

ART, AUTHENTICITY, AND UNDERSTANDING

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1. Introduction

There is a spectre haunting post-Kantian philosophy – the spectre of its possibility. Kant’s inquiry into the ‘transcendental’ conditions of the possibility of knowledge left lingering questions as to how inquiry into such conditions could be possible, what the subject matter of such an inquiry would be, and, indeed, whether there are transcendental conditions in Kant’s sense – universal, necessary, and a priori conditions of knowledge – at all.

Kant’s reception is marked by an immediate response pressing him on precisely these points, among them Reinhold’s sympathetic attempts to provide a first principle justifying Kant’s claims about our cognitive faculties,¹ and Schulze’s skeptical doubts that any such attempts at justification could succeed.² German Idealism is born in Fichte’s attempt to answer these questions in the form of a self-grounding ‘science of knowledge’, a foundational ‘science of science’ which need not suppose anything prior to itself, beginning as it does with a supposedly *absolute* first principle, the act of the self-positing I.³ Not long after the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hamann gives us a label for the problem of accounting for the possibility of critical philosophy itself, calling it ‘metacritique’.⁴

Early 20th century debates over the possibility of ‘metaphysics’ are direct descendants of the debate over metacritique, and share a family resemblance with those debates that is grounded in a set of questions and answers whose central themes are already delineated in Kant’s critical philosophy. Wittgenstein and Carnap are sympathetic to Kant’s dismissal of transcendent metaphysics, but skeptical that there could be any substantive account of the fundamental conditions of our meaning-making. By contrast, Heidegger follows Fichte and the early German Romantics in seeing answers to the problems raised by metacritique not in science, but in the non-discursive forms of understanding and expression exemplified in art. As we shall see, this Romantic turn to art is not taken arbitrarily; it is motivated by methodological considerations

that emerge within Kant's own critical system. Today, the fate and the legacy of critical philosophy as a whole turns on our answers to these questions.

I take up the Kantian considerations which lead to an understanding of art as a window into the fundamental conditions of meaning-making in section 2, before turning to Heidegger's development of this line of thought in section 3. In section 4, I examine Carnap and Wittgenstein's skepticism concerning the meaning of Heidegger's philosophical terminology, focusing on what is perhaps the most problematic case: Heidegger's talk of 'the nothing'. I argue that this skepticism is overblown. Heidegger's talk of the nothing is meaningful in the way that talk about figure and ground is meaningful: it serves as an ostensive indication of intersubjectively accessible structural features of our encounters with things. I conclude, in section 5, by drawing out the existential ramifications of the decision to speak or be silent about these fundamental conditions, drawing on Audre Lorde to illustrate the place of art (and in particular, poetry) in making it possible for us to lead authentic lives.

Let us return to the Kantian beginning, however, to see why talking about the fundamental conditions of our understanding might require us to look beyond the limits of ordinary discursive intelligibility.

2. Judgment, genius, and art

For Kant, the understanding is "the faculty of rules",⁵ the capacity to think in rule-governed ways, which is to say, according to concepts. Since our cognition depends on sensible intuitions, while also requiring concepts provided by the understanding in order to constitute judgments, Kant labels all human cognition, in virtue of this necessary conceptuality, 'discursive'.⁶ To be able to think according a rule does not mean that one is able to apply it, however, and Kant distinguishes the capacity to think in rule-governed ways from the power of judgment, which "is the faculty of **subsuming** under rules."⁷

Kant argues that the power to judge cannot itself be reduced to a set of rules on pain of a regress: the application of a rule requires knowledge of when the rule properly applies; of what is covered by the rule and what is not. This knowledge cannot itself be a rule, for then we would need *another* rule in order

to know when *that* rule applied, and so on *ad infinitum*.⁸ Kant concludes that “although the understanding is certainly capable of being instructed and equipped through rules, the power of judgment is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced.”⁹ Kant identifies this dimension of judgment with what he calls ‘mother-wit’,

the lack of which cannot be made good by any school; for, although such a school can provide a limited understanding with plenty of rules [...] nevertheless the faculty for making use of them correctly must belong to the student himself, and in the absence of such a natural gift no rule that one might prescribe to him for this aim is safe from misuse.¹⁰

Kant observes that a doctor or a judge might understand explicit formulations of medical or legal principles in the abstract, while being unable to intelligently apply those principles when confronted with a concrete medical or legal case. Such a person *understands*, but they are lacking in *judgment*. This, Kant explains, is “the sole and great utility of examples: that they sharpen the power of judgment”¹¹ by tutoring us in how to apply concepts to cases, and thus, “examples are the leading-strings of the power of judgment, which he who lacks the natural talent for judgment can never do without.”¹² The power of judgment, then, enables us to follow rules without itself being constituted by rules, and *good* judgment is more than the ability to think abstractly using concepts: it is the ability to correctly apply concepts to concrete cases.

The non-discursive guidance provided to the understanding by exemplary cases shows up again in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in Kant’s discussion of art and artistic genius. Art provides non-discursive guidance to the understanding by stimulating the imagination to produce representations that Kant calls ‘aesthetic ideas’. An aesthetic idea “occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it”, and as a result, “no language fully attains or can make intelligible”¹³ what is contained in such an idea. The artist possesses ‘genius’ in the specific sense of a natural ability to produce aesthetic ideas in their imagination, and to use their understanding to give “the rule to art”¹⁴ in the creation of works capable of communicating aesthetic ideas to others. The artwork is organized by a rule, even though the content of this rule is not something that we can make fully explicit in words. Kant gives the following example of an aesthetic idea, and explains their use for cognition:

Jupiter's eagle, with the lightning in its claws, is an attribute of the powerful king of heaven, as is the peacock of the splendid queen of heaven. They do not, like logical attributes, represent what lies in our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but something else, which gives the imagination cause to spread itself over a multitude of related representations, which let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words; and they yield an aesthetic idea, which serves that idea of reason instead of logical presentation, although really only to animate the mind by opening up for it the prospect of an immeasurable field of related representations.¹⁵

Art expands our thinking by means of imaginative representations that cannot be summarized by means of determinate concepts. By stimulating thought, in a piecemeal way, towards representation of “an immeasurable field of related representations,” aesthetic ideas serve to indicate, without exhausting, the dimension and extent of the space of meaning, providing a non-logical indication of the infinite breadth of possible experience. The aesthetic ideas conveyed by artworks make us strive to think the unthinkable totality of this space, and can serve to point us towards ideas of reason that “in a fundamental and unnoticed way, serve the understanding as a canon”,¹⁶ thereby constituting the skeletal form of the space of meaning which finite cognition will imperfectly flesh out.

In his essay, “Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*” Fichte raises the question of what is involved in producing an a priori “science of knowledge” (*Wissenschaftslehre*) and suggests that genius, in Kant's sense, is as much a requirement for the philosopher as for the artist: “the philosopher requires an obscure feeling for what is right, or genius, to no less an extent than does, for instance, the poet or the artist.”¹⁷ This is somewhat surprising, given that in the third *Critique*, Kant is clear that “what is called genius [...] is a talent for art, not for science.”¹⁸ Fichte, however, provides an argument for this extension of genius to the philosopher based on Kant's regress argument concerning rule-following. Fichte writes:

I am not quite sure how and why, but an otherwise admirable philosophical author [viz., Maimon] has become a bit agitated over the innocent assertion contained in the foregoing note. “One would,” he says [quoting Maimon], “prefer to leave the empty word ‘genius’ to tightrope walkers, French cooks, ‘beautiful souls,’ artists, and others. For sound sciences it would be better to advance a theory of discovery.” One should indeed advance such a theory, which will certainly happen as soon as science has reached the point where it is possible to discover such a theory. But where is the contradiction between such a project and the assertion made above? And how will we discover such a theory of discovery? By means, perhaps, of a theory of the discovery of a theory of discovery? And this?¹⁹

Fichte's point is that to demand that philosophy begin from a 'theory of discovery' in laying out its most fundamental principles would lead to a regress with the same structure as the rule-following paradox at the heart of judgment. Just as the rule-following that constitutes a judgment must be based on something that is not itself a rule on pain of an infinite regress of rules for following rules, the fundamental principles of a science of knowledge would have to be discoverable without guidance from an explicit theory of discovery, on pain of an infinite regress of ever-deeper theories of discovery. Fichte concludes that at this most fundamental level of explanation, the philosopher needs genius in order to uncover and communicate the science of knowledge, since knowledge of its fundamental principles cannot be generated according to any explicit theory or rule.

Kant had already suggested that art could be revelatory of the deep structure of the space of meaning; Fichte takes a step further in suggesting that the philosopher needs something akin to the artist's ability to distill non-discursive insights into artworks in order to communicate their understanding of what we do at the most fundamental level in making sense of the world.²⁰ This has wide-reaching consequences for critical philosophy: it implies that the critique of our sense-making powers requires us to reach beyond the limits of the discursively-articulable conceptual order in order to explicate the most fundamental grounds of the discursively-articulable conceptual order. As we shall see, this Kantian background allows us to better see the meaning behind Heidegger's talk of 'the nothing': this talk serves to indicate a fundamental condition of encountering worldly things, and it must do this in a way that goes beyond our ordinary concepts because that condition's fundamentality implies that it cannot be described in the usual way, that is, conceptually, by a set of marks.

3. A Big Nothing?

In "What is Metaphysics?" Heidegger notes that "The relation to the world that pervades all sciences [*Wissenschaften*] as such lets them seek beings themselves."²¹ In relating to the world in the way that we do in the sciences, beings become available to us such that we can "make them objects of investigation" and "determine their grounds."²² How is this possible? In talk that delimits what is talked about in the

sciences, Heidegger notes that we often use a term, ‘nothing’, that puts the beings with which science is concerned in contrast with what they are *not*:

[P]recisely in the way scientific man secures to himself what is most properly his, he speaks, whether explicitly or not, of something different. What should be examined are beings only, and besides that – nothing; beings alone, and further – nothing; solely beings, and beyond that – nothing.

What about this nothing? Is it an accident that we talk this way so automatically? Is it only a manner of speaking – and nothing besides?²³

Heidegger himself raises the fairly obvious worry that asking after this nothing fallaciously transposes nothing into a *something*, into a *being*:

In our asking we posit the nothing in advance as something that ‘is’ such and such; we posit it as a being. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from. Interrogating the nothing – asking what and how it, the nothing, is – turns what is interrogated into its opposite. The question deprives itself of its own object.

Accordingly, every answer to this question is also impossible from the start. For it necessarily assumes the form: the nothing “is” this or that. With regard to the nothing, question and answer alike are inherently absurd.²⁴

To make what is *not* into something that *is* would be a terrible mistake, but for Heidegger, the nothing is not to be understood negatively as *the absence of beings*; the nothing is to be understood positively as *an aspect of their being*. Heidegger writes, “We can of course think the whole of beings in an ‘idea,’ then negate what we have imagined in our thought, and thus ‘think’ it negated. In this way we do attain the formal concept of the imagined nothing but never the nothing itself.”²⁵ Logical cognition yields a formal concept of non-being as the negation of all existence, but Heidegger argues that *this* non-being is not the nothing that makes possible the relation to the world at work in the sciences. Rather, the nothing is what first places us in relation to “the whole of beings” upon which logical cognition subsequently operates in generating the negative concept of non-being. Heidegger explains that the negative concept will not do for his purposes because for beings like us, “the nothing makes possible the manifestness of beings as such. The nothing does not merely serve as the counterconcept of beings; rather, it originally belongs to their essential unfolding as such.”²⁶ In his 1943 “Postscript to ‘What is Metaphysics?’” he writes that

Unlike beings, being cannot be represented or brought forth in the manner of an object. As that which is altogether other than all beings, being is that which is not. But this nothing essentially prevails as being. We too quickly abdicate thinking when, in a facile explanation, we pass off the nothing as a mere nullity and equate it with the unreal. [...]

We must prepare ourselves solely in readiness to experience in the nothing the pervasive expanse of that which gives every being the warrant to be. That is being itself.²⁷

This leaves us with a methodological question paralleling Hamann's metacritical question about the possibility of Kant's critical philosophy: given that the nothing "cannot be represented or brought forth in the manner of an object," how can we speak about it? What enables us to begin thinking about the nothing? And what does Heidegger mean when he says that the nothing "prevails as being"? To answer these questions, we will need to examine Heidegger's account of the relationship between anxiety and the nothing.

Heidegger suggests that fundamental 'attunements' (*Befindlichkeiten*) such as existential anxiety (*Angst*) can reveal the structure of our relatedness to 'beings as a whole.' We are always 'attuned' in some way, which is to say that we always find ourselves in some condition or other, and, by being in this condition, find ourselves related to beings. An attunement is a way of finding oneself already related to beings, of finding oneself, in other words, in a world. Heidegger writes that "being attuned, in which we 'are' one way or another, [...] lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole."²⁸ Attunements are an essential and inescapable aspect of the way in which we exist. In Heidegger's terms, they are fundamental *ontological* determinations of our being, because they pertain to our *way of being*; they determine our 'being-there' (*Dasein*) such that we are what we are by being ready in our attunements for encounters with beings.²⁹

Heidegger distinguishes the readiness of attunement from what he calls 'understanding', and from articulations of our understanding through 'interpretation'. Understanding is also a fundamental ontological determination of our way of being, involving a tacit grasp of yourself as having certain existential possibilities. Understanding is always a tacit *self*-understanding because it involves the determination of *your own* possibilities for being. Interpretation consists in an understanding of ways you might be such that beings show up in ways that are defined by those possibilities: nails show up for the carpenter, for example, as beings bearing a certain significance. All understanding and interpretation, however, depends on our being attuned, our being ready for encounters with beings in the first place. An attunement is a readiness

for other beings that makes possible the projection of possibilities wherein beings can stand out as *understood*, and stand out in particular ways, as *interpreted*. An attunement is therefore not a cognitive relation to beings, involving a determinate interpretation of what and how those beings are; rather, it makes such relations possible.

Crucially, attunements are also not to be understood as psychological states. While an attunement is how you find yourself, it is not an encounter with yourself *qua* psychological entity. Attunements first enable us to be related to things in the world, *including our own psychological states and attitudes*, by first placing us in the world, such that particular beings *can* manifest particular characters and valences.³⁰ Being attuned is a way of finding yourself that is more basic than encountering yourself in an intentionally-directed emotional state such as fear or worry. To encounter yourself in a specific emotional state is already to understand yourself as a particular kind of being in a particular kind of state. So, whereas worry or fear are already expressions of a more or less determinate understanding of yourself – an understanding of yourself as related in some way to the things you worry about or fear – anxiety, as an attunement, is not itself a relation between you and a specific being about which you are anxious. As Heidegger puts it, “What anxiety is about is completely indefinite,”³¹ and “*what anxiety is about is the world as such.*”³²

This makes anxiety special in its ability to reveal to us the way that we are connected with ‘beings as a whole’, tied up with a network of beings related to us and to each other; it can reveal how, in other words, we are entangled with the world. As Michael Inwood explains,

Explicit Angst [i.e., anxiety] reveals the world as such, and it does this because in some way or other beings within the world are negated, whether by slipping away, or by losing their significance and sinking into indifference. Correlative with the bare world, Angst reveals bare Dasein, not Dasein as a postman or Dasein as a philosopher, but Dasein stripped of its customary identity and its familiar moorings in intraworldly things.³³

Anxiety reveals the locus of our possible relations to beings through a jarring contrast: the dense tangle of meanings that typically weaves together an ordinary life is noticeably thinned out. In anxiety we undergo a limit case of our being-in-the-world amidst things: we exist amidst things, but in such a way that their significance for us is maximally attenuated. You are there, but not as an existential agent defined by your

possible projects, and the beings are there, but inertly, and devoid of meaning.³⁴ Connecting this back to ‘the nothing’ of “What is Metaphysics?” Heidegger writes,

In the clear night of the nothing of anxiety the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings – and not nothing. But this ‘and not nothing’ we add in our talk is not some kind of appended clarification. Rather it makes possible in advance the manifestness of beings in general. The essence of the originally noth-ing nothing lies in this, that it brings Dasein for the first time before beings as such.³⁵

According to Heidegger, anxiety has the power to reveal that there is something rather than nothing *because of the nothing*, because the ‘openness of beings’ opened by our attunements is always ready to reveal beings as distinct from nothing. The structure of this openness, that beings are something ‘and not nothing’ is, therefore, revealed in fundamental attunements like anxiety:

The nothing unveils itself in anxiety – but not as a being. Just as little is it given as an object. Anxiety is no kind of grasping of the nothing. All the same, the nothing becomes manifest in and through anxiety, although, to repeat, not in such a way that the nothing becomes manifest in our uncanniness quite “apart from” beings as a whole.³⁶

Heidegger’s nothing is an essential dimension of what allows beings to be understood *as* beings, but it is not itself a being. It is not a ‘Big Nothing’, just as being is not itself a ‘Big Being’.³⁷ The nothing is manifest in any understanding that *things are*, but not as an independently subsisting “Big Nothing,” a distinct being, that we could represent as an empirical object, or grasp through a logical form. It is in this sense, then, that the “nothing essentially prevails as being.”³⁸

Heidegger’s infamous claim that “The nothing itself noths” (*Das Nichts selbst nichtet*)³⁹ is meant to indicate it is not a specific being, not our cognition, nor even ‘beings as a whole’ that make possible the manifest difference between being and non-being. In our ‘being-there’ as Dasein we find the nothing differentiating *itself* from beings. The nothing distinguishes itself from beings in the ordinary, everyday manifestation of beings as what they are. In anxiety, because our preoccupation with beings and what they can do for us is suspended, this fundamental structure of differentiation is freed for our attention, and the *noth-ing (nichten)* of *the nothing (das Nichts)* can be thematized phenomenologically. Send not to know for whom the nothing noths; it noths for thee.

Heidegger ties the noth-ing of the nothing to our *transcendence*, our way of being amidst other beings. In being amidst other beings we are not simply related to them as a table is related to what lies on top of it, we are related to the *being of* those beings, in the sense that our being amidst other beings is always an understanding of *their ways of being*, an interpretation of them as *being some way*. Heidegger writes that “If in the ground of its essence Dasein were not transcending, which now means, if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never adopt a stance toward beings nor even toward itself.”⁴⁰ To be Dasein is to be ready to recognize beings as distinct from the nothing. The capacity to witness beings standing out from the nothing constitutes our ‘being-there’ as an essentially relational ‘being-in-the-world’ – a being that is related to a world of beings precisely through understanding the ways that beings can be. This understanding is what allows Dasein to ‘transcend itself’ in the sense of ‘reaching beyond itself’. Dasein’s transcendence is, in part, its recognition of the *being of* beings – *that* they are and *how* they are – and this is the recognition that they are *something* and *not nothing*.

The nothing is an essential part of Heidegger’s answer to the question, ‘what is metaphysics?’ Heidegger’s nothing is both the origin of metaphysical inquiry, and the answer to what Heidegger sees as the most fundamental question of metaphysics, *why there is something rather than nothing*. As such, Heidegger writes that

Only because the nothing is manifest in the ground of Dasein can the total strangeness of beings overwhelm us. Only when the strangeness of beings oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder – the manifestness of the nothing – does the ‘why?’ loom before us. Only because the ‘why’ is possible as such can we in a definite way inquire into grounds and ground things.⁴¹

Heidegger argues that the noth-ing of the nothing is a structural feature of our every encounter with beings, a fundamental condition of their meaning anything to us. The noth-ing of the nothing is the condition of our being amidst beings, and therefore, of any access to ‘beings as a whole’.

For this reason, the nothing is essential to the delimitation of the subject matter of the sciences, and indeed, to their very possibility. All sciences study beings, and this includes the science of metaphysics which inquires into the being of things insofar as they are beings (τό ὄν ἢ ὄν). Heidegger’s point is that the *wholeness* of ‘beings as a whole’ – the *unity* of the meaning of being, and the *unity* of the world to which

all the beings belong and to which *we* belong as ‘being-in-the-world’ – is made possible by something that is *not itself a being*: the nothing which differentiates itself from beings in our every encounter with them. The manifestness of the nothing in anxiety is the manifestation of that which metaphysics asks after when it reaches beyond ‘beings as a whole’ to ask why *they* are, i.e., why there is something rather than nothing. There is something rather than nothing *because of* the noth-ing of the nothing, and this means that we can ask ‘why’ questions about beings, including the ‘why’ questions that animate metaphysics, only because of ‘something’ which is not a being: the noth-ing of the nothing, a nothing which is not a Big Nothing. Heidegger suggests here that the strangeness of this answer to the most fundamental question of metaphysics – that *nothing* explains why there is something rather than nothing – is the true origin of the wonder that, according to Plato, is the beginning of philosophy,⁴² and, in making possible our sense that anything exists at all, the nothing is among the fundamental grounds of meaning.

4. Carnap and Wittgenstein: is talk about the nothing meaningless?

I now want to examine some worries for Heidegger’s view that center on the idea that what he says is meaningless; that there is something inescapably defective about his attempts to talk about the nothing, such that the ontology ostensibly on offer above, is, in fact, nonsense. In what is probably the most well-known expression of this kind of worry, Carnap argues in “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language” that statements about being and nothing are ‘pseudo-statements’. Speaking about metaphysics more generally, Carnap writes that “Metaphysics is not ‘*superstition*’; it is possible to believe true and false propositions, but not to believe meaningless sequences of words.”⁴³ For Carnap, the statements of metaphysics are meaningless because they do not express genuine propositions. Carnap thinks this can be demonstrated in two ways: first, through logical analysis, which reveals that many metaphysical statements are inexpressible in the predicate calculus as well-formed propositions, and second, through the observation that the statements that remain after we set aside the illogical ones lack humanly-applicable conditions of verification.

Here, in response, we should grant right away that the nothing is not, illogically, also a something. Carnap is right that grammatical appearances notwithstanding, no object need correspond to a negated existentially-quantified proposition.⁴⁴ But Heidegger is explicit in distinguishing the nothing he is speaking of from the non-being expressed by such a proposition. Next, although Heidegger's nothing is not an object, not even a logical object, Heidegger does give a positive account of how the nothing can be manifest such that we are in a position to evaluate statements about it. While Heidegger's statements about the nothing are not *empirically* verifiable, they are evaluable based on phenomena that are manifest when we are in the attunement of anxiety. Talk about the nothing functions in the same way that talk about the difference between figure and ground does—it serves to indicate a structure belonging to our being-in-the-world about which we can make accurate or inaccurate claims.⁴⁵ This allows us to understand the '*the*' in '*the nothing*' in a deflationary way: it doesn't define a unique *item* present in experience, but a *structure* which can be reidentified and distinguished from others—just like *the* difference between figure and ground.⁴⁶

Carnap, of course, thinks that he understands what Heidegger and the metaphysicians are *really* up to. Underlying their (supposed) confusion of the merely grammatical with the actually meaningful is their confusion of the “expression of the general attitude of a person towards life”⁴⁷ with genuine fact-stating discourse: “The metaphysician believes he travels in territory in which truth and falsehood are at stake. In reality, however, he has not asserted anything, but only expressed something, like an artist.”⁴⁸ Carnap concludes famously that “Metaphysicians are musicians without musical ability”⁴⁹, and while Carnap is certainly not recommending that we commit art to the flames, he is recommending that we exclude metaphysics from philosophy on the grounds that it is art, and as such expressive of feeling rather than anything which could be true or false.⁵⁰

Is Heidegger guilty of attempting compositions best left to Beethoven? Carnap speculates that in Heidegger's discussion of anxiety and the nothing, “the word ‘nothing’ seems to refer to a certain emotional constitution, possibly of a religious sort, or something or other that underlies such emotions”⁵¹. Here Carnap is partially right: ‘the nothing’ refers to ‘something or other’ that underlies our emotions, something or other that is manifest in the attunement of anxiety. For Heidegger, however, this ‘something or other’ is not

an entity, and certainly not a creature of human psychology. As noted earlier, Heidegger's concept of attunement is not the concept of a psychological state, and the nothing is not a being.

Granting for the moment that Heidegger is doing something more than expressing his feelings in pseudo-scientific form, there remain more subtle worries regarding the very possibility of meaning in our attempts to speak about the most fundamental conditions of meaning. Does Heidegger's work constitute an attempt to say what can only be shown? In his turn to poetry, and the elaborate contortions of 'beyng,' 'being', and so on, was Heidegger trying to 'whistle it?'⁵² The problem here would be, as Frank Ramsey joked, that "what we can't say we can't say, and we can't whistle it either."⁵³

Here we can turn from Carnap's direct criticism of Heidegger to Wittgenstein's suggestion in the *Tractatus*, and elsewhere, that statements about the grounds of meaning are, strictly speaking, meaningless. Wittgenstein writes in the Preface to the *Tractatus* that "The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."⁵⁴ The book is an attempt "to draw a limit [...] to the expression of thoughts", and it will draw this limit within language, since it is only "in language that the limit can be drawn."⁵⁵ In language, there are examples of both sense and nonsense to be found, allowing us to see where the boundary lies between the one and the other. In thought, by contrast, although there is a *limit* to sense, there is no *boundary* to mark between sense and nonsense. If we assume that all thought has sense, then what lacks sense will be unthinkable, and, since we cannot think the unthinkable, there are no 'nonsense thoughts' to separate from 'genuine thoughts' – those with sense. To draw a boundary between sense and nonsense in thought, then, "we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable [...], that is] we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought."⁵⁶

Notoriously, the *Tractatus* appears to present an account of sense according to which its own propositions are nonsense. Meaningful speech concerns facts: to speak meaningfully is at minimum to say something about how the world *could* be; to say how it *must* be, is to have said nothing at all. So insofar as the *Tractatus* purports to say what are the necessary features of thought, meaningful language, the world, and subjects' perspectives, its propositions fail to say anything. Worse yet, many of its statements cannot

even be construed as limit cases of meaning – that is, as tautologies or contradictions – since many of the necessities in question are supposed to be non-logical.

So, if the *Tractatus* itself is largely filled with nonsense, what is its purpose? As Wittgenstein puts it in the penultimate section of the *Tractatus*, “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them.”⁵⁷ In reading the *Tractatus*, what seems, at first, to make sense reverses itself, reveals itself as nonsense, and returns us to the tacit grasp of the division between sense and nonsense that we already possessed, wordlessly, and all along, in our everyday making sense of things. Wittgenstein’s book guides us back to a recognition of the limits of intelligibility without ever succeeding in saying what it wants to – and indeed, if we take Wittgenstein at his word, without ever having *said* anything at all.

Returning now to our worries about the meaningfulness of talk about being and nothing, it is crucial to see that Wittgenstein’s attitude towards metaphysical statements differs from Carnap’s in allowing that *there are* things we cannot say when we attempt to talk about the conditions of meaning, things that ‘*make themselves manifest*.’ Two propositions before his statement that his propositions are nonsensical, Wittgenstein tells that “There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical.”⁵⁸

Wittgenstein’s talk of the ‘manifestation’ of what is inexpressible exhibits striking parallels to Heidegger’s talk of the disclosure of ‘beings as a whole’ by our attunements. Wittgenstein agrees with Heidegger that the manifestation of the grounds of meaning is an awareness of ‘beings as a whole’ that is achieved through a kind of feeling, what Heidegger would have called an attunement: “To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole—a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical.”⁵⁹ As in Heidegger’s description of anxiety, Wittgenstein’s ‘mystical feeling’ is connected to our recognition that there is something rather than nothing: “Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that it is*.”⁶⁰ Compare this with Heidegger: “Of all beings, only the human being [...] experiences the wonder of all wonders: *that beings are*.”⁶¹ For his part, Wittgenstein, himself, seems to have recognized these similarities:

To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be mere nonsense. Nevertheless we do run up against the limits of language. [...W]e are always making the attempt to say something that cannot be said, something that does not and never will touch the essence of the matter. [...] But the inclination, the running up against something, *indicates something*.⁶²

Nevertheless, despite deep similarities in Wittgenstein and Heidegger's accounts of how our openness to 'beings as a whole' can be disclosed to us, Wittgenstein differs from Heidegger in maintaining that the language we use in trying to express the nature of this openness is meaningless. Wittgenstein writes that "this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be unutterably – *contained* in what has been uttered!"⁶³ In saying what can be said about how things are, the mystical is already contained in what we succeed in saying. It shows *itself*, and as Wittgenstein puts it in the *Tractatus*, "What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said."⁶⁴

But if this proposition, which concerns the limits of sense, is itself nonsense, can we really take Wittgenstein at his word when he says that there is something that exceeds the bounds of what we can say? I think that we can; as A. W. Moore points out, Wittgenstein says at proposition 6.54 that we understand *him* when we see that his propositions are nonsensical. It is the person that we understand, and not the proposition. Moreover, Moore adds, "although Wittgenstein speaks of propositions as both saying and showing certain things, he also suggests that the real contrast is between what we (language-users) say by means of propositions and what shows *itself*, or makes itself manifest."⁶⁵ We understand Wittgenstein, not his propositions, and we understand *him* when we see what shows or manifests *itself*. It is in trying to state what this is – in trying to state what shows or manifests itself – that we begin to speak nonsensically. We can succeed in making *ourselves* understood through speaking nonsense, but this is not for a hearer to understand a proposition, but for them to *see* something that the speaker also sees, something that makes itself manifest. As Moore puts it,

The understanding that Wittgenstein imparts is a practical understanding. [...] The *Tractatus* helps us to make sense of propositional sense. But the sense that it helps us to make of propositional sense *is not itself propositional*. The understanding that Wittgenstein

imparts has to be expressed, not in words, but in good philosophy, where good philosophy, recall, is an activity, not a body of doctrine [...].⁶⁶

Just as for Kant the wit needed to apply a rule properly cannot be stated as a rule, an understanding of what can only be shown cannot be stated in a proposition, and so, as Wittgenstein himself puts it, in a note from 1931, “Work on philosophy [...] is really more work on oneself. On one’s own conception. On how one sees things. (And what one expects of them.)”⁶⁷

In the end, Wittgenstein’s assessment of metaphysical statements is more ambivalent than Carnap’s. Where Carnap mocks Heidegger for expressing his feelings in the form of a theory, Wittgenstein recognizes the direction of Heidegger’s thought, and concludes, simply, that what Heidegger wants to express is inexpressible. In his “Lecture on Ethics”, Wittgenstein frames the point in terms of ethics and religion: both are deeply important to human life, and both are concerned with matters that are, on his view, completely inexpressible. After considering whether ethical and religious statements express truths about the world, Wittgenstein says,

I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. For all I wanted to do with them was just *to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language. My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it.⁶⁸

There *is* a there there; it is just that language is not capable of *saying* so. In his talk of ‘the mystical’ Wittgenstein acknowledges that *something* is revealed in ‘mystical feeling’, a *something* which plays a similar role to Heideggerian attunements in giving us our sense of the world as a whole, a *something* whose role cannot be directly expressed in propositions, but only shown in our grasp of sense as sense and nonsense as nonsense.

5. Art, authenticity, and the limits of expression

In a letter to the publisher of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein underscores the importance of what the *Tractatus* leaves unsaid:

the book's point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now... What I meant to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one.⁶⁹

Wittgenstein continues,

My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where *many* others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it.⁷⁰

But can we 'put everything firmly into place' once and for all? If philosophical work is work on oneself and how one sees things, if it involves the development of wit and a philosophical equivalent to artistic imagination, then is the accomplishment of this work compatible with silence? In what follows, I will argue that the attempt to say the unsayable is of great existential significance. Maintaining a clear view of what manifests itself is always a struggle, and because of this, silence risks a dereliction of responsibility for how one sees things. To pass over the unsayable in silence exposes us to a kind of *existential witlessness* in the form of inauthenticity or 'bad faith'.

This can be seen in the very fact that we can think we are talking sense when we are not. Heidegger suggests that a key part of the explanation for this is our inescapable tendency towards 'idle talk' (*Gerede*) which is built into our capacity for 'discourse' (*Rede*). Discourse is the fundamental determination of our way of being that makes it possible for there to be meaning at all. It is because discourse is always threatened by the possibility of degeneration into idle talk that I can always raise the question: am I really making sense, or am I just mouthing the words? In idle talk, we speak 'as one ought to', 'as *they* speak', but in an important sense, we do not really mean what we say because we do not really know what we are talking about. As Heidegger puts it, "Idle talk is the possibility of understanding everything without any previous appropriation of the matter."⁷¹ It is the possibility of understanding things, of projecting your own possibilities for being, without grounding that understanding in a firsthand, immediate encounter with those things which makes that understanding 'your own'.

Where does the tendency towards idle talk come from? According to Heidegger, as historical beings we inherit a background framework of understanding and interpretation that typically dominates our encounters with beings. Heidegger calls this inheritance ‘the one’ or ‘the they’ (*das Man*), because in being ourselves we are always tacitly defining our possibilities for being through an ‘average everyday’ sense of ‘how *one* acts’ in various situations, and ‘how *they* speak’ about things. This is not entirely pernicious, since it is part of what enables us to get along in daily life. A concern about authenticity begins to creep in, however, because in idle talk we ‘understand’ what we are saying, and others ‘understand’ us, only in the sense that we understand the words, and what *they* mean, just as someone lacking in wit ‘knows the rules’ but not how to properly apply them. In idle talk, we do not actually succeed in understanding ‘the beings talked about’, because the beings themselves are not the source of our understanding; what is understood is, instead, the ‘average everydayness’ codified in the medium of communication.⁷² The existential problem facing all of us in using language is that

This interpretedness of idle talk has always already settled itself down in Dasein. We get to know many things initially in this way, and some things never get beyond such an average understanding. [...] All genuine understanding, interpreting and communication, rediscovery and new appropriation come about in it, out of it, and against it. It is not the case that a Dasein, untouched and unseduced by this way of interpreting. [...] just looks at what it encounters. The domination of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already decided upon even the possibilities of being attuned, that is, about the basic way in which Dasein lets itself be affected by the world. The they prescribes that attunement, it determines what and how one “sees.”⁷³

This means that we need to be constantly on guard, ready to renew, refresh, and make authentic our understanding of the things we talk about, our way of speaking about them, and how we see them. Just as for Kant, a non-discursive talent, wit, is needed in order to apply rules correctly, for Heidegger, the ability to genuinely mean what we say rests on a capacity for authentic understanding that is constituted by a non-discursive grasp of the beings one is speaking about.

Wittgenstein thinks that the language of the *Tractatus* must be nonsense because to make sense of ourselves making sense in language or thought, we should have to view ourselves from ‘sideways on’,⁷⁴ and see our sense-making perspective on things – what Wittgenstein calls the “metaphysical subject”⁷⁵ – as one more thinkable object in the field of what is thinkable, like an eye that impossibly contains itself in its

own visual field, as in the diagram at proposition 5.6331. But catching ourselves from sideways on is not a requirement for a Heideggerian authenticity-check by way of the phenomenological method. Heidegger's method is to start from within an ordinary life, and to use ordinary words in non-ordinary ways in order to allow the subject matter to *manifest itself*. Take for example, this discussion from *Being and Time* where Heidegger seems to deny the obvious fact that a chair can touch a wall:

[W]e are accustomed to express linguistically the being together of two objectively present things in such a manner: [...] "the chair 'touches' the wall." Strictly speaking, we can never talk about "touching," [...] because in principle the chair can never touch the wall [...]. The presupposition for this would be that the wall could be encountered "by" the chair. A being can only touch an objectively present being within the world if it fundamentally has the kind of being of being-in – only if with its Dasein something like world is already discovered in terms of which beings can reveal themselves through touch and thus become accessible in their being present.⁷⁶

This atypical use of words lets us step back a bit from what *they* say, unsettling our understanding of what words like 'touching' mean, and allowing us to assess, not from sideways on, but from inside, whether what we are saying makes sense, and, more importantly, how. Heidegger's odd way of expressing himself here casts an ordinary word like 'touching' in a strange light, bringing out submerged features of its context within our lives. This allows us to ask questions about how the word is functioning: whether it is doing what we think it is doing, and how it is doing it. This can, in turn, bring to our attention structures and relations that are not themselves an ordinary topic of our speech, e.g., certain aspects of what we are like as beings that *touch*, and thereby encounter objects which become present to us. The fact that we encounter objects in this way when we touch them while chairs and walls do not is not immediately obvious in our ordinary use of the verb 'to touch' – indeed, that difference is typically covered over in the way we are 'accustomed' to talk about touching. Heidegger's use of language here forces us to appropriate the phenomenon of 'touch'; to make it our own by letting it show *itself* such that we can assess whether this part of Heidegger's account is correct.

Heidegger's response, then, to the metacritical question about the possibility of this kind of philosophizing is that it is evidently possible, directed as it is towards intersubjectively accessible features of ourselves and the world we live in – but it is not possible *as a science*. Instead, phenomenological

philosophy will look more like art, working towards better, more adequate expressions and interpretations of the being of various beings without ever finally exhausting the matter at hand. For Heidegger, this is a *hermeneutic* exercise, an exercise in the *interpretation* of various ways of being, which generates an articulated understanding of ourselves as being some way. Crucially, this is not a science; rather, it is a mode of self-understanding that places things in a wider context than that provided by any science, because, as we have seen, it is our being-in-the-world that provides context for our encounters with beings, and even the encounter with ‘beings as a whole’ that is the theme of metaphysics.

As Heidegger and others have noted, poetry can achieve similarly revelatory effects.⁷⁷ As in Heidegger’s discussion of ‘touch’, when poets hazard unconventional ways of speaking they can articulate and uncover aspects of our lives that it would be hard, if not impossible, to express in other terms. One of the more optimistic, progressive statements of this thought comes from Audre Lorde, in her short essay, “Poetry is not a Luxury,” which I quote here at length:

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.

As they become known to and accepted by us, our feelings and the honest exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring of ideas. They become a safe-house for that difference so necessary to change and the conceptualization of any meaningful action. Right now, I could name at least ten ideas I would have found intolerable or incomprehensible and frightening, except as they came after dreams and poems. This is not idle fantasy, but a disciplined attention to the true meaning of ‘it feels right to me.’ We can train ourselves to respect our feelings and to transpose them into a language so they can be shared. And where that language does not yet exist, it is our poetry which helps to fashion it. Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives. [...]

The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us – the poet – whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom.⁷⁸

There are several things I want to note here. First, even if the value of poetry is *greater* for oppressed and marginalized people, I hope that I am not being too presumptuous in thinking that what Lorde says about the value of poetry applies to people in all situations. Second, while one could read Lorde’s talk of

‘transposing our feelings into language’ in Carnapian terms as the *mere* expression of feeling, it is clear that she intends something of existential import: poetry can be a way of expressing – of letting be seen – ways of being-in-the-world through attunement, understanding, and interpretation, in Heidegger’s sense. It is not simply the words themselves, but the activity that reading them engenders in us that is crucial to poetry’s capacity to mean what it does, to its capacity to extend and expand our ability to make and discover meanings for ourselves, and to inhabit the space of meaning authentically.

To be the kinds of beings that we are is to be ‘thrown’, to be born and raised in a tradition of pre-existing meanings to which we are always related in our understanding of our possibilities for being, and to be what Charles Taylor called a ‘self-interpreting animal.’⁷⁹ For Heidegger, the disconcerting effects of poetry, and the uncanniness of our being in anxiety, provide vital support in the effort to prevent ourselves from interpreting ourselves in ways that are not fully our own. This is a constant battle, because our capacity for authentic self-understanding is essentially also a capacity for an inauthentic self-understanding. In determining ourselves, in pressing into possibilities for being, we all too often determine ourselves according to forms of life for which we do not take responsibility. We evade our responsibility by deluding ourselves about our options, ‘fleeing’ as Heidegger says, from responsibility for our being, telling ourselves that ‘this is how things are’ and that ‘this is how I am’. Our situation, as Inwood puts it, is this:

Human beings are usually involved in dealings with entities in their environment. They have, however, the capacity to transcend their customary environment, to take stock of their lives, and to decide how they are to be, in disregard of the idols before which they normally cringe. This capacity enables us to engage with beings in the way we do, not benumbed by them as insects are, but regarding them as beings. But we need on occasion to exercise this capacity explicitly if we are not to descend too far into intraworldly beings and become too insect-like. The normal human condition is suspended somewhere between the Angst-less insect and the Angst-ridden angel.⁸⁰

This lack of finality is crucial to our decision about whether we ought to remain silent about the fundamental conditions of our meaning-making. The early Wittgenstein thinks that having written the *Tractatus* he (and the rest of us) ought now to remain silent because there will never be anything more which needs to be shown than what the *Tractatus* has already shown. As we have seen, however, there is reason to think that this is not the case. Inauthenticity always threatens us in our being, linguistic and

otherwise. The ways of getting lost are various, and so must be the remedies. Wittgenstein, himself, seems to have seen this, and the *Philosophical Investigations* provide a wonderful example of what it might mean to work on one's way of seeing through non-discursive means, and the same goes for, Heidegger's talk of the nothing, Lorde's talk of the liberatory possibilities provided by poetry, and Kant and Fichte's talk of the genius of the artist and the philosopher. Seeing the nothing does not result in knowledge of any facts, nor in any specific imperatives, but to lose sight of it, is, in some important sense, to lose your way. It serves then, not as a contribution to science or normative ethics, but as a call to authenticity, providing us with a form of self-understanding that allows us to resist the idea that something in the bowels of the real tells us, definitively, how to be or what to do.

The activity of writing and reading about the nothing, and, what is not altogether dissimilar, of writing and reading poetry, can enhance our capacities for self-determination, and in this way, it works towards the same end as Kantian critique. The activity recommended by Heidegger, however, is one that cannot be completed — it does not and is not meant to issue in a critical system; it is what Heidegger in his later work calls, simply, 'thinking'. This has the effect of shifting the terrain of the debate about whether and how we are making sense in these activities from the merely semantic to the existential. And here, we can ask: is it better to side with Wittgenstein and remain silent; or is it better to side with Carnap and take an engineer's stance to language; or is it better to side with Lorde and Heidegger in appreciating puzzling uses of language insofar as they can be genuinely revelatory? Carnap and Wittgenstein cede the grounds of intelligibility to choice on the one hand, and to silence on the other, but I think this is the wrong response. This ground may be dark, and resistant to clarifying light of science, but to jettison the attempt to say the unsayable in philosophy is to run the risk of allowing ourselves to philosophize in bad faith — of being, and remaining existentially witless.

Wittgenstein himself says, "I believe I summed up where I stand in relation to philosophy when I said: philosophy really only allows one to *poetize* [*Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur dichten*]" adding, however, "I was acknowledging myself, with these words, to be someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do."⁸¹ But can't one succeed in working on oneself — succeed in working on how

one sees things? And if one communicates this way of seeing to others, then hasn't one succeeded in making sense?

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Endnotes

- ¹ Karl Leonard Reinhold, *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation*, trans. Tim Mehigan and Barry Empson (New York, NY: De Gruyter, 2011).
- ² G. E. Schulze, "Aenesidemus (Excerpt)," in *Between Kant and Hegel*, ed. George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, Revised (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2000), 104–35.
- ³ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
- ⁴ Johann Georg Hamann, "Metacritique on the Purism of Reason," in *Writings on Philosophy and Language*, ed. and trans. Kenneth Haynes (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 205–18.
- ⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A131/B171.
- ⁶ Kant, A68/B93.
- ⁷ Kant, A131/B171.
- ⁸ Kant, A132-3/B171-2. Kant's argument is clearly resonant in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M Anscombe, 2nd ed (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1963)., but I will not pursue a direct comparison here.
- ⁹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A133/B172.
- ¹⁰ Kant, A133-4/B172-3.
- ¹¹ Kant, A134/B173.
- ¹² Kant, A134/B174.

- ¹³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5:314. All citations of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are to the volume and page of the *Akademie-Ausgabe* edition of Kant's complete works.
- ¹⁴ Kant, 5:307.
- ¹⁵ Kant, 5:315.
- ¹⁶ Kant, A329/B385.
- ¹⁷ Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, 128fn.
- ¹⁸ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:317.
- ¹⁹ Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, 128fn.
- ²⁰ Schelling puts the point even more strongly, saying that "the universal organon of philosophy [...] is the *philosophy of art*" in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 12.
- ²¹ Martin Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 83.
- ²² Heidegger, 83.
- ²³ Heidegger, 84.
- ²⁴ Heidegger, 85.
- ²⁵ Heidegger, 86–87.
- ²⁶ Heidegger, 91.
- ²⁷ Martin Heidegger, "Postscript to 'What Is Metaphysics?,'" in *Pathmarks*, ed. and trans. William McNeill (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233.
- ²⁸ Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," 87.
- ²⁹ "Attunement is an existential, fundamental way in which Dasein is its there. It [...] characterizes Dasein ontologically [...]" Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation*, trans. Joan Stambaugh and Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), SZ 139. When citing *Being and Time*, I give the pagination for the German edition (SZ = *Sein und Zeit*).
- ³⁰ See Elpidorou and Freeman "Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and Emotions in Being and Time," *Philosophy Compass* 10, no. 10 (2015): 661–71. and Ratcliffe "Why Mood Matters," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 157–76. for more detailed analyses of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) in Heidegger.
- ³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 186.
- ³² Heidegger, SZ 187.
- ³³ Michael Inwood, "Does the Nothing Noth?," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 44 (March 1999): 285.
- ³⁴ Heidegger connects anxiety to an almost constantly suppressed awareness of our mortality: "In anxiety, Dasein finds itself *faced* with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of its existence. Anxiety is anxious about the potentiality-of-being of the being thus determined, and thus discloses the most extreme possibility. Because the anticipation of Dasein absolutely individualizes it and lets it, in this individualizing of itself, become certain of the wholeness of its potentiality of being, the fundamental attunement of anxiety belongs to the self-understanding of Dasein in terms of its ground. Being-toward-death is essentially anxiety." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 266. Being-towards-death plays a role in Heidegger similar to transcendental apperception in Kant in constituting the unity of the subject. To develop this thought in detail, however, would require a separate paper.
- ³⁵ Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," 90; translation modified.
- ³⁶ Heidegger, 89.
- ³⁷ I am recalling here Thomas Sheehan's warning not to interpret Heidegger's talk of 'being' as referring to a "Big Being" in Thomas Sheehan, "A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research," *Continental Philosophy Review* 34, no. 2 (2001): 189.

- ³⁸ Heidegger, “Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’,” 233.
- ³⁹ Heidegger, 90; translation modified.
- ⁴⁰ Heidegger, 91.
- ⁴¹ Heidegger, 96.
- ⁴² Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997), Theaetetus, 155d.
- ⁴³ Rudolf Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language,” in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A. J. Ayer, trans. Arthur Pap (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1959), 72.
- ⁴⁴ Carnap, 69–70.
- ⁴⁵ Thanks to Gabrielle Jackson for suggesting this comparison.
- ⁴⁶ Thanks to David Cerbone for pressing me on this last point.
- ⁴⁷ Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language,” 78.
- ⁴⁸ Carnap, 79.
- ⁴⁹ Carnap, 80.
- ⁵⁰ Stone argues that Carnap’s view about what it means to express an attitude towards life allows that such expression could involve the expression of a *practical orientation*, rather than a mere feeling in Abraham Stone, “Heidegger and Carnap on the Overcoming of Metaphysics,” in *Martin Heidegger*, ed. Stephen Mulhall (London, UK: Routledge, 2006), 217–44. This is not far from the way that I read Heidegger, as will become apparent in the concluding sections of the paper. If so, Carnap does not misunderstand Heidegger’s intentions, so much as he rejects the possibility of rigor and objective standards of correctness in the expression of practical orientations.
- ⁵¹ Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language,” 71.
- ⁵² Cf. Peter M. S. Hacker, “Was He Trying to Whistle It?,” in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert J. Read (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000).
- ⁵³ Frank Plumpton Ramsey, “General Propositions and Causality,” in *The Foundations of Mathematics and Other Logical Essays*, ed. R. B. Braithwaite (London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), 238.
- ⁵⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. David F. Pears and Brian McGuinness (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 3.
- ⁵⁵ Wittgenstein, 3.
- ⁵⁶ Wittgenstein, 3.
- ⁵⁷ Wittgenstein, sec. 6.54.
- ⁵⁸ Wittgenstein, sec. 6.522. I lean more towards what A. W. Moore calls a ‘traditional’ reading of the *Tractatus*, according to which Wittgenstein means what he says when he says that *there are things* which can be shown but not said. See A. W. Moore, “The Bounds of Sense,” in *Language, World, and Limits: Essays in the Philosophy of Language and Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 91–92; A. W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things*, *The Evolution of Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 238–39. On this kind of reading, many of statements in the *Tractatus* succeed in showing us something about the grounds of intelligibility even though they are, strictly speaking, nonsense. By contrast, according to ‘new’ (or ‘resolute’) readings, Wittgenstein thinks that all nonsense is *simply* nonsense such that there is nothing to show, and no special class of ‘illuminating’ nonsense. There are only nonsensical displays, which can sometimes teach us not to look for sense where there is none. See Hacker, “Was He Trying to Whistle It?” for a textual-historical case against ‘new’/‘resolute’ readings; see Conant and Diamond “On Reading the Tractatus Resolutely: Reply to Meredith Williams and Peter Sullivan,” in *Wittgenstein’s Lasting Significance*, ed. Max Kölbel and Bernhard Weiss (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004). for a defense.
- ⁵⁹ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, sec. 6.45.
- ⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, sec. 6.44.
- ⁶¹ Heidegger, “Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’,” 234.

- ⁶² Wittgenstein quoted in Friedrich Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle: Conversations Recorded by Friedrich Waismann*, ed. Brian McGuinness, trans. Joachim Schulte and Brian McGuinness (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1979), 68–69.
- ⁶³ Wittgenstein quoted in Paul Engelmann, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, with a Memoir*, ed. B. F. McGuinness, trans. L. Fürmüller (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 7. Heidegger, might, of course, respond, “*Ja, genau! Nothing gets lost...*”
- ⁶⁴ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, sec. 4.1212.
- ⁶⁵ A. W. Moore, “On Saying and Showing,” in *Language, World, and Limits: Essays in the Philosophy of Language and Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 226.
- ⁶⁶ Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*, 242.
- ⁶⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. G. H. von Wright, Revised (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1998), 24.
- ⁶⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, “I: A Lecture on Ethics,” *Philosophical Review* 74, no. 1 (1965): 12.
- ⁶⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Prototractatus*, ed. Brian McGuinness, Tauno Nyberg, and G. H. von Wright, trans. David F. Pears and Brian McGuinness, 2nd ed. (London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1996), 16.
- ⁷⁰ Wittgenstein, 16.
- ⁷¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 169.
- ⁷² As Heidegger puts it, “In the language that is spoken when one expresses oneself there already lies an average intelligibility; and, in accordance with this intelligibility, the discourse communicated can be understood, to a large extent, without the listener actually turning toward what is talked about in the discourse so as to have a primordial understanding of it. One understands not so much the beings talked about: rather, one already listens only to what is spoken about as such. This is understood, what is talked about is understood, only approximately and superficially. One means the same thing because it is in the same averageness that we have in a common understanding of what is said.” Heidegger, SZ 168. Compare this with Wittgenstein: “One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing’s nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it.” Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 114.
- ⁷³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 169-70.
- ⁷⁴ To borrow a phrase from John McDowell.
- ⁷⁵ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, sec. 5.633, 5.641.
- ⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SZ 55.
- ⁷⁷ See, for example, the essays contained in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1971).
- ⁷⁸ Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury,” in *The Selected Works of Audre Lorde*, ed. Roxane Gay (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2020).
- ⁷⁹ Charles Taylor, “Self-Interpreting Animals,” in *Philosophical Papers, Volume 1: Human Agency and Language* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 45–76.
- ⁸⁰ Inwood, “Does the Nothing Noth?,” 290.
- ⁸¹ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 28; translation modified. My deepest thanks to Jens Pier for directing my attention to this fascinating note.