

## Preface

This book is about both Martin Heidegger as a theorist of space and the legacy of his ideas on spatial phenomena. Examining these topics is possible only in conjunction with a discussion of his philosophical ideas generally.

The book's two central chapters (chapters three and four) seek to describe and analyze Heidegger's ideas simply and straightforwardly. I hope that what I write is accessible and provocative to anyone at the university interested in its topics, from those who are either largely unfamiliar with his philosophy or outside the discipline of philosophy to scholars with professional interests in Heidegger, regardless of their field. It has become commonplace to describe a certain class of book as of interest to beginners and experts alike. In my case, I did not write with either the uninitiated or the professional—or any particular audience—in mind, though I was keenly aware that the book was supposed to be intelligible to multiple constituencies. As indicated, I just tried to state his ideas simply and straightforwardly. I did this in the belief, moreover, that when matters are put simply what is said should be understandable by all, informative to different degrees to those with varying amounts and types of prior acquaintance, and thought-provoking for those with well-developed opinions. What fuels my hope that proceeding in this way is not vain and delusional are my experiences teaching on the basis of this belief. I have found, for instance, that I can use the same descriptions of “what is basically going on” in a masterpiece such as Plato's *Republic* in introductory courses on moral and political philosophy and in graduate courses in social thought—though, of course, the contexts in which these descriptions are presented and the discussion they generate differ in the two cases. In any event, aiding the more inexperienced readers

of this book are two brief initial chapters that outline Heidegger's life and his philosophical works. The final chapter on the legacies of Heidegger's thoughts in general and on spatial matters in particular should contain something for everyone.

This book was originally commissioned for a series of books on leading theorists of space. After three volumes had been written for the series, the publisher reneged on the deal, leaving the three books, of which this is one, in limbo. Two and half years passed before Benno Werlen, the editor of the would-be series, abandoned hopes of reviving it. At this point, Steiner Verlag, the publisher of Professor Werlen's series, *Sozialgeographische Bibliothek*, agreed to take on this volume as part of the latter series. The book's organization—the order, lengths, and overall subject matters of the chapters—adhere to the format that had been envisioned for the original series. When, after two and half years, the publication of the book finally became insured, there was little time, and I had little inclination, to alter the chapters' order, lengths, or topics. I did substantially revise the principal chapters, but the book as a whole still displays the format intended for the volumes of the defunct series.

I would like to thank Professor Werlen for standing by this book through the years and Steiner Verlag for agreeing to publish it. My graduate student, Brandon Absher, was a great help looking over the proofs. A large thanks is also owed to Hubert L. Dreyfus, from whom I initially learned Heidegger.

# 1 Biography

Martin Heidegger was born on September 26, 1889 in Messkirch, Germany, not far north of Lake Constance near the border with Switzerland. His family was composed of farmers and craftsmen. His father was a master cooper and sexton of the local Catholic church, whereas his mother was a farmer's daughter from a neighboring village. Heidegger received a classical education at a Jesuit Gymnasium in Greek, Latin, and German language and literatures. His philosophical education began in 1907 at age seventeen when the pastor of a church in Constance gave him a copy of Franz Brentano's *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* (1862). This book made a strong impression on Heidegger, and his later philosophical work made the topic of being his own.

Heidegger entered the University of Freiburg in 1909, where he began studying theology under Carl Braig, having earlier consulted a book of Braig's titled *On Being: An Outline of Ontology* (1896). Later that year, Heidegger heard of a book that Brentano's student Edmund Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological movement, had written titled *Logical Investigations* (1900–01). Borrowing it from the library, Heidegger was so impressed by Husserl's phenomenology that he kept the book in his room for two years, "read[ing] it again and again." In 1911, he dropped theology and elected philosophy as his main area of study. Even at this point his mentors recognized his exceptional abilities. In place of a church scholarship he had forfeited by virtue of leaving theology, he was provided a small grant.

Heidegger's first published philosophy article appeared in 1912 under the title "The Problem of Reality in Modern Philosophy." He received his Ph.D. in 1913 with a dissertation titled *The Theory of Judgment in Psychologism*. His dissertation advisor was the leading

neo-Kantian German philosopher Heinrich Rickert. Between 1910 and 1914, Heidegger immersed himself in the study of various thinkers and poets, including Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich Nietzsche, G.W.F. Hegel, Wilhelm Dilthey, Søren Kierkegaard, Georg Trakl, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Ideas of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Kierkegaard were appropriated in his subsequent thought. When war broke out in 1914, Heidegger volunteered for military service, but his weak heart quickly led to his being assigned to the military postal service in Freiburg. This turn of events enabled him to continue his studies. By 1915–16 he had completed his postdoctoral dissertation, the *Habilitation*, titled *The Theory of Categories and Meaning in Duns Scotus*.

In 1916 Rickert accepted an appointment as successor to Wilhelm Windelband at Heidelberg. Rickert's own successor was Husserl. In 1917, Heidegger reentered military service. He was initially stationed once again in Freiburg. This enabled him to continue his academic work and to begin his teaching career. Later he was sent to a meteorological station on the Western front near Verdun, where he served until the end of the war. During this period he married Elfride Petri, the daughter of an imperialistic and conservative Junker officer. The couple had two sons (1919, 1920).

After the war, Heidegger's own ideas and academic career gathered steam. He became Husserl's Assistant in 1919. Although he lectured under the title "Phenomenology" from 1917 to 1926, he began to articulate his own, powerful voice. The influence of Dilthey's studies of historical life combined with those of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, Greek inquiries into ontology and logic, and Christian thought to yield the seeds of an original approach to questions of being.

In 1922, at the relatively young age of thirty three, Heidegger became an *Extraordinarius* professor at Marburg University. He lectured there 1923–28. He held forth primarily on the history of philosophy, though he also gave lectures on time, logic, and truth. He spoke wearing a loden jacket and knickerbockers. Even though he had published nothing since the middle of the previous decade, his reputation, based on teaching alone, grew in leaps and bounds. Hannah Arendt, a student of Heidegger's with whom he had a passionate affair from 1924 to 1933 (despite tremendous risk to his career) and who

went on to become one of the very most distinguished political thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, described his reputation as follows:

Thinking has come to life again; the cultural treasures of the past, believed to be dead, are being made to speak, in the course of which it turns out that they propose things altogether different from the familiar, worn-out trivialities they had been presumed to say. There exists a teacher; one can perhaps learn to think.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter 1925/26 semester, the philosophy faculty at Marburg nominated Heidegger to be Nicolai Hartmann's successor as the principal chair of philosophy. The ministry in Berlin rejected the appointment because Heidegger had not published a book since his *Habilitation*. Luckily, Heidegger had an unfinished manuscript called *Being and Time*. Husserl arranged for its publication. Page proofs sent to the ministry were returned, however, with the remark "Inadequate." The ministry relented in 1927 when the book was published. Despite its hasty publication and incompleteness, it quickly became recognized as a philosophical work of the highest order.

In 1928, Heidegger succeeded the retiring Husserl in Freiburg. From then until 1933 he lectured on themes arising out of *Being and Time* and on the history of philosophy. In 1929, there occurred the famous Davos Disputation between Heidegger and Ernst Cassirer, in which Heidegger's ontological ideas, grounded in an analysis of human existence, collided with Cassirer's neo-Kantian and atemporal epistemological theories. Twice in the early 1930s Heidegger declined a professorship in Berlin. In April of 1933, after the Nazis had come to power, he accepted the position of rector at Freiburg, to which the combined faculties had elected him. The motivations for this move are controversial—opportunism; rural Catholic conservative upbringing and conservative convictions; weariness in the face of political, economic, and spiritual decline in Germany combined with faith that the Nationalist Socialist movement could renew the nation; the desire to be the intellectual *Führer* to the *Führer*; these are some of the most commonly cited reasons. In May of that year, he joined the Nazi party. His famous inaugural speech as rector (the *Rektoratsrede*) called on the German university to assume new, philosophically con-

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," *New York Review of Books*, October 21, 1971, p. 51.

ceived epistemological duties as part of a general renewal of German society. Heidegger abandoned the rectorship ten months after he had accepted it (in part because he refused to fire two anti-Nazi professors), but the damage to his subsequent reputation had been done. Stories about nasty behavior later circulated; after the war he claimed to have abandoned the Nazi party in 1934 although it turned out that he had remained at least a sympathizer if not also a member into the 1940s; after the war he never addressed or directly acknowledged, let alone apologized for, the ghastly crimes of the Nazis. Despite the fact that the Nazis criticized Heidegger in the 1930s and placed restrictions on his lecturing, publishing, and travel, such matters secured him lasting infamy, guaranteed continuing controversy (the most intense scholarly engagement with his Nazi involvement occurred in the 1980–90s), and led some scholars to refuse to address his ideas.

After he resigned the rectorship, Heidegger continued teaching about logic, truth, and metaphysics as well as the history of philosophy. These topics were supplemented, however, by new ones connected with Hölderlin and Nietzsche. Heidegger had become acquainted with the writings of this poet and this thinker while still a student, but not until the mid 1930s did they seem appropriate material for teaching. Heidegger continued lecturing on their work and the themes they raised well into the Second World War.

After the war, the French occupation banned him from university teaching after a denazification hearing (also requisitioning his house and library). The ban was lifted in 1951, one year before his scheduled retirement. Between 1946 and 1951 he gave private seminars and published his first philosophical essays since around 1930. Heidegger spent the 1950s and 1960s writing, thinking, occasionally offering seminars or public lectures, and overseeing the publication of a long line of prominent works. Heidegger's final official lecture course in 1951 was titled *What is Called Thinking?* He returned to the university as emeritus professor in the mid 1950s to deliver two lecture series, one titled *The Principle of Reason* and the other on Hegel.

During the 50s and 60s, Heidegger traveled to France and Greece, but mostly “stayed in the provinces,” in southwestern Germany, Freiburg and Messkirch. Many hours were spent at his ski cabin in the Black Forest at Todtnauberg, where he often received visitors, many of them young philosophers. He also cultured “friendships” with a number of leading intellectuals, including Hannah Arendt, the physi-

cist Werner Heisenberg, the theologian Rudolf Bultmann, the poet René Char, and the painter George Braque, though many of these friendships were troubled and haunted by the war and Heidegger's Nazi involvement. His enigmatic meeting with the German-Jewish poet Paul Celan in 1968 is symptomatic of these troubles. Heidegger's final public performance was a seminar in 1973 at Zähringen. In 1972 he made plans for the publication of all his writings. In May 1976 he died at the age of eighty six and was buried in Messkirch, between his mother and father, in a cemetery he had passed daily as a boy.

## 2 Philosophical Works

Heidegger's work spans six decades, from his earliest student articles and reviews in the 1910s to the final seminars and lectures in the 1970s. His production is prodigious. In addition to the many works published in his lifetime, his corpus includes a considerable number of talks, lectures courses, and unpublished texts (some book-length), most of exceptional care and quality. His projected Collected Works encompasses 102 volumes, a large number even by German standards.

Heidegger's first lecture was delivered in 1910 about Abraham a Santa Clara (1644–1709), a court preacher who had been adopted as a role model by contemporary conservative elements of the Catholic church. This lecture evinces Heidegger's affinity for Catholic rural conservative antimodernism, an affinity he never abandoned. Indeed, Heidegger's work never shook off the philosophical and cultural sense of crisis accompanying this antimodernism. In 1911–12, he continued publishing articles, reviews, and poems in *Der Akademiker*, the journal of the German Association of Catholic Graduates. His first philosophy essay was "The Problem of Reality in Modern Philosophy" (1912). This essay criticizes the preoccupation of modern philosophy with epistemology, holding that philosophy should become relevant to scientific culture by formulating new problems and stimulating knowledge in the natural and historical sciences. His doctoral dissertation of 1913, *The Theory of Judgment in Psychologism*, argued that although psychology is unable to analyze judgment, which is a phenomenon of logic, logic is nonetheless dependent on extralogical contexts, namely, everyday experience, history, and metaphysics. Similar themes mark his postdoctoral dissertation, *The Theory of Categories and Meaning in Duns Scotus* (1915–16). This work combines the study of pure logic with an appreciation of medieval history and cul-



ture, arguing that the proper content of all logical problems is historical. This same move away from logic toward history is evident in his inaugural lecture of July 1915, “The Concept of Time in the Science of History,” which distinguishes the time of modern physics from the time of history.

Returning to academic work after World War One, Heidegger concentrated on his lectures series, offered occasional public lectures, and worked on manuscripts that eventually became his magnum opus. From 1919 to 1923, he lectured at Freiburg as Husserl’s Assistant, labeling most of his lecture series phenomenological, for example, *Phenomenology and Transcendental Value Philosophy* (1919), *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression* (1920), and *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* (1921/22). These lectures are a baroque amalgam of Husserl’s phenomenology, Dilthey’s hermeneutics of historical life, Scheler’s philosophical anthropology, and Christian ideas of St. Paul, Augustine, and Martin Luther. Heidegger described human life as a finite, situated, and factual (*faktisch*) flow and advocated phenomenology as the science of the nonobjectifiable grounds of life and experience. This analysis received more systematic—though anything but definitive—form in his last Freiburg lectures, *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (1923). Several key themes of *Being and Time* were enunciated in this period, including factual existence, authenticity, the destruction of metaphysics, and *Dasein* (this word at once denotes human beings and expresses their being).

In 1923, Heidegger moved to Marburg. No longer Husserl’s assistant, he stopped titling his lectures phenomenology, though two of his later Marburg lecture series were so labeled (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* [1927] and *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* [1927/28]). It seems that Heidegger, long sensitive to the historical character of human life, had recognized the historical contingency of Husserl’s allegedly atemporal transcendental investigations. Heidegger’s approach now became hermeneutical: an articulation, or working out, of human being from within its midst. His lectures ranged over an impressive range of topics: the beginnings of modern philosophy, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Plato’s *Sophist*, the nature and history of time, logic and truth, intentionality, the basic concepts of ancient philosophy, the history of philosophy from Aquinas to Kant, Kant, and the metaphysical grounds of logic. The question of the meaning of being was first formulated in stable form in his 1924