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— Meaning, That Demonic Hyperbole

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its basic job is to erase its own evidence
– Wagner 2010: 21

Introduction

The history of philosophy is made of a series of developments of previous ideas, which are conceptually legitimate as far as they are theoretically sound, i.e., susceptible of being undertaken after such ideas and in order to explore their implications. Therefore, these developments can be said to have been tacitly authorised by the authors responsible of the original ideas thus unfolded, although such authors might have never authored their development in turn: they might have regarded the unfolding of their ideas as deviations, and might have even protested against the authors of these. The structuralist principle that any work – as a crossroad of theoretical problematics and both explicit and latent concepts – *surpasses* its author (Althusser and Balibar 1970: 11-193) could be evoked here as well as the tension between the said and the *unsaid*, the thought and the *unthought* within the said and the thought that is distinctive of any philosophical work. In this essay, then, I should like to inquire into a particular idea that Heidegger *gives* to think in a number of his works, even if he does not explicitly author its development as it is found in the pages that follow.

      Accordingly, the main purpose of this paper is to clarify what type of *sameness* do being and human belong to when Heidegger writes after Parmenides: "Being belongs with thinking in the *same*," and, as a consequence, "[t]he human and being are both pervaded by a belonging-to-one-another" (Heidegger 2012: 111-114, emphasis added). With this in mind, I shall ponder whether their co-belongingness hints, above all, to a notion of *meaning* which remains elusive and thereby immensely thought-provoking. Heidegger labels such sameness a "dimension" (*Dimension*)[1] and an "in itself resonating

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[1] "Der Unter-Schied ist im höchsten Fall Dimension für Welt und Ding" (Heidegger 1985: 23). "Dimension": so too Hofstadter in Heidegger 2013: 200.

domain" (*in sich schwingende Bereich*),[2] among other designations. I will try to show, then, that this dimension is the *condition of possibility* of both being and thought, and that it is therefore beyond them.[3] I shall also attempt at qualifying this some~~thing~~ further. Moreover, this will allow me to put Heidegger into a fruitful conversation with ancient and modern thinkers like Plato, Wittgenstein, and Roy Wagner.

A Demonic Hyperbole

I will start with Kant, as from Kant onwards we have learned to recognise that what we know may not exactly be what there is. For Kant human knowledge and thought is determined and shaped by *a priori* forms of sensibility or knowledge, that is, by time and space, "under which alone things can be external objects to you" (Kant 2007: 79).

> What we mean to say by this, [is] that all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance; that the things which we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them as being, nor are their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us, and that, if we remove our subject or even only the subjective constitution of the senses in general, then the entire constitution and all the relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time themselves, would vanish. They cannot, as appearances, exist in themselves, but only in us. It remains completely unknown to us what objects may be in themselves and apart form all this receptivity of our sensibility. *We know nothing but our manner of perceiving* them, a manner which is peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, even though it must be shared by every human being. (Kant 2007: 75, emphasis added)

Things in themselves are therefore ungraspable because our thought has a form and everything that is experienced and thought falls into that form or is gathered by it. "Experience contains two very heterogeneous elements," writes Kant: "a *matter* for knowledge, derived from the senses, and a certain *form* according to which this matter is arranged" (Kant 2007: 113-114, emphasis original). This, actually, is how we "produce experience" (Kant 2007: 113).

      In short, the *a priori* forms of sensibility or knowledge are for Kant like a box *in* which we live, the walls *of* which we do not usually see. Similarly, in an ingenious

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[2] "Das Er-eignis ist der in sich schwingende Bereich […]" (Heidegger 1994: 126). Andrew Mitchell translates: "the realm, resonating in itself" (Heidegger 2012a: 118). Cf. Heidegger's use of the term *Gegend* ("region") elsewhere (1959: 40–42).

[3] As Hyland writes (merging Heidegger and Plato, to what we shall later return): "There is (*es gibt*) being, there is becoming. And there is the Good, beyond being, which indeed and almost literally gives both being and becoming" (2006: 20).

dialogue by Roy Wagner with his alter-ego Coyote in which the ethnographer aims at making patent the epistemological *décalage* existing between what we know and what we think we know, we read:

> Roy: "Thus if *thinking* really amounts to perceiving oneself to be perceiving through itself, then what we do every time we perceive is to perceive the act of perception, or, in other words, *represent* the seen to the seer. […]"
> Coyote: "[…] for *what* we see and *how* we see are one and the same thing."
> Roy: "We do not perceive but that we perceive the act of perception, a perception that *represents* itself to be the seen.
> […]
> Roy: "In other words, we see what we know but do not really know what we see […]." (Wagner 2010: 3–4, emphasis original)

Accordingly, the matter for knowledge and its form cannot be distinguished; hence indeed, as Kant says, "we know nothing but our manner of perceiving."

Now, independently from what Kant himself thought about Plato (Kant 2007: 666), Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, considered in reference to the issue of the forms of sensibility or knowledge, may be seen in retrospect as a continuation of Plato's gnoseology, since, arguably, Plato's "ideas" (εἴδη) play, too, the role of forms. For one would not be able to perceive what one calls "bird" if one were not to have a word and an idea for it; instead, such ~~bird~~ would stand out as "movement," "sound," or "heat," which is already saying too much, because these words, on their part, are also ideas. Therefore, Plato's question is the same as Kant's: *how do we achieve intelligibility and, moreover, what is (are) the principle(s) of intelligibility of the ideas themselves (that is, of knowledge)?* Thus, for example, by questioning what is beauty, justice, or virtue[4] Plato, rather than seeking a concrete answer, aims at drawing the *space of meaningfulness* from within which these and other similar notions arise. In *Theaetetus*, for instance, in order to understand what is knowledge, Socrates questions, among other things, our *understanding* of "judgement" (δόξα), "wisdom" (σοφία), and

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[4] "[T]he dialogues remind us […] that it is the stance of questioning – the life of questioning – that is more fundamental than the attractiveness of any of the possible answers. Questioning, it must then be said, comes *before* any possible answers occur to us and is the only genuinely philosophical *response* to the answers that so occur" (Hyland 2008: 134).

"justice" (δίκη), finally leaving us without definite conclusions.[5] Plato is aware that we all *know* what we mean when we use words like beauty, virtue or justice,[6] but by questioning our confidence in our preliminary knowledge of such notions, he consciously puts them in the space of meaningfulness in which they got born, thus making relevant the game that is always-already played when we employ them.[7] By going through this space of meaningfulness, Plato suggests in *Republic,* the interlocutors end up contemplating "the good" (τὸ ἀγαθόν), that is, *the good disposition that makes all ideas possible and meaningful*[8] – they end up, therefore, contemplating the most *elusive* notion of all, which shines onto all other ideas (and on the things themselves, through these) like light does, making them visible and available for thought. Hence, in Plato, the good is *the* transcendental condition of the knowledge of what is; in other words, it is the form under which all ideas and things *get* their meaning or beingness.

In "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (a 1940 text based on a 1931–1932 course at Freiburg) Heidegger thoroughly analyses the image described in Plato's allegory of the cave (*Rep*. 514a–521b) and quotes, among other passages, these two which serve to illustrate my point: (*a*) Socrates's brief comment on the role of τὸ ἀγαθόν vis-à-vis the known and the knower: "Thus what provides *unhiddenness* to the thing known and also gives the power (of knowing) to the knower, this, I say, is the idea of the good" (508e, emphasis added);[9] and (*b*) Socrates's further remark on the disclosive qualities of τὸ ἀγαθόν and its elusiveness: "In the sphere of what can be known, the idea of the good is the *power of visibility* that accomplishes all shining forth and that therefore is properly

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[5] This propaedeutic negativeness (no opinion should be uncritically relied on beforehand) of the elenctic method need not be interpreted as a positive negativeness (nothing can be known), as Antisthenes and the cynical school first, and to some extent the sceptic Academy later, did.

[6] "[W]e should realize that we already 'know' more than we can define" (Hyland 2008: 12).

[7] "[S]e trata de la insolencia consistente en que se vuelva o se quiera volver relevante aquello que en todo caso está ya supuesto y que, por lo tanto, siempre ya ha quedado atrás, digamos: que quiera hacerse relevante el juego mismo que siempre ya se está jugando" (Martínez Marzoa 1996: 19).

[8] Plato's τὸ ἀγαθόν is certainly not the moral good Ross describes (1951: 39–45). Heidegger (1988: 95–116) contends that τὸ ἀγαθόν should not be translated in "moral" terms. Yet, I should like to argue, τὸ ἀγαθόν is used by Plato in both ontological and moral terms, but "moral" must be understood here in a Greek rather than Christian or modern way, hence not as that which orders or commands and expects respect and obeisance in exchange or is appropriate and suitable for something, but as that which is good precisely because it allows things to shine forth into unhidden-ness, thus conferring meaning to human life, which would otherwise be doomed to deploy itself in an un-world of shadows.

[9] As per McNeil's rendering of Heidegger's own translation (Heidegger 1998: 173-174).

seen only last, in fact it is *hardly* (only with great pains) *really seen at all*"[10] (517 b-e, emphasis added). Consequently Socrates says that the good is "beyond being" (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, 509b), for if things *are* nothing safe when they are *something*, and if they are something only when we identify them as such by assigning to them such or such *idea* ("bird," "sunset," etc.), then *meaning* as the condition of possibility of the ideas that we make of things cannot be but *somehow* beyond the beingness of the things themselves which would not be apprehensible to us otherwise.

This, in turn, is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's approach to meaning in the *Tractatus*, especially in propositions no. 2.1: *"*We picture facts to ourselves" (Wittgenstein 2013: 9), which means that we determine what things are by turning them meaningful; and no. 2.172: "A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form; it displays it" (Wittgenstein 2013: 11).[11] That is, meaning *cannot* be depicted, cannot be included in its own picture, for it cannot be *one* of the things brought into sense and being, since it is the "Display*ing*" of sense. Ultimately, it is only through humour or "metaphor" (as per the term's etymology: to "carry across" or "beyond" [μετά-φέρειν]) that meaning can be *somehow* put into the picture it opens. Hence Wagner again: a picture "cannot […] depict itself, nor depict itself depicting itself, nor even depict others depicting it, for each of these would require a separate standpoint" (Wagner 2019: 24-25) from where to look at it, i.e., a dis-placed/un-placed perspective from which to see that which ordinarily cannot be seen. Such, Wagner goes on to say, "is the essential irony of what is called a sense of humour, for a joke is always about how its initial scenario got there in the first place, but then had to be explained (or unexplained) in the second place" (Wagner 2019: 25). Meaning, too, is an *initial scenario* of this kind, in fact *the* initial scenario, the picture within which *all* things make sense, the game that is always-already played and that has to be made evident by recourse to a perspective taken both "across" and "beyond" (μετά) what is ordinarily seen.[12] Thus, going back to Plato, Glaucon *laughs* at Socrates's aforementioned

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[10] McNeil's translation again (Heidegger 1998: 174).

[11] Cf. therein too no. 2.174: "A picture cannot […] place itself outside its representational form."

[12] Cf. Wagner (2010: 8): "metaphor is language's way of trying to figure out what we mean by it."

excessive statement (on the good being "beyond being") and says: "By Apollo, what a demonic *hyperbole*!" (Ἄπολλον […] δαιμονίας ὑπερβολῆς, *Rep.* 509c).[13]

In short, the questioning of meaning (in which the beingness of things is rooted), cannot avoid the demonic. "Δαιμόνια," writes Heidegger, "is used [by Plato and Aristotle][14] as an all-encompassing word for what is, from the point of view of the ordinary busy man, 'excessive,' 'astounding,' and at the same time 'difficult' […] [W]e may translate the τὸ δαιμόνιον ('the demonic') by 'the uncanny' […] [provided we think it as] the extraordinary" (Heidegger 1992: 100-101). Meaning, therefore, which Plato names τὸ ἀγαθόν, is a *demonic hyperbole*.[15]

Heidegger's Unsaid

Let's turn now to Heidegger. Heidegger's thought resembles Plato's in more than one aspect. While Heidegger's work is known for its intricateness and elusive topic (Sheehan 2014: 249–274), I contend that Heidegger's thought, at least from the time of the publication of *Being and Time* onwards, makes circles around a single subject, which he thematises variously by squeezing every bit of sense from the words he uses to circumvallate it, only to finally fail to nail it down. In search for the fundamental meaning *of* being, Heidegger ends up thinking *meaning* as such, even though this is

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[13] On the demons (or gods: δαίμων and θεός can be used indistinctly) as those who are capable of jumping beyond any human see Sophocles 1994–1996: 1298ff. Cf. Deleuze 1994: 37. See also Martínez Marzoa 1996: 125.

[14] Notice, though, that Heidegger's comment applies both to Plato's use of the term δαιμόνιος in *Rep.* 614b9 and to Aristotle's use of the term δαιμόνια in *Et. Nic.* 1141b, which Heidegger examines to *explain* the former (Heidegger 1992: 97-102).

[15] Even though Heidegger's "being" is, as Hyland (2006: 20-21) stresses akin to τὸ ἀγαθόν, Heidegger himself is keen at criticising the latter (see further White 1974; Gonzalez 2009). Heidegger complains that the good in Plato can be *known* at last: "As ἰδέα the good is something that shines, thus something that provides vision, thus in turn something visible and hence *knowable*" (1998: 174, emphasis added). For the good is also a supreme idea *among* (albeit above) other ideas. In contrast, throughout his work, Heidegger is careful to show that "being" (or rather "beyng," or rather "~~beyng~~," as I will argue later) can neither be *known* nor be *among* other beings. As a result, for Heidegger, Plato's τὸ ἀγαθόν is (1) too cognizable and (2) is not in the last instance sufficiently separated *from* all other ideas. Yet the injustice of Heidegger to Plato is patent from what we have seen so far: τὸ ἀγαθόν can neither be absolutely *known* nor be *among* other ideas. On the indeterminacy of Heidegger's being, cf. Haas (2015: 18): being must remain "indeterminable" and "indecidable" for Heidegger lest it be "forced into the *Gestell* of a [cognitive] contract" and its "gift" be turned into "exchange." It is perhaps for this reason, and thereby due to his critique of the modern *Gestell* (the "positionality" or "enframing" of everything that *is* in its presentness and readiness, on which see Heidegger 2012a) that Heidegger wishes to keep being indeterminate. Aside: I shall return to Heidegger's distinction between "being," "beyng," and "~~beyng~~" at the end of this paper.

perceptible only in between the lines.[16] And in that thinking he goes beyond "being," whose earliest instantiation in the history of philosophy, according to Heidegger himself, is linked to the semantics of the Greek word φύσις: "the self-opening coming-forth and emerging 'up' and upwards into an unconcealed standing-there and rising" (Heidegger 2018b: 14).[17] Heraclitus's frag. B123 reads: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, which Heidegger renders as "emerging loves submerging" (2018b: 88). That is, there is one side of emerging which is submerging. As Richard Capobianco writes, Heidegger's thought is indeed about being (φύσις) but it is *also* about that κρύπτεσθαι which I hold to be *meaning* or, from a slightly affective perspective, Plato's τὸ ἀγαθόν, i.e., the *condition of possibility* of meaningfulness (on which more below) that, in turn, makes particular things shine forth in their meaningfulness/being (or, again, "emerge 'up' and upwards into an unconcealed standing-there"). Still, there is no simple equivalence between meaning and being. First, being is in *need* of meaning, while meaning cannot be thought *without* being; hence, although they need each other, they are not one and the same thing. Secondly, whereas being is an abstraction, meaning is the abstraction *of* an abstraction: we *call* "being" the presencing of something into its unconcealed standing-there, and we *call* meaning the invisible noetical frame wherein such presencing takes place. In short, we use the word being to denote something somehow *physical*, and the word meaning to denote something *noetical*. Thirdly, meaning is not only, as I have just underlined, the space of meaningfulness wherein being/presencing takes place: it is also the *opening* of such space. And this, ultimately, is the human activity par excellence. Meaning, then, must be seen as the *human* essence. Heidegger points to it when he

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[16] I am building here on Sheehan (2015), to whose groundbreaking re-interpretation of Heidegger I shall return below.

[17] In φύσις what is perceived and how it is perceived *merge*, that is, things shine forth *before* us only when we see them as separate *things* which are meaningful. Again, what one calls a "bird" stands out as such only because we perceive it physically *and* meaningfully. A perception that were to stop where physical perception does would perceive only "movement," "sound," or "heat," which, as I mentioned, is saying already too much. In fact, the word "bird" is always embedded in its space of meaningfulness. As Eva Schuermann writes in relation to speech and sight (which is as closely interrelated with thought as with any other human way of perceiving): they "both […] operate as performative practices, the nature of which is to *discover* a pre-existing reality while at the same time *constituting* that reality" (2019: 8). Hence, for example, in contrast to the Europeans the Yekuana see the Amazonian crimson-crested woodpecker (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) to be their hero and first shaman because bright-coloured beings like the crimson-crested woodpecker, and dynamic social roles like those of the warrior and the shaman, belong in the same ontological category (Guss 1989: 118, 145). The Amazonian crimson-crested woodpecker is susceptible of shining forth differently to different peoples because the beingness of things is not separated from their meaningfulness. I thus make mine what Farin (2016: 120) calls Sheehan's "equation" of "being," "meaningfulness," and "world"; yet, at the same time, I shall try to prove that what I denominate by the term "meaning" goes beyond this equation.

writes: "Presencing *needs* the open of an illuminated clearing and is thus transferred into the ownership of the human essence" (2012a: 114); and also: "being essences and endures only in that it concernfully approaches [*an-geht*] the human. For it is the human, open for being, who first lets this arrive [*ankommen*] as presencing" (2012a: 114). In what follows, therefore, I will reserve the term *Meaning* (thus capitalised) for this *opening* of the space of meaningfulness in which things shine forth as what they *are*.

Heidegger's own distinction between "being" and "beyng" in the *Contributions to Philosophy* makes sense in this context. While beings *are*, Heidegger claims, "beyng" *is not* like any other being because it is not a being among other beings; in this respect, "beyng," paradoxically, *is* and is *nothing* at the same time: "From the perspective of beings, beyng 'is' *not* a being; it 'is' a nonbeing and so, according to the usual conception, nothingness" (Heidegger 2012b: 193). Yet, this "nothingness" has the *positiveness* of an act of giving, *it gives* in its quality as "allowing-to-presence" (Heidegger 1969: 6). Elsewhere, still using the more common term "being," he similarly writes: "Being *is* not. There is, It gives Being as the unconcealing; as the gift of unconcealing it is retained in the giving. Being *is* not. There is, It gives Being as the unconcealing of presencing" (Heidegger 1969: 6).[18] Hence there is the *occurrence*[19] of nothingness, which, according to Heidegger, remains, though, largely unthought: "In the beginning of Western thinking, Being is thought, but not the 'It gives' as such. The latter withdraws in favor of the gift which It gives" (Heidegger 1969: 8). Therefore, being is nothingness in so far as it is *not* a physical grand Being among, yet above, other physical but less important beings (like the onto-theological *Summum Ens*), but an essential *act* which, it can be furthermore argued, brings reality to its fullness. Accordingly, Heidegger asks:

> Is the latter [that which self-withdraws and essentially occurs as refusal] a nullity [*Nichtig*] or, rather, the highest *gift* [*Schenkung*]? Indeed, it is not primary on account of *this negativity* [*Nicht*haftigkeit] of beyng itself that 'nothingness' [*Nichts*] is full [*voll*] of that *assigning* 'power' the enduring [*Beständnis*] of which is the rising [*entspringt*] of all

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[18] I shall allude later to Heidegger's alternative use of the terms "being," "beyng," and "~~beyng~~."

[19] Not so much in terms of an instant as of an opening which *holds* what it opens (cf. Heidegger's use of the term *Beständnis* ["enduring"] in 2012b: 194) in the very same way in which its "giving" and "granting" ("It gives…") is not punctual but ongoing.

'fulfilling' [*Schaffen*] (*beings coming to be more fully* [*Seienderwerden des Seienden*])? (2012b: 194)[20]

"Beyng," then, is an "appropriating event [*das Ereignis*]" (Heidegger 2012b: 366)[21] in the sense that it needs to *appropriate* things in order to set "*itself off in relief* over and against [them *qua*] beings" (Heidegger 2012b: 366). Yet, it does not *own* anything but makes things what they *are*. Now, if "beyng" brings things to their fullness, it would seem that these can live out there, and hence be, without being, which of course sounds awkward. However, it sounds logical if "beyng" is, again, nothing but an *act* that opens and *clears* the space for the *gathering*[22] of what it appropriates. Drawing on Heraclitus's equivalence between such "gathering" (λέγειν) and the *locus* in which it takes place (ψυχή, as per frag. B45) Heidegger moreover identifies such *act* with the movement of our soul, and hence with something absolutely unseen (like the air we breath) and inseparable from us (like our shadow).[23] This looks to me as a strong additional reason to identify it with Meaning (or rather, then, Mean*ing*, since it is an act): the giving depth of human thought and the source of meaningfulness/being.

    As Thomas Sheehan writes: "we transcend things *not only* in the sense of already understanding their possible meanings and then returning to the things to give them meaning, but also and above all by being already 'beyond' things-*and*-their-meanings and in touch with what makes the meaningfulness of things possible at all […] [W]e in fact *are* […] the thrown-open clearing […]" (2015: 148). That is, we *are* the *act* of opening and clearing the space for gathering of what we appropriate (i.e.,

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20 I have slightly modified Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu's translation, which reads: "Is the latter a nullity or, rather, the highest gift? Indeed, it is not primary on account of *this negativity* of beyng itself that 'nothingness' is full of that *assigning* 'power' the enduring of which is the origin of all 'creating' (beings coming to be more fully)." My reasons are two. First, rendering *Schaffen* by "creating" obliterates Heidegger's Heraclitean-like wordplay: *Nichts* ("nothingness"), *Nichtig* ("nullity"), *Nighthaftigkeit* ("*nega*tivity") / *voll* ("full"), *Schaffen* (to "do," to "fulfil"). Second, rendering *entspring* by "origin" and *Schaffen* by "creation" loses sight of the "enduring" (*Beständnis*) *giving* and *fulfilling* activity of that nothingness, which is evidently what Heidegger intends to stress. The expression "that which self-withdraws and essentially occurs as refusal" is however theirs.

21 For a discussion on the etymology, use, and translation of the word *Ereignis* in Heidegger, see Polt 2006: 72-76; Sheehan 2015: 232-234.

22 As Heidegger observes, λέγειν in its most original sense means "to harvest"; and λόγος, therefore, the "harvest" which "contains safeguarding within itself as its prevailing fundamental trait" (2018b: 203–204). Humans *gather* by making meaning (what amounts to thinking) *within* a space of meaningfulness (that is, in a world) that in turn springs *from* the (fulfilling) nothingness/opening/It which is, on its part, the very *possibility* of having any world of meaning at all.

23 On the equivalence between souls and shadows, see Wagner 2010: 49-50.

those things which obviously would live, biologically or not, even if humans were not there to point at them, name them, and think them). And in so far as we are that act, we *belong* to the clearing, which *makes* us who we are. Meaning, therefore, must be viewed as the special *way* in which humans perceive; as Roy Wagner says, "[i]t is our own mirror image, and we, perhaps, are its" (1986: 5).

Meaning: The Primordial Chaos

As we have seen, *what* is perceived and *how* it is perceived are one and the same thing, which amounts to say that perception and meaning go together.[24] Therefore, what *is* is determined by the space of meaningfulness, which equals to say that our *comprehension* of things is circumscribed by a "world": the "meaning [of particular things] giving context" (Sheehan 2015: 11). While, as Ingo Farin notes, Heidegger "nowhere affirmed or exposed" the formula "world = meaningfulness = being" (2016: 120), it can be argued that the so-called "ontological turn" in anthropology does it for him instead. The refinement of anthropology's traditional method of inquiry over the past two decades or so has led anthropologies to ask, rather than take for granted, what *are* the peoples and things they study (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 7–9). For what *is* is often different, say, for the Yanomami, the Warlpiri, the Ngoni, and the Europeans. In other words, anthropologists have come to realise that, before describing anything at all, they first need to understand (or try to, as it is an effort that requires to go out of one's own world of meaning to catch a glimpse of the other's)[25] "what *is* a thing, what *is* a person, and what *is* their mutual relationship" (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 3); thus, "[t]he ontological turn is not so much a matter of 'seeing differently' […] It is above all a matter of seeing *different things*" (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 6). The universe bursts

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[24] If one enters the domain of the nonlinguistic body by meditating and concentrating on one's sensations, one enters into what can be called the 'unknown,' because many sensations do not actually point to anything in particular (a table, a cat, the heat of the sun, etc.) and thus resist the assignation of meaning. But even in such cases it can be argued that one takes distance from one's own body so as to be able to *observe* sensations due to one's immersion in being, that is, it is only because the sensations *are* for us, that we can meditate or concentrate on them. Additionally, one would not be meditating in the first place if sensations were not to appear to one in their meaningfulness (in whatever way) through a meaningful practice. Therefore one cannot escape being and meaning even when one is silent or empty of thoughts, as humans live in what *is* and not in what *is not*, and meaning is not simply making meaning of this or that (which happens in the space of meaningfulness) but is a permanently open *possibility* of making any sense at all (which is what I call Meaning).

[25] Cf. Viveiros de Castro: "anthropology is always about sticking one's neck through the looking glass of ontological difference" (2014: 18).

into a pluriverse, where, paraphrasing Wittgenstein,[26] the meaningful space I have called "world" (which is always determined by language) is the limit of anyone's reality.[27]

Yet in contrast to the world or meaningful space, Meaning is, as I have underlined, both the *precondition* and the *opening* of such space. Returning to Plato for a moment: when he draws the space of meaningfulness where the beingness of things and ideas appears, he also ventures further into the *giving* itself of that space: into τὸ ἀγαθόν, that is, into "*why* there is meaningfulness at all" (Sheehan 2015: 228). Arguably, this is very close to what Wittgenstein suggests when he says that the "mystical" (which, etymologically, connects with what cannot be seen [Beekes 2010: 988]) "is not *how* the world is but *that* it is";[28] albeit it is not absolutely knowable, we can somehow *think* this giving. I call this *unbounded* (in contrast to the bounded world) dimension the primordial *chaos*, or what Drew Hyland translates as a "'gap,' a 'yawn,' a 'separation'" (2006: 10):[29] the *reservoir* of all thought and possible meaning.[30] Similarly, in Plato, τὸ ἀγαθόν *is the disposition that is the condition of any possible world of meaning* (as without it nothing would make it into a world) *that in turn gives meaning to encountered things*; therefore τὸ ἀγαθόν is *nothing* but the difference that produces all possible world(s). Hence Hyland writes: "If the Ideas (at least, the other Ideas) are being, […] what is the being-status of the Good as *not being* (*ouk ousias*) *but beyond*

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[26] Wittgenstein (2013: 68, §5.6): "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

[27] What applies spatially (synchronically) to different cultures, applies too historically (diachronically) to different cultural epochs. The aforementioned notion of "worlds" as different disclosures of being or varied openings of the space of meaningfulness, can therefore be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Heidegger's "epochs" of being, each of which inaugurates a different truth/disclosure of being. Heidegger: "What is history-like in the history of Being is obviously determined by the way in which Being takes place and by this alone […], this means the way in which It gives Being" (1969: 8). Bizarrely, Heidegger claims that human worlds are determined by the autonomous giving of the "It," which seems to require a credo I do not profess. On Heidegger's epochs of being, see further Heidegger (2015c); see also Tonner (2015). Cf. too Schelling (2000).

[28] Wittgenstein (*Tractatus*, §6.44), as per Hatab and Brenner's translation (1983: 25). Cf. Livingston: "This can be put as the question: What does *the very existence of language* have to do with the *nature of the world* it seems to bound? And what does it mean that the structure of language, which seems to set the very boundaries of the possibilities for speaking of facts and objects and hence determine what we can understand as the world, can again be thought (whether logically, grammatically, or historically) and even experienced *within* the world so bounded? Without overstatement, it would be possible to say that this is the question that links twentieth-century linguistic philosophy, in its specificity, to all that has formerly been thought under the heading of transcendence and the mystical" (2016: 228-229, emphasis original).

[29] Translating χάος as "yawn" and "opening" is a very sound option indeed (Beekes 2010: 1614).

[30] Compare El-Bizri 2004, who approaches the Heideggerian *Seinsfrage* to Plato's notion of χώρα in the *Timaeus*.

being? We need not answer that question here in any further detail than to say, *different*. Perhaps even difference itself, so long as we understand that it is a difference characterized by […] [an] excessive power (*dynamis*)" (Hyland 2006: 20).[31] Heidegger does not expressly think in Plato's terms, but I nevertheless read Heidegger's claim in his *Black Notebooks* to go "above […] φύσις–ἀλήθεια […] [so as to] *ground the domain of the open* [*offene Stelle*] as such" (Heidegger 2014: 241, emphasis original, my translation), as well as his crossing out of being (= ~~beyng~~) also in the *Black Notebooks* and elsewhere (Heidegger 2004: 385-426; 2009: 319; 2015a: 218, 372-373; 2018a: 35, 145; 2019: 37), as an attempt to think the aforementioned "resonating domain" and "difference" which, he says, is "*the* dimension" (Heidegger 2013: 200) that "lets the human and being *belong* in a togetherness [and] […] achieve their essencing [*ihr Wesendes*]" (Heidegger 2012a: 118). The human and being (*qua* world and meaningfulness) belong to a permanently-open-*possibility*-of-making-any-sense or simply Meaning, or chaos, or difference that is the primordial *source* of any worlding and essencing.[32] This, moreover, can help to explain the fact that Heidegger thinks meaning itself as a silence that gathers and speaks yet without uttering a word. "Language speaks" (*die Sprache spricht*), he writes; and adds:

The sentence, "Language is language" [*Sprache ist Sprache*], leaves us hover over an abyss as long as we endure what it says. […] If we let ourselves fall into the abyss denoted by this sentence […] [w]e fall upward, to a hight. Its loftiness opens up a depth. The two span a realm in which we would like to become at home, so as to find a residence, a dwelling place for the life of man. (Heidegger 2013: 188–190 [English]; 1985: 10–11 [German])

Language thus *delimits* a "world" of meaningfulness (Wittgenstein) whereas Meaning is that *creative* "abyss" (Heidegger) that is the origin of language. Yet falling into such depth is nearly impossible, as we are always constrained by one or other space of meaningfulness even when we do not speak; nonetheless hearkening to it is possible (Heidegger 1976). Poetry does exactly this, for, as Lawrence Hatab and William Brenner put it, "poet[ry] is especially attuned to this mysterious background," in the sense that it "makes us see that there always remains something that cannot be said; and in so doing, in its care for the inarticulable, poetry protects the power and meaning of

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[31] Notice that Heidegger also speaks of an "assigning power" (see n20 above).

[32] Cf. Hatab and Brenner: "For Heidegger, the world is not grounded on *anything*; it emerges out of an abyss (*Ab-grund*)" (1983: 27).

speech" (Hatab and Brenner 1983: 35), i.e., its concealed *super-abundance*. It is also in this way, on the other hand, that a Yanomami shaman listens to the ordinarily invisible dimension of the forest "in the silence of the night" (Kopenawa and Albert 2013: 405).

Again: "Being belongs with thinking [or human] in the *same*," says Heidegger after Parmenides; that is, it is only by belonging in *attending* to the disclosure of being that calls us, that we can listen to Meaning, which in turn makes us who we are. For the earth shines forth as φύσις because we make sense of it, and by making sense of it we make a world out of it.[33] By going beyond being (φύσις or ἀλήθεια) we somehow enter, if intuitively, the primordial source of everything that *is*, we somehow open our eyes, if blindly, to the eye that sees but cannot see itself[34] – so as to return to being renewed.

Final remarks

It is fair to hold that Heidegger's thought moves through several stages and around a rich number of issues, but that, overall (that is, if one considers not only the totality of his work, but also the three distinctive layers within which his writings can be distributed), Heidegger's major concern has to do with the metaphysical reduction of the "presencing" (*Anwesung*) to the *actualitas* or being "present" (*Gegenwart*).[35] Heidegger therefore wants to rethink the presencing of what (by that presencing) is, and he (initially) names it "being" (*Sein*) (Heidegger 1996, *passim*). Moreover, Heidegger sees the Presocratics as those who have *somehow* (and this somehow will prove essential, for it is on account of it that Heidegger will finally distance himself from them) thought the presencing that cannot be reduced to presence through the interplay of such notions as φύσις, λόγος, or αλήθεια.[36] Finding himself thus in an ancient, and mostly obliterated throughout the history of metaphysics, domain of thought (which he calls "incipient thinking") (2018b: 2017). Heidegger consequently re-names being as "beyng" (*Seyn*),

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[33] On "earth" as "the spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing," and on "world" as "the self-disclosing openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of an historical people," see Heidegger 2013: 47. I have written on it extensively in Gevorkyan and Segovia 2021.

[34] "[T]he eye is never included in its own field of vision" (Wagner 2010: 4).

[35] As it can be easily deduced from one of his latest, and in fact key, writings: "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," collected in Heidegger 1969: 55-73.

[36] Already in his 1932 lecture course on Anaximander and Parmenides (Heidegger 2015b). Richard Capobianco (2014) discusses this Greek line of Heidegger's thought. See also Hyland's edited volume on Heidegger and the Greeks (2006).

i.e., with an archaism. Yet in order to make beyng's difference vis-à-vis beings all the more emphatic, Heidegger, at some point, goes – as I have mentioned – as far as to cross out beyng: "~~beyng~~" (*~~Seyn~~*). This important move, though, is taken by Heidegger mostly in his esoteric (i.e., non-public) writings, especially in the *Black Notebooks*. My contention, then, is that Heidegger's aforementioned rejection of φύσις may be seen as a *parallel* move to this crossing out of being, since Heidegger takes φύσις to be the oldest instantiation of being we know of, and hence as being equal to what he hints at with the term "beyng."

Yet, at the same time, by exploring further Sheehan's view that, in all this, Heidegger is actually thinking meaning(fulness) – which Sheehan himself links to the openness of human ex-sistence (Sheehan 2015: 133–153)[37] – I have attempted at showing that by deviating our attention from "beyng," Heidegger points to Meaning, or to what he himself calls the grounding (or opening) of the domain of the open (or meaningfulness). Apart from a close discussion of τὸ ἀγαθόν in Plato, I have also found that Heidegger's tacit quest for meaning is not alien to twentieth-century thought. Wittgenstein's fundamental concern, Jacobo Muñoz and Isidoro Reguera hold, revolves around the "speakable" and the "unspeakable," or the "speakable" and the "demonstrable" (Muñoz and Reguera 1987: ix). Similarly, drawing on Wittgenstein's philosophy, Wagner's anthropology of meaning focuses on the chiasmatic relationship between meaning's elicitation (or Meaning) and its containment (or meaningfulness) (Wagner 1972: 4–8).[38] Other examples could be adduced as well, e.g., Merleau-Ponty's approach to the giving and gathering nature of meaning in *The Prose of the World*, where he describes the latter as a supplement to (literally, as a "transmutation" of) perception, as that which is "nowhere *in* the words" and as the "net" that must be kept once these are removed from it like "fishes" (Merleau-Ponty 1973: 47–48, 88–89); or even Deleuze's take on sense and nonsense in *The Logic of Sense*, which, as Eugene Young underlines, turns around the "intangible nature of sense" as a dimension supplementary to denotation and signification (Young 2013: 279), and of "nonsense," in

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[37] His reasoning seems to me to be somewhat circular, though, as it explains one type of openness (meaning) by recourse to another (existence), which, in the last instance, can be viewed as different names for one and the same thing.

[38] On the relevance, and the implications, of blending today philosophy and anthropology, see Charbonier, Salmon, and Skafish 2017.

turn, as a causal supplement to sense,[39] which Deleuze thus regards as the "effect" of nonsense (an "effect of surface," a "positional effect") (Deleuze 1990: 70). Once and again one comes across the same thing: that which escapes, eludes, resists one's grasp. Ultimately, then, the topic of discussion behind all this is *thought* itself: "Thinking 'about' thinking," writes Heidegger, "is like reflection on reflection: it circles emptily around itself and detaches itself from all matters and things" (Heidegger 2018b: 151). And are not these words those that best describe his overall project? "Thinking," however, he says elsewhere, "must first learn what remains reserved and in store for thinking to get involved in. It prepares its own transformation in this learning" (Heidegger 1969: 60).

My suggestion, then, that Heidegger's thought targets Meaning, is, I think, an entirely sound possibility. One not less legitimate – that is, authorised by the inner logic of Heidegger's thought, even if Heidegger himself never expressly named it as such – than the option of re-conducing Heidegger's "~~beyng~~" back to German mysticism (Moore 2019) or sideways towards Zen Buddhism (May 1996: 21–34). And certainly one not less legitimate than that option of rereading it in deconstructive fashion, be it post-structuralist (Derrida 2001: 97–192, 351–370) or speculative-realist terms (Harman 2002).[40] All these various developments, which evidently Heidegger never undertook, must be seen precisely as what they are: developments authorised albeit not authored by Heidegger, developments that inquire into the unsaid implications within/behind what Heidegger explicitly said. My own proposal stands, therefore, alongside these developments as just another possibility of figuring out the unsaid in Heidegger, as just another chance to go from Heidegger beyond Heidegger himself.

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[39] "[N]onesense enacts a *donation* of sense" (Deleuze 1990: 69).

[40] For a criticism of Harman's object-oriented philosophy in relation to Heidegger's thought, see Gevorkyan and Segovia 2020.

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