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DEUS EX MACHINA – AESTHETICS WITHIN THEOLOGY

THE CONCEPTS OF EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION IN HEIDEGGER'S *Contributions to Philosophy*

Parousia – “Ereignis”, “Wie”, “Wer”? Der Bezug zu ihnen
– ein kommendes.
– Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*.

Since its publication on the centenary of Martin Heidegger's birth *Contributions to Philosophy (Beiträge zur Philosophie)* has fascinated Heidegger scholars.¹ In what follows I aim to interpret this seminal work in the context of Heidegger's attitudes towards aesthetics and experience in *On the Origin of the Work of Art (1935/1936)*² and his early Freiburg lectures.

From *Contributions* one can trace Heidegger's later criticism of technique to the tension between the so-called authentic experience, *Erfahrung*, and inauthentic experience, *Erlebnis*. Heidegger's comments about the origin of the work of art relate to the hierarchisation of the experiences on the ontological level. The ontology is expressed through six different jointures, *Fügungen*, where the last one, the coming of the last god, remains enigmatic.³ The last

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy, (From Enowning)*, translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1999. *Beiträge Zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, GA 65, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1989. The first refers to the English translation and the second to the original.

² Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes (1935/1936)* in *Holzwege*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1980, referred to as *On the Origin*.

³ cf. Ben Vedder “Heidegger's notion of the Last God and Revelation”, Jean-François Courtine, “Les traces et le passage du Dieu dans les *Beiträge zur Philosophie* de Martin Heidegger”, both in M.M. Olivetti, *Filosofia della rivelazioni*, CEDAM, Milano 1994 and Constantino Esposito, “Die Geschichte des letzten Gottes in Heideggers “Beiträge zur Philosophie”, *Heidegger Studies*, Vol. 11, 1995.

god's coming is prepared by the authentic experience of Be-ing (*Seyn*), the essential swaying of Be-ing, as *Enowning* (*Ereignis*). *On the Origin* expresses this as the appearing of the original truth (*Alétheia*) in the relation between the work and the truth.

Contributions may have some value in explaining why French philosophers like Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Derrida now pursue the projects "the deconstruction of Christianity" and "the Christianisation of the world as globalisation" respectively. This also relates to Heidegger's "Christianisation of gods", in which the concept of "God" is distanced from his metaphysical or onto-theological sense. Heidegger considers theology in the original sense in which God does not ground ontology: God is understood in the relation to the sacred.⁴

I have chosen the name *Deus ex machina* to elaborate how Heidegger's argumentative structure in *Contributions* concerning the inauthentic experience (representation) has the meaning of machination (*Machenschaft*). This also leads, in conclusion, to the question of how Heidegger repeats, in *Contributions*, the structure of religious experience that he spoke of in his early Freiburg lectures in the twenties, about "ground experience" (*Grunderfahrung*) or "philosophical experience" in relation to what is lived through (*Erlebnis*) as experience.⁵ Heidegger obviously did not like the concept of lived experience and he was already critical of it in the famous 1919 *Kriegnotssemester*-lectures.⁶

I do not try to argue that the idea of the last god in *Contributions* comes simply out of the machine but that it is outside the logic or the circulation of the machination. This is more of a topological argument than simply a logical argument. It seems that God is more outside the machine, in contrast to Aristotle's definition of *Deus ex machina* as the dénouement of the plot: "Obviously,

⁴ The problem of determining the meaning of theology is not our concern here; for the theme and bibliography see Catriona Hanley, *Being and God in Aristotle and Heidegger*. Lanham, Bowman and Littlefield 2000. According to Heidegger's *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (1927) in *Wegmarken*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1978, theology is a positive science of faith as representation.

⁵ See Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. GA 60. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1995, 7-14, 303-309. The context for the notion of the holy and its experience is Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige* (1917). In *Phänomenologische Interpretation zu Aristoteles*, GA 61, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1984, 35-39 the distinction between philosophy as original experience and *Erlebnis* relates to *Ergreifen* as *Bekümmerung* (care).

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, GA 56/57, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1987, 75 ff. Heidegger discusses there a lived experience (*Er-lebnis*) which has a character of "own" event (*er-eignisse*).

then, the denouement of the plot should arise from the plot itself and not be brought about from the machine as it is in *Medea* and in the embarkation scene of the *Iliad*.⁷ The word *machina* (gr. *Mékhané*) had a merely theatrical meaning up to the 18th century, in contrast to that of a "machine" as developed for example in 19th century French literature.

For the Heidegger of *Contributions*, the gods have fled and the question should be if they will ever be back. This is by no means to say that for Heidegger the coming of God is a solution to philosophical problems or that philosophy is simply a plot in *Contributions*. Yet there seems to be a step or a transition to eschatological discourse (or to Bultmannian demythologising eschatology), which I will discuss after explicating Heidegger's argument in *Contributions*. One can question the place and the multiplicity of the gods as well as the eschatological aspect of Heidegger's structuring of time in its relation to the experience of the moment (*Kairos*).⁸ It seems that it is the coming which is grounded by the experience of art.

SITUATING CONTRIBUTIONS

Although *Contributions* is presented as Heidegger's most important book after *Being and Time* it should be noted that *Contributions* must be read along with the next volumes published in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, namely with *Besinnung* ("Mindfulness", GA 66) and *Geschichte des Seyns* ("History of Being", GA

⁷ Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, translated by James Hutton, Norton: New York and London, 1982. Aristotle continues: "The machine is to be used for matters lying outside of the drama, either antecedent of the action which a human being cannot know, or things subsequent to the action that have to be prophesied and announced; for we accept that the gods see everything. Within the events of the plot itself, however, there should be nothing reasonable, or if there is, it should be kept outside the play proper, as is done in the Oedipus of Sophocles" (*Poetica*, 15). The Latin term *Deus ex machina* comes from Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Françoise Dastur, "Heidegger et la théologie", *Revue philosophique du Louvain*, no. 2-3, Mai-Août, 1994, 241 refers also to the *Deus ex machina* meaning that in philosophy the God may solve the moral conflicts.

⁸ The "kairological" Heidegger is explicated by Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1993. See also Karl Lehmann, "Christliche Geschichtserfahrung und ontologische Frage bei jungen Heidegger", 142-144, in Otto Pöggeler (Hrsg.), *Heidegger. Perspektive zu Deutung seines Werkes*, Athenäum, Königstein 1984. Lehmann refers to Otto Pöggeler, *Denkweg des Martin Heideggers*, Pfullingen, 1963.

69).⁹ One should also note that if one considers *Contributions* as Heidegger's most important work along with *Being and Time*, this also means that *Being and Time* is then established as a homogenic work – the second part of *Being and Time*, as well as the third division of the first part, was not published. A lot of work has been done in the reconstruction of Heidegger's thought of the 20s and later.¹⁰ Even if *Contributions* is regarded as more than a “philosophical diary” or an erotic book,¹¹ the philosophical audience – even inside the Heidegger speaking Welt –, the translation of *Ereignis* (appropriation, event, occurrence of own-ing) as *Enowning* seems a little odd because it is not a proper English word.¹² It seems to suggest that the interpretation of Emmanuel Levinas is correct, i.e. the relation to the other in Heidegger, even as *Ereignis*, is derivative of the structure of *Jemeinigkeit* (mineness) and propriety.¹³ *Enowning* therefore means something like coming to one's own, having done my own thing or minding my own business. The coining of new words beginning with the prefix en- seems to be necessary for translating the family of certain German words like “eigen” and “ereigen” which Heidegger uses. The word *Seyn* is translated as *Be-ing*, as difference to *Being* as *Sein*, and the vocabulary of “wesen” and “wesung” is the form of the “essential sway or swaying of be-ing” (*Wesung des Seyns*).¹⁴

The importance of the idea of machination becomes more obvious when read in the context of Heidegger's subsequent writings during his “inner exile” in Nazi Germany. *Machenschaft* also has the connotation of “apparatus of the state and party”. In accordance with Heidegger's view, Western culture and Russia remained as metaphysical as Germany. It is another kind of future, the other beginning, or a futural eventness in which Heidegger is interested in his remarks about enowning. It also seems to be a repetition of the temporality of

9 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Robinson-McQuarrie, London, Blackwell 1962. Orig. *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen, Niemeyer 1927, *Besinnung*, GA 66, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1997 and *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1998.

10 Kisiel, *The Genesis and Karin de Boer, Thinking in the Light of Time. Heidegger's Encounter with Hegel*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2000.

11 Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger, Between Good and Evil*, translated by Ewald Osers, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. 1999.

12 The subtitle *Vom Ereignis* is translated as *From Enowning*.

13 cf. SZ § 12. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre nous. Essais sur penser-a-l'autre*, Grasset, Paris 1991, 207-209.

14 The co-translator Kenneth Maly prophetised that in a hundred years “enowning” will be a normal English word, Lecture at Villa Montesca 18.7. 2000, Collegium Phaenomenologicum on Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*.

coming (*parousia*) of “urchristliche Glaube” in living under the power of the Romans, which does not necessarily mean the repetition of Christianity as substantiality (onto-theological ground, the Church). In Heidegger’s critique of ontology as being a substance there is a place for a coming without a substantial being.¹⁵

ON INTERPRETATION: TWO MODES OF EXPERIENCE

The crux of my argument is first to explicate how these two modes of experience, namely innermost experience and lived experience, have a hierarchy. There are several distinctions in *Contributions* leading to the hierarchisation of experiences, starting from the authentic history of being and ending with art as representation and art as a preparation for the coming of the last god.

We are here examining more the constitution of these distinctions than simply saying that these distinctions, or if you wish oppositions, are untenable or problematic (of course they are). One can easily deconstruct the very distinction between innermost experience and lived experience, but it would not tell enough about the functioning of the distinction. Why is it deconstructable? The problem is not always in the distinction between authentic and inauthentic – experiences are always undifferentiated to the point of indifference but there is also the obvious example of the experience of impossibility, which is the basis of the vocabulary of the paradox of experience as *Unheimlichkeit*. It seems that there is already a doubleness at the heart of the very experience. The concept of *Er-fahrung* invites us to this kind of travelling, being in the path and being away, literary “itinerary” in the vocabulary of nearness and distance, or in the basic experience of the homely and the foreign that, at least in *Contributions*, builds up the Heideggerian discourse.

In *Contributions*, Heidegger says that *Da-sein* has the meaning of “being in-between”, or being-away, being at a distance from the authentic swaying of being. It could then be said, or it indeed should be said, that distance and nearness are already implied in the very notion of *Da-sein*, t/here being and being t/here. Heidegger even speaks of *Da-sein* in the manner of *Da-* and *Fortsein* when he says that Being away [*Weg-Sein*] means being-away-from [*Fort-sein*],

15 Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens*, 98-110. See Hent de Vries, “Formal Indications”, *MLN* 113, No. 3, German Issue, April 1998, 649-661.

which means *apousia* over *parousia*. Taking away means “taking away from” and “being-away is pursuing the closedness of mystery and of being, forgottenness of being” (212/301). He even goes on to say that “mostly and generally we persist in being-away, especially when we are ‘true to life’”, and this is the chias-matical relation to the inside where being-away is where *Da-sein* is (213/301).

For Heidegger the notion of being-away refers to *Dasein*'s being in terms of spatiality, nearness and distance. It is not necessary to point out the fallen-ness of *Dasein* and the equiprimordiality of authentic and inauthentic (as *das Man*) as it was put in *Being and Time*. The being-away is equiprimordial, even if we are true to life, and turned to ourselves. Contrary to *Being and Time*, *Dasein*'s relation towards death is also spatial and not only temporal. *Dasein* begins to look more like its own *Doppelgänger*, be it inauthenticity, fallenness, the body, the spirit, animality or the Human (*Mensch*).

If the notion of interpretation and its relation to hermeneutics was important to Heidegger in *Being and Time*, it has changed in relation to history and spatiality in *Contributions*. In *Being and Time*, *Dasein* has its own under-standing of Being in terms of temporality because there is the fore-knowledge of Being-in-the-World, where *Dasein* is an entity or a being. In *Contributions* it is not clear if there is such a Being-in-the-World because the authenticity is reserved for *Dasein* while inauthentic modes are for the masses in the sense of machination. Understanding relates to the essential swaying of the truth and it could be very well demonstrated that, when in *Being and Time* the understand-ing and the spatiality are submitted to the concept of time and temporality (as originality), in *Contributions* the moment of *Da* of *Dasein* and the moment of *sein* of *Dasein* are chiasmatically related in the spatiality of there and here being. This means to say that Heidegger has the concept of Space-Time, *Raum-Zeit*, in which the “there being” relates to temporality and “being there” to spatiality – there is an original ambiguity of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* which Heidegger reworks in *Contributions*.¹⁶

If you want a theory of understanding in hermeneutic terms, there is Heidegger's distinction between historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), authentic history on the one hand, and history (*Historie*), history in the conventional sense on the other. This authentic historicity is the history of Being, and from this point we have the possibility of the enowning as meaning the *Augenblick*, the moment of

16 Miguel de Beistegui, Lecture course on the “Fissure of Being”, 25.7 2000 at Villa Montecsa, Collegium Phaenomenologicum on Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*.

vision, or the momentary vision, where we can ask questions about the current position in philosophising in relation to the moment, to history and the meaning of Being. This becomes clearer in *Besinnung*, where the near and the far ground the truth (*Lichtung*) of being as the possibility of time-space and not actual time and space,¹⁷ and this relates to the *Augenblick* in the history of Being.¹⁸

Yet the step to history and attuning to the grounding tune means tuning oneself to the pessimism and the darkness of the times – the grounding attunement is reservedness – and this, in *Contributions*, makes Heidegger say that enowning is preserved for the few. Heidegger uses the Nietzschean rhetoric that nobody has yet understood me (another question is whether he was right, but this leads to the futurity of understanding).

There are many traces of Nietzsche in this book. There is a lot of criticism of metaphysics in relation to history, which Heidegger seems just to be repeating from Nietzsche – but, for example, the concept of will is not yet important for Heidegger.¹⁹ Already in *Being and Time* the exposition of history has its relation to the three modes (the monumental, antiquarian and critical) of history writing in Nietzsche's *Von Nutzen und Nachteil in Historie des Lebens*.²⁰ The famous epigraph of Heidegger's *Nietzsche*-book demonstrated the determination of the authentic experience of thinking in Nietzsche (*die sein Denken bestimmende Erfahrung*) and it seems that Nietzsche's experience as a thinker should at least be noted, if not explicated.²¹ If Nietzsche is a thinker close to Heidegger, one must also bear in mind that he is also the most distant in relation to the question of being.²²

It is obvious that the notion of the last god comes from Nietzsche's notion of the last man.²³ There are many interpretations of this notion, for example Maurice Blanchot's concept of the last man, *Le dernier homme*.²⁴ The last, the last man, is something that relates to nothingness, and as a finite being, also to infinity. The last is not just the last on the line, like a Nietzschean last

17 Heidegger, *Besinnung*, 115.

18 *ibid.*, 113.

19 This depends also of dating these notes - the famous lectures on Nietzsche were some years later.

20 Heidegger, *SZ* § 73-76.

21 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, 7. Pfullingen, Neske 1961.

22 de Boer, *Thinking*, 153-160.

23 cf. Vedder, *Heidegger's Notion*, 562.

24 Maurice Blanchot, *Le Dernier Homme*, Gallimard, Paris 1957.

sign as a transcendental signifier, but it is a limit-concept, a *Grenzbegriff*, a coming of a sign that limits in a temporal sense.²⁵

The problem of the coming of God springs from Hölderlin's poetry.²⁶ Hölderlin is understood here mainly as a thinker of the first beginning and as the opener for the other beginning. Hölderlin is the poet of the poets and as we remember from *On the Origin*, poetry is the highest form of art and even the destiny of the German people depends on their future ability to understand it. On the level of interpretation, the other beginning is the "kommender Gott" of Hölderlin's famous poem "Bread and Wine", where in the end of the third strophe the poet says that "Dorther kommt und zurück deutet der kommende Gott".²⁷ This should be interpreted as the dark times, much like the Hölderlinian night (*heilige Nacht*), the famous "dürftige Zeit", the time of distress in the end of the seventh strophe.²⁸ As a figure of the poem the night means also the drunkenness of truth and the coming of the morning, or that Dionysus stays behind as an evergreen leaf (*immergrünende Fichte*) on the Earth, with the redemption of night and day (*er söhne den Tag mit Nacht aus*). It is a peculiar mode of redemption combining both day and night together. Light and day should also be played in the phenomenological conceptuality of appearing, in the relation of the obscurity of Heraclitus,²⁹ and not only as the preparation for the other beginning which also means working through the night of the night.

ON MACHINATION: *Er-lebnis* AS NON-ORIGINAL AND REPRESENTATION

The notion of *Erlebnis*, which is translated as lived experience, obviously has a pejorative sense for Heidegger. First of all, in Heidegger's well-known interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology *Erlebnis* refers to the intentional consciousness where something is lived through. For Heidegger it designates an

25 Josef Simon, *Philosophie des Zeichens*, Berlin/New York 1989, 132-133.

26 see Miguel de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political. Dystopias*, London, Routledge 1998, 95ff.

27 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Leipä ja Viini/Brod und Wein*, Bilingual edition with two different translations into Finnish by Risto Niemi-Pynttäri and Teivas Oksala, Jyväskylä 1998.

28 Peter Trawny: "The Gods and the last God of Hölderlin and Heidegger", translated by Sean D. Kirkland, Unpublished paper.

29 Klaus Held, *Heraklit Parmenides und der Anfang von Philosophie und Wissenschaft. Eine Phänomenologische Besinnung*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1980.

object which is represented for a subject and lived through this re-presented experience in a subject's consciousness. This means that Husserlian intentional structures are grounded in the pre-knowledge of Being-in-the-World and not in the reflexive consciousness as a substance of presentification. In *Contributions Erlebnis* could be translated more like an adventure, as Daniella Neu-Vallega has suggested.³⁰ This means a cheap experience for Heidegger, "chasing an adventure", a mania for lived experience – he tends to speak about reading a newspaper compared to the experience of poetry.

There are numerous such examples of in *Contributions*, but they should also be elaborated in relation to machination because experience also has a relation to culture as politics. Lived experience is somehow inauthentic because it is caused by outer stimulus coming from the order of representation. The innermost experience is therefore not inner, because it is also primordial to the spatial and temporal distinctions, or to the Kantian conditions of possibility, namely the inner intuition of time and the external intuition of space. Heidegger speaks of machination and lived experience as the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) in terms of the familiar and unfamiliar:

Abandonment of being is strongest at that place where it is most decidedly hidden. That happens where beings have – and had to – become most ordinary and familiar. /--/ Abandonment of beings by being means that be-ing has withdrawn from beings and that beings have become initially (in terms of Christianity) only beings made by an other being. (77/110-111)

Christianity relates to the creation when the *ens creatum* is the cause of what is created. This leads to the misunderstanding of the creation of the work of art and experience in ontotheological terms. Perhaps the original Christianity, or the coming, has a more original relation with creation as we will see later. The abandonment means machination:

The abandonment of being means that be-ing abandons being and leaves beings to themselves and thus lets beings become objects of machination. (78/111)

There are two aspects to this abandonment as machination. First, it is a representational lived experience and then a refusal which I interpret as the innermost experience. Second, this machination is also necessary in the history of

30 Daniela Vallega-Neu, "Being and Time and Contributions to Philosophy", Lecture at Villa Montesca, in Collegium Phaenomenologicum 10.7.2000.

Being. One must remember that “guiding attunement” for Heidegger is a startled dismay which is a relation to this experience of machination as abandonment of being. It seems that this relation is expressed in a more neutral way in Heidegger’s later critique of technology,³¹ in which the relation of *Ereignis* and *Gestell* is closer to equiprimordiality than in *Contributions*.

And this live-experience [*Erleben*] which decrees that all of this should turn into a “lived experience” [*Erlebnis*], always into a larger, more unprecedented, more screaming “lived-experience”. “Lived experience” is understood here as the basic kind of machinational representing and of residing therein; “lived experience” means making what is mysterious, i.e., what is stimulating, provocative, stunning, and enchanting – which makes the machinational necessary – public and accessible to everyone. (76-77/109)

There is only a refusal – maybe by the élite – against this kind of representational machination. It happens first in the teaching of Nietzsche. For the chosen ones this is about hearing, the resonance of the echo, *Klang/Anklang* in Heidegger’s pseudo-musical language. He asks:

Do we grasp this important teaching [of Nietzsche] of the first beginning and its history: what is ownmost to be-ing as refusal, utmost refusal in the unrepresented openness of machinations and “live-experience”. Do we who are to come have an ear for the resonance of the echo, which has to be made to resonate in the preparation for the first beginning? (78/112)

Heidegger even expresses this abandonment, this machination and the abandonment of being by means of a table in chapters 63-66. *Machenschaft* is the domination of making and what is made. It means “making” in the sense of *tekhné* and *poiésis* and it also connotes *kinésis* and *nous*. On a deeper level, it refers to forgetting in the sense of the collapse of *alétheia* (92/132). One could easily see making (*machen*) in relation to the work of art and to producing. Heidegger is sceptical even if the times were not as dark as they seemed to be, living without the originary truth:

The coming together of machination and lived experience enclose within the singular enowning within the sheltered and concealed history of being. However, there is still no indication that the epoch has any awareness of it. Or must this awareness remain denied to this epoch, on becoming a truth – an echo of the truth of be-ing – for those already crossing. (93/134)

31 Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Neske, Pfullingen 1954.

Erfahrung AS THE INNERMOST EXPERIENCE OF BEING AND THE SWAYING OF BEING

The concept of the *Ereignis* is tied to the first beginning of philosophy (Western metaphysics) and to the other beginning, which is as necessary as the first. Experience (*Erfahrung*) means the repetition of the experience as a beginning (*Anfang*). The repetition is not simply a temporal line – not a new beginning but the other beginning (*Der andere Anfang*). The truth of Be-ing is grasped only through this repetition. There are certain moods for this beginning, in the meaning of the guiding attunements or tonalities, *Grundbestimmung*, which are (1) deep awe, (2) reservedness (3) and startled dismay. The tonality or the affection for the first beginning was the wondering (*thaumazein*) or the deep wonder (*Er-staunen*) and for the other it is deep foreboding, *Er-abnen* (ch. 6).³² The grounding attunements (reservedness, *Verhaltenheit* from which (1) deep awe and (3) startled dismay are derived) have nearly the same meaning as the moods or the dispositions in *Being and Time* but they are different.³³ They are plural – for Hölderlin the mood is the holy (*Heilige*) and for Nietzsche it is the ecstatic rapture (*Rausch*).³⁴ Heidegger repeats the same content of his thought provoking-argument in the six jointures (Echo, Playing-Forth, Leap, Grounding, The Ones to Come, The Last God) of *Contributions* but they differ from each other by the particular moods.

For Heidegger, the question of the *Ereignis* is the question of the possibility of the authentic or innermost experience contra the inauthentic experience, which is the abandonment of Being. This relates to the crossing, *Übergang*, to the other beginning, in the language of openness, sacrifice and decision.

But whoever is now still a creator must *have* fully enacted this retreat and have encountered that distress in order to have taken up into the innermost experience [*Erfahrung*] the necessity of the crossing – to be a transition and a sacrifice – and in order to know that this is precisely not

32 For *thaumazein* see Martin Heidegger, *Was ist das - die Philosophie?* Neske, Pfullingen, 1956. cf. Heidegger's lectures from 1937-1938, *Grundfrage der Philosophie. Ausgewählte "Probleme" der "Logik"* GA 45, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1984, 153ff.

33 About the moods see Jean Greisch, "Achinement vers sacrée", *Heidegger, Cahier de L'Herne*, 1983.

34 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* 1, 115 ff.

renouncing and giving up for the lost but rather the strength for a clear decidedness as precursor of what is essential. (80/114)

Heidegger also traces a genealogy of the concept of experience from the Greek *empeiria* to the Latin *experiri*, the cognate experimental science. This means that the sciences do not think philosophically, and he charts the whole history of experimental science from Aristotle through Bacon to the German Universities in the 1930s. The notion of experience has multiple meanings (Heidegger names at least five in chapters 77-80), which, according to Heidegger is to come upon something originally or thrusting towards something that thrusts towards one, as affection and sense perception. Yet the original experience is of course in relation to being as art.

THE WORK OF ART AS ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE

Contributions is one of the contexts for the *On the Origin*. In general it is no longer difficult to understand why Heidegger discusses art as a privileged example of enowning, because the re-thinking of art opens up for the other beginning. Heidegger wants to deconstruct traditional aesthetics. In *Contributions* he devotes only two sections to art, namely section 277: *Metaphysics and the Origin of the Work of Art* and 278: *The Origin of the Work of Art*. He determines the origin of the work of art as follows:

The question of the origin of the work of art does not aim at a timelessly valid determination of what is ownmost to the work of art, which could simultaneously serve as the guiding-thread for a historically retrospective explanation of history of art. This question is most intimately connected with the task of overcoming aesthetics and that means simultaneously overcoming a certain conception of beings as what is objectively representable. (354/304)

This is an example of machination: overcoming aesthetics means relinquishing the distinctions of form and matter, and of art as something in which the object reveals itself to a subject. This overcoming, which is already a Nietzschean term, *Überwindung*, is expressed in terms of historicity, that is the overcoming of metaphysics, because for Heidegger “overcoming of aesthetics again results necessarily from the historical encounter with the metaphysics as such”. Heidegger characterises this as authentic historicity, and the quasi-transcendental leap (*sprung*) to the first beginning which is also the other beginning:

Overcoming of metaphysics is, however, not discarding the hitherto existing philosophy but rather the leap to the first beginning, without wanting to renew this beginning – something that remains historically [*historisch*] unreal and historically [*geschichtlich*] impossible. (354/304)

Heidegger then specifies the preparation of the first beginning and the misinterpretation of classicist art as a repetition. What interests us here are the two experiences, the first of which is “the lack of art” (*Kunstlosigkeit*):

The lack of art here does not arise from incapacity and decadence but rather from the power of knowing the essential decisions through which that must pass which until now and seldom enough occurred as art. In the horizon of this knowing, art has lost its relation to culture; it reveals itself here only as an enowning of be-ing. (355/505)

Enowning relates to the experience of art. In the language of *On the Origin* this is exposed as the strife between the Earth and the World, which opens the relation to the “truth’s clearing” in great art. The essential sway of being happens in the enowning, that is in art – not just as an aesthetic cum experience as machination but as the innermost experience. Heidegger also elaborates on the question of art in more concrete terms:

Lack of art is grounded in knowing that the exercise of perfected capabilities – even according to the highest measures and models that have existed up to now – from out of the perfect mastery of the rules can never be “art”; that the planned furnishing for producing such that corresponds the heretofore existing “artworks” and their “purposes” can have wide-ranging results without ever forcing, out of distress, an originary necessity of what is ownmost to art, namely putting the truth of be-ing to a decision; that dealing with “art” as means for an operation has already placed itself outside what is ownmost to art and thus remains precisely too blind and too weak to experience the lack of art or even let it merely “count” in its power for preparing history and for being allotted to being. (335-336/506)

This passage could be interpreted as an opinion straight out of the Frankfurt School, for example in the sense of Benjamin’s thesis of reproduction or Adorno’s moralistic reading of art. It is clear that art is not an instrumentalistic or reproduced experience if we still value the authentic experience, despite the differences between Benjamin and Adorno. Heidegger speaks about the lack of art as negativity, and he is offering more than a phenomenological analysis of the conditions of a work of art:

Lack of art is grounded in knowing that corroboration and approval of those who enjoy and experience [*erleben*] “art” cannot at all decide

whether the object of enjoyment stems generally from the essential sphere of art or is merely an illusionary product of historical [as discipline] dexterity, sustained by dominant goal-settings." (355/505-506)

Heidegger only remarks briefly on the origin of the work of art in *Contributions*. He especially questions art-activity (in Greek art). He questions if "art" and being-active in it or a "letting what is ownmost to art itself first come forth" (356/506). This means an essential ground, the "origin of what is ownmost from within the essential swaying of being". Heidegger refers to the "High Greek time" as that of Pindar and contrasts it to Plato. At last it is the question of origin: "the origin is always historical in the sense that the essential sway is itself historical and has the character of enowning".

In the last chapters of *Contributions* Heidegger discusses Gods (ch. 279: *What about Gods?*) and the question of the origin of language (ch. 281). Experience then refers to an experience in which language is grounded in silence (*Schweigen*). This act of transparency leads to the original strife, which is closely related to the experience of art in *On the Origin*:

And insofar as language [is] ground of *Da-sein*, the measuring lies in this [Da-sein] and indeed as the ground of the strife of ground and earth. (359/510)

THE COMING OF THE LAST GOD. ESCHATOLOGY, PAROUSIA AND QUESTION OF MANY GODS

In *Contributions* Heidegger also discusses the inauthentic mode of art and modernity's conception of art in general as "culture-oriented politics". The experience of art refers to the authentic experience and the enowning as original experience in relation to the historical. This means that Heidegger introduces the last god as a saviour.³⁵ The last god must come from outside the economy or the circulation of machination. Like the excription of the coming God, to borrow a Nancyan term, God is always immanent in Being-in-the-World.

In *Contributions*, the questionable thesis of the old Heidegger is present: "only a God can save us" from technology. In other words, philosophy (general

³⁵ Trawny also points out how the figure of the saviour (*Versöhnender*) comes from Hölderlin's hymn "Friedensfeier".

ontology) can reflect science but science cannot think itself (regional ontologies). Heidegger hopes to reverse the position that there is the preconceptual basic experience of life before the scientific interpretation of the world. In the twenties this means philosophical basic experience, and in *Contributions* it is the preparation for the other beginning.

The other beginning involves the paradoxical process of coming and saving by the last god which needs machination or science. The possible reconciliation does not mean simply a redemption (*Erlösung*) but letting beings sway as beings. This seem to be always already out of the machine, *Deus ex machina*. In this section I try to work out Heidegger's notion of the coming of God. There seems to be at least three separate aspects: (1) the coming of God is not tied to presence; (2) Heidegger's argument about the temporality is a repetition of the question of the eschatology in the New Testament; (3) the "multiplicity" of gods refers to the Greek horizon but the question of the one or many God starts from a theological question: how to understand the different aspects of the holy Trinity?

I contend that Heidegger's argument is circular, as the presence in the foreknowledge introduces the coming as a non-presence. For Heidegger circulation is not a bad thing and repetition is necessary,³⁶ though this seems to be problematic in Heidegger's theory of aesthetic experience. If experience is derived from authenticity why does it come from futural experience? If experience is constituted as a repetition is it then necessary to repeat the same structure of experience, be it philosophical, aesthetic or religious (sacred/profane) mode of experience? There is a difference between the range of experiences but perhaps not enough difference between the structures of experiences.

1. Heidegger's eschatology of being in the deconstructed ontology differs from theological eschatology – it makes more sense to repeat the eschatology, or the experience of *parousia*. Here the miracle – be it the Greek miracle of tragedy or the Christian miracle of God – seems to be a *resemblance* to the outside of the circularity of a representational experience, which is not of course

³⁶ For example, Heidegger argues that curiosity in the Augustinian sense is in relation of authentic experience despite the different notions of ontology. Cf. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, 2. Augustinus und der Neoplatonismus, § 12 ff., De Vries, *Formal Indications*, 678ff. Curiosity is discussed in SZ § 36 in a negative way.

representational. In Nancyan terms it could be said that the miracle of the last god is: there is always a new god to be born.³⁷

Has Heidegger then posited this “bad” machination in contrast to authentic experience and representation? This makes sense in two different ways. First Heidegger sketches this situation (machinational representation and non-presentation) as not simply making a resolution. Secondly he makes his move as a supreme machination, which cuts both positions. This is based on the vocabulary of the nearness and the distance of God, as well as the vocabulary of the authentic *Er-fahrung*. God needs a distance from man in order to “save us” from technology. In fact the doubleness exists already in the experience itself (in contradistinction to inauthentic/authentic modes of experience). This pertains to the experience of poetry, which is present in Hölderlin’s experience, and the original swaying and enowning are in the innermost experience as the passing of the last god.

2. Heidegger says in *Besinnung* that gods are outside the eschatological horizon and that is why we have lost our attunement to being. To employ a proposition by Françoise Dastur this attitude could be called more “theoilogic” than theologic.³⁸ Heidegger speaks about the multiplicity of gods and the godfullness of gods (*Gottschafft der Götter*) but there still is the last god who fulfils the time-space of the truth of being.³⁹ I mean that this is the moment of *ek-stasis*, the thinking of historicity, the excription of being which is problematic and not specific to Heidegger’s circular argumentation. After Courtine it is well-known that Heidegger speaks about the passing of the last god and not of the presence of the last god, and also that the passing of the last god is not something of a *parousia* as being present.⁴⁰ This must be understood in temporal terms, and the recent discussion about the origin of Heidegger’s work, the futural temporality is already developed in *Phänomelogie des religiösen Lebens*, in which Heidegger discusses the Thessalonian letters of Saint Paul. The structural relation between the Christian “kairos” and the Heideggerian

37 Courtine, *Le passage de Dieu*, 532. He refers to Jean-Luc Nancy, *Les lieux divins*, T.E.R. 1987, 7.

38 Dastur, *Heidegger et théologie*, 239.

39 Heidegger, *Besinnung*, ch. 73 at 256. Earliest reference to gods is in *Grundfragen* (GA 45), 90.

40 Courtine, *Le passage de Dieu*, 1994, 527.

moment of vision (*Augenblick*) in relation to the “phronesis” has been studied widely in Heideggerian literature.⁴¹

What is at stake here is the notion Christ’s coming, *parousia*. Heidegger notes that *parousia* (presence, *Anwesenheit*) is other than the presence of being present. Hent de Vries summarises Heidegger’s argument as follows:

The structural change in the concept of *parousia* rather than the range of actual meaning throughout history is what interests Heidegger most here. The anticipation, if that is the right word, of the second coming of Christ is at odds with any idea of some future presence: its structure is a different one, namely the coming of what, in a way, *is already there*. And it is the formulation of this structure which can serve as a formal indication that may help us gain access to the radically other structure of the phenomenon of Christian hope.⁴²

Kairos, is this coming (*parousia*) but according to de Vries, this means an experience of a irreducible alterity for Heidegger. Heidegger seems to be repeating the Christian argument about *parousia*, but the “eschatological experience” is not the same. Maybe it is not so surprising, if one considers that, in the appendix to his lectures on the Thessalonian letters Heidegger notes that *parousia* is an event (*Ereignis*), in its relation to itself as a coming (*kommendes*). He asks where it is, what it is, in relation to the objective knowledge (*Erkennen*), and if this is really faith (*Glauben*).⁴³

Now, even if we would not go into the details of the discussion about the Heideggerian “formal indication”,⁴⁴ it seems possible that *parousia* and the *Ereignis* (as the coming of a last god) are structurally akin to formal indication, a formalisable relation without specific content as whatness (essence). This is close to Derrida’s attempt to explain the notion of general messianicity vis-a-vis the particular messianism, as a new eschatology contra the old one.⁴⁵

3. Nevertheless, these questions are tied to the question of the meaning of God. If the question of God is a philosophical question as it is in this context, this does not mean that it is simply a critique of Christianity but also of theological

41 Marlene Zarader, *La dette impensée. Heidegger et l’héritage hébraïque*, Seuil: Paris, 170-172, Lehman, *Christliche*, 141-144, de Vries, *Formal Indications*, 561.

42 de Vries, *Formal Indications*, 654.

43 Heidegger, *Phenomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, 149

44 Ibid, 60, De Vries, *Formal Indications*, 566-572, De Boer, *Thinking*, 88-93. The reference is to Kisiel’s argument in *The Genesis*.

45 see Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, Galilée, Paris 1993, 110-111. A critique for this de Boer, 149-350 n. 21.

metaphysics.⁴⁶ According to Hans Hübner, in view of Heidegger's theological background, speaking of God and gods also refers to the problem of Trinity.⁴⁷ The distinction between a Judeo-Christian monotheistic god and the multiplicity of Greek gods should not be taken simply as a question of a supreme Being. This remark – in a topological sense – could be easily derived from Nancy, who in the critique of various monotheisms says that they really are deism.⁴⁸

In the terms of the negative theology one could say that the distance of God from Man means the absence of God, the presence of the holy spirit and the coming of the son as a redeemer.⁴⁹ It could also be proven that this is not the way of experience in *Contributions*, but a return and a repetition of a concept of experience as distance and nearness, as an aesthetic experience. The problem is not only within authenticity itself, but also in its relation to the world as publicity. In Heidegger the vocabulary of experience seems to carry the meaning of experience as the presence of God without presence as an act of faith in which the “first” God is dead in the Nietzschean sense.⁵⁰ Yet it is an authentic experience that is on the level of faith, namely that of the *urchristianische* experience of faith.⁵¹ In the Roman world there was no place for expressing real faith as in the Christian religion.⁵² The model of the hierarchisation of the two aesthetic experiences, authentic and inauthentic, seems to repeat conceptions of the spiritual or the inner experience of the holy contra the mundane and worldly experience. This means that in Heidegger's piety of thinking there remains a thoughtful repetition of religious thinking without a repetition of hope. One wonders, if the experience of art really is derivative of the experience of the holy – for Heidegger, surely both derive of the experience of Being.

46 Hans Hübner, “Martin Heideggers Götter und der Christliche Gott: Theologische Besinnung über Heideggers “Besinnung” (Band 66)”, *Heidegger Studies*, Vol 15, 1999, 135

47 *Ibid.*, 139.

48 Nancy, *Les lieux divins*, 2-3.

49 Jean-Luc Marion, *L'idole et la distance* Livre de Poche, Paris, 1991.

50 Esposito, *Die Historie*, 52-53 speaks about the first and the last God in emphasising the plurality of gods.

51 Dastur, *Heidegger et théologie*, 225 explains Heidegger position in temporal terms. “Dasein” is in *Being and Time* projecting itself as temporal to its own possibilities but the Christian faith is not freely temporalised.

52 This is de Vries's argument, *Formal Indications*, 647-649, 658-663.