

ON DWELLING HEIDEGGERIAN ALLUSIONS TO ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOLOGY

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ABSTRACT. This paper investigates the phenomenon of dwelling in Heidegger's thought. This endeavour is undertaken in the context of accounting for his take on the gathering of the fourfold (earth, sky, mortals, and divinities) in things amongst which we dwell. It is also situated in relation to his existential analytic of *Dasein*, his reflections on death, time, and space. This line of inquiry is moreover placed within the broader constellation of the published recollections of Heidegger's thought in connection with his meditations on the unfolding of the essence of modern technology and its en-framing, his contemplation of the origins of the work of art, and the way these aspects connect with his call for re-thinking dwelling anew in terms of what can be seen as an ontological response to the questions of the meaning, truth, and place of being.

Keywords: *Art, Dasein, Death, Dwelling, Space, Technology*

BY WAY OF A PRELUDE: ON DWELLING

The aim behind this paper is to investigate the phenomenon of *dwelling* in Martin Heidegger's thinking, while situating it within the broader constellation of the various manifestations of his thought.¹ Such line of inquiry addresses salient features of the architectural and topological significance of rethinking dwelling as a prolegomenon to meditating on architectural phenomenology and its conditions of possibility as a domain of philosophizing, which can be situated at the interface between philosophical thinking and architectural thought.

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¹ This is particularly based on rethinking selected elements of my earlier article: Nader El-Bizri, "Being at Home among Things: Heidegger's Reflections on Dwelling", *Environment, Space, Place* 3 (2011), pp. 47–71. This present paper is also informed by a postgraduate phenomenology seminar that I taught at the University of Lincoln and by a sixth year design studio project that I supervised at the same university in the Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design.

To reflect on the phenomenological approaches to architecture, to the built and natural environment, or to embodiment in lived experiences, and the various aspects of spatial humanities, we have not restricted our analyses in this present paper to surveying the manifestations of phenomenological motifs within architectural theoretic discourses or critical commentaries on design. Our aim is rather humbler and more defined in scope in terms of undertaking focused pathways in inquiry to examine the engagement with architectural phenomena from Heideggerian perspectives.

Meditations on phenomena associated with dwelling have been pivotal to many humanistic disciplines, especially when linked to the investigation of space and the nature of place, and in examining their architectonic and topological characteristics, or the situational aspects of the cultural and societal interactions within architectural and geographic locales. Whilst such inquiries are becoming abundant in the context of spatial humanities, the investigation of their metaphysical bearings and ontological underpinnings is still hitherto rather rare. This is manifestly the case with the little attention given to addressing the ontological question concerning the essence of dwelling.

To commit to the close textual reading that our inquiry necessitates, we need to account for fundamental leitmotifs in Heidegger's thinking about dwelling, even though this present paper may also be situated within the literature of architectural humanities and the *philosophy* of architecture.

The phenomenological approaches to architecture and to the notion of lived space would be mediated in this context by inquiring about the ontological orientations in Heidegger's take on dwelling. This turn in thinking aims at transcending the rather facile or dilettante manners by which the theories of architects have in most cases approached such matter to be thought, be it at the level of architectural thinking, design practice, pedagogy, critique, or curating. Thinking about dwelling within architectural circles in quasi-phenomenological ways did not always attend with thoughtfulness to the intrinsic intricacies of Heidegger's ontological pathways and the integrity of his thought.²

² The interest in phenomenology amongst erudite architects, be it academicians or intellectually-orientated practitioners, goes back to the first decades of the second half of the twentieth century. This was most notably witnessed with the oeuvre of the Norwegian architect and scholar, Christian Norberg-Schulz in his *Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), then in the *Concept of Dwelling* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993). More recently, a wider reception of phenomenological approaches to architecture has been embodied in the works of the Finnish architect and theorist, Juhani Pallasmaa, as set in *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (New York: John Wiley, 2005), and in *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto, 2001). Various phenomenological influences can be witnessed in the writings and practices of academic architects, such as: Alberto Pérez-Gómez

To redress this lack, we turn our gaze herein towards Heidegger's meditations on *Wohnen* and *Aufenthalt* as originally set in the lecture he delivered at the Darmstadt symposium in August 1951, and later gathered in the epistle: "*Bauen Wohnen Denken*" ("Building Dwelling Thinking").³

A Heideggerian account of dwelling presupposes an ontological elucidation of the essence of "things". This matter was addressed in Heidegger's lectures of 1935 and 1936 in Freiburg and Zürich, respectively entitled: "*Das Ding*" ("The Thing") and "*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*" ("The Origin of the Work of Art").⁴ Thinking about the essential nature of things is itself mediated by way of considering the unfolding of the essence of modern technology (*das Wesen der modernen Technik*) in terms of what Heidegger referred to as "en-framing" (*Ge-Stell*).⁵ Such questions also lead to rethinking dwelling in connection with the unified event that Heidegger evoked in the 1950s under the appellation: "the fourfold" ("*Das Geviert*"),⁶ namely: "earth and sky, divinities and

and Marco Frascari in Canada, Kenneth Frampton and Steven Holl in the United States, Adam Caruso and Peter Zumthor in Switzerland, Dalibor Vesely and Peter Carl in the United Kingdom, and amongst others like David Leatherbarrow, Robert Mugerauer, Adam Sharr etc. Despite these interests and activities, the architectural engagements with phenomenology are rarely taken to the level of philosophical specialism or to advanced conceptual and methodological expertise. Rather, the architectural handling of phenomenology remains on the whole fragmentary in its adaptive appropriation of leitmotifs from the legacies of variegated phenomenologists. The impact of such practices also made its way into architectural pedagogy, in the domains of theory, history and critique of architecture, with some effects being attested in studio jury panels. Nonetheless, the interest in philosophy within architectural circles goes beyond phenomenology, and tends at times to be idiosyncratic in imprudently blending phenomenology with distinct traditions in modern "Continental Thought". At times certain interests in architectural circles arose around figures such as Louis Althusser, Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida. They also appeal to the writings of a new generation of theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Andrew Benjamin, Edward Casey, Karsten Harries, Peter Eisenman, Daniel Libeskind, and Bernard Tschumi. However, these architectural theorizing attempts are not grounded in their variegated commentaries on phenomenology or on deepened serious readings from the works of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, or Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske Verlag, 1954), pp. 145–162; Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 145–161; Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 2nd edition, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), pp. 347–363.

⁴ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–87; Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–212.

⁵ Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–44; Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 311–341.

⁶ Heidegger uses herein an antique appellation that surpasses the monad of monotheism, the Platonic dyad, or the triad of Trinitarian thought. His "fourfold" hints idiomatically at an expression that is derived from the ancient tradition of Galen in medicine, which evoked the correlative schema of the four humours, the corresponding four temperaments, the elements in nature, the seasons, the qualities (dryness, wetness, coolness, hotness), the accompanying dietetics, the associated bodily organs, the cardinal signs, the winds, etc. This also embodies the antique macrocosm-microcosm analogy. I discussed this elsewhere in: Nader El-Bizri, "Microcosm and Macrocosm: A Tentative Encounter between Graeco-Arabic Philosophy and Phenomenology," in *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006), pp. 3-23.

mortals" (*"Erde und Himmel, die Göttlichen und die Sterblichen"*).

Heidegger's thinking about the fourfold is ontological and not based on sciences such as: geology and geography (studying *earth*), meteorology and astronomy (observing the *sky*), anthropology, biology, sociology and psychology (examining *mortals*), theology (contemplating the arcana of *divinities*). The ontological character of dwelling in terms of gathering the fourfold into their essential oneness carries its spatial significance (*Raumbedeutungen*) in terms of attending to the question of being (*Seinsfrage*). Dwelling transcends architectural design and the making of place through the arts and sciences of building construction; despite the fact that Heidegger's thinking about dwelling takes place in the context of post-war reconstruction in Europe.⁷ Our thinking in this regard should aim at tracing back the phenomenon of dwelling into that domain to which *everything that is* belongs; namely to reflecting on the question of being in a manner that is unlike our quotidian ways of accounting for everyday phenomena. Things amongst which we dwell admit the coalescence of the fourfold (*Das Geviert*) as an essential singular event that gathers earth, sky, divinities, and mortals into a primal unified oneness.

MORTALS

To grasp the essence of dwelling we ought to think about the meaning, truth, and place of the fourfold as they are gathered into their original togetherness. We start with the being that inquires about its own being insofar that it is a *mortal*. In *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* the mortal being that inquires about its own being is designated by the individuating expression: "*Dasein*" (namely "being-there" / "being-here" in the world);⁸ or what Jean Beaufret rendered as: "*être-là*" qua "being-here" or specifically as "*être-le-là*" qua "being-the-here"; i.e. *Dasein* as "*hereness*".⁹ *Dasein* is the being that is concerned about its being and death as a mortal,¹⁰ which understands itself in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself. Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) is *concerned being* that reflects on the possibility of its not-being,¹¹ and I would add, of the non-being too of loved ones who are brought into the preserve

⁷ The Marshall Plan (European Recovery Program, ERP), 1948–1952.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 334–335.

⁹ Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome II: Philosophie moderne* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1973), p. 51; Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome IV: Le chemin de Heidegger* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1985), pp. 113–115.

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), p. 12; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press), p. 10.

¹¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

of our care. The mortal, insofar that it is a being who reflects on the possibility of its own death, is concerned about its being and the meaning, truth, and place of its being. Ontologically, this manner of thinking is not letting the question of *Dasein's* being fall into oblivion (*Vergessenheit*). In being-in-the-world *Dasein* is destined towards-its-end. As a mortal, my being-in-the-world is that of being-toward-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*) as the possible annihilation of all my existential possibilities.¹² *Dasein* is destined to run-ahead-of-itself towards a *futural* (*zukünftig*) past that is most certain, whilst being most indeterminate in its happening. *Dasein* has an unfinished quality since it only reaches its wholeness (*Gänze*) in death. Dwelling is thus the mode of being-in-the-world of my *Dasein* as a mortal. However, this does not entail that I darken my earthly dwelling by blindly staring toward the end.¹³ Rather, *Dasein* is always already dying in being-toward-its-end.¹⁴ *Dasein* is timing and spacing in being-ahead-of-itself as already destined to annihilation. As Emmanuel Levinas argued in this regard: if death "is" you are "not" and *vice versa*: "*si tu es, elle n'est pas...si elle est, tu n'es pas*", namely, that there lies an abyss separating the present from death: "*il y a un abîme entre le présent et la mort*".¹⁵

Levinas' words become whining when we listen to what Maurice Blanchot puts forward in *L'instant de ma mort*.¹⁶ Therein he notes that one is prevented from dying by death itself ("*empêché de mourir par la mort même*"), whereby one is dead and immortal at the same time (*mort-immortel*). As if an external [bodily] death clashes with an inner mortality ("*comme si la mort hors de lui pouvait désormais que se heurter à la mort en lui*"), whereby an affirmation of being alive is opposed by an assertion of one's own death ("*Je suis vivant ... Non, tu es mort!*"). The moment of death is an instance of an extraordinary lightness in being.

How *Dasein* takes death as the horizon of disclosing the manner it conducts its being-in-the-world, which becomes a basis for being-itself, being-with-others cum dwelling. In its authentic mode of being-in-the-world, *Dasein* does not shrink back from itself in fear from the nothing of its being-toward-death.¹⁷ *Dasein* is thusly resolute in facing up to the dread of its destining towards an end beyond the busyness of everydayness (*Alltäglichkeit*) and the dealings that comfort its angst about the nothing in which its being is held. *Dasein* has the *courage to be*, which transcends soldiery fortitude by way of a directed wise wilfulness. The mortal wonders about the meaning,

¹² Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), pp. 594–595.

¹³ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, op. cit., pp. 352–353.

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., p. 254; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., p. 235.

¹⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), pp. 59, 73.

¹⁶ Maurice Blanchot, *L'instant de ma mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), pp. 9, 11, 15, 17.

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., p. 185; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., p. 174.

truth and place of being, and ultimately looks upon the abyss of its nonbeing as an individuated being, and in the “loneliness of an anchorite”.¹⁸ *Dasein* is brought back from its falling prey (*Verfallen*) to the public domain of the neuter “they” (*Das Man*) and of being lost in it.¹⁹ The non-worldly character of such nothingness lets an ontological difference emerge that is unlike any being. In thinking about the nothing, the *being* of beings (*Sein des Seienden*) is thought as being ontologically different from all.²⁰ The question remains: “*why are there beings at all rather than nothing?*”

The nothing figures in relation to being by saying that “from the nothing comes nothing” (*ex nihilo nihil fit*), or theologically that “from nothing comes created beings” (*ex nihilo fit ens creatum*), or that “from the nothing all beings as beings come to be” (*ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit*); and it is the latter that solicits Heidegger’s reflection on the belonging of the nothing to being.²¹

TEMPORALITY

By running ahead of itself in anticipation, *Dasein*’s possibility is impossibility. *Dasein* is time (*Zeit*) in being temporal in its destining towards its most certain and yet indeterminate existential end.²² Temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is grasped herein as the horizon of the *existenziale Analytik des Daseins* (section 24, *Sein und Zeit*). The finitude of our time gains its meaning by way of dedicating the little we have of it to others, or to collective projects, and doing so with care, in toil, sacrifice, and labour, in the fear of killing or being killed, in the anguish about the loss in bereavement of loved ones. In the dread from the nothing in which we are held as mortals, we become restless about the time that passes away despite the newness it promises as a future. In the dreadfulness of experiencing the *nihil*, a gaping hole opens up in being that swallows the world, that hammers meaning and with it the ideas by virtue of which our words hook into worldly things. All becomes slippery and unveiled in its being as that which is held out into the nothing. The angst that the dread from the workings of the *nihil* brings about is subsumed in Heidegger’s allusions in the interpretation of *Sein* by way of his own grasp of Nietzsche’s “*der Wille zur Macht*” (will to power) and “*die Ewige Wiederkunft des Gleichen*” (eternal recurrence of the same). These are projected attempts to think about what has

¹⁸ To evoke herein the theological pathway of Paul Tillich’s *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1954), pp. 30-31.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 191; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 362–363.

²¹ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–110.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Begriff der Zeit*, ed. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 10–14.

independence from the time that passes away and is annihilated. This solicits revengefulness and repulsion from the passing away of time, by willing everything as an *eternity* of sameness in all becoming (to let rest happen in motion, the eternal touching the temporal, and bringing together into oneness the two ontological poles of Pre-Socratic wisdom). Such outlooks are not foreign to what announces itself through the unfolding of the essence of modern technology as the advent of the age of the rotating mechanical power in the reproduced recurrence of the same, and in the blanket modelling of reality in mathematical terms.²³

Thought becomes remembering—expecting across generations of mortals in the three modalities of time: of past ancestors that *have been*, of present contemporaries we *live with*, and of future descendants who are *yet to come* in posterity. Such state of affairs can take an architectonic sense in terms of the manner traces of mortals are left in stone, in wood, in codices, and ultimately in the emergence of what we collect in archives of their belongings, and of edifices they leave behind for us to dwell in or cede to ruin.

Archiving becomes in itself an art that has its own science, which makes its way into shaping certain modes of thinking in connection with scholarship (in receiving the classics; documenting, safekeeping, cataloguing them). The passage of time is seen as a demarcating incommensurability between ideas across the ages. This pushes custodians of archiving in academia to approach the handed down over manuscripts with a penchant for documentation, whereby commentary becomes narrowly set in its contextual determinants to the point that it cannot be interpreted hermeneutically in connection with posterity.²⁴ The archives become anchors that resist the time that passes away, and hence, for mortals, they open up a region that receives their trace and safeguards it posthumously. This archiving can become architectural, through structures that retain the trace of their builders and of their dwellers across history; from civilizations that come down to us through the ruins of their built environment, as deep in time as ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The trace can become a constellation of textual fragments (like the *Epic of Gilgamesh* coming down the ages over five millennia). Such relics anchor history despite the time that passes away. The historical trace that is extant can be indeed millennial

²³ Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 105–108.

²⁴ I discussed elsewhere the dominance of archival scholarship in approaching pre-modern intellectual and material-culture history of classical Islamic civilizations, which censures attempts to rethink the philosophical legacies and artworks within comparative frameworks that take into account the hermeneutic approaches to classics and handed down over artifacts and relics from the past: Nader El-Bizri, “The Labyrinth of Philosophy in Islam”, *Comparative Philosophy* 1.2 (2010), pp. 3–23; Nader El-Bizri, “Le renouvellement de la *falsafa*?”, *Les Cahiers de l’Islam* 1 (2014), pp. 17–38.

and hence approximates the eternal as it touches the temporal;²⁵ though not in the sense of an “eternity” that the ancients conceived in connection with the Divine, or what Nietzsche evoked through an eternal return of the same. For such hints at *the eternal* signal what Rilke called for as: letting Gods emerge from things by which we dwell!

EN-FRAMING

Angst from the time that passes away, from a *nihil* that annihilates within being, also calls from within its essence for safeguarding the time of others. Do not hinder, obstruct or neglect the existential possibilities of mortals. Such sentiment, as a call of conscience, is set against the horizon of the being of others toward-death. It is the calling for being at peace with-one-another in our stay amidst things, as a basis for compassion, mercy, dignity, empathy, in which unfurls charity, hospitality, parenting, and dwelling.²⁶

To safeguard one’s own possibilities, and to shelter and spare those of others against the finitude of time in their being-in-the-world as mortals, calls for not being harassed, ordered about, or hindered. Albeit, the eventfulness of certain happenings hold sway upon us in appropriative, challenging, and ordering manners that are not simply of our own mere doing. According to Heidegger, such destining is brought our way through the unfolding of the essence of technology that is nothing technological *per se* (*das Wesen der Technick ist nichts Technisches*).²⁷ This state of affairs sets upon us

²⁵ We explored this notion of the coming to a togetherness of the eternal and the temporal in connection with the thought of Kierkegaard in: Nader El-Bizri, “Variations ontologiques autour du concept d’angoisse chez Kierkegaard”, in *Kierkegaard notre contemporain paradoxal*, ed. Nicole Hatem (Beirut: Université Saint-Joseph, 2013), pp. 83–95.

²⁶ This contrasts with the claims made by Levinas in his critique of the existential analytic of *Dasein* in *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*), which is seen by him as being conducted from the standpoint of affirming the impersonal and lonely character of *Dasein* (*le Dasein esseulé*) that stands in a relation of “side to side” (*côte à côte*) with others, around a common project, theme, or goal, instead of being in a “face-to-face” relationship with others. According to Levinas, this constitutes the meaning of Heidegger’s notion of “*Miteinandersein*”, as being reciprocally with one another: “*être réciproquement l’un avec l’autre*” (Levinas, *Le temps et l’autre*, *op. cit.*, 18–19, 69, 88–89). Following the line of thinking about giving one’s own limited time to others, a belief and resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) in turning impossibility into a possibility also underpins the convictions of those who destine themselves to voluntary self-sacrifice and utter altruism; what the ancients named: “martyrdom”, as testament and witness. This outlook unto death may also take place as suicide in receiving being as a burden in living with guilt, helpless, or hopelessness that contemplates self-annihilation in being. This also contrasts with Levinas’ view of our indebtedness to others. I addressed this in: Nader El-Bizri, “Uneasy Meditations after Levinas”, *Studia Phaenomenologica* 6 (2006), pp. 293–315; Nader El-Bizri, “Being-towards-death: On Martyrdom and Islam”, *Cristianismo nella storia: Ricerche storiche esegetiche teologiche* 27 (2006), pp. 249-279.

²⁷ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

the most dominant, all pervasive, and expansionist mastery over the revealing of truth (*das Entbergen*), which frames beings by way of calculative commands as: objectless energies or power reservoirs; namely, what Heidegger named: “*Bestand*” (standing-reserve).²⁸ Correct *truths* are disclosed within the specificities of calculating parameters that frame them and are allotted to them. The unfolding of the essence of modern technology is co-entangled with the nihilism of an erupting struggle over the domination of earth in which beings are reportable in the manner they get framed and challenged as standing-reserve, and are henceforth made answerable in a particular way to how they are interrogated.

En-framing is an event that overwhelms and subjugates all other possible ways of revealing truth (*Wahrheit*) as *Unverborgenheit* qua *alētheia*, whilst challenging forth, commanding, ordering, and harassing all beings with demands to supply answers, energies, powers, stockpiles that are readied and on-call. Such en-framing (*Ge-Stell*) appears as a danger (*die Gefahr*) to the effacement of the possibilities of dwelling through sheer manipulability. The mysterious *coming to presence* and the uncanny *withdrawal into absence* of beings in their being as a movement from concealment into un-concealment, from unveiling to veiling, is forgotten, and hence, this state of affairs belongs to the metaphysical history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*) that is marked by an oblivion of the question of being (*Seinsfrage*). “The essence of technology comes to the light of day only slowly” ... “this day is the world’s night rearranged into merely technological day”.²⁹ We are not only forgetful of the *being* of beings in our ever distracted handling of *beings*, but more fundamentally we are oblivious of our remembrance in forgetting our oblivion.

Against the modes of revealing that are set at work by way of en-framing, Heidegger evokes other ways of bringing-forth (*Her-vor-bringen*) into presence, letting appear, un-veiling what is brought from concealment, through what the Greeks named: “*tekhnē*” and “*poiēsis*”.³⁰ This corresponds with the calling of the work of art as it unfolds from its origin through *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world as a mode of poetically dwelling on earth. Such call seeks to shelter the promise of resisting the mortals’ destiny of being chained to technology, and of being subject to the incessant demands that are made on our finite passing time. Sparing such hope of dwelling passes by way of fetching it home back into its essence; as when Heidegger evoked the verses of Hölderlin, that: “where danger is, there grows the saving

²⁸ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

²⁹ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³⁰ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 318, 335, 339.

power too”.³¹ Saving sets what is to be spared freely into its essence within the unfolding of its destiny; like it is the case with being freed into our own essence as mortals while at the same time being destined to death. In “*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*” (“The Essence of Truth”), Heidegger held that freedom consists of letting beings be in their disclosure by *releasing* them (*Gelassenheit*);³² and I would add, of doing so by letting them be-towards-death in peace. Freedom is thusly a mode of un-concealment that happens despite being chained by the overwhelming dominance of the orderings of en-framing.

ART/ARCHITECTURE

The space of freedom is opened up as a rift, a leeway, a clearing, a region that makes room for potential existential possibilities at the heart of our finitude in being destined to death. Dwelling is a sojourn in the world within the space of the free that is cleared in the region of destining. Freedom is not as such wilful or determined through a causal human willing (or an ethical-political sense of liberty or human rights). It is not a fate that compels, since what is as such belongs to en-framing. Freedom initiates revelation despite en-framing. Heidegger’s “*Riss*” (rift) carries spatial connotations in opening up a cleft or cleavage (*Die Zerklüftung*) that is a liminal gap in-between opposing regions, which nonetheless holds them together whilst at the same time setting them apart in separation. The *Riss* is not a mere rifting that ripped open; rather it is the intimacy in which opponents belong to one another, carrying them into the source of their unity and common ground. Hence, a rift-design draws together into unison, through outline, figure and *Gestalt*, by setting itself in the hardness of stone, in wood, in the trace of ink and lead.³³ In such shaping, the rift is emplaced by way of a particular mode of placing (*Stellen*) that is not that of en-framing (*Ge-Stell*), nor in being simply a tearing open that incises. It is in the rift that the region of the free is opened up by way of the gathering of the fourfold (earth-sky-mortals-divinities) in dwelling. This state of affairs also announces the calling of art, like when Walter Benjamin noted in his *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

³¹ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke, Band II* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1943), p. 190; Heidegger *Poetry, Language, Thought, op. cit.*, p. 118; Heidegger, *Basic Writings, op. cit.*, p. 333.

³² Heidegger, *Pathmarks, op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

³³ This brings to mind a visual manifestation in artistic/architectural terms of “splitting” of built forms, their incision and cutting, through the 1970s artwork of the New York avant-gardist Gordon Matta-Clark. The physicality of the trace as a form of demarcating a rift, even as a line traced on paper, is unattainable through the computer-aided graphics. I discuss this aspect elsewhere in: Nader El-Bizri, “*Paeraga – Carnet de Croquis: ‘ni oeuvre, ni hors d’oeuvre’*”, in *Recto-Verso: Redefining the Sketchbook*, eds. Nader El-Bizri with Angela Bartram and Douglas Gittens (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 27-38.

Reproduction) that “self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order” (*Ihre Selbst-entfremdung hat jenen Grad erreicht, der sie ihre eigene Vernichtung als ästhetischen Genuß ersten Ranges erleben läßt*).³⁴ Revealing lays claim herein to the arts most originally, and in the manner the poetical pervades revelation in the essential unfolding with exaltedness into the beautiful. In *Philokalia*, “beauty” is one of the names for the happening of truth as unveiling (and in Islam, the “Beautiful” [*al-Jamîl*] is one of the ninety-nine “Names of God”). Such orientation towards the arts is not determined by sheer aesthetic-mindedness or by conceptual-criticisms in the unfurling of artworks. In a similar vein, dwelling is not simply determined via the agencies of architectural design or the techniques of engineering, even if it presupposes in some of its manifestations the presence of a locale for gathering the fourfold (earth-sky-mortals-divinities) and giving their admittance a shelter. Art in its essence is a setting-upon-itself-into-work of the advent of truth that opens a region for its bestowal and granting, which points to poetic dwelling.

The calling of the arts is that of making-room by way of a clearing, a rift-leeway, which lets beings come into appearance and brings them forth into presence by way of un-concealment. Thinking holds sway as remembering (*Erinnerung*) and awaiting (*gewärtigen*) that lets what presences comes forth, rather than appropriating it to serve in manipulability the unfolding of the essence of modern technology. This calls for bringing the artwork into its essence as what arises out of itself, wherein beauty is revealed as one of the names for the happening of truth. Appealing again to Hölderlin, Heidegger meditates on the saying: “*Full of merit, yet poetically man dwells on this earth*”. Such promise of poetic dwelling is not restricted to the arts or artists, in the same way that dwelling is not housing, and that the essence of architecture is not architectural design and construction. Dwelling is the happening of an appropriating event as *Ereignis*, which gathers the fourfold into their primal and simple essential oneness as: *Erde und Himmel, die Göttlichen und die Sterblichen*.

THE THING

Dwelling is the gathering of the fourfold in the manner they are admitted and installed in things that we never abandon in our being-in-the-world. To dwell is to meditate on the question concerning the *thing* (*die Frage nach dem Ding*) that

³⁴ Refer to Sections II and IV of Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977); Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. Harry Zohn, in *Film Theory and Criticism*, eds. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 612–34.

coalesces the fourfold into their oneness. To spare the gathering of the fourfold, as a mode of letting dwelling be, is to set the four free into their own essence by way of admitting them and installing them in things that grant a cleared region for their gathering (*Gegenden des Gevierts*). We never abandon our stay with things in our being-in-the-world, even when they withdraw into the slippery regions of indifference and seem to no longer concern us (as when we suffer from dread, depression, apathy, slothfulness, ennui, etc.).

The “thingly” (*Dinglish*) character of a thing (*l’être-chose d’une chose... sa choséité*) should manifest how in its essence it is singular, individual, and a definite article closed unto itself: “*hors série dans la série*”.³⁵ This runs against the modern turn in our technological age, not only in its powers of mechanical reproduction, but also of its digitized reproducibility. Benjamin cautioned about this aspect from the onset of the twentieth century:

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence.

The presence of the original is a prerequisite of authenticity (*Das Hier und Jetzt des Originals macht den Begriff seiner Echtheit aus*), which is external to reproducibility. Such *authenticity* points to the “aura” of a work of art (without parapsychological connotations). This is brought forth from the uniqueness of an artwork as it is embedded in the fabric of art traditions (*Die Einzigkeit des Kunstwerks ist identisch mit seinem Eingebettetsein in den Zusammenhang der Tradition*) and their ritualistic cult-praxis within the specific situational locales of original uses.³⁶

Having considered some aspects of what pertains to thinking about the essence of an artwork, we have to bring such meditations to bear on the manner the work of art contributes to a gathering of the fourfold; namely of being on earth, receiving the sky, awaiting divinities and initiating mortals. It is herein that comes to presence the essence of dwelling. *Saving the earth* is nurturing, cultivating, nursing, constructing, erecting edifices, landscaping, making room, building that lets locales appear and allow for installing and admitting the fourfold as gathered in their essential oneness. *Receiving the sky* is heeding its clemency, the coming and going of nights and days, of cyclic seasons, the sending of rain, of sun light and heat, the

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), p. 229; see also my treatment of this question in “*Parerga – Carnet de Croquis: ‘ni oeuvre, ni hors d’oeuvre’*”, *art. cit.*

³⁶ Refer to Sections II and IV of Walter Benjamin’s *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, *op. cit.*, and his *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, *op. cit.*, pp. 612–34.

yielding of fruit and nourishment through harvest. *Initiating the mortals* passes by way of letting their being–toward–death becomes accepted with resoluteness as what belongs to their essence; albeit with anguish also over the welfare of those who are in our care should they survive us. The earth thus opens up a world of lived experiences, and shelters its traces, letting mortals dwell their earthly life under the heavens, and receiving mysterious insinuations from an *otherness* that is sustained in history and communal life by *naming divinity and awaiting its beckoning messengers*. The gathering of *Erde und Himmel, die Göttlichen und die Sterblichen* is thing–dependent, for it happens as an event of dwelling–amongst–things.

In *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Heidegger depicts in a manner that surpasses architectural description the ways by which a Greek temple stands on earth, in the middle of a rock–cleft valley. Therein, the temple encloses the figure of the godhead, whilst holding its ground against the violent storms raging in the heavens above it. In firmness, it towers in the sky and makes visible the expanse of its air. Situated in its locale, the temple gathers earth and sky, and lets mortals witness the battle of the lofty and holy with the flighty and unholy in insinuating signs of divinities. The temple reaches out beyond its design and erection as a built structure; it rather sets up a world whilst setting itself back unto earth as what shelters it. In its site, world and earth enter into strife; resting on earth, the world strives to surmount it, and yet earth reclaims it and conceals it, by safeguarding its revelation to posterity, as descending mortals that are yet unborn. World and earth raise each other into their essential natures in the intimacy of belonging to one another, despite the rift that separates them.³⁷

A painting, like one from Van Gogh’s serial pictorial depictions of shoes, is interpreted by Heidegger as being a rendering of the shoes of a German peasant woman,³⁸ and more essentially, as being a *thing* that gathers the fourfold. Heidegger tells us that German peasant women wore similar shoes in working the soil of the fields; accumulating toil and tenacity in everyday labour, and how these become revealed through the dark worn insides of Van Gogh’s depiction of the shoes, which carry a rugged heaviness with the dampness and richness of the soil that weathers their leather and soles. Heidegger sees how the loneliness of pathways in the fields as the evening descends stretch beneath the steps taken with these worn shoes. In them vibrates “the silent call of earth”, with quiet gifts it grants in the ripening grain, surging

³⁷ Heidegger, *Basic Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 167–181.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Basic Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 159–160. Heidegger’s claim was interrogated by Derrida in the context of contrasting it with the views of Meyer Shapiro, in terms of interpreting Van Gogh’s painting of the shoes, and the ontological significance of such accounts when thinking about the happening of truth in painting (Derrida, *La vérité en peinture, op. cit.*, p.289). This controversy, which took a political–economic tone, contested the restitution of the shoes to the *painter*, to a *peasant*, or to a *proletarian labourer*, or perhaps simply *imagined*.

from the desolation of wintry fields, and letting harvest come, by receiving the rain, cold, dryness and heat from the sky, in the grand comings and goings of seasons as they are modulated by the motions of heavenly spheres. The shoes are pervaded by uncomplaining and patient worries as to the certainty of bread, and to be joyful in having once more withstood want and hunger. Through all of this, thanks are given with gratitude for the providence that grants via its beckoning messengers. The artwork lets the essence of the shoes become manifest as what gathers the fourfold and lets them come into appearance, and this depicts for us what withdraws from our world in the epoch of en-framing.

The architectonics of things, be it artworks or architectural built forms, come again to the fore in the manner a bridge gathers the fourfold. Heidegger evokes the scene of an old bridge (in Heidelberg) that brings into togetherness earth and landscape around a meandering stream. The bridge rests with its heaviness upright, while being rooted in the bed of the stream. Its piers bear the load of arches that let the waters of the stream run their wandering course, gay and quiet in the summery seasons, while flooding in storm with the thaw of torrential waves in times of winter. The vaulted bridge swings with apparent lightness above the water despite its actual heaviness. It sets its roots upon the earth, and becomes solidly readied to receive the inclemency of the weather and fickleness of sky. This bridge grants mortals their way across the ages. It lets them linger or hastens their crossings from a bank to another; as if in their ways to and fro, they strive to surmount all that is common and unsound in their everydayness, and prepare themselves to stand before the haleness of divinities,³⁹ be it those in flight or whose signs of arrival are awaited.

Such gifts surpass the work of art and architecture. They are also disclosed via nature *per se*, by way of a simple outpouring of a drink, which is gathered from the water–spring wherein the rocks dwell in the dark slumber of earth, receiving rain, light and heat from the sky. The water–spring dwells in this marriage of earth and sky, in a gift of outpouring that quenches the thirst of mortals in their conviviality; refreshing, enlivening, and being consecrated as libations to be offered to the divinities, or turning into a stream that grants life to beings. Such gifting, which solicits thanking, dwells in the gathering of the fourfold, joining their remoteness in intimacies of nearness, through things that sustain the granting of *what grants in being*.⁴⁰

One also pictures an old German farmhouse at the edge of the Black Forest, built some two hundred years by the dwelling of peasants. It is placed on the wind-sheltered slope of the mountain, looking south, set among the meadows close to the spring and its gifting of water. Its wide overhanging shingle roof bears up the burden of snow, and reaching deep down, the chambers shield against the storms of long wintry nights. The altar is in the corner behind the community

³⁹ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 354–355.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–173.

table, making room for the hallowed places of childhood and the coffin “tree of the dead” (*Totenbaum*). Generations dwelled as such under one roof in a journey through time. This image evokes the mystique that surrounded Heidegger’s hut; the three-room cabin in Todtnauberg, at the edge of the Black Forest. He claimed an intellectual and emotional intimacy with it and its surroundings; even suggesting that it expressed itself through him almost without agency⁴¹.

The gathering of the fourfold also goes beyond the tectonic things as such in terms of happening through the sayings of poets as they are filled with songs and words of poesy (what for Heidegger cometh forth from Heraclitus, Hölderlin, Rilke).

DIVINITY

Our reflection on the gathering of the fourfold, through things that come to presence by way of nature, the work of art and architecture, and yet that surpass the materiality and corporeality of such *things* in becoming a site of dwelling, allows us to grasp the manner earth, sky and mortals are brought into their togetherness in their essential unity through things by which we dwell. The hardest to fathom in this regard is the manner by which mortals “await divinities”. For how could the phenomenon of the divine be graspable when posited from outside the sphere of historical outlooks on religion or any form of deism or theism? In what way do mortals await divinities in dwelling with—one—another upon earth, under the heavenly vault? It might well be the case that it is less obscure for us to think about being on earth, receiving sky, initiating mortals, since it is noticeably harder to meditate on “awaiting divinities”, especially if such a calling is undertaken from outside the sphere of religiosity.

The signs of the divine are revealed in Heidegger’s account of dwelling through what he takes to be “the beckoning messengers of the godhead”, those upon which mortals hold up what is un-hoped for, waiting for intimations of their coming and not mistaking the insinuations from the withdrawal of their weal, their absence in the depths of misfortune.⁴² The divinities are not simply in flight or withdrawn into self-refusal and concealment, for, have they all along never been, even in the comings and goings of godheads as apportioned in the sequence of civilizations? Albeit, as Heidegger enigmatically noted in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (*Contributions to Philosophy*; section 251): “a people are only a people when they receive their history as apportioned by the finding of their God”. So, are we to think of divinities from the site of communal life with its collective memory and sociology of religion? Or are we to think about the divine from the locale in which an existential angst erupts concerning the nothing into which we are held as mortals in our thrown destining to death?

⁴¹ See Adam Sharr, *Heidegger’s Hut* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

⁴² Heidegger, *Basic Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 351–352.

The nothing is not disclosed as a being (as noted in “*Was ist Metaphysik?*” / “What is Metaphysics?”); rather *Dasein* is essentially held out into the nothing in being itself *a being unlike beings*.⁴³ *Dasein* thinks with angst about the empty otherness of the nothingness of its future as absence in being destined to non-being. However, the nothing is not a pure privation, but rather, it presences as a negating annihilation within our being-in-the-world that is ontologically unlike any being. The nothing is felt in what I described much earlier as a gaping hole in my being that swallows the entire world. This is dying before death, and being prevented from dying by the yet coming death.

The oddness in thinking about “the nothing” is that its privative character does not veil the manner by which its “*is*” persists as what is mysteriously experienced as an annihilation from within being-in-the-world, and is itself uttered in language by saying “it *is* no-thing”. Within this “*is*” lies concealed everything that is most worthy of thought about being.⁴⁴ Absence would thusly provoke a mode of reflective thinking/questioning about presence. The annihilating character of the *nihil* in being-toward-death of mortals keeps the meaning, truth and place of being as thought-provoking questions worthy of thought. Death becomes a “shrine of the nothing” that harbours within itself the presencing of being.⁴⁵

Heidegger’s interpretation of the essence of the Greek conception of *phusis* (*natura*) in the context of commenting on Aristotle’s Book *Beta*, chapter I of the *Physics*, leads us to say that the decisive factor in drawing an ontological distinction between beings proper and non-beings is that of presencing, as always already there (like a *hupokeimenon*), while non-beings are at times present, on the basis of the presence of beings proper, and at other times absent.⁴⁶

To think about the mortality of mortals in their being-toward-death is already a tacit mode of evoking divinities, not as gods that have been, but as mute signs of a self-sending and self-withdrawal of being. In the “*Brief über den Humanismus*” (“Letter on Humanism”) Heidegger asserts that thinking about being thinks the nothing by way of thanking what grants.⁴⁷ And yet, what is gathered in the gift recollects itself in appropriating the fourfold and in staying within the event of bringing the remoteness of their regions into an essential oneness. If it is the case that divinities are in abandonment, flight and withdrawal, the hidden fullness of the wealth of what has been through their presencing, becomes an awaiting-remembrance that recollects their signs despite their absence. The “no longer present” is at the same

⁴³ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–103.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 178–180.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–107.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

time “the not yet here”; the flight of godheads is thus a veiled arrival of their inexhaustible nature, despite abandonment, flight, withdrawal, self-refusal, or concealment. This embodies the guardianship of vigilant watchfulness for the remembered “what has-been” in the awaited “yet to come”.⁴⁸ I remember and wait...

We do not decide how beings appear or come forward into presence in the clearing (*Lichtung*) of being,⁴⁹ which is an unveiling. In withholding their presence, the gods let the night remain; and yet, whether or how the day of holiness dawns, with the epiphany of the sacred, remains unclear in Heidegger’s thought; the tracks to the divinities remain veiled, and pathways to haleness and wholesomeness are still effaced. For there comes a distress from an “abandonment by being” (*Seinsverlassenheit*) due to the flight of gods (*Flucht der Götter*; sections 251–254, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*), which also points to remembering–expecting (*erinnernd–wartend*) without flight or arrival of divinities (*das ist weder Flucht noch Ankunft der Götter*). The dread accompanies the *awaiting* as underpinned by *expecting*, even if it is done in patience and with steadfastness. What belongs to the essence of a people is grounded in the historicity of those who belong to themselves out of belonging to a god (*das Wesen des Volkes gründet in der Geschlichkeit der Sichgehörenden aus der Zugehörigkeit zu dem Gott*). Herein the insight is to think about the divine (*theios*) rather than the god (*theos*).

The saying of Heraclitus (*Fragment 119*) resonates from the oldest of old of thoughts as one recites: “...*ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn...*” – namely, as Heidegger reckons, “the [familiar] abode of man is the open region of the presencing of god [the unfamiliar one]”. Heidegger took “*ethos*” therein to be “character” as well as “abode” or “dwelling–place”. He grasped it as such as an open region in which human beings dwell by way of making room for the safeguarding of what belongs to the essence of *Dasein*. For “here too the gods are present”: “...*einai gar kai enthautha theous...*” as Heraclitus added.⁵⁰ Dwelling is accordingly a mode of abiding steadfast in a stay in the nearness of divinities: “now it is time that gods emerge from things by which we dwell”: “*Jetzt wär es Zeit, daß Götter träten aus bewohnten Dingen!*”⁵¹

What is most thought–provoking is that, against such background in thinking about divinities within the context of the manner “thinging” things gather the fourfold, science itself compels us within the epistemic spheres of knowledge to annihilate things *qua* things in no longer admitting their “thingness” (“thinghood”), and in turning them into objects of research. If this happened “long before the atom bomb exploded,”⁵²

⁴⁸ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–178, 183–184.

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 234, 242.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 257–258.

⁵¹ Maria Rainer Rilke, *Gesammelte Werke, Band II* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1930), p. 185; Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁵² Heidegger *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–171.

then the unfolding of the essence of modern technology furthermore renders objects *objectless* as standing reserve. If Heidegger held that “science does not think”, namely that it does not think in the way that thinking is a mode of thanking that recollects/awaits. Perhaps *sapiential* thought is simply homesickness. Being at home amongst things that gather the fourfold in dwelling keeps the question of the meaning, truth, and place of *being* worthy of questioning, which is a piety in thinking that gives thanks, and in it resides in stillness the oneness of *earth–sky–mortals–divinities*.⁵³

Heidegger enigmatically pronounced: “*Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*” (only a god can save us).⁵⁴ Albeit, the saving power arises from the site of danger, and what threatens most in the age of the unfolding of the essence of modern technology is en–framing. However, ontologically, what threatens is *the annihilation from within being* that marks our being–towards–*deaths* as mortals with finite times that pass away. What transcends this predicament of mortality and en–framing is that which is freed from the passing away of time and from being en–framed in its being; namely what is eternal and limitless, or what in the idea we would have of it would bring about the notion of eternity and infinity. And yet, what is as such can only be what humans all along have described by the attributes of Divinity that are internal to the eminence of the idea of a God (or the godhead that enters the idea).⁵⁵

SPATIALITY

Gathering the fourfold in their essential oneness, bringing them from the remoteness of their regions into the intimacy of nearness in a stay with things by way of dwelling, is throughout spatial. Dwelling allows for a locale that makes space for a site that admits and installs the fourfold within *things* that shelter their gathered essence. A place is hence freed by opening up a room for a leeway (*Spielraum*) and a clearing (*Lichtung*). A thing situates a locale that allows for a site that makes space for the gathering of the fourfold.⁵⁶ Making room, opening up a space, situating a site by way of having a locale, all affirm the belongingness of building and cultivating to dwelling.

Building as a mode of constructing locales is an architectural and architectonic mode of founding, joining, and organizing spaces. It is the process by virtue of which edifices may indeed guard and preserve the fourfold without design, and it is as such a mode of building in architecture that lets the simple essence of dwelling become possibly sheltered in coalescing the fourfold hither into a locale, like a bridge, a

⁵³ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, *op. cit.*, p. 362

⁵⁴ *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, 31 May 1976, pp. 193–219.

⁵⁵ See: Emmanuel Levinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1986), p. 104 ff.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 355–358.

temple, a farmhouse. Building becomes thusly worthy of thinking, not simply from the viewpoint of the professional take on architecture, or the techniques of engineering in erecting the built environment or managing the sustainability of ecological landscapes. Building is intertwined with thinking in the search anew for the essence of dwelling as the existential earthly plight of mortals destined to end.⁵⁷

If the reflection on dwelling is intimately connected with meditations on the kind of being of space, there is nonetheless an inherent perplexity in the manner we inquire about spatiality due to the lack of a fundamental transparency concerning the ontological interpretation of the question of being (*Seinsfrage*). As Heidegger noted in section 24 of *Sein und Zeit*, the decisive grasp of this ontological problem lies in freeing up the question of the being of space from the narrow and undifferentiated concepts of being. An investigation of the being of space is mediated via the *existentiale Analytik des Daseins* as care (*Sorge*), and in the manner it takes space in by way of making room (*Einräumen*) for a leeway (*Spielraum*) or a clearing (*Lichtung*) that lets dwelling be.⁵⁸

Heidegger's reflection on space in connection with the phenomenon of dwelling differs from Husserl's research on space (particularly in *Ding und Raum*, and partly in *Ideen-I*).⁵⁹ Heidegger's approach does not focus on a phenomenological analytic of the manifold of appearances of an unchanged and structurally unified *thing* in its immediate givenness to intuition,⁶⁰ within the dynamics of an "oculo-motor" (*ocluomotorisch*) field. Heidegger is not concerned with the unity of a given object of perception in terms of its kinaesthetic constitution through kinetic complexes of (subjective-objective) bodily displacements, rotations, inversions, *et hoc genus omne*. His thoughts on this are also unlike those that later emerged through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of space,⁶¹ which is an analytic of anonymous, pre-personal,

⁵⁷ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 358–363.

⁵⁸ Nader El-Bizri, "ON KAI XΩPA: Situating Heidegger between the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*", *Studia Phaenomenologica* 4 (2004), pp. 95–97.

⁵⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Ding und Raum (Vorlesungen 1907)*; posthumously published in *Husserliana XVI*, ed. U. Claesges, 1973 (Husserl's *opera omnia*); a.k.a. *Dingvorlesung* ("Thing-Lectures"). For an annotated English translation, see: Edmund Husserl, *Thing and Space, Lectures of 1907*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and ed. Ulrich Claesges (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997). Refer also to: Edmund Husserl's *Ideen-I*, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologischen Forschung, Band I* (Max Niemeyer, 3rd ed. 1928). This seminal text was also published in *Husserliana III* as: *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. W. Biemel (revised ed. K. Schuhmann, 1976). For an annotated French translation, see: Edmund Husserl, *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie et une philosophie phénoménologique pures, Tome I: Introduction générale à la phénoménologie pure*, trans. Paul Ricoeur (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

⁶⁰ Namely, what Husserl designates as: *originär gebende Anschauung* (the originary givenness of intuition; *une intuition donatrice originaire*).

⁶¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), pp. xv, 491–495.

pre-reflexive, and pre-objective (subjective) bodily functions and limbs in flesh. Heidegger's spatiality is not mediated via a "body-subject" (*le corps propre*) and its multifarious forms of spacing-disclosures via corporeal kinaesthetic processes.⁶² However, space is presupposed in the inherence of *Dasein* in the world by way of its lived (*vécu*; *Erlebnis*) spatiality. This ontological determination is articulated in Merleau-Ponty's thinking in terms of: *la prise [du corps propre] sur le monde*; namely the body-subject's *taking hold over the world*.⁶³ Space opens up the spheres of possibilities for the surge of a reliable sense of trusting the worldliness of being; insofar that the lived/living body (*le corps vivant vécu*; *Leib*) is what lets us inhabit a *world*. It is the embodied experience that engrains us in the world of life as an ecological environment that our bodies as living beings grew accustomed to inhabit through the course of evolution way before our cerebral and neurological systems evolved into giving us the power of rational discourse. We dwell the earth through our embodiment and its affects, and not simply and solely by way of grasping our being via abstract and calculative reckoning. Emotions and the flesh are the earthly anchors of our worldliness.

Heidegger's laconic confession in the lecture *Zeit und Sein* (1962), that: the attempt in *Sein und Zeit* (section 70) to derive spatiality from temporality (*Zeitlichkeit* [rather than *Temporalität*]) has been "untenable,"⁶⁴ reveals the pivotal aspect of rethinking space and place in his later thought. Heidegger proclaimed initially in *Sein und Zeit* that "the fact that space *shows itself in a world* does not tell us anything about its kind of *being*." On his view "the *being* of space" is not the same kind of *being* as that of the *res extensa* or the *res cogitans*. Consequently, he rejected the reduction of space to a geometrical *extensio*, as Descartes proclaimed, or to an objective absolute, like Newton argued, or to a relational quantifiable function, as Leibniz conjectured.⁶⁵

⁶² See: Rudolph Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, *Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), esp. pp. 130–138.

⁶³ I have investigated this phenomenon in: Nader El-Bizri, "A Phenomenological Account of the 'Ontological Problem of Space'," *Existential Meletai-Sophias*, Vol. XII, Issue 3–4 (2002), pp. 345–364.

⁶⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper, 1969), p. 23 (*Zeit und Sein* in: *Zur Sache des Denkens, Gesamtausgabe Band 14*).

⁶⁵ Descartes' notion of "space" consists of a quantity of *extension* that is shared by many extended things, and its existential distinction from spatial objects pertains to a mere act of mental abstraction. As for Leibniz, he conceived "space" as being a "relational order between coexistent things" (as for instance he noted in his *Fifth letter* to Samuel Clarke). His notion of "space" ultimately results from series of coexistent relational places, and is hence structured as an ordering situational mode of distancing. Consequently, a place (*situs*) is construed as being a fragment of geometrical *space*, which describes an invariable relation between the points of a given (extensional) configuration that is attributable to a physical object. Moreover, based on Newton's theory of mechanics, in a *scholium* incorporated between the sections on "Definitions" and the "Laws of Motion" of the *Principia Mathematica*: the *relative*, apparent, and common conception of space, is distinguished from the *absolute* (self-same/immovable), true, and mathematically quantified *space*. See also: René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, VI, eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1965); Gottfried W. Leibniz, *La Caractéristique géométrique*, ed. Javier Echeverria, trans. Marc Parmentier (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

Moreover, he doubted the Kantian positing of space as being a pure *a priori* subjective form of outer intuition;⁶⁶ and, in a critical turn in his “phenomenological” thinking, he also questioned the Husserlian claim that space is constituted by transcendental subjectivity in its kinaesthetic corporeal functions. Based on this, the decisive task in grasping the ontological bearings of the problem of spatiality lies in freeing up the question of the being of space from the narrowness of undifferentiated and random concepts of *being* (*Sein*; *Seyn*). Heidegger endeavoured to move the attempted clarification of the being of space in the direction of elucidating the question of the meaning, truth, and place of being.⁶⁷ Accordingly, he argued that the *being* of space would be best understood if *the question of being* (*Seinsfrage*) is itself addressed from the standpoint of the spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*) of *Dasein*’s *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-sein*).

Heidegger grasps *Dasein* as being spatial (*räumlich*) insofar that it manifests care (*Sorge*) in the way it comes across things and handles them. In this, it reveals a region (*Gegend*) that is founded on handiness (*Zuhandenheit*). *Dasein*’s “making room” (*Einräumen*) is not readily reducible to a quantifiable positioning, but rather grants a leeway (*Spielraum*) or a clearing (*Lichtung*) in the opened up region of useful and present worldly things, which are encountered in a directional *de-distancing* (*Ent-fernung*). The *making-present* of these things lets *space* itself *presence* by way of *making room* for it. However, this analysis seemed to remain determined from the viewpoint of the presupposition of the priority of *temporality* over *spatiality*. This recalls Merleau-Ponty’s conception of “*la chair du monde*” (“*flesh of the world*”), whereby the hands and the flesh undermine the positing of temporality as the comprehensive primordial (*ursprünglich*) horizon for the existential analytic of *Dasein*. This view is also confirmed by what Merleau-Ponty noted in his manuscript: *Le visible et l’invisible*, wherein the

⁶⁶ According to Kant, space is not a general concept but is rather a necessary universal condition for experiencing. The *a priori* character of space is a pre-requisite for affirming the “universal” applicability of Euclidean geometry and its synthetic *a priori* (analytic) propositions. Space was grasped by Kant as being the *form* of outer-sense appearances, which acts as the subjective condition of sensibility that renders perception possible (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*; A26, B42). Nonetheless, we do not encounter herein a refutation of the reality of space or of its visibility like what is attributable to George Berkeley’s immaterialism (as the latter argued in Sections 2–28 and 41–51 of his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* [1709], and in the associated Sections 43–44 of his *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* [1710], along with the first dialogue of his *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* [1713] – *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, eds. Arthur A. Luce and Thomas E. Jessop, 9 vols. Edinburgh, 1948–1957). Kant rather affirms the phenomenal ground of spatiality as “the pure *a priori* form of outer intuition,” which underlies appearances and concepts (A24–5, B39–40), and is the source of synthetic *a priori* knowledge (A42, B60). Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781); 1st ed. of 1781 as [A], 2nd ed. of 1787 as [B]: *Critique of Pure Reason*, “Transcendental Aesthetic,” Part I, Section 1.

⁶⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, Section 24.

experience of one's own flesh is pictured as being a prototype of *being*, and where the inherence of the body–subject (*corps propre*) in the world is synonymous with being *situated* (*être situé*).⁶⁸

Heidegger gave more prominence up through the 1930s to time over space, perhaps due to a focus on Plato's *Sophist* more than on his reading of the *Timaeus*.⁶⁹ This aspect could have been avoided and would have been more in tune with his later emphasis on the equiprimordiality of space and time, if not even leaning toward the spatial by way of focusing on the place of being. This matter is best grasped in terms of Heidegger's own reflections on the notion of "*khôra*",⁷⁰ as it was ambiguously relegated to us by Plato (on the authority of the narrative of the Pythagorean astronomer Timaeus of Locri), it is said that: "*khôra* is a "third genus" (*triton*) besides being and becoming, which is in itself neither intelligible nor sensible (48E, 52A–B).⁷¹ As a "receptacle" (*qua* recipient; *dekhomenon* and/or *hupodokhê*) this "boundless" *khôra* receives all becoming entities without taking on the character of what it contains. This *matrix* (moulding–stuff; mother; nurse of becoming) is amorphous and characterless (50B–51A); and, like the forms (*eidoi*), it is everlasting and admits not of destruction (52A–B).

In an endeavour to define "place" (*topos*), Aristotle reductively conjectured that Plato's "*khôra*" designated *prime matter*. However, this exegesis served more the purposes of the Aristotelian conception of place as a mode of "containment by envelopment," rather than resulting necessarily from a faithful and attentive reading of Plato's *Timaeus*. After all, Aristotle rejected the theories that posited *place* as being the form (*eidos*), the matter (*hylê*; partly following his own speculative definition of Plato's "*khôra*"), or the interval (*diastêma*) between the extremities of the body that it contains (*Physics*, IV, 212a 3–5).⁷² He rather defined *topos* as: "the innermost primary surface–boundary of the containing body that is at rest, and is in contact with the outermost surface of the mobile body it contains" (*Physics*, IV, 212a 20–21). And, even though he affirmed that *topos* has the three

⁶⁸ Didier Franck, *Heidegger et le problème de l'espace* (Paris: Minuit, 1986); Maurice Merleau–Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964); Merleau–Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

⁶⁹ I discussed this in the context of what I referred to as "*ontokhorology*": "ON KAI XΩPA", *art. cit.*

⁷⁰ Architectural theorists became fascinated with *khôra* (*chora*) since the 1980s in the context of Peter Eisenman's engagement with Derrida around Bernard Tschumi's design of the Parc de la Villette in Paris: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman, *Chora L Works*, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leeser (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997).

⁷¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. IX (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁷² Aristotle, *Physics*, ed. W. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936).

dimensions of length, width and depth (*Physics*, IV, 209a 5), he seemed to indicate in his conception of spatiality by way of “containment” that a *place* is ultimately a two-dimensional “surface-limit” of “envelopment”.⁷³

EARTHLY PLACES AND BEYOND

Dwelling carries within its folds a particular attraction and rootedness in a place, a site, a locale, and in spatial things that admit the fourfold and install them. Dwelling also points to natural sites within the landscape, to specific architectural structure, architectonic settings, artworks, handcrafts that gather the fourfold. Dwelling reflects fundamental, subliminal, vital, and elemental “passions” for locality and earthiness as anchored in nature’s groundwork and upon the land, with its seasons, climate, geography, and topography.⁷⁴ This points to the situational character of the human condition as it unfolds within the vast network of life in its bios and cosmic systems; carving for itself a home by spacing its inhabitation and dwelling-place. Dwelling gains rootedness through ownership and labour; and, more intimately by cultivating the land, tending to the garden and the orchard, harvesting the field. However, humans also inhabit the forests, the heights of mountains, the depths of valleys, roam the deserts, sail upon the oceans, nest on trees, hibernate in caves, and take flight to retreats away from the polis. In the designed techno-scientific means of our age, our being-in-the-world reaches out beyond its terrestrial confines, with

⁷³ The most poignant refutation of the Aristotelian definition of *topos* was accomplished through the geometrical conception of place (*al-makân*) by the Arab polymath: al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen; d. [Cairo] after 1041 CE). In contesting the longstanding Aristotelian *physical* conception of *topos*, Ibn al-Haytham posited *al-makân* (place) as an “imagined [postulated] void” (*khalâ’ mutakhayyal*) whose existence, as an invariable geometric entity, is secured in the imagination. He moreover held that the “postulated void” *qua* “mathematical place” consisted of imagined immaterial distances that are between the opposite points of the surfaces surrounding it. Accordingly, the *place* of a given object is a “region of extension” that is defined by the distances between its points, and on which the distances of that object can be applied. This mathematical development found later affirmations in the history of science and philosophy in the conception of *place* as a *space*; namely, as in Descartes’ notion of “*extensio*” and Leibniz’s “*analysis situs*.” Ibn al-Haytham’s critical thesis was presented in his *Treatise on Place* (*Qawl fî al-makân*), which can itself be inscribed within an Apollonian-Archimedean tradition and not Platonism. For the Arabic critical edition and annotated French translation of this foundational tract (*Traité sur le lieu*) see: Roshdi Rashed, *Les mathématiques infinitésimales du IX^e au XI^e siècle*, Vol. IV (London: al-Furqân Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002), pp. 666–685. Refer also to: Nader El-Bizri, “In Defence of the Sovereignty of Philosophy: al-Baghdādî’s Critique of Ibn al-Haytham’s Geometrisation of Place”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 17 (2007), pp. 57–80; Nader El-Bizri, “Seeing Reality in Perspective: The ‘Art of Optics’ and the ‘Science of Painting,’” in *the Art of Science: From Perspective Drawing to Quantum Randomness*, eds. Rossella Lupacchini and Annarita Angelini (Dordrecht-Berlin: Springer, 2014), pp. 25–47.

⁷⁴ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, “*De Patria Mea: The Passion for Place as the Thread Leading out of the Labyrinth of Life*”, *Analecta Husserliana* XLIV (1995), pp. 8–12.

moon-landings, an International Space Station, robotic probes on distant missions to Mars, etc. Dwelling is entwined with the universal play of the vital forces and energies of life, that transcend the mere localization and positioning within manufactured enclosures or housing units that are established through the calculative methods of the technical and functional production of the multiple spheres of societal spatial co-existence. Such rituals of life become at times saturated with life-transcending yearnings, projected unto imagined *sacral places*, hypothesized *paradisiacal localities*. These imaginings reflect the spacing-impulse to broaden the bounds of *territoriality*, to de-distance things and eliminate their physical-geographical-topological remoteness. The expansion of frontiers, which animates the spirit of economic development, of cultural discovery and geographic expedition, may also suggest the unfurling of aggression as it is associated with conquests, invasions, and the degrading policies of colonization or occupation, which get accomplished by way of forcible transgressions of boundaries. The spread of frontiers, which might indeed sustain aesthetic, moral, or even nobly-impassioned values, or that may result in beneficial practical/utilitarian functions, can furthermore veil tacit or pronounced sinister inclinations to act violently and greedily. Territoriality remains indeed a principal source of communal conflict and injustice; even though it may well offer, under restricted conditions, the possibilities of realizing the betterment of the societal production of space in architecture, urbanism, in finely planned landscaping (*pro bono publico*), and in delicately preserved ecosystems. It is moreover the case that in defending a Homeland, in what is perceived as the historical earth and soil of a people (of mortals: ancestors, contemporaries, and posterity as offspring), the patriotic-passion-for-place results at times in the occurrence of noble events of voluntary-self-sacrifice and heroism; however, it may also dialectically prompt, under certain circumstances, the emergence of devastating bellicose practices, particularly in the context of ruthless invasions and civil wars. While the *spreading*-spacing of frontiers might be violently exercised in the form of conquests, the shrinking behind fortified walls may at times point to the violence of apartheid and xenophobia, which express the modalities of a territorial *retreating*-spacing that also gets settled by way of effecting aggression. Territoriality may polemically solicit the dialectical interplay between peace and war, justice and injustice, the rule of law versus lawlessness.

Dwelling may also have its own labyrinthine expressions of imagined realms that are marked by anguish and hope, punishment and reward, fear and aspiration. Dwelling carries within its lived experiential folds the picturing of imagined localities that supposedly underpin some of our quotidian compartments, and that stretch beyond the spheres of perceptual spaces. The fields of perception and their horizons can thusly be hypothetically expanded through fictional imaginings and associated narratives.

Religion and theological discourses evoke in this context the images of heaven and hell, of *liminal* places of limbo and purgation; all intertwining embodied devotional rituals, with poetry, fables, and epistolary odes, be it in literature, the fine or performing arts. Such yearnings for the virtual and the imagined find further prolongations of their expressions in contemporary techno–scientific means of cybernetic and audio–visual media, and of projected cosmic simulations of extra–terrestrial journeys. The concrete quotidian reality of everydayness appears less real than the imagined and longed–for isthmuses at the interface with machines that challenge, command, overwhelm and seem to surround us from every side in our being–in–the–world. Such things do not gather the fourfold (earth–sky–mortals–divinities) as much as they more radically en–frame them. The en–framing of the essence of modern technology pictures also for us *topoi* of utopia, as purified and abstracted sanctuaries, or by setting actualized urbanization concrete localities that are marked by dystopia, angst, and torment. Such spaces turn us away from the earthiness of our lived–world, and solicit us to grasp our being as an existential burden of prolonged dissatisfactions, of encumbering labours, toil, trial, pain. Yearnings for “esoteric” places flourish “when the already constituted meanings fail to satisfy the passion for place”⁷⁵ (when attending to the meaning, truth, and place of being is forgotten). Escapism becomes an available mode of resisting socio–political, economic, and emotional inter–subjective hardships. Instead of revolution, political engagement, social activism, plain civil disobedience, some trans–natural virtual realms are imaginatively constructed in view of satisfying subliminal yearnings; and these spatial images are inspired on many occasions by handed down scriptural traditions, which influence the particulars of certain concrete everyday embodied comportments and practiced deeds or rituals. This takes place despite the merits of efficiency and smoothness that is granted to us by telecommunication. The “esoteric” place points to the space of soteriology, of eschatology, of promised salvation or redemptive deliverance, or seeking the *eskhaton* in apocalyptic ways. The yearning for the non–ordinary (the extraordinary) surpasses the concrete situational quotidian places in which the rooted–ness of our lived experiences (*le vécu*) finds its place in life on earth by way of our existence in flesh, here and now, through our physiology and sensorial kinaesthetic being–in–the–world. Albeit, imagination always soars beyond our earthbound passions, projecting from earth our very own being into what is perceived as unlimited horizons. Bearing testimony, our calling is to rethink dwelling anew.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Gary Backhaus, “Toward a Phenomenological Grounding of the Geographical Conception of Therapeutic Landscapes,” *Analecta Husserliana* LXXIX (2004), p. 767; Anna–Teresa Tymieniecka, “Preface,” *Analecta Husserliana* LXXVIII (2003), pp. 1–4.

⁷⁶ This article is dedicated *in memoriam* to the Polish–American phenomenologist Anna–Teresa Tymieniecka (1923–2014).