

The Error in our Ways: Twofold Errancy in Heidegger's References to *Dao*

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ABSTRACT

The Error in our Ways: Twofold Errancy in Heidegger's References to *Dao*

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In this paper, I explore the connection between Martin Heidegger's concepts of 'errancy' and the 'way.' This connection provides important clarity to Heidegger's project, as it helps to explain how the ineffable, unfolding 'way' could serve as both the possibility for a new way of thinking and the withdrawal that gives rise to the very reign of method that covers over this possibility. Regarding errancy, this paper distinguishes two senses in which the term is engaged: (1) the inescapable openness of Being that allows for untruth, and (2) the tendency of this open region to efface and forget the fact of its own openness. Drawing from Heidegger's discussions on the *dao*, I argue that this twofold errancy is central to Heidegger's concept of the way. In order to clarify this connection, I introduce the term 'lostness,' hearkening back loosely to its application in *Being and Time* (1927). In my new application, lostness evokes the impossibility of 'finding' truth along some 'right path.' Any such goal of 'finding' the way is emblematic of the twofold errancy of contemporary thought because it forgets that no such path could exist independently of its middle-voiced arising *between* the way-making of the human being and the way-making of Being itself. As such, lostness points out the errancy in contemporary way-making, and clarifies the possibility of 'overcoming' this metaphysical pattern of thought. In short, we must realize the fundamental 'lostness' of the way and reevaluate what the process of 'finding our way' would even look like.

Questioning builds a way. We would be advised, therefore, above all to pay heed to the way and not to fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics. The way is one of thinking. All ways of thinking, more or less predictably lead through language in a way that is extraordinary. (Heidegger 1977d, 287)

1) Introduction

In the following major research paper, I will be questioning the way itself. To take my cue from the above quote, it might be said that I will be building a way into the way, at least as Heidegger understood it. Perhaps this seems redundant, like building a fire into a fire, but the way is unlike any concrete, ontic object in the world. For Heidegger, the way is not a mere path, but it is that which *gives way, forms a way, keeps a way, brings a way*, and, as such, is *way-making* in the truest sense (Heidegger 1971b, 130). The words often translated in Heidegger's work as 'way-making' are *Be-wägen* and *Be-wägung*; unusual versions of the German words for 'to move' (*bewegen*) and 'movement' (*Bewegung*) with hyphens and the trema added. On the significance of these changes, Gail Stenstad writes that

By emphasizing the prefix, Heidegger may be suggesting that we are not to understand *be-wägen* as a transitive verb in some typical subject-object structure. Way is not some object. Way-making makes way in such a way that 'it is' the way, that is, all there 'is' is way-making movement. The movement moves, and that is all. It gives way in self-withdrawing, in yielding way (qtd. in Lacertosa 2019, 113)

Heidegger seems to confirm this, describing the related root *wägen* from the Alemannic-Swabian dialect as "to clear a way, for instance across a snow-covered field," and describes way-making not as moving along a path that is already there, but "to bring the way ... forth first of all, and thus to *be* the way" (Heidegger 1971b, 129-30). As such, Heidegger's 'way' represents the

unfolding movement of Being itself, and is of critical importance to his overall project. This fact was not lost on Heidegger, who featured the word ‘way’ in many of his titles and went so far as to describe his collected works as “ways, not works” (qtd. in Davis 2016a, vii). But as we will see in the following sections, the term still remains unclear.

For Heidegger, the current path of human existence is framed on all sides by a technical fascination with presence and appearances. As we will see, this limited mode of ‘presencing’ obscures the possibility of open comportment and the ‘new way of thinking’ that Heidegger points us to. But it will also become apparent that this technical fascination arises out of the very movement of way-making, as this movement itself has been shot through by ‘errancy’ (*das Irren*). As such, contemporary human beings find themselves on an errant path, and yet the way-making movement of the human being (which represents the possibility for a new way of thinking) ostensibly underpins all iterations of the way, including the errant ones.

From this, it may seem that Heidegger has conflicting views on the way, and it may seem unclear which aspect of the way he intends to criticize. On the one hand, human beings find themselves on a path of thought that obscures the possibility for open comportment and the ‘new way’ of thinking. Yet, it will be shown that this errancy is not only inalienable, but even necessary for the new way of thought itself. This seeming conflict notably appears in Heidegger’s asides to Daoist philosophy. In one such passage, Heidegger calls the way “a great hidden stream which moves all things along and makes way for everything. All is way” (Heidegger 1971a, 92). But in the same breath, he affirms that this primordial movement of way-making underpins the very reign of method that we are supposed to overcome by returning to the way (Heidegger 1971a, 92). In passages of this sort, it seems that a tension is growing between two different senses in which the way is errant. I will argue that Heidegger’s references to Daoist

philosophy highlight this twofold sense of errancy and help to locate these senses with relation to the 'way,' though these implications are not often brought out clearly in the secondary literature.

In order to resolve the seeming conflict mentioned above, I will further clarify the connection between Heidegger's concepts of 'errancy' and the 'way' by introducing the bridging term 'lostness.' This term connects these concepts through its implicit reference to an errant way, and its applicability to Heidegger's work on both concepts. Lostness (*Verlorenheit*) appears in Heidegger's early work as a description of Dasein's everyday disclosedness in the 'They' (Heidegger 1962, 234/BT 189), but the term rings out beyond *Being and Time* (1927) and should be reinterpreted as a hermeneutic tool for his later work as well. This reinterpretation of 'lostness' will clarify the link between Heidegger's understanding of the way and his multi-layered understanding of errancy.

Contrary to the everyday concept of erring, which would emphasize a binary notion of untruth or misdirection, Heidegger's use of errancy does not refer to a propositional state of untruth, or a state of being-misled. Rather, errancy takes on two senses in Heidegger's work. I will call these: (1) the ontological sense of errancy, understood as the inescapable openness of Being that allows for untruth, and (2) the historical sense of errancy, understood as the tendency of this open region to efface and forget the fact of its own openness. By passing over the manner in which this openness arises, this second sense of errancy has given rise to a mode of revealing that Heidegger sometimes calls 'technology.' The first of these senses of erring is ineradicable, but the second, for Heidegger, is the historical product of our philosophical thought and ways of being and could be overcome by cultivating a new way of thinking. This notion that the historical errancy of modern technology can be 'overcome' is complicated by the ontological sense of errancy, which remains ineradicable. As we will see, technology is not errant in the

sense that it differs from some alternate correct path we could independently discern and choose. Rather, technology dominates contemporary thought because it effaces the manner of its own arising. It understands the unfolding way as something that humans send themselves on, but in doing so it has missed the equal contribution made by Being itself in the unfolding of the way. In other words, in contemporary thought, we forget that the way arises in the *interchange between* the way-making of the human being and the way-making of Being itself. For Heidegger, overcoming our historical errancy involves cultivating a state of 'releasement' in which we listen and respond to the way-making of Being, therein opening ourselves to the genuine possibility of finding a way into truth.

Here, we will see the applicability of 'lostness' as the connection between Heidegger's conception of errancy and the way. We are called to realize the error in contemporary thought, insofar as it passes over its own historical contingency, but because the way itself is errant at the ontological level, there is no independently existing 'right path' that we can turn towards. In this sense, we are fundamentally lost. Furthermore, it is by properly realizing this state that we can move beyond the historically contingent errancy in our way of thinking. Instead of calling for us to *find* a new way, Heidegger's project calls us to reevaluate how ways arise. It calls us to realize that ways do not merely arise because we define them and send ourselves on them. Instead, it is only through realizing the historical contingency and limited perspective of our contemporary mode of revealing that we can cultivate a reciprocal openness to Being that is not errant in the historical sense. This is only possible if we understand the manner in which the way is errant and release ourselves into a state in which we can listen and respond to the way-making of Being. In other words, it is only possible if we see our human condition as one in which we are *lost*, and redefine what the active process of 'finding our way' would even look like.

In this way, the term ‘lostness’ will clarify the interplay between errancy and the way in Heidegger’s project, and will show how the way could unfold as both the primordial possibility for a new way of thinking, and the withdrawing openness that gives rise to the very reign of method that covers over this possibility. In the end, this paper will close by considering a possible implication that this content will have on Heidegger’s problem of ‘overcoming’ philosophy. I will attempt to briefly add to a debate on this topic by utilizing the concept of lostness in the way to clarify the problem of overcoming metaphysics.

2) Lostness in *Being and Time*

Although I intend to apply the concept of ‘lostness’ to Heidegger’s later work, the term appears most distinctly in *Being and Time* (1927). Here, lostness is used as a description of Dasein’s everyday disclosedness in the ‘They’ (Heidegger 1962, 234/*BT* 189). I claim that this definition of lostness has notable parallels to themes in Heidegger’s later work and is emblematic of a central movement in Heidegger’s thought. To understand this, we must briefly explore Heidegger’s early conception of the human being, and the way in which lostness is inalienable to its existence.

In some sense, the notion of lostness permeates Heidegger’s early conception of the human being right from the beginning. When we first encounter the contemporary human being in Heidegger’s work, we do not encounter it as an ontic, biological arrangement of parts, but as that entity which has *forgotten* the question of the meaning of Being (Heidegger 1962, 21, 59/*BT* 2, 35). Furthermore, it is quickly argued that the ‘average’ or ‘everyday’ understanding of Being that is perpetuating this forgetfulness is part of our *essential constitution* (Heidegger 1962, 38/*BT* 16-7). In other words, forgetting this question is not like forgetting your keys on the kitchen table, or forgetting how to multiply numbers. This vital question was lost due to the very nature

of the opening onto the world that the human being represents. This is how Heidegger would like to understand an existing human – an opening, or an unfolding encounter, stretched out spatiotemporally within a world. As such, Heidegger names the individual that constitutes this opening ‘Dasein’, or ‘being-there.’ The majority of Heidegger’s early work focusses on interrogating Dasein because its essential constitution carries an ontico-ontological priority in any investigation of Being (Heidegger 1962 34/*BT* 13). This is largely due to the fact that Dasein’s Being can be individuated in a more distinct way than other beings. Dasein is the being for which its own Being-in-the-world is an issue (Heidegger 1962, 182/*BT* 143). An ontological *epoché* focusing on such an entity will expose the structure of Being in newfound clarity, and allow the phenomenologist to resist the focus on theoretical detachment that has passed over the question of the meaning of Being since Plato. In other words, Dasein has the ability to arrive at the question of the meaning of Being through a careful examination of its own existence. Furthermore, the reason that philosophical reflection has historically passed over this ‘ownmost’ potentiality-for-Being is actually revelatory of Dasein’s everyday state, or its everyday mode of ‘disclosedness.’

Throughout our lives, authentic ontological questions are passed over because the world is primarily disclosed to us in a mode of ‘average everydayness.’ In this mode, Dasein passes over its own Being, and deflects any authentic concerns about its existence aside. In the place of these concerns, Dasein rests in the familiarity of the seemingly concrete, ontic world that it shares with others (Heidegger 1962, 165/*BT* 127). It does this because everyday Dasein flees from what Heidegger calls ‘nullity’ (Heidegger 1962, 223/*BT* 178). If we really consider our own existence, we find it is fundamentally delimited by the nothingness of finite limits – our birth, and our death. Consideration of this finitude produces a feeling of anxiety, but it also individuates Dasein

in its Being (Heidegger 1962, 232/*BT* 187-8). This is why Dasein has priority in Heidegger's project, but it is also the reason why Dasein naturally turns away from authentic ontological questions. Rather than resolutely face up to our ownmost possibility (death), we turn inwards, and are 'absorbed', 'entangled, and 'fascinated' by entities within-the-world (Heidegger 1962, 107, 223/*BT* 76, 178). One way that Heidegger describes this state is 'lostness.'

Lostness, in early Heidegger, is the tranquilization of Dasein as a mere entity among others (Heidegger 1962, 234/*BT* 189). Often, this existential mode is referred to as 'publicness' and is articulated around an amorphous social spectre called 'the They' (Heidegger 1962, 234/*BT* 189). Importantly, the They is an *existentiale* – an essential structure of Dasein – and cannot be excised from our being (Heidegger 1962, 167/*BT* 129). Being authentic Dasein does not mean disavowing oneself of the They, but simply gathering oneself from dispersion into the They, and realizing one's actual potentialities for Being. To put this in simpler terms, in everyday life we will almost always sluff off any authentic concerns about Being because such concerns carry an inherent reference to the finitude of our own existence. The uncanny realization of our mortality and our existential angst are passed over for a general ambivalence that we cultivate in several ways. Either we 'absorb' ourselves into the ontic world of objects, or we 'lose' ourselves in the idle talk and support of our neighbours and friends. But in doing so, we fail to realize that death is existentially isolated to the dying individual. It is our 'own' in a way that other concerns are not. For Heidegger, death cannot merely be a state of non-being that we have not yet encountered. If this were the case, then perhaps we could take an Epicurean view on death; perhaps death "is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist" (Epicurus 1940, 31). If this were the case, then death should no longer be of any concern to the existing human being, and any such concern would be

foolishness. But for Heidegger, death has real significance for us. We carry it with us. It represents an existential possibility in our current lives; the possibility to grasp our life's potentialities as our 'own' and no one else's. This is made possible by death because, for Heidegger, death is the lived finitude of our existence (Heidegger 1962, 378/*BT* 329). If Dasein realizes this finitude, it finds itself in a state of anxiety and is 'thrown back' onto the possibilities of its life. These possibilities are realized as its *own* possibilities, and Dasein is therein individualized. As such, any authentic appreciation of Being must necessarily gain its footing by overcoming the "downward plunge" away from such an authentic encounter with our ownmost possibility and into lostness (Heidegger 1962, 223/*BT* 178).

This concept of 'plunging' or 'falling,' is important to note because it highlights an aspect of lostness vital to its reuptake in Heidegger's later work. Specifically, falling reveals the core of 'movement' in Heidegger's conception of everyday disclosedness. Authentic Dasein is spatiotemporally fluid, and its movement through the world escapes all attempts to concretize itself into any objectivist matrix. Furthermore, Heidegger argues that the very tranquilizing forces that we are called to overcome are *inalienable* modes of our Being. The possibilities of our Being are inevitably handed over to us by the They, and as such, lostness represents a "positive possibility" that cannot be left behind by more advanced thinkers (Heidegger 1962, 167, 220/*BT* 129, 176). This complicates the whole notion of overcoming our everyday disclosedness, and places lostness at the uncanny core of human existence.

I claim that these themes are picked up again in Heidegger's later concept of errancy.

Section 3) Errancy

As Heidegger developed his thought after *Being and Time* (1927), he moved away from Dasein as the starting point of the investigation. Rather than examining entities and anxiety as

personal aspects of Dasein's understanding, Heidegger broadens his view to see human existence arising within an enveloping 'openness' or 'region' which is irreducible to its human dimension (Zimmerman 1993, 247). With this, the previously individualized battle against inauthenticity becomes a broader problem that is historically rooted in systems of thought and the unfolding of the world itself (Zimmerman 1993, 247-8). As such, the forgetting of Being no longer primarily reflects Dasein's existential condition, but the condition of the open region itself – the space of clearing in which beings might be seen in their unconcealment. However, like the challenge that lostness presented to authenticity, Heidegger emphasizes that the unconcealment of beings is suffused with a prevailing concealment. This is where the term 'errancy' comes into play.

In his address "On the Essence of Truth" (1930), Heidegger describes this interplay between unconcealing and concealing as a tension between truth and untruth. A connection is drawn between truth and unconcealment through the Ancient Greek term *alētheia*. Contrary to the Aristotelian and Kantian understandings of truth – which Heidegger takes to represent a mere accordance between objects and the subjective intellect (Heidegger 1977b, 122) – *alētheia* points to the freedom (or opening up) of the open region in which beings arise (or are 'lighted'). As a result, truth for the human being becomes a kind of 'letting-be' of this open region. This comportment towards beings may sound passive, but it should be seen as an active engagement of 'sheltering' Being. As Heidegger puts it, "To engage oneself in the disclosedness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they may reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are and in order that presentative correspondence might take its standard from them" (Heidegger 1977b, 128). Here, we see again the emphasis on not *losing* oneself in the ontic world of being, and we get the sense that the

movement of withdrawal is making a positive contribution in the lighting of beings. But these themes of loss and discovery remain intertwined and bear further examination.

Untruth is the result of the aforementioned loss, and is understood as errancy (*das Irren*), or the failure to shelter being in the open-region. As Heidegger puts it a little later in the same essay, our “flight from the mystery toward what is readily available, onward from one current thing to the next, passing the mystery by – this is *erring*” (Heidegger 1977b, 135). Here, we may be reminded of lostness, insofar as errancy involves being driven from the ‘mystery’ of Being in favour of our everyday concerned dealings within the world. By ‘mystery,’ Heidegger is referring to the fact that Being itself plays a central role in the unfolding of the world, equal to the contribution of the human being. We get a clear sense in this passage that errancy represents a kind of ‘passing over’ of the proper focus of our inquiry. This is what I referred to earlier as the historical sense of errancy, or the tendency of errancy to efface itself. In the broader context of this passage, Heidegger reveals that this concealing movement away from truth actually represents an open region of its own, but one that forgets and passes over the mystery of Being (Heidegger 1977b, 136). In its propensity for obscuring the possibility of the unconcealment of Being, errancy underpins an openness towards being misled. Robert Mugerauer connects this to Heidegger’s earlier preoccupation with resolutely facing up to the uncanny grounds of our existence. In errancy, we do not find falsity in the typical sense, but we actually encounter the familiar attunement toward Being that we engage in every day. As he puts it, untruth represents a flight from what shows itself to us in anxiety; a turning “back toward what is everyday and comfortably normal” and “away from what comes toward us” (Mugerauer 2008, 57).

It is worth noting that the push away from individuated interpretations in Heidegger’s work means that errancy is not just a facet of Dasein’s propensity to err, but stands as an ontological

feature of the region itself. George Pattison's *Guidebook to the Later Heidegger* (2000) reflects this, viewing errancy as the wandering of Being at the level of society. Pattison argues that errancy is the reason why different cultures in different epochs have wandered in different directions linguistically and in terms of thought (Pattison 2000, 70). This broader applicability of errancy is important for the project at hand, as I will be locating errancy in the concept of the way, which encompasses both the unfolding way of individual Dasein and the movement of Being itself.

4) Errancy as the 'Wrong Way'

Now, following the implications of the term 'erring,' it might be tempting to say that errancy should be understood as 'moving along the wrong way' or the 'wrong path.' On a limited reading of the historical sense of errancy, this is true, but this application would only present a one-dimensional view of errancy. This link to way is supported etymologically but will later be shown to pass over a more primordial reading of the way, and an ontological dimension of the term errancy.

To err [*irren*], in Heidegger's sense, is derived from the Latin *errare* which means "to wander from the right way" (Heidegger 1977b, 135). In Heidegger's later work, this errant path is broadly addressed as a problem of technological thinking; a thinking which makes nature manifest, or 'wills a ground' in order to categorize and objectify the horizons of its inquiry. As we have already seen, Heidegger often extols an attitude of attentive letting-be toward the arising of things. One essential aspect of this process is that of bringing-forth, or *poiēsis*. For Heidegger, *poiēsis* represents the creative potential of letting what is not yet present arise out of itself (Heidegger 1977d, 293). One specific type of *poiēsis* is *technē*, or the bringing-forth of beings into the unconcealedness of *appearances* (Heidegger 1977d, 294; Heidegger 1975d, 59). *Technē*

represents the possibility for knowing something as *present*, which is obviously an essential kind of knowledge, but this bringing-forth is so dominant in contemporary society that it actually obscures the possibility of *poiēsis*. This runaway mode of bringing-forth is referred to as technology.

Modern technology, in Heidegger's work, should not be read as an ontic product of technical innovation (for ex. a cell phone, hand tool, or skyscraper). Rather, it is a mode of revealing, but not one of *poiēsis*. Instead, technology is a revealing that 'sets upon' being and 'challenges' it into a 'standing reserve' (Heidegger 1977d, 296, 298). What this means is that technology is the revealing of the world in its concrete utility. But technology is not simply a mode of instrumental facilitation, because for Heidegger, it has gained ontological priority over every form of thinking (Jung 1987, 235).

For an extreme example of this mode, we might imagine a modern businessperson, traipsing through the forest and seeing only wood resources, raw materials, and potential vacation destinations. They manage to bring-forth the beings around them, but they pass over a multi-layered interpretation of their being because their view is delimited primarily by utility. Heidegger would like to say that we are all like this businessperson insofar as we rely on a mode of revealing that frames the world around objective forms.

As you can see, there is a metaphysical layer to this criticism as well. Heidegger often attributes the root of modern technology's dominion over contemporary thought to the Platonic project of metaphysics. In this still-dominant project, metaphysics thinks beings 'as a whole', or as *grounded* in light of their presence and availability for objective examination. As he puts it, "metaphysical thinking, starting from what is present, represents it in its presence and thus exhibits it as grounded by its ground." (Heidegger 1977c, 374). Heidegger defines the current

dominance of metaphysical thinking as the *destining* of ‘*Ge-stell*’, which is modern technology’s “explicit key expression” (Heidegger 1975d, 84). ‘Destining’ is used here to highlight the way in which Heidegger believes that the formal concretion of the world ‘sends us upon a way’ (Heidegger 1977d, 305). This is a “supreme danger” for Heidegger, because it has alienated contemporary people from the authentic possibility to encounter themselves in their essence, and from the possibility of listening openly to Being by *letting* it be (Heidegger 1977d, 308-9). As he puts it,

the challenging-enframing not only conceals a former way of revealing, bringing-forth, but it conceals revealing itself and with it that wherein unconcealment, i.e., truth, comes to pass. ... The rule of enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth (Heidegger 1977d, 309).

This priority has not only corrupted the contemporary human encounter with the world, but has also misdirected the project of metaphysical philosophy, itself. As he puts it, in today’s world, “Philosophy turns into the empirical science of man, of all of what can become for man the experiential object of his technology” (Heidegger 1977c, 376). Furthermore, there are real implications to the dominance of technology, including what is often called the “devastation of the earth and the annihilation of the human essence” (Ma and van Brakel 2014, 529). This could be taken in the ontological sense of perceiving *beings* while overlooking *Being* itself, or it could be taken in a literal sense of the devastation of the earth that humans are likely to perpetuate when they encounter it in this way. This double-sense of the annihilation of technology is explored in *Country Path Conversations* (1944-5) where Heidegger acknowledges both the ontic tragedy of the forgetting of Being, and foregrounds the primary impact it has on ‘the human’ in

its essence (Heidegger 2016, 13/G 20). In his time, the ontic component would have been especially relevant to the devastation wrought on Europe during the heavily-industrial World Wars, while today it remains applicable to our ongoing industrial activities and environmental crisis. For example, our inability to authentically hear the ‘call’ of Being due to the dominion of technology leaves us in positions like the one mentioned above, where a forest appears as raw materials, rather than a ‘wilderness’ in all its manifold significations (Taylor 2007, 452-3).

5) The Necessity of Errancy

Despite the fact that technology and the “path of metaphysics” (Heidegger 1977b, 140) seem to articulate Heidegger’s ‘wrong way’ of errancy, this is only true in a limited sense. On a deeper reading, there are indications that Heidegger’s full conception of errancy is much more complex. For instance, Heidegger also tacitly mentions that errancy is *not* “like a ditch into which [the human being] occasionally stumbles; rather errancy belongs to the inner constitution of the Dasein into which historical man is admitted” (Heidegger 1977b, 135-6). So, the historical path of modern technology cannot be the entirety of errancy. This is a crucial point when understanding Heidegger’s conception of errancy. Due to its connection to untruth, we might assume that errancy is something to be overcome through the development of philosophy and thought – like a path that we can leave behind – but to interpret it this way would be to pass over the more nuanced twofold understanding of errancy that Heidegger seems to promote. Just in the same way that lostness was found to contribute to the positive constitution of Dasein and could not be thrown off by more advanced thinkers, errancy is affirmed to be an inalienable aspect of Being, and co-constitutive of disclosure in general.

For Heidegger, errancy is both misleading and productive because “as leading astray, errancy at the same time contributes to a possibility that man is capable of drawing up from his

ek-sistence – the possibility that, by experiencing errancy itself and by not mistaking the mystery of Da-sein, he *not* let himself be led astray” (Heidegger 1977b, 136). By ‘ek-sistence,’ Heidegger simply means the spatiotemporally spread-out nature of human existence. This line of thought is supported by other interpreters as well, such as Pattison, who claims that “The errancy of modernity is not the fault of this or that error in philosophy, still less is it an accidental by-product of industrialisation, for it is a destining that comes from Being itself” (Pattison 2000, 180). In other words, we cannot take a merely pejorative view and say that errancy is a ‘wrong’ path because it conceals being in untruth, or because it underpins modern technology. In reality, both of these are products of errancy as co-constitutive of the openness of Being itself, which should always be kept in the foreground as we investigate technology. The human failure to realize and appreciate this openness underpins our inability to hear the call of Being, and the annihilation along the errant paths that result. In other words, we could say that the misstep of contemporary philosophy begins with the prioritization of things like light and objectivity, whereas Heidegger wants the reader to see darkness and concealment as equally co-constitutive of the arising of Being (Burik 2019, 353-4). In this way, errancy comprises both a necessary ontological status, and the expression of this along the errant paths that arise. In other words, errancy reflects two things in Heidegger’s work – first, the inalienable openness of Being that allows for untruth, and second, the tendency of this region of untruth to efface its own concealment in our historically-motivated movement along various untrue paths.

Pattison and Mugerauer indicate the first of these senses by foregrounding the term ‘homelessness’ in their discussions. In some sense, homelessness brings out the ontological priority in the problem of modern enframing. As Mugerauer points out,

If we attempt to stay on the right way, for example in looking for the truth about homelessness, being, nothing, and humans, we have to allow the *unheimlich* to stay before us. To stay within the uncanny, where we experience not being at home means to refuse refuge in comfortable ways of living and thinking, in comfortable realms which might contain us, or in comfortable goals and homes. But this ... means that to think and question is to hold ourselves in not being at home. The more fully we exercise our human capacities the more radically we have to endure homelessness. (Mugerauer 2008, 58-9)

I certainly agree that Dasein's homelessness, or uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*), is related to the errancy of the unfolding way of Being. Uncanniness clearly embodies the first sense of errancy that I described above. In *Being and Time* (1927), 'not-being-at-home' is the existential mode of Dasein when anxiety brings it out of publicness and tranquilization (Heidegger 1962, 233/*BT* 188-9). In this mode, the familiarity of everyday Being-in-the-world collapses, and Dasein is individualized (Heidegger 1962, 233/*BT* 189). From this description, it may seem that homelessness is opposed to lostness, in which Dasein falls into the familiarity of the world in a mode of 'being-at-home' (Heidegger 1962, 233/*BT* 188). But Heidegger also says that an onto-ontological interpretation of anxiety will see its uncanniness as always present in Dasein's everyday mode of being (Heidegger 1962, 234/*BT* 190). Both homelessness and lostness belong to Dasein's essential state of Being-in-the-world, in which homelessness represents a 'fear' that Dasein 'dims down' in its lostness (Heidegger 1962, 234/*BT* 190). From this, I would argue that homelessness is emblematic of the ontological sense of errancy that I identified, while lostness is more emblematic of the historical sense. Homelessness hearkens back to the inalienable groundlessness of Being that Dasein runs up against in anxiety, while lostness hearkens back to

the tendency of our everyday Being-in-the-world to conceal this anxiety. It could even be argued that I should take homelessness as my guiding term in this investigation because it represents a more primordial phenomenon in Heidegger's work (Heidegger 1962, 234/BT 190). However, in this paper, 'lostness' will come to stand as the placeholder for a broader application of errancy to Heidegger's later work due to its implicit connection to a 'way,' but this should not indicate that I have dismissed the uncanny homelessness of the way in favour of its lostness. The twofold conception of errancy that I am describing is one in which *Unheimlichkeit* and *Verlorenheit* are both captured by an inalienable and self-effacing openness of Being.

With regard to the inalienability of errancy, we see clear evidence of this in Heidegger's work. Both errancy and even technology are often characterized as *inalienable* ways of revealing, or modes of *alētheia* (unconcealment) (Heidegger 1977b, 132; Heidegger 1977d, 302). It might seem especially strange to consider technology, which is mainly credited with *concealing* Being from our purview, as an inescapable mode of *revealing*, especially considering Heidegger's goal of overcoming this concealment. However, to interpret concealment as something problematic would be to misunderstand it. Errancy, untruth, and technology each have tendencies to obscure, but each of their concealments is carried out through a movement of revealing. One example of this seeming contradiction is embodied in the term *alētheia*, which not only refers to the lighting and revealing nature of technology, but evokes its inherent tendency for *concealing* as well (Ma 2006, 155).

Concealment and unconcealment go hand in hand for Heidegger. Whether he is concerned with human perception, or the Being of beings itself, all things arise only out of an unarticulated background that remains in darkness. This concealment is integral to the unconcealment of things (Heidegger 2016, 51/G 81). One of Heidegger's favourite analogies for this point is that of

a *star*. A star in the night sky is ostensibly a point of light, but it is only visible out of a surrounding area of darkness (Burik 2017, 32). Given Heidegger's interest in mapping this paradigm onto truth and untruth, we can begin to understand his similar claim that untruth is essential to the arising of truth (Heidegger 1977b, 132). In this sense, the human being is equally in truth and untruth, where concealing and revealing are equal aspects of the same process and must both respond to the call of Being in order for truth to appear. In this sense, the human being is "always astray in errancy" (Heidegger 1977b, 135). This clarifies where the danger lies in the errant way of thinking. On the one hand, we have a tendency to overshadow a more primary ontological understanding of Being, and to allow metaphysics to present itself as the only mode of revealing (Heidegger 1977d, 294, 316). On the other hand, we have an inalienable tendency towards an open region of untruth, whether it directs us to the former mode of revealing and obscures itself or not. The latter sense (ontological errancy) is only made a problem by the former (historical errancy), but both are important to consider when understanding the term.

However, this notion of errancy as the productive force underpinning the reign of metaphysics and technology is drawn outside of the limited domain of Dasein quite clearly in Heidegger's references to Daoism. In one such aside, Heidegger argued that "Perhaps the enigmatic power of today's reign of method also, and indeed preeminently, stems from the fact that the methods, notwithstanding their efficiency, are after all merely the runoff of a great hidden stream which moves all things along and makes way for everything. All is way." (Heidegger 1971a, 92). It seems clear in this passage that Heidegger considers the movement of way a source for the errant movement of human existence. I will now investigate these notes on way and *dao* in order to bring about a clearer understanding of errancy in Heidegger's concept of the way.

6) The Separation of Errancy in the *Dao*

The word *dao* is of fundamental importance in Chinese philosophy, referring to a myriad of processual forms and activities, such as ‘way,’ ‘road,’ ‘walk,’ and ‘speak’ (Xu 2010, 42). When Heidegger addresses this term, he refers to it as the “key word” in Laozi’s “poetic thinking” (Heidegger 1971a, 92). This is high praise, as for Heidegger, the figure of the poet represents the promise of a new way of thought. The poet is the one able to shape the realm currently defined by the metaphysical lightening of Being in order to “come to learn what is unspoken” (Heidegger 1975f, 96). As we have already seen, this mysterious unconcealment is supposed to arise from cultivating an attitude of letting-be and opening ourselves to hear the call of Being. To say that Laozi has genuinely articulated himself in poetic thinking is no small claim, nor is the claim that the word ‘way’ or *dao* harbours this unspoken message.

This is, of course, complicated by the fact that even Daoists do not think that the word *dao* is exactly correspondent to the unfolding harmony of Being that it represents. In the very first verse of the *Daodejing*, Laozi claims that the true *dao* is unnamable. From a perspective rooted in western metaphysics, it may be tempting to read this as referring to a transcendental *dao*, operating like some ontotheological principle that cannot be fully realized because of its distance from the ontic world. However, some scholarship has pointed out that a more accurate interpretation of the *dao*’s ineffability would simply be to view it as an expansive, diffuse term that applies to the totality of harmonious transformation in the world, and as such cannot be pinned down (Burik 2010, 509). It seems that Heidegger’s model of the way corresponds to the Daoist picture in this respect. Brett Davis makes this argument, claiming that “For both Heidegger and the *Daodejing*, [the] Way is not a transcendent being that lords its Will over us, but rather a natural self-unfolding or “enregioning” of a surrounding ‘open-region; (*Gegnet*) that

lets us be as we release ourselves unto its middle-voiced occurrence” (Davis 2020, 167). The term ‘*Gegnet*’, here, refers to the openness of Being itself, or the “unlimited open-region that encompasses the delimited openness of human horizons” (Davis 2019, 14). Within this openness, we must listen to the call of being in a mode of releasement that lies outside the distinction between activity and passivity. It is a ‘middle-voiced’ response because the way that results is neither the product of human willing, nor solely a product of Being itself. Instead, Heidegger’s way arises in the middle, between Being’s way-making and our response. Because of the emphasis on letting-be and waiting for Being in this process, it could be said that Heidegger calls us to ‘will’ a state of ‘non-willing’ (Heidegger 2016 92/*G* 142). As we will see later, it is hotly debated how we are supposed to understand this willing of non-willing, but at least it seems that Heidegger has taken the Daoist view that the way carries a certain ineffability insofar as it represents the enveloping movement of all Being.

Whatever the case may be with his view on the transcendence of the way, Heidegger is very clear that the common definition of ‘way’ remains emblematic of the technological fascination with presence and appearances; a way typically represents only an ontic space between two points (Heidegger 1971a, 92). This is almost certainly true as regards the contemporary usage of the term, so the first purpose that ‘*dao*’ serves is to understand the way as the arising movement of Being itself. As Heidegger puts it,

Tao could be the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think what reason, mind, meaning, *logos* properly mean to say – properly, by their proper nature. Perhaps the mystery of mysteries of thoughtful Saying conceals itself in the word ‘way,’ *Tao*, if only we will let these names return to what they leave unspoken, if only we are capable of this, to allow them to do so. Perhaps the enigmatic power of today’s reign of

method also, and indeed preeminently, stems from the fact that the methods, notwithstanding their efficiency, are after all merely the runoff of a great hidden stream which moves all things along and makes way for everything. All is way. (Heidegger 1971a, 92)

The significance of this attempt to clarify ‘way’ cannot be overstated. As we saw earlier, the concept of ‘way’ is of fundamental importance to Heidegger. But this passage does much more than enshrine ‘way’ as a central leitmotif in Heidegger’s work. By engaging with Daoist sources, Heidegger is attempting to clarify the source of conflict that he has diagnosed in contemporary Western thought. As he points out, the reign of method arises from the same ‘great hidden stream’ of Being that gives rise to unconcealment, truth, and the possibility of overcoming this metaphysical reign itself. If we consider this in conjunction with my earlier descriptions of the technical-metaphysical history of thought, it seems that when Heidegger attributes the ‘reign of method’ to the overflowing source of the way, he is placing errancy at the heart of this Daoist sense of ‘way.’ As we have seen, the open region of errancy gives rise to modern technology in a twofold manner. In one sense, it provides an inalienable openness of Being that allows for untruth, but in a second sense, it represents the tendency of this openness to efface its own concealment, the prominence of which has given rise to the ‘reign of method’ Heidegger mentions in the passage discussed above. As such, we should consider the above quote to be an indication that errancy is not only fundamental to the human being and our comportment towards the world, but also to Being itself.

There are also other signs that this is the picture of ‘way’ that Heidegger is drawing up in correspondence with the *dao*. This way is said to belong to a ‘neighbourhood’ in which poetic saying and thinking are brought together (Heidegger 1971a, 93). But the way is brought about by

a movement of ‘waiting’ in which we cultivate an open *receptivity* to the world, and *let* Being and language speak to us, from themselves (Heidegger 1971a, 85). As we have seen, cultivating the correct attitude of letting-be in the open region requires an equal receptivity to both unconcealment and concealment. This is made emblematic with regard to the ‘way’ as *dao* in *Country Path Conversations* (1944-5).

In this text, three conversations are written out as scripts between archetypal characters who represent different philosophical stances on the question of Being. In the first conversation, there are notable exchanges in which Heidegger’s scientist-character expresses a feeling of unease and emptiness as the conversation moves into the darkness of night, and away from the realm of metaphysically grounded sciences (Heidegger 2016, 86/G 133). In response, Heidegger’s guide-character extols the virtue of emptiness in gathering being together. He uses the metaphor of a jug, which is only able to perform the gathering involved in the event of drinking by abiding in the *emptiness* of the jug (Heidegger 2016, 87-8/G 135). This theme is brought out further in “The Thing” (Heidegger 1975e, 169) and has often been attributed comparatively to *Daodejing* chapter 11 (Nelson 2014, 316; Parkes 2012, 126; Pöggeler 1987, 61). In this chapter, Laozi describes a cup, a wheel, and a room, but prioritizes the empty space within these as providing their existence. He closes the chapter by saying “only when [a thing] has *wu*, does it have life” (*wu* here being the emptiness mentioned above) (Laozi 2001, 24). *Country Path Conversations* (1944-5) also contains a more explicit reference to Daoist literature at the end of the third conversation. Here, chapter 26 of the *Zhuangzi* is quoted at length:

The one said: ‘You are talking about the unnecessary.’

The other said: ‘A person must first have recognized the unnecessary before one can talk with him about the necessary. The earth is wide and large, and yet, in order to

stand, the human needs only enough space to be able to put his foot down. But what if directly next to his foot a crevice were to open up that dropped down to the underworld, then would the space where he stands still be of use to him?’

The one said: ‘It would be of no more use to him’

The other said: ‘From this the necessity of the unnecessary is clearly apparent.’ (qtd. in Heidegger 2016, 156/G 239)

This comes at the end of a long conversation in a prisoner of war camp in which the devastation of industrial warfare is attributed to the failure of human beings to cultivate an attitude of waiting and letting-be, in contrast to the attitude of ordering and dominating nature (Heidegger 2016, 148-9/G 228-9). Here again, the unnecessary represents the unarticulated background out of which a primordial unconcealment would be possible.

This fascination with Daoism as the harbinger of this new type of releasement was even evident in Heidegger’s personal life. In one notable story, Heidegger had his student Paul Shih-yi Hsiao write a passage from *Daodejing* chapter 15 in calligraphy, and then proceeded to hang it in his office. This passage was translated to Heidegger as “Who can, settling the muddy, gradually make it clear? Who can, stirring the tranquil, gradually bring it to life?” (Hsiao 1987, 100). Heidegger’s interpretation of this highlighted the power of the tranquil in bringing something into being (Hsiao 1987, 100). Here, we see again the idea that letting-be and listening openly to Being is essential to the arising of the world itself.

Whether Daoism was his inspiration for this focus on nothingness, or just helped to clarify his ideas on this topic, it seems that Heidegger drew upon Daoism in order to articulate the central place that nothingness has in his project. It is no longer merely the nullity of Dasein’s own existence which must be faced resolutely. Now the uncanny root of our existence is the

product of the revealing/concealing movement of Being itself. In other words, there is an essential tendency in Being to *withdraw*, which must not be passed over as we attempt to understand it. In this sense, these passages serve to clarify how such concealing could be considered a co-constitutive aspect of the unfolding of Being in alethic *unconcealment*. In other words, these passages place errancy at the heart of the withdrawing movement of the way, and justify its positive interpretation.

Scholarship on Heidegger and Daoism has certainly picked up on this aspect of revealing/concealing, as well as Heidegger's related interest in releasement and letting-be (Davis 2020, 167), but the clarifications I noted regarding errancy and the way are often passed over. Instead, related resonances between Heideggerian and Daoist philosophy are usually noted, such as the fact that Heidegger saw in Daoism something akin to his own polemic against logocentric metaphysics. Steven Burik comes closer to my project when he mentions the fact that Daoism allowed Heidegger to clarify the aspect of *becoming* in which nothing and being must be considered together as mutual parts of a processual, unfolding world (Burik 2016, 24). Burik says that Daoism gave Heidegger a means to rethink ontological presence, and to accommodate an equality between being and non-being (Burik 2016, 24). We saw this earlier with Heidegger's mutual co-dependence of unconcealment and concealment. Developing a processual ontology supports these arguments because elements of Being can no longer be set in objective opposition to one another. Being and nothingness become a developing flow of becoming and passing away. Presence and absence form a cycle like growth and decay, or like the ever-adaptable Daoist binary of *yin* and *yang* (Burik 2019, 365). Furthermore, it helps to clarify the divide between contemporary metaphysics and ancient Chinese philosophy that Heidegger is picking up on. Put simply, contemporary thought focusses on *logos*, or a metaphysical principle that grounds Being.

Though Heidegger continues to apply this term to his own work, his understanding of *logos* shifts alongside his appreciation of ancient Chinese philosophy to become more synonymous with a primary unifying movement of clearing or saying (Burik 2017 33-4).

This processual appreciation of Being subverts the metaphysical desire to concretize entities within-the-world, which is a very common talking point in comparative literature on Heidegger and Daoism. Lin Ma, for example, refers to Heidegger's "exacerbating worry about *Ge-stell*" as the reason he draws on Daoism to help enact another beginning of Western thinking (Ma 2006, 166). She argues that Daoist texts represented the hope of redirecting the misguided historicity that Heidegger diagnosed in Western thought (Ma 2006, 166). Although she does not explore this wrong turn in terms of what I called the historical sense of errancy, Ma does discuss the implication that Heidegger's Daoist references have on this errant historicity, and goes on to provide critically important resources for interpreting the accuracy of such references.

In the course of her analysis, Ma breaks down each of Heidegger's references to the *dao* and points out the comparative flaws in his interpretations. Her main conclusion is that the idea that *dao* could not genuinely serve as a *leitword* for Heidegger in the same sense that the German word *Weg* (way) does. As she puts it, "Only when interpreted in the particular manner, or thought in its proper nature as Heidegger may ascribe to it, can *dao* be said to refer to *Weg*. *Weg* is the standard against which *dao* is measured. This is because *Weg* is the primary and grounding word-thing in Heidegger's thought" (Ma 2006, 150). Much of Ma's criticism arises from the bluntness with which Heidegger applies these terms, such as when he interprets 'nothingness' (*wu*) in *Daodejing* chapter 11 as an abstract metaphysical notion of 'non-existence', rather than the simple not-being-present that it originally indicated (Ma 2006, 161-2). When I mentioned these sections above, I brought the same metaphysical notion to them, as my intent is to focus on

Heidegger's interpretation of these passages. As such, I have no reason to disagree with Ma on these points, and I am heavily indebted to her for providing such thorough translations of Daoist and Heideggerian interplay, but I am also in favour of Edgar Lyra's criticism of Ma's project. He agrees that Heidegger's application of Daoist work inevitably pushes Laozi and Zhuangzi into a foreign commentary on metaphysics, but he argues that our attitude toward this should be positive because Heidegger does this in order to move away from the "gravitational nucleus of metaphysics" that is so dominant in contemporary thought (Lyra 2014, 437-8). As he puts it, "Laozi ... seemed to Heidegger to be particularly attentive to the ontological dignity of 'nonbeing'" and as such, Heidegger's "interest in Daoism ... can be seen as an inseparable part of his effort to reopen the question of Being" (Lyra 2014, 438). Bret Davis makes this even clearer when he notes that

it is highly significant that Heidegger's interest in the Daoist classics is rekindled precisely during his turn away from understanding the relation between human being and being in violent and voluntaristic terms, namely in terms of a militant bringing to stand of the overpowering onslaught of being, and his concomitant turn toward understanding this relation in terms of a non-willful releasement (*Gelassenheit*) to a letting-be (*Seinlassen*) (Davis 2020, 167)

On this view, Daoist works are juxtaposed with Heidegger's own in order to reveal a distinction between the onticizing tendencies of the willing human being, and an open region which, while still bearing some marks of the will, is responsive to the movement of way and the mystery of Being.

But as we have seen, the world-moving 'way' is articulated both as an openness to a fundamental errancy, and as a saying which brings forth the essential totality of language that is

therein disclosed (May 2005, 37). It might be argued that if language is so central to Heidegger's work, it prioritizes a bringing-forth of saying that does not highlight the null ground of errancy. But recent scholarship has pointed out that language features the same double movement into concealment and unconcealment that we see in errancy and the way. It is tacitly acknowledged in Heidegger's work that language breaks off where the possibility of saying the world begins, and as such, language remains 'grounded in silence' (Davis 2020, 174). This could be partially due to the fact that the open region to which the movement of way belongs cannot be captured by representational understanding, as is attested to by the Guide in *Country Path Conversations* (Heidegger 2016, 73/G112). This inability is also reflected in Lao-Zhuang Daoist texts, such as the first verse of the *Daodejing* in which Laozi famously calls the *dao* mysterious and unnamable (Laozi 2001, 14). As such, it seems that even at the level of *Logos* and the 'call' of Being, Heidegger has surrounded the subject of our inquiry in an unarticulated region of errancy. This region, when allowed to serve its role in concealing, uncannily escapes representational understanding, but also gives light to the clearing of primary words like '*Weg*'. In my view, this conclusion is signaled quite clearly in Heidegger's asides to Daoist texts, and the manifest undercurrent of errancy that it signals should be pointed out as explicitly as possible throughout Heidegger's own project.

7) Errancy in the Way as Lostness

It is my belief that the term most emblematic of the twofold errancy in the way is 'lostness.' As we have seen already, the term 'way' does not implicitly carry this connotation. Our common use of 'way' harbours the assumption that the myriad ways of the world could each be 'found', or traced by ontic maps, despite Heidegger's denial of this (Heidegger 1971a, 92). But in reality, these ways are fundamentally 'lost', and the further we move from the comforts of metaphysical

enframing, the more obvious this sense of lostness will become. This is literally manifested in *Country Path Conversations* (1944-5), where the encroaching darkness of night serves as an analogy for a departure from metaphysical thinking and the growing feeling of lostness that accompanies it. The characters come up against the realization that the true notion of way (in the sense of the movement of Being) is not fully articulable and escapes representational language. The way exceeds human understanding because it is neither solely a human movement in which we send ourselves along a path, nor is it a completely passive arising of the world that relies on Being alone. The truth is in the middle; the way arises out of the interchange between these two poles. As Massimiliano Lacertosa puts it, “we neither create a world *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) nor are we totally determined by it. Quite the reverse: we walk in the middle of these two extremes; we discover a place by making space for it in our conceptions” (Lacertosa 2019, 116). Our task is not to bend the unfolding of the world to our will, as we do in logocentric metaphysics, but to create the tranquil emptiness of letting-be wherein we might hear the call of Being. Like seeing a star slowly appear as the sun sets, we must embrace the gathering darkness of our own way-making in order to allow the light of Being, itself, to shine forth.

As we saw earlier, the problem with errancy in the historical sense is that it effaces and forgets this possibility. It passes over the manner in which the open region arises, instead treating the way as something in which Being is set upon by the human will and enframed along concrete paths. In doing so, it is unable to cultivate a state of ‘releasement’ in which the human being listens and responds to the way-making of Being, therein opening themselves to the genuine possibility of finding a way into truth. But if this middle-voiced way-making is possible, it will still not be like a ‘right path’ that we have finally found. To imagine that such a path exists independently from the mutual way-making of the human being and Being itself would be to

fundamentally misunderstand the way. In reality, Heidegger's way is one that is shot through with *lostness*. Human beings find themselves on a path that arises out of a withdrawing, errant movement, and no alternative paths exist independently such that they could be *found*. Instead, the only solution to this problem is to cease our incessant 'sending' along various ways and reevaluate how ways arise in the first place. Heidegger calls us to realize the historical contingency and limited perspective of our contemporary mode of revealing; to see the multiple senses in which the way is errant, and in doing so, to release ourselves into a state where we can listen and respond to the way-making movement of Being itself. In other words, we must come face to face with the fundamental *lostness* of the way, and redefine what the active process of 'finding our way' would even look like.

One way Heidegger describes this new middle-voiced way-making is *Eignis*, or a "restful event of peaceful owning whereby one comes to a proper understanding of Being by letting oneself be owned by Being, and Being achieves the proper mode of disclosing by letting its voice be heard by one" (Ma and van Brakel 2014, 531). As Lacertosa says, any such new understanding of the unfolding way would be closer to a Daoist sense of 'becoming' than it would be to any foundational substance or traditional conception of Being (Lacertosa 2019, 116). If we could open ourselves to such an understanding, even those metaphysical notions of Being would reveal themselves to be nothing more than the errant runoff of the great hidden stream of Being. They would be, using my terminology, historical products of the errancy of the way. Overcoming these would not imply that the way was no longer fundamentally errant, but simply that our way-making is no longer dominated by an errant mode of revealing that 'sets upon' Being, but instead begins with an openness to the call of Being; a withdrawing in which the errancy and the unconcealment of the world can arise between the human being and Being itself.

8) Conclusion and Application

Despite the fact that Heidegger directs his reader towards a new way of thinking that avoids the pitfalls of metaphysics and Platonic philosophy (Heidegger 1977c, 378), it is hotly debated to what extent human beings can really leave these errant ways behind. This debate begins with the German word Heidegger sometimes uses to signal the letting-go of these metaphysical paths; *Verwindung*, which has been translated as overcoming, surmounting, wrestling-with, surpassing, or even restoration (Mehta 1967, 438, 473). This term seems to indicate that, in some sense, philosophy must be overcome, or perhaps even abandoned, as Heidegger affirms that it has become entwined with metaphysical enframing (Rae 2013, 240). Philosophy has become so committed to the idea that Being is synonymous with presence that it fails to cultivate the proper openness to Being, instead prioritizing the concrete category of ‘actuality’ (Rae 2013, 245). But a debate has sprung up around the possibility of such a ‘meditative’ mode of thought.

Because Heidegger is known to critique the act of willing as implicated in the larger problem of metaphysics (Heidegger 1975f, 117), it is confusing how one is supposed to *enter into* the state of releasement that might ‘overcome’ metaphysics. It seems that if meditative thinking relies on an act of the *will* to *choose* this mode of thought and *enact* the overturning of metaphysics, then meditative thinking remains contaminated by the same willing which gave rise to metaphysics in the first place (Rae 2013, 250). However, the alternative is that Heidegger’s ‘releasement’ requires a complete absence of willing, and an arbitrary reliance on Being to bring about this new type of thought (Rae 2013, 251). This is further complicated by the fact that overcoming metaphysical thinking is not merely a process of openness, but also a process involving the *realization* of technological enframing itself. This realization is presumably also a process tied up in willing (Rae 2013, 252). Gavin Rae provides a third possibility, arguing that

Heidegger's *non-willing* releasement *is* actually an active type of willing, but that its metaphysical implications fall away once meditative thinking is achieved (Rae 2013, 254). He argues for this by appealing to Heidegger's concept of the 'trace' – a remnant of metaphysical thought that remains in the thinking that overcomes philosophy.

Rae's argument is that this reconstructed trace of willing will be important in the "transformative movement from metaphysical to meditative thinking," but that after this transition, "all forms of willing will be extinguished from meditative thinking, thereby ensuring meditative thinking does not impose itself on being, but stands in the clearing of being to let being be to reveal 'itself' as it is" (Rae 2013, 254). This is one conclusion in a much broader body of literature, but I believe it relates nicely to my project because it retains the sense that letting-be is not solely passive or active. As we have seen, letting-be involves the rethinking of the passive/active schema. One could reframe the above concerns about willing as a worry that humanity's prioritization of self-assertion, sending, or, perhaps even, 'attempting-to-find' the new way of thinking could not possibly give rise to an open releasement, as this releasement requires the 'overcoming' of such projects. But this would be to misunderstand Heidegger's problem with metaphysics and technical enframing. As we saw earlier, technology is an essential mode of revealing that makes entities present in a certain light. Heidegger is not concerned by the fact that humans *can* 'set upon' Being in this way, as this is merely an aspect of the inalienable openness of our ontological errancy. Instead, Heidegger is concerned by the fact that today, technology and metaphysics have gained ontological *priority* over every form of thinking. In the context of my paper, the idea that a trace of this metaphysical past must be taken up in order to 'overcome' metaphysics is not in conflict with Heidegger's work. The 'overcoming' that would result would not be a denial of errancy in either of its senses, as though arriving at the new

way of thinking would be like finding a new region in which the open space of errancy is no longer a factor. Such a region could not exist. Furthermore, to seek such a region out would only perpetuate the way of technical enframing, as you would be forgetting the essential openness of the unfolding of the way. In short, any willing required for Heidegger's releasement is not a problem because it is a willing that is aware of the manner of its own arising. Willing is not a problem as long as it wills non-willing; as long as it withdraws in order to remain open to the call of Being, and then engages in way-making as a mutual response to this call.

One question that this conclusion raises, which remains unanswered in Rae's paper, is how this meditative thinking removes or neutralizes the human will and its metaphysical trace. I think that a proper attentiveness to the inherent 'lostness' of the movement of Being could also supplement this lack. If the reader sees the flow of Being as a fundamentally lost movement – one in which a correct path cannot be 'found,' and in which we are called instead to reexamine how the way arises – then it would not be unbelievable that the human will and its metaphysical trace would be extinguished in this way. A true open comportment to the clearing of Being would reveal the historical contingency of enframing, and as such, the extinguishment of enframing would entail a perspectival shift, rather than a full ontological shift barring the human from returning to this errant path, which seems impossible. In this way, the perspective of open comportment might see the human will like a spotlight in a dark field. Its lighting of objects would overpower the natural flow of unconcealment arising from Being itself, and instantiate an artificial spectre of lighting and concealing that is primarily concerned with appearances. This metaphysically motivated lighting would be intent to reveal the grounds of the beings it examines, but it would overlook the very interplay of revealing and concealing that it utilizes to examine them. To step outside of metaphysical thought and look at this scene from an open

perspective would be like watching a person shining a flashlight around a field at night, claiming that soon she would know everything about this world by looking at the objects that her light captures. From the perspective of meditative thinking, this would be comical, because even if she looks at every single object, she will still have completely missed the incorruptible darkness that follows her at every turn. Her preoccupation with the appearances that she *finds* will completely pass over the arising of the way itself; the interplay of concealment and unconcealment coming from both human way-making and the way-making of Being itself. In short, this metaphysician would be seeking to *find* a region, without realizing that it is *lost* at its core.

This lostness is where I have arrived in my project to build a way into the way. Perhaps this seems like an impossible conclusion, as the way is all around us. As we saw earlier, Heidegger says that “All is way” (Heidegger 1971a, 92). If this is true, how could the arising of everything we encounter be fundamentally *lost*? In order to understand this conclusion, we must first understand that the manner in which we *find* the world is fundamentally errant. As long as the dominant manner of thinking prioritizes the human activity of enframing, then Being will remain unheard and our way-making will be dominated by errancy. On the one hand, this errancy is fundamental to the way, insofar as it ontologically represents the openness of Being. On the other hand, this open region has a historically contingent tendency to efface its own openness, forget the manner of its arising, and therein seek out truth along paths where it cannot be found. Since this situation calls for a reevaluation of the very project of ‘finding’ the way, and a new understanding of the arising of the way itself, it seems reasonable to say that a certain ‘lostness’ is fundamental to Heidegger’s way. In this sense, I believe that lostness brings out the twofold errancy in Heidegger’s work, and clarifies its place in his concept of the way, which is arguably his most central idea.

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