system. In other words, what would be put forth as counter to Hegel’s system would be absorbed into the system and its character as counter to the system would be negated, suspended.

Heidegger grants that within Hegel's system negativity is the basic determination. He echoes Hegel's own assertion of "the enormous power of the negative," that it is "the energy of thought."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Heidegger charges that in the system there is "complete dissolution of negativity into the positivity of the absolute" (GA 68: 14/11, em). In Hegel's terms it is a matter of determinate negation, of negation that, in being itself negated, is transformed into positivity. The reiteration of such transformation defines the life of spirit, which is described in one of the most decisive and oft-cited passages in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The passage reads: Spirit "is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it. This tarrying [with the negative] is the magical power [*die Zauberkraft*] that converts it into being."<sup>4</sup>

Heidegger does not directly oppose Hegel's dissolution of negativity into positivity. He does not risk staking out a position that would then prove to be reabsorbed into the system. Rather, his opposition is oblique in that both being and the negative are fundamentally re-determined. As such they coincide, and to this extent there is an affinity with Hegel's assertion that being and nothing are the same. Yet, their coincidence is of an entirely different sort. The difference stems from the determination of negativity as abyss. Heidegger writes the word in hyphenated form, as *Ab-grund*, in order to express its coincidence with ground, that is, with being. Thus, he asserts that the most abyssal (*das Ab-gründigste*) is being itself. In order to express the mutation that being undergoes through its conjunction with the abyssal, he writes it in the form *Seyn*.

On the other hand, Heidegger asserts that negativity as abyss is opposed to being, that it is the abyssal contrary of being. And yet, he adds immediately that abyssal negativity, in its very difference from being, is the essence of being. In these assertions he opposes Hegel's position that being and nothing are the same. Yet, this opposition is oblique rather than symmetrical. Being and the abyssal nothing are opposed; there is between them a difference that cannot be dialectically surpassed. And yet, in this very difference, they coincide, they are the same.

How, then, if not dialectically, do being and nothing – in their identity and difference – belong together?

The abyss – that is, negativity – is nothing other than the ground, nothing set apart from it. It is through its grounding that there is opened a clearing (*Lichtung*) in which beings can come to be present. Yet, precisely as abyssal, the ground is never itself present; it refuses itself, withdraws, in the very grounding that clears a space for beings. It is abyssal and yet it grounds. This abyss that belongs essentially to the ground is the negativity intrinsic to ground; it is the negativity that belongs to being. Being and nothing are neither the same nor different. Rather, the nothing is, as it were, coiled within being in such a way as to render being itself abyssal.

In thinking the abyss of being, Heidegger thinks negativity in a way that escapes the reach of dialectic and that carries it beyond metaphysics as such.

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How does negativity, redetermined in this way, bear on space and time? Can Heidegger's rethinking of negativity serve to launch the kind of inquiry prompted by Heidegger's referring of time to the sky, to the space of the heavenly bodies? Can the redetermination of negativity as abyss provide a means by which to extend ontologically the connection between negativity and time revealed in the analyses of being-toward-death and of guilt and care?

In *Contributions to Philosophy*, which was composed a decade after *Being and Time* and at virtually the same time as the text on Hegel, Heidegger devotes an entire section to the question of space and time. This section falls within the fugal division entitled "The Grounding." In the title of this section, the hyphenated word *Ab-grund* occurs.<sup>5</sup> These indications serve to portend that the account of the abyssal ground forged through the encounter with Hegel will figure prominently in the determinations of space and time undertaken in *Contributions to Philosophy*.

Heidegger poses the question: Why, ever since antiquity, have space and time been thought together? Why, conceived, for instance, as kinds of order or as schemata,<sup>6</sup> have they always been yoked together, since they are radically different and indeed have nothing whatsoever in common? Why space *and* time? Heidegger takes the “and” as his clue: the “and” that conjoins space and time points back to the ground of the essence of both. In order to think them in their essential conjunction, it is necessary – says Heidegger – to dislodge or derange them (the word is *Verrückung*, a noun form of *verrückt*, which means *mad* or *crazy*). Thereby they are brought back, resituated, within the open (*das Offene*), within the clearing, within the sphere of ἀλήθεια. It is here that they have their common essence. Though throughout the history of metaphysics they were always regarded as conjoined, their common essence could – Heidegger contends – never be thought because the locus of their commonality, ἀλήθεια, had been abandoned and replaced by ὁμοίωσις. In the first beginning the essential “and” gave way to an “and” that only indicated from afar the essential conjunction of space and time.

Heidegger proposes to recover and redetermine this essential conjunction of space and time by thinking them as originarily united in what he terms, in hyphenated form, time-space (*Zeit-Raum*). He designates time-space as the “common root” of space and time (GA 65: 378/298).

The entire discourse on time-space focuses on the bond between time-space and the essence of truth. In fact, the immediately preceding section of *Contributions to Philosophy* is devoted to an analysis of the essence of truth. This section takes over and extends the analysis of truth in Heidegger’s earlier text “On the Essence of Truth” (first composed in 1930). Most significantly, it takes over from the earlier text the deconstruction of the opposition between truth and untruth; in that text Heidegger shows that untruth is not simply the opposite of truth but rather belongs to truth. In addition, truth is itself redetermined as disclosedness, as unconcealing; since it is precisely in and as the open – that is, the clearing – that unconcealing takes place, truth can also be determined as clearing – or, recovering the ancient sense, as ἀλήθεια.

In *On the Essence of Truth* a certain strategy is employed, one that recurs decisively in later texts. It can readily be discerned in Heidegger's confrontation with Hegel, in his move from the sheer opposition between being and nothing (such that their identity can supervene dialectically) to a configuration in which this opposition is deconstructed through the inclusion of one opposite within the other, that is, of untruth within truth, of abyss within ground, of negativity within being. Such inclusion does not simply cancel the difference that would obtain if these pairs were opposites; rather, it resituates that difference within the belonging of one would-be opposite to the other. In this strategy, which governs many of Heidegger's analyses – especially where there looms the threat of dialectic – one can discern a kind of logic operative in Heidegger's texts, a logic quite other than the conventional logic of noncontradiction, which has been taken to be logic as such ever since its codification by Aristotle. In Heidegger's strategy there is broached a breakthrough to another logic.

In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger takes up the pairing of truth and untruth as clearing and concealing. Yet, since untruth belongs to truth, since it is internal to truth rather than opposed to it, the pairing can be formulated more precisely by supplementing the phrase "clearing and concealing" with the stipulation: as one (concealment) belongs to the other (clearing), or, more comprehensively, as each belongs to the other. This says, on the one side, that in the happening of clearing – that is, of truth – there is also, within that very clearing, concealment. But also, on the other side, in the happening of concealment there is also, interior to it, clearing. Since concealing is always also self-concealing, that is, since concealing conceals itself, it could never become manifest, were it not for the clearing that belongs to it. This pairing, thought radically, Heidegger often formulates in the expression "clearing for concealing" (*die Lichtung für die Verbergung*). Here it becomes evident that in the inclusion there is a kind of reduplication by which that which is included in the other also includes the other within itself; otherwise, clearing could not be readily subordinated to concealment, as in the phrase "clearing for concealment."

In the course of his discourse on truth in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger ventures even to reformulate the pairing in the phrase “truth is untruth”; he warns, however, that, though it serves the purpose of indicating the strangeness of the determination of truth, this formulation is seductive and easily misunderstood, especially if construed in the direction of Nietzsche’s dictum that truth is the error without which a certain kind of living being cannot live. To declare that truth is untruth is of course to undermine that very declaration. The declaration cancels itself, and yet, for Heidegger, it expresses something essential. He writes: “This statement, deliberately formulated to be in conflict with itself, is meant to say expressly that the *negative* [*das Nichthafte*] belongs to truth, but by no means merely as a lack but as resistance, as that self-concealing that comes into the clearing as such” (GA 65: 356/281). In other words, the concealing that belongs to clearing constitutes the negativity of truth.

By laying out the various determinations of the essence of truth as well as the logic of oppositional inclusion, which is extended from truth to being and to ground, the stage is set for the analysis of time-space. It will be expedient to reconfigure – indeed to structure – this quite disseminated analysis as proceeding through a series of five stages. These stages do not by any means exhaust the resources of Heidegger’s analyses. Several strands of the discourse lead beyond the scope of the present account, perhaps most notably, that by which the thinking of the event (*Ereignis*) is woven into the analysis of time-space. Other concepts that remain subordinate, that are merely broached but left undeveloped – such as that of the “momentary site” (*Augenblicksstätte*) – must also be left aside.

Note, first of all, that the section on time-space begins by positing a certain relatedness between time-space and the essence of truth. Specifically, Heidegger identifies “time-space as arising out of and belonging to the essence of truth” (GA 65: 371/293). Yet this arising and belonging are of a unique kind. It is not as if the essence of truth – that is, clearing/concealment – is already in place, already deployed, such that time-space would somehow be generated by and from it and hence

would be simply derivative. On the contrary, Heidegger declares that “time-space is merely the essential unfolding of the essential occurrence of truth [*die Wesentfaltung der Wesung der Wahrheit*]” (GA 65: 386/305). This says: the essence of truth, its very deployment, occurs through the essential unfolding that takes place as time-space.

The second stage is launched with the question: What form does this deployment, this essential unfolding of truth that takes place as time-space, assume? In other words, what are the joinings, junctures (the word is *Fügung*), that is, the structural moments that are operative in this unfolding? There are two such moments, which Heidegger describes with the words *Entrückung* and *Berückung*. *Entrückung* has the sense of being carried away, removed, transported beyond, as in ecstasy. *Berückung* has the sense of being captivated by what is at hand. The words are of course related to the word *Verrückung*, which, as noted already, has the sense of dislodging or deranging.

The two words, taken together, thus describe the deployment of truth that takes place as time-space, as the conjunction of transport beyond and adherence to what is at hand. In and as the essential unfolding of truth in its essence, these moments happen at once; one could say that they happen at the same time, were it not that this happening is antecedent to the emergence of time. Furthermore, through the allusion to *Verrückung*, there is a hint that in this happening there is a dislodging – indeed, a dislodging corresponding to what Heidegger describes as the “dislodging of the essence of the human into *Da-sein*” (GA 65: 372/294). One could say: in that the human is engaged in the occurrence of truths in the operation of time-space, the human undergoes such dislodging – that is, becomes deranged, is exposed to *μανία*, to madness.

At the third stage Heidegger takes up the question of ground in a manner not unlike that in the contemporaneous text on Hegel. Heidegger declares that time-space grounds the “there” (the *Da*), the open region in which beings can come to presence. Indeed, he says in this connection that it is through the “there” that selfhood and beings in their truth “first come to be grounded” (GA 65: 376/297). In

other words, in and through the grounding of the “there,” that is, the grounding in which is opened the sphere of appearance, both oneself and beings are granted the expanse in which they can come to presence. The very possibility of their appearance thus has time-space as its ground, twice removed.

But what kind of ground is time-space? And how does it ground the “there”? What kind of grounding occurs here?

Heidegger calls it an abyssal grounding. Through time-space there takes place an “abyssal grounding of the ‘there’” (GA 65: 376/297). Thus, the grounding takes place as abyssal; that is, in the grounding, the grounding occurs as abyss. The abyss, he says, “is the originary essence [*Wesung*] of the ground” (GA 65: 379/299). This is to say, then, that time-space, as the essential occurrence of truth, as the ground of the “there,” is to be grasped as abyssal, as the *Ab-grund* that belongs essentially to the *Grund*. Heidegger consistently hyphenates the word *Ab-grund* in order to stress this belonging of the *Ab-grund* to the *Grund*. The *Ab-grund* is not the opposite of the *Grund* but belongs to it. The abyss is interior to the ground rather than being posed over against it as its opposite. Here again Heidegger’s strategy is to deconstruct opposition by turning it into an inclusion, in which, nonetheless, differentiation is retained.

Granted the belonging of abyss to ground, the question is: What is this abyssal occurrence that brings about the very achieving of grounding? Heidegger describes it as an *Ausbleiben* – a staying away, an absenting – of ground. It is a self-concealing of ground – in Heidegger’s words, a “self-concealing in the mode of the refusal [*Versagung*] of the ground” (GA 65: 379/300). It is the self-withholding of ground.<sup>7</sup>

But how is it, then, that in and through a withholding of ground there occurs an achieving of grounding? How, if time-space withholds itself, does it ground the “there” and thereby provide an open region in which beings can come to presence? How is it that time-space grounds and yet, since it withdraws, does not properly ground?

Heidegger’s response – and nothing is more crucial – is that the self-withholding of ground brings about “a distinctive and originary

kind of leaving unfilled-out, of leaving empty.” Thereby it accomplishes “a distinctive kind of opening up” (GA 65: 379/300). In other words, by withdrawing from what will be the site of the “there,” the ground leaves the site empty, without ground, and precisely thereby it opens up the site. In Heidegger’s words: “In withholding itself, the ground preeminently brings into the open, namely, into the first opening of *that* emptiness, which is thereby a determinate one. . . . In this withholding, the originary emptiness opens up and the originary *clearing* occurs” (GA 65: 379–80/300). Thus, it is the self-withholding abyssal ground that brings about the clearing, that lets it open up at a site. Indeed, the connection is so intimate that by inserting only minimal mediation – namely, the word *erstwesentlich* – Heidegger can declare that the *Ab-grund* is the clearing/concealment, that is, the essence of truth. Yet, this is only “the first clearing,” and “it abides in hesitancy [*Zögerung*]” (GA 65: 380/300). It is such because something further must take place in order that the “there” be fully grounded.

At the fourth stage there is a return to the question of time-space, of its emergence as the essential unfolding of the essential occurrence of truth. The question is: How, in and through the withdrawing of the *Ab-grund*, does time-space come into play as the original unity that breaks asunder into time and space? How does time-space come to be installed in the “first clearing” in such a way that the clearing as such is constituted?

Heidegger’s response is formulated in a monstrously abyssal, barely penetrable discourse, which thus enacts discursively that to which it is addressed. He focuses again on the self-withdrawing of the ground, which leaves what will be the site of the “there” empty. It is, then, precisely into this emptiness that the various transportings (*Entrückungen*) enter. There is transporting toward – that is, into – the emptiness of what is not-yet, of what is to come; there is transporting toward – that is, into – the emptiness of what is no-longer, of what has passed by. It is the conjunction, the gathering, of these transportings and, in addition, their impact (which “constitutes the present,” GA 65: 383/303) that constitutes temporalization. Since temporalization is granted – or, more precisely,

its site is first opened up – by the self-withholding of the *Ab-grund*, Heidegger declares that the *Ab-grund* grounds in the mode of temporalization. In an allied but distinctive manner, spatialization arises from captivation (*Berückung*), from the entrance of captivation into the empty site opened by the self-withdrawing of ground. It is the unity of such originary temporalization and spatialization that constitutes time-space. The *Ab-grund* grounds as time-space. Thus, time-space is nothing other than the *Ab-grund* as, withdrawingly, it grounds. Hence the title of the entire discourse devoted to time-space: *Der Zeit-Raum als der Ab-grund*.

Heidegger stresses that temporalization and spatialization cannot be understood on the basis of the usual representations of time and space. On the contrary, time and space can be grasped in their very source only from temporalization and spatialization – that is, most originally, from time-space. Heidegger's account as to how such a derivation would proceed offers only the most preliminary indications, emphasizing that it would require leaving traditional conceptions behind and adhering to the proper conception of time-space.

How, in the end, do time and space come to structure what otherwise would be only the *first* clearing? How, in particular, are they to be thought concretely and not only as remote derivatives from the self-withdrawing of the *Ab-grund*? Heidegger leaves these questions largely unanswered, hardly even posed. But there is one brief passage that in this regard is quite remarkable. Heidegger writes: “Only where something at hand [*ein Vorhandenes*] is seized and determined does there arise the flow of ‘time’ [*Zeit*] that flows by it and the ‘space’ [*Raum*] that surrounds it” (GA 65: 382/302). A possible interpretation would be: time and space become manifest only in connection with things – as in the case of the “time” that first announces itself in the space of the heavenly bodies.

The final stage of Heidegger's analysis makes explicit the bond between time-space and negativity. Heidegger begins by excluding, or at least qualifying, a certain kind of negativity. He observes that the *Ab-grund* is not the negation of *Grund*. The abyss is no proclamation of unlimited groundlessness. On the contrary, the abyss is an affirmation

of ground, since it is precisely through the self-withholding of the abyssal ground that the “there” comes to be grounded. Yet, if considered immediately, both the *Ab-grund* and the refusal or withholding contain a certain negativity, which is thus a negativity of time-space. For the abyss is, in a sense, the negative of ground and the refusal is the negative of bestowal or granting. And yet, in both instances Heidegger’s analysis displaces the negativity, breaks down the opposition expressed by negation. For the abyss belongs to the ground rather than being symmetrically opposed to it; and the refusal of ground, rather than negating its bestowal, is the very means by which the bestowal of ground is accomplished. In both cases the alleged negation proves to be interior to, rather than opposed to, its would-be opposite.

Such is the logic of the negativity – that of time-space – that enables the deployment of the essence of truth, that lets a clearing for concealment take place.

And yet, it seems that at a certain juncture this logic is violated. For Heidegger insists that there is a *not* that is neither a mere opposite nor a negativity included in its would-be opposite, a *not* that is not coiled up within that which it would negate. Heidegger calls it “the originary *not*” (GA 65: 388/306). He identifies it only to the extent of saying that it is the *not* that belongs to being itself and thus to the event. Beyond this he says only that this negativity occurs in the withholding. One can only surmise that it is the negativity that remains beyond all the grounding that it enables, an originary concealment belonging to being and the event and decisively withheld beyond all grounding, the originary  $\lambda\eta\theta\eta$  at the heart of  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ .

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Heidegger’s engagement with the question of time-space and of its negativity does not cease after the account developed in *Contributions to Philosophy*. To take up the most decisive rethinking that Heidegger ventures in this regard, it is necessary to leap far beyond the series of texts discussed thus far.

Two and a half decades after he composed *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger delivered the lecture “Time and Being.” The title was provocative, as it was to have been the title of the never-published third Division of *Being and Time* in which the task of this work, to exhibit time as the meaning of being, would finally have been carried out. Yet, in a note to the published text of the lecture, Heidegger confesses that the lecture cannot be linked up with *Being and Time*, because in the intervening years the question, though still the same, has become still more questionable.

If “Time and Being” is compared with *Contributions to Philosophy*, what is most striking is that, in the lecture, grounding, which is so prominent in *Contributions to Philosophy* plays no role whatsoever. As a result, the distinction that previously was drawn in various connections between ground and grounded is effaced, and the entire analysis now occurs on a plane where the separation between ground and grounded no longer occurs as such.

What is it, then, that replaces grounding or at least that compensates for this exclusion? It is what Heidegger calls *Reichen* – let us say *reaching* or *reaching out to*, though the word also has the sense of *holding out to*, *offering*, *extending to*. Yet, what figures in the lecture is not reaching in general but a single, unique, yet complex reaching. It is a reaching in which each of three moments reaches out to the others. The moments that are submitted to such reaching are those of time: future, past, and present.

What, then, is time-space? Heidegger defines it thus: “Time-space now names the open, which is cleared in the reaching in which future, past, and present reach out to one another” (GA 14: 18–19/14). Two points need to be noted in this definition. The first is that time-space is identified with the open, with the clearing. Here it is evident how grounding and the separation it entails have been eliminated: Whereas previously time-space was thought as the ground that grounds the open or clearing, now they are situated on the same level. Time-space *is* precisely the open that is cleared by way of the reaching. Yet, Heidegger identifies time-space not only with the open that is cleared but also – and

this is the second point – with the complex of reachings by which the clearing is effected. In his words: “What is proper to the time-space of time proper lies in the reaching that clears, the reaching in which future, past, and present reach out to one another” (GA 14: 19/14). Thus, all – that is, time-space, the open or clearing, and the threefold reaching – not only operate on the same level but are so closely allied that each blends into the others.

Within this new configuration, the complex of reachings corresponds to the temporalization that, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, is effected by the abyssal grounding and, specifically, by the transport structure of time-space as the ground. But now, in “Time and Being,” the temporalization merges with time-space rather than being – in any sense – grounded by it. It is as though the language of grounding has been replaced by one of sameness, of a sameness that does not simply – nor in the manner of an *Aufhebung* – exclude difference. To this extent the analysis of time-space has become an exercise in tautological thinking.

Though it is in “Time and Being” that Heidegger dismisses his attempt in *Being and Time* to trace Dasein’s spatiality back to temporality, the lecture seems, in what little is said of space, to mark another dependence within the configuration developed in the lecture. Heidegger says that the reachings are pre-spatial and that it is only in this connection that there is space.

Much more developed than the question of space is that of the unity of the three reachings. Minimally expressed, their unity lies in the interplay (*Zuspiel*) of each with each. Heidegger regards this interplay itself as a fourth dimension along with the three that interplay; indeed, he regards the interplay itself to be the first of the four dimensions of time, since it is what draws future, past, and present near to one another by distancing them from one another.

Near the end of the lecture, Heidegger addresses, in effect, the question of negativity. Central to his account is the observation that in the reaching to the past or the future, there is a refusal of the present, a withholding of the present. There is a hint of this refusal in the description of the past as no longer present and of the future as not yet

present. The negativity that the word *not* here expresses Heidegger terms *Entzug*, withdrawal (GA 14: 27/22).

Toward the end of the lecture Heidegger brings the entire configuration that has taken shape – indeed far beyond these brief remarks – back to what he terms the oldest of the old in Western thought, namely, that which is held concealed in the word – which he hyphenates – ἀ-λήθεια. Here he evokes once more the originary *not*, the *not* that withdraws even from the word *Entzug* and that antecedes all grounding, that – so it seems – is anterior even to the *Ur-grund*, which in its designation retains reference to ground.

Near the end of one of his last published texts, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” Heidegger asks how it is that ἀλήθεια has gone unthought. Is it – he asks rhetorically – something that has happened by chance or as a result of careless thinking? “Or does it happen because self-concealing, concealment, Λήθη, belongs to Ἄ-Λήθεια, not as a mere addition, not as shadow to light, but rather as the heart of Ἄλήθεια?” (GA 14: 88/71).

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Finally, as a brief epilogue, let me propose a question, one that comes from outside Heidegger’s analysis of time-space as abyssal ground or as a complex of reachings.

Throughout his analyses of time-space, Heidegger takes – in contrast to much of ancient thought – an uncompromising stand against mathematics or what he usually calls calculation. In one passage in *Contributions to Philosophy*, he declares that in calculation in its most powerful form, there is at work “the most indifferent and blindest denial of the incalculable” (GA 65: 446/351). It is as if a mathematical approach could never reach a point at which calculation might prove no longer possible. And yet, it is by no means evident that such an advance to incalculability is lacking in modern physics, for instance, in the discovery of such non-phenomenal phenomena as black holes and in Heisenberg’s indeterminacy principle.<sup>8</sup>

Near the end of the analysis of time-space in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger poses the question: “What is it about space and time that *allows* their mathematization?” (GA 65: 387/306). He immediately offers an answer: the condition that has made such mathematization possible is that the abyssal ground has been covered over – indeed, already in the first beginning (GA 65: 387/306). And yet, the question is: In what Heidegger regards as the first beginning, specifically with Plato, are there not ἀρχαί that are abyssal – most notably, τὸ ἀγαθόν as ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας and, indeed, most insistently, the χώρα?<sup>9</sup>

The χώρα is announced at the center of the *Timaeus* – if there be a center and to the extent that an announcement is possible. The dialogue is engaged with mathematics from the beginning, from the commencement of the counting – 1, 2, 3 ... – with which it begins. Both arithmetic and geometry serve to structure much of the description carried out in the first of Timaeus’ three discourses. For example, in Timaeus’ account of how the god formed the cosmic soul, shaping it into a long, harmoniously articulated band (which would prove to be the orbits of the heavenly bodies), he begins by declaring that as the first step the god took portions of the soul mixture corresponding to squares and cubes in the odd and even series of numbers.<sup>10</sup> Such theoretical reliance on mathematics runs throughout the first discourse, only to give way, when another beginning becomes imperative, to the chorology. In this discourse the χώρα proves to be incalculable and inaccessible (except through remembrance of a dream) – indeed to such an extent that the discourse itself is threatened with utter incoherence, with dissolution. Rather than preventing the advance toward the incalculable, the mathematics of the *Timaeus* leads the discourse precisely to the point where it breaks down and opens the space of what is abyssally incalculable.

In still another passage in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger explicitly contrasts time-space with the space and time of physics. Here again it is so-called calculation – that is, mathematical procedures – that is Heidegger’s primary target. Such procedure – as he describes it – involves leveling space and time down to what is calculable and merely coupling them, merely tying them together (GA 65: 377/298).

And yet, can one maintain that the special theory of relativity – along with its experimental confirmations – merely couples space and time, merely ties them together? For what this theory demonstrates is that the linear spatial movement of one thing with respect to another effects a difference in their time-determinations with regard to any particular event. Spatial movement, space as the medium of movement, is not merely tied together with temporal determination but is intrinsic to it. And this is to say nothing about the manner in which spatial distance between an earthbound observer and a distant galaxy brings about an enormous time-difference: in the present the observer sees the galaxy as it was in the very remote past.

The question is whether the results that modern physics has established regarding space and time have a bearing on the thinking of time-space, or whether these results are entirely undermined and rendered irrelevant for thinking by the role that mathematics plays in their formulation. Can the divide that Heidegger poses, the divide separating ordinary thinking from mathematical physics – separating it even from philosophy as determined in its Greek beginning – can this divide be crossed? Can the separation be overcome so that what modern physics has shown regarding space and time, along with what can be retrieved from ancient thought in its engagement with mathematics, can be brought to bear productively on the thinking of time-space? Might it be possible that through such a crossing the thinking that Heidegger has launched with such force might be brought to address, more affirmatively and more productively, that which most insistently confronts us in our time?

## NOTES

- 1 All translations from works by Heidegger are my own.
- 2 When, in the development that Heidegger's thought undergoes after *Being and Time*, "The question of being becomes the question of the truth of being" (GA 65: 428/338), this task is accordingly transformed. One consequence is that the concept of horizon is subverted. As a result, the question of being can no longer be construed in terms of the manner in which time provides the horizon within which and from which being can be – and always has been – understood and interpreted. Through this development the concept of horizon (which is essentially phenomenological) falls away (see GA 13: 44–45/DT 63–64), and the task becomes that of thinking time and space in their emergence within the event of truth.
- 3 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes, Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1980), 27. English translation: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 19, tm.
- 4 Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 27; *Phenomenology*, 19, tm.
- 5 The full title is "Der Zeit-Raum als der Ab-grund."
- 6 The references are to Leibniz and Kant, respectively.
- 7 It is in this connection that Heidegger abruptly introduces references to what he terms the *Ur-grund* and the *Un-grund*. The extreme compactness of the discourse at this point excludes all but minimal and provisional interpretation. He writes: "The *Ur-grund* [a possible translation is: primordial ground] opens itself, as what is self-concealing, only in the *Ab-grund*" (GA 65: 380/300). Presumably the *Ur-grund* is to be taken as the ground as such ("beyng essentially occurring in its truth"), which, however, as entirely self-concealing, is disclosed only in and through the *Ab-grund*, in which the ground is both concealed and exposed. On the other hand, the *Ab-grund* can itself be completely concealed through what is termed the *Un-grund*.

- 8 See my discussion in “The Cosmological Turn,” chap. 6 of *The Return of Nature: On the Beyond of Sense* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016).
- 9 The determination according to which there would have been a first beginning with which – through Plato – metaphysics would have commenced is put thoroughly into question, if not indeed undermined, by Heidegger’s retraction of his Plato interpretation. Granting that ἀλήθεια was initially experienced only as ὀρθότης, Heidegger concludes: “But then the assertion about an essential transformation of truth, that is, from unconcealment to correctness, is also untenable” (GA 14: 87/70). Since it is precisely this alleged transformation that would constitute the first beginning, the very setting of *Contributions to Philosophy* between the first beginning and an other beginning cannot but be thoroughly displaced. On χώρα, see my discussion with Jacques Derrida regarding its relation to what is ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας. The principal texts are 1) Jacques Derrida, “Tense,” trans. D. F. Krell, in *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis*, ed. Kenneth Maly (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995); and 2) my text “Daydream,” chap. 3 of *Platonic Legacies* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004).
- 10 Plato, *Timaeus* 36a.