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# Intimations of a Spiritual New Age: III. Martin Heidegger's Phenomenology of Numinous/Being Experience and the "Other Beginning" of a Futural Planetary Spirituality

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The phenomenology of numinous or Being-experience in the later Heidegger is the focus in this third in a series of papers on a group of independent figures—also including Jung, Reich, Toynbee, Teilhard de Chardin, and Simone Weil—who beginning in the crisis years of the 1930s envisioned versions of a futural "New Age" spirituality to address a globalizing materialism and its disenchantments—and so also creating a context for much of contemporary transpersonal and consciousness studies. A preliminary consideration of Heidegger in the contexts of transpersonal psychology, religious studies, the macro-histories of Toynbee and Sorokin, James on "pure experience," and spirituality as intelligence must also lead to some reckoning with Heidegger's disastrous initial involvement with National Socialism. Considered here in terms of a spiritual metapathology of narcissistic inflation/grandiosity, it was his way past this episode that led from the mid 1930s on into his radical critique of a globalizing technology of universal commodification and to an answering futural potential for a spiritual "Other Beginning" and "last god"—re-sacralizing humanity for the "guardianship" and "sheltering" of planet and life.

**Keywords:** *New Age, globalization, Being-experience, Dasein, this-worldly mysticism, ideational/classic/sensate eras, awe, thatness vs. whatness, social-personal vs. thing intelligences, anthropomorphism, homelessness, schizoid dilemma, pre-Socratic physis, logos, aletheia, Other Beginning, Event of Appropriation, Inceptuality, Clearing, releasement*

This study of Heidegger's phenomenology of spirituality as the essence of a creative human intelligence and his analysis of a potential "Other Beginning" for a future planetary spirituality is the third in this series on a group of independent figures—in the crisis years from the 1930s into the 1950s—who articulated overlapping visions of possible future resolutions to what the sociologist Max Weber (1922/1963) saw as a "disenchantment" of traditional meaning and purpose now intensified in the increasing globalization of an historically unprecedented materialist-sensate economy and its exclusively "instrumentalist" values (see also Hunt, 2017, 2018ab).

In addition to the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) these key figures would include the psychologists Carl

Jung (1961) and Wilhelm Reich (1949/1973), the macro-historians Arnold Toynbee (1946, 1957) and Pitrim Sorokin (1957), along with the more explicit spiritualities of such as Teilhard de Chardin (1959), Simone Weil (1947/2002; Hunt, 2017), Krishnamurti (1973/1987; Hunt, 2014), and Gurdjieff (1975; Hunt, 2003) with their potentially futural versions of an essentialized Christianity, Vedanta, and Sufism.<sup>1</sup> While they all offer intuitions of a more distant Age of spiritual renewal, they also became direct precursors and the larger context for what might be termed a present transpersonal *Era* of more specific empirical studies of psychedelics, meditation, neo-shamanism, and consciousness studies.

The consideration of the later Heidegger as one of these New Age figures—with his intuitions of

Being-experience as the cognitive-noetic meaning of numinous-mystical feeling—might indeed seem questionable in light of his early allegiance to Hitler’s National Socialism, as Nazi Rector of his university in 1933/4. This has not surprisingly caused some to question the entire basis of his phenomenology of Dasein or human existence set forth in his seminal *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927/1962; see Wolin, 1990; Hunt, 2003, and discussion below). Nonetheless, his rapid disillusion with National Socialism as spiritual “new beginning”—an enthusiasm initially shared by many conservative neo-romantics at the time—led to his abrupt resignation. What followed between 1934 and about 1947 was a series of lecture courses, notebooks, and extended writings, some only recently published, in which he critiqued what he saw as the “machination” of modern technology and its ruthless commodification of both nature and humanity, which he came to see as common to the mass political movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These writings also put forward what he saw as a potential spiritual renewal based on a futural global sacralizing of Being-as-such. This planetary Other Beginning was based on his original re-interpretations of a pre-Socratic First Beginning of Western spirituality, which he, and others, have compared to Taoism and Buddhism (Guenther, 1989; May, 1996; Parkes, 1987). He also suggested a more regionally specific re-sacralization of nature and its mythology, which he derived from the nature poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843). This amounts to a kind of neo-shamanism similar to the related re-enchantments of Emerson and Thoreau.

Especially in light of the contemporary “populisms” of nationalist, fundamentalist, and narrowly ethno-centric reactions against the pressures and resentments of an accelerating economic globalization—a reactivity anticipated by Teilhard de Chardin (1964) as an inevitable way station on the path to any wider re-spiritualization—Heidegger’s way out of his earlier National Socialist enthusiasm and forward into an original this-worldly mysticism and ecological re-sacralization will have its own renewed relevance—both in the mistake and in its potential answer.

### **Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Spirituality as Essence of the Human Condition**

It is the cross referencing of Heidegger with these other New Age precursors, and the larger issues of social theory, spirituality, and the nature of consciousness this raises, that can best contextualize his unique understanding of Being-experience as the noetic core of the numinous and its relevance for contemporary transpersonal studies. It seems especially significant that Heidegger, with Wittgenstein one of the two greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, and both sharing a major impact in ongoing debates over the unique conceptual foundations of the human sciences (Hunt, 1995, 2005), offers a phenomenology of the transpersonal at the very core of his phenomenology of human existence.

#### **Being-Experience and the Numinous: A Philosophy for Transpersonal Studies**

Following the earlier descriptive naturalism of *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s phenomenological writings from the late 1930s show a growing alignment of his understanding of Being-experience, as the direct intuition of the sheer thatness of Being-as-such, with Rudolf Otto’s (1917/1958) more sensory-affective dimensions of the numinous—Otto’s term for the feeling aspect of mystical experience also so influential on Jung (1961). For Otto these experiences of wonder, awe, and the uncanny, also the empirical focus of recent empirical research on awe (Shiota, Keltner, & Mossman, 2007), have been historically schematized in the multiple doctrines of a spiritual Absolute: variously understood as God, Void, Spirit, Brahman. For Heidegger Being-as-such becomes the deeper noetic meaning implied within these schematizations.

Otto, a Protestant theologian drawn to a comparative phenomenology of the numinous as the felt core of the world religions, distinguishes within that a first dimension of the *mysterium* as wonder, fascination, mystery, while Heidegger similarly comes to describe his Being-experience with terms such as “wonder,” “awe,” “amazement,” and “marvelling” at an ineffable “wholly other” (Heidegger, 1942/1992, pp. 62, 75; 1939/2006, p. 241). Where Otto describes his second dimension as

the *tremendum*, with its sense of the overpowering, dread, and uncanny strangeness, Heidegger begins to write of the experience of Being in terms of “shock,” “shudder,” and the “uncanny” (Heidegger, 1942/1992, p. 101; 1938/1994, p. 133; 1940/2015, p. 89). Here Heidegger cites Nietzsche’s own descriptions of a “rapture” that “explodes” the very subjectivity of the subject in an “essence of joy” that must be “strong enough” to bear “being terrified” (Heidegger, 1937/1979, p. 123; 1940/2015, p. 89)—a duality of peak experience also described by Maslow (1962). Finally, Otto’s third dimension of dependency, humility, or “creature feeling” is echoed in Heidegger’s descriptions of Being-experience in terms of “diffidence,” “indigence,” and “essential poverty” (Heidegger, 1941/2017, p. 93; 1942/2013, p. 182).

For Rudolf Otto, as for James (1902) and Jung (1961), the “wholly other” quality of numinous/mystical experience will at its extreme entail an utter “ineffability.” Here Heidegger describes a “keeping silent” (Heidegger, 1938/1994, p. 162) such that all verbal expression becomes at best “indicative” and poetic—full of overt self contradiction and paradox. Thus for Heidegger Being-experience can only be conveyed as a coincidence of opposites. It is at once the most “empty” and the most “excessive” and complete; the most “said” and “obvious” (as in the ubiquity of the word “is”) and yet the most “concealed” and “mysterious”; the most “universal” yet the most “singular” and “unique”; and “both utterly void and most abundant” (Heidegger, 1946/1982, p. 193; 1941/1993, pp. 42–57). Heidegger will also describe Being, in its “withdrawal” behind the “gift” of its “welling forth,” as an ostensible “nothing”—and so reminiscent of Buddhist void and the “godhead” of Meister Eckhart—one of his major early influences (Heidegger, 1956/1958; 1962/1972).

The mantra-like repetitions of these phrasings from his then unpublished notebooks (*Ponderings II–VI*, *Ponderings VII–XI*, *Ponderings XII–XV*), lecture courses (*Hölderlin’s Hymns: Germania and the Rhine*; *Parmenides*; *Hölderlin’s Hymn: The Ister*; *Hölderlin’s Hymn: Remembrance*; *Heraclitus*), and then unpublished books (*Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*; *Mindfulness*; *The History of Being*; *The Event*) are all written in an

experientially evocative manner. These are the main sources for this present analysis, and offer the most direct support for the relevance of his later work as a phenomenology of spirituality and a philosophical foundation for transpersonal studies.

Also central here is the link between Maslow, Almaas, and Gurdjieff on the transformation in sense of self in peak and ecstatic experience and Heidegger on Dasein—the essence of human existence as our self-aware “being there”—first developed in *Being and Time* (1927/1962). There he outlined the existential a priori of the human condition as a being-in-the-world, as oneself, with others, ahead in time toward death—that openness conferring the sense of Being to which we can either “authentically” awaken or suffer a more everyday “forgetfulness.” Later he would write this as Dasein, connoting the direct experience of a presence-openness-wonder in which one’s self identity becomes Being itself. That would be the beginning of the futural sense of identity that could prepare his “Other Beginning” for a planetary spiritual renewal (Heidegger, 1938/2012, pp. 277–279).

Heidegger is on much the same ground here as Maslow (1962) on one’s identity as Being in peak experiences and self actualization. Heidegger, in discussing Nietzsche’s personal experiences of ecstasy notes this same transformation of self-hood as Being:

A being beyond oneself, hence a coming to oneself in the supreme lucidity of Being... the heightening of life itself...a transformation in which the supreme lawfulness of Dasein becomes visible. (Heidegger, 1937/1979, pp. 212, 216)

Almaas (1988) similarly describes the experience of “essential identity” or the “point” as one’s felt identity as Being, as also for Jung (1951/1959) on the Self, and as opening for Almaas into the more formless transpersonal states.<sup>2</sup> Heidegger’s Dasein also shares a conceptual framework with Gurdjieff (1975) on “self remembering,” as the cultivation of a here and now sense of presence that opens to the intuition of Great Being, and, with the early Heidegger, energized by the contemplation of death.

Heidegger's awakening to Da-sein and its similarity to the Being-experiences in Maslow, Almaas, Jung, and Gurdjieff places them together as expressions of what Max Weber (1922/1963) termed "inner-worldly" mysticism—to be contrasted with the more detached "other-worldly" mysticisms and the socially driven propheticisms. It was inner-worldly mysticism that Troeltsch (1931/1960) and Weber saw as the form of re-sacralization most in tune with the individualized, capitalist West (see also Hunt, 2003). More specifically for Heidegger, Being, as the noetic core of ecstatic states, is that schematization of the numinous most consistent with a civilization prioritizing a sensate empiricism of the "factual," since it is the felt attunement to a sensed "thatness" running through all of physical and social-personal being. We really do exist, such that "Being-experience" becomes not a "representation" of something, but the fully embodied reality or "facticity" of presence-openness that *is* the numinous.

### Heidegger and Religious Studies

Both the very early Heidegger (1919/2004, 1920/2013) and the older philosopher of ethics Max Scheler (1923/1960), inspired by their mentor Edmund Husserl, sought to articulate a "transcendental phenomenology" of the human life-world as the next step in Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness. Wilhelm Dilthey (1911/1960), also a major early influence on Heidegger, similarly sought a "deep structure" for the human sciences of "understanding," which would have to be indirect or "indicative," since unlike the "explanatory" physical sciences there is no objective "outside" to humanity, only its indirect expressions in history and culture. Both Heidegger and Scheler independently came to the insight that this categorical phenomenology for human existence already existed—expressively amplified outward in its most inclusive form in the world religions (Spiegelberg, 1965; Hunt, 2012).<sup>3</sup>

Thus in the years leading up to *Being and Time* in 1927 Heidegger derived his categories of human being-in-the-world by a "de-mythologizing" or "naturalizing" re-description of the Christianity of Augustine, Duns Scotus, Meister Eckhart, and Kierkegaard. Christian love became the existential structure of care; original sin became the sense of

inherent flaw, "fallenness," and forgetfulness of Being; and faith in eternal life the "authenticity" of being ahead of oneself in time toward the open unknown of death (Crowe, 2006; Kisiel, 1993; van Buren, 1994).

Certainly one might wonder whether a similar "naturalizing" of Taoism or Vedanta would have generated these same universalizing forms of humanness, and Heidegger's later use of the pre-Socratics instead of Christianity did elicit shifts in emphasis. However, given the generality and orienting intention of these deep structures—being-in-the-world, as oneself, with others, ahead into the care and openness of time—it would seem that while starting from Taoism would have elicited more emphasis on his *eigenwelt* (world-of-one's-own) or from Confucianism, more on *mitwelt* (world-with-others), neither would have led to anything completely "other." Indeed, the validity of something *like* Heidegger's Dasein is needed to help explain how cultural anthropology is even possible.

The central implication is that if the existentials of being human are most fully derivable from religion, this also meant for Heidegger that religious/mystical experience must be a capacity inherent to Dasein—indeed as its "fullest" self-aware expression. A being with the structure of Heidegger's Dasein would have to be capable of something like numinous experience. Being-experience becomes the closest our self awareness as such can come to the essence of human being-in-the-world. It makes spirituality not just a faculty of mind but mind-as-such:

Man himself is that being that has the distinctive characteristic of being addressed by Being itself, in such a way that in the self showing of man... the uncanny itself, god, appears. (Heidegger, 1942/1992, p. 104)

Heidegger's approach to this intrinsic spirituality is neither purely "perennialist" in the sense of Huston Smith (1976), nor purely "constructivist" in the sense of Katz (1978), but more "interactionist"—as with Scheler (1923/1960), Martin Buber (1947), and indeed Otto himself. While Being as the noetic meaning of Otto's numinous sounds at times like a perennial core, its "deep structure" of wonder, awe, gratitude, humility,



and communality is as general and unspecified as Heidegger's original categories of Dasein. For the later Heidegger it is the schematization of Being-experience, always shaped by culture, history, and society, that creates the "History of Being" he will trace forward into the possibilities of a futural Other Beginning and last god. Such a planetary renewal would then be a sort of pulling forward of the deep structures of the numinous through schematizations specifically reflective of the modern disenchantment of tradition and its economic and technological commodifications of nature and humanity, that is, as uniquely emergent in the currency of our unfolding world history. It would follow that the schematization of the numinous in this age of globalization would favor the "facticity" term "Being" over a previous Absolute, Spirit, One, or God.<sup>4</sup>

Most simply put, to say that God is everything or in everything raises all the traditional theological debates over pantheism, dualism, monism vs. theism. For Heidegger, knowledgeable in both medieval scholasticism and contemporary mathematical physics, to say that Being is the essence of all things—a primary thatness running under, through, and ahead of all specific whatnesses—is true by definition. But then to say that this Being-as-such is the holy, and that fully felt it becomes the numinous, is to posit a spirituality of radical immanence—a non dual re-integration of humanity and universe that could then become the unitive meaning for the globalized sensate-material age to come.

### **Heidegger and Social Theory: The Multiple Histories of Being**

One way to better understand Heidegger's rather unique "deconstruction" of the entire history of Western civilization and its futural globalization—in terms of an originary sense of Beyng (the English for his use of the archaic German *Seyn* instead of *Sein*) and its progressive distortion and loss—is to contextualize his Beyng-History within the broader context of other macro-social theorists such as Sorokin (1957), Toynbee (1957), and Weber (1922/1963). The latter all share an understanding of repeating cycles within the more linear socio-economic development of the major world civilizations—between eras or maximum sacralization and its countering secularization.

### **Heidegger's Phenomenology of Numinous Experience**

Heidegger(1935/1961, 1946/1975, 1942/1992, 1944/2018) locates his own First Beginning of a Western sacralization of Being-as-such in the pre-Socratic nexus of Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, which he will later compare to Taoism and Buddhism as its closest Axial parallels. This First Beginning he sees as gradually lost within the categorical certainty and predominance of a narrowly causal thinking culminating in modern science and technology. By contrast the pre-Socratics intuit an underlying unity of nature (*physis*), thought (*logos*), and truth (*aletheia* or unconcealment). All three concepts reflect the same "gathered emergence" of Being as a "welling forth" from a background "boundlessness." This "self-unfolding" thereby "gives" an uncanniness and wonder to all specific beings, while "withdrawing" behind them in that very giving in an implicit concealment sensed as the holy. This for Heidegger becomes the early Greek sense of astonishment at the "pure shining" and "radiating light of all specific beings in their uncanny beauty" (Heidegger, 1942/1992, p. 136).

The emergence and concealment that dwell in all emerging beings, i.e. Being itself, must therefore be astonishing to common experience within everyday dealing with beings....The astonishing is for the Greeks the simple, the insignificant, Being itself. The astounding visible in the astonishing is the uncanny (Heidegger, 1942/1992, p. 101)

Heidegger's admittedly controversial grounding of Western thought is already its own form of Weber's immanent "this-worldly" mysticism—a first expression of the deeper renewal now needed as a planetary necessity in the face of what he feared might be its irreversible "forgetfulness." Heidegger traces the breaking up of this pre-Socratic unity into what he sees as the characteristically Western dualism of subject and object, in which truth shifts from "unconcealment" to a dominating representation and causal control by a separate mind over an objective world. That dualism passed through an omnipotent Judeo-Christian God of creation and Final Judgement into its eventual secularization as the modern Prometheanism of a scientific-technical "calculative

thinking” and “will to power.” For Heidegger, we have ended with an entirely secular, narrowly defined “anthropomorphism” that reduces Dasein to a kind of “super animality.” Corresponding to Weber’s “disenchantment of modernity,” Heidegger describes a “darkening of the world,” with its “flight of the gods,” “destruction of the earth,” “standardization of man,” and “misinterpretation of the spirit” (Heidegger, 1935/1961, p. 37). Where the “basic disposition” of the First Beginning was wonder, that of any futural Other Beginning would only emerge through a collective acknowledgement of this contemporary global “unsettlement” and its new dislocating sense of the uncanny (Heidegger, 1938/2012).

Heidegger’s *History of Beyng* can best be contextualized as a larger version of the more empirical observations of Pitrim Sorokin (1957), the Russian émigré social theorist who founded Harvard’s sociology department in the 1940s and 50s. His major work, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, traced within all major historical civilizations a common cyclicity between “ideational” or “sacralising” eras of cultural inspiration and subsequent “sensate” eras of secularization. The latter result from inevitable historical changes in the socio-economic patterns whose resultant dilemmas in living are no longer resolvable within the original ideational schematization. Eras of secularization are reflected in the predominance of materialistic, pragmatic, and individualistic values—which then may be followed by fundamentalist ideational revivals, new religious movements, or a more nihilistic cultural decline. Compromise “classical” eras can sometimes bridge these extremes, as in Hellenistic Neo Platonism or the European Renaissance, wherein the developing sensate is still contextualized and subordinated within a larger ideational attunement. Heidegger’s version becomes one single macro cycle from the Pre-Socratics to modern technology, with Medieval Scholasticism as its classicism, and culminating now in the need for a global spiritual renewal.

Sorokin independently agrees with both Heidegger and Max Weber, in the latter’s comparative sociology of the world religions (1922/1963), that the economic globalization of the modern West seems to have broken this pattern, perhaps permanently. The

cyclic theories of Sorokin, Toynbee, and Weber are very different from the linear development models of Gebser (1985) and Wilber (1995), stretching from hunter gatherer shamanism to the present scientific/informational civilization, while for Sorokin the latter is the unprecedented intensification and extension of an otherwise cyclic materialism—with what Weber saw as its entrenched “disenchantment.” Sorokin had concluded that by the early 1900s an ideational re-sacralization was long overdue, based on the preceding sensate culmination of the “Enlightenment Project” of reason, instrumentalism, individualism, and science, ending perhaps in Nietzsche’s relativism and nihilism. Weber (1905/1958) similarly wondered if the historically unique “rationalization” of Western society, its system complexity, associated with capitalism, technology, and bureaucratization, would permanently marginalize and suppress any periodic attempts at “re-enchantment” by increasingly marginalized sects and cults. Of course neither Sorokin nor Weber could have anticipated the run-away self-perpetuation of contemporary capitalist driven technology with its digitalized media, automated expert systems, and artificial intelligence.

Meanwhile Toynbee (1957), aligned with Heidegger on the inherency of the spiritual in the human condition, and with his own controversial radicalism, pictured world history as a succession of post-regional “universal states”—Greece, Persia, Rome, China, and India—whose “point” or deepest function had been their culminating generation of a still wider universal religion. Accordingly he anticipated that the same must eventually follow from a globalized materialist capitalism—which will finally have to give rise to its own re-contextualizing sense of meaning and broader spiritual purpose. With Weber, he saw modern capitalism as itself the further secularization of the Christian preoccupation with the incarnation of soul into a material world now becoming more and more unbalanced in its excessive materialism. He thought its futural re-spiritualization would be a synthesis of Judeo-Christian love and Eastern meditation, but one which would also have to remain consistent with modern empiricism and its this-worldly values. Here he turned to the later Henri Bergson (1935/1956)

and his understanding of mystical experience as the direct amplification of an intrinsic “life energy” or evolutionary “life force”—so close to Wilhelm Reich’s orgone energy as his “religion of the future” (Hunt, 2018ab).

While Heidegger (1920/2013) was initially influenced by Bergson’s “religion as transcendent life,” he soon came to see that the unique self-aware openness of human Dasein, contrasted with the “enclosed” worlds of all other living beings (Heidegger, 1930/1995), meant that Being-experience was a species-defining calling out of humanity by Being-as-such—creating a mandate for our “guardianship” and “sheltering” of life and planet (Heidegger, 1947/1962). This became the basis for his Other Beginning and “last god” (below).

### **Heidegger, James, and Consciousness Studies**

Heidegger understood his intuitive phenomenology of Dasein, Being, and Being-experience as the fuller completion of his mentor Husserl’s analytic phenomenology of consciousness, which he critiqued as an unintended perpetuation of a more traditional subject-object dualism. Instead, Husserl’s intentionality or “aboutness” of immediate consciousness—so similar to William James (1890) on its “stream” or onflow—was to be understood as already rooted in a constitutive being-in-the-world, rather than the other way around (Heidegger, 1973/2003, p. 69). The structure of Dasein, its self-aware presence-openness, makes Being-experience the nondual potentiality for Being to know/be itself through that Dasein.

Heidegger’s “thatness” of Being-experience shining through the myriad “whatnesses” of both abstract metaphysics and everyday life was a more intuitive way of conveying what he had termed the “ontological difference” between Being-as-such and specific beings, with all their thereby imbued interest and novelty (Heidegger, 1939/2006, p. 240). The ontological difference is not a “faculty” of human nature, but the “basic structure of Dasein itself” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 369)—and as such determines an intrinsic humanly defining creativity most fully expressed in numinous experience. The wonder/awe/uncanny of this attunement to the thatness of Being, in making spirituality intrinsic

to the fullness of Dasein, is thereby opposed to any “God of the gaps” notion that would see science as the ultimate replacement of a more vestigial, mythologically expressed and inevitably disappearing sense of mystery. Instead, the “wonder” or “strangeness” that things are at all continues to shine through all levels of their more specified explanation.

It is interesting that the later William James arrives at a similar “thatness” underlying both his “stream of consciousness” and all that it is “about.” Influenced by his own phenomenology of mystical experience in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), he describes a “pure experience” or “thatness” implicit within the “thisness” of consciousness and “whatness” of world:

The instant field of the present is at all times what I call the “pure” experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or subject as yet. For the time being, it is plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple that. (James, 1912/1971, p. 15)

With Heidegger, it can be sensed as:

Wonder over the general fact of being,...it is only familiarity that blocks it. Not only that *anything* should be but that *this* very thing should be, is mysterious. (James, 1911/1996, p. 39)

In his accounts of nitrous-oxide experience James had already intuited this more primary sensing of being and time. He describes a “limitless, infinite feeling...a sense of existence” (James, 1890, p. 273) that feels “always having been there” and with no conceivable end: “The now...exfoliating out of itself yet never escapes” (James, 1902, p. 351). Amplified as such this becomes the “timeless” and “eternal” quality of mystical experience. James is intuiting here his own version of a nondual unity or monism (Bricklin, 2010) that is also fundamental to Heidegger and Eastern thought.

Heidegger stresses that this wonder/mystery/astonishment of Being-experience is not to be confused with a more ordinary novelty and surprise at the myriad “this’s” and “what’s” of the everyday life-world. Its “unusualness” or astonishment are not that of other “unfamiliar” or “exceptional”



experiences (Heidegger, 1939/2006), p. 110)—but something more intrinsic.

Only that which is unrepeatable...is the innermost law of Being. (Heidegger, 1938/2016, p. 202)

In short, Being is always unique. As such it becomes the inner form or deep structure of astonishment—an intrinsic creativity of Dasein that separates us from other living beings. Here Heidegger naturalizes that more traditional Christian discontinuity of humanity and other species, contrastive against a purely Darwinian evolutionary continuity.

One could also add that considered in a wider organismic context, Otto's numinous with its wonder and awe of the *mysterium*, the wholly other power of the *tremendum*, and resulting sense of radical dependency, can be seen as the purely abstract form—brought forward as such into self-aware experience—of the “orientation response,” in which animals exposed to novelty initially react with an absorbed fascination and “still reaction” preparatory to flight/flight or actual exploration (Hunt, 1995). Indeed Heidegger confirms such an extension by adding to his primary “wonder” and “uncanny” a concomitant “shock,” “stillness,” “restraint,” and “shudder” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, pp. 14, 18). Here Being-experience would become the inner form of the organismic orientation response, but played through the entirety of our human self-aware cognitive/affective schemata, and so bringing forward an intrinsic creativity in which all and everything can become sources of “fascination” and “mystery”—conferring that openness which Heidegger will term “capability for God.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Two Cognitions: Spirituality as Social-Personal Intelligence**

A major dimension of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time* was his attempt to reconcile Dilthey's dichotomy between the intelligence of the sciences, as based on “explanation” (*Erklärung*) and grounded in a causal and mathematical connectivity—and the humanities, based on empathic interpretation or “understanding” (*Verstehen*)—with its most inclusive expression in the religious-spiritual traditions. (Bambach, 1995; Kisiel, 1993). For Dilthey

(1911/1960) the human sciences (and their subject matter) were correspondingly oxymoronic—based on the emergent combination of what could be termed these separate intelligences of thing and person (Hunt, 2005).

Although the two intelligences are distinct in terms of their ultimate intentionalities—witness the increasing distance between C. P. Snow's (1959) “two cultures”—this author (Hunt, 2009) has argued that it is their necessary collisions and partial integrations that help to constitute the permanent creativity of human symbolic cognition—in contrast to their separation in the higher apes and apparently in more primitive hominids. Heidegger's (1935/1961) version of this dynamic interaction and ultimate incommensurability comes in his inherent “strife” of “earth”—as natural environment—and “world” of culture. For Heidegger this strife, most directly felt, is the uncanny—that most primitive form of Otto's numinous. Thus it is of particular interest that Freud, in his seminal essay *The Uncanny* (1919/1959), similarly understands the sense of uncanniness as the direct crossing of these intelligences of person and thing. It is the feeling that arises where physical objects are felt to have the expressive physiognomies of persons and animals, or persons are experienced as mechanized and thing-like. The latter becomes especially characteristic of schizoid and schizophrenic conditions (Sass, 1998), while the interpersonal psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) considered the extreme of this uncanny strangeness as the defining emotion of psychotic onset. Meanwhile for James (1902), Jung (1961), and Anton Boisen (1936/1962) full mystical experience becomes the latter's resolution and healing.

While the major multiple intelligences (linguistic, artistic, scientific, and mechanical) can be seen as variously balanced integrations of these ultimately separate primary intelligences of person and thing (see Hunt, 2009), these domain fusions normally entail an originating predominant context of the social-personal, whether explicit or implicit—even in science and mathematics. This predominance, while maximally expressed in the spiritual traditions, remains determinant throughout Sorokin's sensate-materialist eras, to the point of truism, in the very necessity of social learning,

modeling, and mentoring for all knowledge—no matter how purely quantitative its outer form. Put most simply, the entirety of Piaget’s sensori-motor intelligence requires this shared context of “with others” for its integrated development.<sup>6</sup>

On the level of the history of cultures, Sorokin’s ideational and classic eras—as well as the larger mythic frameworks of nature in shamanic peoples (Levi-Strauss, 1966)—would make most explicit and overt this contextual predominance of social-personal over thing intelligence. Indeed, it would allow their optimal integration and balancing. Its outward collapse in Sorokin’s sensate-materialist eras entails the slipping of the spiritually amplified social-personal back into the implicit—resulting in Weberian disenchantment and loss of any larger sense of meaning. For Heidegger, the present technological era and its economic globalization reflects an historically unprecedented skewing in favor of sensate-materialist “machination,” in which humanity sees itself more and more through machine and now digital metaphors.

In the face of that, and despite the semantic sense of Being as equally inclusive of physical universe and cultural world, it would appear that Heidegger’s characterizations of Being-experience make clear that his futural Other Beginning would indeed renew the same contextual predominance of the social-personal found in the traditional world religions.

Thus, consistent with Gordon Allport’s (1961) classic account of the “idiographic” nature of the personal self, Being-experience is described as “unique,” “specific,” “self-same,” “singular,” and “alone” (Heidegger, 1932/2015, pp. 113–114, 132; 1938/2012, pp. 51–56). Similarly Heidegger’s descriptions of Being as a “oneness,” “unity,” “wholeness,” and “simplicity” echoes the gestalt psychologist Solomon Asch (1946) on the way that individual traits in person perception are spontaneously synthesized into a unique gestalt, with its sense of a central essence subsuming more peripheral attributes into one self. Finally, and even more strikingly, the “appropriation” of Dasein by Being as a “sheltering” that “holds,” and “safeguards” (Heidegger, 1945/2010, p. 124)—a “giving” and “allowing” whose source holds itself back in favor

of that very gifting—is the very essence of the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott’s (1971) account of mother-infant mirroring and nurturance.

This means that Heidegger’s Being—meeting these long established criteria—is ultimately a kind of person. If so, does that make his futural Other Beginning *merely* anthropomorphic—as in the projection of personhood within more traditional religious concepts of God, Absolute, and the compassion of Buddhist Shunyata. Instead for Heidegger:

The “anthropomorphic” objection immediately exposes itself to the most pointed counter-objections....Behind it stands the conviction... that everyone, of course, generally knows what man is....Does it not rather follow primarily that *before* everything, the question must be asked who is man?...Does man not exist in such a way that the more primordially he is himself, he is precisely not...himself? If man, as the being who is not only itself, becomes the criterion, then what does humanizing mean? (Heidegger, 1936/1985, pp. 163–164).

For Heidegger the radical openness of Dasein—metaphorically mirroring and mirrored by all of Being—means humanity is a “beyond itself” (Heidegger, 1937/1984, p. 102). As with Lakoff and Johnson (1999) on the physical metaphoricity of all cognition, it cannot be clear what becomes metaphor of what—the universe of us or us of the universe. The success of modern physics is based on a language of mathematics that has been seen as both “real” *and* a human “construction” (Penrose, 1997). Meanwhile, the generation of humanity and its spiritual capacity by that universe—its giving forth of Da-sein—also makes that universe, to this very degree, anthropomorphic in itself—with humanity as its self awareness (see also Hunt, 2006).

For Heidegger that leaves open an emerging ethical choice for that self aware openness between “guardian” or would-be despot.

### Mendacity Interlude

Any consideration of Heidegger as major spiritual thinker must come to terms with his enthusiastic service as Nazi Rector of his university in 1933/4.

## National Socialism and Personal Inflation

Although Heidegger was not *personally* anti-semitic (see below), he seems to have fantasized that he might become a leader of the social revolution side of National Socialism, which he initially saw as the potential spiritual renewal of the West (Ott, 1993). Meeting mainly derision from the more orthodox Nazi Education Ministry (Farias, 1989), he resigned abruptly in 1934, privately terming it “the greatest stupidity of my life” (Petzet, 1993, p. 37). Rejecting the twin extremes of later criticism that his Nazi period had no significant relation to his philosophy or that all his work is thereby rendered Fascist in its entirety (Wolin, 1990), it remains that the later recovery and extension of his larger phenomenology of Being does not mitigate the also insidious quality of a Nazi allegiance based not on any ideology of racial supremacy but a would-be spirituality. It seems most plausible to understand Heidegger’s Nazi episode as the kind of spiritual metapathology—here of an inflation and grandiosity—that Maslow (1962) and Jung (1928/1960) have seen as a vulnerability of modern attempts at a new secular or this-worldly mysticism. (For a more extended treatment of these issues in major spiritual figures, including both Heidegger and Jung, see Hunt, 2003.)

By 1928 Heidegger was left with the sudden international fame of *Being and Time*, the recent deaths of both parents, and the end of his now notorious affair with his young Jewish student Hannah Arendt, who had also been his creative muse prior to its writing.<sup>7</sup> He comes to see a “nothing” or absence at the core of Being (Heidegger, 1930/1995). Here he writes expressively of the contemporary forgetfulness of Being as a form of “boredom,” in the sense of a “queer kind of indifference,” “being left empty,” and “futility”—very much evoking the schizoid diminution of “vital presence” that Wilhelm Reich (1949/1961) and more recently the phenomenological psychiatrist Louis Sass (1992) have seen as the reflection of a widespread loss of meaning in modern culture. His sudden enthusiasm as the first Nazi Rector of a major university and extolling of Promethean Will as the “first philosophy” in his National Socialist university speeches (Neske & Kettering, 1990), meanwhile shaving his moustache to look more like Hitler,

would seem to justify his then friend the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers’ conclusion that he was both fatally “naïve” and “delusional,” and that he hoped to be a sort of “spiritual Fuhrer” or Platonic philosopher-king for the movement (Grunenberg, 2017; Ott, 1993).

This author will seek to show below that the larger significance of this period of grandiose intoxication became his path out of it—and its more contemporary implications. In his initial lectures and notebooks after his resignation he mocked the “mass rallies,” “dismal biologism of race,” “vulgar ethical materialism” of Nazi ideology, and the “brainless” appeal of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (Heidegger, 1935/1961, pp. 31, 39; 1938/2016, pp. 99, 104, 105). While acknowledging his earlier hopes for a “spiritual” National Socialism, he came to see the movement not as some renewal of civilization, but as the culmination of a false Western metaphysics of “will to power”—the political expression of a commodification of nature and people that will destroy the planet. The lectures, unpublished books, and notebooks that follow from 1935 through 1947 fill out his approach to a post-nationalistic, post-racial “homeland” through the nature poetry of Hölderlin, along with his more abstract planetary intuitions of Other Beginning and last god.

With a few exceptions, these writings—the main focus of this present work—came to a stop with the shock of Heidegger’s post-war de-nazification hearings. He had, in his naïveté, assumed that his resignation and lecture critiques would have somehow outweighed the notoriety of Germany’s most famous academic’s public endorsement of Hitler. Banned from teaching, and suffering a series of recurrent depressions, he went through a “breakdown” and brief hospitalization. Encouraged by Jaspers and some former students to publicly admit guilt and moral responsibility, he could only confess a private shame—which probably best explains his otherwise “notorious” postwar silence on the Holocaust.

The vulnerability to intense shame, for the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (1984), is part of a narcissistic weakness in sense of self that is consistent with accounts of his cold, austere maternal upbringing

and the desperate compensatory grandiosity of his Rectorship speeches. Where the guilt of a more cohesive self can be publicly confessed and so seek reparation, shame can only continue to hide, deny, and seek to justify—as he himself did. His wartime writings on a planetary spiritual renewal are largely replaced by more specific work on technology and the nature of thinking. He becomes bitter and more overtly pessimistic—saying in a late interview: “Only a god can save us now” (Neske & Kettering, 1990, p. 57)—and so becoming his own example of Weber (1922/1963) on the “broken quality” of the heightened sensitivity of a this-worldly mysticism.

### **Brilliance, Aloneness, Eros: A Further Cost of Genius**

The intensity and felt brilliance of mystical experience, and indeed the ecstasy in all intense creative experience, require a certain capacity for aloneness and solitude that can also become intensely painful (Almaas, 2006; Storr, 1989). D.W. Winnicott (1958) understood the capacity to be alone as requiring a sense of selfhood rooted in the early maternal holding relationship, which becomes internalized as the dialogic matrix for later creative consciousness. When not securely established—which it clearly was not in the early upbringing of Heidegger—the aloneness intrinsic to ecstatic brilliance can intensify what Winnicott’s mentor Melanie Klein (1963) termed a schizoid loneliness—as a felt futility, emptiness, and intolerable sense of absence. The spiritual metapathology that can then arise is a desperately felt necessity for the externalized erotic muse relationships that became so central in the later life of Heidegger—as also in the personal lives of both Jung and Wilhelm Reich (Bair, 2003; Sharaf, 1983).

In letters to his wife, Elfride, written over the many years of his intense isolation during writing retreats, Heidegger describes something of the creative ecstasy he then feels:

[It is] like a revelation, an elemental force... something unutterable...[in which] I am wholly and absolutely present...all alien distractions disappeared...what does “moment” mean here...it is an inappropriate designation.... (Heidegger, G., 2008, pp. 8, 66)

Yet these periods of isolation occasion an aloneness that would later lead him to a series of passionate affairs:

This dreadful feeling of isolation....An intense loneliness from the realization that no one can help...as one tries to find one’s way back.... (Heidegger, G., 2008, p. 84)

Indeed, his friend the existential psychiatrist Medard Boss (1988, p. 8) describes Heidegger’s outward appearance of deep depression during his periods of creative thinking—“as if wounded in some indescribable way.”

Writing to his wife in some mixture of apology and would-be justification for the affairs that soon often preceded or followed his creative retreats, he says:

If my existence is without passion my voice falls silent and the source does not spring forth.... [The god Eros] moves me...when something long intuited is to be led across into the realm of the sayable and when what has been said must after all be left in solitude. (Heidegger, G., 2008, pp. 254, 213)

He goes on to blame:

The manner of my early upbringing, inability in...the ability to trust, and then again inconsiderateness in the abuse of trust... (Heidegger, G., 2008, p. 213).

The latter alludes to her own confession at the time of the birth of their second child, who had been conceived, during one of Heidegger’s writing retreats, in the arms of her childhood friend—which Heidegger accepted and forgave.<sup>8</sup>

These letters do make for a sad and painful reading. Perhaps their larger significance rests in their demonstration, as also in the lives of both Jung and Reich, that a re-newed this-worldly spirituality in a contemporary sensate-materialist era would entail the continuity of soul and body explicitly rejected in more traditional “other worldly” religiosity. A radical openness to experience in-the-world will tend to revive a more neo-shamanic continuity between sexuality and mystical states (Tedlock, 2005; Hunt, 2018b), with the actual phenomenology of ecstasy



in both more alike than different in any essence (Laski, 1961; Wade, 2013).

### **A Sad Banality of Genius**

That Heidegger was not personally anti-semitic seems clear enough, despite his participation in the very political machinations of the Rectorship (Ott, 1993). After all, his mentor was Edmund Husserl, the Jewish originator of phenomenology, in itself a rare choice for a conservatively raised rural Catholic, and almost all of his most famous students were Jewish, later recalling the sharp contrast between his personal warmth and his fervently Nazi wife's cold rejection (Neske & Kettering, 1990). So the more recent publication of his notebooks from the 1930s caused a deep shock through the community of Heidegger scholars (Farin & Malpas, 2016; Trawny, 2015). Scattered throughout are the most stereotypical expressions of the cultural anti-semitism all too typical of popular opinion in Europe of the day, but hardly what anyone had expected of one of the greatest independent spiritual thinkers of the times—and one whose writings had actually been denigrated by the Nazi Education Ministry as “Talmudic” (Falias, 1989). So there is the sad irony of these occasional passages on Jewish “cosmopolitanism,” “homelessness,” “calculative manipulation,” “empty rationality,” and a “dangerous international fraternity of Jews” (Heidegger, 1939/2017, p. 153; 1941/2017, pp. 224–225). Was it embittered defiance that left him comfortable with their posthumous publication, and this after the very public reconciliation with Hannah Arendt? It is true, with Harries (2016), that removing all references to Jewish “homelessness” and “calculativeness” leaves his critique of modernity entirely intact, and which he never blamed on Judaism anyway. Yet what is one to make of the contemporaneous contrast of his praise in a letter to his wife of Martin Buber (Heidegger, G., 2008, p. 225) and then, after finally admitted back to university teaching, standing at the lectern and commenting that there were too many Jews on the faculty, while silently counting them off on his fingers (Farin, 2016, p. 207)?

This is all entirely so stereotypically ordinary, stupid, and ignorant that it should not be seen as some Jamesian theopathy or Maslow metapathology of distorted spiritual realization. At most it reminds

of Jung (1921/1971) on extreme onesidedness in development—say of a highly introverted intuitive thinking—as inevitably opposed by what he aptly termed its undeveloped, and so, *inferior* function—here an undeveloped feeling taking the form of an abject moral obtuseness. Heidegger becomes yet another example of the larger issue in present times of how, or not, to separate a *deeply* flawed personal character from the *actual* genius of creative work.

### **Heidegger's Way Forward: Toward Other Beginning**

For Heidegger the first step past a globalizing, technologically driven commodification of earth and world had to be its full acknowledgement—in all its new uncanniness.

### **A Planetary Dilemma of Machination and Inner Homelessness**

Heidegger's initial path into this understanding of global crisis comes from his series of lecture courses on Nietzsche between 1936 and 1944 (*Nietzsche*, Vols. 1–4). Rejecting any approach that would see Nietzsche as offering his own futural understanding of a this-worldly spirituality (as in Noll, 1994; Hunt, 2003), Heidegger came to understand his own enthrallment with National Socialism as “a kind of hubris” (Olafson, 2000, p. 273) infected by a Nietzschean “will to power” that was the antithesis of the “releasement” into Being he now sought. Heidegger saw this “will to power” as the underlying metaphysic of modern Western culture—a narrowing, anthropomorphizing projection of an all-too-human domination onto the primary thatness of Being. Nietzsche's would-be “overman” of the future, who would will the affirmation of this ultimately meaningless “eternal recurrence of the same” in a “yea-saying” of Dionysian ecstasy, becomes for Heidegger a kind of distorted Promethean Homo-Deus—the very opposite of a more fundamental humility he finally came to feel in the face of Being as such.

Heidegger (1954/1977, 1949/2012) understands the inner essence of this will-to-power and its universal commodification in terms of *Gestell*—variously translated as “Enframing” or “Positionality.” *Gestell* in the German means a frame, stand, or rack which positions its instruments or tools in advance

for their use. For Heidegger this is the metaphor for a universal metaphysic in which *all* of Being is “calculable in advance” as measurable commodity or “standing reserve” (Heidegger, 1954/1977, p. 21). Enframing is still Being—what else could it be?—but as a metaphysics of planetary domination it has become for Heidegger “something demonic” (Heidegger, 1949/2012, p. 58)—more recently best captured in the notion of the Anthropocene as a new human-made geologic age.

Implicit within Enframing as the inner structure of modernity—and beneath its enforced forgetfulness of any larger context of Being-as-such—is a new form of the uncanny—Otto’s most preliminary of the broader dimensions of the numinous. While its sense of “strangeness,” “unreality” and “unsettlement” will be most commonly denied and suppressed, its fuller acknowledgement becomes the only opening to any futural Other Beginning. For Heidegger this new uncanny reflects a specific shift in the inherent “strife” of earth and world—in terms of the above discussion, as an unprecedentedly unbalanced collision/mergence between person and thing—that core of the uncanny for Freud. For Heidegger a “thing” technology that ostensibly mirrors and extends human purpose comes increasingly to circumscribe and dominate that purpose—most clearly reflected now in artificial intelligence, automated expert systems, and an eventual genetic engineering.

Here then is Heidegger in 1939:

The “miracles” of technology...enchant the human being, such that he arrives at the opinion that *he himself* dominates the miracle, whereas he has become merely the most submissive cog in a machine.(Heidegger, 1939/2017, p. 306)

This will elicit the felt “unsettlement” and “strangeness” Heidegger finds at the heart of a perpetual technological innovation—its new uncanny.<sup>9</sup>

The German for “uncanny” is *unheimlich*—literally unfamiliar, strange...*Un-homelike*. This usage becomes the bridge for the later Heidegger to his view of a globalizing inner “homelessness”—the felt loss of an “at homeness” and founded sense of “dwelling.”

The closure of the holy...lets all beings stand in the unfamiliar...The unfamiliarity of beings as such brings to light the homelessness of historical man within beings as a whole...The partly conceded, partly denied homelessness of man with regard to his essence is replaced by the organized global conquest of the earth, and the thrust into outer space. (Heidegger, 1946/1982, p. 248)

This theme is most fully developed in his 1947 *Letter on Humanism*, where “homelessness becomes a world destiny” (Heidegger, 1947/1962, p. 287).

Hannah Arendt (1978) in her later extension of Heidegger’s critique of “will to power” points out that the orientation toward perpetual novelty—held well short of the more intrinsic wonder of the numinous—must in itself be opposed—if only implicitly—to all tradition. This is a view shared as well with Simone Weil in her last book *The Need for Roots* (1949/2002). One could add that this globalizing will to novelty has been doing more slowly to Western civilization what it inflicted more rapidly on colonized indigenous peoples—with the disruptions of their family structures, enforced re-settlements, and loss of culture and traditional spirituality. The result was the despair, suicide, and resort to numbing drug use and intoxication now also rampant throughout the capitalized world economy. One is left to wonder whether Heidegger’s essentialized inner “homelessness” of modernity may be destined for its own literalization in the globalized impact of a human-driven ecological crisis, with its widely forecast displacements and actual homelessness.

It also seems relevant to note that Heidegger would have seen the present era of transpersonal and consciousness studies as risking its own deflection into a merely compensatory “subjectivism” and unintended commodification of experience. He distinguishes between experience as *Erlebnis* or lived experience—as also in current “altered” or “higher” states of consciousness—and *Erfahrung*—experience in the sense of a cohesive and sustained meaning. The dualism of subject and object he sees underlying Western civilization, while manifesting outwardly in technological enthrallment, will have

its corresponding and compensatory over-valuation of “lived experience” for its own sake.

Thus he warns against “psychic adventuring” or “intoxification” with the “alien,” “exotic,” and merely “unusual” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 109; 1942/2018, p. 152):

The loss of the gods is so far from excluding religiosity that rather only through that loss is the relation to the gods changed into mere “religious experience”....The resultant void is compensated for by means of...psychological investigation of myth. (Heidegger, 1954/1977, p. 117)

So much here for James and Jung—and doubtless unfairly to those pioneers of a present transpersonal era. Heidegger will similarly reject what he sees as an “instrumental” attitude to spirituality as “intelligence” (as in Hunt, 2016), in which the holy “falls to the level of a tool in the service of others,” a “utilitarian intelligence” (Heidegger, 1935/1961, pp. 38, 40). From Heidegger’s perspective then, the current fascination with “peak” and “flow” experiences in extreme sports, mindfulness meditation in the service of mental health and “well being,” and LSD micro-dosing for creative business innovation, as in Kotler and Wheal’s aptly titled *Stealing Fire* (2017), would become the most extreme examples of a commodification of consciousness that while seeking to compensate the new “strangeness” actually blocks its deepening into the *Erfahrung* of Other Beginning.

Here the “creative minority” Toynbee fore-saw as someday moving toward a global spiritual renewal becomes just another “power elite.”

### **Hölderlin and Re-sacralizing the World:**

#### **A Regional Neo-Shamanism**

Heidegger’s first positive step toward a re-sacralizing Other Beginning, beginning from the mid 1930s, was his developing interpretation of the nature poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin. He sees in Hölderlin the re-creation of an originary homeland for “Germania” by linking the expressive physiognomies of its rivers and forests with a Greek mythology of Olympian sky gods and chthonian maternal deities of ground and fate. For Hölderlin the animation of earth, sky, towns, and rivers through a Greek polytheism creates a kind of sacred regional

geography. Hölderlin’s own by-passing of the Germanic Wotan and the Norse gods so central to a National Socialist romanticism allows Heidegger an understanding of “homeland” that undercuts the quasi-religious notions of race, ethnicity, and nationhood that he had come to criticize.<sup>10</sup> There is a comparison here to Jung who in these same years was moving past his own initial fascination with a National Socialist nativism, so resonant with his earlier formulations of a separate Aryan, Chinese, and Jewish “racial unconscious,” to the more abstract metaphoricities of mandalas, alchemy, and a “land mysticism” of region and nature (see Hunt, 2003).

Heidegger now clearly rejects the mass movement of National Socialism as any kind of “new beginning” in the face of a larger “loss of the holy”:

The people of the country may not attempt to make themselves a god by cunning and thus put aside by force the supposed lack...of holy names. (Heidegger, 1943/1949, p. 265)

“The fatherland”...for the poet...does not mean some dubious greatness of an even more dubious patriotism full of noise. He means the “land of the fathers”...This people of this earth....” (Heidegger, 1935/2014, p. 108)

Instead Heidegger utilizes Hölderlin’s poetry of the rushing Rhine, with its “fury of the demi-god,” and the more gentle flow of the Ister (the Roman name for the Danube) to suggest the boundaries of an original “strife”—defining a “homeland” linking “heavenly fire” with a slower “planning” or “ability to grasp”:

[The Rhine]...is to plunge downward and from out of the force of such a plunge to be able at once to hasten away...The Ister by contrast appears...a hesitant whiling...almost backward flow...patiently alongside its [source]. (Heidegger, 1942/1996, p. 162)

In these rivers:

Land and earth are given limits of shape, and the homeland comes into being for...truth for the people. (Heidegger, 1935/2014, p. 204)

Heidegger has in mind here something post-national and specifically regional. It can also thereby become a model for all other regions and peoples—much as Henry David Thoreau (1854/1982) had already attempted for the woods of New England. By broader implication, the Thoreau (or Hölderlin) of the Arizona desert, New York Finger Lakes, Midwest plains, and Northern California and Oregon coast will intuit very different “root metaphors” of these nonverbal levels of meaning. They are also the physiognomic patterns of Jung’s archetypes and the non reductive, non perjorative equivalents of his “racial unconscious”—the potential re-emergence of a regional neo-shamanism of the land as emblem of the sacred.

Heidegger’s understanding of “the poet”—who in “naming the holy” becomes a “demi-god” who loses himself in “bliss”—is clearly close to Weber’s this worldly charismatic mystic. In an age of radical secularization Heidegger’s poet is engaged in a “holy mourning” (Heidegger, 1935/2014, p. 204; 1942/1996, p. 163). The poet is to “hold the ground” of “the no-more of the gods that have fled and of the not-yet of the god that is coming” (Heidegger, 1936/1949, pp. 289–290). Hölderlin, who suffered recurring schizophrenic episodes, reflecting also the deeply conflicted nature of a transitional this-worldly spirituality, is thus described by Heidegger as “struck down...and driven into the dark...by the excessive brightness” (Heidegger, 1936/1949, p. 285).

This “naming of the holy” by Heidegger-Hölderlin is based on the metaphoric embodiment and mirroring in feeling of the expressive dimensions of physical nature—of the light and darkness, dynamic flows, heights and depths—evoking deeper non verbal emblems of Dasein. Rather than being some logical “domain violation” of “primitive thought” (Boyer & Ramble, 2001), the animation of nature in classical mythologies reflects the exteriorization of physical metaphors also implicit in the etymologies of words for feeling in all languages (Arnheim, 1969; Kugler, 1982) and spontaneous phrases describing felt emotion (Asch, 1961; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In Heidegger’s version of this inherent metaphoricity:

We are tempted to say the sun and wind manifest themselves as “natural phenomena” and then “in addition” signify something further; they are “symbols” for us....As if it were not the reverse, that...the “things themselves” are already each time poetized before they become so called “symbols.” (Heidegger, 1942/2018, pp. 34–35)

The poet/mystic/shaman, in *becoming* the symbol, is *being* that specific dimension of the numinous.

Marghanita Laski (1961) similarly describes the mediation of mystical experience by the “quasi physical sensations” conveyed by words for heights (soaring), luminosity (flashing, brilliancy), darkness (abyss, shining blackness), expansion (bursting), and words describing liquidity and flow (dissolving, melting, streaming). A.H. Almaas (1986) has specified these same cross-modal or synesthetic qualities in terms of the Indian chakras or Sufi lataif of the red of essential strength, the yellow of joy-bliss, the black of power as peace, the shining white of will as surrender/allowance, the golden melting of love, and the green of compassion. In the vision trance of shamanism (Eliade, 1964; Walsh, 2007) these chakra/lataif qualities are encountered outwardly as the expressive dimensions of nature—as in the play of light through streaming clouds mediating joy and serenity in Heidegger’s explication of the verses of Hölderlin:

The cloud...lingers above against “the silver heights”...the clear brightness...serenifies this lingering. What it writes, the “Joyous,” is the Serene....That which causes joy shines forth towards the homecoming poet....This pure lighting...the streaming lighting itself...we call the Serene. The Serene is fundamentally healing. It is the holy. (Heidegger, 1943/1949, pp. 247–248, 251)

As for Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact” (1836/1963, p. 12).

In his post-war essays, “The thing” (1950), and “Building, dwelling, thinking” (1951), Heidegger extends this understanding of Hölderlin’s sacred geography into a more general neo-shamanic understanding of an originary being-in-the-world as the crossing of two foundational dimensions



in the “foursome” of earth-sky and mortals-gods. This would be the metaphorically expressed deep structure of Dasein, in contrast to the more conceptual analysis of *Being and Time*, and as such, one can add, would be filled in differently for each culture and its metaphorized region. Here the pre-Socratic *physis*, or nature, is unfolded into the dimension of earth—as what “upholds” and supports in the guardianship of “dwelling”—and sky, as the horizontal openness of the meaning of sunrise and sunset so easily lost in any more astronomical “explanation.” Meanwhile, the pre-Socratic *logos*—as the original openness of thought—unfolds into the dimension of mortals—understood in terms of Dasein’s being-toward-death rather than Aristotle’s *animal rationale*—and gods, as the mythic divinities that “animate” earth and sky. Mortals, open to the unknown ahead, are thereby attuned to the Being-as-such whose reflection the gods must have if they are to exist for a community as “real.” Thereby the foursome is held open as the “inbetween” for a “roundance” of cross mirrored and sustaining meaning specific to each culture.

Heidegger’s “foursome” can be seen as an independent essentializing of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966) on the elaborate multi-dimensional classificatory lattices in the mythological systems of tribal peoples, cross referencing the specificities of local geography, seasons, the varieties of plant and animal life, social roles and clan structure, all linked to mythic stories of gods, spirits, and ancestors. The classical sociologists Durkheim and Mauss (1903/1963) had earlier located these dimensions as still implicit within the religious schematizations of world civilizations—seeing the Chinese *I-Ching*, with its juxtaposition of Taoist/Confucian meanings with the physiognomies of nature, colors, geographical directions, and family roles, as one such more explicit survival (see also Hunt, 2011). These lattices of meaning—whether explicit or implicit—constitute the inner matrix of what Emile Durkheim (1912/1961) would call the “collective representations” of a communal or shared consciousness. This notion of consciousness as intrinsically “collective” is in marked contrast to the Western tradition of consciousness as individual, separate, and ultimately “private”—which for

Heidegger is part of the alienation and “unsettlement” of modernity. The question for Heidegger, as for Jung, becomes the extent to which an originary sense of “at homeness” and “dwelling” might be recoverable through this kind of re-mythologized thinking.

What Heidegger has done with his abstract foursome is to offer a new version of his deep structure of Dasein to counter the present globalization of a calculative mentality that can only understand humanity “biologically”—ultimately as Nietzsche’s “super-animal.” Meanwhile this foursome would have to be specified differently for the distinct regional identities of different cultures and peoples. This offers a more grounded replacement for the current populist and ethnic-national reactions against the economic globalization that opposes these regionalisms—which began of course in the 1930s with the Aryan would-be biologism Heidegger came to oppose. His foursome thus represents both a common humanity and a regionally specified “homeland.”<sup>11</sup>

Heidegger would almost certainly agree that the present planetary crisis of climate change and ecological sustainability cannot be fully addressed by pitting one calculative instrumentalism—however rational human survival is as an issue—against another. There is, indeed, some emerging consensus that a more “non rational” re-sanctification of planet and humanity will be needed—despite the view of the scientific Enlightenment that all “superstition” had been left behind (Taylor, 1989). For Hawken (2007), in his *Blessed Unrest*, on the current gathering together of the initially separated issues of ecological survival, world-wide social justice, and the rights and traditions of indigenous peoples:

We cannot save our planet unless human kind undergoes a widespread and religious awakening....Fixes won’t fix unless we fix our souls as well. (p. 184)

This sounds very like Heidegger’s sacralised “guardianship” and neo-shamanic “shepharding.”

### **Other Beginning, Freedom, and Last God**

In these same years, from the late 1930s, Heidegger also began to address a more abstract, truly global, level of a futural spiritual renewal.

## **Inceptualities of Being: First and Other**

Heidegger pictured a globalizing “loss of the holy” as “the very twilight of the most monstrous transformation our planet has undergone” and “the dawn of an altogether different age” (Heidegger, 1946/1975, p. 17). In answer, he sought a deeper understanding of the origins of Western thought in the Greek pre-Socratics in order to regain from that originating paradigm some intuition of a still latent *Other* Beginning to come. For Heidegger the pre-Socratic First Beginning rested on *Physis* or Nature as organic emergence, an ever-arising unconcealment, in which Being surges forth as ecstatic “fire of the world” (Heidegger, 1943/1975, p. 112). By contrast he intuits an Other Beginning—implicative and as the yet unspecified within the first—in terms of the imagery of a “Clearing” (*Lichtung*)—with its potential for an emergent sense of openness, releasement, and freedom (Heidegger, 1938/2012). This openness or Clearing is also the basis for a futural *Da-sein* or sense of human identity—with humanity as the “in-between” that holds open the Foursome.

It may follow from Heidegger’s origins within Husserlian phenomenology that he implicitly models the relation of First and Other Beginning—as distinct historical ages of spiritual understanding—on the inner unfoldment of thought itself. For Eugene Gendlin (1962), himself strongly influenced by Heidegger, the “felt meaning” in all thinking begins from an open unspecifiable “sense,” which can then unfold into more specific and sayable meanings. It is only then that one may or may not sense one’s understanding as cohering into a now fully specified whole. The initially inchoate beginning of any felt meaning is only fully understandable in its completion—as either fulfilled or needing instead a renewed beginning.

Heidegger seems to be applying something like this model to the stages of a world spirituality. So it is only within the now better understood implicit ground of the pre-Socratics—illuminated for Heidegger through its final miscarriage into a globalizing mentality of calculation—that an Other Beginning for the sense of the holy might be intuited. That still deeper beginning is latent within the first—whose full understanding “does not reside

back in a past but lies in advance of what is to come,” (Heidegger, 1942/1992, p. 1). Thus there is an intrinsic inner relation between:

The First Beginning, which is still to be won back, and the Other Beginning which is still to be unfolded. (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 47)

As audacious as this may seem, if one posits that the numinous has a “deep structure” similar to that of language, and if Heidegger, Toynbee, and Jung are correct that something called “spirituality” is as intrinsic to human creativity as language itself, then just as the Axial civilizations schematized an overlapping first beginning out of that deep structure, then perhaps Heidegger can intuit an Other Beginning that awaits its own drawing forth as the creative response to an emerging sense-material global world order.

Heidegger pictures the relation between his First and Other Beginning in terms of a “guiding notion” of light and luminosity—which has always been central to the cross cultural metaphoricity of the numinous (see Hunt, 1995). Thus he likens the arising surgence of pre-Socratic Being, welling forth as wonder and awe, to a flash of lightning in the night, with the sudden intensity of its brightness gathering and fixing everything that suddenly arises out of the surrounding darkness (Heidegger, 1944/1975, p. 72), while the lightning itself has already withdrawn “behind” its circle of illumination:

The unconcealment of beings, the brightness granted them, obscures the light of Being. As it reveals itself in beings, Being withdraws. (Heidegger, 1946/1975, p. 26)

For Heidegger it is this blinding but fixated unconcealment that also creates the potential for a characteristic and intrinsic Western “errancy.” This becomes a narrowed conviction and “certainty” finally emerging as such in the scientific “objectivity” of an Enlightenment and culminating in the unquestioned necessity of a perpetual technologized novelty. Meanwhile another part of the “strangeness” of modernity lies in its present scientific and conceptual uncertainty and relativity, rendering that novelty unstoppable, regardless of its consequences.

The Clearing of Heidegger's Other Beginning, implicit in that "lighting" of the First, is based on the German sense of *Lichtung* as the opening out of a woodland glade or forest clearing (Heidegger, 1938/2012; 1942/2013). Later he will suggest it also evokes the contemporary globalizing "clearing away" and "freedom from" all tradition (Heidegger & Fink, 1967/1979). Thus the Clearing of Being comes to include both the sense of an "inceptual" subtle glow—a "simple brightness" of unconcealing openness seen through the trees—and a lack of any ground (*Abgrund* or Abyss), an absence of sensed foundation. This is the incipient contemporary nihilism out of which Other Beginning must unfold. The Clearing is:

The dim glow of the attuning attunement out of the *ab-grund* (removal of all ground) of Being. (Heidegger, 1939/2006, p. 90)

Here Heidegger's Other Beginning—in the sheer subtlety of its pre-dawn glow—becomes a collective version of the "negative theologies" of an Eckhart or Ibn Arabi—in which Being—as the unique and incomparable—can only be described in terms of absence and what it is not.<sup>12</sup> The fullest sensing of the numinous becomes the completely ineffable and *wholly* other. This is the thin line between a "clearing away" and a "clearing for" that Heidegger sees as the dilemma of a future humanity.

### **The Event of Being:**

#### **A Mutual Appropriation of Being and Da-sein**

The very possibility of multiple Beginnings means that Being itself is Event. It is historical, with Da-sein understood as its opening—readying now to re-emerge as Clearing. With Toynbee and Sorokin, human history can be understood in terms of epochs of spiritual awakening and forgetfulness. Heidegger is positing an essence or deep structure of Da-sein that would be this continual potentiality.

Being as Event is based on Heidegger's amplification of the ordinary German *Ereignis*—for happening, occurrence, event, along with the closely related *Aneignung*—as an acquiring or taking, usually translated as Appropriation—or in Heidegger's broader usage "Event of Appropriation," and more narrowly by some as

"Enownment" (Emad & Maly, 1999). The *eigen* root of both words means "one's own," while *eignen* means "belonging to." Epochs of Being are thus unique "sendings" in which Being "enowns" Dasein and vice versa.

In Heidegger's language of the late 1930s, Being, as Event of Appropriation, appropriates Da-sein as the expanse for its successive "lightings," and Da-sein appropriates Being as its felt source, meaning, and ground—however schematized. The *Da* becomes the "in-between" of this mutual appropriation. The Appropriation of Dasein by Being is at the same time a "giving" or "sending" of the holy—with its quality of "it has you" or dependency, and a simultaneous holding itself back in withdrawal—as implicate within Otto and James on the ultimate ineffability of the numinous. Heidegger was especially intrigued with the root meaning of the German *es gibt* or "it is"—literally as "it gives" or "it lets." For Heidegger this implies a tacit grace within all ordinary events—one held back but always implied within ordinary usage (Heidegger, 1938/2012; 1962/1972).

It was this language of Event and Appropriation that Heidegger needed for his futural Other Beginning. Therein the "it" of "it gives" has undergone a specific transformation: The "clearing away" of tradition as an uncanny "unsettlement" leaves the "clearing for" empty—the "it" of "it gives" an ostensible "nothing." Indeed he occasionally later writes Being as ~~Being~~, akin to the Buddhist void in its simultaneous emptiness and incipient fullness (Heidegger, 1956/1958). Thus modernity loses both the "giving" and the "withheld" sense of source in a "de-divinization" (Heidegger, 1939/2017, p. 20), a kind of "unconcealment of the concealment" (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 277). This is experienced as a "refusal" of Being—its abandonment of the appropriation of Dasein sensed as a pointlessness in existence. Any collective re-newal could only come through the full experiencing of this sense of refusal/abandonment (Heidegger, 1940/2015)—which in that very "personification," one can add, would begin its own re-linkage to a social-personal "understanding" as the larger context for the present ubiquity of calculative "explanation."

Heidegger's understanding of this loss of sensed foundation or "absence of ground" (*Abgrund*) has been variously translated as "abyss" (Heidegger, 1940/2015) or "refusal of ground" (Heidegger, 1938/2012), its ordinary German equivalents including chasm, fissure, abyss, or gap. The Other Beginning would require a collective Da-sein to come back to itself in what Heidegger variously terms a "twisting away" or "turning back" from its enthrallment with a perpetual novelty of beings, back toward the openness of the Clearing.<sup>13</sup> There needs to be the willingness to "wait" in that "stillness"—held open for the possibility of a pre-dawn Inceptuality (*Anfanglichkeit*)—as the inner form of "beginning:"

Only in the Other Beginning is the Inceptuality experienced and the Clearing of the beginning itself bestowed....The beginning brings itself to the Clearing in something illumined by the Inceptuality (Heidegger, 1942/2013, pp. 166–167)

This impalpable, purely incipient sense of Inceptuality creates a thin line between Heidegger's naturalized phenomenology of Being and a collective version of a more traditional "dark night of the soul"—or better perhaps "long grey night of the soul." The felt absence of sensed ground occludes the incipience of any "dawning" not yet understood as such. For Heidegger it is only the full feeling of that emptiness—a "meditative" attention to the open clearing ahead—that can open to grace—much as for Weil (1947/2002) and Almaas (1988) essential realizations must emerge out of their fully felt "holes" of suffering and lack.

### **A Dependence of Being on Da-sein: The Human Capability for God**

For Heidegger Being "needs" humanity to hold open the Clearing in order to allow its fullness to appear as such. Without that opening "for," humanity is "denied its capacity for God" (Heidegger, 1939/2006, p. 48).

Beyng needs humans in order to occur essentially, and humans belong to Beyng so that they might fulfill their ultimate destiny as Da-sein....Beyng needs Da-sein and does not...

occur without this appropriation (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 198, 200)

An Other Beginning cannot be without the "stillness," "waiting," and "solitude" of the Clearing. Its meditative attunement must be kept free of the endless instrumentalities of modern culture, to allow an opening for the inceptual "uniqueness," "singularity," "sovereignty," and "solitude" of a Being which is thereby incomparable—not knowing an "other" like itself (Heidegger, 1938/2012, pp. 180, 198; 1939/2006, p. 292; 1939/2017, p. 47.)

Here Heidegger not only evokes the earlier influence of Meister Eckhart's (1941) dependency of an impalpable Godhead on the individual soul, but there is an even more striking and ostensibly independent resonance with the Medieval Sufi mystic Ibn Arabi (Chittick, 1989). For Ibn Arabi the Absolute—sometimes referred to as Being-as-such—is similarly unique, an unrepresentable singularity, and so "incomparable." It is dependent for its self-awareness on the meditation of the Sage, who gathers and reflects back to the One the myriad "comparables" of its creation, and in that sense both creates and reveals its otherwise withheld Reality. Ibn Arabi refers to this reflecting-back-that-brings-forward as the Sage becoming "capable of God" and so "alone with the Alone" (Chittick, 1989; Corbin, 1998). As with Heidegger, an attuned humanity brings Being forward through our capacity for the numinous. God's need of us in order to Be is a notion also central to Gurdjieff (1975) and Jung (1961)—and arguably one of the paradoxes of a fully this-worldly spirituality.

As with the ambiguity of Heidegger's versions of negative theology and "dark night," there is a similar thin line—or indeed reversing gestalt figure—between Heidegger's view of Being as dependent on the opening of Da-sein—our "capability for God"—and a more "scientific" view of spirituality as a projective human intelligence—perhaps indeed instrumentally useful for "mental health" and "life meaning"—but based like all intelligences on physio-chemical modules of the central nervous system as their "causation."<sup>14</sup> As also for Jung (1961), a futural New Age spirituality for a globalized sensate economy would need to



reconcile this more “naturalized” understanding of the numinous.

Meanwhile for Heidegger the phenomenological revolution that formed his thought is based on the primacy of human experience as such—on the “it has you” of James on consciousness. That phenomenological “givenness” becomes the emergent and non reducible context of understanding for the thereby subordinated cognitive functions and specific intelligences that it reveals as its more specific dimensions. This “lighting” of immediate experience as primary was traditionally held in place by God.

### **The Last God**

Heidegger’s Other Beginning for a planetary spirituality—based on a “meditative thinking” (Heidegger, 1959/1966)—would entail its own more specific religiosity. This might or might not arise out of what he calls “waiting” for the “last god.”

For Heidegger the Clearing of and for Being was held open and in place in classical cultures by the foursome of mortals and divinities, earth and sky. It would be this “in-between” of Dasein that allowed the “light” of Being for those gods—conferring their felt Reality—which in turn allowed them to animate earth and sky. So any possibility of a futural “last god” will require the sense of renewed Being opening up from a “leap of the human being into Da-sein” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 330). Within that “lighting” may or may not appear the unfolded schematization of a new planetary religion presently unimaginable.

There has been considerable debate over the interpretation of “last” in Heidegger’s “last god” (Law, 2000). The German *letzt* variously means last and final, latest, and ultimate or extreme. It seems clear that Heidegger’s meaning was not “last” in the sense of “final”:

The last god is not the end, but is instead the Other Beginning of the immeasurable possibilities of our history. (Heidegger, 1938/2016, p. 228)

In addition to thereby including “last” in the sense of next or latest, Heidegger also intends, at least by contrast with the previous world religions, a meaning of “ultimate,” in the sense of his deeper beginning only coming later. Here again he implies a sort of

“deep structure” of the numinous, with its more planetary wide expressions as potentially more “form near.” In Otto’s terms, the schematization of the numinous Heidegger would have in mind would be responsive to a global run-away technology, total planetary commodification, and crisis of human “stewardship”—conditions of life broader than those inspiring the previous world religions.

A long preparation is required for the great moment of the passing by of the Last God. Peoples and states are too small for the preparation of that moment. (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 328)

The task of the futural “creative ones” is to become “stewards of the stillness of the passing by of the last god” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 232)—staying open to whether that passing by is to be an approach or a continuing withdrawal.

Heidegger, on the potential of a “last god” for “the renewal of the world out of the saving of the earth” (Heidegger, 1938/2012, p. 325)—and in a late interview saying “only a god can save us now” (Neske & Kettering, 1990, p. 57)—could not have anticipated the full extent of what would need saving in our emerging ecological crisis of man-made global warming, with its potential population displacements, mass starvation, and increasing social/economic disparities. In that light one might better anticipate his “last god” in terms of Gaia—in the sense of Lovelock’s (2009) understanding of planet and eco-systems as ultimately nurturant equilibrating organism. Some such return of deity as “Great Mother” would fit with 1) the original female/maternal origins of tribal shamanism (Tedlock, 2005) and the maternal deities of early agricultural societies (Vycinas, 1961, 1990). 2) The “maternal” metaphoricity of Heidegger’s “giving” and “sheltering”—a Winnicottian “holding” as a nurturing of the planet. 3) the developing world-wide revolution of feminism, with its more collaborative approach to social institutions. A confluence of ecological crisis, issues of social and gender justice, and the spiritual authenticity of “indigenous peoples—that true “first beginning”—may be what finally re-sacralizes the planet itself as Gaia (Hawken, 2007). Heidegger’s invitation to this sort of re-imagining of humanity remains open.

## Conclusions

What then would be the longer term “prospects” of Heidegger’s *Other Beginning*—as a spiritual New Age for future centuries?

In some form, if such as Heidegger, Jung, Toynbee, Weil, Reich, Gurdjieff, and Maslow are right on the inherency of spirituality to the human condition, it eventually becomes inevitable. It would be the full re-newal on a planetary level of the primacy of a social-personal intelligence of meaning and purpose, as the superordinate context for the “intelligence of things”—no matter how sophisticated the digitalizing of the latter. For Toynbee (1957) it was this larger contextualizing that defined the major civilizations of the past—certainly not in the sense of any “utopia” or human “perfection,” but rather as the optimal attainable balance and integration for an inherently unbalanced, strife ridden humanity (see also Hunt, 2009).

What would be the initiating focus for such a planetary re-balancing? On the level of individual research by far the most common precursor of spontaneous peak or ecstatic experiences is extreme personal crisis, with the settings of nature and meditation following in order (Taylor, 2013). This is also consistent with Simone Weil (1947/2002) on the fullest experiences of redemptive grace as following the greatest “afflictions”—with their “soul destroying despair” and final surrender to the “hole” of that suffering. It is also well reflected by Heidegger (1942/1996, p. 134) discussing Hölderlin—on the edge of psychosis—as “annihilated” in the “fire from the heavens.” On the collective level then, one would have to posit any precursor to Heidegger’s “last god” as the sort of planetary wide afflictions so widely predicted now in our dawning ecological crisis—mediated and guided perhaps, following Taylor, by a developing neo-shamanic appreciation of nature and increasingly widespread meditative practices.

One of course fears the literalization through actual collective disaster of Heidegger’s new uncanny of “unsettlement” and loss of a “dwelling.” While the contemplation of such a globalization of collective misery is itself deeply

unsettling, there is at least some indication that Weil’s cycle of affliction and grace can also occur on the level of larger society as well. Rebecca Solnit in her *A Paradise Built in Hell* (2009) reviews the history of spontaneous communal response to the major disasters of earthquakes, tornadoes, mass fires, and floods. Rather than letting loose some Hobbsian anarchy, a first response has most often been the spontaneous arising of a communal coming together in mutual assistance and shared responsibility—a shared guardianship and sheltering of grace and generosity. Those involved later recall shared ecstatic and peak experiences in the midst of their response to truly awful events—states of being that are consistent with Maslow (1962) on the “being-values” of strength, will, and compassion and Almaas (1988) on “personal essence.”

Solnit’s findings are perhaps some of the strongest empirical evidence of a spiritual essence of the human condition. The widely foreseen disasters of a fast approaching planetary future would accordingly not be the end, and it would be their aftermath that the later Heidegger was already addressing as *Other Beginning*.

## Notes

1. It should be noted that these comparisons of Heidegger with such as Jung, Reich, Weber, Weil, Toynbee, Sorokin, or William James would have been anathema to him—especially given his forceful rejections of anything resonant with psychologism, neo-Marxism, and traditional approaches to “mystical consciousness.” However, hindsight has inevitably relativized the competing ideologies of those times, and it is their independent confluence that now seems so striking.
2. Almaas (1988) also distinguishes another level of spiritual transformation in sense of self that he terms “personal essence” or the “pearl.” It is very close to much of Maslow’s (1962) original discussion of “self-actualization,” with both describing a uniquely personal synthesis of autonomy and nurturance/compassion—and conceptually it is also related to Heidegger’s “authenticity” of “care.” For Almaas the

failure to develop personal essence makes the spiritual path more likely to become distorted by its various “metopathologies” (Almaas, 1988; Maslow, 1962; Wilber, 1984) or what James (1902) termed “theopathies.” Biographical depictions of Heidegger (below) show a personal narcissism that would have made him especially vulnerable to the metopathological inflation and grandiosity of his National Socialist period.

3. While the early Heidegger would derive his analysis of Dasein from his “naturalizing” of Christianity, Scheler (1923/1960) worked more directly from Otto’s numinous and its religious schematization as an ethics of human sympathy. By the later 1930s Heidegger had gradually imported the Scheler/Otto language of numinous feeling into his more cognitive-noetic Being.
4. It has indeed been tempting to see a core perennialism in the “Axial” emergence of the major world mysticisms in Greece, China, India, and the Near East, as also in the striking similarities of the independent world wide shamanisms of tribal peoples. While one might be able to argue that certain spiritual traditions are more deep structure “near,” as maximally complete expressions of the multiple dimensions of the numinous, it is also true that such commonalities will also reflect a necessary “interactionism” with the shared socio-economic conditions common to Toynbee’s (1957) “universal states” that generated these overlapping Axial mysticisms, as well as across hunter gatherer societies and their similar shamanic practices.
5. Thus from Heidegger’s perspective Siegel’s (2005) demonstrations of a wide range of animals repeatedly seeking incapacitating self-intoxications with hallucinogenic and fermented plants would attest less to Siegel’s “fourth drive” for “altered states of consciousness” than a more ordinary manifestation of novelty motivation. Examples of awe-like behaviors and what look like uncanny emotion in chimpanzees resonating aesthetically to wind and flowing water (Bering, 2002) may indeed show a nidus of Otto’s numinous, but are confined to specific situations and lack the repeated ritual expressions, prolonged trance-like absorptions by individuals and groups, and response to the entirety of one’s surroundings, all essential to the intrinsic creativity of human mystical states. There seems to be no such thing as chimpanzee shamanism.
6. The pioneering social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934, 1932/2002), who has been compared to both Heidegger and Dilthey on the primacy of social context for all human knowledge (Barash, 2003), saw the inter-relation of all discoveries in the multiple physical sciences as not only generated out of a social and historical matrix but as themselves engaged in their own implicit “society,” based on a “taking the role of the other” toward each other. The “facts” of multiple disciplines thus constitute their own society, a bit like Mead’s notion of a baseball team with its various co-defining “positions.”
7. The large and controversial literature on their affair, their post-war renewal of friendship, her final forgiveness of his Nazi Rectorship, and her help in overseeing the translation and publication of his later work in English—and whether for Heidegger himself this was mostly about reclaiming a damaged international reputation—is beyond the scope of this essay (Ettinger, 1995; Grunenberg, 2017; Maier-Katkin, 2010). They did agree they had been the loves of each others lives, and Arendt continued to regard him as the seminal philosopher of modernity. Where Heidegger took *Being and Time* in the direction of a futural planetary spirituality, she developed it into her own philosophy of civic responsibility (Arendt, 1978; Maier-Katkin, 2010).
8. Elfride Heidegger, who remained a committed Nazi ideologue and deeply anti-semitic, apparently told the son, Hermann, the truth of his birth when he was fourteen—the same year Heidegger resigned his Rectorship. She pledged her son to tell “nobody” while she lived except for his future wife. He writes of this in a short afterword to his father’s letters, saying that the secret had been “a burden that has weighed upon and tormented me for seventy-one years” (Heidegger, G., 2008, p. 317). This inevitably leaves the reader uncertain whether the *nobody* and its “torment” meant that he may not have

been told that his father already knew, who in fact had long accepted him as his son—a son who became an academic historian and the administrator of his father’s archives. Otherwise the “torment” seems less obvious. Make of it all what one will.

9. Current speculations in some A.I. circles (Chalmers, 2010) about a digital “singularity,” to somehow inevitably develop out of the necessity to administer and control the ever more complex systems of society, economics, and science on a global basis, offer the perfect emblem for Heidegger’s insight into technology as run-away machination and will-to-power. It does not have to be true or even remotely possible to evoke this same sense of the new uncanny. What has been less remarked is the way such a “singularity” comes to mirror in digitalized form the traditional Judeo-Christian God, with its omniscience, omnipotence, and hoped for ultimate benevolence—as though the fantasies of technology must come to address and symbolically resolve the “disenchantment” of its own emptiness. *That* crossing of amplified personhood and ultimate computer *is* uncanny.
10. Bambach (2003) and others (Wolin, 1990) persist in seeing Heidegger’s use of Hölderlin’s “fatherland” poetry as a direct continuation of National Socialist propaganda of “blood and soil.” Yet, while certainly reflecting a conservative romanticism of folklore and rural life, the absence of any language of race and nationalism in Heidegger’s language would seem to reflect his move past National Socialism into something considered here as a kind of regionalized neo-shamanism. Despite Hitler’s own mythologizing of *Volk*, and the tendency of some neo-romantic thinkers to be drawn to such revivalism, it is *in itself* no more “fascist” than a concern with workers’ rights and class inequalities makes one “communist.” Of course for Wilhelm Reich, a New Age thinker in these same years, it did (see Hunt, 2018a), and for much longer than Heidegger’s infatuation with National Socialism, but in both cases there followed the stepping back to something more foundational.
11. Vincent Vycinas (1990), a Heidegger scholar and native Latvian, attempted this kind of regional sacralization of the “foursome” for Baltic or Aistian regions, based on pre-Christian and pre-Roman survivals of a great goddess marsh-land ecology and its local mythologies—including ancient traditions of a primary maternal responsibility for hearth-fire and sacred house serpent.
12. To return to the phenomenology of consciousness Heidegger sought to complete, Heidegger’s sense of his Other Beginning as a pre-dawn “glow” still occluded within the First Beginning is also resonant with accounts from Tibetan Buddhism of a “luminous darkness” or “light of the void” latent within the more expansive luminosities of intensity ecstasy (Guenther, 1984). It is also consistent with early introspectionist tachistoscope research that distinguished a pre-dimensional “spread” and indefinable glow at the briefest screen exposures, which can only be gradually detected with numerous repetitions “beneath” the more obvious “kick of light” that emerges out of it (Bichowski, 1925; Dickinson, 1926). Otto, William James, and Heidegger were all influenced by Schleiermacher, 1799/1988; Marina, 2004) who understood mystical experience as the felt amplification of the inner form of the unfolding moment—what would now be termed the amplified expression of the moment by moment “microgenesis” of immediate consciousness out of its impalpable sense of synesthetically based felt meaning (Hunt, 1984, 1995, 2011).
13. This “turning back” that illuminates the Clearing as Inceptual Being—an opening of Da-sein to the “shining back” of Being—shows Heidegger on similar metaphoric ground as G. H. Mead’s (1934) social “taking the role of the other” toward oneself—and Frederic Bartlett’s (1932) cognitive psychology of “turning around on the schemata”—as the uniquely human capacity for turning around on the inner forms of experience. For Mead this opens up the unrepresentable spontaneously creative “I” and Generalized Other—whose maximum amplifications become “soul” and “God.” From the view, however, of Heideg-



ger's radical phenomenology, the problem with Mead's and Bartlett's versions of this unique "reflexivity" of human mind would be that it is inevitably based within the "process" language of "explaining" in terms of the "already familiar," and so occludes the resulting sense of wonder and awe emergent from the deep structures of consciousness—losing the implicit phenomenology from which these concepts would have been initially derived (Heidegger, 1935/2014, pp. 225–227).

14. Anthony Newberg (2016), in outlining a prospective "neurotheology" based on the contemporary neuroscience of meditation and psychedelic drugs, similarly stresses that the neuro-chemical induction of mystical states does not in itself establish a causal reductionism of mind to matter or refute any traditional spiritual understandings of such experience. While the brain is often viewed in terms of linear causal process, it is as better understood as a mediator or conduit that *enables* the resonant interface of organism and environment. For the psychologist of ambient perception James Gibson (1979) such a linear "causation" is entirely subordinated within the larger context of the circle of continuous self location of organism within its ambient array—concrete and symbolic. On the human level of symbolic intelligence that mirroring resonance will apply equally to a central nervous system "capable" of both mathematics and God, since the same root metaphors seem required for both (Hunt, 1995, 2006).

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