

Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition

Reiner Schürmann

Edited and Introduced by Francesco Guercio

Abstract: The text presented here is an edited transcription of a thirteen-page unpublished typescript titled “Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition” by Reiner Schürmann. It dates back to the time following the completion of Schürmann’s book on Meister Eckhart and exhibits the preliminary conception of the former’s famous “practical a priori.” Focusing on the relation between Heidegger’s meditative thinking and a mystical tradition inaugurated by Meister Eckhart, the text retrieves the steps of the latter’s path to Releasement as a practical transformation of existence (Part I). In so doing, it provides a detailed account of Releasement as the condition for a peculiar experience of thinking “in which one fundamental attitude manifests itself throughout an itinerary of human existence and which tends to make this itinerary the very condition for the understanding of truth.” By hinging on Heidegger’s different acceptations of “letting-be”—as well as on his verbal understanding of Being as *Anwesen* (presencing) and *Ereignis* (appropriation-event)—the text indicates Releasement as the coincidence of Being’s and man’s ways to be and shows how it is in the very “urgency of a new existence and thought” that the proximity between Heidegger and Meister Eckhart’s mystical tradition comes to the fore.

EDITOR’S PREFACE AND EDITION GUIDELINES

The text presented here is an edited transcription of a thirteen-page typescript titled “Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition” by Reiner Schürmann. The typescript—previously unprocessed—is available in the *Reiner Schürmann papers, NA.0006.01, box 3, folder 3, The New School Archives and Special Collections*, at The New School for Social Research (NSSR)

in New York, USA. Although undated, the typescript is signed “Reiner Schürmann, Ph.D.—Duquesne University” and can thus be dated back to the years (1972–1975) he spent teaching at Duquesne before transferring to the NSSR. As Schürmann writes at the end of his typescript, “Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition” attempts to present some points of discussion which “have arisen from seminar/conversations.” It was at some point plausibly given as a lecture, though never published. The typescript has numbered pages and is annotated by Schürmann himself. All handwritten notes have been transcribed. Bibliographical references have been updated or added, and original passages have been provided. The word “Releasement”—Schürmann’s translation of *gelâzenheit/Gelassenheit*—has been capitalized throughout the text for consistency. Within square brackets, I provided a translation of Latin words—whenever necessary—and a transliteration of Greek words. In my edition, I have followed Diaphanes Verlag’s *Selected Writings and Lecture Notes of Reiner Schürmann* Editorial Guidelines. The following marks have been used:

- no marks: bibliographical references by Schürmann.
- <_>: infra-text handwritten additions by Schürmann.
- []: Editorial notes.
- { }: handwritten marginal annotations (*Marginalia*).
- {< “ ”>}: crossed-out text by Schürmann.

Meister Eckhart’s works are referenced from:

- *Meister Eckhart Werke*. 2 vols, ed. Niklaus Largier—Vol. I: Texte und Übersetzungen von Josef Quint, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Niklaus Largier / Vol. 2: Texte und Übersetzungen von Ernst Benz, Karl Christ, Bruno Decker, Heribert Fischer, Bernhard Geyer, Josef Koch, Josef Quint, Konrad Weiß und Albert Zimmermann, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Niklaus Largier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Klassiker Verlag, 1993). The edition is referenced with the cipher MEW, followed by roman numerals (volume), page, and line (l) numbers. The following are also referenced:
- Meister Eckhart’s *Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*, herausgegeben im Auftrag der deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (Stuttgart/Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1936), with the ciphers DW (*Deutsche Werke*) and LW (*Lateinische Werke*), the former followed by roman numer-

als (volume), page, and line (l.), and the latter followed by roman numerals (volume) and subsection numbers (n.), respectively.

- Franz Pfeiffer, ed., *Meister Eckhart. Deutsche Mystiker des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Band 2 (Leipzig: Göschen, 1857). Referred to with the cipher Pf., followed by page and line numbers.

The cipher GA refers to Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975—), followed by volume number (Band), title, and page. Numbers in parentheses indicate page numbers of first edition. Finally, throughout this text, when referring to Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann, Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Louise Gnädinger (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1984/Zürich: Manesse Verlag, 1986), page numbers of the 1984 edition are given followed by an asterisk (*) to signal that the quoted version in modernized German is drawn from the 1986 edition.

I am deeply grateful to Archivist Jenny Swadosh and Director Archivist Wendy Scheir at the NSSR Archives and Special Collections for their patient help during my research; to Michael Heitz at Diaphanes Verlag, as Reiner Schürmann's publisher and executor of the *Reiner Schürmann Estate*, as well as to all the members of the estate, for their permission to publish my edition of "Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition"; to all my colleagues at the *Selected Writings and Lecture Notes of Reiner Schürmann* Diaphanes Edition; and, especially, to Ian Alexander Moore for his precious suggestions and our fruitful intellectual exchange on Schürmann's relation to Meister Eckhart and Martin Heidegger.

Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition¹

Reiner Schürmann

I should much prefer avoiding the adjective “mystical.” It evokes representations far too mixed to produce any clear understanding. I can think of no other word however to name a certain tradition in both Western and Eastern history. I shall use it therefore as a title for the cultural fact of accounts of an experience of thinking, in which one fundamental attitude manifests itself throughout an itinerary of human existence and which tends to make this itinerary the very condition for the understanding of truth.

Otto Pöggeler² mentions that Heidegger can claim the authority of the mystical tradition when he thinks the “without why” of Being. This raises at least two questions: a) If Heidegger’s thought “and” mysticism can be put together, of what kind is their relation? b) Is there any such thing as “the” mystical tradition?—Both questions are formidable. The answer to the second question will remain implicit in this paper, as I shall certainly not attempt a dialogue between cultures. Some Japanese Buddhists (Shizuteru Ueda, Minoru Nambara, Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, Keiji Nishitani, Hugo Makibi Enomiya) who have written on Meister Eckhart find in him the basic intuition of Zen. I shall rather try to look at the “matter” that manifests itself as the unity of the three elements: the experience of a *path*, the attitude of Releasement (*Gelassenheit*) and an appropriate mode of *thinking*. This may lead us to become suspicious of concepts and propositions.

In order to answer the first question mentioned above—the relation between Heidegger’s thought and what the tradition calls mysticism—I shall try to trace these three elements, in Meister Eckhart. This choice is not arbitrary. Eckhart inaugurates a tradition. He is not only the father of the “Rhineland Mystics” of the fourteenth century, but he is also sometimes considered to be an ancestor of German Protestantism, Romanticism, and Idealism. The question is precisely: to what extent does Heidegger belong to

1. {Meister Eckhart is called a mystic. The title “Heidegger and Meister Eckhart” seems to make [of] Heidegger also a mystic—no way. I only want to underline a *tradition*. My intention is *broader* than “Heidegger and Meister [Eckhart.]”}

2. Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* [(Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1990), 157: “Heidegger kann sich auf die mystische Tradition berufen, wenn er die Abgründigkeit, das »OhneWarum« des Seins denkt.” See also Reiner Schürmann *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart’s Mystical Philosophy*, trans. and commentary by Reiner Schürmann (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 255–256n109.]

this line of thinking? Does the “matter” Heidegger tries to remember show an essential kinship with the “matter” of the mystical experience? Or, to invert the question: Is there something in this experience that makes it resist, by its very nature, the fate of the metaphysical tradition? Did the judges of the Inquisition, when they condemned a list of theses of Meister Eckhart’s, act as lieutenants of onto-theological thought against another mode of thought whose time had perhaps not yet come? Bernhard Welte suggests this: “The trial against the theses of the Master before the Pope’s court at Avignon gives the impression of a trial brought in action by Being itself against him who daringly forestalls its destiny.”³

I shall now present briefly four stages, or rather four intelligible moments, on the path which constitutes the central experience of Meister Eckhart. I shall then compare the result to a particular aspect of Heidegger’s thought.

I. THE DYNAMICS OF RELEASEMENT

Two preliminary remarks:

- Meister Eckhart’s vocabulary is Christian. The attitude of Releasement reflects itself in a movement between man and God. I consider, though, that this is due to cultural conditions: the experience itself is not religious.
- At the outset, God is all, the creature is nothing; at the ultimate stage, “the soul is beyond God.” It is important to see that the attitude of Releasement is the condition both of the experience of these steps and of their understanding: “He who wants to understand this teaching must himself be perfectly released.”⁴ To experience as well as to think this itinerary, a certain quality of existence is required.

3. Bernhard Welte, “La métaphysique de Saint Thomas d’Aquin et la pensée de l’histoire de l’être chez Heidegger,” in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 50 (1966), 614 [“Le procès à la cour papale d’Avignon contre les thèses du Maître donne l’impression d’un procès intenté par l’Être lui-même contre celui qui hardiment devança son destin.” Also Bernhard Welte, “Rückblick auf die Metaphysik. Thomas von Aquin und Heideggers Gedanke von der Seinsgeschichte,” in *Wort und Wahrheit* 12 (1967): 756, “Der Prozeß am päpstlichen Hof in Avignon gegen die Thesen des Meisters Eckhart mutet an wie ein Prozeß des Seins selbst gegen den, der seinem Geschicke kühn zuvorkam.” Trans. by Schürmann.]

4. [MEW I, *Pr.* 10 “In diebus suis,” 126, l. 32–34: “nieman enmac mîn wort hoeren noch mîne lère, er enhave denne sich selben gelâzen.” See also MEW I, *Pr.* 30 “Praedica verbum,” 346, l. 16–19 (Pf., 209, l. 29–31): “Ez ist vil liute, die diz niht enbegrifent,

1) Dissimilarity

“All creatures are pure nothingness. I do not say they are small or petty: they are pure nothingness.”⁵ The total dissimilarity between man and God lies in the fact that God possesses being while the creature does not possess being. The creature receives being from elsewhere. Outside God, there is pure nothingness. *Esse est Deus* [Being is God]: Eckhart reverses the Scholastic formula *Deus est ipsum esse* [God is Being itself]: he thus destroys any proportionality between man and God and comes perhaps closer to Spinoza than to Aquinas. The being of creatures which is negated is called *iht*: they have no *iht*, they are *niht*, nothing. *Iht* designates the quality of being as such, the *entitas* of *ens* or the *ousia* of *on*. To say that all creatures are pure nothingness means literally that their fact-to-be is negated. They cannot be represented as beings: their *iht* is God’s, not theirs. Releasement here will lead man to move amongst things, all the while knowing that they are nothing in themselves; it will lead him to resemble nothing and nobody. In some aspects, Releasement may have, in this sense, an ascetic connotation and may then produce detachment (*Abgeschiedenheit*). However, the nothingness of creatures is sufficiently understood neither as an ontological thesis, nor as a moral “ought.” It arises from and leads to another mode of thought.

2) Similarity

Releasement thus detaches man from individual things and attaches him to the universal. Indeed, *iht*, which is God’s, belongs to creatures as their *ens commune*, they “borrow” it universally.⁶ Rather than “detachment,” we have now “attachment,” namely to the transcendental qualities of beings. At

und bedünket mich niht unbillich; wan der mensehe, der diz begrîfen sol, der muoz sêre abegescheiden sîn und erhaben über alliu dinc.” In Schürmann, *Wandering Joy*, 182: “There are many people who do not understand this. That is not surprising to me. Indeed, whoever wants to understand this has to be very detached and raised above all things.”]

5. [MEW I, Pr. 4 “Omne datum optimum,” 52, l. 16–17: “Alle créatûren sint ein lûter niht. Ich spriche niht, daz sie kleine sîn oder iht sîn: sie sint ein lûter niht.”]

6. Angelus Silesius [, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann, Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Louise Gnädinger (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1984; Zürich: Manesse Verlag, 1986), 51* (Book I, distich 163):]

*Daß du nicht Menschen liebst, das tust recht und wohl,
Die Menschheit ists, die man im Menschen lieben soll.*

[In Angelus Silesius, *Selections from The Cherubic Wanderer*, trans. J. E. Crawford Flicht (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932):

Thou lovest none? ’Tis well. He has the better mind
Who loves not any man, but loves in man Mankind.

this stage, the phenomenon of Releasement is best described as *letting-be*: being as universal perfection lets beings be. Again, in a characteristic move of appropriation of such concepts, Eckhart continues: I, insofar as I am released, let beings be. As I am dissimilar (*ungeliche*) to all things, they are all equal (*geliche*) to me. An assimilation takes place: I resemble God whose goodness resides in making all things, setting them forth, letting them be. During the transition from Dissimilarity to Similarity, the Son, image of the Father, engenders himself within me. Eckhart is mostly known for having taught the birth of Christ in the “ground” of the soul. The accent, however, lies on the event: birth, assimilation, letting-be. This process is illustrated in many metaphors (e.g., man must become an “adverb to the Verb”)⁷ which point neither to man nor God primarily, but to being *as* Releasement.

3) Identity

Eckhart’s numerous statements on identity between God and the soul can be easily misunderstood. He never has in mind a substantial identity: well before the distinction of substances, the operation of God and the becoming of man bring together God and the soul in an identical event. God is no longer facing man. He is perfectly interiorized. Hence such astonishing statements: “The being and the nature of God are mine; Jesus enters the castle of the soul; the spark in the soul is beyond time and space; the soul’s light is uncreated and cannot be created, it takes possession of God without mediation; the core of the soul and the core of God are one.”⁸ Here Releasement

Cf. Meister Eckhart: “omne commune in quantum commune, deus” [Whatever is common, insofar as it is common, is God] in LW IV, 52, n. 53—Sermo VI, 1 “Deus caritas est.”]

7. [Cf. MEW I, Pr. 9 “Quasi stella matutina,” 112, l. 24–30:

Ich meine daz wörtelin >quasi<, daz heizet >als<, daz heizent diu kint in der schuole ein bîwort. Diz ist, daz ich in allen mînen predigen meine. Daz aller eigenlicheste, daz man von gote gesprechen mac, daz ist wort und wârheit. Got nante sich selber ein wort. Sant *Johannes* sprach: >in dem anvange was daz wort<, und meinet, daz man bî dem worte sî ein bîwort.

As translated by Schürmann in *Wandering Joy*, 93:

I have in mind a little word *quasi* which mean “like”; children in school call it an adverb. This is what I intend in all my sermons. The most appropriate things that one can say of God are “Word” and “Truth.” God called himself a “Word.” Saint John says: “In the beginning was the Word,” meaning by this that we should be an adverb to this same Verb.]

8. [Cf. the following: “sîn [gotes] wesen und sîn natûre mîn ist” (MEW II, Pr. 76 “Videte qualem caritatem,” 132, l. 2); “Jêsus gienc úf in ein bürgelîn” (MEW I, Pr. 2 “Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum,” 26, l. 21–22, trans. modified by Schürmann);

means not only detachment and letting-be, but *an operation*: Man and God are “one in operating” (*ein in gewürke*)—in homage to Aristotle, “energetic” identity. Only at this point does it become clear how far away Eckhart is also from Spinoza: not a unique substance, but an event. “Being” not as a noun, but as a verb: *wesen*. Between God and man the identity is Releasement, their being is *one* in the process of their presence. In his own symbolism, Eckhart says: their being is one in the process of reciprocal < begetting >;⁹ not only does the Father give birth to the Son in me, but I give birth identically to the Son in the Father: “I engender Christ in his eternity.”¹⁰ To the created zone in man Eckhart thus opposes an uncreated zone, the “bottom” of the soul, in which I remain of God’s nature. Here being is understood as *nasci*, arising, being born, happening.

4) Break-Through

The logic of the path of Releasement cannot stop at the identity with God: to abandon all things without abandoning God is still not abandoning anything.¹¹ Man must live “without why [*sunder warumbe*].” He must

“Ich hân etwenne gesprochen von einem liehte, daz ist in der sêle, daz ist ungeschaffen und ungeschepflich. [. . .] diz selbe lieht nimet got sunder mittel und sunder decke und blôz, als er in im selben ist” (MEW I, *Pr.* 48, 506, l. 23–27; cf. *Wandering Joy*, 103–104); “Aber diu sêle tritet über an irm natürlîchen liehte in irm hœhsten über zît und über stat [in die glîchnisse des liehtes des engels und wûrket mit im vernünftliche in dem himel]” (MEW I, *Pr.* 54a, 576, l. 20–23); “der grunt gotes unde der grunt der sêle sint ein wesen” (Treatise “Daz ist swester Katrei” (VI), Pf., 467, l. 15). This treatise is now generally considered apocryphal.]

9. {“engenderment”}

10. [Cf. MEW I, *Pr.* 5a “In hoc apparuit charitas,” 60 (l. 33)—62 (l. 1): “do gebirt der vatter sinen sun, als erinn in der ewikeit gebirt weder meer noch minder.” Also, *Wandering Joy*, 23: “out of the ‘same’ ground from which the Father engenders his eternal Son, the detached man engenders the same Son at the same time. [. . .] The Father begets, and man begets jointly with him. [. . .] At each instant the detached man engenders the eternal Son of the Father.”]

11. [Cf. Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, 30* (Book I, distich 24): “Mensch, wo du noch was bist, was weißt, was liebst und hast,/So bist du, glaube mir, nicht ledig deiner Last” (*The Cherubic Wanderer*: “If thou art Somewhat to thyself, If Somewhat thou dost love and will,/If Somewhat knowest, Somewhat hast—/Thou carriest thy burden still”); 34* (distich 44): “Mensch, so du etwas liebst, so liebst du nichts fürwahr:/Gott ist nicht dies und das, drum laß das Etwas gar” (*The Cherubic Wanderer*: “If Thou dost love a Something, Man,/Thou lovest naught that doth abide./God is not This nor That—do thou/Leave Something utterly aside”); 34* (distich 45): “Wer nichts begehrt, nichts hat, nichts weiß, nichts liebt, nichts will,/Der hat, der weiß, begehrt und liebt noch immer viel” (“Who desires nothing, has nothing, knows noth-

seek nothing, not even God. Such a thought leads into the desert: prior¹² to God, there is the Desert.¹³ For Eckhart, God only exists as “God” when the creature invokes him; but since creatures are nothingness, all relationships disappear on the road. Eckhart calls “godhead” [“gotheit”] the origin of all things that is beyond God (“God” conceived metaphysically as Creator). “God and the Godhead are as distinct as heaven and earth.”¹⁴ “When I came out from God, all creatures exclaimed: ‘God!’”¹⁵ After detachment, letting-be and engenderment, Releasement means now breaking-through. No representation, not even the highest being, and no motivation, not even love of the highest being, can stop it. Releasement reaches its conclusion in the break-through beyond God. The metaphysician will object that beyond

ing, loves nothing, wills nothing, *he* ever has, knows, desires, and loves much,” trans. by Edward Ingram Watkin in “The Silesian Angel,” *New Blackfriars* 2 [1922], 634; and Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, 85* (Book II, distich 92): “Gelassenheit fängt Gott: Gott aber selbst zu lassen,/Ist ein Gelassenheit, die wenig Menschen fassen.” (*The Cherubic Wanderer*: “Abandonment ensnareth God: But the Abandonment supreme,/Which few there be can comprehend, Is to abandon even Him.”)

12. {“anterior”}

13. [Cf. MEW I, *Pr.* 10 “In diebus suis,” 128, l. 26–31:

Ich hân gesprochen von einer kraft in der sêle; an irm êrsten ûzbruche sô ennimet si got niht, als er guot ist, si ennimet niht got, als er diu wârheit ist: si gründet und suochet vort und nimet got in sîner einunge und in sîner einœde; si nimet got in sîner wüestunge und in sînem eigenen grunde.

In Schürmann, *Wandering Joy*, 110:

I have spoken of a power in the mind. In its first manifestation, it does not apprehend God. It does not apprehend him insofar as he is good, nor insofar as he is the truth. It penetrates into the ground, it pursues and burrows, and it apprehends God in his oneness and in his desert (einoede); it apprehends God in his wilderness (wüstunge) and in his own ground.

See also Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, 28* (Book I, distich 7):

Wo ist mein Aufenthalt? Wo ich und du nicht stehen.

Wo ist mein letztes End in welches ich soll gehen?

Da, wo man keines findt. Wo soll ich denn nun hin?

Ich muß noch über Gott in eine Wüste ziehn.

In *The Cherubic Wanderer*:

Where is my hiding place? where there’s nor I nor Thou.

Where is my final goal towards which I needs press?

Where there is nothing. Whither shall I journey now?

Still farther on than God—into a Wilderness.]

14. [Sermon “Nolite timere eos” (LVI), Pf., 180, l. 15–16: “got unde gotheit hat underscheit als verre als himel und erde.”]

15. [Cf. DW IV, 771, l. 56: “Dô ich ûzvlôz, dô sprâchen alle crêatûren got.” Also, *ibidem*: “Dô alle crêatûren gotes sprechent, dô wird got.”]

the supreme being no higher origin (*Ausbruch* or *Ausfluß*) can be thought. Eckhart perhaps thinks the essence of being as an appropriating event: beyond God, man and the world, the origin accomplishes itself without why.

To reserve a place would be to maintain distinctions. *Therefore I pray God that he may quit me of god*, for [my] unconditioned being is above god and all distinctions. It was here [in unconditioned being] that I was myself, wanted myself, and knew myself to be this person [here before you], and therefore, I am my own first cause, both of my eternal being and of my temporal being. To this end I was born, and by virtue of my birth being eternal, I shall never die. It is of the nature of this eternal birth that I *have been* eternally, that I *am* now, and *shall be* forever. What I am as a temporal creature is to die and come to nothingness, for it came with time and so with time it will pass away. In my eternal birth, however, everything was begotten. I was my own first cause as well as the first cause of everything else. If I had willed it, neither I nor the world would have come to be! If I had not been, there would have been no god. There is, however, no need to understand this.¹⁶

16. [MEW I, *Pr.* 52 “*Beati pauperes spiritu*,” 560 (l. 15)—562 (l. 2):

Dâ der mensche stat beheltet, dâ beheltet er underscheit. Her umbe sô bite ich got, daz er mich ledic mache gotes, wan mîn wesenlich wesen ist obe gote, alsô als wir got nemen begin der créatûren; wan in dem selben wesene gotes, dâ got ist obe wesene und ob underscheide, dâ was ich selbe, dâ wolte ich mich selben und bekante mich selben ze machenne disen menschen. Her umbe sô bin ich mîn selbes sache nâch mînem wesene, daz êwic ist, und niht nâch mînem gewordenne, daz zîtlich ist. Und her umbe sô bin ich ungeboren, und nâch mîner ungeborenen wîse sô enmac ich niemer ersterben. Nâch mîner ungeborenen wîse sô bin ich êwicliche gewesen und bin nû und sol êwicliche blîben. Daz ich bin nâch gebornheit, daz sol sterben und ze nihte werden, wan ez ist tœtlich; her umbe sô muoz ez mit der zît verderben. In mîner geburt, dâ wurden alliu dinc geborn, und ich was sache mîn selbes und aller dinge; und hæte ich gewolt, ich enwære niht, noch alliu dinc enwæren niht; und enwære ich niht, sô enwære ouch >got< niht. Daz got >got< ist, des bin ich ein sache; enwære ich niht, sô enwære got niht >got<. Diz ze wîzzenne des enist niht nôt.

On Schürmann’s original typescript a page cropped from Raymond Blackney’s translation in Raymond Bernard Blakney, ed., *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), 231 (trans. modified) is found glued. I have transcribed and kept Blackney’s version for coherence with Schürmann’s typescript, although Schürmann himself later translated the Sermon into English. In fact, during his time at Duquesne University—i.e., at the time when he was composing the text of “Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition”—Schürmann had most likely not yet completed—or, at least, deemed it unnecessary to use an excerpt from—his own English translation of the Sermon “*Beati pauperes spiritu*.” Now Schürmann’s translation of the excerpt can be found, instead, not only in his “The Loss of the Origin in Soto Zen

II. HEIDEGGER AND THE MYSTICAL TRADITION

Some preliminary remarks:

- It is not an undue restriction to speak of Meister Eckhart alone when we look for Heidegger's being indebted to a mystical tradition: Eckhart is the only "mystic" he mentions more than incidentally (Pseudos-Dionysius: 1; Tauler: 1; Suso: 1; Angelus Silesius: 5, but these have to be attributed to Meister Eckhart whose versifier Angelus Silesius is; Meister Eckhart: 7).¹⁷ Eckhart, indeed, inaugurates this tradition. It is insufficient to place him simply in the line of Platonist mystics, as Plotinus, Proclus, etc.: he is even more Aristotelian than Platonist, cf. "virgin"—"wife"—"*intellectus receptivus*"—"intellectus activus."¹⁸

and in Meister Eckhart," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 42, no. 2 (April 1978), 281–312, but also in *Wandering Joy*, 113, 214–215:

Where man still preserves some place in himself, he preserves distinction. This is why I pray to God to rid me of God, for my essential being (*min wesentlich wesen*) is above God insofar as we comprehend God as the principle of creatures. Indeed, in God's own being, where God is raised above all being and all distinctions, I was myself, I willed myself, and knew myself to create this man [that I am]. Therefore I am cause of myself according to my being which is eternal, but not according to my becoming which is temporal. Therefore also I am unborn, and according to my unborn being I can never die. According to my unborn being I have always been, I am now, and shall eternally remain. What I am by my [temporal] birth is to die and be annihilated, for it is mortal; therefore with time it must pass away. In my [eternal] birth all things were born, and I was cause of myself as well as of all things. If I had willed it, neither I nor any things would be. And if I myself were not, God would not be either: that God is God, of this I am a cause. If I were not, God would not be God. There is, however, no need to understand this.]

17. [In a recent book, both very thoroughly researched and deeply inspired by Reiner Schürmann—Ian Alexander Moore, *Eckhart, Heidegger and the Imperative of Releasement* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2019)—the author documents with scholarly akribeia "when and where Heidegger cites or references Eckhart," (xiv). Based on "ample historical evidence, much of it unpublished or only recently available in German" (*ibidem*)—historical evidence mostly unavailable to Schürmann at the time of the composition of "Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition"—Moore shows (and patiently discusses in Appendix One of his book) that "Heidegger cites or makes reference to Eckhart nearly *one hundred times* throughout his career," Moore, *Imperative of Releasement*, 4 (emphasis added).]

18. [Cf. Schürmann's "Analysis and Commentary" of Meister Eckhart's *Pr. 2* "Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum," in *Wandering Joy*, 9–46 for a detailed description of

- This dependency is very fundamental—in 1966, it was Heidegger himself who, in some long conversations, drew my attention to this material.¹⁹ And if there is a mystical tradition that transcends occidental thought, Heidegger’s late interest in Zen Buddhism may confirm this. Cf. William Barrett’s remark. [He] relates that one day, a friend visited Heidegger and found him reading one of Suzuki’s books. Heidegger said: “If I understand this man correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings.”²⁰
- To acknowledge this resurgence of the mystical tradition in Heidegger, implies neither that Heidegger is a mystic, nor that Meister Eckhart is a modern. In *What is a Thing?*, Heidegger writes: “Modern philosophy is usually considered to have begun with Descartes, who lived one generation after Galileo. Contrary to the attempts, which appear from time to time, to have modern philosophy begin with Meister Eckhart or in the time between Eckhart and Descartes, we must adhere to the usual beginning.”²¹

Eckhart’s “very Aristotelian” (18) thinking and “original adaptation” (20) of Aristotelian elements.]

19. [Probable reference to Schürmann’s visit to Heidegger on March 11, 1966. Cf. “Reiner Schürmann’s Report of His Visit to Martin Heidegger,” trans. Pierre Adler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19, no. 2/20, no. 1 (1997), 67–72. The original French text can be found in Jean-Marie Vaysse, ed., *Autour de Reiner Schürmann* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2009), 155–157.]

20. [Cf. William Barrett, “Zen for the West,” in *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki* (New York: Three Leaves, 2004) vii–xxiii. Barrett’s report: “A German friend of Heidegger told me that one day when he visited Heidegger he found him reading one of Suzuki’s books. ‘If I understand this man correctly,’ Heidegger remarked, ‘this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings.’” In *Eckhart, Heidegger and the Imperative of Releasement*, Ian Alexander Moore renders the title of Suzuki’s book explicit: “Nishitani gave [Heidegger] a copy of the first volume of D. T. Suzuki’s *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1927)” (15). On page 230, n. 41, Moore cites Barrett’s remark and gives as a further reference Graham Parks’s “Introduction,” in Graham Parks, ed., *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 9–10.]

21. [Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, trans. W. B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch, with an analysis by E. T. Gendlin (New York: University Press of America, 1967), 98. Cf. GA 41. *Die Frage Nach Dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre Von Den Transzendentalen Grundsätzen*, ed. Petra Jaeger (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1984), 98 (76):

Man setzt gewöhnlich den Beginn der neuzeitlichen Philosophie bei Descartes (1596–1650) an; er lebte eine Generation später als Galilei. Gegenüber den zuweilen auftaudienden Versuchen, die neuzeitliche Philosophie mit dem Meister Eckhart oder in der Zwischenzeit zwischen ihm und Descartes beginnen zu lassen, muß an der bisherigen Ansetzung festgehalten werden.]

- I take the word “mystic” literally: μύω [muō], to close one’s eyes, which is precisely an attitude of detachment. More specifically, I use this word exclusively to suggest Eckhart’s understanding of detachment as it shines up in all European languages: the root of the English “releasement,” *laxare*, is the same as that of the French “laisser,” and the German “lassen” from which “*Gelassenheit*” is derived. In the very elaborate language of the Rhineland mystics, this word undergoes a change in meaning and comes to mean not to “let go,” but rather the opposite, to “let be.” Not carelessness, closing one’s eyes in order ~~not~~ to see the world, but the highest form of care: the supreme attention expressed in the bust of Homer—one does not know whether he is blind or simply listening with supreme concentration.

- My comparison focuses exclusively on the third period in Heidegger’s writing. Indeed, one distinguishes usually between two periods in Heidegger’s work: the earlier and the later Heidegger. But in truth there are three definite phases, namely three successive modes of understanding the relation between Being and Time:
 - a) Period of *Being and Time*. Beings are understood out of their constant presence (*beständiges Anwesen*). One dimension of time is privileged, the *present*.²²
 - b) Period until the texts on Hölderlin. The truth of Being is understood in historicity. Time becomes the transcendental background for the understanding of Being. Heidegger speaks now of the “history of Being [*Seinsgeschichte*].”
 - c) Being is now understood as “clearance [*Lichtung*],” and time as “destiny,” *Geschick*. But “*Geschick*” must no more be thought of as “*Geschichte*,” history. Heidegger asks: how does time belong to the different modes of the clearance? Language becomes the guiding thread—not the history of the Occident. Under the title of the Fourfold [*Geviert*], Heidegger now attempts a “Topology of Being.”

I shall now briefly formulate some propositions—we never escape propositions—based on this attempt of a Topology of Being. Indeed, here Being is precisely understood as *Gelassenheit*, as letting-be. I use only Heideg-

22. {≠ ecstases}

ger's conference *On Time and Being*.²³ That there are again four propositions formulated, as there were four stages in the previous section, indicates no deliberate symmetry.

1. Being shows itself as an event

Meister Eckhart uses the word “*Wesen*” exclusively for the ground of the soul—that “something” within man that “is uncreated and cannot be created.”²⁴ We remember that the ground of the soul and the ground of God are *one* in the reciprocal < begetting >²⁵ of the Word. The misunderstanding of the Inquisition was to consider “*wesen*” as a fixed substance, identified with the divine substance. No, “*wesen*” means this reciprocal event, birth, < process >²⁶ *energeia*. “I am translated into God and I become one with him—one being (*wesen*) and one nature (*nasci*).”²⁷ “God and I are one in this < process >²⁸ (*gewürke*).”²⁹

This first proximity between Eckhart and Heidegger is undeniable: Being is primarily an event. Being is not a noun, but a verb. To underline this, Heidegger speaks in *On Time and Being* of the “< process >³⁰ of Being,” “[*das*] *Wesen des Seins*.”³¹ Earlier he had already said that Being is “not an essence

23. [GA 14. *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. F. W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007). In English: Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).]

24. [Cf. *supra*, n. 8, and also, MEW I, Pr. 29 “*Convalescens praecepit eis*,” 334, l. 16–19: “Ich spriche, als ich mê gesprochen hân: dâ diu sêle ir natiurliche geschaffen wesen hât, dâ enist kein wârheit. Ich spriche, daz etwaz obe der sêle geschaffener natûre ist.” In *Wandering Joy*, 104: “I repeat what I have already said on many occasions: as far as the mind’s natural and created being goes, there is no truth. I say that there is something which is beyond the created nature of the mind.”]

25. {<“engenderment”>}

26. {<“accomplishment”>}

27. {<“accomplishment”>} [MEW II, Pr. 76 (Pf., 42, l. 2) “*Videte qualem caritatem*,” 132, l. 17–18: “daz ich übergesast werde in got und werde ein mit im [. . .] êin wesen und êin natûre.” See also *Wandering Joy*, 132.]

28. {<“accomplishment”>}

29. [MEW I, Pr. 6 “*Iusti vivent in aeternum*,” 86, l. 13–14: “Got und ich wir sîn ein in disem gewürke.”]

30. {<“accomplishment”>}

31. [Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 37. Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 29, trans. modified by Schürmann.]

of things but [a process]³² (verbally).³³ Only when Being is represented as the “cause” or the “rock” that holds all beings, does it appear as a noun. But in *On Time and Being*, Heidegger attempts “to think Being without regard to its being grounded in terms of beings.”³⁴ In the second phase of Heidegger’s thought which I have mentioned, Being appeared already as [a process]:³⁵ namely the history of the clearance of Being in the Occident. Now, Heidegger speaks rather of an event. He comes thus closer to Eckhart’s understanding of Being than in the works on the History of Being.

2. Man is the place of the difference between beingness and Being

The first stage of the process of Releasement, you may remember, was called “Dissimilarity.” Man, as created, “is not.” The other stages then spoke of a “spark” within man, “uncreated and uncreatable.”³⁶ Thus man appears to Meister Eckhart as the place of a difference: between created being and uncreated being. The latter he calls “*wesen*.” The created being he calls “*ih*”—which properly speaking is not, “*niht*” or “*nicht*.” Only created being can be represented. We cannot imagine the Being that accomplishes itself in the core of the soul and the core of God.

This difference is in truth the difference Heidegger thinks of when he distinguishes between beingness, *Seiendheit*, and Being, *Sein*. “Being preserves within itself the difference between Being and beingness; but it can only clear this difference in its truth when the difference accomplishes itself properly.”³⁷ In *On Time and Being*, Heidegger asks what we think of when we say “there is Being.” The German language does not say “there is,”

32. {“accomplishment”}

33. [GA 7. *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. F. W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 278 (263): “Nicht [. . .] als Wesenheit der Dinge, sondern [als] Wesen (verbal).” Trans. by Schürmann. Now in Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking. The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank. A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 113: “not [. . .] as the essence of things, but rather [as] the essential unfolding (*Wesen* as a verb).”]

34. [Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 5: “[ein] Versuch, der das Sein ohne die Rücksicht auf eine Begründung des Seins aus dem Seienden denkt.” Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 2.]

35. {“accomplishment”}

36. [Cf. *supra*, n. 8 and n. 28; MEW I, *Pr.* 48, 506, l. 24: “ungeschaffen und ungeschepflich.”]

37. [Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 76 (74): “[. . .] das Sein selbst den in ihm verwahrten Unterschied von Sein und Seiendem erst dann in seiner Wahrheit lichten kann, wenn der Unterschied selbst sich eigens ereignet.” Trans. by Schürmann; now in Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper &

but rather “it gives,” *es gibt Sein*. This idiomatic turn of speech reveals to Heidegger Being’s way to be. What is experienced when language says: *es gibt Sein*? what is given? Being is given. But what is it that gives? “We try to bring the ‘It’ and its giving into sight and write the ‘It’ with a capital letter.”³⁸ Already in the second paragraph of *Being and Time*, Heidegger had questioned man as the place of the difference between Being and beings. “Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make one being—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being.”³⁹ In the conference *On Time and Being*, the place of this difference is language rather than what Heidegger used to call “*Dasein*” earlier.⁴⁰

3. Releasement as a condition for the understanding of Being

Meister Eckhart emphasizes again that we must ourselves be totally released if we are to understand his teaching of Releasement. “He who wants to understand this must let himself be, and let himself thoroughly be.”⁴¹ That is probably the reason why he chose to be a preacher: to bring about an attitude in man that allows for a true understanding of Being. That may also be the reason why his texts in German, his mother language, are much more original than his Latin school writings. We shall understand Releasement only in responding for our own sake to its claim. Releasement is the condition of possibility to understand Being’s way to be.

Let us give some more attention to the “giving” of Being that we have just mentioned in *On Time and Being*. Heidegger says that man can only be man when he stands within this “giving” of Time and Being.⁴² What

Row, 1973), 91: “Being itself can open out in its truth the difference of Being and beings preserved in itself only when the difference explicitly takes place.”]

38. [Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 9: “Wir versuchen, das Es und sein Geben in die Sicht zu bringen und Schreiben das »Es« groß.” Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 5, trans. modified by Schürmann.]

39. [Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967), 7: “Ausarbeitung der Seinsfrage besagt demnach: Durchsichtigmachen eines Seienden—des fragenden—in seinem Sein.” Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. A translation of *Sein und Zeit* by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 27, trans. modified by Schürmann.]

40. {Here: Releasement: Being’s way to be, but still the *attitude* of man is required.}

41. [Cf. *supra*, n. 4, trans. by Schürmann.]

42. [Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 16–17:

Der Mensch innestehend im Angang von Anwesenheit, dies jedoch so, daß er das Anwesen, das Es gibt, als Gabe empfängt, indem er vernimmt, was im Anwesenlassen erscheint. Wäre der Mensch nicht der stete Empfänger der Gabe aus dem »Es gibt Anwesenheit«, erreichte den Menschen nicht das in der Gabe Gereichte, dann bliebe beim

Heidegger speaks of, is the necessity of thought as a preparation to an experience which, as yet, is not possible. Heidegger's thought prepares a path, in the predominant technological organization. This path leads to a *possible* experience. But he also says: "This thought is not yet the experience."⁴³ In Kantian terms: it is the condition of possibility for this experience to grant itself. What Heidegger called "meditative thinking" as opposed to "calculative thinking," which today "captivates, bewitches, dazzles and beguiles man,"⁴⁴ in an earlier text (precisely entitled: "Release-ment," [*Gelassenheit*] *Discourse on Thinking*) becomes now the condition for Being to "give" itself properly (or as appropriation, *Ereignis*). It is not by chance that in this context Heidegger describes the giving of Being in the old terms of "without why."⁴⁵ Being grants itself forth—with no reason, no purpose. As in the verse of Angelus Silesius:

The rose is without why, it flowers because it flowers. It pays no heed to itself, asks not if it is seen.⁴⁶

Ausbleib dieser Gabe Sein nicht nur verborgen, auch nicht nur verschlossen, sondern der Mensch bliebe ausgeschlossen aus der Reichweite des: Es gibt Sein. Der Mensch wäre nicht Mensch.

Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 12:

Man: standing within the approach of presence, but in such a way that he receives as a gift the presencing that It gives by perceiving what appears in letting-presence. If man were not the constant receiver of the gift given by the "It gives presence," if that which is extended in the gift did not reach man, then not only would Being remain concealed in the absence of this gift, not only closed off, but man would remain excluded from the scope of: It gives Being. Man would not be man.]

43. [Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 63: "Also [. . .] ist das Denken (mithin auch das Denken, das im Seminar selbst versucht wurde) noch nicht die Erfahrung." Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 53, trans. modified by Schürmann.]

44. [GA 16. *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, ed. Hermann Heidegger (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), 528: "[die im Atomzeitalter anrollende Revolution der Technik] den Menschen auf eine Weise *fesseln, behexen, blenden und verblenden könnte*." Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, A translation of *Gelassenheit* by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 56, trans. modified by Schürmann (emphasis added).]

45. {SD [*Zur Sache des Denkens*,] 62} [Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 52.]

46. [Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, 69* (Book I, distich 289), trans. by Schürmann:

*Die Ros ist ohn Warum: sie blühet, weil sie blühet,
Sie acht nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet.*]

That is how man has to live—or, in Heideggerian terms, how we have to “think”—if Being is to be understood properly. Releasement as “life without why” is the condition of possibility to understand Being’s way to be.⁴⁷

4. Releasement as Being’s way to be⁴⁸

A last step now appears: Releasement is not only the condition to understand Being’s way to be—it *is* Being’s way to be. From Parmenides through Meister Eckhart to Heidegger, Being is thought of in its identity with thought.⁴⁹ Only here appears the real proximity between Eckhart and Heidegger: Being’s way to be is the identical event of Releasement. Here, Releasement is no more represented “within the domain of the will.”⁵⁰ Releasement appears to be the most noble title to say “there is Being.” *Es gibt Sein*. Heidegger describes this giving as follows: “The ‘It’ which here ‘gives,’ is Being itself. The ‘gives’ however indicates the giving nature of Being granting its truth.”⁵¹

47. {Here the two come together:
| → Being’s way to be
Releasement

| → man’s way to be}

48. {The now unity of *path, attitude, thought*.}

49. [Cf. GA 15. *Seminare*, ed. Curd Ochwad (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986), 401: “Parmenides gibt uns einen ersten Wink, auf welchem Wege nach der Herkunft des Denkens gefragt werden muß. Diesen Wink enthält der Spruch: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι (Fr. 3) [DK, 28 B3] »Denken und Sein (d.h. Vernehmen und Anwesen) gehören nämlich zueinander.«” Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 93: “Parmenides provides us with a first hint as to which way the provenance of thinking is to be questioned. This hint is contained in the claim: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι [τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι] (Fragment 3) “Thinking and being (i.e., perceiving and presencing) belong, namely, to one another.”]

50. [GA 13. *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, ed. F. W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 25: “[der] Bereich des Willens.” Cf. Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 61, trans. modified by Schürmann.]

51. [Cf. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 5 trans. n. 1 by Joan Stambaugh. Therein Stambaugh makes reference to *Letter on Humanism*. In *Brief über den Humanismus* in GA 9. *Wegmarken*, ed. F. W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 334 (165), Heidegger writes: “[. . .] il y a l’Être: « es gibt » das Sein. Das il y a übersetzt das « es gibt » ungenau. Denn das « es » was hier « gibt », ist das Sein selbst. Das « gibt » nennt jedoch das gebende, seine Wahrheit gewährende Wesen des Seins. Das Sichgeben ins Offene mit diesem selbst ist das Sein selber.” Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 254–255: “il y a l’Être: ‘there is / it gives’ [‘es gibt’] being. Il y a translates ‘it gives’ imprecisely. For the ‘it’ that here ‘gives’ is

Releasement is the abstemious word for Being that is neither a supreme substance nor the speculative ground of all beings. Releasement tells us what Being does: it lets its truth be. Being lets itself be. It grants itself to thought. But only to a thought that is itself released.

You see that in *On Time and Being*, Heidegger attempts to remember Being as that which lets everything be present. The starting point of this remembrance is neither the multiplicity of beings, nor man. The path of thought is reversed: from Being's way to be, we shall eventually reach man's way to be and all things' way to be. But in *On Time and Being*, Heidegger questions only Being's way to be. He calls this a "presencing," *Anwesen*. And Heidegger⁵² had read Meister Eckhart particularly at the time when he was himself tracing the modes of *Anwesen*, "presencing."

In *On Time and Being*, Heidegger says that "presencing" points into a double direction. It points towards the beings that are present. Being "lets" beings be present. But it points also into the direction of Being itself that "lets" beings be present. In other words, "presencing" points towards Being as the event. In the first case, we have the difference between a thing's beingness and Being the way metaphysics represents it. In the first case, letting-be designates very precisely the ontological difference. The first case is spelled out, in German, as *Anwesenlassen*. In the second case, however, what comes into sight is no more the beings that are present, but the letting-be-present itself. Heidegger writes: *Anwesen-lassen*, which has been translated as letting-presence.⁵³ This is Releasement in its non-metaphysical sense: the event that shows forth Being's truth, although Being itself remains hidden.

For both Meister Eckhart and Heidegger, neither beings nor their beingness can answer as to what Being is. In a seminar held in Le Thor in France (1969), Heidegger added a third acceptance of letting-be. This is somewhat intermediate between the two acceptations mentioned in *On Time and Being*. He explained that beingness, which makes beings be, can already be understood as a happening. But that this happening—that things

being itself. The 'gives' names the essence of being that is giving, granting its truth. The self-giving into the open, along with the open region itself, is being itself.]"

52. {told me he} [Cf. *supra*, n. 20 and Reiner Schürmann, "Heidegger and Meister Eckhart on Releasement," *Research in Phenomenology* 3 (1973): 95, "Heidegger in private conversations emphasizes the authenticity of Meister Eckhart's experience of Being" and also, *Wandering Joy*, 254: "[...] Heidegger sometimes quotes from Meister Eckhart, and we learned personally from him that he developed his understanding of being as *An-wesen* (a verb, not a noun) in the years in which he also read Meister Eckhart's sermons" (emphasis added).]

53. [Cf. *Wandering Joy*, 206–209 and Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 5.]

are there, in their beingness—is not genuinely the “event” that he thinks to be Being’s way to be. This event, Heidegger then said, appears rather as an “excess of presence.”⁵⁴

What counts is that Releasement brings Being into its proper way to be. “Proper,” the German “*eigen*,” suggests a belonging or an appropriation, *Ereignis*, an event. This is our hope: that Being as event may require us. To conclude: Releasement, all of a sudden, turns into its contrary: appropriation. But *we* do not appropriate, here. We have ceased to lay hands on everything, literally to manipulate things, ourselves, and God. Only then are Releasement, *Gelassenheit*, and Appropriation, *Ereignis*, names for one and the same claim, laid on us. These names no longer refer to any attitude of man or anything human. Beyond all the incongruities that oppose medieval to contemporary experience, it is the urgency of a new existence and thought that brings Heidegger so close to the mystical tradition.

I have tried to present some points of discussion. They have arisen from seminar-conversations. This originally oral form may still be sensible in some repetitions. They want to bring about the debate from which they stem.

54. [Heidegger, *Seminare*, 331: “Was ist im Wort φύειν sogleich mitgenannt? Das ist die *Überfülle*, das *Übermaß* des Anwesenden.” Cf. Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, 38: “What is at once co-named in the word φύειν [phúein]? It is the *overabundance*, the *excess* of what presences” (emphasis in original).]