

the field of animal studies and will hopefully garner equally thoughtful responses.

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Ian Alexander Moore, *Eckhart, Heidegger, and the Imperative of Releasement* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2019).

Ian Moore's book is an erudite investigation of the way in which being, thinking, and method are interrelated in the work of Meister Eckhart and Martin Heidegger. In terms of careful, rigorous philosophical and philological argumentation, as well as archival research, Moore's monograph is exemplary. While it offers various thought-provoking threads, I will focus on two of the most important themes that Moore raises, which have the immediate potential to spark further debate in both Eckhart and Heidegger scholarship: (1) the imperative mode of thinking (or what Moore, following Reiner Schürmann, calls the "practical *a priori*") (xiv, 28–9); and (2) the middle-voice happening of releasement (which Moore associates with Heidegger's notion of the event [*Ereignis*]) (xvi; see also 123).

"You must become who you are": this phrase provides an important insight into the imperative mode of thinking (see 61–80). This mode of thinking has provided contemporary philosophical scholarship with a different understanding of the manner in which the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge is to be conducted. According to this mode of thinking, the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge cannot be fulfilled by way of theoretical statements understood solely in an epistemological register (28). Rather, this pursuit requires that the relation between theory and practice is understood in conjunction with the practical *a priori* (see 64). That is, Moore writes, "in order properly to understand being, one must first engage in the proper *activity* of thinking. This activity will, in turn, reveal being to be the same as that very activity" (xiv). Moore's book is cognizant of the way in which the practical *a priori* is brought to the fore in Schürmann's reading of Eckhart, which prefigures the former's engagement with Heidegger (64; see also 36–7).

So, the practical *a priori*, for Moore, also highlights the connection between being and thinking: how one *is* (being) affects how one *thinks* (thinking) (see, e.g., xvii). Moore thus brings the third component of his study to the fore, namely method. If being and thinking refer to the content of wisdom and knowledge, method refers to the form in which their pursuit takes place (see, e.g., 92–3). However, if we were to re-inscribe the three themes of Moore's book into the usual categories of form and

content, the point would already be misunderstood. Thus, the notion of method is perhaps best understood as a path or guide to action, which can only be brought forth by the one who already undertakes the action (93). For, as Moore, following Heidegger, points out in the introduction to part 3 of his book, method, understood in the original Greek sense, is a way of awakening the thinker in ourselves, and setting us on the path on which both the event of being and thinking take place (*ibid.*).

To show how being, thinking, and method are related in Eckhart, Moore turns to the way in which Eckhart sets the practical *a priori* into play in his sermons and tractates (see, e.g., 54–6, 61–80). The most convincing account of these practical *a priori* strategies occurs in chapter 4, “Eckhart’s Strategies for Cultivating Releasement” (81–7). Moore shows just how different Eckhart’s view is from that of the typical Scholastic philosopher, in which the connection between being and thinking was generally understood according to a neo-Platonic framework of God’s transcendence (see, e.g., 9, 15, 36, 39, 40–2). Eckhart’s position is exceptional due to his attempt to push beyond this common Scholastic framework of being and thinking. By challenging the traditional ways of thinking through exhortative or imperative strategies (e.g., dialectical logic, paradoxes, and alternate translations), Eckhart forces us to wrestle with the ties of being, thinking, and method, which are gathered in the imperative of releasement (see 82, 85, 86–7). Thus, as Moore writes, Eckhart “repeatedly emphasizes” that we cannot hope to learn anything about releasement without ourselves becoming released (81; see also xiii).

While the theme of being and thinking is familiar to readers of Heidegger’s work (especially when it comes to the original interpretation of the Greeks, particularly of Parmenides [see, e.g., 93, 115]), Moore also describes, with Heidegger’s reading of Eckhart, the additional relevance of method in Heidegger’s pedagogical strategies. Heidegger’s pedagogy, Moore argues, puts into play the same kind of logical, discursive, and rhetorical strategies employed by Eckhart to demand the reader to become involved in the movement of thought and action that is required for the disclosure of the relation between being, thinking, and method (93–4). By recognizing the intrinsic connection between being, letting-be, and releasement, Moore highlights the way in which Heidegger genuinely appropriates Eckhart’s own philosophical method (97–100, 102). Moore reminds the reader that Heidegger was aware of this imperative dimension of philosophical thinking, which drew him to Eckhart’s work toward the end of his life (139–40).

In chapter 3, “Become Who You Are: The Oneness of Thinking and Being as Releasement in Eckhart’s German Writings,” Moore examines the ways in which releasement or letting-be (*gelâzenheit*) figure in Eckhart’s

work. According to Moore, “releasement” in Eckhart’s writings refers to the verbal and generative way in which this fundamental event takes place (75, 79). However, it is only when Moore attends to Heidegger’s writing that he can further elucidate the event-like structure of releasement. Moore argues in chapter 5—“The Middle Voice of Releasement in Heidegger’s Lecture Courses, 1928–30” (97–109)—that Heidegger’s use of the term *Gelassenheit* should be understood in the middle voice (as opposed to the active or passive voice). *Gelassenheit* refers to an event in which the distinction between subject and object is blurred (97–9, 100–2). For Eckhart, Moore writes, “To unfold being as letting-be, I must let be. I cannot understand being without undertaking the thoughtful activity of letting-be. And what is revealed thereby? That the essence of being and of my being is letting-be” (64). It is this event-like understanding of the middle voice of releasement that Moore identifies with Heidegger’s preoccupation to think the connection between being, thinking, and method. It is with the event of releasement that things are *what* and *how* they are, as well as the *way* through which this event can be *thought* (132).

Beyond its significant theoretical contribution to Heidegger and Eckhart scholarship, Moore’s monograph also includes three appendices and a lengthy bibliography (283–316), which are required reading for anyone interested in these topics. In “Appendix One: Materials on Heidegger’s Relation to Eckhart” (145–90), Moore provides a list of references to Eckhart in Heidegger’s work, Heidegger’s marginalia on Eckhart, testimonies by other philosophers on Eckhart’s importance to Heidegger, and editions of Eckhart’s works owned and consulted by Heidegger. Appendices two and three provide two previously untranslated essays on Eckhart, both by Heidegger’s former students: “Essentiality, Existence, and Ground in Meister Eckehart,” by Käte Oltmanns (191–4), and “Nietzsche’s Zarathustra and Meister Eckhart,” by Nishitani Keiji (195–218), respectively.

Finally, I would like to tug on some of the threads that Moore leaves open in the conclusion of the book (139–43). For example, his call to dedicate future research to Eckhart’s an-archic ethics is welcome and timely, and would allow us to rethink our understanding of ontology and its ethical implications (see 142). Furthermore, future work on Eckhart’s an-archic ethics would continue the work that was started by Schürmann, whose interpretation of Eckhart extends beyond Heidegger’s reading. Moore’s book should be read as an invitation to further develop the connections between being, thinking, and method, since these themes appear in the entirety of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*. One of Moore’s crucial insights is that Eckhart’s texts interrupt Heidegger’s epochal understanding of history by introducing a non-epochal or infra-historical sense of being (141). Although there is much work to be done

on Heidegger's notion of the event as it relates to his understanding of the history of being, Moore's monograph is a significant contribution to the vibrant and exciting contemporary scholarship on Heidegger, which combines rigorous exegetical and archival research with original readings of Heidegger and the historical figures from whom he draws.

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