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Heidegger and Nishitani:
Nothingness, Nihilism, and the Possibility of Meaning

Thesis presented by

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Declaration

The thesis submitted is the candidate's own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

Because of the unfortunate circumstances of Mr. Copson having passed away before the examination of his very near-complete dissertation, his supervisor, Dr. Adam Loughnane has carried out minor revisions in response to the internal and external examiners' requests. Those revisions are indicated with an asterisk.

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Introduction

The aim of the thesis is the inquiry into the experience of the self in terms of the relation between Being (meaning) and Nothingness (non-meaning). This experience will be thought solely in accordance with the problem of nihilism. Nihilism is to be taken as the experience of existence as meaningless and phenomena as uniformly insignificant due to the restriction of alternate manners of self-understanding through the forgetting of the origin of meaning. The approach will not be to solve or resolve the problem but explore an alternative disclosure of nihilistic phenomena that renders it non-problematic. Heidegger and Nishitani's thought on Ereignis (the integral relation of man and Being/Nothingness) and Śūnyatā (the absolute nothingness of which the individual is a mask/expression) will be compared to provide a framework for understanding the experience of nothingness as nihilism in terms of its essential role in the human experience of meaning.

A comparative approach has been chosen in order to question Heidegger's characterization of nihilism as bound to the development of Western thought over the history of metaphysics, instead aiming to understand Western nihilism as originating in a universal experience of nothingness integral to the disclosure of meaning. The comparison is between these specific thinkers as not only do both explicitly engage with the problem of nihilism but both critique modernity with great insight yet one eye closed. The thesis argues both thinkers mis-characterize nihilism due to fundamental tensions in the way their core concepts are both ontological (what is), existential (how this is realized), and ethical (how it should be realized), and how their true meaning is the unity of these senses.

These tensions provide the context for all other issues addressed, which are divided into two related themes. Firstly, the tension between their thought's portrayal as simply phenomenological (a description of experience as lived) and its projective aspects (a description of how we should live, a projective retrieval of the essential nature of man). Secondly, how both thinkers claim the self-overcoming of nihilism requires the dual transformation of man and society, yet the relation of these transformations is underdeveloped. In Heidegger due to the problem of mediating the relation between the singularity of Sein and the communal nature of its Da, and for Nishitani the relation between absolute nothingness and its individual personal mask (the true self as personal-sive-impersonal). The thesis argues these tensions result in Heidegger and Nishitani overlooking that nihilism already contains its own counter-tendency within each nihilistic phenomena they identify. This will then be used to explore the possibility of an alternate manner of overcoming nihilism to the way they chart, one that enframes what they critique of nihilistic phenomena as inherent to disclosure and consonant with the core of their project.

Nihilism as Integral

Both an aim and presupposition of the thesis is to indicate nihilism as integral to all human disclosure and nihilism as one mode of experiencing the nothingness of self and a prior phenomenon to the history of metaphysics. Not only do the traits of nihilistic experience common to both Heidegger and Nishitani indicate the nature of nihilism, but so do those

of its self-transformation into an alternate experience of nihility. Whilst nothingness (Ereignis/Śūnyatā) only manifests in a finite historical (socio-cultural) context the thematizing of the experience of nihility can indicate a more universal primordial experience of reality, such as to be found in the shared elements of anxiety and the Great Doubt that also indicate an affinity between what follows from such experiences. The intent is not to argue for a step back out of Western metaphysics into Eastern mysticism, but that as nihilism is not identical with nor resulting from the oblivion of Being through metaphysics a retrieval of the Greek origin of metaphysics is a possible but not necessary source for the diffusion of the problem. The relation of the historical Greek origin of metaphysics with the ahistorical ontological origin of nihilism will be addressed in chapter 2.3 on the relation of the danger and that which saves as taking place prior to their realization within ontic intellectual traditions.

Whilst Heidegger characterizes nihilism as a Western destiny and Being as historical he also offers a notion of the human that appears to be valid for the whole species throughout its history. Heidegger's discussion of Dasein implies a universal structure of human existence that allows for a commonality in various intellectual traditions that deal with this phenomenon and a constructive synthesis of these traditions to better indicate and experience this commonality. Whilst Heidegger laments that the global destiny of Gestell obscures the ground of Eastern thought Nishitani's project can be seen as the retrieval of this ground and correlate to Heidegger's own retrieval of the Greek as a "precondition of the inevitable dialogue with the East Asian world"¹, thus that some form of universal statement regarding the nature of self and its relation to the experience of nihilism can be formulated. Yet Heidegger also makes statements on fundamental ontology based on the analysis of uniquely German terms. Whilst he accepts it can seem "that the understanding of the nature of the thingness...may be based on the accidents of an etymological game."² the historically conditioned nature of all meaning and thought means he is also correct in believing "that etymology has the standing mandate first to give thought to the essential content involved in what dictionary words, as words, denote by implication"³. Nishitani seems to go further, claiming that the 'elemental mode of the understanding of meaning' is to be found in Japanese thought, yet he also finds such elemental words in other languages such as the English term 'realization'.

However, although both thinkers try to address the unsayable by indication rather than direct representation ineffability is not identity. Being and Śūnyatā as both reached indirectly through beings or illusory reality are both beyond thematic conceptualization, as the ground of metaphysics and conventional thought respectively, but direct experience of Śūnyatā through its self-identity with self implies an element of universality that can be attested to in a manner that historical Being as withdrawal lacks. Śūnyatā's portrayal as the true form of reality introduces both a kind of essentialism and the possibility of direct knowledge (albeit in the form of a 'knowing of non-knowing') of such an essence that implies a greater universality to the human condition than expressed in the work of Heidegger. Such universality should not be seen in terms of general categories or uniformity; Heisig characterizes Nishitani not as reaching for "an abstract, generic idea of the human – his approach remains fixed on the individual – but that he has reached a point in individual consciousness that a shifting of cultural and historical conditions cannot reach, however much they may stimulate is to reach that point."⁴

¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (HarperCollins, 1982), 158.

² "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 172.

³ Ibid., 173.

⁴ James Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 219.

This element of universality leads to a slight tension in Nishitani's work. On the one hand he believes that Western thought must be revitalised through the retrieval of its own resources (for him, mainly those of the Christian tradition). On the other he believes in both the necessity and validity of a world-philosophy that tackles problems endemic to the human condition that take different ontic forms in different cultures but are best expressed in the Buddhist tradition that was also to be a resource for the West. Van Bragt portrays this as a balancing act between Nishitani's beliefs that "the true view of reality and the only hope for the global culture of the future is to be found (or at the very least strongly prefigured) in the Eastern heritage"⁵ but that nihilism in its historical form is a primarily a Western phenomena that must be countered from within so that "the West has nowhere to go but in the direction of the Eastern (Buddhist) ideal, but it cannot do so except from its own Western (Christian) premises."⁶ Nihilism and its relation to the human essence as constituted in relation to nothingness may be universal, and for Nishitani best approached through a radicalizing of nihility along the Buddhist model, but as its specific forms are culturally embedded so too must be its overcoming. Despite this Nishitani holds Buddhist thought as having universal validity in explicating the essence of the human condition, and the next chapter will address how successful the 'balancing act' is in regard to his stance on his own presuppositions.

Whilst universality of ontological constitution is a presupposition of the thesis, so is the fact that it may only be reached through the culturally bounded forms of nihilism it has manifested as, and that indicate this common source to be retrieved through the projective dialogue between traditions (a theme taken up more expressly in chapter 2.3).

Texts and Interpretation

These two thinkers have been chosen as both deal explicitly with the relevant concept of nothingness as this relates to self and world and also place themselves as culminating a narrative of nothingness realization within an intellectual tradition. Both also try to articulate the inexpressible in different ways, both failing at this impossible task in a beneficial manner, opening up other ways through their critique's limitations. The thesis will not concern itself whether any affinities between Heidegger and Nishitani are the result of influence or appropriation, as to "To search for influences and dependencies among thinkers is to misunderstand thinking. Every thinker is dependent – upon the address of Being"⁷. Regardless of whether such appropriations did take place the condition for their possibility is the shared context of concern rooted in fundamental human experience and the thesis presumes the problem of nihilism is independent enough from the two thinkers traditions to form a horizon of comparison for them; that the experiences of nothingness and nihilism charted by Heidegger and Nishitani share common origin.

Although proceeding by way of textual analysis comparison is the method not the goal. This accords with Nishitani's overall project as his "interest is not primarily comparison, but the resolution of certain philosophical problems"⁸. A classic text or thinker is one that stands the test of time, and does this as they stand open to many interpretations of their meaning, possessing a depth that allows each age to find something new and take what is classic for its own. The meaning of a text or thought lies in its relation to the tradition that it transmits and forms, its appropriation by later ages. Classics in this sense are not reproduced in thought but continually created through violent interpretation. To be a

⁵ Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, trans. J.V. Bragt (University of California Press, 1983), xxxvii.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* (Harper & Row, 1984), 55.

⁸ T. P. Kasulis, "Whence and Whither: Philosophical Reflections on Nishitani's View of History," in *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, ed. T. Unno (Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 259.

classic is to invite violence, and to weather generations of it is to prove a classic and move from theory to the realm of art.

Projection and Violence

Heidegger's narrative of the history of metaphysics is itself an act of interpretative violence to bring out the unthought in ways unintended by those thinkers, as "while a right elucidation never understands the text better than the author understood it, it does surely understand it differently."⁹ This leads to Hodge characterizing Heidegger's reading of texts as a 'duplicitous dialogue' not seeking their intrinsic meaning "but a release of a new one, supposedly hidden within the text through the duplicitous operations of the sendings of being."¹⁰ Hodge argues Heidegger's readings form a prospective history guided by his ethical commitments in which "He is using these readings to address himself to current and future conditions, understood to be in a state of extreme crisis"¹¹ opening him up to accusations that he reads modern oppositions back into the tradition and then declares the tradition to lead to them.

Such interpretation enframes the meaning of the text in terms of the projective moment Heidegger believes his own work stands in; a projection conditioned by his own thrown situation. New interpretations are a response to new concerns; Heidegger's violence was due to a concern with the fate of Being thus drew out what was unsaid yet ignored some of what was explicitly voiced. Heidegger must himself be interpreted in similar fashion to bring out what Hodge calls the unthought ethical element in his thought to highlight its futural element, and that I will later define as the axiological element to highlight its presuppositions. The criteria for judging such interpretation can only come from the new projected criteria, themselves guided by that which came before. Whilst Heidegger's narrative of nihilism in terms of the history of metaphysics will be addressed in later chapters it must be noted at the outset that the ontology of nothingness first elucidated both conditions and is conditioned by the projective elements in Heidegger and Nishitani's thought that themselves depend upon yet also first realize the 'dangers' of nihilism.

Texts

The aim is not for any sense of finality but to trace a way of understanding and experiencing indebted to but not ultimately constrained by those of Heidegger and Nishitani. To bring out an element at odds with other parts of the authors corpus, partly engaging in an immanent critique to explore a neglected possibility that underlies the work as what is unsaid. The tendency is always to find what we seek as we regard the philosophy of others from the perspective of our own concerns, especially when not seeking to lay out a correct or final interpretation of the thinkers in question but instead chart an experience of nothingness. As such the interpretation will hopefully remain open enough to follow the way of the texts and proceed with them even when appearing contrary, yet not surrender the possibility in the matter of thought to be explored even when it goes against the texts intended meaning.

The focus will be on Heidegger's later works and the attempt made to address the matter of thought indicated by these texts rather than treating each as discrete. A possible critique of this approach is that in taking Heidegger's thought as a unitary whole, treating the jug, chalice and pitcher from *The Thing*, *The Question Concerning Technology*, and *Discourse on Thinking* respectively as a single extended discussion, I am forcefully subsuming such thought into Nishitani's framework and ignoring vital textual variations.

⁹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 58.

¹⁰ J. Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (Taylor & Francis, 2012), 119.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

My approach will doubtlessly lead to the loss of certain nuances across the development of Heidegger's thought, but such is necessary in the attempt to indicate the continuity and structure of disclosure indicated throughout Heidegger's texts. Heidegger's later texts tend to reflect his projective interests more than his formally descriptive early works and it is thus fitting that their insights be wrested from them for one's own purposes.

The main text of Nishitani's to be considered is *Religion and Nothingness*, as to a greater extent than *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism* it reflects his own interpretation of Zen rather than commentating solely upon Western thinkers. In his own words this text does "not possess the systematic unity of a work written from beginning to end with a definite plan. Still, the work will, I hope, reveal a unity of thought throughout"¹². This lack of a systematic unity means that elements of his thought are often repeated throughout the chapters with differences in phrasing, terminology and emphasis that can lead to occasional contradictions (many surface, but some problematic as will be discussed in the following chapter) and can make it difficult to do justice to an element of his thought without dealing with its treatment in each essay. This results from Nishitani's intention to trace a way towards the realization of *Śūnyatā* rather than formulate a concrete position. As with Heidegger the attempt has been made to treat the themes present throughout all the essays as unified strands explicating facets or aspects of the process of *Śūnyatā*. The terminology and characterization most pertinent to the aims of the thesis will be used when a single idea is given a variety of formulations.

Ways of Thought

Heisig also sums up the potential frustration in dealing with Nishitani's thought as a way in which "arguments do not proceed along a straight line, and indeed at times seem to be going around in circles...this way of argumentation lies at the core of Nishitani's philosophy as an exercise in awakening"¹³, and "While the conclusion of the argument is clear, its logical progress is not always clear, and the circularity can be annoying when one wants explicit rational connections"¹⁴. Often one idea is reformulated and repeated numerous times over several pages yet apparently important steps in the argument skipped over as if they were self-evident. There is often a sense that an unexamined presupposition is covered up through reformulating premises and insights that, although possibly valid, are not examined and defended as much as they should be. Despite his view that traditional philosophical arguments and traditional Zen are "the same thing in different form"¹⁵ Nishitani tends to eschew the former form when it comes to the assertion of core presuppositions.

Rather than tackling traditional philosophical problems in a traditional manner both thinkers explore an understanding of ourselves and the world by charting a way of thought¹⁶. Heidegger characterizes his thought as both 'underway' and 'a way' with the connotation that it is only one of numerous valid paths to walk whose destination is as yet unclear; a single way of experiencing the call to thought. Such thought rejects singular definitive interpretations to tarry in ambiguity and multiple meanings, "To maintain such tension and fluidity in thinking is to resist the long-standing tendency to settle for one explanation, one voice, one truth."¹⁷ That the way is exploratory and without true goal in

¹² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, xlvii.

¹³ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 188-9.

¹⁴ Ibid., 223.

¹⁵ Ibid., 249.

¹⁶ Their methodologies can be likened to Nagarjuna, who in charting the middle way did not so much attempt to construct a position contrary to those he critiqued but instead engaged in a process of thought that would liberate the thinker from damaging ways of thought and hold them open to a revelation concerning the nature of *śūnyatā*.

¹⁷ Gail Stenstad, "Revolutionary Thinking," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. N.J. Holland and P.

part explains Heidegger's changing of core terminology that remains unified only by its concern with topic under question. Reflection on the characterization of thought as a way we are called to will feature prominently in chapter 2.5 and the conclusion of the thesis, notably the differences in their approaches to this method and how true they are to it. The possible limits of this methodology and the manner of critique appropriate to it is to be considered here.

The downside to this approach is that in proceeding by way of negation the movement seems to be away rather than towards, and ambiguity carries with it the inherent and essential danger of misinterpretation. Such tentative exploration of new ways opens possibilities rather than decides between them and can appear lacking in concrete content, leaving a vagueness filled by new phrases pushing at the constraints of that which came before. Heidegger's thought seems to undergo a perennial beginning leading only to a restarting on this way away that can make use of the last journey's trail-marks in an attempt to once more move from the transfigured point of departure, now rendered now less familiar, to an unknown destination. Such a journey never ends with a final position as "even the most genuine question is never stilled by the answer found."¹⁸ Whether his way of thought is befitting to the question of meaning "is something each one may judge after he himself has tried to go the designated way, or even better, after he has gone a better way, that is, a way befitting the question."¹⁹ To understand Heidegger one must follow him on his way, thus to an extent be invested in the veracity of the 'away' and already move within the horizon of thought laid out by him. Whilst "the way is not already there for us to follow, but comes into being as we go along it."²⁰ and should remain preparatory, provisional and contingent chapter 2.5 will consider whether Heidegger's way in fact leads to a prefigured destination (a position of a unique kind), and the manner in which the way back to *Ereignis* (thus *Ereignis* 'itself') only 'is' when we realize it as such will be a constant theme of the thesis.

This is partly why Nishitani characterizes *Śūnyatā* as both existential and ontological, although providing a theory of the conditions required for the manifestation of meaning this manifestation occurs in the manner of an existential movement that also provides for the transformative overcoming of nihilism. That *Śūnyatā* can only be realized existentially (and through such a realization its ontological role made manifest) not only makes it difficult to separate out the strands of Nishitani's work but also renders it opaque to purely intellectual apprehension as only through its existential realization is the notion truly understood in transfiguring the essence of those who encounter it. The dual nature of realization and *Śūnyatā* as existential-ontological are dealt with at length later, but it is worth noting now the methodological difficulties of this approach.

Existential as opposed to theoretical apprehension brings with it the problems endemic to all forms of quietism; the validity of a method that simply charts out a way of experiencing often involves a lack of argumentation capable of convincing those who do not share in that experiential attestation, it lacks the objective verifiability that Heidegger held as less rigorous than true 'thought'²¹. This problem is unavoidable as in the realm of fundamental ontology "one cannot prove anything, but one can point out a great deal"²². Approaching ontology through existential self-awareness shifts investigating the nature

Huntington (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 345.

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?* (Jovian Press, 2018), 44.

¹⁹ "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings* (HarperCollins, 1993), 247.

²⁰ Joan Stambaugh, "Heidegger, Daoism, and Metaphysics," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 82.

²¹In "My Philosophical Starting Point" Nishitani explicitly places the personal experience of nihilism, death and despair as what started him on his way; an experience not necessarily shareable by all.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 22.

of reality towards inquiry into the manner in which we experience the relation of self and reality. Nishitani takes this approach as paradigmatic and his thought often seems to go so far as to render reality and awareness of it as ontologically self-identical even whilst denying all forms of idealism and materialism. Whilst this relational view of *Da* and *Sein* brings him into affinity with Heidegger, his arguably more radical view of this relation of self-identity is to be seen later as bringing new attendant difficulties.

Heidegger and Nishitani's thought are not intended as provable theories but as ways through a state of being viewed as detrimental, and whilst Heidegger stops short of portraying his way as any kind of solution to nihilism Nishitani is less hesitant when talking of the self-overcoming of nihilism in such terms. Since solutions are only provable through their trial the onus is as much on the reader when it comes to ascertaining the validity of their approaches as it is on them. What renders this problematic is the connotation of universal ultimate truth Nishitani attributes to *Śūnyatā*. There seems to be little grounds for disagreement with them from within when to not share their experience of nothingness is to be in denial; when anxiety is attested to by the fleeing of those who deny it, and one who does not encounter nihility as the abyss of the everyday shows that "Nihility makes its presence felt in the very fact that he does not encounter nihility"²³.

Heidegger and Nishitani are engaged in a sort of meta-philosophy, and just as metaphysics cannot penetrate or question its own ground so too does traditional philosophy have difficulty in addressing the thought that concerns itself with the ground of philosophy and its horizons. Their thought can only be truly critiqued from within and from the same way they trace, a violent interpretation that appropriates them to one's own way. Meaningful critique best comes from charting a rival way in line with a similar experience of thought, to take the leap out of metaphysics with their aid and concentrate on internal contradictions and tensions along the way, ending up somewhere different due to a different thrown situation. Their thought is a guidebook to approaching a matter of thought rather than presenting a theory or definite position, it is to aid fellow travelers who can make use of the path they have cut. Heidegger invites those who want to find their own path, despite sometimes retreating into fiat style claims that invite adherents. Although conditioned by the tradition that precedes it this new thought cannot take its measure from its roots but instead from the unknown and not yet bloomed fruits for which it seeks to create the conditions for. Every way of thought is a projective interpretation that throws forward its own criteria for adjudication, in this manner Nishitani's way can be seen as less open and the difference between them on this point will be returned to in the conclusion.

Because of this method the most viable path of critique relates to the success of the texts in inspiring their readers. Stenson claims that the work of both Heidegger and Nishitani "reveals the meaning it seeks to communicate by transforming the mode of being-in-the-world of the person who gets the message."²⁴ This leads him to describe *Religion and Nothingness* as "an intricate Zen *kōan* in which question after question is raised on the level of intellection in order to spill us into another order of awareness."²⁵ This manner of presentation of Nishitani's thought is not incidental as to "to confront the 'meaning of Being', one must experience the deconstruction of common language, a destruction of ordinary everyday patterns of thought"²⁶. The poetic paradoxical saying of a *kōan* is the

²³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 43.

²⁴ T. Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness* (Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 119.

²⁵ Sten. H Stenson, "Beyond Science and Technology to Absolute Emptiness," in *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, ed. T. Unno (Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 115.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

manner in which the fields of consciousness and nihility are broken through, the text is not (and could not be) a description of *Śūnyatā*, but is an instance of *Śūnyatā* when engaged with in the manner of a personal realization. A kōan is not an argument, it is a tactic to indicate the unthinkable and incite a moment of insight in which “One is suddenly and paradoxically aware of ultimate truth within the structures of conventional truth both affirming and negating those same structures.”²⁷ that opens the way for enlightenment through realizing the mutual emptiness of self and world. One does not make sense of a kōan but sets it aside as a valueless vehicle that has aided one to reach a new position, as steps along a way the thought in the text “instead of furnishing representations and concepts, experiences and tests itself as a transformation of its relatedness to Being.”²⁸ As a tool of enlightenment rather than the attempt to construct a systematic position the most fundamental critique of *Religion and Nothingness* itself (and not the thought it represents) would relate to its success in transforming its readers, or even more narrowly, as each kōan was crafted to aid the enlightenment of those in a single situation, those readers who the text was intended to address. Although the thesis concerns the thought and not the text a potential problem with this manner of presentation is discussed in the next chapter.

Whilst the kōan paradigm is helpful in approaching *Religion and Nothingness* there is a limit to how far the similarity can be taken. Nishitani combines historical treatment of philosophers with existential self-examination, the former always in service to the latter as “it has often been the case that philosophy and its thinking has only found its own rest or repose in a return to the mystical,”²⁹ yet Nishitani holds his “central concern has been to *think* the problem of nothingness. In other words, to approach it as a problem of philosophy”³⁰, by which he means Western philosophy. As such the text combines transformative experiential attestation with formal academic rigour, even whilst performing a critique of the limited rationality and theoretical onus of the latter. This combination is frequently found in Zen, which whilst opposed to intellectual theory and suspicious of languages ability to truly grasp reality has spilt much ink in theorizing as to the limits of theory, it speaks loudly of the need for silence and it is “an obvious fact that the history of Zen is replete with practically every kind of literary production”³¹ full of utterances. As such it could be seen as a polemical attitude, not anti-theory per se but anti the primacy of theory, and some of the emphases within *Religion and Nothingness* that seem to favour one side of dichotomous relations may be better seen within a polemical framework. A broadly similar approach will later be taken on Heidegger's reflections on the nature of meditative and calculative thought.

Religion and Nothingness may resemble a kōan in being an aid to enlightenment, but it takes the form of more traditional philosophy and brings with it theoretical doctrinal assertions that also invite more traditional rational critiques. Whilst both Heidegger and Nishitani question reason the former asks as to the possibility of “a thinking outside of the distinction of rational and irrational”,³² the latter posits a thinking of the self-identity of such opposed terms. The ambiguous relation of rational critique and experiential attestation in Zen practice leads Nishitani to alternate between invoking reason and repudiating it in a manner that is at times troublesome. His overt critiques of reason and

²⁷ Dale S. Wright, “The Significance of Paradoxical Language in Hua-Yen Buddhism,” *Philosophy East and West* 32, no. 3 (1982): 333.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 138.

²⁹ Keiji Nishitani, “Ontology and Utterance,” *Philosophy East and West* 31, no. 1 (1981): 29.

³⁰ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 1.

³¹ Nishitani, “Ontology and Utterance,” 31.

³² Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” in *Basic Writings* (HarperCollins, 1993), 449.

admonishments to go ‘beyond’ reason as found on the field of consciousness can be seen in the context of Zen’s portrayal as a kind of ‘hyper-reason’, not an irrational negation of reason but its self-transcendence. For Nishitani the essence of reason is the union of the knower and known that is only possible upon the field of *Śūnyatā*, and he never seeks to move beyond this broad understanding or imply irrationality in terms of it. Thurman notes that “the ‘reason’ he often talks about and associates with personality and so on, is clearly the primarily substantivistic aspect of reason or *logos* that is concerned with world construction and order. At other times he refers to the critical reason involved in modern subjectivism, referring primarily to Kant’s Copernican revolution in getting beyond substance to subject.”³³ It is the narrow historical conception of reason upon the field of consciousness that is critiqued, a critique utilizing reason itself as can be seen in the presentation of the Zen Great Doubt as a radicalization of Cartesian doubt that “is clearly not a rejection of reason, but an intensification of reasoning and inquiry to a point where it breaks through its imagic lenses into the realm of nihility and then the field of emptiness”³⁴. But despite radicalizing rational inquiry Nishitani still draws a limit to it that may be too severe considering the ramifications of the leap he invokes and the religious form he gives it. His striving for a “balance between reason and letting go of reason”³⁵ can seem unbalanced and leads to problems within his paradoxes and resolution of dichotomies that will be addressed later.³⁶

For example; when he speaks of the conversion to affirmation he claims “It is something of which we cannot ask why. There can be no conceivable reason for it...If a reason is to be sought, it can only be as the traditional religions have all sought it...in God or in the Buddha...But a reason that is on the side of God or Buddha is not the sort of reason man is after when he asks why...After all, we can do no other than to say: it is so...all that is left is *that* or *thus*. All we can say is that such is the way Existenz is.”³⁷ It is one thing to agree that a rose is without why, but when it comes to the existential conversion of the human way of being it would seem insufficient warrant that such a leap is necessitated by the current condition; we may agree with the leap *from* but not the leap *to*. Nishitani’s critique of and moving beyond the field of reason does not render him immune to rational critique that is conducted in a parallel fashion to his own use of reason, from within the new horizon he opens up. If *Śūnyatā* is to reconcile all dichotomies through overcoming the very notion of duality; if *Śūnyatā* as the process of disclosure is not apart from what it discloses but constituted with it (as *Ereignis* is with metaphysics), and part of what it discloses is reason itself even whilst moving beyond reason through the negation of the field of consciousness, then at no point can the requirements of rationality be truly absent within the field of *Śūnyatā*. Jones suggests a division of spheres, that “Kyoto philosophers grant traditional logic legitimacy in certain areas, such as physical sciences, but insist on their dialectic in other areas, such as religion and the investigation of self-consciousness.”³⁸ but this called into doubt by Nishitani’s insistence that science and religion cannot be partitioned and that fields are self-identical. Nishitani cannot draw a limit to the applicability of the sphere of reason without reinforcing dichotomous thinking as integral to *Śūnyatā*. He provides a single image of the ‘suchness’ that cannot be questioned in terms of traditional reason, but beyond the sphere of reason he seems to

³³ Robert. A.F. Thurman, "Nishitani and the Inner Science of Buddhism," in *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, ed. T. Unno (Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 155.

³⁴Ibid., 174.

³⁵ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 184.

³⁶At the risk of waxing poetical; there is a difference between the paradoxes of reality that still reason in silent wonder (yet also impel it), and the purely irrational paradoxes that first require reason to be silenced. The risk is that the former lead to the latter.

³⁷ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 231-2.

³⁸ Nicholaos John Jones, "The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School," *Philosophy East and West* 54, no. 3 (2004): 316.

have few resources when it comes to alternative experiences of reality in its 'suchness' that differ from his own but stand in the same horizon, except to claim that such are false experiences as their form of revelation is at variance with the manner of experiential attestations he ties to traditional religious themes. Despite the emphasis given to planetary dialogue between traditions by both Nishitani and commentators on his work it would seem to remain a dialogue between those who share a fundamental attunement that, as in a horizon beyond the reasons why, has difficulty forming a dialogue with those whose experience attests in a different manner.

Nihilism as 'Problem'

The provisional guiding definition of nihilism is to be the experience of existence as meaningless, a way of self-understanding, that as such can lead beyond itself without having been 'solved' or overcome. Nihilism stems from an experience of Nothingness as integral to Being, as a certain aspect of this experience comes to dominate then meaninglessness comes to the fore, essentially making nihilism a form of self-experience or attunement we find ourselves in when nihility manifests in a limited fashion. If nihilism is a manner of experiencing the nothingness of self then to talk of the 'problem' of nihilism implies reality itself is a problem placing the perspective of man as having precedence over reality. Nihilism as an experience of nihility stems from an experience of Being and just as "The 'mystery' of Being can in no way be solved, as if it were a 'problem'"³⁹ nor can nihilism as an experience of this mysterious wonder. Instead nihilism is to be transformed from its own origin into a different manner of experiencing nihility as that origin, Heidegger and Nishitani offer alternative ways of experiencing this Nothingness; an attending to a more primordial or originary experience of Nothingness as *Ereignis* or *Śūnyatā*. Nothingness is thus the condition for both nihilism and salvation as the realization of identity with reality (*samsāra-sive-nirvāna*). Such an experience seeks to transform lived human existence by expressing the experience of Nothingness in a non-nihilistic vocabulary. Problems of the attestation to such primordial experiences will be later addressed, as will the horizon for their comparison given that adjudication between nihilism and the alternate ways they chart appears to require a further axiological assumption through which such experiences and paradigms can be judged.

Heidegger does not talk of the problem of technology, he talks of the question concerning it and questioning implies a puzzlement; why do we experience reality nihilistically, especially given our nature as revealers of meaning? The question of nihilism is thus the question of the self and its possibilities, accordingly "In regard to the *essence* of nihilism there is no prospect and no meaningful claim to a cure."⁴⁰ Questioning builds a way and to be on a way is to undergo an experience; the issue is not the problem of nihilism but what the nihilistic way of experience tells us of *Ereignis* and *Śūnyatā* thus of ourselves and how we can more fully realize that self. Both Heidegger and Nishitani think through the self-transformation of nihilism from the nihility that is its shared origin with that which saves; strictly speaking neither has recourse to condemn nihilism as it is a dispensation or gift of Being, and nirvāna is nothing other than samsāra. Neither are critical of nihility or even nihilism as such, but only the inauthentic elements within nihilistic disclosure that obscure the more primordial origin of nihility, with authentic nihility as indicative of reality being celebrated as much as it is critiqued. Yet at times both Heidegger and Nishitani appear to be untrue to their own thought in that, through virtue of their own historical perspectives, their stances towards nihilism do not cohere with their theories as to its possibilities. Despite sharing the over-riding concern with

³⁹ James Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God* (Ohio University Press, 1974), 63.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, "The Question of Being," in *Philosophical and Political Writings: Martin Heidegger*, ed. M. Stassen (Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), 37.

nihilism there remains a great difference in biases and presuppositions between myself and the thinkers in question, specifically the role of current manifestations of nihilism as criteria for the new epochal understanding, leading to an alternate way consonant with their own being the culmination of the thesis.

Heidegger claimed he had “never spoken against technology, nor against the so-called demonic elements in technology”⁴¹ seeking only to understand the essence of technology that “challenges man and, in opposition to which, he is not free any longer – that something is being announced here, namely a relationship of Being to man – and that this relationship, which is concealed in the essence of technology, may come to light someday in its undisguised form.”⁴² These comments by Heidegger raise two points.

Firstly, that their tone is at odds with other of his statements. Whilst neither Heidegger nor Nishitani want to master technology or science for rational ends, nor call for reactionary policies, their thought and its presentation do differ allowing for easy misappropriation. They possibly adopt a polemical tone to question an epoch obscuring their true aims and ontologies. For example, the *Memorial Address* in *Discourse on Thinking* can easily be taken as speaking against technological thought and its 'attack' on nature that characterizes the current historical epoch. Elements in Heidegger's works that can be seen as speaking against technology are to be read in light of his claims that *Gestell* (thus nihilism) is to be understood not countered or worked against; that as not against technology he is not against the historical manifestation of nihility as nihilism since this is a process of withdrawal inherent to disclosure, it is how Being *is* and as already noted reality cannot be a problem.

Secondly, the idea that the relationship of man and Being concealed by technology (*Ereignis* as their mutual appropriation) could appear in an 'undisguised' form seems both integral to Heidegger's project yet innately unable to come to light in this way since the concealment integral to disclosure means Being must withdraw to disclose beings and such disclosure through withdrawal is what Being *is*. Heidegger and Nishitani's critiques as both ontological and axiological (a theme to be addressed in chapter 1.1 and throughout) means there is a question of ends to be addressed. Such undisguised *Ereignis* will later be assessed as forming the projective criteria for the epochal transformation Heidegger's thought aims towards, and as itself self-identical with the nihility that enables the disclosure of meaning which only 'is' as its present nihilistic manifestation in *Gestell*. This identity of *Ereignis* and *Gestell* ; of both the saving power and supreme danger, is mirrored in Nishitani's view of samsāra-sive-nirvāna and this strong sense of identity is a guiding presupposition of what follows. Accordingly nihilism in this thesis will not be thought as different from the realization of *Śūnyatā* or that which saves.

Neither Heidegger nor Nishitani place enough emphasis on the beneficial elements of nihilism as the realization of nihility that are to be preserved in the saving power or field of *Śūnyatā*. The tone of their presentation and attempt to reach 'undisguised' *Ereignis* obscures elements of *Gestell* (or for Nishitani science as nihility) that once retained in authentic form can give concrete content to the originary experience of *Śūnyatā* and *Ereignis*. This leads to the appearances of core tensions in their work that are to be inquired into, such as the precedence of elemental subjectivity and unbalanced paradoxes in Nishitani. Comparative critique of their thought is intended to use each to highlight this tendency within the other and indicate how their respective notions of nihilism can inform the others projective thought.

⁴¹ R. Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation* (Arnold-Heinemann Publishers (India), 1977), 43.

⁴² Ibid.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Ereignis and Śūnyatā

This chapter will first offer a preliminary definition of what is meant by the constituent terms in the phrase ‘ontology of nothingness’ in relation to Heidegger before moving on to how for Nishitani Śūnyatā as absolute nothingness is to be approached through the overcoming of duality and dichotomous thinking, along the way raising shared broad problems that will be thematic in following chapters. The following chapters will proceed to consider what this understanding means for Śūnyatā in terms of the specific duality of subject-object in relation to the reality of things and self, as well as world as the relation of disclosure between them alongside consideration of similar themes in Heidegger's work. The identity of these in Śūnyatā as the self-realization of reality is to indicate the absolute nothingness of self and world through the self-identity of which meaning arises.

Heideggerian Ontology

Ontology is defined as the study of Being, yet the meaning, spelling and even use of this latter term changes throughout Heidegger's works. Despite being the avowed concern of his earlier works the term ontology is itself later dropped by Heidegger for its lingering metaphysical connotations. But whilst the fundamental ontology of Being and Time is later criticized for suggesting that Being itself is reached through transcending beings and determined by Dasein the problem of transcendence as concerning “what makes it ontologically possible for entities to be encountered within-the-world”,¹ encountered as beings, remained a constant theme.

Being names that which in virtue of which entities are rendered beings, “that on the basis of which entities are already understood”.² When entities are understood “we say that they have meaning...Meaning is that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself. That which can be Articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we call 'meaning'.”³ The Being of beings is their meaningfulness and the meaning of Being itself is the horizon in which this meaningfulness is grasped, not that which is but that which enables the meaning of that which is and is prior to any specific conception of meaning or what we take the metaphysical constitution of beings to be (their beingness, *Seiendheit*). Being comprises the horizon of understanding for the intelligibility of beings, it dictates the range of meanings beings can have for us. The thesis thus follows Sheehan in claiming *Sein* essentially can be taken as 'meaning' so the phrase 'the being of beings' means “the meaningful presence of things to human concerns”⁴ so that “Heidegger's discourse about 'being' is to be understood as a discourse about meaningfulness, one that ultimately focused on the source of meaningfulness.”⁵ Meaning is how we take beings to be in our comportment towards them and does not inhere in entities, all non-Dasein are unmeaning (nothingness); the sheer present-at-hand that can 'assault Dasein's Being'. Dasein's meaning itself originates in Being through which entities are revealed as beings

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: HarperPerennial, 2008), 417. *Sein Und Zeit* (Niemeyer, 2006), 366.

² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 25-6. *Sz*, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 192-3/151

⁴ Thomas Sheehan, "The Turn: All Three of Them," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

and thus "can be appropriated in understanding, or can remain relegated to non-understanding"⁶ and remain un-meaning present-at-hand entities.

Ereignis

By the time of *Identity and Difference* Ereignis as the "belonging together that concerns man and Being."⁷ replaces Being as Heidegger's guiding term, thinking the relation of Da and Sein rather than trying to reach Being through analysis of Dasein. Being (Sein) is not Beingness (Seiendheit), but nor is it Ereignis that gives Sein. These three usages are sometimes conflated throughout Heidegger's work as the way progresses back to its origin in appropriation, inquiry into each must progress through the others as each only is through the other; from the Seiendheit of beings, to Sein, to Ereignis as the appropriative process that originates meaning in relation with the unmeaning of Da. Ereignis gives Being and is only this giving, Ereignis has no meaning beyond the Sein it enables, and Sein no meaning beyond the beingness of the beings it enables disclosure of; Ereignis only is in the manner in which appropriation occurs (only as a specific epoch).

Ereignis speaks the hypen of Da-Sein that gives both and replaces Dasein as the essence of the human constituting the horizon for the meaning of Being through this relation. Despite this Heidegger's prime concern remained the conditions of possibility for meaning and the regional ontology of Dasein remains fundamental ontology as "Being is present and abodes only as it concerns man through the claim it makes on him. For it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence."⁸ There 'is' neither Being nor the essence of humanity outside of their relation to each other. The relation is prior to what it relates, Da and Sein can only understood in terms of their mutual belonging so that "In truth, we can then not even say any longer that 'Being' and 'man' 'be' the same in the sense that they belong together; for in so saying we still let both be for themselves."⁹ Ereignis refers to a relation between meaningfulness and those that experience meaning that comprises the horizon needed for beings to manifest as meaningful through the lived human existence it enables; it equally names Being and Nothingness, meaning and unmeaning, through their mutual interpenetration.

Ereignis would also seem to involve more than two elements; Da, Sein and entities are all gathered together in appropriation and related to nothingness, yet the third is not constituted solely by this relation. Being not only requires man as an ontic entity but also requires prior entities to be revealed as beings. Without Ereignis or Being we cannot say entities 'are' but their 'notness' is not a total lack of existence and Ereignis is dependent upon this notness of entities. Heidegger does not address the nature of the entities that are appropriated to the same extent as he does the Da and Sein, possible viewing such an interpretation as too derivative of scientific objectivity, yet implies this element in his talk of the inherent possibilities required for releasement. This theme will emerge more in chapter 1.2 and section 3 in relation to the gathering of jitai upon its homeground and the possibility of scientific disclosures allowing for elemental objectivity.

Ontology as the study of Being can thus be called thought of Ereignis as the origin and possibility of meaning (as opposed to any specific epochal meaning), including the related topics of both the meaning of the self and the role the self plays in disclosing meaning. Ontology does not define Being but asks "Whereon is each answer to the question of being based i.e., wherein, after all, is the unconcealment of Being

⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 25-6. Sz, 6.

⁷ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 30.

⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁹ Heidegger, "The Question of Being," 77.

grounded?"¹⁰; how the relation of meaning and unmeaning in appropriation makes it possible for beings to show themselves.

Nothingness

A definition is an ascription of a meaning, nothingness is to partly name the process that enables such ascriptions of meaning; as thinking must be about something nothingness can only be approached obliquely through its relation to the experience of meaning it is a condition for. Whilst not a term that conceptual representation can give any objective reference, and as an abstract noun impossible to coherently define except in terms of general negation, Heidegger's identifying of Nothingness with Being means that a partial definition has already been given above. Meditative reflection upon Being must dwell upon the nihilating of the nothing and "because it thinks Being, thinking thinks the nothing"¹¹; Being and Nothing belong together so must be dealt with at a single stroke. But that both he and Nishitani also kept them as separate terms indicates a difference of emphasis within the process of the disclosure of meaning.

In *Being and Time* the ontological meaning of nothingness is said to remain obscure yet "Ontology and logic, to be sure, have exacted a great deal from the 'not' and have thus made its possibilities visible in a piecemeal fashion",¹² but to understand the question of nothingness is said to first require "taking the meaning of Being in general as a theme and clarifying it".¹³ The nothingness behind the 'not' is not explicitly thought in *Being and Time* yet constitutes *Dasein* in its nullity and guilt, it structures the authentic temporality of *Dasein* that provides the horizon for the disclosure of Being. This ontological uncertainty regarding the 'not' swiftly gives way to the claim "that the nothing is more original than the 'not' and negation,"¹⁴ and that "nothingness...is nothing negative. It belongs to being present. Being and nothingness are not side by side. One intercedes on behalf of the other...Being 'is' just as little as nothingness, but both are."¹⁵ As integral to the meaning of beings and at one with the disclosure of them rather than in opposition to or the negation of them, "The nothing does not remain the indeterminate opposite of beings but reveals itself as belonging to the Being of beings,"¹⁶ a belonging realized through the *Da-Sein* relation in which man as place-holder for nothingness "is holding the place open for the complete other of being, so that in its openness there can be such a thing as being present (Being)." ¹⁷ The Being of beings is only made manifest when *Dasein* attends to the difference between beings and non-being in nihilation, that both meaning and non-meaning are separate to that which has meaning (that which 'is'), and form the horizon that enables things 'to be'. The difference between what 'is' and that which allows it to 'be' was, in *Being and Time*, said to be the ontological difference between Being and beings. By the writing of *What is Metaphysics?* the previously ontologically uncertain 'not' had come to fulfil this role, that beings are not nothingness is that through virtue of which beings can 'be'. The question of the meaning of Being is accordingly supplemented by the question of the Nothing's relation to disclosure; most

¹⁰ Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 45.

¹¹ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 261.

¹² *Being and Time*, 331. *SZ* 285.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 332. *SZ* 286

¹⁴ *What Is Metaphysics?* , 97.

¹⁵ "The Question of Being," 97.

¹⁶ *What Is Metaphysics?* , 108.

¹⁷ "The Question of Being," 97.

pertinently; “Why does the forgetfulness of Being dominate, and from where does it come?”¹⁸; a question dealt with in section 2 of the thesis.

Nothingness first strikes the ear with the connotation of negation; a literal no-thing (not-anything) that refers to a specific absence of something which could or should be there, an abstract exaggeration of which would be a total absence as the counter-concept to the totality of entities. No-thing can also be heard as no specific thing, as an absence of exclusive distinctions or differentiations that commonly delimit entities; neither simple negation of existence nor a being; “Nothing is never nothing; it is just as little a something...it is Being itself”.¹⁹ In this sense Nothingness is heard with a similar resonance as Being for both share that they are no specific being, and in some ontologies as non-differentiated they enable possible differentiated manifestations (one example of this could be the Vedantic Brahman describable only as *neti-neti*, ‘not this’). Every revealing is also a concealing of alternate possibilities thus permeated by a ‘not’ that pertains to finite possibility and freedom; Being is constituted equally by what is absent as what is present and so its meanings remain contingent and inherently plural. This aspect of nothingness as positive potential, as concealed possibilities that have not-yet been articulated as meaning, can also be seen in *Śūnyatā* having as its Sanskrit root ‘*svabhva*’ (hollow or swollen, pregnant with possibility) and the non-differentiation encountered in anxious experience of the field of nihility when the erasure of meaningful significance leads to an experience of non-differentiation in meaning.

When properly encountered as the condition for the possibility of disclosure nothingness shows itself as an aspect of the appropriative process of *Ereignis*; un-meaning is shown to be one with meaning; “Nothing, conceived as the pure ‘Other’ than what-is, is the veil of Being.”²⁰ Whilst Heidegger often uses the term Being for the entire process of the disclosure of meaning it most properly names the revealing aspect, with nothingness naming the withdrawal and concealment (un-meaning) of Being through which beings are revealed as meaningful. Being and nothingness can thus be seen as two facets of the same process described with a difference of priority or emphasis yet each notion contains the other, both indicate a relation of strife between meaning and non-meaning that allows for the disclosure of meaning. The relation between meaning and un-meaning; revealing and concealing, Being and Nothingness, is what makes possible the meaningful disclosures of *Da-Sein*.

Ontology of Nothingness

The integral relation of Being and Nothingness would seem to make the phrase ‘ontology of nothingness’ a redundancy; but the intent of the phrase is to highlight both how un-meaning is an essential condition of possibility for the manifestation of meaning and is the feature of disclosure that gives rise to the experience of nihilism from within *Ereignis* itself. The ontology of nothingness thus inquires into how the man-Being relation (*Da-Sein*) is constituted by or related to Nothingness; how the nihility of self, beings and world enable *Ereignis* through the strife and identity of meaning and unmeaning resulting in the realization of nihilism. The *Da-Sein* relation as constituting the essential human self means that ontology is self-inquiry, what it means for us to be who we are. The thinking of *Ereignis* as the mutual constitution of man and Being (*Da-Sein*) is reflection on the relation of self and meaning.

Śūnyatā

Whilst Nishitani avoids term ontology Asakura holds that his thought “must be seen as

¹⁸ Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 45.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 154.

²⁰ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 248.

ontological in nature”²¹ as it moves from beings to their Being as empty so that “The being of beings presents itself in our /// meditation as our awareness of the ontological deepens and develops.”²² The definition of the essence of religion Nishitani gives at the start of *Religion and Nothingness* emerges throughout the work to encapsulate his understanding of Śūnyatā in terms of the process of self-identity between the self and reality is clearly ontological in nature. Yet he also uses the term ‘religion’ throughout the text to denote both aspects of, or perspectives within, that reality and ontic religions in the traditional narrow definition of the term. This highlights two related flaws that run throughout his work; his tendency to favour one element in the overcoming of dichotomies, and how the lack of a systematic unity can lead to a conflation of the ontological, existential, axiological and ontic senses of his core terms.

Nishitani holds the essence of religion to be “the self-awareness of reality, or, more correctly, the real self-realization of reality. By the ‘self-awareness of reality’ I mean both our becoming aware of reality and, at the same time, the reality realizing itself in our awareness.”²³ ‘Realize’ is here to be taken as both denoting ‘actualize’ and ‘understand’, it is always with this dual resonance that the term is used both in his text and this thesis. He goes on to claim that “our ability to perceive reality means that reality realizes (actualizes) itself in us; that this in turn is the only way that we can realize (appropriate through understanding) the fact that reality is so realizing itself in us; and that in so doing the self-realization of reality takes place.”²⁴ Self and reality are only realized through a mutual appropriation prior to any individual existence; that “The real perception of reality is our real mode of being itself and constitutes the realness that is the true reality of our existence” meaning “the self-realization of reality can only take place by causing our existence to become truly real”²⁵. This conjunction of the realization of the true self and reality matches Heideggerian ontology as in Dasein's coming to awareness of the mutual appropriation of self and reality (inquiry into awareness of our awareness) Ereignis comes to self-awareness; reality realizing itself in our awareness as we become aware of it.

Yet throughout *Religion and Nothingness* the term ‘religion’ is used in three distinct senses; the ontological definition that is Śūnyatā, the teleological worldview (or life axis) of existence that is only one element of the wider understanding, and the ontic religions through which the first two elements partly arise to awareness. The latter two uses have a corresponding opposed understanding of science; either the nihility of the mechanistic worldview (the death axis, which along with the life axis are the poles between which modern man is pulled and that must be reconciled for our existence to be transformed), or the institutions and individuals engaged is the scientific enterprise. With the primary ontological understanding of religion no such opposed understanding seems possible, just as Gestell is not the opposite of Ereignis but occurs within its horizon. At times it is not made clear which of these usages is being invoked, they oscillate, merge and are used to support each other even when they are more properly seen as conflicting or as only one incomplete aspect of one another.

Each element of his understanding of religion would seem to need its own term, and the use of the same term for the process of fundamental reality and one view within reality to which another view is opposed can give the impression that Nishitani prioritizes religion as a worldview or ontic phenomenon over their dichotomous opposites due to the use of the same term for the ontological process that encompasses both sides of these

²¹ Tomomi Asakura, "On Buddhistic Ontology: A Comparative Study of Mou Zongsan and Kyoto School Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 61, no. 4 (2011): 667.

²² Ibid., 671.

²³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 6.

oppositions. The reality of Śūnyatā is not capable of opposition to secular or scientific thought since Śūnyatā is to overcome the very notion of such duality, but the ambivalence of his usage complicates his claim that “The problem of religion and science is the most fundamental problem facing contemporary man.”²⁶ This use of the term religion is clearly different to the overarching ontological definition and will be addressed in depth in the chapters on nihilism.

This same trend is also found in Nishitani's use of the term Śūnyatā that as encapsulating Nishitani's ontological definition of religion is a broad unifying term denoting; the self-identity of absolute emptiness and being as suchness, self-emptying as the process of meanings manifestation that discloses this suchness, true self-realization as the realization of elemental subjectivity (the self as mask of absolute nothingness), and Buddhist practice within the framework of the Great Compassion. This unity is a legacy of Nagarjuna, who Inada characterizes as identifying three facets of experiential reality; “the empirically grounded relational nature of the rise of all perceptions or events, the nonempirical “empty” nature in virtue of the dynamically relational or dependent nature, and the total or holistic nature of an enlightened way of life”²⁷ so that sunyata or “emptiness is a unifying principle without which the whole experiential process would not be what it is.”²⁸ The various understandings of Śūnyatā can be distinguished within conventional thought but the true meaning of the term lies with their self-identity. In line with this understanding the term ‘Śūnyatā’ is to be used solely to designate being-sive-nothingness understood as a process of self-identity, emptiness for the facet of that process when artificially considered as separate. The term religion will be restricted to its traditional Western usage of denoting specific belief systems. Religion in its essential ontological definition will be replaced with Śūnyatā or referred to as ‘ontological religion’, and in its perspectival sense with the terms life axis or teleological perspective. This should not unduly distort Nishitani's work as he uses all such terms as synonyms for his various conceptions of religion.

Soku / sive

Śūnyatā does not merely involve the overcoming of specific dualities and dichotomies, but the overcoming of the very notion of duality and dichotomous thinking. The standpoint does not begin from “a separation of subject and object and then work toward their reunification”²⁹ and nor is a simple monism, instead it preserves the differentiation of constituents within a relation of self-identity. The use of the term sive (Jap. Soku) is intended to demonstrate this and when “Put between two contradictory concepts...it is meant to draw off the total reality of the two poles into itself as their constitutive and ontologically prior unity. It indicates the only point or ‘place’ at which the opposites are realized and display their true reality.”³⁰, not in the form of joining or alternating between the elements but a simultaneous superimposition in which both aspects are equally real. Whilst not directly commensurate with the appropriative event of Ereignis the hyphen of Da-Sein can be thought in a similar sense of mutual constitution as that of the sive relation; an identity of belonging rather than uniformity.

Jones holds that the Kyoto thinkers “grant the legitimacy of this dialectic without question, and invoke it often”,³¹ and whilst paradox is essential to reality they fail to spell out when and why it is valid. Jones points out Nishitani does not overcome every

²⁶Ibid., 46.

²⁷ Kenneth Inada, *Environmental Problematics*, ed. J.B. Callicott and R.T. Ames, Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy (State University of New York Press, 1989), 139.

²⁸ Ibid., 143.

²⁹Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 107.

³⁰Ibid., xxx.

³¹ Jones, “The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School,” 302.

dichotomy and never “uses the dialectic to relate abstract and concrete, atheism and theism, enlightened and unenlightened, dynamic and static, “real” contradiction and “merely formal logical” contradiction.”³² (Abe does use the phrasing sacred-sive-profane in relation to Christ, but in basing the relation within the symbolism of a religion does not go as far as atheism-sive-theism) Jones concludes that soku may more resemble “a rhetorical device rather than a genuine logical relation”;³³ a tool/way towards enlightenment that seeks to achieve a fundamental attunement, yet which cannot be used to question these goals. Such a logic of non-self is held by Jones to be preferable to traditional logic when it comes to existential realities that are always in state of becoming so refer to something they are not, viewing this separation of logics as perfectly valid³⁴ and contributing to a worthwhile understanding of reality.³⁵ Yet this retains a dichotomy within sunyata regarding reason and logic, a division of conventional and ultimate reality that leads to a problematic regarding the role of reason within sunyata to be returned to later.

The soku relation can be elucidated by Nishitani’s treatment of life and death, whilst the content of these ideas is to be addressed later the form of the relation highlights how “in truth reality is two-layered...It is not as if only one of the representations were true, so that all the others could be reduced to it. Reality eludes all such attempts at reduction. In the same sense, the aspect of life and the aspect of death are equally real, and reality is that which appears now as life and now as death. It is both life and death, and at the same time is neither life nor death. It is what we have to call the nonduality of life and death.”³⁶ Śūnyatā as nondual reality adopts the standpoint of the sive so that “Everything can be seen as a kind of ‘double exposure’ of life and death, of being and nihility.”³⁷ Both constituents of a dichotomous relation are shown through the sive relation to be a self-identity of illusion and reality, of self and non-self, and this relation of self-identity in non-self-identity is the true form of their suchness. The nature of this claim is explicated throughout the section and provides the context for Nishitani’s formulation samsāra-sive-nirvāna that is to be vital for sections 2 and 3. For now an example of the vital role of the sive relation in the theory of Śūnyatā and how it indicates ‘suchness’ is to be considered, an example pertaining to the relation of emptiness and being that also highlights a case of the ‘semantic drift’ in relation to Nishitani’s core concepts mentioned earlier.

Nothingness and Emptiness

Nishitani says of true emptiness that “it is to be realized as something united to and self-identical with being”³⁸ and that “the phrase ‘being-sive-nothingness’ requires that one take up the stance of the ‘sive’ and from there view being as being and nothingness as nothingness”³⁹. Nothingness is not seen here as the negation of being but as paradoxically identical to being even whilst maintaining its own identity. This idea is at the heart of the examination of jitai (non-substantial sunstantiality) as both reality and illusion in the next chapter, but is a relation sometimes obscured by variations in Nishitani’s use of the terms nothingness, emptiness and Śūnyatā. Nishitani often uses the phrases ‘absolute nothingness’, emptiness and Śūnyatā interchangeably (sometimes using being-sive-emptiness rather than being-sive-nothingness). Jitai and non-self are also sometimes spoken of as a state of emptiness rather than in terms of their relation in the self-emptying

³² Ibid., 303.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 309.

³⁵ Ibid., 315.

³⁶ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 51.

³⁷ Ibid., 93.

³⁸ Ibid., 97.

³⁹ Ibid.

process of world. The emptiness or nothingness of the formulation being-sive-nothingness that is self-identical with being must be distinguished from the absolute emptiness of Śūnyatā that encompasses both sides of that sive relation. Both Śūnyatā and the emptiness of the sive relation are referred to as emptied of representation and in this sense absolute emptiness. Emptiness not yet understood in terms of the sive relation is termed relative emptiness, but the use of the phrase ‘self-emptying’ often blurs the conventional usage distinction between Śūnyatā and the emptiness of the sive relation, although in truth they are always self-identical.

Śūnyatā as absolute emptiness is distinguished from relative emptiness in that “Emptiness in the sense of Śūnyatā is emptiness only when it empties itself even of the standpoint that represents it as some ‘thing’ that is emptiness”.⁴⁰ Such self-emptying emptiness is only present as the process of emptying rather than any ‘state’ of being already empty. Emptying is the process of meanings manifestation and in this manner is correlate to Ereignis as an ongoing event of appropriation, both Ereignis and Śūnyatā are existential ontologies; a manifestation of meaning arising only in identity with a process of self-realization. Both express a limit-condition that is only indicated by the ‘things’ they enable as “things as they are in themselves, where they are on their homeground, just what they are and in their suchness, are one with emptiness. For the field of emptiness stands opened at the very point that things emerge into being.”⁴¹ Being only shows itself through beings, and in doing so also withdraws, when both the presence and absence are seen as dwelling together within the sive then the field of emptiness as entire process is realized, and with it the true being / suchness of beings.

Śūnyatā as the horizon for disclosure that is self-identical with what is disclosed embraces both existence and non-existence (thing and no-thing), and this self-identity is what emerges through and makes possible the process of meanings manifestation. It is only as so self-emptied of all representation and objectivity that emptiness “is at bottom one with being, even as being is at bottom one with emptiness. At the elemental source where being appears as one with emptiness, at the home-ground of being, emptiness appears as one with being”⁴². Śūnyatā in its truest sense, from the standpoint of the sive, is no more emptiness than it is being and could be formulated just as easily in terms of absolute being as absolute nothingness (indeed the be-ification of jitai to be considered does just this). Just as when Heidegger speaks of Being this most truly indicates a process relating Being and Nothingness so too in the case of Śūnyatā as ‘absolute emptiness’ a term is used for the ontologically primordial that is more reminiscent of one side of the relation it comprises, a relation of two elements that are not contradictory but self-identical in their differentiation and thus constituted solely by their relation in that process.

Abe claims Zen has a tradition of “strong criticism of attachment to emptiness”⁴³, but the occasional lack of systematic use of terminology does lead to elements of similar reification or favouring of one side of various sive relations. For example Abe’s statements such as “the standpoint of emptiness or Śūnyatā in Zen is not a negative but an affirmative one”⁴⁴, when it is not negative or affirmative but negation-sive-affirmation overcoming the duality between negation and affirmation, may arise from alternating between conventional usages of terms like negative and affirmative and stricter usages relating to Śūnyatā proper.

Abe admits that such ‘strong criticism’ can lead to misleading emphases in

⁴⁰Ibid., 96.

⁴¹Ibid., 123.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Frederick Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries* (World Wisdom, 2004), 64.

⁴⁴Ibid.

presentation; “Buddhists emphasize ‘emptiness’ and say that everything is empty...quite misleading...I think that ‘Everything is empty’ may be more adequately rendered in this way: ‘Everything is just as it is’.”⁴⁵ This ‘just as it is’ indicates the ‘suchness’ of self and things that is made manifest through self-emptying to reveal “not that the self is empty, but that emptiness is self, not that things are empty, but that emptiness is things”⁴⁶; suchness denoting the identity of Śūnyatā with both self and world. This helps capture the notion of Śūnyatā as being-sive-emptiness, the emphasis should perhaps not be so much on emptiness (or Being for Heidegger) but the role they play in the process of Being-sive-Nothingness that is as much one aspect as the other. Even in clarifying Śūnyatā through suchness an uncertainty of presentation remains within Abe’s essay in such claims as “the realization of suchness is the positive aspect of the realization of emptiness”⁴⁷. Although I would disagree with this phrasing and would prefer to use Nishitani’s terminology and phrase it ‘suchness is emptiness-sive-being’ Abe’s assertion that suchness gives a ‘positive’ content to the process of self-emptying and prevents the process having a null or negative effect of simply stripping away ego is informative; the non-self of Śūnyatā is to be seen as original suchness of self instead of a literal ‘no’ self. For Abe this suchness is not a static state (neither past, present nor future), but the dynamic beginning and culmination of an ongoing ethical endeavour in which “When you realize your own suchness, you realize the suchness of everything at once”⁴⁸ so that “Everything is now truly empty, and this means that all things make themselves present here and now, just as they are, in their original reality. They present themselves in their suchness, their tathatā.”⁴⁹

Nishitani-sive-Heidegger

This broad approach to absolute nothingness as self-emptying brings Nishitani and Heidegger along the same way, despite Nishitani clarifying the distinction of relative and absolute nothingness partly through oblique critique of Heidegger as thinking nothingness only in its relative form within the confines of *What is Metaphysics?* In relation to the nihiliation of *das Nichts* Waldenfels notes that “While Nishitani agrees with Heidegger’s approach as far as it goes, he cannot hide the fact that for him it does not go far enough.”⁵⁰ Despite finding Heidegger to be closer to the reality of being-sive-nothingness than his Western contemporaries in taking nothingness as the ground of the self he holds that Heidegger retains the bias of self-existence even whilst the self is seen as a realization of nothingness through anxiety; “in Heidegger’s talk of self-existence as ‘held suspended in nothingness’...traces of the representation of nothingness as some ‘thing’ that is nothingness still remain”⁵¹. Nishitani seems to critique Heidegger mainly on the basis of his use of phrases such as ‘being-upheld in nothingness’ and the ‘abyss of nothingness’ in relation to the meaning of *Dasein*, claiming that if *Dasein* is suspended in nothingness then nothingness is still an external object to *Dasein* as its negation, that nothingness is still objectified as an ‘other’ to existence even if only to a small extent.

Steffney, although not comparing Heidegger to Nishitani specifically, broadly agrees with his critique of Heidegger in that “despite his efforts to transcend Western metaphysical thinking, Heidegger is still confined to its limitations by thinking of man in relational - even though it be integral – terms”⁵². That *Da* and *Sein*, and *Being* and *Nothingness*, are

⁴⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁴⁶ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 30.

⁴⁷ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 213.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 34.

⁵⁰ AbNoth 69

⁵¹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 96.

⁵² John Steffney, "Transmetaphysical Thinking in Heidegger and Zen Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 27, no. 3 (1977): 326.

constituted by their relations to one another that allow for the disclosure of meaning does not go far enough towards the self-identity of these aspects for Steffney, who does see a more radical self-identity within Zen thought. As much is held to be exhibited by the guiding question of 'Why are there beings at all and not much rather the nothing?' that shows dualistic thinking, so that nothingness still stands beyond man and Being, whereas "Zen would say that, though phenomenally a difference can be perceived, ultimately no difference exists."⁵³ But the guiding question that is claimed as dualistic is only the start of a path of thought that leads to the self-identity of Being and Nothingness, a kōan to spur thought along its way. Steffney claims that "Nonbeing hides within Being...Nonbeing hides behind beings"⁵⁴ implies a duality absent from a Zen thought that "insists on transcending the very notions of Being and Nonbeing, of concealment and unconcealment."⁵⁵ and is paradoxical not integral. But this integral relation harbours the same 'paradoxical' identity as the being-sive-nothingness of Śūnyatā, both are a relational process of self-identity, and I find it hard to see how such an 'integral' relation is less of a self-identity. Steffney seems to overlook that for Heidegger being and nothingness are aspects of the Being process (Ereignis) and takes them to be distinct and related, and in line with Nishitani holds that no matter how integral or mutually constituting a relation is it remains too dualistic and objectified.

In Heidegger's later texts this self-identity is thought more explicitly as a belonging prior to its constituents bringing it nearer to thought of Śūnyatā than any merely integral relation. Da and Sein only are as mutually appropriated and it is "From this belonging...man and Being have first received those determinations of essence by which man and Being are grasped metaphysically in philosophy."⁵⁶ Like Śūnyatā Ereignis always manifests as an awareness self-identical with the fields of awareness it gives so that in this appropriation "we witness a belonging together of man and Being in which the letting belong first determines the manner of the 'together' and its unity." ⁵⁷

Such constitutive belonging aligns Heidegger's thought with Nishitani's claim of the personal self as the mask of absolute nothingness to be discussed in chapter 1.4. Ereignis as the hyphen of Da-Sein, like the sive, is more primordial than integral and before self-identity is realized or thought that appropriative belonging itself must be heard. As also speaking being-sive-nothingness Ereignis indicates withdrawal, thus the nothingness that is the essence of nihilism, as innate to disclosure. That "The oblivion belongs to the difference because the difference belongs to the oblivion," ⁵⁸ implies nihilism as Gestell is itself self-identical with Sein and integral to the Ereignis process, the role of this in the narrative of nihilism's emergence and relation to that which saves is to be explicated in section 2.

I am more inclined to agree with Dallmayr's judgement that Nishitani's criticism of Heidegger is "dubious or at least puzzling...his comments can hardly be reconciled with Heidegger's texts"⁵⁹. That nothingness is realized, in Nishitani's sense of the term, in anxiety attests to it as constituting Da-Sein as the interrelation that makes possible the manifestation of beings in such a manner that the 'suspendedness' of Dasein in nonbeing denotes "Dasein's exposure not to an alien domain outside of being but to its own intrinsic abyss"⁶⁰. Dallmayr goes on to point out that Heidegger explicitly states nothingness is not

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 328.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 329.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 32.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁵⁹ Fred Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," *Philosophy East and West* 42, no. 1 (1992): 208.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 210.

an 'is' but as possibilizing the disclosure of beings is an integral part of their essence; "In the Being of beings the nihilation of the nothing occurs".⁶¹ Nothingness is accordingly not even portrayed as a 'thing' in a marginal sense but is "a 'nihilating' potency participating obliquely in the ongoing happening or disclosure of being"⁶², as one aspect of the dual process of disclosure. Neither Being, Dasein nor Ereignis can be seen as entities held in relation, but are solely constituted as a relational process. The relation between Dasein and its nothingness (its ontological meaning) is accordingly one of self-identity, the process of nihilation is how beings are disclosed and the disclosure of beings is the essence of Dasein, so the nothingness that is experienced in nihilation is most properly experienced as the very homeground of Dasein. For Dallmayr the relation of being and nothingness in Heidegger's work fits the paradigm of the sive relation as a 'discordant mutuality', a self-identity that resists uniformity whilst revealing the process in which both come to realization through and as the other, thus paralleling the non-duality of Nishitani's thought rather than relying on integral relations.

Ereignis as naming the essence of the human as an integral relation to nothingness would then parallel the relation of self and absolute nothingness in Religion and Nothingness in naming the true self of elemental subjectivity. Nishitani's critique seems to take nihilation as a process Dasein is part of but that as a process remains apart from Dasein, integral not identical in Steffney's sense. Such 'relational' themes and the favouring of either element of being-sive-nothingness within Heidegger's thought seem to result from the caprices of language rather than the core of his ideas. At times the constraints of language compel the treatment of the constituents of the relation as discrete but the concern is always the unity of the relation, the sive of Being and Nothingness, of Da and Sein, even when it seems necessary to treat one of the constituents on its own terms. Another casualty in Heidegger's struggle against the nature of metaphysical language is the reification implied in 'es gibt'; that "the 'it' that here 'gives' is Being itself"⁶³. The 'it' only is in terms of an appropriative relation so is not reified into a being, as it only 'is' in terms of Da-Sein so it is that which we are mask of as process/event rather than a 'being', yet cannot be spoken of otherwise. That thought is of Sein not Seiendheit means "how Being is must remain an open question for the careful attention of thinking"⁶⁴ and the Da-Sein relation cannot be captured in assertions only indicated poetically, nature of such essential language and its relation to the coming to pass of the hyphen taken up in section 3.

The Nishitani interpretation that follows can fall within the broadly Heideggerian understanding of the Da-Sein relation (and vice versa), and I am unsure if Steffney would consider Nishitani as too integral and 'non-Zen' by the standards of his own Zen interpretation. The parallels that are to be drawn between Heidegger and Nishitani should demonstrate a shared overcoming of the very notion of duality in regards to such fundamental elements of the disclosive process, yet also some shared problems in their approach given the context of their aims. Ereignis comprises both being and nothingness and both are concealed in the event of giving; yet Nishitani prioritizes nothingness and Heidegger being, both can be seen as referring one back to the other and failing to achieve nonduality in presentation. Whether this results in them failing to move beyond representative thought to a true self-emptying of both presence and absence that leaves them self-identical yet not reduced to the other will be questioned throughout the following chapters. The possibility that this leads Heidegger to overlook the preservation of Sein's withdrawal/oblivion in the saving epoch is to be considered in chaps 2.6 and section 3.

⁶¹ M. Heidegger, W. McNeil, and W.H. McNeill, *Pathmarks* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 87.

⁶² Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 211.

⁶³ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 238.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

It can also be claimed that Nishitani strays dangerously close to similar reification of nothingness, the imperfect metaphors he criticizes Heidegger for using often seem similar to his own. He states Śūnyatā “can also be termed an absolute transcendence of being, as it absolutely denies and distances itself from any standpoint shackled in any way whatsoever to being. In this sense, emptiness can well be described as ‘outside’ of and absolutely ‘other’ than the standpoint shackled to being, provided we avoid the misconception that emptiness is some ‘thing’ distinct from being and subsisting ‘outside’ of it.”⁶⁵ Whilst warning against such misconceptions his dualistic terminology allows for similar critiques as those he makes of Heidegger when removed from the overall context of his thought. At times his phrases invite integral interpretations themselves; “emptiness can only appear as a self-identity with being, in a relationship of sive by which both being and emptiness are seen as co-present from the start and structurally inseparable from one another”⁶⁶, that it is only a self-identity in appearance, a structural relation of co-presence. The improvement of Nishitani by Heideggerian notions is pointed to by Dallmayr when he claims that in relation to these dualistic traces “Attention to Heidegger's writings...can rescue these statements from opacity or contradiction, thereby enhancing the persuasiveness of Nishitani's work--just as the latter can serve to elucidate Heidegger's exploration of being-sive-nothingness as an ontological happening (or Ereignis).”⁶⁷ Both thinkers stray into metaphysical phrasing at times, and can aid one another in the identification and eradication of these by providing context for one another's thought. And, as will soon be seen, also highlight problems in the characterization of these self-identities in each others thought that may otherwise remain hidden.

Such metaphysical remnants and lingering reification can also be partly attributed to the inclusion of being within Śūnyatā that leads to Nishitani's ascription of positive content to the term in defiance of Nagarjuna's warnings against wandering back into the realm of self-being. In identifying Śūnyatā as the ‘suchness’ of reality Nishitani not only moves the term towards a positive doctrine rather than a negative methodology but in retaining the emphasis on liberation and compassion through enlightenment, subsuming the positive ontological doctrine to existential and ethical concerns, gives more concrete ethical content to enlightenment beyond traditional non-discriminative practices. Nishitani seemingly adopts a position through elucidating and deepening the understanding of original non-position. Heisig's claim that for Nishitani Śūnyatā “is not so much a philosophical ‘position’ as it is the achievement of an original self-awareness”⁶⁸ that dispels ignorance overly downplays the strength of Nishitani's claims and the philosophically systematic manner in which he tries to portray them but does highlight how he blends numerous strands of Buddhist thought into a paradoxical Zen unity of silence and theory. In taking a more ‘positive’ stand on Śūnyatā Nishitani only deepens the understanding of the human condition and manages to preserve the original core of the idea whilst using it to explain more thoroughly the origin of meaning and relation to meaninglessness. His building upon Nagarjuna's thought on the self-identity of samsāra-sive-nirvāna will later be seen as indicating the necessity of taking a position for non-position to be practically realized.

Awareness and Realization

Whilst many of Nishitani's spatial metaphors, such as of circumference, circles and centres seem overly metaphysical his metaphor of fields invokes how “our everyday idea of ‘place’ is not a mere nonexistent ‘nothing’ and yet neither is it an existent ‘something’”. It is more in the nature of what Jaspers calls an ‘encompassing’ that allows things to exist

⁶⁵Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 97.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 212.

⁶⁸ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 222.

where they are: each on its own, and yet all together in a sort of oneness.”⁶⁹ Field is not a background but a homeground that constitutes things not just sets the stage for them, “defining their most intimate relationships and thus constitutive of their very reality”⁷⁰. Gilkey finds Nishitani’s language to revolve around “the very symbolic metaphor of a medium...In each case the medium is that in and through which entities are immanent within them”⁷¹. Such fields/mediums are other to the collective entities they provide a horizon for, leading to Nishitani’s possibly misleading statements on absolute transcendence, yet do not exist apart from such entities.

Nishitani defines the field of Śūnyatā through the negation of the successive fields, yet through the self-identical incorporation of previous fields Śūnyatā is given a more positive content than its traditional formulation. The progression of integral stages Steffney finds in Heidegger’s thought; Dasein to Being-Nonbeing to Ereignis, is related to similarly problematic integral language in Nishitani’s discussion of Śūnyatā as a ‘field’ that emerges from a progression from the field of consciousness to that of nihility before reaching Śūnyatā. This progression is not a linear succession of states but a progressive deepening of awareness that reveals the fields to be self-identical as simultaneous possibilities of disclosure. Each progresses to a deeper level of self-awareness propelled by reflection on the problems inherent within them. From the field of consciousness with the self-enclosed egoistic self, subject-object dichotomy and attendant paradox of representation, through the field of nihility or relative nothingness that nullifies such representations to realize nothingness as the ground of the self opening the way for the field of Śūnyatā as the absolute emptiness of being-sive-nothingness where both self and world, subject and object, return to their shared homeground. This progressive realization moves by way of negation, only to radically negate negation to arrive at Śūnyatā as affirmation-sive-negation, “that ‘absolute emptiness’ in which nihilizing emptiness would itself be emptied”⁷² eliminating the traces of reification that remain in relative nothingness as external to the self so that it is “not that the self is empty, but that emptiness is the self; not that things are empty, but that emptiness is things”⁷³.

The understanding of each field is preserved as equally real within the realization of reality in Śūnyatā, as will be seen the self-conscious self of the field of consciousness ‘is’ only as the absolutely empty non-self of Śūnyatā, and vice-versa. Each field is equally real and interdependent, none exists except as the unity of them. Yet neither are the fields given equal ontological priority, Śūnyatā is the field upon which the other two fields can be represented yet cannot itself be represented upon them. Whilst self-identical with them Śūnyatā is also ontologically primary (as the condition of possibility for what they take as meaning), yet is not a transcendent reality different from the everyday, but just this reality in its suchness.

Whilst Nishitani’s concern is the emergence of Śūnyatā as a result of the deepening self-realization exhibited in each field, my primary concern is how the experience of nihilism related to nihility arises from the ‘ultimate’ ontological reality found upon the field of Śūnyatā. Despite its characterization as a field that is radically real nihility is more of a transitional stage than those of consciousness or Śūnyatā, a movement between the conventional understanding of the field of consciousness and the more radically real ‘suchness’ of Śūnyatā. “We call it the standpoint of nihility, but in fact it is not a field one can stand on in the proper sense of the term. It is no more than a spot we have to ‘run

⁶⁹Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, xxxi.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 64.

⁷²Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 34. 4

⁷³Ibid., 138.

quickly across”⁷⁴, it is radically real yet for this very reason cannot be maintained as a position. Its transitional character is due to nothingness remaining to an extent objectified as external to the self, not yet being ‘owned’ by the self to the core of its existence. It remains the negation of existence thus in an external relation to it rendering everyday experience too problematic for such a negation to be sustained as a worldview, although it will later be questioned whether Nishitani does full justice to the self-identity of nihility and Śūnyatā implied by his thought.

The movement between the fields through immanent critique of key metaphysical thinkers often resembles Heidegger’s history of metaphysics, a parallel to be explored more in section 2. The extent and nature of the retention of prior fields within Śūnyatā is to be explored more fully in chapter 2.4 to provide context for section 3); that samsāra-sive-nirvāna speaks of the identity of Gestell and the saving power.

This identity of the everyday reality of intellectual discrimination and the true reality of suchness in Śūnyatā, that whilst we cannot cognize emptiness all that we can cognize is indeed truly empty, can be seen as building upon Nagarjuna’s two truth doctrine that may illuminate Nishitani’s thought. Nagarjuna posited that reality was neither existence nor non-existence but as Śūnyatā was real on two levels of truth; the conventional everyday truths of empirical experience, and the non-conceptual ultimate truth of things as they really are. Both are real but from the perspective of the latter the former can be seen to be empty of own being and limited in its ability to articulate ultimate reality whilst ultimate truth can still articulate conventional reality in its suchness. The self-being that was denied as ultimate truth was thus reasserted as true and meaningful in the sense of conventional truths, but at the same time these truths were ultimately empty and non-existent. Since Nagarjuna also held samsāra and nirvāna as self-identical these levels of truth were also and the reality of phenomena required them both, the self-being that was denied by traditional Buddhist thought was reinstated as reality but only as conditioned by the ultimate truth of their dependence and illusory nature, an ultimate truth unreachable through experience or conventional thought. ‘Emptiness’ itself is therefore only a conventional verbal truth, only a description rather than true status for reality and not to be reified as it is only an ‘illusory’ description of a reality that is beyond even Śūnyatā, thus absolute Śūnyatā as ‘self-emptying’. The difference between the two levels of truth was held as experiential not ontological, in the ignorance of the everyday we experience conventional truth only attaining to the realization of ultimate truth through enlightenment as insight into emptiness. Without this self-identity Śūnyatā would simply be an integral relation along the lines Steffney critiques.

The related ‘double exposure’ of the sive relation and the identity of these three fields is reminiscent of numerous strands in modern Western philosophy relating to language and perspectivism; Wittgenstein’s language games, Nietzsche’s perspectivism and Rorty’s thought on the impossibility of final vocabularies can all help elucidate the broad feel of Nishitani’s thought whilst highlighting an important difference.. In Nishitani’s discussion of the various horizons on which we can encounter the laws of nature the viability of the various contextual vocabularies on the level of conventional truth is asserted, “The laws of nature...become manifest on various dimensions and various fields, and we encounter them on all these dimensions. We encounter them as much on the field of instinct, where man finds himself on par with a dog, and on the field of physical inertia, where man finds himself on par with a crust of bread, as we do on the field of our technological activities”⁷⁵. Seemingly contradictory approaches and ways of understanding the same phenomena are held as equally constitutive of reality, whether these vocabularies pertain

⁷⁴Ibid., 137.

⁷⁵Ibid., 82.

to the field of consciousness, nihility or Śūnyatā, whether they relate to one aspect or another of a sive relation. Within the self-identity of the competing vocabularies a final vocabulary of enlightenment as the process that gives rise to such perspectives is found; the experience of Śūnyatā as a final framework for all such vocabularies. Śūnyatā as fundamental ontology both grounds the contextual vocabularies of regional ontologies and speaks of their equal claim to reality/truth despite their illusory nature. This is indicative of the essentialism Nishitani operates with in reference to Śūnyatā, a movement against the relativism of the postmodern age towards a foundation for world culture; the relation of self-identity between Śūnyatā (or Ereignis) and the contextual vocabularies they make possible in terms of reality-sive-illusion is to be returned to in chap 2.6 and section 3 in terms of samsāra-sive-nirvāna; Gestell as the saving power.

Heidegger-sive-Nishitani

Whilst Nishitani's critique of Heidegger is defused through the nature of Ereignis this solution also highlights a shared problem concerning the paradoxical nature of both Śūnyatā and Ereignis; namely both only are as existentially realized but also act as the precondition for such a realization. How does a relation of appropriation come to pass if neither element precede that relation, and what does this tell us about the responsibility for epochal transitions to and from nihilism? Heidegger talks of Being's need for man; "Being is present and abodes only as it concerns man through the claim it makes on him. For it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence,"⁷⁶ so that Sein is equally appropriated to man as man is to Sein. In discussing the Ereignis relation as equally constitutive Heidegger stresses the dependence of both elements upon the other, but also at times seems to favour Sein. Ereignis only is as the epochal understanding it grants, Being is nothing other than the disclosure of beings it enables, this identity of the ontological and existential is why Heidegger speaks of Being's need for man. But need implies desire and agency; what does it mean to claim the realization of meaning needs itself? What is the 'it' prior to the realizing/giving?

Despite needing its Da the destinal sending of Sein is also said to happen 'without mediation', complicating the nature of the preparation Heidegger also holds as required for the new epoch. Being does not cause beings but could be characterized as self-causing since "Being brings itself to pass into its epoch"⁷⁷ so that "Only Being 'is', only in Being and as Being does that which the 'is' names bring itself to pass; that which is, is Being from out of its essence."⁷⁸ Accordingly the forgetfulness of Being in nihilism does not result from a human lack but is integral to the way in which Being grants its truth. "The oblivion does not happen to the difference only afterward, in consequence of the forgetfulness of human thinking,"⁷⁹ as withdrawal is integral to the disclosure of meaning. The self-disclosure of Sein in Ereignis that names both the danger of nihilism and the turn to that which saves is called by Heidegger 'insight into that which is'. This insight is not the beholding of beingness but "the disclosing coming-to-pass of the constellation of the turning within the coming to presence of Being itself, and that within the epoch of Enframing"⁸⁰ that marks the turning point in epochal understanding. Yet such self-disclosure occurs through the understanding of Da so that "In insight, men are the ones who are caught sight of"⁸¹ and the traces of Ereignis in Gestell are first glimpsed in human nature yet requires that man "renounces human self-will and projects

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 31.

⁷⁷ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 44.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *Identity and Difference*, 46.

⁸⁰ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 47.

⁸¹ Ibid.

himself toward that insight, away from himself"⁸² and towards the divinities so that we may be gathered to the fourfold as mortals.

We say too little of Being if "we leave out the being present in the essence of man and thereby fail to recognize that this essence itself helps to determine 'Being'. "⁸³ Whilst "man is not only affected by nihilism but has an essential share in it" ⁸⁴ the manner of this co-responsibility is given varying interpretations, and there is a tendency to emphasize man's role in the accomplishment of nihilism yet emphasize Being's when it comes to the saving epoch. For instance Weinmayr places the onus on man's desire for permanence rather than Being's withdrawal as such; the mutual presencing of jointure is overlooked because "man, increasingly struggles against its transitoriness, insists on its continuance, on its unbounded presence, and thus begins to establish itself against and eclipse other beings."⁸⁵ This brings Heidegger more into accordance with Buddhist thought on willful desire for permanence as the root of dukkha in which removed from simultaneity of jointure beings are "continuously unconcealed and present, but in a kind of presence whose only criterion is the significance and use of beings for the subject." ⁸⁶ But such insistence on permanence and rejection of transitory lingering also reduces the oblivion of Being to a result of man's faculties.

In describing how subjectivity becomes determinative of modernity Heidegger says "What is decisive is that man himself expressly takes up this position as one constituted by himself, that he intentionally maintains it as that taken up by himself...Man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective," ⁸⁷ and in doing so begins the new epoch. This seems to go beyond pure response to an epochal sending; the possibility for man to do so may depend upon the withdrawal of Being, but the necessity for him to do so would contradict the very sense of terms such as 'expressly' and 'intentionally'.

The relation of will, desire and representation in the modern age seems to increase the emphasis on man's responsibility for the oblivion of Being as well as constituting that oblivion raising the issue of how our actions and decisions can directly 'effect' the manner of our appropriation. Man as subject "founds and confirms himself as the authoritative measure for all standards of measure with which whatever can be accounted as certain...is measured off and measured out"⁸⁸ and in so becoming subject man "can determine and realize the essence of subjectivity, always in keeping with the way in which he himself conceives and wills himself."⁸⁹ Yet the extent to which man is compelled to will his subjective freedom and determine its essence by the withdrawal of Being in metaphysics remains unclear; could such withdrawal have been accomplished differently, or the transition to subjectivity refused by man, and if not what would this mean for Heidegger's proposed 'solution' to our coming-to-presence as subjective will?

Despite laying out the history of metaphysics in terms of pivotal thinkers Heidegger states "that does not mean in any way that metaphysics at any given time is the accomplishment and possession of the thinker as a personality within the public framework of creative cultural activity." ⁹⁰ Yet the death of God as resulting from the

⁸² Ibid., 136.

⁸³ "The Question of Being," 75.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 83.

⁸⁵ Weinmayr Elmar, "Thinking in Transition: Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger," *Philosophy East and West* 55, no. 2 (2005): 238.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 239.

⁸⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 132.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 152.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 54.

sending of Being is "an act accomplished through man" ⁹¹ through the transformation of man. It is an accomplishment (realizing) of man, thus a self-transformation (self-realization); whilst Heidegger says it is accomplished through man the death of God "is accomplished in the making secure of the constant reserve by means of which man makes secure for himself material, bodily, psychic, and spiritual resources, and this for the sake of his own security."⁹² That the claim is accomplished in 'material and psychic resources', and is nothing other than this accomplishing, indicates that Ereignis only occurs existentially and psychologically so whilst not caused by man's actions is nothing beyond them. The accomplishment of man is 'in order to' correspond to Being, which seems to separate out the through and by; the correspondence is achieved by man as one element in the Ereignis that is accomplished through both man and Being.

Whilst Sein is not caused by Da the relation of Da-Sein comes about by one element of the relation bringing itself into accordance with the other. Heidegger ends *The Turn* by asking if insight will come to pass and if we will "correspond to that insight, through a looking that looks into the essence of technology and becomes aware of Being itself within it?";⁹³ but as Ereignis grants this insight and only comes to pass through appropriating Da that which we are to correspond to (thus must be prior to us) has that correspondence as the condition for its possibility. The onus of responsibility for Ereignis varies whether the emphasis is placed on man's accomplishment of correspondence or the prior nature of that we are to correspond to.

Man as Individual and Collective

The epochs of metaphysics are not the accomplishments of individual poets and thinkers alone; they must also attend to Being as Saying which as a shared horizon for understanding also requires a collective accomplishment. Although Da-Sein most properly names the integral relation between man and Being in Being and Time Dasein would seem to have a referent in the embodied human entity, but exactly what it is that has this relation to Being seems somewhat indefinite. The portrayal of Dasein in Being and Time seems replete with explicit connotations of selfhood and the necessity of Dasein occurring as a specific kind of being as its antecedent condition. A vagueness arises as there seems to be no individual-plural distinction; it might refer to an individual human or humanity in general, or indeed certain collections of humans as in the Dasein of a people or nation. The former individual notion seems more prominent in Being and Time where Dasein is characterised as "in each case mine" ⁹⁴ and where "one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am', 'you are'." ⁹⁵ It seems hard to deny that Dasein is a replacement term for the human self in Being and Time when Heidegger claims that "Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am," ⁹⁶ indicating Dasein as entity as much as relation. As "Being-with is in every case a characteristic of one's own Dasein; Dasein-with characterizes the Dasein of Others to the extent that it is freed by its world for a Being-with"⁹⁷ Olafson claims Heidegger's discussions of Dasein "make sense only on the assumption that there are many such entities."⁹⁸ But at times phrases are used that open the possibility of it also relating to a community of entities; "we are it, each of

⁹¹ Ibid., 107.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 49.

⁹⁴ *Being and Time*, 67. SZ 298

⁹⁵ Ibid., 68. SZ 42

⁹⁶ Ibid., 78. SZ 54

⁹⁷ Ibid., 157. SZ 121

⁹⁸ F.A. Olafson, "The Unity of Heidegger's Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140.

us, we ourselves”,⁹⁹ so the term could still designate both a plurality and a singular collective, and is clearly intended in a collective sense at times.

The use in later works of the indefinite article ‘man’ in place of Dasein seems to de-emphasize the individuality; talk of the Dasein of a people becomes more common until a collective human noun takes its place, possibly due to “Heidegger's desire to address the question of who 'we' are on the basis of a concrete place, time, and community rather than in the name of an abstract 'humanity' or 'Dasein'.”¹⁰⁰ This later conception de-emphasized the quality of ‘mineness’ and connotations of selfhood to focus more on the relational nature of Dasein in terms of how Being has been understood throughout the history of metaphysics. The collective notion of man and the approach of a people to the world exemplified by its greatest thinkers is a conception more suited to a relation with an understanding that is epochal rather than determined by an individuals projects.

The communal nature of Dasein as a plurality of understandings of Being leads Olafson to claim the core tension in Heidegger's thought is between the singularity of Being and plurality of Dasein; that this unity is never adequately explained and the attempt to reconcile the singularity of Sein with the plurality of Da led to Heidegger separating existence and presence and “to assert as complete an independence of being from entities as possible”.¹⁰¹ Like Olafson so too does Hoffman hold there is a tension in Heidegger “between those individualistic and subjectivistic aspects of Heidegger's philosophy, on the one hand, and his simultaneous stress on the inevitably public character of intelligibility and significance, on the other.”¹⁰² A similar problematic will be seen to emerge over the following chapters in both the relation between absolute nothingness and its individual personal mask as well as the relation of the gathering of individual jítai and that of the circuminsessional totality.

Despite its dropping from Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary for the sake of convenience the term Dasein is to be retained when discussing Being and Time, even though it most truly names a relation that later relegates its referent in that text to the Da side of the relation. Although the term is retained its meaning is to be taken in light of elements from later works rather than Being and Time alone, and it will be held to be commensurate with Heidegger's later use of the term ‘man’. Regardless of the sense in which 'man' is to be heard man does not choose to be subject as this is a destining, but as subject we actively accomplish subjectivity through willing; the self does not choose or will subjectivity but accomplishes subjectivity through its wilful choice and so has a shared partial responsibility for the modern epoch as finite and thrown. Whilst man cannot inaugurate the epochal sending our requirement to its accomplishment would seem to go beyond being passively appropriated.

The difficulty of reconciling this singularity and plurality, thus the relation of precedence, leads to contrary claims by both Heidegger and commentators; that Gestell “was the inevitable result of the clever animal's craving for power.”¹⁰³ but that “modern humanity came to regard itself as the ground or foundation for entities resulted not from human decision...but instead from the self-concealment of being itself”¹⁰⁴ The primacy of Being in the mutually constitutive Da-Sein relation seems inconsistent with the way Being only is as the existential realization of the disclosure it allows. Not only does Sein determine man's understanding but the existential realization of this understanding is

⁹⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 36. SZ 15

¹⁰⁰ Richard Polt, "Heidegger in the 1930's: Who Are We?," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).

¹⁰¹ Olafson, "The Unity of Heidegger's Thought," 109.

¹⁰² Piotr Hoffman, "Death, Time, History: Division Ii of Being and Time," *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁰³ Michael Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

equally determinative of Sein; Sein is fundamentally not 'other' to man understood in his mortality (they are divided at the level of conventional not ultimate truth) as what calls us to thought is the absolute nothingness of self. There can be no causal connection between Da and Sein as we are this relation and whether we 'cause' the change in relation or the change in the relation 'causes' us seems too related to instrumentalist thinking in terms of means-ends and what can be done to change the relation. Gestell does not originate in human action or will, but is nothing beyond this action and will; as Dasein is its world existentially we create the thrown situation as much as we are the result of it.

Heidegger's earlier comments on Sein are partially mediated in light of this, reinterpreted as way-points; variations in nuance leading to the true thought of appropriation wherein errancy stems from the relation rather than either constituent. Whilst this reconciles Heidegger's contradictory remarks on the relation of priority between Da and Sein the manner in which epochal transformation takes place remains paradoxical and will be seen to mirror the problematic of Śūnyatā's realization; that the existential realization of Śūnyatā is its own condition of possibility due to the ontology of nothingness only being as existentially realized.

The inter-referential nature of self, to be explicated over later chapters, collapses the distinction between the individual and collective senses of the term; an individual's sense of identity is always also both collective and stems from a non-differentiated universal nihilism (the absolute nothingness of non-self discussed in chapter 1.4). Dasein is always both an individual personal self and equally a plural, collective, epochal understanding; the problems and possibilities of this characterization are dealt with more in chapter 2.5. The total nature of an epochal understanding of Being as disclosed by a collective Dasein marked by a plurality of understandings raises problems regarding the viability of Gestell's characterization as the supreme danger that will also be expanded upon in chapter 2.5 and stems from how Ereignis in its ontological sense only is in terms of a collective existential realization. The manner in which our reflection upon such appropriation is accomplished through renunciation and determines the nature of an epochal understanding is to be explicated more thoroughly in chapters 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, of the thesis in terms of reflection, poetry and dwelling. Such determination of Sein by Da is a pre-requisite for the coherence of any recommendation Heidegger makes as to how and why we should think. The ethical consequences of the self only being as claimed, both in terms of our responsibility for the ontic ethical stance of treating others as standing-reserve and whether the paradigms of the poet and thinker provide a model of responsibility adequate to an ontic ethics will be returned to in chapter 3.5.

The relation of Being and entities also remains problematic; beings and Being only are as realized in human awareness, yet entities are independent of this realization. Without Being there would be no beings and vice-versa, but entities are also required for Being yet not vice-versa. The extent to which non-Dasein entities are also determinative of Sein and form an element of the Ereignis relation is integral to the coherence of Heidegger's understanding of releasement and Nishitani's notion of koto. Whether their thought on the present-at-hand and homeground of jītai accounts for this relation is to be questioned over the following chapters before addressing its relation to the un-meaning of nihilism in section 2 and the retention of this absence of meaning within the saving epochal understanding in section 3.

Ereignis and Śūnyatā as Ontological, Existential, Psychological, Axiological and Ethical

Whilst the term ontology seems most apt in describing the thought of Heidegger and Nishitani their guiding ideas can be equally contextualized as existential, psychological, axiological/ethical, each characterization both constituting and relying on the next.

Sūnyata only is as the self-emptying of attachments, thus a lived emptiness. The relation of the fields seems to be a process of existential self-negation to reach true self-awareness as an affirmation-sive-negation of the self. The charting of the increasing awareness of this unitary process of disclosure makes Religion and Nothingness understood as a kōan “Nishitani’s Buddhist interpretation of Western civilization’s existentialist awakening”¹⁰⁵ that leads to true emptiness as “nothing less than what reaches awareness in all of us as our own absolute self-nature. In addition, this emptiness is the point at which each and every entity that is said to exist becomes manifest: as what it is in itself, in the form of its true suchness”.¹⁰⁶ In the realization of Śūnyatā “self-nature as true self-awareness – and the selfness of each and every thing in the form of its suchness come about simultaneously, or rather in unison, or perhaps better still, self-identically”¹⁰⁷ Śūnyatā is the realization of the equiprimordiality of the suchness of self and things, disclosing both how they truly are through a deepening of self-awareness.

In such ontological-existential unity Śūnyatā “is entirely united to and self-identical with what we ourselves are as body and mind”¹⁰⁸. The impossibility of the separation of these elements means Śūnyatā is only truly reached when it is realized existentially within the self. This is why Nishitani’s claims that the religious quest as this process of self-realization can only be understood from within and leads to Gilkey’s characterization of Śūnyatā as essentially “an immanent-transcendent, universal...ontological principle as well as an existential, subjective principle in and through which we exist.”¹⁰⁹ It is through this dual conception of Śūnyatā as the “conjunction of the real and our realization of the real”¹¹⁰ that the flaws and paradoxes of the field of consciousness are to be resolved through the overcoming of duality.

So too is Ereignis only realized through our comportments; Being needs beings with both given at a single stroke, inseparable. Whether in Thing or artwork Being only is when realized through the prism of the ontic; “within a being that is to be brought forth only in such a way that the conflict opens up in this being...Truth establishes itself in a being in such a way, indeed, that this being itself occupies the Open of truth.”¹¹¹ The paramount such being is human being, Sein is in need of Da for Ereignis to give meaning and “in each case Dasein is its Self only in existing”¹¹² so that in relation to “All the structures of Being which belong to Dasein...To characterize these ontologically is to do so existentially.”¹¹³ Sein only is when realized as such through the self, since disclosure is always projective fundamental ontology is inseparable from ontic existential commitment so that “The question of being reveals and is revealed by the ethos of Dasein.”¹¹⁴ Accordingly Da, Sein and the totality of human entities are unitary because “While Dasein is the site at which being reveals itself, the site at which Dasein reveals itself is human being, individual and collective.”¹¹⁵ Not only is the self of Dasein itself always an embodied ontic being (thus assertions as to the nature of its existence a form of psychology) but as Dasein is an inter-subjective self ontological statements carry with

¹⁰⁵ Stenson, “Beyond Science and Technology to Absolute Emptiness,” 121.

¹⁰⁶ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 106.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 102.

¹⁰⁹ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 64.

¹¹⁰ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 222.

¹¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 61.

¹¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152. SZ 117

¹¹³ Ibid., 149. SZ 114

¹¹⁴ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 26.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

them social and ethical consequences and presuppositions leading Hodge to claim

“Heidegger definitively rejects any separation between...ethical and moral aspects of freedom and...ontological and metaphysical aspects.”¹¹⁶

Axiological / Ethical

Whilst Hodge characterizes Heidegger's concern with futural flourishing as the repressed ethical element of his thought I believe that as conditioned by a presupposition of how *Ereignis* should be realized it can also be characterized as the concealed axiological element. By axiological it is meant that the 'ought' and 'is' are simultaneously given so that both Heidegger and Nishitani start from an imperative and conception of what should be, one that is fixed throughout their way of thought and guides it. This identity of 'is' and 'ought' means their ontology is also a self-validating normative ethics (albeit one ungoverned by strict universal principles); a way of living is being recommended on the basis of how things are so that an existential imperative accompanies their ontologies in that *Ereignis* and *Śūnyatā* only are as realized yet also imply a responsibility for them to be so realized. Despite his critique of ‘values’ if the term is taken in a looser sense than the technical place it is given by Heidegger in the history of metaphysics, as what guides us to the desirable outcome, then Heidegger himself clearly held certain values close to his heart. In general that Being be guarded against oblivion and thus humanity retain its true nature, and in specific that the saving epochal understanding to be prepared for take a certain form.

This makes it unclear whether the human self is only *Dasein* when engaged in that relation as the *Da* for *Sein*; whether the human self can ever lose or not be in this relation to Being. Regardless of whether the characterization is of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world or man as mortal dweller, Heidegger always maintained that “disclosedness is that basic character of *Dasein* according to which it *is* its ‘there’.”¹¹⁷ *Dasein* cannot escape its nature as disclosedness, any attempt to cover it up or flee into the everyday disclosures of *das Man* is defined as opposition to more ontologically originary authentic disclosures as the concealment of it, disclosure not only founds the concealments but is itself founded by its wresting of possibilities from such inauthentic disclosure. Yet *Ereignis* tries to think from within an authentic experience of Being rather than the more neutral stance of *Being and Time*, giving Heidegger's work a more polemical tone than that of pure phenomenological description. Strauss held the true Turn in Heidegger's thought came with the realization that the existential analytic could not be an objective investigation into universal structures as “commitment can only be understood by an understanding which is itself committed”¹¹⁸. This can be seen in how *Da-Sein* defines the essence of man, yet “Heidegger speaks of the goal of his work as the transformation of the person into *Dasein*, that is, into accepting oneself as thrown-open as the clearing for the sake of meaning.”¹¹⁹

For Heidegger's characterization of *Gestell* as danger to be coherent it must be possible for man to no longer be defined in terms of this relation. In the later works *Da-Sein* seems to more become a task we are called to accomplish (although elements of this understanding are also to be found in *Being and Time*) rather than an immutable we can never truly flee from. Heidegger at times both explicitly and implicitly suggests that we are only *Dasein* when we find things uncanny and are restlessly compelled to think, “that

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 37.

¹¹⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 263. SZ 220

¹¹⁸ Leo Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss* (University of Chicago Press, 1989).

¹¹⁹ Sheehan, “The Turn: All Three of Them,” 37.

only so long as the clearing of Being propriates does Being convey itself to man”¹²⁰. To be *Dasein* is then an accomplishment that we are called to realize; an essence that only is when realized as such, a dynamic way we come-to-presence rather than how we are always present. Man may then only be *Dasein* sporadically; it may be sufficient for our being to be at issue only in satori-like moments of decision and self-realization rather than continually held open in a state of *zazen*. Another possibility is that we are more true to our nature when attending to Being and allowing beings to manifest according to their own possibilities, but even when it is common meanings or meaninglessness that is manifesting we are still the arena in which such takes place, indeed such disclosure of non-meaning is equally integral to our lived existence. The coherence of Heidegger's narrative of danger that renders *Da-Sein* a task rather than our inherent constitution is to be taken up in section 2.

This axiological element is far more explicit in the work of Nishitani given his over-riding concern with an already achieved form of Enlightenment, Nishitani's ontology is from the very start an ethics and despite denoting an ontological reality *Śūnyatā* also functions in an ethically normative sense through these elements of liberation and compassion. For Nishitani the guiding question of *Religion and Nothingness*, ‘What is Religion?’, is asked in the sense of “the quest...for the ‘home-ground’ of religion, where religion emerges from man himself, as a *subject*, as a self living in the present.”¹²¹ His claim that “the fundamental meaning of religion – what religion *is* – is not to be conceived of in terms of an understanding of what it *has been*”¹²² instead on what it *ought* to be, with the ought clarifying what has been, means his interpretation of religion is a projective retrieval that despite being accepted as such is often portrayed as an absolute. The ultimate reality of *Śūnyatā* is an unquestioned presupposition the equal of the objective presupposition he criticizes in modern science, perhaps due to his own earnest experience of it. *Śūnyatā* and the Zen aim of enlightenment through deepening self-awareness are not an end-point for his reflections, despite his treatment of it as the culmination of the process of self-realization, but his starting point; the framework he uses to address the problems of modernity. He holds this presupposition to be validated in an experience, but one that cannot be assumed for his readers if *Religion and Nothingness* is seen as a *kōan* to instigate such an experience of self-realization.

King notes that Buddhism was originally purely existential-axiological, concerned only with curing a condition stemming from unquestioned Brahmanism assumptions, asking “how then are we to regard some of the words developed Buddhism uses about its ultimates-ultimates of some sort or other? Are they ontological/metaphysical in fact or only disguised forms of the existential/experiential? Or are they both at the same time”¹²³ King concludes that due to the shared inexpressibility of reality and its experience *Śūnyatā* “performs all the functions of a full-scale substantial Ultimacy, both ontological and experiential, but like a mystic ultimate...can neither be conceived, nor attacked, nor proven, nor denied, but only experienced by the (Buddhist) believer”.¹²⁴ Streng connects this relationship between ontological claims and normative prescriptions directly to Nishitani, to claim that experience of ultimate reality is moulded by a founding attunement as “reflective human beings often recognize that what is seen as real is connected to the act of giving value”¹²⁵ in the face of a transitory process. Streng concludes Nishitani's ontology is pervaded and conditioned by his axiology leading to an

¹²⁰ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 240.

¹²¹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, xlviii.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Winston L. King, "The Existential Nature of Buddhist Ultimates," *Philosophy East and West* 33, no. 3 (1983): 265.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 271.

¹²⁵ F.J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (Abingdon Press, 1967), 373.

imperative towards “full awareness of the transience and interrelated arising of existence”¹²⁶ as “the communication of a sense of reality is an expression of a process of evaluation (which can be defined by its axiological structure). Where onto-logies are given to help people understand the nature of authentic living, they expose not only conceptual systems but also processes of valuing whereby that reality is given form and content.”¹²⁷ Yet Streng does not address how the imperative towards awareness of sunyata as essential reality is complicated by the claim it is only essential reality when we realize it as such. This conflation of experience and reality raises issues of warrant and criteria dealt with in chapter 2.6 and relates to the problem of experiential attestation touched upon in the introduction and returned to in more depth in anxiety chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how both *Śūnyatā* and *Ereignis* are at a single stroke; ontological as concerning the conditions of possibility for meaning (the absolute emptiness of suchness) the ontic-existential realization of this meaning in a certain way which in terms of human experience is psychological (the self-emptying that realizes suchness), and axiological/ethical as concerning the 'ought' or need for this realization. Essentially this unity speaks of the possibility of, realization of and impetus for a self-transformation in the experience of nihility. These aspects are self-identical and separated out only for the convenience of conventional thought, just as the light that enables sight can only itself be seen prismatically *Ereignis* and *Śūnyatā* can only be grasped when diluted by such concepts but are properly speaking prior to such divisions. Nishitani at times prioritizes one aspect over the others but consistently and explicitly stresses their self-identity, whilst Heidegger emphasizes the ontological yet also relies upon this unity.

The relation between these senses raises problems that are to be thematic throughout the thesis (most explicitly in chaps 2.6 and section 3), essentially that there is a tension between their philosophy as generally phenomenological (a description of experience as lived) yet also projective (a description of how we should live). Heidegger at times in his later works speaks as if he is still engaging in the Existential Analytic; simply offering a phenomenological account that is in a sense beyond why as it contains no imperative. Yet through his concern with the danger of technology he also offers an account of how we should be, moving from the conditions of possibility for meaning to assertions as to the form such meaning should take (although not its content). Heidegger says man only is as long as he is mortal, we are only mortal when we accomplish our share in the Fourfold, yet at times Heidegger says there has not yet been a Thing so that man is not yet mortal and not yet man leaving the 'ought' of mortality unclear. Man seem to be meant as both a noun and verb, yet the relation between these senses is not always clear and at times are discussed as only one or the other. The ontological aspect seems to be taken as validating the axiological aspect; yet in light of the existential aspect does not precede it leading to a paradox within such realization.

In relation to nihilism this unity means that whilst nihilism is not to be seen simply in terms of its ontic consequences, but addressed through reflection on our essence as relation to the truth of Being, nihilism only *is* through such ontic consequences. The ontic consequences of nihilism; its psychological, social, political and ethical elements, are self-identical with the ontological origin of nihilism and the self-transformation of nihilism can only come to pass through these very same consequences. Reflection or meditative thought upon such origin is only authentic when self-identical with its ontic-existential realization, psychological transformation, and the experience of the normative call to such reflection. The relation of this unity will guide the later interpretation of *Gestell* and dwelling in sections 2 and 3.

The chapters in this first section will consider the ontological aspect as discrete. The emptiness of phenomena, both things and self, will be explicated through inquiry into their self-identity as the condition for the possibility of the disclosure of meaning. Beginning with

¹²⁶ Ibid., 389.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 390.

phenomena as empty (the in-itself of a thing as *jitai*), moving on to the identity of *Śūnyatā* and self, to the relation of phenomena and self as world, the nature of the experiential attestation of this in discussion of koto as the culmination of this treatment, then finally to deal with issues surrounding the primacy of the self resulting from the view of ontology as self-realization. The emptiness of self and things (their 'suchness'), their relation as world and how this allows for the disclosure as a 'knowing if non-knowing' are all identical facets of a unitary process but are to be treated in stages whilst bearing in mind this inherent unity.

1.3 *Jitai*

On the field of *Śūnyatā* the mode of being of beings (their beingness) is termed '*jitai*' (in-itself) and can be seen as denoting suchness understood as the reality or being of a thing on its own homeground, how it is for-itself. Whilst for Heidegger beingness pertains to regional ontologies, or is always confined to a specific epochal understanding of the reality of the real, and belongs to the Da-Sein relation rather than entities in-themselves for Nishitani *jitai* is a primordial form of beingness that applies to the true reality of the real. This mode of being is characterized by its freedom from the possibility of representation and objectification and replaces both traditional notions of substance (*jittai*) and subject (*shutai*). In *Religion and Nothingness* the notion of *jitai* is largely elucidated through examining the essence of fire and is first mentioned as a brief clarification of how self is constituted by non-self in a relation of non-duality that absolute selfhood "is absolutely death-sive-life, life-sive-death; absolutely being-sive-nothingness, nothingness-sive-being."¹²⁸ Both death and life belong to the self in one stroke, equally manifesting within each moment and this is said to indicate "the central meaning of emptiness."¹²⁹ The themes of gathering and interpenetration apply equally to *jitai* and world (the latter dealt with in chapter 1.5) constituting the self internally as well as externally. The connecting of *jitai* to the self-identity of death-sive-life also relates *jitai* as suchness to the relation of reality on the field of nihility in Nishitani's essay *Science and Zen* that is to be dealt with in chapters 2.2 and 2.4, namely the reconciliation of science and religion that preserves the essence of nihilism within *Śūnyatā*; that "All living things can be seen under the Form of death without thereby being separated from their proper Form of life. The real appearance of these things must be seen at ground to rest on the basis of absolute being-sive-nothingness, nothingness-sive-being, or of the absolute non-duality of life and death."¹³⁰ As the self-identity of things realized non-objectively *jitai* is intended to be the true mode of being for both the self and entities, how they manifest in their suchness. Abe holds that "In the notion of *jitai* , the true reality of things is fully realized as it is. Thus for Nishitani, *jitai* or 'in itself' is simply another term for *Śūnyatā*."¹³¹ *Jitai* as the true manifestation of reality is thus chosen as the starting point for explicating the wider process of *Śūnyatā*, it will first be considered in relation to entities in general before moving on to the nature of the self as emptiness. Parallels between *jitai* and Heidegger's early thought on *Zeug* are taken up in chapter 1.6, the relation of *jitai* to the presence-at-hand of entities not-yet in relation to the world of *Dasein* is to be considered in section 3 in connection to possible improvements in Nishitani's understanding of the relation between nihilism and *Śūnyatā* after chaps 2.5 and anxiety chapter consider the relation of the present-at-hand to the plurality of meaningful disclosures.

Whilst emerging through the critique of previous notions of substance, and remaining grounded in Buddhist denials of self-subsistent independent being, *jitai* is also

¹²⁸Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 102.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹³¹ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 33.

characterized as ‘non-substantial substantiality’¹³² in which “everything appears once again as possessed of substance”¹³³, a reappearance of substantiality as constituted in unison with emptiness, a self-identity of self and non-self nature. Jitai thus denotes the nonduality of self-identity (being) and non-self-identity (nothingness). This ‘be-ification’ after the ‘nullification’ of nihility is part of the movement of negation-sive-affirmation that explicates the core assertion of the self-identity of form and emptiness and represents Nishitani’s previously mentioned moving of Śūnyatā towards a positive ‘position’. Nishitani’s return to the concept of self-being possibly “seems at first worrisome”¹³⁴ as a re-instating of what was shown as empty. But within the broad context indicated in the last chapter can be seen as indicating the relation of conventional and ultimate realities in the thought of Nagarjuna that heavily informs Nishitani’s conception of jitai, a conception that draws a deeper and more explicit connection between those levels of reality in elucidating the manner of their disclosure, so that “The assertion that being is only being in unison with emptiness belongs in its fullest and most proper sense to the point of view that speaks of the ‘substance’ of things.”¹³⁵ The return of substantial self-being occurs only within the context of the self-identity of conventional experience upon the field of consciousness and the emptiness of ultimate reality, a self-identity of suchness.

The Critique of Substance

Despite jitai incorporating the notion of substance its elucidation begins from the critique of how substance is understood upon the field of consciousness to show the necessity of moving towards jitai as the nonduality of being and nothingness. Nishitani understands substance as what “is used to point out the essence of a thing, the self-identity in which a thing is what it is in itself. In other words, it is the being of a being.”¹³⁶ This understanding of substance (in altered form) remains within the formulation being-sive-nothingness, yet whilst substance indicates the mode of being of jitai it also “invariably restricts the selfness of a thing to the way that thing is disclosed to us on the field of reason”¹³⁷, overlooking how such beingness is also constituted by nothingness. Nishitani’s critique of substance revolves around the assumption that substance as how a thing presents itself to us is the sole constituent of selfness upon the field of consciousness, that appearance is taken for reality, the viability of this assumption and its kinship to Heidegger’s narrative is considered in chapter 2.5.

The categories of subject and substance as denoting what preserves self-identity as the ground of changing properties are said by Nishitani to have consistently determined Western notions of Being so that “being is looked upon as substance because, from the very outset, beings are looked upon as objects”¹³⁸. The Being of beings is thus seen as substance as beings are represented as objects from the perspective of the self-conscious subject upon the field of consciousness, a critique of Western metaphysics that revolves around the forgetting of the ontological difference mirroring Heidegger’s critique of scientific representation that is to be dealt with in chaps 2.2 and section 3. Accordingly substance “can only be grasped through thinking”¹³⁹ such as in Descartes meditation on the self-identity of wax beneath its changing surface properties. Nishitani claims that reason is held to be the union of the subjective and objective but that because of the objectification of self and thing upon the field of consciousness “time and again through

¹³² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 76.

¹³³ Ibid., 124.

¹³⁴ Thurman, "Nishitani and the Inner Science of Buddhism," 155.

¹³⁵ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 125.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 119.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 110.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 119.

the course of history traces of the duality of seer and seen have survived in contemplation or intellectual intuition.”¹⁴⁰ The transformation of the notions of substance and reason upon the field of consciousness are thus an attempt to bring reason into its own essential being through its self-transcendence, as was discussed in the introduction concerning Nishitani’s relation to rational argumentation.

Such dualities within reason upon the field of consciousness can be seen in the division of ‘actual’ and ‘essential’ being; actual being is that a thing is (its existence) and essential being is what a thing is. In focussing on the concept of substance traditional ontology (Nishitani uses both Plato and Aristotle as paradigmatic examples) seeks to reach actual being through essential being, existence by way of essence understood in terms of how it becomes present to subjective consciousness. Elucidating this through the example of fire Nishitani holds that its substance, its essential being that distinguishes it from other beings, resides in “the power and activity of combustion.”¹⁴¹ Such combustion as the form/eidos of fire is its mode of being only in relation to how it presents or displays itself to the subject, combustion is indeed part of the ontological constitution of fire but only in “terms of logos, as something that can be explained in terms of ‘logical’ structures or interpreted ‘theoretically’”. It is given as something that can be viewed from the standpoint of reason.”¹⁴² Combustion is claimed as only the objective representation of fire, the form it presents or discloses to the subject on the field of consciousness.

Heidegger indicates that Western metaphysics also begins from such a division in taking Being as ground; “that from which beings as such are what they are in their becoming, perishing, and persisting as something that can be known, handled and worked upon”¹⁴³. Metaphysics as the search for ground also begins from the essential whatness of presence and “starting from what is present, represents it in its presence and thus exhibits it as grounded by its ground.” For both the metaphysical reason of the field of consciousness concerns itself solely with essential being as ground. The traditional understanding of substance thereby only indicates “the eidetic form in which the thing discloses itself to us”¹⁴⁴, which whilst an aspect on the side relation that forms the in-itself overlooks that which withdraws and is concealed behind the form yet renders such possible. This approach of the actual via way of the essential leads reason on the field of consciousness to reinforce the division between seer and seen; “It does not put one directly in touch with the home-ground of a thing, with the thing itself”¹⁴⁵; it forgets the ontological difference concealing the homeground of *jitai* as that which makes possible beingness and thus necessarily fails to reach Being through beingness in similar fashion to how metaphysics cannot reach its own ground.

The Paradox of Representation

This duality that remains leads to disclosure upon the field of consciousness entailing a paradox in relation to representation that forms the core of Nishitani’s critique of traditional ontologies; namely that “An object is nothing other than something that has been represented as an object, and even the very idea of something independent of representation can only come about as a representation.”¹⁴⁶ This paradox stems from the objectification of beings that is inherent to the field of consciousness on which “are all ‘received’ as objective entities by the self-conscious ego posited as a subjective entity.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 114.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 113.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³ Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” 432.

¹⁴⁴ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 115.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Both substance and self are thus objectified as representations, obscuring their true suchness through the dichotomization of subject and object that prevails throughout the representational thought of metaphysics.

This paradox is said to have been made explicit in the West through the work of Kant, whose thought is seen by Nishitani as a natural progression from the limited nature of an ontology of substance. Despite Kant's awareness of the limitations of representation "as we see in the sharp distinction between the phenomenal world and the world of things-in-themselves"¹⁴⁸, Kant is said to have still dealt with representation as the substance aspect of non-substantiality, as what the thing shows to us. The phenomenal-noumenal distinction has the effect of entrenching further the estrangement of self and world through the subject-object dichotomy. Nishitani holds that as "Kant looks on things from the very outset as objects; or, to put it the other way around, his standpoint is that of representation."¹⁴⁹ he remains in the same field of traditional ontologies that saw knowledge as correspondence of concepts to things only changing the relation of correspondence. Despite the qualifications Nishitani makes in his critique of Kant it remains an overly metaphysical interpretation overlooking that for Kant objectivity and substance are transcendental principles rather than assertions as to reality in-itself or suchness, and can be seen as explicitly dealing with the phenomenal as the conventional reality of the field of consciousness. The accuracy of his interpretation, its fidelity to Kant's work and possible defences in light of it, are not the primary concern; what it highlights regarding the nature of the field of consciousness and relation of this to Śūnyatā is. The issue is what the interpretation says regarding Nishitani's own attempt to negate objectivity and, as will emerge over the following chapters, whether this negation is lacking a true self-identity (sive) with affirmation leading to problems with Nishitani's thought on elemental subjectivity.

Heidegger takes a similar approach to Nishitani in asserting that "The thing-in-itself means for Kant: the object-in-itself."¹⁵⁰ Here the being of a thing in-itself still signifies solely objectivity, albeit "that the object is an object in itself without reference to the human act of representing it... 'Thing-in-itself' thought in a rigorously Kantian way, means an object that is no object for us, because it is supposed to stand, stay put, without a possible before: for the human representational act that encounters it"¹⁵¹ and thus an objectivity defined by subjective representation yet also in a sense prior to and separate from such representation. Whilst what 'thing' means for Heidegger in this context is to be dealt with in the next chapter both thinkers can be seen as sharing the view that the noumenal remains upon the field of consciousness despite its changed relation to the representations of the subject. Despite this not being a simple inversion along the lines of idealism Nishitani holds that Kant remains upon the field of consciousness and objective presupposition with the only change being "that the relationship between the object and its representation which operated as a covert basis in the former was made overt in the latter and there given approval"¹⁵². The paradox is exposed but whether a representation confirms to the object or the object to the representation does not alter the presupposition of the objective-representational view. But this making explicit of the paradox is held as deepening the understanding of subjectivity by rendering the self as subject resistant to objective comprehension opening the way for the subjectivization of ecstatic nihilism, it is an opening of the way towards the Great Doubt.

Nishitani holds that this paradox entails that suchness as "original selfness must

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 133.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 171.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 174.

¹⁵² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 134.

lie beyond the reach of reason and be impervious to thought”¹⁵³, or at least to that thought which is limited to the substantivistic reason of the field of consciousness. Realism and materialism are said to not reach selfness as “this manner of representation stems from a field on which the subjective and objective are set in opposition to each other, from the field of objects and their representations”¹⁵⁴ so does not escape the paradox as such a position “has yet to elude the contradiction of being represented as something lying beyond representation”¹⁵⁵. The warrant for this ‘must’ seems to rely upon the prehension of original selfness upon the field of Śūnyatā, the necessity of overstepping the field of consciousness stems from its inability to reach the thing in-itself, and yet the warrant for Śūnyatā is that it satisfies this ‘must’. Unno claims the paradox exposes the main flaw of the field of consciousness as that “a thing is lifted up from the elemental mode of being and transformed into an object re-presented to the subject”¹⁵⁶ resulting in only abstract conceptual knowledge, but such criticism assume the possibility and reality of an elemental mode whose attestation is to come from the process of realization that it is also to render possible, and does not by itself indicate the necessity of such realization (the sive that joins understanding and apprehension). The field of consciousness fails to reach the elemental truth of reason as the nonduality of seer and seen due to the inherence of the subject-object duality within it that leads to alienation, an assumption regarding the essence of reason that parallels those Nishitani critiques. Such presuppositions are explicit in Nishitani’s claim that the key to the resolution of the paradox “is contained in something that has been present in the Eastern mind since ancient times”,¹⁵⁷ an instance of his conflation of the Zen tradition with a possible artificial construction of Eastern thought as a whole that was mentioned in the introduction. As was noted at the end of the previous chapter concerning the imperative for the progression through the fields such assumptions are not necessarily invalid, but are not justified any more or less than the core presupposition of the field of consciousness itself in relation to what is to be accepted as real and pertain to the conflation of the existential and ontological senses of Śūnyatā to be returned to in chapter 2.6.

Non-Substance and Emptiness

The separation of self and things through the subject-object duality on the field of consciousness is said to entail “that we are drawn to things, and that we in turn draw things to ourselves. (In this sense, ‘will’, or desire and attachment, can also be posited at the ground of ‘representation’.)”¹⁵⁸; that things are beyond our reach as objects are compelled towards them and desirous of attaining what is beyond our grasp upon the field of consciousness. Nishitani’s inclusion of an element of desire and attachment in such disclosure seems in a way ambiguous. Whilst in line with traditional Buddhist views of conventional discriminations stemming from the grasping of false ego and self-attachment the subject-object duality and representation seem required for such wilful desires; if they are posited as stemming from the ground of representation then this is coherent, if they are ‘at’ the ground in the sense of contributing then this seems more problematic. Such drawing together of the subject and object pertains to the partial overcoming of the paradox of representation upon the field of nihility. As non-objectifiable the nothingness aspect cannot be grasped representationally and in so withdrawing from the grasp of the field of consciousness directs attention upon that field solely to the substance/being aspect, repelling attention from the nothing aspect of the nondual in-itself to allow for the disclosure of things as objects of consciousness. The

¹⁵³ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Unno, 308

¹⁵⁷ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 116.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 123.

paradox of representation is partially overcome in nihility as things are rendered unreal in nihilation, they can no longer appear as external actuality (objects) or representations and it is through the nullification of nihility revealing the in-itself as unreachable upon the field of consciousness (that relies upon its withdrawal) that fire is rendered non-objective as non-combustion bringing to awareness on the field of nihility the nothingness aspect of being-sive-nothingness. As such nihilation can only ever be transitional it is in turn transfigured through be-ification into the self-emptying of being-sive-nothingness, of non-substantial substantiality.

Whilst the essential being of fire for us (how fire represents itself to others) is combustion Nishitani holds that the self-identity of fire in-itself (how it represents itself to itself) is its non-combustion, that it does not burn itself. Since how fire presents itself to itself is its self-identity on its own homeground then “the words, ‘Fire does not burn fire’, speak of the essential being of fire. They also mean that fire does actually burn and that there is actually a fire burning.”¹⁵⁹ The nonduality of being-sive-nothingness is also the nonduality of essential and actual being, the essential being of non-combustion (non-self-identity) and the actual being of combustion (self-identity). The simultaneity of combustion and non-combustion of fire in-itself dissolves the duality of actual and essential being. Fire’s not burning itself is both its essential being in-itself and makes possible its actual being for us, if its non-combustion is taken as the nothingness (or empty) aspect of being-sive-nothingness then the self-identity of fire as the identity of its actual and essential being is expressed by its nature as empty, but such expression is never apart from fire as combustion so that “The two are here one and the same.”¹⁶⁰ Self-nature (beingness) is grounded on non-self-nature as self-emptying, this identity is the transfiguration of substantiality as non-substantial substantiality. This notion of substantiality is later explicated in terms of samadhi as gathering.

The nature of non-combustion is unsurprisingly defined largely through the negation of substance as what makes self-identity possible. Despite that “this non-combustion is not something apart from combustion: fire is non-combustive in its very act of combustion”¹⁶¹ non-combustion is given a seeming ontological priority in that “Self-nature is such as it is only as the self-nature of non-self-nature. The true self-identity of fire does not emerge from the self-identity it enjoys in combustion as a ‘substance’ or a ‘self-nature’, but only from the absolute negation of that self-identity, from its non-combustion”¹⁶². The definition through negation seems to stray into the realm of relative nothingness by identifying true self-nature overly with emptiness understood as negation. As was said in previous chapters throughout Religion and Nothingness a self-identity is continually asserted in the formula being-sive-nothingness even as one aspect of that process is seemingly prioritized. This prioritization cannot be one of value, reality or truth (despite occasional references to true reality self-nature remains equally real in line with Nagarjuna’s two truths doctrine) but must be an ontological priority concerned with what enables the manifestation of the substantial or actual being aspect of the sive relation. The self-identity of combustion and non-combustion as “paradox bespeaks the selfness by virtue of which the fire is on its own home-ground in the act of combustion”,¹⁶³ unlike the paradox of representation this paradox is seen as fundamentally unproblematic and the relation of paradox to real reality remains unclear given Nishitani’s ambiguous stance on the self-identity of reason and Śūnyatā, the wording of this later quote also

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 116.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁶² Ibid., 118.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 125.

emphasizing the ontological identity of self and non-self over the priority of the emptiness aspect.

The problem of the priority of negation could be seen as the issue of whether emptiness as non-objectivity escapes from the paradox of representation or remains within its sphere as the negation of a representation. Negation of a representation seems to remain within the paradox of representation itself, a relative nothingness on the field of nihility that is not yet a self-emptied emptiness. Non-self nature in relation to jítai is clarified by Abe as relating to “the thing itself in its original mode of being, and which is grasped entirely ‘non-objectively’ from its ‘within’- more strictly speaking, from neither without nor within”¹⁶⁴, the non-objective is only realizable from a non-subjective position, emptied of representation. It is the same reality as substance but viewed ‘non-subjectively’. Non-combustion cannot be negation in the sense of absence (non-combustion) or any phenomenal extinguishing. Jítai as true in-itself must be “completely free from all representation – representation not only in terms of the subject-object duality, but also in terms of nihility which overcomes that duality”¹⁶⁵. The ‘be-ification’ that is a return to substantiality as non-substantial implies the total surpassing of negation and duality whilst jítai as elucidated by fire as non-combustion seems still to rest on a homeground of relative nihility through the negation of its self-identity.

In relation to non-self nature Gilkey asks “Why, in this experience of them (and their lack of powers) are we said to be finally in touch with fire in itself and water in itself?”¹⁶⁶ a criticism that is flawed yet highlights the difficulty of Nishitani’s resolution to the paradox of representation. Gilkey treats non-combustion as a phenomenal experience of fire, but fire’s not burning of itself cannot be the negation of its phenomenal persistence (that there is no combustion) as this remains on the representational level of the field of consciousness. Non-combustion cannot be something we experience in a correlate manner to our experience of combustion. As the attempt to indicate the non-objective mode of being of the in-itself non-combustion is not something we encounter, it must be what enables us to encounter combustion, in a way we encounter it through not-encountering it in the experience of combustion¹⁶⁷. But Gilkey does highlight the difficulty in understanding what Nishitani means by non-combustion and how he comes to term it as negation. Gilkey claims that Nishitani assumes “that difference represents or is identical with absolute negation”¹⁶⁸, that the in-itself of fire is not combustion (is not the representation fire presents to us) does not immediately entail negation but only difference. The assertion that the self-identity of fire in-itself, as it presents itself to itself, is non-combustion requires the realization of emptiness through what is later termed the ‘knowing of non-knowing’ and cannot be used to ground or entail that realization.

As was said earlier Nishitani claims a ‘must’ for the priority and nature of non-self, it is far from certain that Nishitani succeeds in justifying any such statement. He rightly states that such an apparently contradictory position does not fall straightforwardly to the paradox of representation, and if the field of consciousness is overstepped the

¹⁶⁴ Maseo Abe, “Nishitani’s Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology,” in *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, ed. Frederick Franck (World Wisdom, 2004), 32.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 30.

¹⁶⁶ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 61.

¹⁶⁷ One of the other examples Nishitani briefly mentions (eye not seeing eye, water not washing water) may have been better suited to his purposes, whilst one of the classic elements fire is not easily regarded as a substance, it is a reaction, and combustion the property of a combusting substance rather than the defining feature of fire as a ‘substance’. But the above problem would remain for any example, for instance the eye’s not seeing the eye can also be regarded either as a phenomenal inability (a represented emptiness) or a representative negation.

¹⁶⁸ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*.

‘strangeness’ of his position evaporates. But a more coherent and forceful experience of the non-objective needs to be offered to make his position more than an abstract theoretical possibility; and as beyond representation and conceptualization the sense in which non-combustion can be the negation of (as opposed to simply other than) representation remains unclear, as does why non-substance is not conceivable as the noumenal unknown. Jitai as non-objective requires an experiential attestation non-reducible to conceptualized theory that is not yet provided by the account of how it renders possible the substantial forms of the field of consciousness. This is the same problem as discussed in relation to the necessity of the progression through the fields of awareness, the paradox of representation leads to the necessity of jitai as beyond reason but as discussed in the introduction Nishitani places this necessity beyond the demands of reason and doubt so that jitai “is simply itself, cut off from every How and Why and Wherefore”.¹⁶⁹ Such attestation is to be dealt with in anxiety chapter as linked to the notion of presence-at-hand as unmeaning, not as the negation of any specific meaning, revealing or notion of substantiality but a prior condition of concealment for the revealing Jitai and its necessity (and by extension the nature of world to be considered over the following chapters) cannot come in postulate form as what is required to render possible being-sive-nothingness as the only viable solution to the paradox of representation; that such emptiness is arrived from working backwards from experience of nonduality in compassion does not verify the realization of such non-objectivity separate from a specific experience of nihility that as cut off from every 'why' cannot be justified in communal discourse and renders ontological reality dependent upon an individual's coming-to-awareness.

Reality-sive-Illusion

The relation of self-identity between self and non-self nature is further elucidated later in Religion and Nothingness when it is said that as being-sive-nothingness jitai or “the elemental mode of being, as such, is illusory appearance”¹⁷⁰ The formulation of jitai in terms of reality-sive-illusion is more reminiscent of Nagarjuna’s two truths doctrine in the claim that appearances are not representative images of a thing that appears, reality and illusoriness are self-identical and the in-itself is nothing beyond appearance. In moving away from the remnants of relative nothingness such a characterization may better express what is meant by jitai . Illusion is here said to be ‘for us’ in same manner as substance, the form of a thing as it appears to us on the field of consciousness, and reality is the non-objective mode of being of the thing in-itself. The language and relation of negation between the aspects remains but such negation is contextualized more in terms of an otherness or difference, the non- denoting not a direct negation but a mutual negation, just as the in-itself was the negation of substance “the shapes of things that appear on the fields of sensation and reason...are a negation of the ‘position’ (or self-positing) of things”¹⁷¹.

This mutual negation is indicated as implying self-identity through the sive relation so that “all sensory modes and all supersensory eidetic forms of a thing are not to be seen apart from the ‘position’ (the self-positing mode of being) of the thing. They are all appearances of the thing itself”¹⁷², the form is not selfness but emanates from selfness and selfness is no other than this emanation so that “each reality in its suchness just as it is constitutes phenomenal appearance”¹⁷³. Such negation would then relate to the nihilation that renders beings brute entities, not a negation of any specific meaning

¹⁶⁹Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 158.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁷² Ibid., 131.

¹⁷³ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 316.

but the homeground of non-objectivity that 'is' as the impossibility of incorporation into a meaningful totality; the nihility of the present-at-hand revealed by anxiety. The non-self of *jītai* could then be paralleled to the concealed possibilities of Being that as "the 'non-' of the primordial nonessence of truth, as untruth, points to the still unexperienced domain of the truth of Being (not merely of beings)." ¹⁷⁴ In the unconcealment of emanation only one aspect of intelligibility comes to presence concealing all other nuances as well as non-objectivity as the ground for disclosure. The mystery of Being, that it conceals itself in revealing thus leading to its own oblivion, and the homeground of *jītai*, that which the thing hides from us in appearing yet is the source of such illusory appearances, are the preconditions for the establishing of the conventional truths of the field of consciousness. This language of emanation retains the priority of the nothingness aspect in being-sive-nothingness (or illusion-sive-reality) in regards to the disclosure of both aspects as suchness is nothing more than the images conveyed yet is not reducible to those images in the same manner that illusion as the form presented to us seems ontologically reducible; the reality behind the illusory appearances is 'nothing'. This pattern of relations is the weaving together of the manners of disclosure across the three fields discussed earlier, only the appearance aspect of illusion appears on the field of consciousness, only the suchness of non-self (brute presence-at-hand before taken up into context of world) on field of nihility, both in their sive relation is grasped on the field of *Śūnyatā*. All are the same reality realized through a different mode of our being, through deepening levels of self-awareness.

In its appearing, or emanation, each thing is asserting its self-identity and "becomes manifest in its suchness in its very act of affirming itself, according to its own particular potential" ¹⁷⁵, the process of disclosure begins to take on a more active connotation of a thing gathering and settling itself through its own activity that is self-identical with its appearance for us as illusion. The non-substantial substantiality of *jītai* takes on an element of agency, and despite the denial of *Śūnyatā* as a regression to a prior state such gathering indicates that a thing "recovers once again its power of concentration for gathering itself into itself" ¹⁷⁶. This self-gathering agency would also seem to act as a precondition for Heidegger's thought on releasement, a connection taken up in chap 2.6 and section 3. Such recovery relates to the 'settling' of a thing upon its homeground, that in taking a position "They centre in on themselves and do not get scattered." ¹⁷⁷ 'Scattered' here refers to the process of nullification on the field of nihility so that the settling of *samādhi* is the 'be-ification' referred to earlier, so that recovery is not the moving between discrete objective or temporal states but pertains to the realization of the self-identity of the fields of disclosure; it is a recovery of awareness joined to manifestation within the process of realization. 'Samādhi' originally designated the focusing of the mind in meditation to overstep the ego but Nishitani claims "it also applies to the mode of being of a thing in itself when it has settled into its own position" ¹⁷⁸ so that *jītai* is also 'samādhi-being' as indicating a thing has settled into a specific thing (asserted its self-identity). This spreading of what was originally a mental activity (albeit one of mental non-activity) to the process of manifestation of things merges Nagarjuna's notion of two truths with later Chinese Buddhist theories of mind and grounds Nishitani's assertion of the self-identity of self and reality, with the former arguably being taken as paradigmatic. This theme of the priority of the self through the joining of manifestation and awareness within realization is to be developed more later along with the nature of gathering, but for now it must be asked whether such emanation through gathering falls into inconsistency

¹⁷⁴ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, 131.

¹⁷⁵ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 131.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 123.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 128.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

through 'representing' the 'non-objective'; whether Nishitani falls back into viewing the in-itself of *jitai* as the object-in-itself that Heidegger finds in Kant and whether such a retreat is not both necessary and beneficial.

Despite assertions of self-identity dualistic metaphors or implied causality remain, discussions of circles and circumferences, of appearances as "radiations from the things themselves, like rays of light issuing from a common source"¹⁷⁹. Not only do such descriptions seem inadequate, mere representations of what is self-emptied of representation, but often seem simply misleading in invoking images of causality and duality that Nishitani's thought seems striving to overcome. The division of within and without that is to be overcome through the *sive* relation is seemingly reinforced and remains in the idea that "things posit themselves as they are and in such a way as not to permit contact from the outside"¹⁸⁰, introducing a gulf between self and things akin to the subject-object duality. The self-identity of reality and illusion, of being and nothingness, often hovers dangerously close to representation as a dualistic relation. It could be seen that such 'outside' is to be overcome through the self-identities of self and world that are to follow, but such is intended to overcome all notion of 'within' and 'without' rather than simply to bring both constituents of a relation within. The subject-object duality also seems to remain in statements such as "the shapes of things as objects of sense intuition and rational thinking are reflected within ourselves as things that have left their own home-ground in order to move into a relationship with us, a relationship that may be likened to a beam of light radiating from its source"¹⁸¹. Such phrases may be intended to illuminate rather than perfectly express that which is empty, but invoke a relational (even if integral as for Steffney) state between what is to be asserted as self-identical. The true nature of this relational self-identity is examined in chapter 1.5, but there seems to be a residual tension of thought, a lingering estrangement, that is soon to blossom into a more far reaching problematic concerning the relation of self and world.

Overcoming the Paradox of Representation

That the reality of reality-*sive*-illusion is similar to Kantian noumenal reality is denied by Nishitani, claiming that *jitai* as the thing in-itself "is altogether different from the Kantian notion of the 'thing-in-itself'"¹⁸² as "There is no distinction here between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. The original thing is the thing that appears to us as what it is, without front side or back."¹⁸³ If the in-itself were simply to be denoting the limitations of knowledge or reason they would be the 'hidden aspect of things' and thus "imply a view of things from where we stand. On its own home-ground, a thing has no front and no back. It is purely and simply itself, as it is in its selfness and nothing more"¹⁸⁴. *Jitai* is here differentiated from an interpretation in terms of the object-in-itself as it is not divorced from representation yet neither dependent upon it. The in-itself is more illusory than the noumenal as its suchness is no more than illusory appearance, thus the noumenal and phenomenal are held to be self-identical in a more thorough-going sense than is found in the work of Kant. This seems an unfairly dualistic interpretation of Kant, for whom the noumenal is not ontologically distinct from the phenomenal but instead arguably self-identical in a similar sense with the phenomenal as how the noumenal's emanations are experienced upon the field of consciousness; self-identical aspects only distinguishable epistemologically upon different fields of awareness or truth.

A criticism along similar lines to the one Nishitani makes of Kant would also seem

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 141.

¹⁸² Ibid., 107.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 138.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 127.

to pertain to the presentation of unconcealment in Heidegger's thought, and provides for a more pertinent distinction that Nishitani's critique of the relative nothingness of What is Metaphysics? Both concealment and unconcealment as the process of a beings coming to presence imply a similar standpoint towards things in terms of what a being shows to us, yet Nishitani seems to require that *jitai* as non-objective indicates things separate from their disclosure, even as he draws that disclosure into a more radical self-identity with the manifestation of the in-itself through realization as manifestation-sive-apprehension that over following chapters will be seen to make even the homeground of *jitai* dependent upon its knowing by the self.

Whilst at times Nishitani's critique of Kantianism can seem overly harsh this stems from his understanding of ontology in terms of realization (manifestation-sive-apprehension) so that the phenomenal and noumenal are not conceivable as self-identical in an ontological sense as the noumenal mode of being of the thing-in-itself is irretrievable separated from its apprehension as phenomenal manifestation. The main difference between the noumenal and the in-itself would seem to lay in the latter's encounterability upon the field of *Śūnyatā* where as "the thing itself is always and ever manifest as such, its realization is able to come about."¹⁸⁵ This is portrayed by Nishitani as a further and more radical Copernican Revolution in which the object is no longer made to correspond to the subject, but the self does not revert in a simple sense to compliance with the object; rather it is a 'non-cognitive knowing of the non-objective thing in itself'¹⁸⁶; the realization (manifestation-sive-apprehension) of the thing in its suchness by and with a self constituted by non-self. Nishitani's critique of Kant seems decidedly Schopenhaurian on this point, that direct experience of the Kantian noumenal is made possible since the essence of the self is self-identical with this noumenal in-itself and therefore directly experientiable. Whilst Nishitani never mentions Schopenhauer the latter's knowledge and affinity with Buddhism in general is well-established.

This realization of the thing in itself as reality-sive-illusion has as its condition of possibility the self-identity of self and reality that allows for the nonduality of seer and seen Nishitani claims to be the true essence of reason, yet also provides for the possibility of that self-identity. Through *jitai* as a form of gathering or *samadhi* the direct knowledge of the thing in-itself that Nishitani terms a 'knowing of non-knowing' and is defined as "the gathering together and concentration on a single point of the light of all things. Or better still, it is a reverting to the point where things themselves are all gathered into one"¹⁸⁷ is initially made possible. This direct knowledge of *jitai* is the realization of the in-itself through the mutual manifestation of self and things through a process of gathering that overcomes the notion of duality regarding subjects and objects building on and furthering the overcoming of the duality inherent in the paradox of representation. The paradox of representation is only overcome through direct encounter with an absolute emptiness emptied of representation, yet as the condition of its own possibility (through the self-identity of the ontological and existential) this encounter is itself a paradoxical realization; a paradox Nishitani places beyond 'why' and reason despite not doing the same for the paradox of representation. Such direct knowledge will be returned to in chapter 1.7 on *koto* as non-knowing, and the problems of reliance upon such attestation in anxiety chap.

The success of *jitai* as the resolution of the paradox of representation is a judgement that must be left pending, whether *jitai* as the in-itself operates as a reification of reality beyond representation and slips back into metaphysics, whether freedom from

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 139.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 140.

objectivity is possible or desirable given the problems of elemental subjectivity soon to be addressed. Despite its flaws jitai opens the way for such a resolution but requires greater attestation and explication as to how it makes possible a disclosure of direct contact with the in-itself, more strictly speaking an explication of the nature of such direct encounter and how it is possibilized solely by such a conception. Such an explication is to be the feature of chapter 1.5, the attempt to think the plurality of the referential totality of world in its relation to the singularity and unity of jitai and self in terms of samadhi. This problematic relates to the tension between the singularity of Sein and plurality of Da in Heidegger's thought mentioned in chapter 1.1 but having dealt with how jitai pertains to the being of entities (as replacing jittai or substance) it is first required to show how this understanding relates more specifically to jitai as replacing subjectivity (shutai) as the true mode of being of the self. Only a non-conceptual existential emptiness, an emptiness encountered at one with the self, can resolve the paradox by providing for our capacity to have direct experience of the emptiness aspect of reality-sive-illusion.

1.4 Self

As an existential progression towards enlightenment through emancipation from false notions of the self Nishitani's theory of self as ontologically self-identical with absolute nothingness provides the point of encounter with the in-itself that constitutes the realization of both self and reality. As such it is the primary condition for the possibility of essential religion as the real self-realization of reality. This relation of self and absolute nothingness also speaks the integral belonging of Da and Sein; and will later be seen as facing the same problems of reconciling singularity and plurality, as well as sharing a pattern of deepening self-awareness upon the fields whose identity and differences are revealed in meditative thought/reflection.

Whilst providing for the direct encounter with the in-itself such an encounter cannot be an everyday experience of some faculty or drive, it cannot be intuited in the manner of a universal Schopenhauerian Will as a form of metaphysical entity or ground. But neither is the true self "a Kantian 'thing in itself' that cannot be known except through...indirect pointers. It can be known, but only as formless, not as a thing, not as consciousness"¹⁸⁸; it is a direct experience of the horizon of disclosure (of the integral relation of Ereignis) for such conceptions that is thus knowable but not in a correlate sense to knowledge/experience of beings or anything it makes possible. The empty self that is self-identical with the realization of reality provides the horizon for disclosure of conventional thought upon the field of consciousness and thus is not to be reached through the introspection that takes place upon that field, even if its coming to awareness begins from that field and is self-identical with it. Instead it is reached through a 'knowing of non-knowing' the conditions of which are to be explicated over both this chapter and chapters 1.5-6 before being fully addressed in chapter 1.7. The impossibility of reaching the true self by 'stepping back' through introspection is a common one in Buddhism, making the relation between insight and transformation one of mutual dependence and requirement, with little indication of how this process of mutual enablement operates. Heisig claims this merging of a system of critical doubt aimed at liberation and description of the direct awareness of self mirrors Nagarjuna's 'no-position' view in not giving "an epistemology or ontology of the self so much as a permanent critique of all such ways of thinking."¹⁸⁹ Philosophical critique and critical doubt are utilized to prepare the way for the liberation of the self through the transitional field of nihility but cannot

¹⁸⁸ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 232.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

achieve such liberation, leaving his reflections on the encounter with the true self “more mystical in tone than philosophical.”¹⁹⁰, nowhere is the difficulty of attestation mentioned previously more pertinent than in relation to Nishitani’s theory of the self.

Like all his thought Nishitani’s theory of self remains heavily rooted in Buddhist doctrine, but the centrality of the notion of empty self in all Buddhist schools does not obscure the great variety of ways such doctrines can be interpreted in relation to what constitutes emptiness and self. Broadly speaking the denial of self-subsistent being in relation to the self meant that the self was thought of as ‘anatman’ (non-self), a transitory phenomena that lacks inherent existence and is constituted by the interplay of the skandhas (matter/form, sensation, perception, volition, mind) that are themselves empty of self-being. Self as a persistent existing identity (subjective ego) was here seen as resulting from grammatical convention and ignorance concerning the true nature of experience; in truth self was an illusion generated by the continuity of mental experiences within the interplay of transitory phenomena. Even as empty this remained a form of self (even if a formless form) so the term non-self (as negation of substantive self) is generally favoured over no-self (which would entail a denial even of illusory self), although there is much doctrinal divergence in early Zen concerning what the ‘pure’ or ‘universal’ mind behind the illusion consisted of. No brief or generic picture could do justice to the variety and depth of the historical theories of self that Nishitani draws from, but highlights that although it may be a foregone conclusion that Nishitani will hold the self to be constituted by emptiness even consistent reference to non-self hides an abundance of understandings, and that what self refers to often remains ambiguous. Since nothingness (and thus non-self) in the context of this thesis is given a more limited definition as unmeaning how this specific understanding of nothingness relates to anatman and Śūnyatā in general will emerge throughout this and the following chapters; specifically how Dasein as constituted by nihility and entities lack of inherent meaning (there sheer presence-at-hand) can inform Nishitani’s thought.

Heisig lays out three broad ways non-self is treated by the Kyoto thinkers; a meditative principle for deliverance from illusion, selfless moral action, and a metaphysical or ontological doctrine. He holds that whilst not necessarily implying or requiring each other the attempt was made to unify these conceptions into “the same sort of singular and univocal meaning that Western philosophy has always required of an idea of the subject”¹⁹¹ yet that not even Nishitani “clearly states the univocal definition of no-self (or its correlatives, true self and non-ego) that they were assuming as necessary”¹⁹². This general characterization is at odds with other themes of Nishitani’s work that he clarifies; namely that Śūnyatā as uniting ontological and existential understandings through the twofold definition of realization indicates the bringing together of these three broad approaches to non-self. As was said at the start of chapter 1.2 the ontological doctrine of the emptiness of reality, its rising to awareness through experience of the empty self behind illusion, and the ethical consequences of this are all mutually implied in Śūnyatā as the real self-realization of reality’s coming to awareness. It is in this process that the ‘univocal definition of no-self’ emerges as rendered possible by Nishitani’s more explicitly narrow theory of self as identity with absolute nothingness. Although at times there remains an ambiguity relating to the notion of human self-hood that is to emerge in later discussion of anthropocentrism. Despite having a unity of thought through his guiding understanding of essential religion it is true that there is a lack of systematic unity in Nishitani’s use of the terms self, ego and subject (and their various negations). These various meanings of self are to emerge through initial consideration of the self on each of

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 265.

¹⁹² Ibid.

the fields of disclosure before moving towards the self-identity with absolute nothingness, beginning with his critique of the self on the field of consciousness.

Self as Realized through Critique

Nishitani claims that “The idea of man as person is without doubt the highest conception of man yet to appear”¹⁹³ and connects this conception of personhood with the development of modern subjectivity in Western thought. The implication of this is that the ‘self’ originally designated by the anatman doctrine is not the same self of modern subjectivity that Nishitani’s own theory of self is aiming to overcome. This problem of reconciling the historical location of self to be overcome with Śūnyatā and the ahistorical nature of original Buddhist doctrines will be more thoroughly considered later in relation to nihilism. For now it can be said that as a kōan for the modern age Religion and Nothingness’s notion of what comprises the conventional self is limited to the ego of modern subjectivity.

The critique of the subject (shutai) mirrors the previous critique of substance (jittai) in that just as substance indicates the in-itself of a thing only as ‘for us’ (as representation) the notion of subject “merely points to man in himself insofar as he is laid bare to himself within himself, on the field of his own consciousness.”¹⁹⁴ Subjectivity is only the self as it appears to the self upon the field on consciousness as standing opposed to the world and objects. Nishitani points to the work of Descartes and Kant as indicating how this understanding of self emerged to become seen as self-evident and entails that through the Copernican Revolution in modernity “the subject that lies at the ground of the various faculties of consciousness has come at the same time...to lie at the ground of the visible world and all things therein”¹⁹⁵. As for the critique of objectivity the importance of Nishitani’s interpretation of Kant is not its fidelity but what it highlights regarding Nishitani’s conception of modern subjectivity; that personhood as the highest conception yet to appear carries with it the flawed presupposition of the centrality of the subjective or egoistic self within the phenomenal world of the field of consciousness being taken for a similar centrality in awareness of true reality. Although this subject-dependence is seen as the culmination (and beginning of self-nullification) of the subject-object duality the nature of the critique of subjectivity as ground for the world of objects is problematic for Nishitani, as shall be later discussed in reference to the ontological priority he also seems to give the awareness of self.

The core of the critique is that in the self only grasping itself from within, only seeing itself from within itself, the field of consciousness is taken as both conventional and ultimate reality resulting in the self’s enclosing within itself and estrangement from the suchness of both self and things. The egocentric self-centred perspective leads to the prioritizing of the subjective self and represents “form of captivity or self-attachment”¹⁹⁶, incapable of moving beyond its own representations (of both itself and objects) to the true awareness required to overcome the paradox of representation. Such a conception of self is an artificial illusory construct resulting from the inherent subject-object division of the field of consciousness, an incapacity necessary to and befitting its nature along the same lines as metaphysics inability to think its own ground. The seeming self-evidence of this traditional notion of subjectivity is attributed to the tendency to reification of the self into ego that is constitutive of the very nature of self, as falling is of Dasein as the metaphysical animal, so that despite the impossibility of viewing subjectivity objectively “the self shows a constant tendency to comprehend itself representationally as some ‘thing’ that is

¹⁹³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 69.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 132.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 95.

called 'I'."¹⁹⁷ Such an inherent tendency towards self-attachment arises as “ego and person from the very outset entail inward self-reflection, without which they cannot come into being as ego and person, it is only natural that this kind of self-immanent self-prehension should come about”¹⁹⁸ through the proximal everyday experience of conventional reality upon the field of consciousness. The self-attachment of the field of consciousness is natural and proper to the form of disclosure upon that field; it is hard to fathom how persons could operate at the level of conventional reality without recourse to such a mode of being.

This conventional truth upon the field of consciousness is just as real as the Śūnyatā that constitutes its possibility, and the egoistic mode of self upon this field is not only ineliminable but justified within the context of applicability for such an egoistic vocabulary. In the same manner that inauthenticity is not pejorative, rather only the covering up of what renders it possible and the obscuring of the authentic mode of being that constitutes the self in concert with the inauthentic is condemned, it is only certain features of this egoistic mode of being that seem problematic. Namely; the mistaken identity of the field of consciousness for the sole-reality that brings with it the constant danger of “a confinement that inevitably ushers in the narcissistic mode of grasping the self wherein the self gets caught up in itself”¹⁹⁹. Such self-attachment obscures the self-identity of the personal self with the absolute nothingness that in their mutual constitution comprise the self-realization of reality allowing for such realization to surpass the estrangement stemming from the paradox of representation. This obscuring of the self's true nature and closing down of other possibilities of self-understanding will later be expanded and clarified through Heidegger's more rigorous analysis of the relation between *Gestell* and *Ereignis* in chapter 2.2, for now it can be noted that Nishitani's account of the process of self-realization mirrors that of metaphysics self-surmounting. A key shared feature is that whilst the self's reification of itself through the egoistic mode of being is always an act of the self “it is not something we are free to do as we please...The force of destiny is at work here, impelling us to be and to act in this manner.”²⁰⁰, a destiny that is not “something that simply rules over us and controls us from without. Nor is it merely something like blind will. It is a destiny that appears only in the shape of the acts we ourselves perform, only as one with our own actions.”²⁰¹ The self-identity of the self and Śūnyatā, of *Da* and its *Sein*, makes the grasping of the self on the field of consciousness (the slipping into the inauthentic subjective self) a force that acts through us and as us. The nature of and relation between the self-understanding of the field of consciousness and the free relation of *Da* and *Sein* once the illusory necessity of *Gestell* is exposed raises issue to be addressed in chapter 2.3 concerning the inevitability that governs the narrative behind the history of metaphysics. The manner in which this is both accomplished by the self yet beyond the power of the self was touched upon in chapter 1.1 and is to be the main focus of section 3 concerning the manner of our responsibility for preparing the way for the saving epoch.

Such self-attachment is shattered in the nullification of the field of nihility that renders the self non-differentiated from the world as both self and thing, subjects and objects, are rendered into a single question deprived of meaning. The ego as an object of its own representation is rendered non-objective as non-ego along with the entities that are deprived of the simple self-identity of substance. The attempt of the self to reach itself representationally upon the field of consciousness falls victim to its own form of the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 97.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 69.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 103.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 104.

paradox of representation so that “the human ego-self falls into an ever-deepening dilemma. At the extreme point of this dilemma...the human ego must die.”²⁰², a claim that echoes the problems of warrant and attestation for the necessity of the progression through the fields that are to be questioned more thoroughly in anxiety chapter and 2.6. This nullification is prefigured within Kant’s rendering of the subject as central; not only was the radical non-objectivity of the subject thus posited but limits were also drawn to the competence of the self. This opened the way for the combining of both subject and objects into a single doubt as the nullification of the self is thus transferred into the objects that are its representations but in a reciprocal manner so that “the insertion of nihility at the ground of things means, in fact, that nihility looms up from the ground of all existing things, assaults us, and inserts itself into the ground of our existence.”²⁰³ The incomprehensibility of self and things in nihility arises from their previous reification as objects obscuring their essential nature and unity, and if the subject is the representer of objects the nullification of objects also reveals the nullity at the ground of the subject. The paradox of representation passes away on the field of nihility as both self and things are no longer objects so that “their cognition cease to be problems; the problem is the reality of things and the self.”²⁰⁴ There is a paradigm shift away from epistemological concern of how objects can be known by a subject to concern with the suchness of both and the manner in which they manifest; the conditions for their mutual realization. The experience of the transitional field of nihility will be returned to in anxiety chapter, for now the main concern is the nature of the realization this transition leads to.

Self as Absolute Nothingness

As with the jitai of entities in general the field of nihility leads here to a re-emergence of what was nullified so that a transfigured subjectivity, a non-subjective subjectivity to parallel and allow contact with the non-substantial substantiality, also features in discussion of the true self. Subjectivity, like substance, is not to be simply negated but transformed and recontextualised within the process of Śūnyatā as an aspect of the self-realization of reality, the illusory ego is drawn into the sive relation with the reality of the empty self; the everyday inauthentic self with the authentic Da disclosed as nothingness in anxiety. The difference of jitai as replacing subject to jitai in the context of replacing substance lies in that here the absolute nothingness of reality is directly encountered at the homeground of the self allowing for the encounter through self-identity with things as equally realized through such nothingness.

The negation of the ego through the nihilizing experience of non-self leads to the breaking of self-enclosure “from within and the personal self discloses itself as subjectivity in its elemental sense, as truly absolute selfhood.”²⁰⁵, the experiential aspect of which will be dealt with in anxiety chapter. The term elemental in respect to subjectivity in Religion and Nothingness is translated from a character more literally rendered as ‘fountainhead’ or ‘root source’ and “carries the sense of the primal spring of life from which subjectivity flows.”²⁰⁶ Elemental subjectivity as the absolute selfhood of non-subjective subjectivity is thereby portrayed as what renders possible the subjective ego of the field of consciousness, an understanding of nihility as ontological origin that will emerge as the keystone to the self-transformation of nihilism and the relation of danger and saving in chapter 2.4.

²⁰² Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 212.

²⁰³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 136. 6

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 137.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 72. 2

²⁰⁶ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 330.

Such elemental subjectivity is neither self-confined as personal ego nor dispersed and nullified as non-ego but denotes the self as “in unison with absolute nothingness, which is its original mode of being.”²⁰⁷ Despite the ultimate reality of Śūnyatā being an unquestioned assumption for Nishitani this original state is only realized through a process of affirmation-sive-negation so that its primordality is ontological not chronological, the consequences of this for the historical emergence of nihilism are returned to in chapters 2.3 and 2.4. True personhood is therefore “a phenomena that appears out of what cannot itself be called personal”²⁰⁸, the essence of the human is not here constituted in or by a relation to the non-human but is the direct manifestation of the non-personal. A self-identity beyond any form of integral relation that interprets the human self in terms of that which it is not but does not thereby reduce the self to be explained in terms of anything other to or transcending the self and world. Instead there is a moving beyond duality to provide for the self-identity of self and world, a moving beyond both the duality of ego and its negation in the non-ego of nihility to the self-identity of these mods of awareness upon a deeper field. It is through this elemental subjectivity that “opens up as nonobjectifiable nothingness in the conversion that takes place within personality.”²⁰⁹ that the subject-object duality is to be overcome in the direct encounter with things in themselves. The absolute self-identity between the illusory ontic world and the true self as the realization of absolute nothingness leads to the self as non-objectifiable nothingness transcending the outer-inner division of self-world, “The ‘outer world’ emerges here as a self-realization of nonobjectifiable nothingness, or, rather, makes itself present such as it is, in oneness with nothingness.”²¹⁰

Nishitani finds such a primordial understanding of personhood in the notion of 'persona' as originally meaning 'mask', a mask behind which is nothing so that person is the mask of nothingness with ontic personal states occurring on the stage of nothingness as its expression. This conception will later be linked to Hodge's interpretation of the Da as requiring the question of the human must be kept open as opposed to the fixed metaphysical understandings of the human it makes possible, thus that self is no-specific-thing and this is the true essence of the human. The horizon for possibility the field of nihility reveals then shows such fixed understandings of the human to be the mask of Da-Sein as the true essence of the human. The connections between these understandings will be addressed more in chapters 2.2 and 2.6 regarding humanism.

The self-identity of reality and illusion, being-sive-nothingness, means that “Person is an appearance with nothing at all behind it to make an appearance.”²¹¹ This nothingness that constitutes the self as its mask is described as wholly other to and the absolute negation of person yet “it is not some ‘thing’ or some entity different from person.”²¹², as an absolute nothingness it is emptied of any objective representation that could lead to a relation of duality between self and non-self. Paralleling the non-substantial substantiality of jitai as reality-sive-illusion “‘Being self in not being self’ means that the being of the self as a personal, conscious, corporeal human and the existence of the self as subject are essentially illusory appearances...put the other way around, it is precisely on the field of Śūnyatā that these phenomena, at one with emptiness, are nothing less than actual reality at an essential level”.²¹³

As personal consciousness the true self is always radically individual, yet as a unity with

²⁰⁷ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 95.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 69.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 73.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 70.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 157.

absolute nothingness the same self is radically impersonal, “self and other, while remaining absolutely two as persons, are at the same time and in there very duality absolutely nondual in their nonhumanity, in their impersonality...This is the standpoint of absolute selfhood, of the true self that is personal-sive-impersonal, impersonal-sive-personal.”²¹⁴ The nature of the personal-sive-impersonal pertains to the connection of the ontology of self to both its ethical ramifications and the opposition of religion and science understood as opposing teleological and mechanistic worldviews; it is principally related to the context of the I-Thou relation rather than the more general relation between self and things. The concern of this chapter is the ontological relation between self, things and world as constituted by nothingness and I find myself agreeing with Heisig that “the I-you relationship in Nishitani is given a place of special importance but does not form part of the paradigm of all of reality. In a word, interpersonal encounter is made the handmaiden of self-awareness, and within it the ‘other’ is viewed as a dimension of no-self.”²¹⁵ Nishitani’s theory of self moves towards the identity of phenomenon and resolving of estrangement between self and world, a facet of this includes the alienation between selves but whilst the I-Thou relation, like MitSein, is constitutive of the self it does not play an integral role within the process of Śūnyatā and within the immediate context of Religion and Nothingness is secondary to the more general relation between phenomena. The relation between selves upon the field of Śūnyatā is grounded by the ontological considerations of this chapter but the implications of the personal-sive-impersonal for the I-Thou relation in terms of ethics and personal freedom will be dealt with later in connection to the overcoming of nihilism and ethics. But it should be noted that this bears on Heidegger’s problematic of reconciling singularity and plurality, a theme that in section 2 will emerge as of vital consequence for the manner of nihilisms self-transformation.

In relation to the identity of mask and nothingness a similar problem to that noted in consideration to jitai in general resurfaces, given the lingering terminology of otherness and negation does Nishitani’s portrayal of this relation escape from the representation of a relative nothingness? Whilst self-identical with the field of consciousness the strenuous denials of true emptiness’s duality or opposition to the egoistic self are occasionally contradicted in the reappearance of divisive language such as “insofar as personality and consciousness can be what they are only in oneness with absolute nothingness, the same complete oneness stands ecstatically outside of personality and consciousness.”²¹⁶ The self in its suchness is self-identical with the subjective self, yet in its role as the ecstatic ground of that aspect still seems portrayed as ‘outside’ and external to it, the same traces of representation in its description that Nishitani criticizes Heidegger for remain equally present and worrying in Religion and Nothingness.

The self-identity of self and nothingness lies in that “Were nothingness to be thought of apart from its mask, it would become an idea. Were we to deal with the mask apart from nothingness, person could not avoid becoming self-centred”²¹⁷, but in describing the self-identity as ecstatically grounded in a unity ‘outside’ or ontologically prior to the unified aspects there is a persistent risk of rendering absolute nothingness into just such an idea. This may be an unavoidable danger inherent within language, as was discussed in chapters 1.1 and 1.2, but it is also a trace that seems to emerge at several points in Nishitani’s work, and these residual dualities and ambiguities increasingly contribute to the persistence of the primacy of the self in the process of disclosure through the dual nature of realization; the sive between manifestation and apprehension is a

²¹⁴ Ibid., 74.

²¹⁵ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 233.

²¹⁶ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 74.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

lurking paradox that seemingly concerns Nishitani less than others whose flaws are cited as necessitating this very paradox. Whilst the appearance of the non-objective mode of being of *jitai* is possibilized by the field of *Śūnyatā* the non-objective mode of the self is more radically related to absolute nothingness as its manifestation, and increasingly emerges as grounding the manifestation of the non-objective in-itself in a similar manner to the pre-nihilism critique of Kantian thought. The re-emergence of a transfigured substance and subject at times seems too reminiscent of a simple restating of the dualistic estrangement *Śūnyatā* moves beyond.

The overcoming of duality cannot be the simple passing from ego to non-ego as this just reinforces their duality in simple negation. The extinction or death of the ego upon the field of nihility that is to explicated in anxiety chapter is the passing of self-awareness from the field upon which the ego is constituted towards an awareness of the simultaneity of ego and non-ego; of reality-sive-illusion. The true self is not just the negation of ego but arises from that existential realization of negation; “It must reach self-awareness as something come from the self’s absolute negation of itself. It is not the case that the self is merely not self (that it is non-ego). It must be the case rather that the self is the self because it is not the self.”²¹⁸, yet is only non-self once realized as such despite such realization being made possible by the primordially of *Śūnyatā*. Non-self is not just the negation of subjective ego but is also the ontological ground of subjectivity as the true self is existentially realized only as the overcoming of the self-confined ego through the experience of non-self. When this experience of the negation of self is realized as self-sive-nonselF rather than as simply self or its negation then the true self as self-identical with absolute nothingness is manifested through this experience. The self-centred egoistic self is negated in the sense that is revealed as illusory, as lacking in self-being, and this negation is “precisely that existential self-awareness wherein the true self is realized as an emergence from the non-ego”²¹⁹. But such self-awareness retains the negated illusory aspect of self in the qualified sense of conventional reality that is not to be seen as dual with the ultimate reality of suchness, person as the mask of absolute nothingness is both real and illusory so that “Man thus comes into being as an absolute nothingness –sive-being rooted elementally in the personal mode of being.”²²⁰. Both aspects of self arise from this relation, but again the ontological priority is given to the process whereby non-self negates the egoistic self; the illusory aspect arises “because all the activities of man become manifest as themselves only in unison with absolute nothingness”²²¹ and in this the self is also radically real, indeed its actions are “the most real of realities because they are nothing other than the manifestation of absolute selfhood.”²²² The ‘most real of realities’ carries here a connotation of the greater ontological stature Nishitani attributes to the self in the process of disclosure. As constituted by the relation of self and non-self this true self is seen as the manifestation of absolute nothingness (*Śūnyatā*) in a seemingly more thorough-going sense than the *jitai* that pertains to entities other than the self-aware subject.

Whilst in reference to *jitai* absolute nothingness enables the true manifestation of the thing-itself in its suchness, in reference to the self the realization of the non-objective self is “self-revelation as the manifestation of absolute nothingness”²²³ in which “nothingness really becomes actualized in the self as the true self.”²²⁴ Realization as both the understanding and actualization means that when the self understands itself as self-

²¹⁸ Ibid., 251.

²¹⁹ Abe, "Nishitani's Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology," 286. Abe, 286

²²⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 71.

²²¹ Ibid., 73.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., 70.

²²⁴ Ibid., 71.

sive-nonsself, as self-identical with absolute nothingness, then the self is “that in which absolute nothingness becomes manifest.”²²⁵ The field of Śūnyatā is that on or through which things appear in their suchness, but it is that which the self in its suchness appears as, Śūnyatā as the self-realization of reality manifests through the personal subject’s realization of their non-subjective nature. Nishitani critiqued Kant for ultimately portraying the object in-itself as still an object for the subject, yet *jitai* as the non-objective in-itself only is in its suchness on the field of Śūnyatā thus for the elemental subjectivity that is Śūnyatā. The mode of being of the in-itself on its homeground was earlier said to be characterized as a form of ‘samadhi’, in relation to the self in-itself Nishitani goes so far to characterize this as King Samadhi; the self amongst *jitai* is the paramount samadhi so that “The point at which the non-objective mode of being of things as they are in themselves takes hold of its ground lies at the homeground of our self”²²⁶. The primacy of subjectivity is negated in the critique of ego, only to be affirmed in terms of elemental subjectivity; and whilst such affirmation-sive-negation is a key principle in Nishitani’s thought to be truly balanced the sive relation between them must also preserve the negation within the subsequent affirmation rather than simply returning to a conditioned form of affirmation (a similar problematic will be addressed in chapter 2.4 concerning the relation between calculative and meditative thought and how such affirmation-sive-negation impacts the relation between the danger and that which saves).

Self-realization as Resolution to the Paradox of Representation

The non-objective knowing of the thing in-itself that was earlier said to be necessary to overcome the paradox of representation is made possible since despite that “things are thoroughly substantial and the self is thoroughly subjective...things and self are not different, but one ‘in itself’”²²⁷. This single in-itself is not meant in the sense of a unification of opposites but a prior nondualistic ontological unity as sketched out in terms of Ereignis in chapters 1.1 and 1.2. The realization of this unity arises with the self’s realization of its own nature so that the real non-subjective self is the self-awareness of emptiness; “True emptiness is nothing less than what reaches awareness in all of us as our own absolute self-nature”²²⁸ once the mutual belonging of Da and Sein is revealed through the nilations of anxiety and epochal nihilism. When elemental subjectivity is realized as the ontological ground of selfhood through the process of self-negation then the self becomes the self-expression Śūnyatā, true selfhood is the mutual realization of both self and reality so that the suchness of non-objective things in themselves is realized through the self in the process of the self coming to true self-awareness of itself, a notion to be later compared to releasement. It is through the real self-realization of elemental subjectivity that “each and every entity that is said to exist becomes manifest: as what it is in itself”²²⁹; the manner in which this is accomplished is to be explicated more fully in section 3 after further consideration of the conditions of its possibility in terms of both world and transitional nihility.

This is the nondual existential and ontological nature of Nishitani’s theory of self. The ontology is not simply a tool of liberation in the service of an existential awakening, nor is the process of existential realization the understanding of an objective antecedent truth. The self-realization that transforms the subject is the manifestation of the ontology of nothingness, and the ontology of nothingness is only manifested in the self-realization that attains to elemental subjectivity. This is what is meant by realization as both understanding and manifestation, that “Absolute nothingness...is not possible as a

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., 165.

²²⁷ Abe, "Nishitani’s Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology," 34.

²²⁸ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 106.

²²⁹ Ibid.

nothingness that is thought but only as a nothingness that is lived.”²³⁰ The realization of self as nothingness, thus the manifestation of nothingness as the suchness of all phenomena, is always an existential experience of the loss of the ego-centred perspective as is to be outlined in anxiety chap. The real self-realization of reality is a broad ontology of self possibilized by the narrower ontology of self that is also its attestation.

Stenson considers this in terms of an ontological psychology that builds upon the Buddhist psychology of Enlightenment, and whilst Nishitani stresses that he is offering an ontology not an empirical psychology (claiming that his use of samadhi is ontological not psychological) he draws his ideas from a tradition with a strong psychological element that remains within his thought. For Stenson the emptied self denotes “a clearing in a dense fog of neurotic egoism...if the fog lifts – if the self is emptied of its egoistic and willful self-centredness – the clearing becomes an illumination (an insight, revelation, conversion, satori) in which...the ‘suchness’ (tathatā) of things appears.”²³¹ An appearance that is accordingly nondual with its realization and not ontologically prior to it as indicated in Nishitani’s denials of material realism. This leads Stenson to conclude that “Heidegger’s poetic image of the ‘authentic’ self as a ‘clearing’, and Nishitani’s Buddhist image of the ‘true’ self as ‘empty’ are psychologically and ontologically related...their analyses of Dasein (their existential psychologies) are mutually supportive and they use them to arrive at compatible ontological conclusions.”²³²

If true self-awareness is the realization of the non-objective mode of jītai through the nonduality of self and things, if “The transfiguration of the world from ‘illusion’ to ‘reality’, is due to a transformation of the self”²³³ then the existential-ontological unity that is denoted by the sive of apprehension-sive-manifestation needs greater clarification to complete the overcoming of the paradox of representation rendered possible by the mutual nothingness of self and things. The coming to awareness of elemental subjectivity is both the condition of possibility for the manifestation of suchness, yet the nonduality of self and emptiness (being-sive-nothingness) that comprises suchness is also presented as required for the realization of elemental subjectivity as the self’s self-identity with absolute nothingness. The paradoxical nature of the sive relation of realization is the core of Nishitani’s thought as encapsulated in the definition of essential religion and leads to both the representative remnants and lingering priority of the self in the ontological constitution of the in-itself upon the field of Sūnyatā, mitigating his critique of the subject-dependence of traditional ontology. This difficulty is echoed in chapter 1.2’s discussion of the priority of the Da-Sein relation and the possibility of its obscurement in nihilism and ensuing self-transformation, once these chapters have laid out the ontological possibility of such changes sections 2+3 deal with the manner in which the forgetting and remembrance respectively are realized.

Two main problems remain in the overcoming of the paradox of representation; the relation of manifestation and apprehension within the self-realization of reality, and the nature of the experience or direct encounter with the absolute nothingness of elemental subjectivity that such realization as the overcoming of the paradox of realization relies on. Phrased differently; how the identity of self and things in their non-objectivity (or mutual samadhi) is constituted as world, and the given that “True nothingness is a living nothingness, and a living nothingness can only be self-attested”²³⁴ then what is the form of this self-attestation? The basis for the answers to such questions are now to be sought in Nishitani’s explication of the mutual gathering of world, before moving onto

²³⁰ Ibid., 70.

²³¹ Stenson, "Beyond Science and Technology to Absolute Emptiness," 132. 2

²³² Ibid., 130.

²³³ Ibid., 134.

²³⁴ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 71.

consideration of how koto as non-knowing thinks the sive of realization and the problematic nature of the self-attestation of nothingness.

1.5 Nishitani's World / Circuminsessional Knowing

The relation of world as the totality of both things and self in Nishitani's thought is a reinterpretation of the Buddhist doctrine of Pratityasamutpada that has been translated into a great variety of English phrases; dependent origination, conditioned co-production, dependent co-origination, origin in dependence, reciprocal dependency, contingent co-arising, interconnectedness and non-obstructed interrelationship. The doctrine is most commonly illuminated through the Hua-Yen school's metaphor of the jewelled net in the palace of the god Indra; a vast net formed by gems that are empty and reflective so that each mirrors the light of all the others, a light with no source external to this mirroring and determined by the gems that reflect it constituting reality itself as this infinite mirroring. Each gem as phenomena is empty of own-being and exists in-itself only as an interplay of reflected appearances, each constituting all the others even as they are constituted by them. Phenomena thus 'are' only in relation to all other phenomena, as the light they mirror in virtue of their empty nature, by reflecting the emptiness of all other phenomena. As interdependent all phenomena are equally themselves and every other, related not by linear causality but as a network of mutual manifestation. The net and light can be seen as relating to the field of sunyata that does not exist apart from the phenomena whose mirroring it possibilizes and yet is constituted by.

Nishitani's explication of the idea remains grounded in the thought represented by this metaphor but expands its explanation in light of the nonduality of the *sive* between empty phenomenon and their mirroring and of his characterization of *jitai* as samadhi-being. Such differences may have prompted Van Bragt's decision to use the theological phrase 'circuminsessional interpenetration' (denoting the relation within the Trinity) for the Japanese 'egoteki kankei' (more literally rendered as 'reciprocal interpenetration'), rather than a completely new or more traditional translation. A number of commentators such as Dallmayr have attributed the "borrowing from Christian theology"²³⁵ directly to Nishitani and then attempted to move the term away from its Christian roots to a more general mystical setting; for example Stenson claims the term "is but a Western name for a mystical principle that is apparent in many traditional cultures. It is the concept of *pars pro toto*: that, in mystical experience, the whole of the sacred is present in every one of its parts."²³⁶ Whilst I believe the theological overtones of the phrase are unhelpful they are also obscure enough for the phrase to be retained for the sake of convenience, the term is somewhat unwieldy but to non-theologians strikes the ear as suitably connotation free to receive its meaning from the *Religion and Nothingness* alone.

Gathering of Jitai

As was said in chapter 1.3's discussion of *jitai* Nishitani calls the in-itself samadhi-being, bringing in elements of both the active role of things in their disclosure (in how they represent themselves rather than just being apprehended representationally) and the connotations of an originally mental term being used as paradigm for disclosure. As meditative practice samadhi is a technique intended to bring an awareness both of the emptiness and interconnectedness of the self whilst remaining immediately engaged with this process as that awareness. Nishitani's extending of the idea builds upon the thought of Dogen; that realization does not emerge as a result of Zen practice but is self-identical with it, in Dogen's terms that enlightenment and *zazen* (Zen meditation) are one and the same. Samadhi accordingly pertains to the realization of reality in both its connotations,

²³⁵ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 217.

²³⁶ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 135.

its understanding and manifestation, the ontological and existential are unified in the process of sunyata as the reflective samadhi of self and all things in the world. The activity of samadhi in Nishitani's altered sense of gathering or settling is the self-positing of a thing as *jitai*, the mode of being of a thing on its homeground that makes possible both its representation and relatedness to others. It is through this "act of *con-centration* by which every being gathers itself within itself – in other words, the 'beingness' of a 'being'"²³⁷ as a non-objective in-itself that non-representational apprehension of the thing in-itself is possible through the relational aspect Nishitani gives to samadhi, that gathering is also a mirroring and that in gathering itself a phenomena is also a gathering of all other things.

In the mode of samadhi-being a thing gathers itself into its own centre and this is both the possibility of and possibilized by the gathering of all things into a world. The gathering of a thing in *jitai* is self-identical with the gathering of world, the claim that "where each thing in itself is concentrated in itself, all things of necessity concentrate themselves into one"²³⁸ provides the framework for Nishitani's resolution to the paradox of representation through the mutual self-realization of self and things in the coming to awareness of reality. In the mode of being of *jitai* as the positing of self-identity through samadhi "That a thing *is* means that it is absolutely unique"²³⁹; the being of a being resides in its uniqueness as an in-itself as absolute centre, but as such non-substantial substantiality the thing in-itself is only an absolute centre in a relation of identity with all other absolute centres. That all things are equally absolute in this sense means a things unique self-identity also constitutes the totality of circuminsessional relations that comprise the world so that "wherever a thing *is*, the world *worlds*."²⁴⁰ The circuminsessional form of the relation of self-identity that comprises world requires that which is so related to be constituted as being-*sive*-nothingness; the condition of possibility for this mutual realization that resolves the dilemmas of the field of consciousness is the "self in itself: a self that is not itself in being itself, a self that is not a self"²⁴¹ that was explicated in the previous chapters. The self-positing of a thing for itself and in itself was first introduced to break the dependence of phenomena on the representations of the subject stemming from the self-centred mode of being on the field of consciousness. Such gathering is portrayed in a manner that can be seen as a radical form of self-centredness, a turning of each in-itself into an absolute centre through its gathering as a centring of itself upon its homeground. This settling is said not to be the simple self-centredness of the field of consciousness, it is a non-self-centred self-centredness that does not exclude or remain confined from other such centres comprising a unity that preserves radical differentiation.

The necessity of retaining differentiation as opposed to the uniformity of phenomena that Nishitani likens to the 'absolute One' "conceived of in terms of a negation of the multiplicity and differentiation of existing things as deceptive and illusory appearances"²⁴² is because upon the field of sunyata illusory appearance is suchness as a re-affirmation of illusory appearance through the negation of nihlity. Such uniform unity begins from, and remains upon, the field of reason and is thus metaphysical in the Heideggerian sense as beings remain self-enclosed and are only unified through "returning to the unity of an absolute One that is, in turn, itself a being."²⁴³ Such reductive uniformity cannot account for, or escape from, the egoistic self-identity of phenomena and by treating the non-differentiated as an abstract being, understanding Being in terms

²³⁷ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 122.

²³⁸ Ibid., 164.

²³⁹ Ibid., 147.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 164.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 165.

²⁴² Ibid., 143.

²⁴³ Ibid., 145.

of a unifying highest being, falls into the same difficulties of traditional substance views in forgetting the ontological difference. Nishitani claims this form of uniformity is rendered impossible once the field of nihility is passed through on the way to realization of sunyata. Nihility is here portrayed as a field of isolation that disperses the unity that grounds the meaning of beings through the nullification of the meaningful relations of conventional understanding. In indicating that only “when a thing has lost any point to be reduced to, only when it has nothing more to rely on, can it be thrown back upon itself”²⁴⁴, nihility is reminiscent of a universal interpretation of Heideggerian death. The individualization of ownmost being in nihility that in *Being and Time* was characteristic of *Dasein* as the only being that faces death applies here to all beings, for in Nishitani’s ontology every being’s being is at issue for that being in virtue of its samadhi-being. Nullification here seems to have a twofold sense that did not emerge earlier. Nihility moves toward the overcoming of the estrangement of subject and object by gathering the self and all things in the world into ‘a single question mark’ that seems akin to the ‘absolute One’ as a uniform meaninglessness that does not differentiate between the subject and object, between what *Dasein* is anxious for and in the face of. Yet this shared absence of meaning retains an element of self-enclosure in which “all things appear isolated from one another by an abyss. Each thing has its being as a one-and-only, a solitariness absolutely shut up within itself. We call such a state of absolute self-enclosure ‘nihilistic’.”²⁴⁵ Deprived of meaning phenomena cannot relate themselves to each other and are experienced as radically differentiated even whilst the meaning that could differentiate them is nullified. Such a paradoxical union of multiplicity and non-differentiation would seem to bring nihility closer than ever to the characterization of sunyata, even for a transitional stage.

Gathering of World

The circuminsessional relation of the field of sunyata moves beyond the radical differentiation or isolation of nihility without thereby returning to notion of simple uniformity (given how he formulated previous considerations of jítai Nishitani could have phrased such as ‘non-uniform uniformity’). Each thing as centred is the unity that also gathers whilst being gathered, “Each and every thing becomes the centre of all things and, in that sense, becomes an absolute centre”²⁴⁶. The gathering of absolute centres into one that preserves the uniqueness of each is likened by Nishitani to a relation of mutual servitude that seems paradoxical, in which “all things are master and servant to one another”²⁴⁷, simultaneously in a relation of both mastery and servitude to all other phenomenon so “that a thing is – its absolute autonomy – comes about only in unison with a subordination of all other things”²⁴⁸, yet paradoxically at the same time this autonomy is constituted by subordination to all other things. The characterization of the circuminsessional relation in terms of a master-servant relation brings both a personalized element to the non-sentient things within the network of world and emphasizes how as an existential realization the relationship grounds the later ethics of compassion. The relation of master and servant implies a duty to others (whether selves or things) and carries a sense of solicitude as entailing that the autonomy of elemental subjectivity arises through subordination to others in the I-Thou relationship. Dallmayr finds that “This linkage of selfness or autonomy and openness to otherness or difference is at the heart of the standpoint of sunyata”²⁴⁹, and the relation of this responsibility to the axiological nature of sunyata is to be addressed in chapter 2.6. The ethical elements of existential self-

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 146.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 148.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 218.

emptying in this relation (its interpersonal context as the I-Thou relation and MitSein) will be returned to in chapter 3.5, what is of concern now is the form of the ontological aspect of self-emptying and the manner in which this constitutes the mutual realization of phenomenon in general.

That a thing is a servant means “it lies at the ground of all other things, that it is a constitutive element in the being of every other thing”²⁵⁰, in making the other being what it is in-itself it upholds that being as its servant and thus “possesses no substantiality in the ordinary sense, that it is a non-self-nature”²⁵¹. In upholding others in servitude it empties itself of its own self-nature so that other things can attain their self-nature, yet at the same time all other things empty themselves so that they may uphold that thing as their master; the self-emptying that constitutes a thing on its homeground occurs in unison with the self-emptying of all other things. Abe elucidates this as meaning that within the multiplicity of absolute centres “self-centredness realized at the standpoint of sunyata is a selfless self-centredness in which the self and other are completely non-dual within the nexus of reciprocal interpenetration, and thus the self-centredness and other-centredness are dynamically one”²⁵²; through a dynamic of self-emptying. That all phenomena are master-sive-servant is related to the simultaneous affirmation and negation of their nature as both real and illusory. Affirmation-sive-negation correlates to the being-sive-nothingness of jitai ; the relation of affirmation and negation within the self-identity of reality and illusion of the thing in-itself pertains also to its interrelation as world so that each phenomena is affirmed (negating all others) and also negated (affirming all others). Unno characterizes such negation and affirmation both within and between the jitai as “the basis of the relationship between master and servant”²⁵³ and the manner in which they are related as self-identical to both prevent uniformity yet allow for the direct encounter required for the overcoming of the paradox of representation.

That on its homeground a thing in-itself in its suchness is not itself, that all things are themselves in not being themselves, means that as non-self they are surrendering their self-identity in servitude and also being constituted in their self-identity by the servitude of what they are not so that “the totality of things in the world, and also the world itself...are in their phantomness-sive-suchness by virtue of the circuminsessional interpenetration whereby all are in each”²⁵⁴. Whilst the mutual dependency of the circuminsessional relationship is possibilized by the non-self nature of jitai the circuminsessional relation is also what makes non-self possible. Non-self (lack of own being) arises due to a things being upheld by all else upon its homeground, which arises due to non-self; they are equiprimordial as constituted in mutual realization. Because of this sunyata is characterized as a twofold field through which “all things as they are in themselves gather themselves together into one: the field of the possibility of the world” and also “a given thing gathers itself together: the field of the possibility of the existence of things.”²⁵⁵ These two gatherings or samadhi’s of self-sive-other as world and being-sive-nothingness as jitai are self-identical; jitai , circuminsession, being-sive-nothingness, all are differing phrases for the same ontological process of the real self-realization of reality as self-emptying, they differ only in the emphasis they give to aspects of this process.

This mutual gathering of all things to one’s own homeground and being gathered

²⁵⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 148.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Maseo Abe, "Nishitani's Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology," in *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, ed. T. Unno (Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 286.

²⁵³ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 317.

²⁵⁴ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 162.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 150.

by all things to their own homeground is termed the worlding of the world. The mutual constitution of jitai and circuminsessional world “means that in the being of things, the world worlds, and that things are in the world”²⁵⁶, all things gather themselves into themselves yet also through this gather all things into the world; through the gathering of the thing (thinging of the thing) there is the gathering of things into world (the worlding of the world). That the claim “being is only being in unison with emptiness belongs in its fullest and most proper sense to the point of view that speaks of the ‘substance’ of things”²⁵⁷ with jitai as non-substantial substantiality as this mode of being, is joined with the claim that “The being of things in themselves is essentially circuminsessional. This is what we mean by speaking of beings as ‘being that is in unison with emptiness’”²⁵⁸ entails the mutual mirroring of thing and world in line with Stenson’s starting characterization of circuminsession as a mystical principle. Nishitani’s assertion that “the very tiniest thing, to the extent that it ‘is’, displays in its act of being the whole web of circuminsessional interpenetration that links all things together. In its being...the world ‘worlds’”²⁵⁹ leads Kasulis to attribute to him the belief “that each thing in the universe is equally and fully expressive of the most profound spiritual truth”²⁶⁰ as through each things self-emptying (that Kasulis terms kenosis) into world it is world. Although this would seem perfectly consonant with Nishitani’s phrasing it will soon emerge as problematic in light of some of his other claims, and the difference between Kasulis’ and Abe’s take on these claims is to be addressed in chapter 2.6.

For now this can be seen as clarifying the issue of difference and negation that Gilkey raises in relation to jitai . That a thing on its homeground must also be at the homeground of all else entails negation through the subordination of the self in the master-servant circuminsessional relation. This can be seen as a reformulation of Nishitani’s claim (at the start of chapter 1.3) that death and life manifest equally in each moment; the self-negation of death that disperses the self to the homeground of others is non-dual with the settling of jitao on its on homeground. As self-emptying each phenomenon negates itself and through this is affirmed by the self-negation of others “that a thing is not itself means that, while continuing to be itself, it is in the home-ground of everything else... That a thing is itself means that all other things, while continuing to be themselves, are in the home-ground of that thing”²⁶¹. The non-objective mode of being, the non-self of jitai requires interpenetration with all other such non-objective in-themselves, and this mutual gathering or mirroring through self-emptying is the mode of being of things in the world, it is how a world is gathered. The circuminsessional relation is a reformulation of the traditional reciprocal interrelation doctrine in terms of self-emptying as a process of the manifestation of beings. The gathering of all things into a world mirrors the gathering of a thing in itself, each thing empties itself in service to the gathering of others and this is how it gathers itself as self-emptying upon its own homeground upon the field of sunyata. The paradox of representation is overcome through a further paradox of mutual realization in which “The centre is both nowhere and everywhere; it is everywhere because it is nowhere.”²⁶²

This step further towards the resolution of the paradox of representation comes with the extending of gathering to include the relation of world; the necessity of jitai is explicated through its relation to what it renders possible. This gathering through self-emptying in the form of the master-servant relation also clarifies elemental subjectivity;

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 125.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 149.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 150.

²⁶⁰ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 268.

²⁶¹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 149.

²⁶² Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 65.

“To the extent that the being of the self is present in the homeground of all other things, the self is not the self... This is elemental self-awareness.”²⁶³ The self’s self-identity with emptiness that provides the direct encounter with the nothingness (or non-self-nature) of things to attain direct non-objective knowledge of them takes the form of mutual constitution through circuminsessional interpenetration that (in line with the meaning of ‘elemental’ as root-source) also gives rise to the conventional egoistic self. Because of this giving rise to the disclosures of the field of consciousness Nishitani characterizes circuminsessional interpenetration as the most essential of all relationships that enables all later ontic or metaphysical understandings of world, the fundamental interrelation of things through mutual self-emptying that gathers each thing and world is the ontological pre-condition for any view of the world as a meaningful totality. Such gathering is only possible “on a field of emptiness where being is seen as being-sive-nothingness, nothingness-sive-being, where the reality of beings at the same time bears the stamp of illusion”²⁶⁴; the meaningfulness of world through circuminsessional realization is made possible through the nothingness (non-self) aspect of the process of sunyata as the self-realization of reality as and through self-emptying. Ontological nothingness is thus the precondition for the manifestation of the relations that render a world meaningful by enabling the interpenetration of gathering.

The Precedence of Self

No sooner does Nishitani outline this radical mutual subordination that renders everything equal yet absolutely itself in the process of manifesting meaningful world than he seems to take a backwards step and attribute ontological priority to the self in-itself, even whilst consistently reasserting ontological equivalency in the circuminsessional relationship. For Nishitani sunyata denotes the self-realization of reality through the mutual gathering of jítai and world, but as was discussed last chapter there is a sense in which sunyata is also that which the self manifests as even whilst things appear on or through sunyata leading to the self being termed the paramount samadhi. This ambivalence now blossoms fully in his claim that “The field of sunyata within which the world and things become possible opens up at the home-ground of the self as a self that is truly on the home-ground of the self itself, that is, the original self in itself. As a field of ‘possibility’, the home-ground of the self in the self precedes the world and things.”²⁶⁵, in an ontological not chronological sense, so that “The self has its home-ground at a point disengaged from the world and things”²⁶⁶. Nishitani’s criticizes European existentialism for retaining an ecstatic ground of nothingness that is thus still a represented relative nothingness, but the absolute nothingness that is elemental subjectivity here also seems to transcend the world and remain an objectified self that receives its autonomy from its self-constitution apart from the world rather than through its equiprimordial circuminsessional subordination within it. Nishitani stresses that it is not the self but the home-ground of the self; non-self, the absolute nothingness that gives rise to person as mask yet does not exist apart from this mask, that is the ontological prior ground to world and things. It was through this non-objective non-self that the paradox of representation was to be overcome and the duality of subject and object, self and world, reconciled through return to their primordial unity through direct encounter with the absolute emptiness of self-emptying that constitutes the homeground of all things. Yet within the circuminsessional relation that was to provide for the possibility of such unity, the knowing as non-knowing of the non-objective in-itself, an element of duality returns whose nature seems more integral to Nishitani’s thought than previous invocations of metaphysical analogy or lingering traces

²⁶³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 158.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 147.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 151.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 152.

of representative emptiness through the difficulties of expressing a non-representative absolute nothingness; such traces can now be seen as deriving from the prioritized role of the self-awareness in realization. Although repeatedly conditioned by denials of priority and reassurances of total mutual ontological dependence his comments on the nature of the self in circuminsessional worlding are clearly dualistic in thought not just presentation.

Nishitani has already said the world ‘worlds’ in the homeground of even the tiniest thing, but seems to go further to claim that the very possibility for this worlding (and thus of all things) rests only in the home-ground of the self as non-self, that the mutual gathering is made possible by “the self of each man as at bottom preceding the world and things.”²⁶⁷ But even as elemental subjectivity he states we remain ‘things’ in the world and in not being the self “on the field of sunyata the selfness of the self has its being in the home-ground of all other things”²⁶⁸, and this is what is said to render impossible the self-centredness of ego as “the absolute negation of that very self-centredness enables the field of sunyata to open up in the first place”²⁶⁹. ‘To be’ elemental subjectivity that precedes world and things requires that all things in the world already be gathered at the homeground of the self that precedes world and things. This seems to be a problematic facet of the paradox that is circuminsessional interpenetration; the ontological priority of the homeground of the self lies in its opening the field of sunyata and possibilizing the manifestation of world and things, but what renders impossible self-centredness (i.e the field of sunyata) is portrayed as requiring the rendering impossible of self-centredness.

Nishitani begins from ontological equivalency in the circuminsessional relationship to asserting an ontological priority of the homeground of the self, then reasserts that the home-ground of the self is at the homeground of all other things in a relation of equivallancy; “so far as our self is at the home-ground of all things, that is, on the field of sunyata, all things are also at the home-ground of the self”²⁷⁰ requiring the field of sunyata already be opened up by the self’s self-realization, before again reversing to re-emphasize the ontological priority of self. This priority seems more far-reaching than the usual master-servant circuminsessional relation as the homeground of the self is providing the possibility for this relation in a way that the homeground of all other things do not provide for the homeground of the self, and yet Nishitani also maintains that the homeground of the self is opened up by something that it is the ontological precondition for. The intended paradox of the circuminsessional relation seems to shelter and rely on a further paradox that is not quite reconcilable with that relation as the resolution to the previous paradox of representation. The circuminsessional relation is intended to account for the non-objective knowledge of the non-objective thing in itself by explaining the ontologically prior unity of non-self and *jitai* through mutual self-emptying, a role that is rendered problematic by reassertions of the ontological priority of the self.

The relation of apprehension and manifestation within realization is admittedly paradoxical through the sive formulation and it might be argued that as the priority of the self and its disengagement from things and world are accompanied by denials of the very same that Nishitani is simply remaining true to the circuminsessional paradox of the master and servant. But the ontological priority given to the self seems to be of a different nature to the priority at work within the circuminsessional relation, and the estrangement of the self from the world lacks a correlative estrangement of things from self beyond the already discussed post-nihilism preservation of radical multiplicity. The division of the subjective self and objective thing that resulted in the paradox of representation seems

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 159.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 158.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

replaced by a no less divisive paradox of the relation between the homeground of non-self and non-objective thing in-itself; and despite Nishitani's ambiguous relation to reason as previously discussed his viewing of some paradoxes as problematic and others as indicative of reality remains troublingly inconsistent. The illusory self of egoistic self-consciousness is brought into identity with the illusory appearances of the thing in-itself but only through taking a step back into a similar problematic. As stated in chapter 1.4 the impossibility of reaching the true self through such retreats to a prior horizon is a traditional tenet of Buddhist practice, and in the movement to elemental subjectivity Nishitani seems to attempt just such a regression and so retain traces of relative nihility in sunyata as the ultimate horizon of disclosure.

Time

The ontological precedence of elemental subjectivity is attributed to and elucidated by the relation of the self and time. The self 'as self' is said to lie radically in time, and as 'not a self' (emptiness) be "ecstatically outside of time"²⁷¹, thus have the ontological precedence required to ground the gathering of world as a temporal system. The first element is characterized by our relation to the samsaric cycle; "On our own home-ground...we live and die birth-and-death. We do not simply live in time: we live time. From one moment in time to the next we are making time to be time"²⁷², thus would seem to be a correlate understanding with Heidegger's notion of the temporality of Dasein as the unity of the ecstases, of death as the end of Dasein shadowing every moment and all actions relying on the retrieval of the thrown situation of our birth. However, the first element is self-identical with the second, to live as temporality "means to stand ecstatically outside of time and outside of that cycle. It means to precede the world and things"²⁷³ and to be this self-identity of inside and outside of time is for us to be on our homeground outside the world with nothing to rely on thus absolutely free. The identity of these understandings of time leads to the same paradox noted above in relation to the circuminsessional relation being preceding by what it makes possible.

Moreover, the self's precedence is said to come from its ecstatic transcendence of time, not only is this one of the most explicit statements of the estrangement of self and world but the circuminsessional relation of world is also portrayed as similarly ecstatic. The essence of time on its homeground is characterized in line with the circuminsessional relation of world that requires reality-sive-illusion in a parallel manner to the homeground of the thing in-itself; "all time enters into each moment of time passing from one moment to the next. In this circuminsessional interpenetration of time...the whole of time is phantom like...But in spite of this...each time, in its very actuality, is the suchness of this time or that time."²⁷⁴ The simultaneity of each moment in time brings the relation of moments into correlation with the relation of phenomena within world, and it is this circuminsessional relation of world that grounds illusory samsaric time by opening up the present moment through the interpenetration with all other moments. This simultaneity of time is again portrayed along similar lines to Heidegger's notion of temporality in *Being and Time*, that each moment is opened by the unity of the three ecstases allowing us to encounter the past through retrieval and the future through projection within the present moment. Circuminsessional interpenetration constitutes both the spatial and temporal being of things in the "elemental relativity of existence"²⁷⁵, through incorporating the element of possibility the world that is gathered by interrelation also interpenetrates with all possible worlds. Not only is the entire world reflected in one facet

²⁷¹ Ibid., 159.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 160.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 161.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 162.

of the mirrored net but all conceivable worlds are also so reflected, in itself within the circuminsessional totality of world a thing contains at its homeground all possible manifestations of meaning without thereby “ceasing to be the real world that it is of itself.”²⁷⁶ The world that is preceded by the self through the self’s ecstatic transcendence of time would also seem ecstatic in the same sense through the interpenetration of all times and possibilities within the circuminsessional gathering of world. If the world derives this ecstatic nature from self-identity with the elemental self that precedes it then the claiming of the self’s ecstatic transcendence of time is a restating of its priority not the explanation for it, such transcending of the unity of world is what the relation to time is meant to explain and cannot be used to explain the essence of time itself.

The ecstatic transcendence of the self outside of time as leading to the precedence of the self is later restated in stronger terms in discussion of King Samadhi as the temporal Existenz of dropped-off body and mind. Here the master servant relation is made one-sided; it is the realization of the self in King Samadhi through which “Each and every thing, in being in itself on its own home-ground (dharma-like) is originally preserved by...a master who has risen to a position of self-awareness in his own domain of boundless emptiness.”²⁷⁷ The kingliness of King Samadhi is metaphorically attributed to the awareness in Existenz that actualizes the field of sunyata and “whose position as sovereign is inconceivable without a land for him to rule over...a domain initially opened up and kept open by virtue of that power, for which his position as monarch is a sort of self-realization...Only Existenz in King Samadhi throws open the field of emptiness existentially while at the same time taking a stand on that field”²⁷⁸. The self as paramount samadhi that precedes the world is attributed to the true self as the existential realization of nothingness that opens the field of sunyata as the homeground of the self; whilst the samadhi of jitai is required to constitute the self it does not attain to mastery over King Samadhi in virtue of lacking a lived existence thus subverts the previous characterization of the master-servant relation.

Sunyata for Nishitani is not the field for the manifestation of reality, nor its apprehension, but the self-identity of these as the self-realization of reality; the sive of realization renders sunyata both ontological and existential leading to the precedence of the self as that which sunyata is realized as yet jitai is realized through. Waldenfels locates the priority of the self “in that man is the being in which, by reason of his self-consciousness, the ‘fact’ of the transitoriness of all being becomes a ‘problem’ to be solved”²⁷⁹, and that this problem is the meaning of our existence; that through us nihilism or samsara is realized as us, and thus enlightenment and nirvana also. The self “is a being united with emptiness in a self-awareness according to which emptiness is self...by virtue of that self-awareness, which is nearer to the elemental than anything else, it precedes the world and all things”²⁸⁰. That the self-awareness of the true self is more elemental than the thing in-itself upon the field of sunyata is because “Dasein, when it emerges into its nature from non-ego, is the realization of this field”²⁸¹ its ontological precedence stems from that it is uniquely self-aware of the process of sunyata as the essence of the self is such awareness. But this non-self (elemental self-awareness) as condition for possibility of world is self-identical with the self as a thing/phenomena amongst others, thus itself dependent upon that world. The relation of temporality to the self and world does not seem to clarify or explain the issue as Nishitani intends, at most remaining a restating of

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 192.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Abe Noth pg109

²⁸⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 165.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 264.

the precedence of the self in terms of the same paradox and estrangement whilst the denial of existence separate from its realization through apprehension, makes things radically dependent on the self in more thoroughgoing sense than the subject dependence of the field of consciousness. The relation of the precedence of elemental subjectivity in relation to awareness and the axiological implications of this will be returned to in chapter 2.6.

Knowing of Non-Knowing

At the end of the chapter 1.4 it was said two problems remained for the overcoming of the paradox of representation; the manner in which manifestation and apprehension are related in the self-realization of reality (the identity of self and things as non-objective), and the nature of the direct experience with the nothingness of elemental subjectivity that attests to the ontology of nothingness. The *sive* of realization has been elucidated as made possible through the circuminsessional relation of world that is self-identical with the gathering of *jitai*, but in so elucidating has only increased the ontological precedence of the self raising the issue of whether Nishitani so sharply distinguishes self from other phenomena as their ground that a new dichotomy emerges leaving the estrangement of self and world of the field of consciousness fundamentally in place. In prioritizing the self yet retaining its dependence upon the world Nishitani renders problematic how experience of such elemental self-awareness comes to pass if it relies upon what it precedes for its possibility. This was touched on in relation to Heidegger in chapter 1.2 and his thought shall soon be turned to clarify this issue, but first the knowing of non-knowing that is made possible by the circuminsessional relation and yet also seen as necessary for it and is to replace the representation of the field of consciousness must be further explicated.

In relation to his circuminsessional understanding of world as *sunyata* Nishitani remarks that “The question will no doubt arise as to whether this is possible, and if so, how”²⁸²; how is suchness and ‘in emptiness’ possible. Formulating the problem in terms of his Zen predecessors he asks; “What mode of being renders it possible for all things to come forth and practice and confirm the self...What does it mean that hills and rivers, the earth, plants and trees, tiles and stones, all constitute the original part of the self, that they have all arisen out of the realm of that original part?”²⁸³ Stressing the possibility for his position in terms of what it means or entails Nishitani sets forth an ontology in terms of the conditions of possibility for the meaning of the identity of Being and Nothingness. In addressing the possibility of his position Nishitani clarifies and explains it more thoroughly rather than laying out more conventional arguments for its necessity, but such positions may be self-validating and contain within themselves their own criteria for necessity so that explanation and justification are not so easily divided. The ambiguity in the relation of necessity and possibility regarding how he justifies his position, and whether justification is appropriate in this context, is to be returned to in chapter 2.6.

The formulation of the question of the possibility of the circuminsessional understanding of world in terms of the confirmation of the self indicates the precedence of elemental subjectivity as at the heart of the issue of the possibility of the field of *sunyata*; the possibility of *sunyata* lays in the realization of the elemental subjectivity that *is* as *sunyata* so that such possibility relies upon the necessity of *sunyata* itself. Such necessity stems from trying to describe the mode of beings on own homeground (in themselves) and resolving the question of nihility; it is a necessity stemming from an experience that requires and inaugurates the process of *sunyata*'s self-realization. Nishitani's ontology is not purely ontological but incorporates existential themes, notions of normative value and ethical injunction that complicate the issue of *sunyata*'s necessity.

²⁸² Ibid., 107.

²⁸³ Ibid., 108.

Whilst nihility is the experience of the necessity of sunyata; how its need and the beginning of the self-realization of reality is encountered, the confirmation of the self by all things is the experiential attestation of the culmination of such self-realization. It is how sunyata is known in experience and this manner of circuminsessional knowing that attests to the possibility of sunyata must be considered before moving on to the experiences of nihility and nihilism.

The 'knowing of non-knowing' that is the precondition for the objective knowledge of the field of consciousness occurs through the interpenetration of the homegrounds of self and things as world, through the mutual manifestation of the emanations of things in-themselves and of persona understood in terms of the mask of absolute nothingness. Only when the knower and known are both an 'absolutely non-objective self-in-itself' constituted through the circuminsessional relation can the objective knowledge and dualities of the field of consciousness be surpassed to realize the suchness of both as the real self-realization of reality. On the homeground of the self as elemental awareness, prior to consciousness and nullification, the knowing of non-knowing as "an elemental and truly original intellection comes about...that arises at the very point at which 'all things advance to confirm the self' or that 'hills and rivers, the earth, plants and trees, tiles and stones, all these are the self's original part'." ²⁸⁴ Such confirmation is the self-identity of the true self and all other *jitai* in their suchness, the 'original countenance' of elemental subjectivity that precedes the world and is confirmed by it in its paradoxical self-identity with world that is both equiprimordial and subsequent to such subjectivity.

Nishitani says of such non-knowing that in it 'knowledge and praxis are one', the ontological and existential are joined in self-identity, and that here the fields of consciousness and nihility are grounded by the field of sunyata with which they are self-identical and does not exist other than as their objectivity and negation. The real self-realization of reality that is revealed in the knowing of non-knowing emerges through the realization of the true self in the awareness of that knowing, both preceding and constituted with what is thereby revealed as the progression through the fields of awareness to their identity. As was stressed at the beginning of the consideration of sunyata this is a unitary process in which *jitai*, circuminsession and non-knowing can only be divided on the level of conventional thought and the self-realization of reality is unity of these aspects.

The *sive* of realization indicates this unity; that "To know things such as they are is to restore things to their own home-ground...The identity of 'being' and 'knowing' is more primal than traditional metaphysics has taken it to be." ²⁸⁵ This identity of being and knowing indicates the precedence of awareness in the manifestation of things as the presencing of world. The mutual dependence of reality and awareness is a radicalization of subject dependence as existence itself becomes dependent upon elemental subjectivity rather than only the phenomenal appearance of such existence; if Being and Knowledge are the Same then to be is to be known in the manner of non-knowing as circuminsessional presencing.

Due to this unity of Being and Knowledge Unno finds sunyata most essentially explicated in terms of koto as the description of the process of knowing of non-knowing. As how the suchness of a phenomena manifests in the mind of one who is aware of the phenomena in its suchness to apprehend the koto is to apprehend reality 'in itself', as it is in its suchness. The paradox of representation is overcome through an existential epistemology wherein awareness is joined with a sense of the real manifesting within our

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 110.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 162.

awareness in such a way as to transform both ourselves and that of which we become aware. Within this appropriative apprehension the reality of *jitai* is affirmed in the transformation of awareness so that “Each of these realities realizes itself through my awareness, and my awareness is deepened and expanded through each reality thus realized”²⁸⁶.

Unno explicates this identity through the theory of emptiness from the original *Prajñāpāramitā* literature as having both epistemological and ontological aspects “The first aspect is that of *prajñā* or transcendental knowing, and the second is that of *Śūnyatā* or emptiness”²⁸⁷. Prajna “contains the contradictory opposites : non-knowing and true knowing which work together. Epistemologically, this is what Nishitani calls the ‘knowing of non-knowing’”²⁸⁸ that is the negation of (subject-object cognition) joined with the apprehension of the in-itself. Sunyata “is also constituted of contradictory opposites : no-thing and thing-as-it-is, whether called thatness or suchness”²⁸⁹, the joining of the relative emptiness of no-self with the absolute emptiness of suchness. Both aspects are combined by Nishitani into his own notion of sunyata, the epistemological and ontological division is one of convenience and both “the knowing of non-knowing and the substantiality of non-substantiality characterize the ‘in-itself’ of each reality, the self-realization of things non-objectively in the field of emptiness”²⁹⁰. I have been characterizing sunyata as both existential and ontological, Unno’s characterization of sunyata as epistemological-ontological is a variation of this in which the real self-realization of reality means that the manifestation (realization) of a being is not separate from true understanding (realization) of that being. Since such knowing (the prajna aspect) occurs through transformations in self-awareness and is thus realized as and through existential anxiety its terming as existential rather than epistemological seems more apt, but this represents a variation in emphasis of presentation rather than thought.

This identity within koto as the attestation and form of circuminsessional knowing thus mutual realization is now to be considered as the conclusion of Nishitani’s ontology of nothingness. Such knowing is counterposed to the objectivity of ‘modern science’ as certainty in coherence with objective reality, but the theme of such certainty and coherence is soon to be seen as emerging also within the thought of Nishitani.

Koto

Koto is first indicated obliquely through Nishitani’s invocation of the poet Bashō on learning of the bamboo from the bamboo; that “The Japanese word for ‘learn’ (*narau*) carries the sense of ‘taking after’ something, of making an effort to stand essentially in the same mode of being as the thing one wishes to learn about.”²⁹¹ Such an attuning of oneself to the suchness of what is to be known indicates that the knowing of non-knowing involves an existential conversion of self-awareness that constitutes realization as manifestation-sive-apprehension. This is the transfigured sense of compliance between subjects and objects, a compliance not of theoretical knowledge but of ‘knowing by becoming’, an existential compliance whereby on the field of sunyata the self in-itself brings itself to stand in the mode of being whereby what is to be known (thus realized) manifests in its suchness.

Nishitani finds this reinforced in the literal sense of understanding as ‘obtaining the mind of’, “the ‘meaning’ of a given koto (a term signifying either ‘matter’ or ‘affair’,

²⁸⁶ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 311.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 313.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 314.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 315.

²⁹¹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 128.

as well as ‘word’) can also be called its ‘mind’, or kokoro. In solving a riddle, for instance, we say that we have ‘obtained its mind’ when we have understood what it means.”²⁹² To understand or know something is for that koto (matter) to be appropriated at the homeground of the self and for the self to be appropriated at the homeground of what is thus understood. Understanding or apprehending in the context of the knowing of non-knowing is a mutual mirroring of the knower and known in terms of the circuminsessional relation in which the non-objective self and non-objective in-itself attain to one another in mutual realization, “the obtaining of mind (understanding) is aboriginal as the sort of realization wherein a koto takes possession of us and transfers into us, even as we in turn really transfer over into the koto”²⁹³. The paradox of representation is overcome in the identity of understanding and manifestation in realization as the correspondence of subjects and objects is replaced with the notion that in the process of being-sive-nothingness the projection of ‘appearance’ is self-identical with ‘suchness’ so that in apprehending the appearance (being) of a thing the manifestation of its suchness (emptiness) also occurs as an aspect of the process that is self-identical with the self. In other words there is direct encounter between the knower and known as both are constituted by their mutual manifestation in the process of realization as appropriative worlding.

Nishitani denies that the fact “our self is at bottom prior to the world and things, and therein lies the root of the possibility of the world and the existence of things”²⁹⁴ is Kantian (the compliance of subject to object) as it is prior to the division between the phenomenal and the noumenal as the manifestation of things as jitai (in themselves) “rests in our own homeground: on the field of sunyata”²⁹⁵ and in their noumenal suchness are self-identical with their phenomenal appearance. The relation of the true self to the thing in-itself no longer operates within this understanding of knowledge as cognition of objects but from a relation of mutual appropriation through the self-identity of homegrounds. True emptiness is both the awareness of elemental subjectivity and the manifestation of the suchness of entities, the real self-realization of reality is the identity of the realization of the true self and the disclosure of beings as they really are. Both facets are disclosed in koto as the knowing of non-knowing as non-objective knowledge of the non-objective in-itself, revealing the self-identity of emptiness and form, of the noumenal and phenomenal. Such non-knowing as the mutual manifestation of knowing and known is none other than conventional knowledge yet also grounds such knowledge so “that the standpoint of emptiness unites what is dichotomized in ordinary consciousness”²⁹⁶, the reality-sive-illusion that speaks the unity of the fields of awareness. An element of the rational subject remains in elemental subjectivity through Nishitani’s understanding of essential reason as the union of the seer and seen; and it is as the manifestation of this “‘oneness of minds and things’ that Buddhism calls emptiness”²⁹⁷ that such subjectivity retains precedence as the non-discriminating knowledge that allows manifestation of suchness.

Non-knowing as circuminsessional is the “gathering together and concentration on a single point of the light of all things...a reverting to the point where things themselves are all gathered into one.”²⁹⁸ Such an identity arises through the replacement of the light of reason with that of the natural light of the emanation of the in-itself that in chapter 1.3 was said to invoke a notion of causality and estrangement ill at ease with the core aim of Nishitani’s thought. The Kantian element of compliance that is repudiated here makes a

²⁹² Ibid., 178.

²⁹³ Ibid., 179.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 163.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 222.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 231.

²⁹⁸ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 140.

mitigated return in that the essential reality of suchness, the ‘mind’ of the ‘matter’ to be obtained, is directly experienced (albeit in a non-representative manner) and the knowing of non-knowing is in this way a compliance of the knower to the self-positing on the in-itself upon its homeground. The subject-object framework of the paradox of representation in Kantian thought is surpassed but in so doing is transfigured into the convergence of knowledge with suchness; knowledge is not compliance to object nor subject but to the mirrored light that is the gathering of world in such a manner as to enable such presencing.

Whilst this seems to shift emphasis from subjective reason the gathering of world has already been seen as originating from the elemental subjectivity that precedes it. The mutual compliance of knower and known within koto is the self-realization of reality and such realization renders knowledge compliance with the suchness of presencing that originates in the elemental awareness that precedes presencing; non-knowing occurs within true self-nature as that nature. It is through such knowing of non-knowing that the self as absolute nothingness is known, the Knowledge that is self-identical with Being is ultimately a self-knowledge of elemental subjectivity as constituted by mutual realization with reality; through such direct apprehension of the self as absolute nothingness the ontology of nothingness is attested. In the confirmation of the self through all things advancing as its ‘original part’ Knowledge as identical with Being retains a form of compliance in which truth is understood as certainty in the coherence of self and world in the realization of the real; that true knowledge is the convergence of self-awareness with the absolute reality of elemental subjectivity as confirmed by the mirrored presencing of world preceded by such awareness. These themes are to be addressed through consideration of the mutually constituted conditions of koto as mutual self-emptying self and thing, self-awareness and non-objective manifestation, to elucidate the manner in which koto arises. Whilst both such awareness and non-objectivity have already been dealt with in their relation they are now to be seen in light of the new emphasis upon how as Being they are also Knowledge.

Koto as knowing of non-knowing is first formulated in terms of true self-knowledge, the elemental awareness that constitutes and is constituted with the self-realization of suchness as the self-awareness of nothingness. For Nishitani the essence of self is awareness, for the true self in its suchness such awareness is self-identical with a non-self-awareness. The self in its suchness is an awareness-sive-non-awareness that apprehends the non-objective in-itself and in so doing realizes itself in the real self-realization of reality. Nishitani elucidates this traditional Buddhist theme of being unable to step back to grasp the self (the aporia of consciousness) through the example of the eye, that just as fire is fire as non-fire (not combusting itself) the eye is the eye as not an eye; seeing is rendered possible by non-seeing, “the eye’s not-seeing only comes to be a not-seeing in unison with the eye’s activity of actually seeing something. Likewise, that activity of seeing only comes to be a seeing in unison with not-seeing”²⁹⁹; the self-identity of an eye in its nonobjective mode of being in itself is the unity of seeing and not-seeing. The same situation pertains to elemental self-awareness so that “on the home-ground of the self, there is an essential not-knowing that is one with the knowing of the self.”³⁰⁰ Self-awareness comes about as the knowing of the self is constituted by a not-knowing of “the self as an absolutely non-objective selfness, and the self-awareness that comes about at the point of that not-knowing comes down to a ‘knowing of non-knowing’.”³⁰¹ As the union of the question and the answer, the seer and the seen the self cannot be objectified as it is the openness in which both question and answer arise, “that which is

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 153.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 154.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

sought is simply that which is seeking...Being at the centre of one's searching, it can never be objectified." (Abe, BE66). Such non-objective knowing of the non-objective self in-itself arises through the self's self-identity with emptiness, from its nature as the mask of absolute nothingness, and such essential selfhood is attested to in koto as the realization of such awareness. In terms of self-awareness the knowing of non-knowing is the realization (manifestation-sive-apprehension) of the self in itself (it is the self on its homeground), the being of the self is the awareness of itself as the process of sunyata as being-sive-nothingness; as self-emptying.

Such self-awareness renders possible both subjectivity defined as non-objectivity and thus the relation to objects through conventional knowledge; elemental subjectivity as non-self-awareness is the source of reflective self-consciousness as non-objective opposition to objects whereby the self as subject "comes about in the reflective knowing whereby the self knows itself"³⁰². The self knows itself through differentiating itself from the objective. Subjective knowledge is made possible by the self's knowing of non-knowing in a parallel manner to the non-combustion of fire, "the self in itself makes the existence of the self as a subject possible, and...this not-knowing constitutes the essential possibility of knowing."³⁰³ The ontological priority of the self that stems from non-self-awareness is mitigated by how such not-knowing is self-identical with knowledge of objects, just as jitai is the non-substantial substantiality of reality-sive-illusion the self in-itself is the identity of the non-knowing of non-self with "the various modes of being of the self – personal, conscious, corporeal, and so on – and constitutes, together with them, one 'being', one 'position'."³⁰⁴ The non-knowing of the self's non-awareness that opens as the field of sunyata only is in unison with the subjective knowledge of the field of consciousness that it makes possible in concert with the non-objective suchness of jitai .

The primal identity of being and knowing that stems from sunyata's existential-ontological nature arises as the knowing of non-knowing that constitutes the home-ground of the self is a circuminsessional relation so that "reentry to the point where things in themselves realize themselves nonobjectively and posit themselves (on their position or samadhi-being), means for the self a direct reentry to the home-ground of the self itself"³⁰⁵. The existential aspect of the self's self-realization of itself as awareness of the process of sunyata is self-identical with the ontological process of the manifestation of things in themselves. Elemental subjectivity as self-sive-not-self is the manifestation of being-sive-nothingness; yet for sunyata to truly surpass all dichotomies and dualities elemental subjectivity must itself equally be an elemental objectivity.

The equiprimordiality of self and jitai lies in that the mirroring gathering of world "is not something apart from the very 'being' of all things themselves"³⁰⁶, the being of things as gathered is also the being of the self as essentially a knowing of non-knowing. Knowing of non-knowing comes about only as the joining of the self's non-awareness and the non-objective in-itself of the thing. Sunyata as primarily a theory of self is explicated as the self's constitution through a relation to things as the process of their manifestation and the return to the homeground of the original self is the realization (manifestation-sive-apprehension) of this process thus the coming to awareness of the self-realization of reality through the self in itself. It is in this manner that all things advance to confirm the self as its 'original part'; koto as mutual manifestation of meaning is held to be the verification of the possibility of suchness in which both elemental awareness and the non-objective in-itself are mutually confirmed by the mirrored light of

³⁰² Ibid., 155.

³⁰³ Ibid., 156.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 157.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 163.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

world as arising through circuminsession. Such confirmation emphasises the precedence of the self in the presencing of world; “That things are means, aboriginally, that they express themselves; and that in expressing themselves they give expression, at the same time, to what makes them be, pointing it out and bearing witness to it (in the twofold sense of clarifying and confirming)”³⁰⁷. In advancing to confirm the self beings as jitai attest to the nothingness of elemental awareness through their manifestation whereby they express their suchness as constituted with such awareness in the knowing of non-knowing, bringing the self to realization. “The dharma of things has at once the character of preaching the dharma and of obeying the dharma...what makes the dharma preach itself and obey itself...is the self as non-ego”³⁰⁸, the expression of the non-objective in-itself known in koto is ‘aboriginally’ the self-knowledge of elemental awareness, here confirmed as the real self-realization of reality by the manifestation of that reality in its suchness; sunyata is hereby portrayed as self-validating in both senses of the term.

Heisig portrays the necessity of the suchness of jitai to the self-realization of reality as the manifestation of absolute nothingness as laying in that “while it is only the mind that can ‘realize’ this in awareness, it is something that is already ‘realized’ in the fundamental structure of reality itself. Hence, the freeing of the self from ego-centredness is not something simply internal to the mind, but takes place in the encounter with the world as it is”³⁰⁹; the suchness of reality always is but only comes to awareness of itself through the enlightenment of man. That “The light that illumines us from our own home-ground and brings us back to an elemental self-awareness is but the nonobjective being of things as they are in themselves on the field where all things manifest from their own home-ground”³¹⁰ seems at first to mitigate the ontological priority given to the self by Nishitani, but as Heisig elsewhere emphasizes the field of sunyata that renders possible and is constituted by the non-objective suchness of things is self-identical with the true self. In one sense such a paradoxical condition of self and things both constituting the others homeground is in accordance with the circuminsessional relation, but this mutual constitution does little to mitigate the priority of the self if the suchness of jitai that brings the self to its homeground is preceded by that homeground, at most it renders the self of subjectivity mutually constituted with the non-objective but retains the paradoxical precedence of elemental subjectivity in the realization of that which brings about such awareness.

A notion of knowledge as coherence of self and world remains within koto, but this compliance through mutual constitution of self and non-objective jitai as koto occurs as the confirmation of the dependence of suchness upon elemental awareness. What is ‘realized’ within absolute reality is not simply that awareness is constituted with that which manifests; the reality or existence of things advance and confirm the original self as that which brings them to being and this combined with the rejection of any notion of material realism means that the mutual compliance of koto as the identity of Being and Knowledge renders entities radically dependent upon awareness. Whilst awareness itself is also constituted, brought to being, in compliance with that which manifests, what thereby comes to awareness is the confirmation of the precedence of the homeground of elemental subjectivity, of the original self that in the earlier consideration of circuminsessional world Nishitani has claimed to precede that worlding that is known experientially in koto. The manifestation of jitai within koto that constitutes the true self yet requires that true self-realization has already taken place must precede the self in the same manner as self precedes world for them to be truly circuminsessionally constituted,

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 195.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 196.

³⁰⁹ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 227.

³¹⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 164.

for the paradoxical sive of realization to truly overcome the estrangement of self and world. The extent to which the scientific disclosure of the field of nihility, once rendered less transitional in the self-identity of the fields, is to be returned to in chapter 3.4.

Nishitani defends the paradoxical assertions of the sive formulation with the claim that such paradox is only problematic to the conventional thought of the field of consciousness, but his paradoxes harbour further unaddressed paradoxes and tend towards an inequality within the equiprimordiality of the sive. This theme has been touched on before but now bears further elucidation in light of the relation between koto as meaning and the role of reason and paradox within the self-identity of the fields of awareness. Thomas considers koto as returning to Nishitani's critique of reason as dividing actual and essential being and trying to reach the former through the latter and thus fail to reach apprehension of true suchness; "on the one hand, we have an ontic thinking, concerned with entities; on the other hand, a thinking of essential matters. The distinctions Heidegger and Nishitani draw in the realm of thought, then, reinforce the divisions to be overcome."³¹¹ Heidegger's division of thought into calculative and meditative will be returned to in chapter 2.4, and the wider consequences of this distinctions for nihilism's self-transformation in chapter 3.1. Thomas finds such division in Nishitani's claims of the paradoxical nature of reality; that "the truly true appears in the mode of paradox or absurdity...Where ratio is pushed to its extreme, the 'irrational' shows up. Where meaning is pushed to its extreme, 'meaninglessness' shows up. And yet what thus appears as paradox, irrationality, or meaninglessness, is truly absolute reality"³¹²; the self-identity of the fields requires that reason re-emerge equally constitutive as irrationality within sunyata as the identity of the fields, the transcending of reason and meaning that constitutes reason and meaning must itself be constituted through them. Irrationality and meaninglessness would seem to pertain to the nullification of nihility, but sunyata as be-ification that overcomes the duality of being and nothingness must move across such transitional nihility to embrace both rationality and irrationality, meaning and meaninglessness, and contain both sides of such dichotomies as for non-substantial substantiality. Neither reason nor irrationality can grasp the reality of suchness in sunyata, it must be their mutual constitution as within the sive formulation, a draining away of their opposition, which does so. As Unno says "the dynamic, living self 'in-itself' is realized only within the subject-object, I-It, I-Thou relationship"³¹³, the absolute reality beyond reason is only realized within and as the field of consciousness constituted by traditional reason.

Despite the self-identity of the fields of awareness, of reason and paradox, sunyata as that identity retains a paradoxical presentation moved beyond all 'why'; sunyata as beyond reason must be equally beyond paradox else it falls again to the estrangement of self and world found in the precedence of elemental awareness to world. The nihility of the paradox of representation that issues from field of consciousness is resolved by overcoming the duality of subject and object; yet the paradoxes Nishitani holds to be paradigmatic of sunyata as the disclosure of realities real self-realization retain dualities that are not overcome as in these cases paradox is a sign of suchness rather than the transition to it.

As said earlier Nishitani replaces a paradox he finds troublesome (that of representation) with a radicalized form of paradox he finds indicative of elemental truth or reality. For Thomas such a move remains in the framework of division between actual and essential being and the precedence of the suchness of jitai earlier said to be required

³¹¹PtPb Pg250

³¹² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 180.

³¹³ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 315.

to balance his paradox is lacking through his favouring of one side of a dichotomy; a troubling tendency indicated in initial consideration of his stance towards both reason and the opposition of religion and science. In relation to reason it was said that Nishitani builds upon the Zen tradition of 'hyper-reason', the self-transcending of reason (that reason and meaning pushed to their limits emerge into irrationality and meaninglessness), but such a move mirrors that of technology where reason and subjectivity becomes the irrational mechanization of man as object. Sunyata and technology; both here seem to be a prioritizing of a duality that is intended to be overcome by Nishitani, a pushing through the transitional nihility of modern technology to the be-ification of sunyata. Yet in his moving from the false absoluteness of the field of consciousness towards its self-identity with that of sunyata he steps from immanent critique of reason as constituted with the irrational towards paradox unmitigated by reason, into the realm of nihility.

The self-transcendence of reason was earlier portrayed by Heisig not as its irrational negation but its intensification, a balance of reason and letting go of reason, yet it was also said that Nishitani places the 'why' of Existenz beyond the grasp of even a transfigured rationality, a reason he called 'on the side of god or Buddha'. In light of the problematic status of the paradoxes in his thought Nishitani's ambiguous relation to reason (and the related independence of the non-objective from elemental awareness in 'essential' reason as the nonduality of seer and seen) becomes more troublesome. The self-transcending of reason that realizes its essence in the real self-realization of reality as nondual appears to finally dwell in paradox as absolute reality, as purely beyond reason thus the field of consciousness that is to be self-identical with sunyata. His favouring of certain paradoxes indicate the imbalance in the sive, the paradoxical presuppositions of his thought that as self-validating lay beyond reason are on his own account constituted in identity with reason that must thus remain equally constitutive of reality.

Kokoro as both 'meaning' and 'mind' that renders koto circuminsessional knowing leads Thomas to claim that for Nishitani "'meaning' is an abstraction, for it arrests the process and attempts an ideal correlation of thought, meaning, and matter"³¹⁴ in defiance of the Buddhist tradition of Nagarjuna for whom any such correlation was a reification of sunyata and suchness as ultimate reality was ungraspable even as koto. The impossibility of certainty in coherence between mind and reality is a holding open for all contextual meanings or vocabularies, adjudication between such may be possible on the level of conventional thought but the ultimate reality of emptiness as both an absence of intrinsic being yet not a denial of being cannot be apprehended as reason nor paradox. Within koto as compliant correlation with the paradoxical absolute reality of suchness there remains an element of the understanding of truth as certainty that was criticized within scientism, a certainty that as beyond reason is less open to doubt and the self-transcendence of immanent critique; a certainty that issues from the mutual constitution of self and world at the homeground of elemental subjectivity as preceding world. There is a sense in which Nishitani's thought remains within the sphere of that which it is to overcome, in a way this is valid within the notion of the sive, but it is the shared imbalances in the sive formulation and unreflective presuppositions (that as were said at the start Nishitani exhibits possibly more than the views he critiques) that remain in contradiction to other elements of his thought; every ineffable does not say the same nothing and not all paradoxes speak the same reality.

1.6 Heidegger and Worlding

The equiprimordial constitution of self and world is thematic throughout the Heidegger corpus, how world arises from a mutual appropriation in which the self dwells in the

homeground of all other things (and vice-versa) a consistent concern. This relation of *Da-Sein* also speaks the identity of self, world and nothingness for "Without the original revelation of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom."³¹⁵ The subjectivity repudiated by Nishitani is likewise replaced by Heidegger with a variety of new vocabularies, but the core conception remained the same; humanity as an open project constituted by nihility, "a peculiar kind of nothingness: the temporal-linguistic clearing, the opening, the absencing in which things can present themselves and thus 'be'."³¹⁶ that remains inseparable from what is.

In Heidegger's characterization of *Dasein* "as a creature of 'distance' or farness, a distance which alone could nurture a true closeness to things and fellow beings...'homecoming' not as a retreat into a native habitat but as a journey homeward through the most distant peregrinations"³¹⁷ Dallmayr finds a similar conception of the self as dwelling both in its own homeground yet also in that of all other things, approaching itself through what is radically other to it but that also lies closest to it so that the I-Thou (and I-Thing) relation is one of distance and nearness simultaneously. Despite holding as evident the affinities between the Heidegger and Nishitani's thought Dallmayr attributes a fundamental difference in that "After elucidating the status of world and selfhood on the field of *sunyata*, Nishitani curiously proceeds to drive a wedge between these two aspects."³¹⁸ Whilst I agree with Dallmayr that Nishitani takes a troublesome backwards step towards the estrangement of self and world there seems to be a similar lingering ontological priority in Heidegger's thought throughout his corpus.

This chapter will explicate several variations of the gathering of world in Heidegger's texts, tracing the persistent yet changing nature of this affinity to shows its necessity and nature as a contextual problematic. Heidegger explored varied terminologies to explore the appropriative relation between self and world and speak their belonging. Many texts could have been chosen to explore the relation between Heidegger and Nishitani's understanding of world.

An initial brief consideration of the Umwelt in *Being and Time* will give way to a lengthier treatment of *The Anaximander Fragment* to highlight the affinity between Nishitani and what Heidegger conceives of as primordial western thought (a theme explored more in chapter 2.4), before concentrating most on *The Thing* due to its importance to the projected epochal transformation that is to achieve the self-overcoming of nihilism. Brief consideration will be given to Heidegger's other terminological formulations in relation to his shared concern with koto, although these texts will mostly be considered in the third part of the thesis. Emphasis will be on the paradoxes and problems already identified in Nishitani as scene setting for sections 2 and 3.

Umwelt

The integral identity of *Dasein* and world begins from *Being and Time* with being-in-the-world, which like *egoteki kankei* entails each being or phenomena is both disclosed and constituted through relations with other beings. The mutual constitution of *Dasein* and world is broadly intended to show that as always already immersed within a world of activities and defined by relations with beings we are prior to subject-object division of field of consciousness. *Being and Time* thus mirrors Nishitani's concern with the paradox of representation, their thought sharing an impetus in overcoming the estrangement between man, self and world that underpins the nihilistic age. In broad terms that worlds

³¹⁵ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 103.

³¹⁶ Michael Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 242.

³¹⁷ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 200.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 224.

as a totality of interpretations of significance in constant flux give rise to beingness based on *Dasein's* understanding also indicates the precedence of elemental subjectivity stems, as it does for Nishitani, from how we are our world existingly; absolute nothingness requiring the awareness of lived experience for its realization. These two themes already found in *Religion and Nothingness* will guide the reading of all the texts in this chapter, in relation to *Being and Time* consideration of the role of *MitSein* will be delayed until chapter 3.5 to accompany the I-Thou relation in Nishitani. The focus will instead be on Heidegger's discussion of *Umwelt* and *Zeug* due to its role as the first indication of the relation between gathering and emptying, and how it is the first tentative speaking of the identity of the danger and saving in that it contributes equally to the later conceptions of *Gestell* and the revelation of the freeing claim.

The reflection on world begins from the *Umwelt* as the closest to *Dasein* and the one we are most proximally engaged in. This world is far from primordial so cannot be taken as truly paradigmatic, although as well as informing later theories of world the primordality of the *Umwelt* in the epoch of *Gestell* will be seen as a more complex issue in chapter 2.4. As worlds are inter-referential totalities that determine the beingness of the beings encountered in that totality the *Umwelt* can be taken as paradigmatic in this regard as equipment can never be considered in isolation. *Zeug's* Being is not innate to it as an essence but is only derived from the totality that the equipment is a part of; "Taken strictly, there 'is' no such thing as *an* equipment. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially 'something in-order-to...'. A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the 'in-order-to', such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability."³¹⁹ A being is not determined by a pre-given essence but by its relation to other beings similarly empty of essence, its co-equipment and the task they are used for; its existence precedes its essence. The totality is prior to its constituent parts and their meaning is derived from this totality, before any item of equipment is disclosed as meaningful "a totality of equipment has already been discovered"³²⁰

In his discussion of *Zeug* Heidegger introduces the distinction between the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand, the former mode of being relating to what is traditionally meant by existence (the presence or brute 'thereness' of an object) and the latter pertains to the mode of being exhibited by the *Zeug* caught up in our everyday concerns. Proximally we encounter beings as ready-at-hand; but the most primordial mode of being is less clear and will be addressed in chapters 3.4 and anxiety concerning the relation of presence-at-hand and the homeground of *jitai* in relation to the reality of nihility. When grasped as ready-to-hand in terms of their 'in-order-to' *Zeug* withdraw from the horizon of significance into the background context of world, deriving their meaning from their relative absence, if they fail to withdraw and resist our understanding them in terms of the ready-to-hand they re-emerge as a form of presence-at-hand but still only in the context of and through relation to the ready-to-hand.

The breakdown of understanding based on the 'in-order-to's' of foresight redirects our attention to the now fractured totality that is *Umwelt* bringing before us world as the horizon for meaning, "we catch sight of the 'towards-this' itself" and thus the whole "context of equipment is lit up"³²¹ and so "the world announces itself".³²² That the meaning of the world arises from *Dasein's* projections is highlighted by the resistance of entities to the projection of that meaning. As the meaning of *Zeug* withdraws so too does the *Umwelt* as the horizon for understanding this meaning; revealing the need for a deeper

³¹⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 97. SZ 68

³²⁰ Ibid., 98. SZ 69

³²¹ Ibid., 105. SZ 74

³²² Ibid. SZ 74

field of awareness. The Umwelt cannot provide its own horizon or context for its meaning, this is instead provided the *Dasein*'s attempt to understand itself through projecting possibilities (the ultimate 'for-the-sake-of'). Each new horizon of meaning requires a further step back to become intelligible or meaningful itself from within its own structure, this stepping back to find the ground of meaning ultimately terminates in nothingness as groundless. *Zeug* and the Umwelt (indeed any regional ontology world) as the totality of equipmental relations are empty of meaning (characterized by nothingness as lacking in essence), the argument against essence revolves around a notion of an absence of meaning in the constituents of the Umwelt. The first sense of nothingness in relation to meaning is found in this rejection of substance ontology.

As the being of *Zeug* is determined by their 'in-order-to' what they 'are' is dependent upon the referential totality; every 'in-order-to' is a 'for-the-sake-of'. This ever-widening network of relations reaches its ultimate referent in the final for-the-sake-of that is the being of *Dasein* that is at issue; "the 'for-the-sake-of' always pertains to the Being of *Dasein*, for which, in its Being, that very Being is essentially an *issue*"³²³. Beings as ready-to-hand are disclosed through concern with *Dasein*'s own possibilities, the analysis of equipment and world is dependent upon the meaning of *Dasein* as temporality and care. The ultimate meaning and significance of the Umwelt 'itself' is derived from *Dasein*'s concern with its own possibilities as "Meaning is an *existentiale* of *Dasein*"³²⁴ and all non-*Dasein* are unmeaning or devoid of meaning.

The ontological priority of elemental awareness here is evident; *Zeug* derive their meaning from the needs of *Dasein* as embodied entity rather than being allowed to gather themselves upon their homeground. Yet, whilst the self-understanding of *Dasein*'s projections is what grounds the meaningfulness of the world as *Dasein* is its world existingly, then the Umwelt could be said to be for the sake of world itself. Both world and *Dasein* are the ground for each other, their meaning is mutually derived so both are their own groundless ground. In virtue of understanding itself in terms of projected possibilities *Dasein*'s disclosedness is characterised by being 'not yet'³²⁵ its understanding is constituted by a present absence and the withdrawal of alternative possibilities, with the world as an ongoing projected defined by both actualized, intended and forever absent possibilities. *Dasein* as being-in-the-world leads to the notion of both beings and *Dasein* as without essence, and their existence as constituted by relations leading to a rejection of the notion of independence. As being-in-the-world *Dasein* is determined by a referential totality in relation to its self-identity, just like *Zeug* it lacks any intrinsic essence and instead finds its identity through emptying itself by giving meaning to other phenomena. This rejection of essence parallels Nishitani's critique of the field of consciousness and also paves the way for a deeper notion of nothingness as encountered in anxiety that further explicates the rejection of essence in the direction of self.

The breakdown of the Umwelt in the failure of the ready-to-hand to withdraw also highlights the breakdown of being-in-the-world itself in the experience of anxiety, pointing to the relation of mutual withdrawal or repelling between world and beings. The emptiness of *Zeug* is obscured by the meaning granted them by *Dasein*'s projections, the horizon withdraws when we are concerned with beings, and the beings when we are concerned with totality as horizon. As said in chapter 1.2 only one vocabulary or regional

³²³ SZ84/BT116-7. This picture of *Dasein* as an end point to meaning implies an individual self seeking to create and understand its own identity, but could also be seen as for the sake of a communal self-understanding even if just in the sense of seeking to fulfil cultural archetypes in the manner of a retrieval of heritage, and can therefore support both of the earlier mentioned conceptions of the manner of 'entity' *Dasein* refers to.

³²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 193. SZ 151

³²⁵ Ibid., 186. SZ 145

ontology can be unconcealed, the circuminsessional world is an endless cycle of the revealing and concealing of different understandings; whether it can ever be otherwise will emerge as vital to Heidegger's notion of danger in chapter 2.5. The emptiness of both *Zeug* and *Dasein* as the projections of care are both revealed and concealed by the process of their mutual withdrawals (emptying) that allow the everyday disclosure of meaning, the condition of possibility for everyday meaning is to be found in the nothingness of *Dasein* as this process of disclosure. The Umwelt could be seen as the field of consciousness made possible yet obscuring the other fields of awareness, Heidegger's thought on *Zeug* indicates how nothingness constitutes the fields of conventional awareness but does not reach those of nihility or sunyata.

It is the experience of anxiety that leads to the field of nihility; wherein both world and beings are stripped of all meaning and *Dasein*'s own meaning is threatened disclosing *Dasein* as one with world. The notion of the world as an inter-referential totality is the first indication of nothingness as the horizon for the disclosure of Being, but it is only through the disclosure of the Umwelt as meaningless through the mood of anxiety, wherein disclosure breaks down and reveals the uncanny nature of beings and the conditions for disclosure itself that this emerges as explicit. In anxiety both beings and the world withdraw simultaneously, anxiety shatters the Umwelt, bringing *Dasein* "back from its absorption in the 'world'" as "Everyday familiarity collapses,"³²⁶ rendering the familiar into the uncanny. Although the everyday world is no more world-as-such as *Dasein* is Being-in-the-world and can never exist/be without world. This world-as-such later reveals itself to be part of operation of nothingness that allowed the world as meaningful and familiar to be disclosed, the nothingness of the world-as-such is the condition for the possibility for the disclosure of the world of beings around us as meaningful. It is the apparent transformation of the world in to meaninglessness and lacking significance with anxiety that reveals the true operation of the nothing.

The Anaximander Fragment

Heidegger's reflections on The Anaximander Fragment recalls a thought that not only prepares the way for his later discussion of the Fourfold and is within the same sphere of world presencing as circuminsessional, but also highlights issues and problems concerning thoughts retrieval of its origin to be taken up in chapter 2.4. Weinmayr finds Heidegger's discussion of the fragment to bring him into strong relation with the thought of Nishida, and the framework of that comparison can be held as equally valid to Nishitani as it pertains to his predecessors use of the 'logic' of soku; Weinmayr translating the term as 'simultaneous' rather than 'sive' indicating the paradoxical element of the relation involving the simultaneity of the identical and non-identical. He finds such 'simultaneity' to be the core of Heidegger's thought, laying behind numerous reformulations in the terminology used to indicate the mutually appropriative nature of reality that stems from Ereignis. The retrieval of the thought in the fragment aims towards the transformation of thought in the face of planetary technology, and can be seen as preparing the way for the things of the Fourfold that are later said to have not yet emerged through recovering that which is "concealed in the historical and chronological remoteness of the fragment the historic proximity of something unsaid"³²⁷. The retrieval of the origin of western thought is to prepare the way for foundational thinking as the basis for planetary discourse; whether Greek thought can supply be considered such an origin is discussed more in chapter 2.4. The language of gathering is used in relation to such a recovery, the Being of beings is gathered in the destiny of the fragment, and the withdrawal of Being since its

³²⁶ Ibid., 233. SZ 189

³²⁷ *Early Greek Thinking*, 16.

writing has gathered its history as an immanent eschatology within such history of Being. This eschatology means that which is at the most distant homeground of the west also lies before us and has gathered (made possible) the metaphysical withdrawing/dispensations of Being since.

Heidegger replaces the 'arising and passing away' of things in the traditional translation of the fragment with "a movement which lets every emerging being abandon concealment and go forward into unconcealment...as a going which in its turn abandons unconcealment, departing and withdrawing into concealment."³²⁸ A movement that brings beings into presence through the relation of concealment and unconcealment replacing the context of causation with that of disclosure or manifestation as meaningful presence. Beings are that which come to presence by lingering in unconcealment, so that "Unconcealment itself is presencing"³²⁹. Presencing is how Being discloses itself through unconcealment as the being aspect of being-sive-nothingness; being and nothingness, concealment and unconcealment, are not identical yet the Same as the process of Being or sunyata. Such a movement gives rise to the illusory appearances of eidos or substance, to that which the things shows of itself to us upon the field of consciousness, such "Appearance is an essential consequence of presencing...Only what appears can in the first place show an aspect and form"³³⁰. The process of presencing through the simultaneity of concealment and unconcealment inherently leads to the representative disclosures of consciousness, as presencing is first displayed as the appearance that issue from it. The mutual constitution of concealment and unconcealment are the source of appearances emanation, and such simultaneity can be seen as speaking jītai 's gathering of itself in reality-sive-illusion.

Lingering jointure

To come to presence is to linger in unconcealment, and that which is present is self-identical with that which is absent "for as absent from the expanse, it presents itself in unconcealment"³³¹. Presence-sive-absence, being-sive-nothingness; both speak of the process of disclosure through that which is in its suchness shows itself whilst withdrawing in self-negation thus constituting the field of presence and absence as such. As previously discussed Heidegger and Nishitani both deal with the self-identity of Being and Nothingness yet in their presentations use terminology that seemingly emphasises one side of the identity, for Heidegger presence and unconcealment seem more determinative of absence just as emptiness is for Nishitani (rather than the equally valid 'absolute being' of be-ification). But whilst "the presently present and the unconcealment that rules in it...pervade the essence of what is absent, as that which is not presently present"³³² absence also pervades the essence of presence so that "In both directions presencing is conjointly disposed toward absence."³³³ As one with absence that which is present is not in a state of absolute presence, it is only present in the movement of transition between concealment and unconcealment; "what is present is arriving or lingering insofar as it is already departing from unconcealment toward concealment. What is presently present lingers awhile. It endures in approach and withdrawal."³³⁴. Such movement indicates the being-sive-nothingness in which each in-itself manifests from this self-identity within its homeground, the self-identity of presence and absence is how what comes to presence posits itself through lingering in the expanse, and in so coming to presence as appearance

³²⁸ Ibid., 30.

³²⁹ Ibid., 55.

³³⁰ Ibid., 56.

³³¹ Ibid., 35.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., 41.

³³⁴ Ibid., 37.

“Everything present in unconcealment in this way presents itself to all others, each after its own fashion”³³⁵ with such presentation giving rise to the objective representations of the field of consciousness.

In such lingering gathering that which comes to presence does so in accord with and through the lingering of others, it “coheres in unifying presence, as everything becomes present to everything else within its duration; it becomes present and lingers with the others.”³³⁶ Such mutual lingering is not thought in terms of a collection of separate entities united by a higher being but as a single gathering that reveals the totality of world as mutual dependence. The fragment does not speak of a conceptual totality of uniformity or highest being as it predates such conceptual language that can think such universality, instead the unity of presence as the totality of what is present arises through the expression of Being through beings that come to presence through such expression. It is only later in the epochal history of Being that this totality is grasped metaphysically and with the emergence of nihilism “This grasping together (*concupere*) in the manner of representational concepts is immediately taken to be the only possible way to understand Being.”³³⁷ The disclosures of the field of consciousness necessarily result in this misinterpretation due to the withdrawal inherent in the appropriative relation, and it is the bringing of this errancy to awareness that is to prepare for the freeing claim and confrontation with technology dealt with more explicitly in chapter 2.2.

In that beings only presence in transitory lingering between approach and withdrawal, by concealment and unconcealment, Weinmayr finds the simultaneity of the *soku* as constituting how beings presence together as world.³³⁸ The openness in which beings come to lingering presence through transition is termed jointure and is constituted solely by the joining it renders possible, jointure enables beings and beings constitute the jointure, so that the world is as transitory and dependent as that which presences within it. If that which lingers in presence through the joining are beings that gather themselves in the movement between concealment and unconcealment then their mutual gathering as world or jointure can be seen in terms of the circuminsessional world that ‘is’ only in self-identity with the gathering of phenomenon that constitute the world and are in turn constituted by it in simultaneity. This parallels how world and *jitai* only are as mutually gathered to one another and reflects how Ereignis only is in terms of the epochal meanings it gives rise to; the ramifications of this in terms of the ontic-ontological identity are to be discussed in chapters 2.3 and 2.6. That which is joined presences only as jointure which itself is constituted only as the joining of what is present; in that “Everything lingering is in each case only in a joining of what already is – but every joining is a joining that conjoins lingering things”.³³⁹ Weinmayr finds the question of priority between joining and jointure an ‘empty question’ since both are equally transitory; the gatherings of *jitai* and world are only as the mirroring of such gathering.

Disjointure

Jointure as lingering presence is contrasted yet constituted with disjointure as the insistence of what is present upon its endurance, upon its remaining in unconcealment rather than in transition. To linger awhile in presence is to stand in disorder, to cling to

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid., 40.

³³⁷ Ibid., 24.

³³⁸ Considering the origin of Nishitani’s theory the circuminsessional relation often seems to lack this element of transitoriness or ‘generation-extinction’ that lingers on in Heidegger’s essay even whilst moving away from the natural sciences understanding of such a process. Later formulations of the circuminsessional relation in *Religion and Nothingness* reintroduce such fleeting transitoriness in terms of time and karma when circuminsessional interpenetration is reformulated in the terminology of world-nexus, but are to be treated later.

³³⁹ Elmar, “Thinking in Transition: Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger,” 237.

oneself in continuance defying the circuminsessional order of jointure. Such is for beings in their presencing to strike “a haughty pose towards every other of its kind”³⁴⁰ through their persistence. In wilful persistence towards other beings that which presences in disjointure seeks only its own endurance crowding out all else that strives to come to presence, using them to gather itself in prolonged lingering so that “Everything that lingers awhile stands in disjunction”³⁴¹. Such endurance in disjointure could be seen as the master aspect of the circuminsessional relation that if unmitigated renders impossible the mutual presencing of circuminsession, to linger in disjointure is to strive to have presence upheld by others through refusing to withdraw into concealment (non-self) to uphold the lingering presence of others upon their homeground. Such wilful desire for persistence is posited as the ground of representation by Nishitani; and when unchecked leads to the epochal understanding of Gestell in which “The totality of beings is the single object of a singular will to conquer. The simplicity of Being is confounded in a singular oblivion.”³⁴² Yet such persistence cannot be simply negated; the circuminsessional relation requires servitude and self-emptying be constituted in identity with absolute mastery so that “This relationship of circuminsessional interpenetration harbours an elemental strife...this strife is at once an absolute harmony and an elemental peace...On the field of emptiness, elemental strife and elemental harmony are essentially one.”³⁴³

So too presencing as lingering is both approach and withdrawal, disorder and order; it is constituted by both jointure and disjointure, by the persistence of approach into unconcealment and the surmounting of this through the transition back into concealment. Disjunction is a fundamental trait of what is present and this insistence upon continuance that “asserts itself in presencing as such, which lets each present being linger awhile in the expanse of unconcealment”³⁴⁴ is constitutive of jointure; rather than being its simple negation their simultaneity constitutes the lingering expanse. Only in the disjointure of asserted continuance does the presencing of jointure as whiling between concealment and unconcealment come to pass. Disorder thus “haunts lingering itself as an essential possibility”³⁴⁵, presencing ‘is’ no other than the overcoming of this through solicitude and contains an essential danger of persistence in lingering in disjunction. In lingering within the jointure that which is present “surmounts disorder”³⁴⁶ by not insisting upon its continuance, jointure as the surmounting of disjointure is given by disjointure as tempered in its approach with withdrawal and so allowing the order of mutual presencing of world. Jointure as such order in mutual implication with disorder is the circuminsessional gathering wherein what is present “lets itself belong to the non-present”³⁴⁷, to the non-being that constitutes their homeground and allows the surmounting of disorder as persistence through acceding to hold up all else through withdrawal. Jointure and the circuminsessional master-servant relation both speak of worlding as requiring the tendency that leads to nihilistic or wilful disclosures as being preserved in the primordial field of awareness that is self-identical with and enables them. This necessity of nihilism will be thematic and explicated in detail over section 2 in terms of samsara-sive-nirvana.

For Weinmayr this definition through simultaneous negation highlights the true sense of jointurehood as a mutual lingering of beings so that in joining “each being lingering awhile in a plural variety among other beings lingering awhile, which let one

³⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 46.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 42.

³⁴² Ibid., 57.

³⁴³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 263.

³⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 43.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 49.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 44.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

another be in a reciprocal concern and consideration, appreciation and attention”³⁴⁸. Showing solicitude to other beings is a condition for lingering in presence so that “Insofar as beings which linger awhile...no longer share the compulsion to expel one another from what is presently present, they let order belong”³⁴⁹. Such circuminsessional solicitude is the only way world is gathered as bringing beings to presence within jointure. Disjointure/disorder is a necessary facet of lingering, but one that must be countered in solicitude for the lingering in jointure to occur as the mutual gathering of world. Such mutual servitude allows each to attain to presence in their own fashion and in accordance with their suchness whilst not being reduced to metaphysical uniform unity. If ‘simultaneity’ as soku indicates that “Only a being that knows itself through others... as ‘simultaneously’ presencing and absencing...is able to take itself back, in order to let the other be”³⁵⁰, then only as being-sive-nothingness thus constituted as circuminsessional can beings enable and allow each others presencing within compliant jointurehood and thereby make it possible for the realization of meaning.

The articulation of lingering presence in terms of such circuminsessional simultaneity indicates the presencing of Being through the dual process of approach and withdrawal; being-sive-nothingness as the twofold absence (jointure) that enables presencing through mutual appropriative solicitude, bringing Heidegger’s retrieval of the origin of western thought into correlation with Nishitani’s elucidation of the disclosive process of sunyata as the core of the Eastern-Buddhaic experience of Being.

The ethical and experiential aspects of such solicitude are to be examined in later chapters, for now it can be noted that in repudiating the language of justice and penalty in the traditional translation of the fragment the way is laid open for elucidating a framework of originary ethics through the nonduality of the existential and ontological. Heidegger not only moves away from interpreting the fragment in terms of causal changes in the natural world but also defends Anaximander from attributions that moral and legalistic notions are projected upon his view of nature due to the ‘primitiveness’ of his understanding, locating the true meaning of such phrases prior to such notions. The letting presence of manifold being is said to be “anything but a kind of primitive and anthropomorphic representation”³⁵¹ and Heidegger’s use of ‘reck’ as solicitude in place of consideration is an attempt to render less anthropocentric the process that allows for mutual presencing. The success, necessity and possibility of this move is to be addressed in chapter 2.6, for now it can be seen that despite the moving beyond anthropomorphism the insistence of endurance in disjointure involves a similar ascription of agency through active gathering as is seen in samadhi. The moral and juridical terminology Heidegger seeks to move away from retains a correlation with such anthropomorphic presentation in the master-servant paradigm of the circuminsessional relation, a presentation that also seeks to move prior to the notion of the division between ethics and ontology.

Gathering of The Thing

The relation of the mutual gatherings of jitai and world as the disclosure of meaning through self-emptying has evident and striking similarity with Heidegger’s discussion of how world arises as the appropriation of the fourfold in *The Thing*. The ‘thingness’ of the thing seems commensurate with the suchness of jitai, with the non-objective mode of being that as distinct from representation is how the thing posits itself upon its homeground through mutual gathering. Just as jitai as true self-identity or suchness lies

³⁴⁸ Elmar, "Thinking in Transition: Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger," 237.

³⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 44.

³⁵⁰ Elmar, "Thinking in Transition: Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger," 238.

³⁵¹ Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 22.

beyond the objectivity of substantial being or illusion, so too does the jug as a vessel denote “something self-sustained, something that stands on its own...As the self-supporting independence of something independent, the jug differs from an object.”³⁵² In his explication of the jug as thing Heidegger, whilst discounting traditional notions of objectivity, retains a place for such appearance as how the thing is first encountered upon the field of consciousness even as this limits the disclosure of it to the form it presents to us. As for the essential being of combustion; “the jug must first show its outward appearance to the maker. But what shows itself here, the aspect (the *eidos*, the *idea*), characterizes the jug solely in the respect in which the vessel stands over against the maker”³⁵³. The estrangement of subject and object in the initial encounter with both *jitai* and jug is inherent to the nature of such encounter yet also indicates the necessity of moving towards the in-itself beyond objective representation. Only non-representational knowing can grasp the non-objectivity of *jitai*, and conceiving of the true mode of being as vessel Heidegger claims “no representation of what is present...ever reaches to the thing qua thing. The jug’s thingness resides in its being qua vessel.”³⁵⁴ The non-objective mode of the jug in-itself is its being as vessel, and the nature of vessel as holding is not formed from the jugs given structure but by the emptiness of the jug, “The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is what the jug is as the holding vessel.”³⁵⁵ The emptiness aspect of the jug both forms its non-objective mode of being and makes possible the aspect of its being that is represented objectively in the form of its *eidos*. As the making process is shaped and determined by the emptiness of the vessel then the objectivity of the jug issues forth from this non-objective, non-fabricated nature, just as the substance aspect of *jitai* emanates from its suchness as non-objective emptying; the emptiness of both direct attention towards their attendant objective form.

Jitai alone was unable to explain the manner in which self-emptying leads to disclosure, requiring the further step of circuminsession, so too is the isolated self-gathering (its ‘self-support alone’) of the jug as vessel is not enough to define its thingly nature. The non-objectivity of the jug as thing lies instead in its holding (gathering) capacity as relational. Holding is said to consist in both taking and keeping, but these constituents are unified by the outpouring of liquid from the jug, “In the outpouring, the holding is authentically how it is. To pour from the jug is to give. The holding of the vessel occurs in the giving of the outpouring.”³⁵⁶ The jug gathers itself through emptying itself in service to what it is not, according to Dallmayr “the outpouring of a liquid is *schicken*, which carries the double sense of pouring and giving (or donating).”³⁵⁷ Such self-emptying is how the jug gathers itself as a vessel, its holding is constituted by its emptiness but such holding as its self-gathering or *samadhi*-being is equally constituted by its non-holding (self-emptying) so that “The jug’s jug-character consists in the poured gift of the pouring out.”³⁵⁸ Just as *jitai* gathers itself on its homeground only through a self-emptying in service to the gathering of all other things on their homeground so too is the self-gathering of the jug, its holding as a vessel, constituted in self-identity with the negation of its holding for others. Both the gathering of *jitai* and the thinging of the thing are related to themselves and others along the lines of Nishitani’s master-servant relation. Heidegger’s characterization of such a process is replete with language that evokes the free submission to others characteristic of the master-servant relation and the active capacity, the wilful abnegation of will, bequeathed to non-objective *jitai* in virtue of their

³⁵² *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 164.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 166.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 169. 9

³⁵⁷ Dallmayr, “Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani,” 222.

³⁵⁸ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 170.

self-gathering. The gathering of the four is consistently portrayed as being of their own accord, as stemming from a freedom constituted through the solicitude of letting the other elements be. Such “appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another”³⁵⁹, things are modest and compliant in their relation and in their freedom as the assertion of their own self-identity they are also bound to all others as upholding them through such gathering.

Through this the outpouring of the jug is itself possibilized by the self-emptying of each element of the fourfold gathered by the jug, in their self-emptying each element gathers at the homeground of the jug supporting its own holding and outpouring, yet are also gathered into themselves by the outpouring they make possible. In this mutual self-emptying all the elements attain to their own nature, are gathered as what they are in-themselves in the homeground of the jug in-itself that gathers them through its own outpouring, in this “gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals dwell together all at once. These four, at one because of what they themselves are, belong together. Preceding everything that is present, they are enfolded into a single fourfold.”³⁶⁰ In the self-emptying that is the in-itself of the thing as vessel there is the prior gathering of world that like the circuminsessional relation enables the coming to presence of things upon the field of consciousness, the gathering of thing and of world is self-identical and the precondition for meaningful disclosure.

The first two elements of earth and sky are brought together “In the gift of water, in the gift of wine”³⁶¹; what both elements give in their self-emptying brings them into relation with each other and makes possible the non-objective in-itself of the jug through its own self-emptying, through its outpouring that brings sky and earth to dwell together. As gathered at the homeground of the jug, the self-emptying of earth and sky is made evident through the jugs own outpouring that gathers the mortals and divinities that receive that outpouring whether in libation or consecration. Whilst the self-emptying of earth and sky through the outpouring of the vessel gathers mortals and divinities in receiving such libation it is less than explicit how in so receiving they are themselves similarly emptied. The earth-sky dyad can be seen as reflecting nature (or the earth of *The Origin of the Work of Art*) and the mortals-divinities historical societies (the world of *The Origin of the Work of Art*). The relation of world and earth in terms of art will be dealt with in terms of dwelling in chapter 3.3 and Heidegger's broader characterization of the 'natural' in chapter 2.2, but here it can be seen that there is a tendency to construe the natural world in terms of a teleological narrative; Perotti gives such an interpretation in claiming that “The water or wine which is poured is also one of the things of the earth intended for men.”³⁶² The earth and sky empty themselves for the sake of mortals and divinities; these latter must also empty themselves for earth and sky and be constituted by this emptying for the Fourfold to be a truly reciprocal mirroring. If they are merely in receipt of outpouring then the gathering process remains in the framework of viewing the thing as for mortals and divinities. If to be mortal means to be constituted in mirroring the other three elements then our dwelling and identity is bound to and constituted by their outpouring, but human existence remains an ultimate end with the situation further complicated by the role of mortal as maker that is latter to be explicated.

Emerging into presence is the disclosure of that which is present as meaningful, and the mutual gathering of the fourfold and thing is how the thing presences. That “the

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 177.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 171.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God*, 85.

manifold-simple gathering is the jug's presencing"³⁶³ means that in its non-objective samadhi-being a thing in-itself is gathered through its relation to the gathering of all things and so emerges into presence. Presencing as the 'beingness' of that which is present arises as "All things 'are' in the home-ground of any given thing and make it to 'be' what it is"³⁶⁴; being (to be) is for a thing to gather itself in a process of mutual gathering and so make itself present. Such presencing of the thing is a transient gathering, appropriation "gathers the fourfold's stay, its while, into something that stays for a while: into this thing, that thing."³⁶⁵ Such staying is counter-posed to 'mere persisting', the lingering stay of that which presences instead temporarily brings the fourfold into a mirroring appropriation that constitutes such presencing so that what is present is no longer seen as the self-identity of substance. Instead that which is non-objective is brought into the homeground of the other, and in the manner of upholding each other in line with the relation of master and servant so that "What is gathered in the gift gathers itself in appropriately staying the fourfold"³⁶⁶ and such appropriation presences as the worlding of the world.

The process that brings the fourfold together in mutual appropriation is termed the thinging of the thing, thinging as gathering makes the thing manifest upon its homeground, along with all other things as what support it on that homeground, in so making manifest it supports them in their own gathering upon their homeground. Such gathering is how a thing in-itself is disclosed as coming to presence; "The presence of something present such as the jug comes into its own, appropriatively manifests and determines itself, only from the thinging of the thing"³⁶⁷, presencing is appropriative as mutual gathering of both *jitai* and *circuminsessional* world. In so gathering "The thing things world. Each thing stays the fourfold into a happening of the simple oneness of world"³⁶⁸, as for Nishitani that a thing 'is' means that in its being (its coming to presence) the world worlds, the whole is gathered and expressed in each part through the self-identity of the two notions of samadhi; that the gathering of the in-itself is the mirroring of the gathering of world as the mutual constitution of lingering presences. The terminology of presence shows how The Thing builds directly upon the thought of The Anaximander Fragment to explain in greater detail how lingering jointure comes to pass.

Such a mirroring in "lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another."³⁶⁹ Each elements mirroring of the other through the mutual self-emptying of appropriation brings the fourfold firmly into the framework of dependent origination, each element as emptying itself thus presencing is gem-like in reflecting the shared light that originates from none but instead from the interplay and mutual arising of each empty element. Such mirroring allows each of the fourfold to dwell in both its own homeground and that of all other elements and the thing equally without the illumination originating solely from any, but only from such appropriative mirroring as the worlding of the world. Mirroring is said to not portray a likeness and so does not reduce the elements to a simple uniformity, despite the thinking of appropriation not being referred to by Heidegger as related inherently to the process of nihility (except obliquely in terms of such thought not yet having arisen and as first encountered in objective making's inability to reach thingness) the uniformity that Nishitani said required the

³⁶³ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 171.

³⁶⁴ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 159.

³⁶⁵ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 171.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 175.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 178.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 177.

transitions of nihility to repudiate is denied here also as “The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another...the fouring does not come about in such a way that it encompasses the four and only afterwards is added to them as that compass.”³⁷⁰ Despite not insisting on their particularity each element retains its own self-identity and avoids reduction to uniformity even whilst being appropriated into mutual presencing. Dallmayr holds that through the self-emptying element of the jug as non-objective in-itself such gathering does not assimilate the four into uniformity remaining a mutual implication of neither simple identity nor bringing into relation of prior externals. Whilst the jug example seems to introduce a greater amount of determination into gathering than Nishitani’s general framework would indicate (each element of the four that are gathered do seem partially determined by the jug, the sky and earth could be gathered as other than water or wine) such determination is in accord with mutual constitution through solicitude so that the thinging of the thing happens “in a manner approximating Nishitani’s circuminsession.”³⁷¹

Heidegger’s use of a single phenomenon, a single in-itself, however carefully chosen, does limit the comparisons that can be drawn; the thing gathers the Fourfold whilst the circuminsessional totality gathers things to each other. Heidegger’s thought on jointure can then be used to extend the things gathering into a wider network but differences remain. He seems to give an instance of the circuminsessional relation and treat it as paradigmatic, selecting the jug through its easy exemplification of gathering through emptying the broad conception of which may apply to other things but seem less natural or persuasive when it comes to considering the hills, animals and sundries he ends the essay with in terms of outpouring. Earth, sky, mortals and divinities; each seems required for the true mirroring of Ereignis, yet not all things that are drawn from the natural world are so easily related to both earth and sky, and the integration of the mortals and divinities seems less integral to the outpouring, not all libations are in service to a consecration. Whilst the relation of the elements in the fourfold are in line with the self-emptying of the circuminsessional relationship the elements themselves provide a narrower conception, in incorporating all things (the totality of absolute centres) sunyata seems broader in its scope even as both seek to bring all things to dwell in the homeground of the other. To an extent this reflects a difference in approach towards the same aim; to provide a model for man’s dwelling in a homeless world of technology. Nishitani draws upon a more wide-ranging Buddhist doctrine to explain the self’s non-knowing of the non-objective in itself to overcome the estrangement of man and world through their mutual realization. Heidegger’s repeated stress of ‘simplicity’, his choice of natural elements and evocations of local climes, indicate a more specific vision of what such a goal entails, rather than seeking to primarily explicate the structure of disclosive realization he is painting a picture of dwelling in contrast to modern ways of living rendering man into the service of Being’s truth rather than mechanized efficiency. Issues concerning his selection of examples in relation to this aim will be dealt with more in chapter 2.3.

Despite possible differences in their stances toward technology Nishitani later in *Religion and Nothingness* uses an example near identical to that of Heidegger’s in *The Thing* in discussing the historicity of cyclical time. He remarks upon the rice harvest festival in which the first batch of wine from the crop is offered to the gods in the royal palace. Such a libation celebrates how “the generative force latent in the native soil...works to uphold the existence of man...all of this is based on a relationship between man and the gods...the gods and the land, man and the land, and man and man form as

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 223.

one totality a socially and politically unified nexus”³⁷². The context of the example is different, history as the repetition of the recurrent that the example refers to is held to be only one aspect of true historicity even if essential to the gathering of the world nexus or circuminsessional relation. But as an instance of the circuminsessional relation it maps onto Heidegger’s example of the jug, even if not taken as paradigmatic and primarily providing an account of how the world as gathering provides historical meaning.

The divinities and gods are mentioned in both examples, within the context of Nishitani’s example they are most explicable as relating to cultural identity through the mythical role of divine ancestry in Japanese pre-history. Such an understanding could also be seen in *The Thing* as building upon Heidegger’s earlier thought concerning Dasein’s destiny as the retrieval of heritage through emulation of cultural exemplars. The self-emptying of the divinities would then take the form of bequeathing the repeatable possibilities of existence, possibilities constituted and verified by such repetition so that such destined heritage is gathered at the homeground of the mortals through the consecration of the outpouring, even whilst such repetition gathers the divinities upon their own homeground by affirming them as such destiny. The nature of such retrieval and what can guide it is to be the main concern of chapter 2.6, and raises issue of the projective nature of Heidegger’s thought concerning the Fourfold soon to be touched upon. The sense in which the bequeathing of repeatable possibilities can be termed a self-emptying, and the manner in which the divinities themselves can be characterized as empty and absent, is heavily related to Heidegger’s view of the modern epoch as one of the gods default that is to be the main focus of the second part of the thesis. By providing the measure for man the divinities empty themselves and are thus marked also be an emptiness or absence, the manner of their absence is named by the poets who speak the worlding interplay of the Fourfold thus articulating how they dwell together so that man too may poetically dwell

Dallmayr holds that in Nishitani’s thought “there does not seem to be room for immortal gods, and perhaps not even for humans seen as mortals”³⁷³, taking such terms as polytheistic and rendered mute by nihilism. Through Nishitani’s example of the festival divinities in the above sense can be seen to both indicate historical meaning as the repetition of the recurrent. But Heidegger also writes that “The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present”³⁷⁴. Invocation of the Godhead brings a theistic resonance of Eckhartian lineage; but if the absolute nothingness of the godhead is seen as the absolute emptiness of sunyata the self-emptying of which is meanings manifestation then as heralds of the godhead the divinities relation to heritage is reinforced if the manifestation of such meaning is tied to the repeatable possibilities of existence. The relation of the epoch of absent gods to the absolute nothingness of the Godhead, and that of the divinities and poetry in terms of epochal transformation, will be returned to in-depth in chapter 3.2 after chapters 2.4 and 2.6 prepare the way with consideration of nihilism as the origin of the call to destiny and the contingent criteria for this call respectively.

Regardless of such differences in the context of comparing their thought on the conditions of possibility for the non-objective knowledge of the non-objective thing in-in-itself both thinkers demonstrate a shared conception of the manner in which the in-itself is apprehended. Such possibility arises from the interpenetration of homegrounds in virtue of the self-emptying of the non-objective in-itself that brings both the gathering

³⁷² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 205.

³⁷³ Dallmayr, "Nothingness and Sunyata: A Comparison of Heidegger and Nishitani," 225.

³⁷⁴ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 176.

vessel and the elements of the fourfold into a radical proximity whilst maintaining their differentiation as a multiplicity; “the world’s worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else.”³⁷⁵ Heidegger’s phrasing of how mutual gathering allows for the direct encounter of the in-itself through the non-differentiated multiplicity of interpenetration relates to his characterization of Dasein as a creature of both distance and nearness. Through the staying of the thing the four are both remote and near as master and servant in the homeground of the other, such “Nearness preserves farness. Preserving farness, nearness presences nearness in nearing that farness.”³⁷⁶ The circuminsessional interpenetration renders all things both near and far to the homegrounds of the non-uniform totality of absolute centres.

The mirroring of the fourfold is a transmission into the homeground of the other in the manner of koto, obtaining the mind of the thing through the outpouring of mutual appropriation through which the manifestation of meaningful world is brought to presence and the thing in-itself is known through entering its homeground even as it is brought to the homeground of the self. When the thing is allowed to emerge into presence through this worlding then Heidegger asserts we are finally thinking the thing as thing, we are ‘called’ by the thing and when we respond our non-objective knowing that is required for the things realization “takes up its residence in a co-responding which, appealed to in the world’s being by the world’s being, answers within itself to that appeal.”³⁷⁷ By taking part in the mutual appropriation of the Fourfold not only is the manifestation of meaningful world brought to presence but also comes to pass the direct encounter with the in-itself through mutually appropriative self-emptying is to dwell both near and far and through the vigilance of mortals to step back from representative thinking into the realm of non-objective non-knowing, “As we preserve the thing qua thing we inhabit nearness.”³⁷⁸

Although the possibility for such knowing, and the form in which it occurs has been laid out how such a possibility is actualized is less clear. “Only when – all of a sudden presumably – world worlds as world”³⁷⁹ does the thing emerge as the mutual appropriation of the four, the ‘presumably’ seems to imply such presencing as mere theoretical possibility, the thinging of the thing remains an inherent possibility in the history of Being that has yet to come to pass. We have yet to be called by the thing as “if things ever had already shown themselves qua things in their thingness, then the thing’s thingness would have become manifest and would have laid claim to thought”³⁸⁰, yet they remain nihilated. Whilst for Nishitani the real self-realization of reality arises through the transformation of self-awareness in egoistic death the worlds presencing still awaits the call of Being that such a transformation must respond to; the divinities of the Fourfold cannot be the gods who have withdrawn in the epoch of their default, but those who have not-yet arrived. Unlike the circuminsessional relation the thinging of the thing is not a constant occurrence but a futural ideal or projective retrieval of the essential nature of man. It is a project we are called to realize; the possibility and necessity of such a call, the presumed suddenness of worlding and why things have yet to call or if man as mortal has simply yet to respond remain to be elucidated. Heidegger’s aim in *The Thing* is to describe the form or possibility of poetic dwelling; the necessity of which is dealt with in section 2 (specifically chapter 2.4 and 2.6), how it is to be accomplished in section 3. The manner, nature and necessity of the call are to be dealt with soon, but in this call there

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 177.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 175.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 179.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 168.

emerges a possible divergence in the thought of Nishitani and Heidegger. Enlightenment for the former remains both a historically achieved event and a new dawn whilst in *The Thing* the call to such enlightenment has yet to come and cannot be reached through recollecting “former objects which perhaps were once on the way to becoming things”³⁸¹; despite the influence of The Anaximander Fragment to reach the true origin of dwelling requires going beyond the Greek. Whilst both thinkers hold openness to the circuminsessional relation with things as necessary for non-objective apprehension as the realization of the thing in-itself the role of the self’s transformation in relation to this possibility contains differences in emphasis.

Gathering the Region

Through all the terminological reformulations this view of world essentially endures, whilst brief *Discourse on Thinking* is worthy of mention in this regard due to how its terminology has the greatest resemblance to that of Nishitani. This resemblance is partly due to its abstract nature which lacks the depth of Heidegger's other analyses, remaining vaguer on how worlding actually occurs than the writings on language, appropriation and dwelling. Here Sein gives way to talk of 'that-which-regions' which "gathers, just as if nothing were happening, each to each and each to all into an abiding, while resting it itself. Regioning is a gathering and re-sheltering for an expanded resting in an abiding"³⁸² a description of mutual circuminsession that names the appropriative mirroring of world speaks as that which both forms our horizon of awareness and manifests as that awareness in line with the former understanding of Ereignis as Da-Sein.

That-which-regions is only encountered in terms of what it makes possible with which it is self-identical; like *jitai* is only known from the appearances of the field of consciousness that-which-regions is "an openness which is filled with views of the appearances of what to our re-presenting are objects."³⁸³ Accordingly that-which-regions is the homeground behind the appearances whose representing it makes possible, "where everything belonging there returns to that in which it rests."³⁸⁴ As with the mutual constitution of jointure and disjuncture that-which-regions is “at once an expanse and an abiding. It abides into the expanse of resting. It expands into the abiding of what has freely turned towards itself.”³⁸⁵ In doing so that-which-regions “gathering all, opens itself, so that in it openness is halted and held, letting everything merge in its own resting”³⁸⁶; bringing *jitai* to rest in its own homeground and that of the other so that instead of being disclosed in terms of objective representation they are gathered to "rest in the return to the abiding of the expanse of their self-belonging."³⁸⁷

Continuity of thought between the texts is exhibited in references to the relation between the Fourfold and that-which-regions; *The Thing* is said to have shown that "things are things through the regioning of that-which-regions".³⁸⁸ This continuity can also seen in indicating a problem equally thematic for Heidegger as for Nishitani; the relation between realization and awareness as outlined in chapter 1.2 and the primacy of elemental subjectivity in this process of realization. Only thing, man and that-which-regions together name determination; yet also that-which-regions “determines the thing,

³⁸¹ Ibid., 179.

³⁸² Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (Harper & Row, 1966), 66.

³⁸³ Ibid., 64.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 65.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 66.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 67.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 76.

as thing"³⁸⁹ but what determining is requires awareness of the nature of thought "by waiting upon determining and regioning with respect to man."³⁹⁰

Koto and Language

Heidegger's discussion of language is also replete with circuminsessional themes portraying language as that which brings together self and *jitai* in world; it is language and discourse whose "gathering power penetrates and pervades everything gathers in an preserves all it has gathered, not like an encapsulating shell but rather by penetrating with its light all it has gathered, and only thus releasing it into its own nature."³⁹¹ Heidegger's thought on language also brings him into his most explicit concordance with Nishitani in relation to the latter's characterization of the knowing of non-knowing.

Like Nishitani Heidegger brings together Being and Knowledge, arguing "that for something 'to be' means for it to disclose itself or to present itself"³⁹² 'to be' means to be disclosed as meaningful, thus to be known as such. In a manner parallel to Nishitani's discussion of *koto* Heidegger brings together knowledge and Being in the role of the mortal seer who apprehends the totality of presence through the nothingness of elemental awareness. Truth as the preservation of Being entails that the apprehension of the seer is indebted to that which brings the present to presence; "Knowledge embraces vision and remains indebted to presencing. Knowledge is remembrance of Being...Knowledge is thoughtful maintenance of Being's preserve."³⁹³ To partake in the circuminsessional gathering of world through preservation of jointure is both Being and Knowledge so that "Being, as the presencing of what is present, is already in itself truth, provided we think the essence of truth as the gathering that clears and shelters".³⁹⁴ These equations of Being and Knowledge are implicit in the understanding of ontology as laid out in chapter 1.1; the requirement of elemental subjectivity flows from the requirement of awareness for Being, yet its precedence does not. The prior existence of entities (before they 'are' in virtue of our understanding) is an equal pre-requisite to Ereignis as *Da* or *Sein*, and whether their treatment of such appropriation does justice to this nullity of entities is to remain an open question in the chapters that follow.

Koto as a direct experience of *jitai* to overcome the paradox of representation is connected to Heidegger's phenomenological method by Kockelmans, who defines both as "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself the very way it shows itself" (Kockelmans RP128); thought attaining to the homeground of *jitai* in such a way that realizes and transforms both the self and what is known. Truth and knowledge accordingly become a process of increasing self-awareness (progression through fields of awareness) through reflection on *jitai*. Primordial truth as unconcealment is a relation between self as elemental awareness and *jitai*; *Da-Sein* as the clearing for such is essential self.

Nishitani's citing of Basho in explicating *koto* draws him close to Heidegger's emphasis on poetic language as allowing phenomenon to speak by attuning oneself to *jitai*; Unno characterizing poetic expression as what "issues forth from the 'in-itself'"³⁹⁵ Whilst never citing Nishitani Heidegger explicitly connects his thought on language to the notion of *koto*; defining it as "the appropriating occurrence of the lightening message of grace."³⁹⁶ and "the happening of the lightening message of the graciousness that brings

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 77.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ *On the Way to Language*, Harper & Row paperback ed. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1982), 159.

³⁹² Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 243.

³⁹³ Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 55.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 37.

³⁹⁵ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 312.

³⁹⁶ Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 45.

forth." ³⁹⁷. Koto as how meaning arises in apprehension is connected to how words issue from this showing, to give language as the entirety of the appropriative process; in language as koto-ba words are flowering petals emerging from suchness, jitai the mode of being of being of things allowed to flower of and in themselves. Heidegger connects Saying and koto ba in that both are how appropriation occurs in giving words to man and things. Unlike Nishitani Heidegger explicates how koto operates at greater length through his reflections on poetry and can help elucidate Nishitani's own characterization of koto. As relating to epochal transformation this will be fully considered in chapter 3.2 after consideration of nihilism in section 2.

The Precedence of Self

The ontological precedence of elemental awareness also stems from this shared understanding of knowing and runs throughout Heidegger's texts, beginning from Being and Time's claim that the understanding of Dasein alone guides ontological inquiry. The subjective elements of Heidegger's thought are often held to lessen as his works progress, but even within the Fourfold a tendency related to the primacy of the subject can be detected. That the mortal-divinities dyad appears to take precedence over that of earth-sky was alluded to earlier, the precedence of the divinities will be explicated more in chapter 3.2, for now that of the mortals is to be considered. Last chapter it was said that Nishitani accords elemental subjectivity a precedence over world in circuminsessional gathering and a similar theme emerges in the role of the mortals in the fourfold and the making of the jug that renders possible its gathering. Although this is mitigated in light of the role of the call of Being through the thing the relation of the call to the mortals of the fourfold may lead to a re-convergence in Heidegger and Nishitani's understanding of elemental awareness. In Nishitani's terms the mortality of man in the fourfold can be seen as denoting that the self-emptying of mortals is the death of egoistic self; a self-emptying that allows man to participate in mirroring in virtue of the elemental self-awareness that allows for the realization of world as appropriative presencing. There is ambiguity between the connection of mortality and making; they are not simply identical as the vigilance of mortals is required for all thinging and Heidegger refers to non-made entities as things but it is only man as mortal that makes even whilst such making does not define mortality but is exemplary of how mortals elemental awareness allows for gathering. The role of making in The Thing is connected to the relation of building and dwelling in Building, Dwelling, Thinking; but the latter essay more concerns the accomplishment of dwelling than its ontological possibility and is to be dealt with in these terms in chapter 3.3.

It is the vigilance of elemental awareness that allows for making, but even in the unmade such awareness operates in a more fundamental relation to that which makes possible presencing than other elements of the four. Human making does not bring things to presence, "They do not appear by means of human making. But neither do they appear without the vigilance of mortals."³⁹⁸ Making does not orchestrate or compel the appropriation or gather the fourfold, but as stemming from the elemental awareness of mortal vigilance it indicates the self-identity of such awareness with the field of possibility for presencing through which things manifest. Heidegger attributes a mitigated importance to the making of the jug in that it "lets the jug come into its own. But that which in the jug's nature is its own is never brought about by its making."³⁹⁹ Although the non-objective mode of jitai, the jug as vessel, is not determined by mortal making, such making is required as a condition of possibility for the mutual gathering which the jug renders possible and the importance of its participation in the gathering seems somewhat

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 47.

³⁹⁸ *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 179.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 166.

downplayed. It is the emptiness of the vessel that allows the gathering and outpouring, but the potter still shapes the void, still renders the gathering possible by providing the *eidos* or objective form of the jug through awareness of the void. Only those things capable of awareness of the gathering process can enable the jug as vessel to truly attain its non-objective mode of being and be realized as a thing in-itself. “The jug’s void determines all the handling in the process of making the vessel”⁴⁰⁰, the void may remain beyond the representative grasp of man but only through awareness of the void is the gathering of the jug brought forth, the possibility of the gathering of world through the fourfold rests in an elemental awareness of outpouring. For Nishitani such elemental awareness precedes the gathering of world as its ontological precondition, a similar awareness of gathering and outpouring seems to act as a precondition for the providing of the vessel that is required for the outpouring that gathers the world. If making is traced to its origin in the mortals of the fourfold then one of the four seems to make a twofold contribution to the gathering by rendering possible that gathering through elemental awareness that arises with and through the gathering it is also a precondition for. It is the mortals that both allow for the manifesting of the void that gathers in outpouring and also receive such libation; their self-emptying renders possible the self-emptying of the other elements in a more radical sense.

The role of making and its relation to mortals results from Heidegger’s choice of the jug as a paradigmatic example, his ending references to natural features such as hills and trees, and living non-human animals as things complicate this issue. That the natural features that constitute the earth and sky (that gather the water and nurture the vine) are themselves thinging things is in line with the circuminsessional understanding as the fourfold that gather in the thing are then themselves things that are also so gathered. But such unmade things do not lend themselves so readily to the etymological analysis and analogies of self-emptying as the jug and raise the issue of how mortals are appropriated in their thinging if not as consumers of this bounty; mere receivers of outpouring rather than taking part in the gathering through the fashioning of the vessel through their awareness of void. For mortals to still gather such unmade things requires that elemental awareness not be limited to the fashioning of actual vessels, but that this awareness of self-emptying void instead allows thinging as emerging into presence as world through the apprehension of that which gathers, through the awareness of self-emptying as absolute nothingness self-identical with Being that emerges in the homeground of man as mortal. In removing the made jug from being purely determined by man as subject Heidegger takes a similar step to Nishitani in rendering the thinging of unmade phenomena more dependent upon the awareness of mortal man; increasing the dependence of things upon self beyond that of objects upon the subject.

The mortals of the fourfold have death as their homeground, their homeground is the shrine of the Nothing as “that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself”⁴⁰¹. Only mortals can die and in so doing, through the nothingness of their homeground, apprehend the mystery and oblivion of Being in the realization of elemental awareness through egoistic death. As elemental awareness such death is the shelter of Being and mortals as its shepherds are the realization of such absolute nothingness in a parallel way to how elemental subjectivity arises as the field of *sunyata* that *jītai* and things as *samādhi* arise on, the emptiness or nothingness of the vessel’s void that allows for the outpouring as gathering seems to still be writ large in man as mortal. Mortals are understood in the same terms as *Dasein* as “the presencing relation to Being as Being”⁴⁰², as the only thing that

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 176.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

in its thinging is aware of such thinging as the presencing of world; mortals alone in the fourfold have their appropriative presencing at issue for them and through apprehension of such allow for the coming to presence through appropriation of the four in the thing. If the gathering of the manifold in the thing is how Being comes to presence and such gathering requires the self-awareness of mortals as the nothingness through which presencing occurs then there remains a notion of ontological precedence in virtue of the mortal self's relation to Being that allows the appropriation of that gathering, even whilst mortal awareness emerges only alongside and with the fourfold. Just as in Being and Time the call of conscience originates in Dasein's own-Being the call that the thinking of the thing is to respond to issues from the homeground of man as mortal, from the shrine of Nothing as presencing relation to Being; a call that speaks both of the precedence of elemental awareness in the worlding of the world yet also of how such awareness requires the thinging of the thing to emerge as world for its realization.

A similar paradox as that within Nishitani here emerges; that to attain to death as the shrine of Nothing requires the appropriative mirroring made possible by the elemental awareness of mortality. Whilst not explicitly stated as doing so making through awareness of void introduces the same problematic of the existential realization of sunyata emphasizing apprehension over manifestation in the sive of realization, rendering the presencing of beings dependent upon the human self in a deeper sense even whilst having such elemental awareness constituted through the presencing it makes possible. This fundamental paradox was outlined in chapter 1.2 in relation to Ereignis in general, and

can now be seen as applying to Heidegger's poetic conception of the grounds for our projected dwelling.

Just as for Nishitani the self stands outside the world as its ground, even whilst within the totality of the circuminsessional relationship of world it has no priority, the human element within the gathering of the thing retains an ontological precedence through elemental awareness at the homeground of the self making possible the presencing of world even though within the mirroring appropriation mortals have no priority in mutual constitution. This priority is partially mitigated by Heidegger's claims that whilst as a manner of disclosure of the non-objective the thinging of the thing requires awareness for its realization, the nonappearance of the thing to thought is not the neglect of man as we can only represent "what has previously come to light of its own accord and has shown itself to him in the light it brought with it."⁴⁰³ this light is same as that which Nishitani ascribes to the natural illumination of non-objective knowledge of non-objective mode of being that originates with things themselves not reason, but such light in both cases requires awareness of them to shine, illumination require both light and seer. Neither thing nor Fourfold are the result of the human but both require it for their accomplishment in line with the general characterization of Heidegger in chapter 1.2, the problematic nature of this for the self-overcoming of nihilism will be returned to in chapter 3.1.

The nature and role of men as mortal raises the issue of the dehomocentric element in Heidegger and Nishitani's thought, the roles of self-awareness and also of non-human awareness; that "Men alone, as mortals, by dwelling attain to the world as world."⁴⁰⁴ Only men as mortals, only the self from the homeground of non-self that is the shrine of Nothing, attain to the worlding that is the mirroring light of the field of sunyata, originating not in reason or man but only beheld (attained) by him, and thus requiring

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 169.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 180.

elemental self-awareness to manifest on its homeground in a manner more primordial than any other element of the fourfold. Man as also a thing would seem to be a paramount thing; men alone attain to world through an awareness un-possessed by any other non-mortal thing. As was said above in relation to nihility and uniformity, for Nishitani all things may die in the Heideggerian sense and his understanding of sentience is less anthropocentric than Heidegger's. Not just in his occasional references to possible equal intelligences of other worlds (which Heidegger would presumably concede as *Dasein*) but also in respect to animal life of all levels of awareness that Heidegger characterizes as things, whilst man through appropriation into the mirroring of the four constitutes their presencing as alone among living beings man dies and so can bring about his own presencing.

The Anaximander Fragment contains the same themes of realization through self-transformation as Religion and Nothingness and The Thing but with differences in presentation and emphasis when it comes to the precedence of self-awareness in relation to the realization that such awareness both constitutes yet requires that may help elucidate and reconcile these issues. To apprehend (realize) the jointure we must be that which can partake in the lingering joining of world in order for the jointure to be realized as what allows presencing; "translate ourselves to the source of what comes to language"⁴⁰⁵ in the fragment. Weinmayr's analysis of the fragment finds little of the priority of the self that lingers within Nishitani, instead seeing us as but one part of the happening of joining, equal to other beings and no more the ground of jointure than anything else luminescently in the world. Yet as was indicated in chapter 1.2 Weinmayr attributes the oblivion of Being to the greater tendency of man to insist on his continuance in presence than that of other such insistent beings; giving man power over the balancing of jointure and disjuncture thus priority over Sein. The prioritized role of self-awareness lingers still in the lingering jointure in similar terms to the role of mortals in the fourfold. Man as mortal shepherd is prefigured in the role of seer as herdsman who preserves the gathering "only if he continues to hold the place of nothingness"⁴⁰⁶, to have as his homeground the shrine of Nothingness and retains the element of previous understandings of *Dasein* as the being for whom Being is an issue, as "that present being which, illuminating, apprehending, and thus gathering, lets what is present as such become present in unconcealment"⁴⁰⁷. It is through the elemental awareness of concealing and presencing that gathering in the jointure becomes possible, the apprehension required for realization stems from the self's awareness of itself as constituted through such jointure. Through such elemental awareness the seer "makes-present and belongs in an exceptional sense to the totality of what is present"⁴⁰⁸. As in The Thing what is present is not a subject-dependent object but only comes to presence through the vigilance of mortals and unlike all else that lingers in jointure, unlike the other fourfold elements that gather, such elemental self-awareness belongs to the totality of gathering world 'in an exceptional sense'.

If Heidegger and Nishitani were constructing epistemologies such precedence would be unproblematic, but for Nishitani transition through nihility replaces the problem of knowledge of things to that of their reality and the shared denials of idealism and material realism combined with the identity of apprehension and manifestation in realization render the human self more central to the reality of beings than in the subject-dependence of the field of consciousness that is to be overcome for its homocentric implications. But a wedge may be driven between the manifestation and apprehension of realization in the thought of Heidegger. For Nishitani elemental self-awareness and the

⁴⁰⁵ *Early Greek Thinking*, 28.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

field of sunyata are radically self-identical, such was the basis for his criticism of Heidegger as reaching only a relative nothingness still external to the self overlooking that “The epochal character of Being is the ecstatic character of Da-Sein...The ek-sistence of man sustains what is ecstatic and so preserves what is epochal in Being, to whose essence the Da, and thereby Da-Sein, belongs.”⁴⁰⁹ Both thinkers would seem to operate with an ontological equivalency of self and world at slight variance with the identity of elemental self and the field for the possibility of world. However Heidegger slips in a small qualification to such an understanding of realization in stating that “For us...the most readily experienced correspondence to the epochal character of Being is the ecstatic character of Da-Sein”⁴¹⁰, implying that the self-identity of elemental self-awareness and Being is not totally determinative of the possibility of manifestation. The ‘for us’ perhaps denotes that the priority of self-awareness arises from us only experiencing nothingness as lived, as embodied through the personal and so necessarily experienced with a priority of self whose non-self nature lies in relation to what it is not. For Heidegger, who operates with a distinction of entities and beings thus opening him to Nishitani’s critique of Kant as only dealing with the aspect that things disclose to us, a way is open to preserve the independence of beings from elemental self-dependence in a way that Nishitani’s stronger identification of apprehension and manifestation through stringent denials of realism (yet also idealism) precludes. Heidegger’s changing stance towards the presence-at-hand of entities in relation to Nishitani’s thought on scientific nihilism is to be considered at length in chapter 3.4; whether *jitai* and *releasement* require a notion of the Kantian ‘object in-itself’ to balance Nishitani’s prioritizing of elemental subjectivity in circuminsessional world.

Pre-nihilistic nihilism

Heidegger’s thought on errancy in the essay may also shed light on how the self-realization of sunyata requires that which such realization makes possible to have already come to awareness. Since “Oblivion of Being belongs to the self-veiling essence of Being”⁴¹¹ presencing and what is present are only revealed as self-identical so that the distinction between them is forgotten from the start of the history of Being. The process of sunyata as self-identical with the manifestation of things obscures the operation of that process resulting in the field of consciousness being taken as the only reality. This oblivion is “the richest and most prodigious event”⁴¹² as it is metaphysics, the route to the person Nishitani calls the highest conception of the person, a route that leads to sunyata via nihilism. It is through the forgetting of Being that the route to Being is opened up through its making possible of what is present. Sunyata as a process of self-realization that already requires sunyata to have been realized emerges from the nascent experience of such awareness within the field of consciousness as permeated by nihilism in such attestations as the paradox of representation that indicate and lead to the experience of Being’s oblivion. The forgotten distinction of Being and beings “can invade our experience only if it has already unveiled itself with the presencing of what is present; only if it has left a trace which remains preserved in the language to which Being comes”⁴¹³, presencing only speaks as the relation to what is present, only through the objects of the field of consciousness. The oblivion of Being that is metaphysics, the experience of nihilism that is the obscuring of how sunyata makes possible the everyday disclosures of the field of consciousness, such are the routes to the hidden processes of meanings manifestation hitherto concealed and the manner which they are preserved in

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., 27.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 50.

⁴¹² Ibid., 51.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

their forgetting to allow for the self-realization as remembrance. The presumed suddenness of the worlds worlding in *The Thing* is here given more context and the possibility and necessity of such realization indicated through a shifting of the onus from the self's achieving enlightenment through egoistic death found in Nishitani to the epochal sending of Being; that "When Being keeps to itself in its destining, world suddenly and unexpectedly comes to pass."⁴¹⁴

In raising such a possibility Heidegger turns again to the element awareness that is realized through such nihility, but such awareness does not precede the circuminsessional world that is constituted as *sunyata*. The real self-realization of reality is said to occur only "when Being itself advances to its farthest extreme, and when the oblivion that issues from Being itself undergoes reversal"⁴¹⁵, in then asking "if Being in its essence needs to use the essence of man?"⁴¹⁶ he goes beyond the assertion that the human essence is thinking the truth of Being through elemental awareness to place such awareness as the condition for presencing, but a condition claimed by Being that maintains precedence over elemental awareness. Such usage of man by Being is not be intended utilization in a technological sense, Heidegger instead aims to retrieve usage's original sense of 'enjoy' as meaning "to let something present come to presence as such"⁴¹⁷; as how Being presences as bringing to presence that which lingers. Being through using man brings to presence beings that linger between approach and withdrawal by providing the expanse of jointure, such usage "delivers what is present to its presencing...dispenses to what is present the portion of its while."⁴¹⁸ The understanding of usage as the gathering of lingering presence by Being through man as *Da-Sein* is the retrieval of what lays dormant in the technological understanding of usage that arises through the oblivion of Being's withdrawal as metaphysics yet still preserves the possibility of such a destiny. The use of man by Being is how both come into their essence as and through each other in solicitude to lingering presence in jointure. Although both Heidegger and Nishitani hold that elemental awareness and absolute nothingness are self-identical beyond even an integral relation the use of man by Being indicates that even in responding to the call of Being as originating from the homeground of mortality Heidegger has a lessened sense of human precedence in appropriation, but in such a way as to open up his thought again to Nishitani's critique of remaining at the level of relative nothingness. Consideration of the ontological conditions for meaning now returns to the problematic themes outlined in chapter 1.2; namely how this mutual usage of *Da* and *Sein* is accomplished, how a relation can precede its constituents without its realization falling into paradox.

The idea of usage as the origin of utilization leaves the term dwelling close to the danger it emerges from. Whilst not a simple inversion of technological thinking that renders man a means for Being to presence through beings the extent to which the value of man becomes derivative in a manner paralleling mechanization is ambiguous, as is the possible derivative value the truth of Being has through its relation to man's essential nature. This ambiguous relation between the danger of nihilism and the retrieved dwelling that is to save is now to be the main focus of the thesis, exploring the historical narrative of *Gestell*'s emergence in Heidegger and the relation of the transitional field of nihility to science in Nishitani in order to elucidate the nature of danger-sive-saving, *samsara-sive-nirvana*. This relation of nihility as ontological ground to its nihilistic realization,

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 58.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

and the manner and extent that which is to save from the realization is related to its nature as danger will be dealt with in section 2, how this unity/retrieval is to be realized in section three.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 The relation of Nihilism, Metaphysics and *Gestell*

Ereignis and Śūnyatā as processes of disclosure are the origin of both the manifestation of nihilism and the more primordial experience of Being in terms of wonder and gratitude. These chapters will deal with how nihilism comes to be the definitive experience of nothingness; an explication of nihility's relation to nihilism in order to think Gestell as the return to the origin of both nihilism and that which saves thus the possibility of nihilism's self-transformation. The focus of the following chapters will be on Heidegger's formulation of nihilism in terms of Gestell as the current epochal disclosure that completes metaphysics and Nishitani's thought on science and the field of nihility. Some preliminary remarks on the history of metaphysics and field of consciousness that 'precede' these culminations of nihilism will first be made to help provide context for the following chapters.

Metaphysics as Desire and Representation

The manifestation of nihilism in Western thought is characterised by Heidegger as metaphysics, defined as the forgetting of the ontological difference resulting in inquiring only as to beings instead of the truth of Being as their ground that enables metaphysics as its essence. The essence of metaphysics as nihilism is the self-withdrawal of Being (nothingness) that discloses meaning, metaphysics is how Being discloses through withdrawal so that the essence of nihilism is Ereignis itself. Metaphysics necessarily overlooks the question of Being to inquire into beingness in terms of the intelligibility of the totality, reducing the mystery of Being to a rational framework. Metaphysics inability to reach its own essence is how Ereignis gives meaning through the withdrawal of Sein; it is the epochal history of responses to Being's withdrawal so that the history of metaphysics is the charting of manners in which Ereignis has given meaning.

Metaphysics is characterized by the representative thinking that forms the world-picture; "that what is stands before us - in all that belongs to it and all that stands together in it - as a system." ¹ Metaphysics strives to give an account of beings in terms of Being as ground and unity, "all metaphysics is at bottom, and from the ground up, what grounds, what gives account of the ground, what is called to account by the ground, and finally what calls the ground to account." ² Metaphysics attempt to order beings as a unified system in terms of Being reduced to the highest being leads to Heidegger terming it onto-theo-logic, as "The essential constitution of metaphysics is based on the unity of beings as such in the universal and that which is highest." ³

In seeking to grasp beings as a whole the root of metaphysics representation is desire; the desire to comprehend, to order the whole and articulate reality bringing permanence to dukkha. The relation of representation and desire is more apparent in the German Vorstellen, "to set out before oneself and to set forth in relation to oneself." ⁴ This evokes the notion of bringing things in front of man as a judge rendered central as arbiter, having more connotations of a wilful desire to objectify Being and dominate through representation. Such grasping is not purely epistemological as in searching for

¹ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 129.

² *Identity and Difference*, 58.

³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 132.

foundations and fixed structure metaphysics also imposes hierarchical value structures centred around the subjective ego. Accordingly the modern epoch is marked by man's ascension to subjectivity through desire to understand that which is. Rorty inverts this notion; the need for certainty does not stem from desire but vice-versa as "it has turned out that the only thing we can be certain about is what we want. The only things that are really evident to us are our own desires"⁵ and so desire is prioritized as a result of the quest for certainty. In either case this world-picture is how the reality of what is comes to presence as represented by man leading to meaning becoming fixed or narrowed into a single possibility.

Metaphysics as Gestell

Gestell as the essence of technology is said to be "identical with the essence of modern metaphysics,"⁶ as the self-concealment through withdrawal in which "Being dismisses and puts away its truth into oblivion in such a way that Being denies its own coming to presence."⁷ Despite such a shared essence their unity is not an identity but more a culmination. The *End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* identifies Gestell with the self-completion of metaphysics. Such completion is not simple termination but the place where philosophy "is gathered in its uttermost possibility. End as completion means this gathering"⁸ marking a shift from Heidegger's earlier position that "Through anthropology the transition of metaphysics into the event of the simple stopping and setting aside of all philosophy is introduced."⁹

Heidegger uses the term cybernetics to denote this proliferation of and communication between independent sciences that is a legitimate completion of philosophy. The term also brings out the relation of Gestell as a governing process marking a shift in manners of communication and control; the greater regulation and arrangement of labour, and the reduction of language, art and knowledge to an endless flow of information. Whilst Heidegger names the epoch of Gestell the Atomic Age (and perhaps naively predicts this energy source will replace fossil fuels) the reduction to information seems increasingly pronounced over that of labour and Gestell might better be named the Information Age. This gathering is not a cessation of metaphysical thought, but the end of its developing into anything new, the exhaustion of its possibilities. This completion of metaphysics is the extreme point (thus possible turning point) of withdrawal resulting in the end of any essential differences between beings in the levelling uniformity of the field of nihility as metaphysics exhausts itself and its epochal history reaches a final disclosure. Metaphysics cannot reach its own essence of Ereignis, Gestell as the experience of the self-withdrawal of Being (Nothingness) as such can do so. As the completion of metaphysics Gestell is also the completion of nihilism heralding the possibility of a new epochal movement in the history of Being through the self-overcoming of such nihilism in Gestell.

The Field of Consciousness as Metaphysics

The movement between the fields of consciousness and nihility mirrors Heidegger's deconstruction of metaphysics, except whilst the essence of metaphysics is equated with nihilism by Heidegger, in Nishitani's schema metaphysics falls within the field of consciousness preceding the experience of nihilism on the field of nihility. Gestell itself would be the transition from consciousness to nihility; the dissolution of metaphysics that

⁵ Richard Rorty, "Heidegger, Contingency, Pragmatism," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. H.L. Dreyfuss and H. Hall (B. Blackwell, 1992), 210.

⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 116.

⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁸ "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 433.

⁹ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 140.

at once both completes it and marks the self-transformation of representative thought into calculative.

Nishitani offers a parallel critique to that of metaphysics in how substance is understood upon the field of consciousness as what “is used to point out the essence of a thing, the self-identity in which a thing is what it is in itself. In other words, it is the being of a being”¹⁰, which “invariably restricts the selfness of a thing to the way that thing is disclosed to us on the field of reason”¹¹ overlooking how such beingness is also constituted by nothingness. His critique of the subject (*shutai*) mirrors this as the notion of subject “merely points to man in himself insofar as he is laid bare to himself within himself, on the field of his own consciousness.”¹² Subjectivity is only the self as it appears to the self upon the field on consciousness as standing opposed to the world and objects. This leads to the prioritizing of the subjective self and represents a “form of captivity or self-attachment”¹³ incapable of moving beyond its own representations (of both itself and objects). These categories of subject and substance are said by Nishitani to have consistently determined Western notions of Being, the Being of beings is seen as substance as beings are represented as objects from the perspective of the self-conscious subject upon the field of consciousness.

The subject-object duality upon the field of consciousness can be seen in the division of ‘actual’ (that a thing is, its existence) and ‘essential’ being (what a thing is). Traditional ontologies of substance seek to reach actual being through essential being, existence by way of essence understood in terms of how it becomes present to subjective consciousness. Such essence is claimed as only an objective representation in “terms of logos, as something that can be explained in terms of ‘logical’ structures or interpreted ‘theoretically’”. It is given as something that can be viewed from the standpoint of reason.”¹⁴ Heidegger indicates that Western metaphysics also begins from such a division in taking Being as ground; “that from which beings as such are what they are in their becoming, perishing, and persisting as something that can be known, handled and worked upon”¹⁵. Metaphysics as the search for ground also begins from the essential whatness of presence and “starting from what is present, represents it in its presence and thus exhibits it as grounded by its ground.”¹⁶ For both thinkers the metaphysical reason of the field of consciousness concerns itself solely with essential being as ground and so “does not put one directly in touch with the home-ground of a thing, with the thing itself”¹⁷; it forgets the ontological difference and so cannot reach its own ground.

The centrality of the subjective or egoistic self within the phenomenal world of the field of consciousness is taken as both conventional and ultimate reality resulting in the self’s enclosing within itself and estrangement from the suchness of both self and things. Such a conception of self is an illusion resulting from the inherent subject-object division of the field of consciousness, an incapacity necessary to and befitting its nature along the same lines as metaphysics inability to think its own ground. This obscuring of the self’s true nature and closing down of other possibilities of self-understanding will later be connected to Heidegger’s understanding of *Gestell* in terms of danger.

This duality leads to disclosure upon the field of consciousness entailing a paradox in relation to representation that forms the core of Nishitani’s critique of traditional

¹⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 119.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 5.

¹³ Ibid., 95.

¹⁴ Ibid., 113.

¹⁵ Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” 432.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 115.

ontologies; namely that “An object is nothing other than something that has been represented as an object, and even the very idea of something independent of representation can only come about as a representation.”¹⁸ Substance and self are thus objectified as representations, obscuring their true suchness through the dichotomization of subject and object that prevails throughout the representational thought of metaphysics. This paradox is said to have been made explicit in the work of Kant, deepening the understanding of subjectivity by rendering the self as subject resistant to objective comprehension opening the way towards the Great Doubt. Although this subject-dependence is seen as the culmination (and beginning of self-nullification) of the subject-object duality the nature of the critique of subjectivity as ground for the world of objects is problematic for Nishitani, as shall be later discussed in reference to the ontological priority he also seems to give the awareness of self.

The Field of Consciousness as Desire and Destiny

The separation of self and things through the subject-object duality on the field of consciousness is said to entail “that we are drawn to things, and that we in turn draw things to ourselves. (In this sense, ‘will’, or desire and attachment, can also be posited at the ground of ‘representation’.)”¹⁹ Nihilism in traditional Buddhist thought would be seen in terms of Dukkha; not so much suffering as the failure to recognize impermanence thus overcome attachments, mainly to the illusory ego leading to discontent at the realization of our own limits. The natural and necessary tendencies of desire and aversion are frustrated by impermanence that shadows every moment with death and loss.

Yet Nishitani’s inclusion of an element of desire and attachment is more ambiguous. Whilst in line with traditional Buddhist views of conventional discriminations stemming from the grasping of false ego and self-attachment the subject-object duality and representation seem required for such wilful desires; if they are posited as also stemming from the ground of representation then this is coherent, if they are ‘at’ the ground in the sense of causation then this seems more problematic.

This was touched on in the last chapter regarding the accomplishment of the Da-Sein relation, which mirrors how whilst the self’s reification of itself through the egoistic mode of being is always an act of the self “it is not something we are free to do as we please...The force of destiny is at work here, impelling us to be and to act in this manner.”²⁰, a destiny that is not “something that simply rules over us and controls us from without. Nor is it merely something like blind will. It is a destiny that appears only in the shape of the acts we ourselves perform, only as one with our own actions.”²¹ The self-identity of the self and Śūnyatā, of Da and its Sein, makes the grasping of the self on the field of consciousness a force that acts through us yet as us. The inevitability that governs the narrative behind the history of metaphysics and what this means for the free relation of Da and Sein once the illusory necessity of Gestell is exposed are to be addressed in chapter 2.3.

Related to this is the issue of how nihilism conflates the individual existential realization of nihility with its current historical form. Nishitani seeks to combine Buddhism with a historical approach to nihilism; samsara and dukkha originating in the attachments of the craving ego as eternal notions are merged with Western influenced ideas of nihilism as growing from the historical progress of modernity. Like Heidegger he “understood modernity as the result of a historical development that began with the middle ages, passed through the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance, and ended

¹⁸ Ibid., 108.

¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

²⁰ Ibid., 103.

²¹ Ibid., 104.

in the emergence of modern science.”²² *Ontology and Utterance* even offers a shorter history of metaphysics to Heidegger, moving from Plato through Descartes to Kant, dealing with the attempt to reconcile the personal-impersonal self-identity to unify subject-object.

Yet this approach seems to introduce problems as well as resolve them. There is a tension between the various characterizations of nihility; as attuning us to a pre-existing abyss yet also emerging historically, as both transitional yet also self-identical with transhistorical sunyata designating 'real reality', between the advent of nihilism as a historical phenomena and of nihility as constitutive of Dasein's constitution (the 'why' behind nihilism's advent). If nihility as transitional and self-identical with sunyata is required to be passed through to attain enlightenment upon the field of sunyata then the linking of the emergence of the field of nihility with secular/scientific trends of modernity, the rendering of nihilism a historical problem rather than eternal issue, seems to make sunyata as enlightenment dependent on the overcoming of a modern phenomena. The historical status of nihility thus needs initial clarification; is experience of nihility and the Great Doubt a personal transformation true and possible at all times, an historical destining like Gestell, or a continual possibility more easily realized in modernity.

These chapters will begin with anxiety and Doubt as the experiential entry point into nihilism. The nature of Gestell as a destinal disclosure (the historical manifestation of nihilism) and the supreme danger will be explicated in chapter 2.2 alongside Nishitani's thought on science. Chapter 2.3 will consider examples of nihilistic disclosure and what implications these have for the issues relating to historical nihilism. Chapter 2.4 will explore the relation of the danger to Ereignis thus that which is to save; the self-identity of the danger and the saving (nihility and Śūnyatā; samsāra-sive-nirvāṇa). Chapters 2.5 and 2.6 will critique the notion of danger in terms of its viability and context respectively.

Anxiety and Doubt as Call and Attestation

Nothingness cannot be directly grasped in thought but only approached through beings, we can only experience or think nothingness through the withdrawal and nihilation of beings-as-a-whole. Despite its ontological priority it can only be encountered chronologically after beings as we are first always thrown into the totality. As the primordial is only revealed through the withdrawal of the everyday “the nothing is at first and for the most part distorted with respect to its originality”²³ and as belonging to Being must be encountered as at one with the totality through a “correspondingly original mood”²⁴ that unifies the nature of Dasein as disclosure; anxiety. Anxiety and the Great Doubt will be dealt with together as sharing the same role; the experiential realization of nothingness as the structural unity of Dasein and ontological condition of metaphysics (the field of consciousness). In both we become our nothingness, it overpowers and possesses us. Both turn the questioner into a question and through the withdrawal of meaning open the way back into the nothing of the self. The nothing may be ungraspable in thought but anxiety as the experience of it allows it to be thematized, just as sunyata can only be experienced and then expressed imperfectly. This chapter will deal with the proximal experience of nihility that both attests to their ontologies and constitutes nihilism to prepare for later chapters addressing of nihilism and its self-transformation more explicitly in terms of their unity.

²² Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 209.

²³ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 104.

²⁴ Ibid., 100.

Attunement and Experience

The nature of the experience of anxiety and what it discloses are intertwined, disclosing the Da of Dasein to itself so that we experience in ourselves what is thus disclosed. Brief consideration of attunement and the nature of experience in general will elucidate this before dealing with anxiety more specifically.

Dasein's state-of-mind reveals Dasein to itself as Da, it is the "primordial disclosure...in which Dasein is brought before its Being as 'there'"²⁵ grounding understanding by directing Dasein towards its thrown possibilities that understanding projects onto so "By way of having a mood Dasein 'sees' possibilities."²⁶ States-of-mind reveal the whole we are amidst and "this revealing – far from being incidental – is also the basic occurrence of Dasein."²⁷ It is state-of-mind that makes possible the disclosure of meaning by allowing Da to relate to Sein through bringing Dasein before its essence as the Da side of that relation. Heidegger claims states-of-mind are beyond our control, they pertain to our thrownness and that Dasein "has been brought into its 'there', but not of its own accord",²⁸ yet the Da-Sein identity also means it is none other than Dasein that brings us before the Da.

State-of-mind is an ontological structure not psychological phenomena, anxiety is ontologically prior to the experiences it enables and the range of experiences enabled by a state-of-mind share a commonality derived from it that all point to the more fundamental underlying attunement. Despite this Heidegger's later definition of experience also matches how we are called to face our anxiety. To experience something means "that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us....we endure it, suffer it, receive it as it strikes us and submit to it. It is this something itself that comes about. comes to pass, happens."²⁹ In experiencing something we "attain it along the way, by going on a way...this something, which we reach along the way in order to attain it, itself pertains to us, meets us and makes its /// appeal to us, in that it transforms us into itself."³⁰ Stambaugh remarks that 'entering into the movement of waying' ties "in nicely with the literal meaning of the English word 'experience' which means to go through."³¹ and it is worth noting that 'to go through' also ties this definition of experience to Nishitani's charting of the progression through the fields to their self-identity.

This later definition of experience joins together elements of anxiety with the call of conscience as the ontic attestation to the possibility of authenticity, anxiety needs this further attestation as "The call of conscience, existentially understood, makes known for the first time what we have hitherto merely contended".³² Whilst anxiety is to attest to the nature of the self as nothingness this attestation is only compelling in concert with the further experiential attestation of the call of conscience. The call of conscience in Being and Time is the first mention of the ontological meaning of nothingness, the call to the self from its own uncanniness/homelessness. It is note-worthy that this first treatment of nullity by Heidegger takes the form of being called to a task, of an imperative that acts as its own warrant by disclosing what is thus the deficiency in what ought to be. In this first call is announced the powerlessness and debt of Dasein towards Being, that in Heidegger's later thought summons us to thanks and sacrifice. The nature of the experience as a call is also axiological, or normative, as it forms the motivation for transforming the self-

²⁵ *Being and Time*, 173. SZ 134

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 188. SZ 148

²⁷ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 100.

²⁸ *Being and Time*, 329. SZ 284

²⁹ *On the Way to Language*, 57.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

³¹ Stambaugh, "Heidegger, Daoism, and Metaphysics," 84.

³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 322. SZ 277

conception of man. It is not anxiety itself but the readiness for anxiety that is to result from hearing the call of conscience; it is not enough to experience nihility, the call of conscience and new saving epoch only have anxiety as their precondition. This call is silent as it speaks the nothing, conscience is a call to and from the nothing that appears uncanny and alien to the self lost in *das Man*. The called and caller are both *Dasein* so that the call of conscience is the call for the self to retrieve itself as nothingness and clarify its own essence as nihility. What calls us to thought is the absolute nothingness of self, not anything 'other' to me but only other to the everyday. The hearing and heeding of silence is to be more fully explored in chapter 3.3 in terms of poetry, the axiological elements in chapter 2.6.

To experience nothingness in the attunement of anxiety is to be transformed by it through submission, as this nothingness is nothing other than the self then the experience is one in which the self summons itself to transform itself into itself; the experience of nihility is one of self-transformation through the self's overwhelming of itself. It is this experience that first begins the process of realization that renders nihility from an external relative nothingness into the absolute nothingness of elemental subjectivity. The self realizes itself as *Da*, the mask of absolute nothingness, called underway towards an experience of the self-appropriation of nothingness that is other to the experience of nihilism. The self's calling itself along this way is how *Ereignis* comes to pass; the experience of nihility how appropriation occurs. As the existential realization of nihility (the meaninglessness and contingency of our endeavours) such Doubt is nihility as the nullification of the egoistic self; ontological nihility and existential doubt are self-identical and without such existential realizations there is no ontological nihilism.

The Nature of Anxiety/Doubt

The threefold structure of anxiety as a mood will now be examined; that in the face of which we have anxiety, anxiety as such (the way it manifests 'how one is'), and that about which we are anxious.

Anxiety

That in the face of which we have anxiety is no specific thing, it is not an anxiety-inducing entity even if the mood may be inspired by an ontic state of affairs; "The indeterminateness of that in the face of which and for which we become anxious is no mere lack of determination but rather the essential impossibility of determining it."³³ The omnipresent indefiniteness of anxiety, that it is felt towards no particular being (no-thing) yet effects all beings, indicates "Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious"³⁴ so anxiety is in the face of *Dasein* itself as nothingness. Both world and *Dasein* are the ground for each other, their meaning is mutually derived so both are their own groundless ground, both beings and *Dasein* are without essence as their existence is constituted by relations. As being-in-the-world *Dasein* is determined by a referential totality in relation to its self-identity, it lacks any intrinsic essence and instead finds its identity through emptying itself by giving meaning to other phenomena. "In uncanniness *Dasein* stands together with itself primordially. Uncanniness brings this entity face to face with its undisguised nullity"³⁵ note 'entity' in footnote ref to 1.1), since anxiety always concerns the structural totality of *Dasein* and arises from *Dasein* itself it is experienced as both indefinite and all-pervasive, originating everywhere and nowhere. Anxiety is not felt in the face of or for a single possibility or mode of being but in the face of the possibility of the impossibility indicating that in the face of which *Dasein* is anxious

³³ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 101.

³⁴ *Being and Time*, 232. SZ 187

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 333. SZ 286

is also what Dasein is anxious for, “is simply Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being”.³⁶ In fear we are afraid for a possibility of Dasein and thus turn away from what is fearsome and threatening to that possibility. In anxiety we turn away from Dasein as possibility itself fleeing to the everyday indicating that anxiety is both for and in the face of Dasein.

Anxiety as-such makes us feel ‘uncanny/unhomelike’ by disclosing nothingness as non-meaning so that anxiety is experienced as the loss of everyday concerns and significance bringing “one back to the pure ‘that-it-is’ of one’s ownmost individualized thrownness”.³⁷ Deprived of the everyday meanings it was once absorbed in as its attention is no longer repelled but drawn back to its own nature as nothingness. States-of-mind open up the world as a horizon of significance, anxiety opens up a horizon of insignificance, the referential totality is no longer experienced as meaningful, “it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance.”³⁸ Both beings and the world withdraw simultaneously bringing Dasein “back from its absorption in the ‘world’” as “Everyday familiarity collapses”³⁹ rendering the familiar into the uncanny. This lack of significance reveals the resistance of entities to the projections of meaning, that non-Dasein “must be conceived as unmeaning, essentially devoid of any meaning at all.”⁴⁰ All that remains is the sheer givenness of entities, non-differentiated regarding their significance, both entities and Dasein are disclosed as potentiality thus ready for either the projection of Dasein or the sending of Being. To experience the world as uncanny in anxiety is to experience it as without ‘why’, as obtrusive and resistant to our projections, bereft of the possibilities that define our self-understanding all that remains is the potentiality of pure Da-Sein; nothingness as the condition for the disclosure of the now absent meanings. The complex relation of this unmeaning to the present-at-hand is developed more in chapter 3.4.

This is why when faced with our Da in anxiety we feel an ambivalence between panic and “peculiar calm”⁴¹ an uncertain tension and nervous apprehensiveness of this new found homelessness in the wake of the withdrawal of meaning that settles into an uncanniness ill at ease with a world rendered unfamiliar. It is not a fearful flight but bewilderment in the face of entities sunk into indifference, this uneasy insecurity in the face of our own contingency is accompanied by a peaceful calm of freedom from previous bonds of the everyday, an exuberance at the new horizons opened by a return to one’s ownmost Being that is “in secret alliance with the cheerfulness and gentleness of creative longing.”⁴²

How one is in anxiety reflects the other structural features, the indefiniteness of what it is in the face of that brings Dasein to face itself, “What is ‘it’ that makes ‘one’ feel ill at ease? We cannot say what it is before which one feels ill at ease. As a whole it is so for one...In the slipping away of beings only this ‘no hold on things’ comes over us and remains,”⁴³ leaving us amidst alien unfamiliar beings that we can no longer grasp as meaningful, in exposing this failure of meaning “(a)nxiety reveals the nothing” (ibid). Indefiniteness and unmeaning combined make us powerless in the face of anxiety, as it concerns our very nature as Da it can only be accepted or the doomed attempt be made to flee. This element of helplessness before an overwhelming experience of our ownmost

³⁶ Ibid., 295. SZ 251

³⁷ Ibid., 394. SZ 343

³⁸ Ibid., 231. SZ 186

³⁹ Ibid., 233. SZ 189

⁴⁰ Ibid., 193. SZ 152

⁴¹ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 100.

⁴² Ibid., 106.

⁴³ Ibid., 101.

truth, and that to deny such an attunement is only to flee reality, transforms in the later works into the warrant for an awe-ful surrendering before the mystery of Being.

Great_Doubt

These elements of anxiety are also found in Nishitani's characterization of the Great Doubt; that world and self are unified as a question, the paradox of alienation/isolation within non-differentiation, and the revealing of unmeaning. In the first essay of *Religion and Nothingness* Nishitani characterizes the religious quest as the question "For what purpose do I myself exist?" (pg3RN). Just as in anxiety Dasein is bought before itself through the loss of meaning "We become aware of religion as a need, as a must for life, only at the level of life at which everything else loses its necessity and its utility."⁴⁴ Ontological enquiry as the study into the conditions for possibility of meaning always pertains to the question of ones own meaning and encounter with the nothingness of self and world, and is also thereby the study of the elemental selfhood revealed through anxiety as the precondition for meaning.

Ontology thus begins with nihility overcoming the self as "Nihility refers to that which renders meaningless the meaning of life. When we become a question to ourselves and...our very existence has turned into a question mark"⁴⁵ in moments of self-questioning the abyssal nihility of our being comes to the fore as the world withdraws. In the Great Doubt we are what is doubted and confronted so that Dasein faces itself as what is at issue, the question of our own meaning arises as the everyday world recedes. As anxiety is both in the face of and for our existence so does the self both doubt, is doubted and impels the doubting, the self does not engage in doubting, it becomes doubt; it realizes doubt in the sense of actualization-sive-understanding. The self does not encounter nihility but becomes nihility, in doubt the world and self are realized as one, the self is nullified so that "the separation of the within and the without is surpassed subjectively, and that nihility opens up at the ground of the within and the without."⁴⁶

This unifying of doubt and doubter ends the estrangement of the subject-object dichotomy of the field of consciousness by gathering the self and all things in the world into 'a single question mark' so that the Doubt is at both once reality and the self. Nishitani denies this is akin to the 'absolute One' of traditional metaphysics despite such uniform meaninglessness not differentiating between the subject and object, between what Dasein is anxious for and in the face of. Instead this shared absence of meaning retains an element of self-enclosure in which "all things appear isolated from one another by an abyss. Each thing has its being as a one-and-only, a solitariness absolutely shut up within itself. We call such a state of absolute self-enclosure 'nihilistic'."⁴⁷ Deprived of meaning phenomena cannot relate themselves to each other and are experienced as radically differentiated even whilst the meaning that could differentiate them is nullified. Such a paradoxical union of multiplicity and non-differentiation would seem to bring nihility closer than ever to the characterization of sunyata, even for a transitional stage. Chapter 2.5 will deal more with this relation of uniqueness and uniformity.

Great Doubts 'greatness' lies in that "The very condition of basic uncertainty regarding human existence in the world and the existence of self and others, as well as the suffering this gives rise to, are surely matters of the utmost, elemental concern".⁴⁸ Greatness is thus conditional upon an experience of suffering and shared concern that is

⁴⁴Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 3.

⁴⁵Ibid., 4.

⁴⁶Ibid., 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁴⁸Ibid., 16.

not restricted “to the isolated self of self-consciousness but embraces at once the existence of the self and of all things.”⁴⁹ Yet such Greatness is also absolute as it concerns the nihility of the self “at the foundations of its existence...To that extent the realization of nihility is nothing other than the realization of the self itself.”⁵⁰ Like Heidegger Nishitani calls the denial of such elemental concern a flight from doubt, yet whilst such nihility is omnipresent and only uncovered in doubt/anxiety, it paradoxically only is when existentially realized within such doubt/anxiety. Anxiety reveals the essence of Dasein to be the nothingness that enables meaning, but this essence is inconstant; “the transformation of man into his Da-Sein that every instance of anxiety occasions in us”⁵¹ both reveal us as, yet also renders us, Da-Sein. This theme was first raised in chapter 1.1 and is to be the focus of chapter 2.6.

As Way Towards Death

Both anxiety and the Great Doubt are seen as preparatory for and complemented by death, but whilst Nishitani's thought on the Great Death has affinities to Heidegger there are also significant differences.

The attunement of anxiety brings Dasein “face-to-face with the ‘nothing’ of the possible impossibility of existence,”⁵² so too does its equiprimordial understanding reflect this impossibility of projection; “Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein.”⁵³ As attunement is ontologically primary to understanding death first requires anxiety discloses to Dasein that it exists as thrown towards its end. Death shares the distinguishing features of anxiety; individualizing and inescapable as Dasein's ownmost, non-relational possibility not to be surpassed, indefinite and constant it brings the totality of Dasein into view as being-towards-death and is proximally fled from even whilst the pre-condition for the resoluteness of authenticity. As the Great Doubt enables authenticity by shattering the ego of the they-self Nishitani also characterizes it as the way towards the Great Death; the death of ego (field of consciousness). The Great Death is the transitional process of nihilization between the fields of consciousness and sunyata, the relative nihility that erodes the subjective ego self opening the way to the realization of self as absolute nothingness. The death of ego is thus characterized as “the realization (actualization-sive-appropriation) of the reality of the self and all things.”⁵⁴ and this reality is both defined and enabled by nihility that allows the self “to achieve a subjectivity that can in no way be objectivised.”⁵⁵

Neither understand death as ontic demise but an ontological structure existentially realized through owning ones finitude as shadowing every moment of life; for both death permeates and reveals the ontological structure of existence as being-towards-death and death-sive-life, the personal realization of which through anxiety/doubt leads to the possibility of authenticity and sunyata. Just as death is encountered in every moment of life and Dasein cannot flee itself this abyss of our being is always present so that “In the case of death, we do not face something that awaits us in some distant future, but something that we bring into the world with us at the moment we are born.”⁵⁶ Both see the existential realization of death as a liberation from inauthentic illusion, either from the understanding of the self in terms of das Man or subjective ego. For both this points beyond man; to our belonging to Sein or identity with absolute nothingness, yet also

⁴⁹Ibid., 18.

⁵⁰Ibid., 16.

⁵¹ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 102.

⁵² *Being and Time*, 310. SZ 265

⁵³ Ibid., 294. SZ 250

⁵⁴Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 21.

⁵⁵Ibid., 16.

⁵⁶Ibid., 4.

paradoxically indicates that such absolute nothingness only is as finite man and that Sein only is as its Da.

Despite these similarities Nishitani uses death to denote a wider variety of related ideas. His discussion of death in terms of the death axis in Science and Zen places it more with the resolution of the conflict between religion and science. In many ways it is a notion of death more consonant with Gestell that like the death of Being and Time is the possibility of the impossibility of possibility, that instead of calling us to authentic responsibility announces the possibility of a free relation to Sein. Whilst for both the question of reality is opened up by death in Being and Time this is an individualizing whilst for Nishitani's own-being is revealed as undifferentiated from others. The Great Death of the ego's passing is a transcending of duality, being-towards-death a gathering of the everyday repeatable possibilities into focus, a difference profound enough to say what they term 'death' is a different phenomenon in the works of early Heidegger.

In later texts the role of death for Heidegger began to change, and the mortality of man in the Fourfold came closer to elemental awareness that stems from the death of ego, resoluteness replaced with releasement introducing the element of non-willing. The self-renunciation of the most mortal poet as a sacrifice for Being so that in appropriation for meaning man overcomes himself; "Being present is grounded in the turning-towards which as such turns the essence of man into it so that the latter may dissipate itself for it."⁵⁷ As the notion of death shifted from individual resoluteness to the mortality of man similarities remain balanced by different differences, the variances in the negation of ego-death and interpenetration of death-sive-life will be dealt over section 3.

The Role of Nihilation

In both of Heidegger's main reflections on anxiety (Being and Time and What is Metaphysics?) it reveals nothingness as what enables the Da-Sein relation (disclosure of meaning). In both it is the encounter with nothingness in anxiety that allows the disclosure of entities as meaningful beings in the everyday world by the repelling of Dasein's attention away from its own nothingness towards inauthenticity and the reification of ego. By disclosing our thrownness into un-meaning anxiety also discloses the necessity of projected meanings to render the uncanny familiar; the resistance of earth invites world and both are necessary to the strife of meanings disclosure. The experience of our nothingness is the experience of un-meaning that impels us to meaningfulness; meaning manifests both within us as nothingness and impelled by that nothingness that is our nature. This action of the nothing is termed nihilation by Heidegger, a "wholly repelling gesture toward beings that are in retreat as a whole, which is the action of the nothing that oppresses Dasein in anxiety."⁵⁸ Heidegger's later injunction that we should strive to fulfil our nature as shepherds of Being is foreshadowed here with the claim that "Being held out into the nothing – as Dasein is – on the ground of concealed anxiety makes man a lieutenant of the nothing,"⁵⁹ anxiety reveals us to be agents of the nothing, just as it will later be said that as mortals we preserve death as the shrine of the nothing.

In revealing the contingency and groundlessness of everyday meanings anxiety firstly discloses that it has been fled from. This is a two-fold concealment, not only do we flee from anxiety and our ownmost selves as nothingness but we forget that we are thus fleeing and that the meanings of the everyday are contingent, we first forget our essence as un-meaning then we forget that these meanings are contingent not necessary. This feature of anxiety is later interpreted in terms of the supreme danger of Gestell. If the Dasein of Being and Time is a personal self, and the man of Heidegger's later thought a

⁵⁷ Heidegger, "The Question of Being," 83.

⁵⁸ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 103.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

collective noun, then anxiety is the precursor to Gestell which itself is anxiety writ large. This marks a shift in Dasein's moods towards epochal attunements as authenticity moves from the individual resolution to the communal service to the nothing. Anxiety as Dasein's direct experience of its own nullity is widened in scope to the experience of the nullity of Being that is nihilism (Gestell). Nihilism as withdrawal is the experience of the self's appropriation making anxiety epochal.

Like all moods Dasein proximally encounters anxiety in its inauthentic mode of being, disclosing the Da in the manner of turning away from it towards beings. As the referential totality of beings as a whole recedes into unmeaning Dasein is repelled from the looming nothingness towards beings, the horizon withdraws when we are concerned with beings, and the beings when we are concerned with totality as horizon. Dasein cannot grasp the nothingness so instead attempts to grasp the totality as it withdraws, thus are beings as meaningful highlighted as other to the unmeaning nature of the horizon that makes them manifest. The Umwelt nihilated in anxiety could be seen as the field of consciousness made possible yet obscuring the other fields of awareness, nothingness constitutes the fields of conventional awareness in such a way as to conceal itself. This everydayness is essential to Dasein due to the "existentially positive character of the capacity for delusion."⁶⁰ Yet despite the everyday being proximal "the 'not-at-home' must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon."⁶¹ Anxiety discloses how mood normally repels attention from itself to the world, and does so by disclosing the nothingness of Da-Sein that allows the process of disclosure. Anxiety is the self-disclosure of disclosure, of the possibility for meaning; it shows nothingness as possibilizing both authentic resoluteness and inauthentic turning away, as the origin of both the saving and the danger. Anxiety discloses falling and directing ourselves towards meanings as inherent to our nature as structural features of disclosedness. In disclosing Dasein as its own project that must take responsibility for its null existence anxiety discloses "its Being-free for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its Being-free for the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is."⁶² Yet inauthentic attunements remain integral to the disclosure of meaning as they "bring us face to face with beings as a whole they conceal from us the nothing"⁶³ as we flee from non-meaning into meaning, from nihility into the illusions of the field of consciousness with its everyday comforts of egoistic identity. It is awareness of the limitations of everyday disclosures not their complete dismissal that is necessitated by anxiety.

As the awareness of the nothingness that is required for the disclosure of meaning precludes the operation of the process of disclosure anxiety is necessarily a fleeting experience, as the condition of possibility for both authenticity and inauthenticity itself anxiety belongs to both and neither, it is a moment of nothingness and a return to some form of meaning is inevitable, with only potentially an authentic return featuring awareness of our ground as nothingness. To more fully grasp nothingness requires building on the temporary instances of what anxiety reveals, and nothing beyond this revealing. This is the root of the ambivalence between panic and calmness, it is a state of purest potentiality that precursors a return to or significant break away from our previous way of experiencing the world. Thus there is an element of panic as old self-identities slip away yet also a sense of elation from the possibility of self-redefinition free from everyday meanings so that "Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakeable joy in this

⁶⁰ *Being and Time*, 117. SZ 138

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 234. SZ 189

⁶² *Ibid.*, 232. SZ 188

⁶³ Heidegger, McNeill, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 87.

possibility”⁶⁴ the experience of the self being torn within an undifferentiated mode of Being, to be on the cusp of falling or freedom.

The Great Doubt as a mode of awareness is also such a call to both responsibility and freedom in awareness of nihility as primordial selfhood. It is only as grounded in abyssal nihility that the Great Doubt can be experienced, and the experience of it is our grounding in nihility, it is the existential realization of that nihility so that “Through it the uncertainty that lies at the ground of the self and all things is appropriated by the self”⁶⁵ and Dasein is brought before its responsibility for these uncertain possibilities. Nishitani's consideration of our karmic debt of finitude as an infinite responsibility, the burden-debt for all existence, will be considered more in chapter 3.5, but the karmic burden mirrors Heidegger's characterization of authenticity as responsibility for owning ones actions; resoluteness is wanting a conscience thus accepting infinite karmic responsibility, leading beyond the field of nihility.

Inauthenticity also plays an integral role in Nishitani' thought. The seeming self-evidence of subjectivity is attributed to the tendency to reification of the self into ego that is constitutive of the very nature of self, as falling is of Dasein as the metaphysical animal, so that despite the impossibility of viewing subjectivity objectively “the self shows a constant tendency to comprehend itself representationally as some ‘thing’ that is called ‘I.’”⁶⁶ Such an inherent tendency towards self-attachment arises as “ego and person from the very outset entail inward self-reflection, without which they cannot come into being as ego and person, it is only natural that this kind of self-immanent self-prehension should come about”⁶⁷ through the proximal everyday experience of conventional reality upon the field of consciousness.

This is natural and proper to the form of disclosure upon that field; the conventional truth upon the field of consciousness is just as real as the Śūnyatā that constitutes its possibility, and the egoistic mode of self upon this field is not only ineliminable but justified within the context of applicability for such an egoistic vocabulary. In the same manner that inauthenticity is not pejorative, rather only the covering up of what renders it possible and the obscuring of the authentic mode of being that constitutes the self in concert with the inauthentic is condemned, it is only certain features of this egoistic mode of being that seem problematic. Namely; the mistaken identity of the field of consciousness for the sole-reality that brings with it the constant danger of “a confinement that inevitably ushers in the narcissistic mode of grasping the self wherein the self gets caught up in itself”⁶⁸. Such self-attachment obscures the self-identity of the personal self with the absolute nothingness that in their mutual constitution comprise the self-realization of reality allowing for such realization to surpass the estrangement stemming from the paradox of representation

This self-attachment is shattered in the nullification of the field of nihility, the ego as an object of its own representation is rendered non-objective as non-ego along with the entities that are deprived of the simple self-identity of substance, so that “the existence of the self and things is disclosed in their reality by sweeping off the cover projected by conceptualization.”⁶⁹ The attempt of the self to reach itself representationally upon the field of consciousness falls victim to its own form of the paradox of representation so that “the human ego-self falls into an ever-deepening dilemma. At the extreme point of this

⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 358. SZ 310

⁶⁵ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 18.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 97.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 23.

dilemma...the human ego must die.”⁷⁰ The combining of both subject and objects into a single doubt as the nullification of the self is thus transferred into the objects that are its representations but in a reciprocal manner so that “the insertion of nihility at the ground of things means, in fact, that nihility looms up from the ground of all existing things, assaults us, and inserts itself into the ground of our existence.”⁷¹ The incomprehensibility of self and things in nihility arises from their previous reification as objects obscuring their essential nature and unity, and if the subject is the representer of objects the nullification of objects also reveals the nullity at the ground of the subject. The paradox of representation passes away on the field of nihility as both self and things are no longer objects so that “their cognition cease to be problems; the problem is the reality of things and the self.”⁷² There is a paradigm shift away from epistemological concern of how objects can be known by a subject to concern with the suchness of both and the manner in which they manifest; the conditions for their mutual realization.

As Way Towards Wonder and Metaphysics

Through nihilation nothingness enables Dasein to enter into a relation with beings, thus meaning, as the essence of Dasein is to have an understanding of Being through disclosing beings “Da-Sein means: being held out into the nothing...if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never be related to beings nor even to itself.”⁷³ Being and nothingness fulfil the same role in rendering entities meaningful beings, “The nothing does not merely serve as the counter concept of beings...In the Being of beings the nihilation of the nothing occurs.”⁷⁴ (Unmeaning is the condition of possibility for the disclosure of meaningful beings, so that “Only in the nothing of Dasein do beings as a whole, in accord with their most proper possibility – that is, in a finite way – come to themselves.”⁷⁵ The nothingness of the Da is required not only for Dasein to find beings and itself meaningful, but also for what is un-Dasein and un-meaning to also come into their own essence.

Anxiety in the face of nothingness leads us to wonder and “Only on the ground of wonder – the revelation of the nothing – does the ‘why?’ loom before us,”⁷⁶ thus starting philosophy on its way, uncanny homelessness leading to wonder then awe at the mystery of Being. The fundamental function of nothingness as the unmeaning facet of Being in What is Metaphysics? is to invoke the mystery that compels the questioning of metaphysics and scientific inquiry that allows us to fulfil our natures as thinkers and explorers of meaning. Anxiety discloses meaningful beings as uncanny entities, as strange thus worthy of questioning; the brute ‘thatness’ of beings leads us to inquire into the mystery of Being; that beings ‘are’, and thus engage in metaphysical speculation, and this questioning is the essence of scientific Dasein that allows it to tear down the false necessity of everyday meanings. Wonder at meaning, the asking of nothingness is also the start of Nishitani's religious quest; it is the uncovering of what is forgotten and concealed necessarily by the field of consciousness and the bringing forth of the mystery that is concealed by the everydayness of the ego. Elemental subjectivity as absolute nothingness is thus disclosed in the mood of wonder; “the most appropriate mode of being ‘aware of awareness’ is when we are in a state of ‘wonder’, as this enables us to perceive our openness, or ability to be aware, as an extra-ordinary mystery.”⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 12.

⁷¹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 136.

⁷² Ibid., 137.

⁷³ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 103.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁵ Heidegger, McNeil, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 95.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 109.

⁷⁷ M. Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger* (Taylor & Francis, 2014), 72.

Nothingness grounds both Dasein and metaphysics as “metaphysics belongs to the ‘nature of man’...Metaphysics is the basic occurrence of Dasein. It is Dasein itself.”⁷⁸ To question metaphysics is to question ourselves as Dasein and reveal the shared ground of both as nothingness. Metaphysics and science as responses to the silent call of wonder forget their ground, yet this ignoring of the nothing is fruitful as their inability to reach their own ground is precisely what allows the nothing to possibilize metaphysical inquiry. The inauthentic approaches to the nothingness of our Da are just as integral to the structure of disclosure as the authentic, indeed the purpose of the ontological unity disclosed through anxiety is the enabling of disclosures whether authentic or inauthentic, “this constant if ambiguous turning away from the nothing accords, within certain limits, with the most proper significance of the nothing.”⁷⁹ Nothingness must remain the unthought ground of metaphysics in order for a conception of ‘beingness’ to be disclosed so “the truth of metaphysics dwells...in closest proximity to the constantly lurking possibility of deepest error.”⁸⁰ This is later characterised as a progressive forgetting of Being in terms of the supreme danger yet is proper to the essence of metaphysics, the more Being is forgotten the truer metaphysics is to its essence. Nihilism is natural to man and the nature of this forgetting is to be inquired into further over the following chapters.

The formulation of wonder in terms of a question implies an answer, and this question of wonder that manifests itself as metaphysics in the search for an answer is the origin of philosophy. But the answers conceal the question, moreover they conceal the question as a quest. This question thus serves as a koan; nothingness is not its answer as there is no answer, only the setting on the way of thought through wonder. The question of the meaning of the self is realized as having no answer, only non-self in terms of nihility as bare possibility, the meaninglessness that allows for meaning. The desire to answer the question of wonder could be seen as the metaphysical impulse Buddhism and Heideggerian thought is intended to cure, our existence characterized by a homeless need. This impulse is what sets nihilism on its way, shrinking back before the abyss of self and world to flee to false metaphysical certainties. The question 'why beings not nothing?' may drive inquiry, but the greatest human tragedy is that if there is a meaning to the universe then it will be unsatisfactory to the minds that evolved within it; the need for something beyond the brute reality explicated through scientific investigation (pure nihility) does not entail anything other than a statement on how we have developed to require such explanation so are driven towards a mystery of our own making.

Concluding Issues

In short; anxiety discloses uncanniness, the dissolution of our conceptions of self and world that leaves us to encounter both as nothingness rather than the contingent meanings of the everyday that we seek to cover the nothingness with. As a metaphysical question nothingness brings us into question, it characterizes Dasein as the Da for meaning, beings as uncanny prior to their disclosure as meaningful and Being. Un-meaning is integral to; meaningful beings, those who find things meaningful, Meaning itself, and in all cases is ontologically primary as despite that beings are chronologically encountered as meaningful first this is only possible in virtue of unmeaning. Anxiety as the fundamental attunement cannot and should not be covered over or surpassed, it is not a form of suffering nor a distress we should leave behind. The experience of nihility is both the preparing of the way to sunyata by breaking through the field of consciousness yet also once realized with the self is itself sunyata. Uncanny homelessness is not purely transitional but continually permeates authentic retrieval. This primordial homelessness is later rendered historical by Heidegger and the relation of this to the self-transformation

⁷⁸ Heidegger, McNeil, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 96.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 104.

⁸⁰ Heidegger, McNeil, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 96.

of nihilism is considered later in terms of dwelling, divinities and the retention of the field of nihility within the unity of fields that is Sunyata. There are several issues raised by the above to be addressed over the coming chapters.

Incitement

Attunements are beyond our power coming over us and overwhelming us; especially anxiety which due to its indefiniteness "can awaken in existence at any moment. It needs no unusual event to arouse it. Its sway is as thoroughgoing as its possible occasionings are trivial." Nothingness cannot be thought, but anxiety as "experience is accessible (or at least presented) only through discourse of a traditional kind"⁸¹ so although we cannot think anxiety we can reflect on the experience once it has occurred and thus also try to instigate it through such reflections. Anxiety may be occasioned by the most 'innocuous of situations'⁸² but it is far more likely to be occasioned by far-reaching experiences that bring the projections of Dasein into radical doubt, "The point at which the ordinarily necessary things of life...all lose their necessity and utility is found at those times when death, nihility, or sin...undermine the roothold of our existence and bring the meaning of life into question – become pressing personal problems for us."⁸³ Conditioning of the Great Doubt would seem in line with Buddhist meditative practice and leads Heisig to claim that Doubt is "not a simple blanking of the mind but a disciplined emptying of mind."⁸⁴ Stenson that "Nishitani's use of mood as a means of evoking insight is similar to Heidegger's"⁸⁵ yet Nishitani also asserts that "When this Doubt appears to the self, it does so with an inevitability quite beyond the control of the consciousness and arbitrary wilfulness of the self".⁸⁶ There is a tension between claims of the powerlessness of man regarding anxiety/Doubt and that for their works to have impact it must be within our power to start ourselves and each other along this way.

Anxiety can be incited through meditation or exposing oneself to extreme life experiences, even if what anxiety discloses is ontologically prior to these they can still open a road back into their ground as the nothingness of Da. A sense of the uncanny can arise through analysis of the familiar that renders it uncanny, but nihility is not uncanny until it is analyzed, the familiar is only rendered uncanny by existential analysis and questioning. Such incitement is integral to Heidegger's thought, Kirkland notes Heidegger "seems to wager that his reader is experiencing at present a certain distress"⁸⁷ holding we must not "from dread of dread, i.e. in sheer timidity, shut our ears to the soundless voice which attunes us to the horrors of the abyss."⁸⁸ The experience of nihility in anxiety is not enough, to go through nihility (to progress through the fields) one must want to have a conscience, so that "Wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes a readiness for anxiety".⁸⁹ One must want to be enlightened and cured; which first means one must be persuaded one is sick through the solicitude of others. The role of such distress will be dealt with in depth in chapter 2.6, and will be returned to later in chapter 3.5's consideration of compassion as both choosing to have a conscience and inculcating the desire to have a conscience in others (Being and Time and Religion and Nothingness can both be seen as

⁸¹ M. Murray, *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays* (Yale University Press, 1978), 131.

⁸² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 234. SZ 189

⁸³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 3.

⁸⁴ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 221.

⁸⁵ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 117.

⁸⁶ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 18.

⁸⁷ Sean Kirkland, "Heidegger and Greek Philosophy," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 82.

⁸⁸ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 385.

⁸⁹ *Being and Time*, 342. SZ 296

such attempts at inciting such desire). The possibility that the danger only is as such in terms of an attunement to a projected saving will be a major focus of chapters 2.3-6.

If the ontological only is when realized as such then solicitude takes on the connotation of attempting to attune others to a reality that only is for them once they are so attuned. The issue is whether nihility understood as homelessness is primordial and just highlighted by the analysis, or whether it only is as existentially realized thus created/incited by the analysis. Whether the uncanny automatically and only is an experience of homelessness that impels us to seek a dwelling place or whether nothingness can be experienced other than as anxiety (not through homelessness as privation) in a way no longer bound in a relation of deprivation to the everyday is a theme to be explored in later chapters.

Attestation

As noted in the introduction Heidegger and Nishitani's thought proceed not from theoretical foundations but from experiential attestations, the history of Being is a charting of a sequence of experiences of Being culminating in the current epoch. Their thought's warrant rests on this accounts explanatory force compared to other conceptions of the self, the warrant of any such explanation lies in its ability to do justice to the phenomenon to which it attests within the context of what the inquiry is to ascertain. Ultimately their thought relies on the experience of self we have and opens the way for an obvious counter-argument of denying that one has had such an experience of anxiety, thus it cannot play such a vital role in the human condition. The fact that nihilism "is the common experience of countless numbers of reflective persons today"⁹⁰ says nothing of those not amongst those numbers. Those who have not anxiously faced the Great Doubt have little purchase to move further through Nishitani's thought, for "There is no proof or disproof of what he is arguing...without the experience of having followed the path oneself"⁹¹ and personal attestation is only personally convincing. Strauss notes that the primordality of anxiety "is not guaranteed by the experience itself. It can only be guaranteed by argument."⁹² Anxiety cannot be refuted, but its precise pertinence cannot rest on the warrant of pure experience alone, argument is required to show whether this is the result of a historical epoch or a fundamental attunement; anxiety alone cannot ground the narrative of epochal history or theory of the fields by itself.

Those who do not experience anxiety/Doubt are said to be in denial/flight, that their experience of nihility is faulty. In Being and Time Heidegger sees anxiety as flight from the stance of completeness, there is an axiology of autochthony. This is valid within its appropriate context of applicability (the analysis of the structural totality of Dasein) yet if we are not attempting to re-awaken the Being question through preliminary analysis there is no warrant for the call to authenticity. Only from the achieved self-identity of the fields do the earlier fields get apprehended as flight; thus only once we have realized sunyata do the flaws of previous fields get enframed as flaws. The realization of sunyata is its verification; that denial of anxiety is flight from it is not a truth until the resolute integrality that leads to sunyata is realized. This problem will be dealt with at length in chapter 2.6; that sunyata only is as existentially realized yet also acts as the condition (and normative warrant) for that realization; that the supreme danger only is so from the perspective of a projected saving.

Universality

The question remains whether anxiety is the sole way to the realization of nihility or

⁹⁰ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, viii.

⁹¹ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 221.

⁹² Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 32.

whether other moods or self-experiences not linked to the experience of homelessness as privation can lead to ontological origin. Whilst agreeing that these experiences are of a universal nothing thus accessible to all I would also like to question their characterizations as universal experiences; that all who deny it only flee from anxiety and the only way to reach sunyata is through the doubt that leads to death.

The three fields for Nishitani are a necessary progression that cannot be skipped, this would seem to rule out other primordial moods leading to enlightenment, for him “the only route to philosophy was one that began in a nihilistic despair over the human condition, passed on to doubt over all of existence, and only then ascended to the wonder of emptiness”.⁹³ But the claim that nihilistic despair can only be overcome from within does not entail that the wonder at emptiness cannot be reached through other moods without needing the transition through the despair of nihility (through an experience of homelessness as privation). To claim this requires that other modes of experiencing nihility are shown as incapable of reaching wonder. It may be true that the “real self-realization of reality is possible only by overcoming nihility in and through our existence”⁹⁴ and that Nishitani personally came to philosophy through nihilistic anxiety, he “began in despair, nihility, and negativity”,⁹⁵ but this does not warrant his universalizing of that path so that it becomes the only way into sunyata.

Anxiety is the paramount mood as it discloses the totality of Dasein, its ontological priority results from its disclosure of what enables the disclosure of beings-as-whole at the same time as it discloses that whole. The grasping of the totality of Dasein is to be achieved through the analysis of anxiety as “one of the most far-reaching and most primordial possibilities of disclosure – one that lies in Dasein itself.”⁹⁶ Anxiety is ‘one of the most primordial possibilities, it is given paramount importance as “in anxiety there lies the possibility of a disclosure which is quite distinctive; for anxiety individualizes,”⁹⁷ in individualizing Dasein anxiety brings it before its ownmost being in a way that both discloses and unifies the structural totality of Dasein in a way fitting the conditional aim of Being and Time. What is Metaphysics? matches the former concern as shown by the criteria for metaphysical questions; that “can be asked only in such a way that the questioner as such is present together with the question.”⁹⁸ This indicates Heidegger is trying to think metaphysics in the same manner as Dasein, as a totality that can be grounded by something inherent in its structure that allows its relation to Being through comportment with beings. The concern with individualizing is no longer cited, the main unifying concern of the texts is the attunement that reveals the condition of meaning to be an inherent relation with nothingness as non-meaning. Boredom and joy also reveal beings as a whole yet in such a manner that conceals the nothing. The indifference of boredom is akin to anxiety in disclosing the undifferentiated insignificance of beings yet does not lead to wonder; just as joy covers over unmeaning so does not disclose the nothing. Anxiety and Doubt are not pure attunements to suchness or the presence-at-hand of unmeaning entities, they are an attunement towards this as possibilities for (and the necessity of) meaning. Rather than pure experiences of nothingness they carry their own axiological pre-conditions to exist in this manner of attunement, a theme to be dealt with at length in chapter 2.6.

Awe and astonishment also turn us towards the whole and can disclose the nothing, calling us to realize the shared nullity of self and world, and share a similarly grounding

⁹³ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 191.

⁹⁴ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 14.

⁹⁵ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 193.

⁹⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 226. SZ 182

⁹⁷ Ibid., 235. SZ 190

⁹⁸ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 93.

relation to the sciences, "Angst, as anxiety in the face of the abyss, and Scheu, as awe and wonder at there being anything at all, are two aspects of the same phenomenon." ⁹⁹ What needs to be clarified is whether anxiety is a necessary step towards the experience of wonder at the mystery of Being, the sole gateway to the mystery that being is, or whether experiencing nihility in awe is an equally primordial mood that both reveals the whole and has the relevant characteristics. Most pertinently; whether the experience of awe can be reached in a manner without prior experience of homelessness as privation so that dwelling/Sunyata is attained from within the experience of nihilism as a homelessness to be preserved. As only occurring with the withdrawal of the everyday anxiety is primordial but never proximal. But under the claim of Gestell as anxiety made epochal such experience of nihility is both proximal and primordial, the experience of homelessness is then not a privation and lacks the element of the collapse of conventional thought and meaning. The primordially of Gestell as return to epochal origin opens up new ways into the nothing that must also share certain other of anxiety's traits.

Science and Awe

Heidegger tends to denigrate scientific awe as mere inauthentic curiosity that does not reach the nothing, a thought that remains on the field of consciousness and in offering causal explanation covers over the mystery of Being. Werner Marx and many others assert that "It is a matter of fact that the aggressive self-assurance of Western man has led to...///...the loss of any sense of awe whatsoever in the face of what is in principle beyond his ken"¹⁰⁰, that the way to wonder through awe is inimical to science as the herald of Gestell despite metaphysics being impelled by this sense of wonder and kept alive by it.

What is Metaphysics? foreshadows later identifications of science and Gestell in asking "What happens to us, essentially, in the grounds of our existence, when science becomes our passion?"¹⁰¹ the implied answer is that we forget the nothing, thus Being. Being and Time characterizes the attunement of science as the indifference of the present-at-hand, also a stance of mechanistic death. Yet such a stance can also be related to an attunement of awe leading to wonder. This stance towards the present-at-hand shares traits with anxiety, the breaking down of accepted meanings by scientific levelling and the disclosing of the relation between entities and awareness in unifying their nullity. Whilst every "state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world"¹⁰² scientific disclosures with their more reflective than projective attunement to beings seem to be in a way more submissive, "In such impartiality of inquiring, determining, and grounding, a peculiarly delineated submission to beings themselves obtains, in order that they may reveal themselves."¹⁰³ Wonder in the face of Being, philosophical astonishment and curiosity that beings 'are', grounds science as the quest to fully understand beings and our apprehension of them, to understand the process of reality's rising self-awareness. Emphasizing the element of surrender to beings within scientific disclosures, inquiring into beings on their own ground, could even be seen as a preparatory stage in Heidegger's notion of releasement.

In his later writings Heidegger moves to an opposite view of science as mathematical projection, but that a form of scientific inquiry which "holds itself out into the nothing...understands itself for what it is only when it does not give up the nothing",

⁹⁹ G. Parkes, "Thoughts on the Way," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 123.

¹⁰⁰ W. Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World* (State University of New York Press, 1992), 29.

¹⁰¹ Heidegger, McNeill, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 87.

¹⁰² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 177. SZ 137

¹⁰³ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 94.

¹⁰⁴ opposed to the more narrow positivistic notion of science tackled by Nishitani and the later Heidegger, can be one of the higher forms of disclosure that will inform later critique of Nishitani's theory as to the opposition of religion and science. Chapter 3.4 will use these hints in the earlier writings to expand a possible counter-view of science in his thought, the second half of the following chapter concerns Nishitani's thought on the existentialization of science towards this end.

2.2 Nihilism as Destiny and Danger

The Question Concerning Technology

The chapters in the rest of this section will be guided by a reading of *The Question Concerning Technology* supplemented by other texts as needed to elucidate themes pertinent to the historical emergence of Gestell. This text was chosen as its characterization of Gestell in terms of danger highlights two of the themes addressed by the thesis; the axiological presuppositions of Heidegger's ontology, and in concert with *The Turning* the shared origin of nihilism and that which saves. The narrative of Heidegger's history of metaphysics itself will only be touched on when pertinent to addressing the general process of Being's withdrawal (that the destiny of Being is its forgetting) and its culmination in the epoch of Gestell, rather than dealing with previous epochs themselves.

The clarification of *The Question Concerning Technology's* title through Heidegger's initial defining of its terms provides a concise and helpful summation of his thought regarding technology to guide the following chapters. "Questioning builds a way...The way is a way of thinking," ¹⁰⁵ that leads through language; way was previously defined as being called to undergo an experience. The concern is with the status of freedom in the relation between humanity and technology, with enabling this free relationship; the way is to prepare a free relation that "opens our human existence to the essence of technology." ¹⁰⁶ The essence of technology to be thought is not equivalent to technology but how technology 'comes to presence' or 'endures as presence'; how the understanding of Beingness in the modern epoch comes to pass. The essence of technology is how beings are disclosed as meaningful in the current epoch; the essence of man (human existence) is to be appropriated into the gathering that reveals such meaning.

The concern with a free relation to the essence of technology requires we do not "merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it" ¹⁰⁷ as this is simply to comport ourselves towards technology and thus overlook its essence. The implication of this is that on our current understanding of technology we are not capable of a free relation. As for the attestation of nihility there is an element of irrefutability to Heidegger's claim that "Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology whether we passionately affirm or deny it;" ¹⁰⁸ that no-one has yet to achieve a way of relating freely to technology to compete with the way Heidegger charts. Heidegger uses his usual method of starting with what is proximal to build a way into the primordial; beginning with the 'correct' definition of technology's essence as instrumental-anthropological to reach the 'true'. This instrumental conception frames the question of a free relation in terms of which constituent is using the other. Heidegger's posing of the question if

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰⁵ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

“technology were no mere means, how would it stand with the will to master it?”¹⁰⁹ indicates it is not to be the case that a ‘free’ relation involves the mastery of one constituent over the other; a free relation between human existence and technological essence would require that both enter into a free relation with the other.

The essays title can thus be read as 'being called to undergo an experience through language of the mutual freeing of the relation between human existence and the current epochal revealing of meaning.' That by thinking more deeply the relation between the essence of man and the essence of technology as how we reveal meaning (Da-Sein) both may be freed in their essential relation to one another. This endeavour can be seen as exemplifying the project of Heidegger's later thought, and contained within the unpacked title is the entire thrust of the Heideggerian *Verwindung*. This expanded title provides the framework for Heidegger's thinking on technology that is now to be addressed.

Gestell 's Manner of Revealing

Heidegger traces the way back into the concealed essence of technology through consideration of primordial notions of causality as indicated by the 'correct' definition of technology as instrumentality. The ‘true’ definition of technology is concluded to be bringing into appearance that is to “let what is not yet present arrive into presencing.”¹¹⁰ To bring to presence is to bring what is into its essence, such “starting something on its way into arrival”¹¹¹ enables what is to find its own way into presence as what it is. Heidegger names the shared nature of 'true' technology (techne) and thinging as poiesis; bringing-forth into unconcealment. The highest form of poiesis is said to be physis as “the arising of something from out of itself” whilst techne is its counterpart in that it “reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us”.¹¹² The ‘correct’ instrumentality of technology becomes the ‘true’ essence of technology as a bringing-to-presence of meaning so that “Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where aletheia, truth, happens.”¹¹³

Modern technology's mode of revealing is characterized as moving further from the techne that complements physis and poiesis into “a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging forth.”¹¹⁴ the unlocking-transforming-storing-distribution of energy. As a setting-upon technological revealing is characterized by unlocking and exposing directed “toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense,”¹¹⁵ it could be called the will to efficiency (the *causa efficiens* as paradigm writ large). This manner of revealing is an ordering that reveals entities as “ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering.”¹¹⁶ As a challenging-forth it “puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such,”¹¹⁷ it is a demand placed upon what comes to presence that it do so in the form of useable energy. Of note here is the use of the terms 'unreasonable' and 'nature', both of which are historically determined by their epoch and seem to have little meaningful sense beyond this, yet are used to indicate a flaw within that epochal understanding that gives them their current meaning. The possibility of adjudicating criteria for what counts as 'reasonable' in this regard will be explored further

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹¹² Ibid., 13.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 14.

in later consideration of the examples of challenging-forth Heidegger gives and the possible horizons for danger.

The nihilistic disclosure resulting from the completion of Being's withdrawal is accordingly characterized by challenging-forth (unreasonable demand that energy be supplied) and setting-upon (unlocking maximum efficiency) combining to reveal everything as standing-reserve (coming to presence as energy to be stored up and to-hand); the revealing as standing-reserve conceals the presencing of a thing by bringing it to presence as energy to be ordered. In doing so Gestell "entraps the truth of its own coming to presence with oblivion"¹¹⁸ so that the setting up of what is as standing reserve conceals Gestell as a mode of revealing.

Gestell, Man and Destiny

Since Heidegger's concern in the essay is to free the relation of man and Gestell he first clarifies the nature of this relation. In terms of the correct definition of technology man is unfree, in terms of the true definition of revealing man has conditioned freedom in terms of a co-responsibility. Challenging-forth as a revealing addresses and claims man to bring itself about as a mode of revealing, we are responsible for challenging-forth but only as already under the claim of Being as withdrawal so that "Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this ordering revealing happen."¹¹⁹ Challenging-forth happens through us but is prior to us, the field of nihility is no more our doing "than is the realm through which man is already passing every time he as a subject relates to an object;"¹²⁰ that of the field of consciousness surpassed in nihility.

When we reveal what presences we are responding to not dictating unconcealment, it requires this response to come to presence but in so responding man is already claimed by the manner of revealing "so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed."¹²¹ We are appropriated by Gestell, but we can only ever be as appropriated; such appropriation is our manner of existence as the Da-Sein relation so that we are not so much enslaved by Gestell as we are Gestell as how this relation occurs in the current epochal withdrawal. Man is nihilism in his essence as "The essence of man itself belongs to the essence of nihilism and thereby to the phase of its completion."¹²² As starting man upon the way of revealing the real as standing-reserve Gestell is a sending that reveals a destining; an experience of being called by the self along a way from out of our own nothingness. The essence of technology as Gestell is thus defined as the "challenging claim that gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve".¹²³ Technology is not merely a framework or a way of presencing, it is a way we are claimed (as responding to a call) as challenged to challenge that which is to be unconcealed as standing-reserve, the current way we are appropriated into the Da-Sein relation that for Heidegger has a greater reality than the mere procedures of ordering yet is nothing beyond its realization in them.

Gestell thus attests to the integral relation of man and Being outlined in previous chapters as it is through the claim of Gestell that Being addresses man in the modern age. As such a destining that calls to and claims man Gestell as the manifestation of nihility is how Being is in the current epochal withdrawal since Being is nothing other than the manner of disclosure it makes possible. Thus not only as belonging to Being is man

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "The Question of Being," 83.

¹²³ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 19.

challenged to secure all beings for calculative manipulation but equally "Being itself is faced with the challenge of letting beings appear within the horizon of what is calculable".¹²⁴ As the current form of the integral relation Gestell "places man and Being face to face in such a way that they challenge each other by turns".¹²⁵ The mutual belonging of Da-Sein now comes to presence as a challenging; a "mutual confrontation of man and being...that determines the constellation of our age." ¹²⁶

As always already appropriated by Gestell we are always already in a relation to it that defines us in our essence; and what mutual freedom means in this context depends on the co-responsence of our existence to such a claim. The question of this relation becomes "whether we actually experience ourselves as the ones whose activities everywhere, public and private, are challenged forth by Enframing," ¹²⁷ and "how we actually admit ourselves into that wherein Enframing itself comes to presence," ¹²⁸ or fail to hear the claim of Being that speaks in Gestell. Destining as such a call "holds complete sway over man. But that destining is never a fate that compels." ¹²⁹

Gestell and Danger

Freedom originates in our corresponding response to the call from the self itself that claims us in Ereignis; in the possibility of other appropriative destinal disclosures. To be appropriated by a destiny is to be claimed by one's own essential self in such a way as to preserve other possible destinal sendings; "Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light...Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way."¹³⁰ Freedom as awareness of the possibility of other possibilities is conditional on the preservation of the concealed so that freedom "stands in the closest and most intimate kinship"¹³¹ with truth that as disclosure is marked by both revealing and concealment. A free relation would be characterized by an awareness of the nature of Ereignis and our responsibility as claimed for the preserving of alternate concealed possibilities; of the nature of our existence as appropriated so that "Freedom is a feature of a relation between human beings and forces above and beyond human control." ¹³² The concern with the free relation leads Heidegger to consider of the lack of freedom in the current appropriation in terms of danger.

As epochal history is given by the withdrawal of Being all destining is "in every one of its modes, and therefore necessarily, danger." ¹³³ Every destining contains the risk that it directs us solely to that which is revealed rather than to the concealment which allows us to experience how we belong to the revealing. The withdrawal of Being into beings, means every revealing disclosure is a concealment of Being itself in the manifestness of beings making such danger inherent to disclosure. Being as withdrawal and nihilation repel man so that he may know both self and beings, yet they also "pull him along, suck themselves fast to his thoughts and actions and, finally, suck them into the withdrawing wake in such a way that man can believe that he is only encountering himself." ¹³⁴ In nihilism the nothing that befalls Being is Being itself; "Enframing as the danger within Being, is Being itself".¹³⁵ Such danger threatens freedom as the possibility

¹²⁴ *Identity and Difference*, 35.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 24.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 135.

¹³³ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 26.

¹³⁴ "The Question of Being," 75.

¹³⁵ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 38.

of other possibilities rendering the mutual appropriation of Da and Sein potentially unfree.

Yet despite this Gestell is worthy of being called the supreme danger above all other destinings due to its culmination of this withdrawal in a double forgetting that covers up human responsibility for accomplishing the claim of Being; that the withdrawal into concealment of Being is itself now concealed leading to the dangerous illusion Gestell is fateful. Such double forgetting is related to previous discussion of anxiety revealing fleeing as a twofold concealment and shows how realizing the nature of Gestell is the experience of anxiety writ epochal. Whilst other destinings conceal alternate modes of revealing Gestell conceals revealing itself, “threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealedness of standing-reserve.”¹³⁶ As a total revealing Gestell conceals the possibility of other possibilities appearing as an inevitable fate and sole definitive reality by obscuring its true relation to human existence. In obscuring the claim of revealing as truth it obscures the mystery of Being and our relation to it; which since Being only is as its revealing in concealment means both the essence of man and Being is imperilled.

Hodge sees the true danger of Gestell as “an erasure of the autonomy of the ethical mode of questioning”¹³⁷ through rendering metaphysical questioning redundant. Questioning as to the self and other are required for ethics and metaphysics yet with Gestell “The question of what it is to be human is forgotten along with the forgetting of the question of being, since humanity is the site at which being reveals itself”.¹³⁸ Not only does Gestell threaten to subsume man into the standing-reserve but “the systematic way in which what there is can be taken up into technological relations”¹³⁹ provide no place from which to critique this understanding of the human.

Hodge characterizes ethics as the relation to the sending of Being (an open question of what it is to be human); Gestell obscures the forgetting of this relation thus the possibility of ethical questioning so that in Gestell metaphysics becomes ethics as a reified understanding of the human (self and other). The erasure of the ontological difference; “the closure of the gap between what there is and how it comes to be like that”¹⁴⁰ is also the erasure of the difference between metaphysics and ethics as ethics requires a relation to sendings of Being to remain open to the future. This taking for granted of the human diminishes responsibility and reduces ethics to metaphysics by claiming to definitively answer the question of what it means to be human, as for ethical responsibility and freedom it is required that our Being always remain a question. Nihilism for Hodge is thus the conflation of metaphysics and ethics in humanism as a fixed theory of the human that makes “human beings more and more alike and interchangeable.”¹⁴¹ Such uniformity marks the erasure of human relations through dissolving the ethical-political distinction (and those of the public-private spheres, thus individual and community) disconnecting ethics from actual existence to become a generalized question rendered abstract as metaphysics leading to a proliferation of ethical disciplines to try and replace the lost ethos.

The true danger is thus that the question of human responsibility (what it is to be human) becomes replaced by the acceptance of and accommodation to Gestell conceived of as coercive through an externalizing reification of absolute nothingness into relative. In the epoch of Gestell “the withdrawal of being in its extremity leads to being manifesting only

¹³⁶ Ibid., 33.

¹³⁷ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 2.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 166.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 80.

as nothingness”¹⁴² leading to the dissolution of ego in the field of nihility. The danger is that we now view nothingness as a technical function and fail to see it as a feature of ourselves instead projecting a disowned nothingness out into the world. Such reified nothingness (the relative nothingness of field of nihility) is then taken as an external constraint we must conform to obscuring the free relation to technology so human responsibility for its realization is obscured; “what is forgotten in relation to technology is that a series of human actions and decisions, admittedly undertaken without full foresight of all possible consequences, contributes to the danger.”¹⁴³

At times Heidegger connects the danger more explicitly to the manner of revealing in Gestell, that Gestell as ordering “levels every ordo, every rank, down to the uniformity of production, and thus from the outset destroys the realm from which any rank and recognition could possibly arise.”¹⁴⁴ Or that the real danger is that “we will be in a position to make man in a certain way i.e., to construct him, purely in his organic being, according to the way we need him”¹⁴⁵. That we ourselves become standing-reserve so that “Man becomes human material, which is disposed with view to proposed goals”¹⁴⁶ and nothing else besides, the use of the term ‘man’ to denote an entity rather than relation to Being portraying the danger as concerning the understanding of organic nature in Gestell rather than its relation to other epochal disclosures. Whilst much of what Heidegger says on topics such as cybernetics and genetics seems to support this interpretation he more emphatically states that “precisely because man is challenged more originally than are the energies of nature, i.e. into the process of ordering, he never is transformed into mere standing-reserve.”¹⁴⁷ Whilst one aspect of the human condition is quantitatively closer to being subsumed into the enframing of standing-reserve another aspect retains a qualitative necessary separation from it.

At other times the danger is presented in terms of a dichotomous relation between calculative as opposed to meditative thinking. The danger is that “that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking”¹⁴⁸ so that “our unpoetic dwelling, its incapacity to take the measure, derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating.”¹⁴⁹ Gestell then becomes a constant tendency rather than a single epoch; the tendency to reveal totally opposed to that of reflecting on concealment that is a valid if limited and dangerous manner of revealing. These alternative yet related conceptions are considered more in chapters 2.4 and 2.5.

The linking of representational thought to desire leads Alderman to claim “the primary element in Western metaphysics is not its calculative rationality but its insistent aggressiveness.”¹⁵⁰ that stems from the anthropocentric assumptions of science. That “it is the intrusion and not the calculative style of the intrusion that is crucial from the point of view of identifying the special characteristics of Western thought”¹⁵¹ seems contrary to Discourse on Thinking’s claim on the true danger as calculative thought, and depends on the questionable relation of Heidegger’s thought to anthropocentrism and the issue of science to be dealt with later. But the element of intrusion does cohere with the

¹⁴² Ibid., 78.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 114.

¹⁴⁵ Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 43.

¹⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 109.

¹⁴⁷ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ *Discourse on Thinking*, 56.

¹⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, ““...Poetically Man Dwells...”,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 225.

¹⁵⁰ H Alderman, “Heidegger’s Critique of Science and Technology,” in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays*, ed. M. Murray (Yale University Press, 1978), 43.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

'unreasonable' demands of challenging-forth and remains an integral element in the examples of Gestell Heidegger invokes.

True Danger

Despite such characterizations Heidegger is more consistent in claiming that rather than the specific manner in which Gestell reveals the real the true danger is how this revealing obscures other possibilities; it is not the disclosure of the real as standing-reserve but that the real is only revealed as standing-reserve. The true danger is not simply to the truth of the real, to man as claimed nor that which claims, but to the appropriative relation of claiming itself that constitutes the event of truth and both elements of Da-Sein integral relation. Thus the danger is equally to Gestell as from it, if Gestell is the current mode of how Being claims man then the true danger is Being threatening itself due to how it brings the real to presence through withdrawal. This is why Heidegger must talk of the mutual freeing of Gestell and human existence; Gestell endangers its own essence and is as in need of saving as man.

What Are Poets For? also deals with how man is differently endangered; that as challenged-forth in a more radical sense to other beings due our nature as claimed by Being we are more vulnerable to becoming "a function of objectification".¹⁵² "The danger that man will lose his selfhood to unconditional production"¹⁵³ is more pressing since we are appropriated into the realization of challenging-forth itself. Man is unique among beings as we are challenged into ordering the standing-reserve as well as being so ordered; man as responsible for responding to revealing is himself ordered to order the real as standing-reserve. In so challenging nature Heidegger holds man belongs more originally than nature within the standing-reserve, but unlike other entities such belonging does not simply bring man to presence as standing reserve. This element of responsibility for challenging-forth seems to prevent man being purely appropriated into the standing-reserve. The danger is not that man as ontic animal becomes standing-reserve but that man as Da reveals the real only as standing-reserve so that as appropriated into the realization of Gestell "man deliberately and completely blocks his path, already obstructed, into the Open. Self-assertive man, whether or not he knows and wills it as an individual, is the functionary of technology" ¹⁵⁴ and thus contributes to the obscuring of his own essence, yet does so only as claimed by this essence. We thus become in need of protection in a way other beings are not as we are differently endangered, and this increased danger is to be related later to passing through such danger and venturing into the realm of that which saves.

Regardless of whether the complete incorporation of man into the standing-reserve is possible or remains an aspect of the supreme danger the unique way man is endangered is in his essence as the site for the mutual appropriation of the Da-Sein relation. That the withdrawal of Being will culminate in the forgetting of the true self and rather than encountering ourselves as responders to the claim of a destining we mistakenly believe that "everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct...It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself."¹⁵⁵ That our being will no longer be at issue but forever settled; Gestell making "the question of Being appear irrelevant and superfluous."¹⁵⁶ and thus Dasein as a mode of being ceases.

Man's encountering of only himself and his constructs seems to connect the danger of Gestell with Heidegger's critiques of anthropocentrism; that the triumph of

¹⁵² Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 113.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 27.

¹⁵⁶ *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, 3.

instrumentalism results in "Being becomes subordinated to the goals and purposes of man."¹⁵⁷ Yet that man himself being taken up into the standing-reserve remains an element of the danger indicates the triumph of Gestell is more properly the termination of the anthropocentric in that both ontic man and Da are now subordinated to the aim of flexibility and efficiency for their own sake. This subordination to challenging-forth is itself the dissolution of the anthropocentric in Gestell as a sending of Being, the centrality of subjective ego to the ordering of the objective is a prior phase to Gestell that dissolves the subject-object division on the field of nihility.

Conclusions Concerning Technology; the Implications of Danger

That the essential danger is that "Being itself endangering itself in the truth of its coming to presence, remains veiled and disguised. This disguising is what is most dangerous in the danger."¹⁵⁸ has three immediate implications. Firstly, that if Being is endangering itself due to the way it reveals through withdrawal then danger is unavoidable. Secondly, that the true danger is the belief in the totality of Gestell's revealing rather than the content of the disclosure, although these are heavily related. Thus thirdly, the manner in which Gestell reveals the real can be preserved so long as the attendant danger of its concealing of other possibilities is countered which must be a continual effort against inherent danger. As necessary to disclosure the danger is not to be seen as negative, danger does not of itself necessitate the need for salvation through an alternate manner of revealing, only the need for wariness. These implications will be questioned over the following chapters.

This danger is a unitary threefold; that beings have their variety of possibilities obscured and are placed under 'unreasonable demand' in the standing-reserve, that man is no longer aware of his essential self as appropriated, and that Being as withdrawal is concealed and forgotten. Accordingly each element of Ereignis is endangered; and that such appropriation only is in terms of its ontic realization the danger must also be to man as ontic animal and psychological subject as much as to the Da of Sein. The first element of the danger relates more to the manner in which Gestell reveals, which renders the thing "as thing, unsafeguarded, truthless"¹⁵⁹ obscuring that as things beings are the site for the gathering of world. This element will be taken up more later in relation to science and present-at-hand entities as truthless thus unmeaning.

In relation to the danger to man two questions are raised by our unique relation to the challenging-forth of the standing-reserve that are both to be returned to in chapters 2.5 and 2.6. Firstly; if being challenged to challenge-forth is how we are appropriated and we cannot lose this to become nothing more than standing reserve (if we can never not be Dasein) then what does this entail for the viability of the supreme danger that Ereignis could be totally concealed? Secondly; the extent to which we are responsible for conditioning this accomplishing and are capable of choosing to not accomplish (if 'self-assertive' man deliberately blocks his path into the Open) pertains directly to the viability of the sheltering of the saving power. To what extent is the preparation for (thus co-determining of) a new destining a denial of the current manner in which we are appropriated requiring a prior horizon to appropriation itself?

Science and Zen

Nishitani characterizes nihilism in similar terms to Heidegger; the erosion of the human essence in the mechanization of man that conceals the origin of this mode of disclosure,

¹⁵⁷ Alderman, "Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology," 45.

¹⁵⁸ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

but there is a greater nuance in both the examples of nihilism cited and its relation to its opposing tendency (the reconciliation of science and religion). The core of this understanding is first explicated before following chapters deal with these examples, historical themes and reconciliation of science and religion; a division that will necessarily render the below picture too limited.

Nishitani's thought on nihilism as mechanization is most clearly put forward in the essay *Science and Zen* that parallels *The Question Concerning Technology* and so will be focus of comparison. *Science and Zen* explores the nature and origin of the confrontation of science and religion, seeking to resolve this antagonism through explanation of how it came to pass. The essay's critique of science and scientism traces a similar way to *The Question Concerning Technology* through the dangers inherent in the essence of science back to its origin that is also to be the source of the saving power. The science Nishitani discusses in the essay is the death axis (impersonality) as opposed to the religious life axis (personality) that feature in *Religion and Nothingness*; although in this essay they are described slightly differently as the “teleological perspective on the world the Tagesansicht (day-aspect) of the world in contrast to the mechanical perspective which is its Nachtansicht (night-aspect)”¹⁶⁰ with the former reducible to but not deducible from the latter. Despite the slight difference in terminology the relation of the axis (axes?) to each other (as dual aspects of disclosure) and *sunyata* remains the same, as does the role of nihility as both true reality and transitional.

Science and Mechanization

The precursor to the mechanistic view of modern science is said by Nishitani to be “implicit in Descartes identification of matter with extension”¹⁶¹ as the subjectivity of metaphysics leads to *Gestell* so too through the subject-object dichotomy does “each individual ego become like a lonely but well-fortified island floating on a sea of dead matter.”¹⁶² This led to the modern scientific view in which the world “came to be looked upon as an ‘external’ world possessed of its own laws and existing by itself alone.”¹⁶³ The impersonal death axis precedes the disclosures of science as the condition of possibility for its worldview in a similar way to *Gestell* 's preceding of technology and similarly involves a totalizing mechanistic paradigm becoming falsely seen as the sole aspect of disclosure. This alienation of man and world ultimately results in the same total homelessness as *Gestell* so that “modern science has deprived the universe of its character as a ‘home’”¹⁶⁴ rendering it uncanny in a correlate manner to anxiety and the Great Doubt.

As the spiritual life axis of religious telos withers and the mechanistic death axis rises to dominance this “denial of the teleological view of the natural world by modern science necessarily results in the collapse of the whole system of teleology extending from the natural world through man to God.”¹⁶⁵ This leads to “the annihilation of all sorts of ‘eidos’ (or ‘substantial form’), not only the annihilation of the substantiality of visible things, but also the negation of the essence of life, soul, and the spirit”¹⁶⁶ like with the Great Doubt the forms of the field of consciousness (the telos of the life axis) are negated as meaning slips away from the world. By having “excluded teleology from the natural

¹⁶⁰ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 124.

¹⁶¹Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 11.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 109.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 110.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 111.

world”¹⁶⁷ science, like Gestell, renders the real un-meaning as uniform energy so that “everything that exists in the universe under the rule of such natural laws is thought to consist of nothing but matter, devoid of life and devoid of spirit.”¹⁶⁸

This spreads to human awareness which also comes “to be regarded in the same way as the phenomena of the external world...processes governed by mechanical laws of nature (in the broader sense).”¹⁶⁹ Through this the true essence of man is forgotten as “sciences all too often mistake man himself for a mechanism. These sciences in turn have led man to make the same mistake about himself, and in this way have played a role in dissolving the substantial form of ‘man’, in annihilating the essence of man.”¹⁷⁰ Such mechanization is the greatest danger, it is the deathly possibility that human being in its essence could lose that very essence so that our existence would be forever ossified in a meaningless mechanistic world; “directly beneath the field of man’s being-in-the-world, and the field of the very possibility of that being, the field of the impossibility of that being has opened up”.¹⁷¹ That the telos of religion is replaced by an ‘abyss of death’ at the ground of the human means that scientific disclosure renders “the universe...a field of existential death for...all mankind.”¹⁷²

Religion and Nothingness reinforces this picture in its analysis of how nihilism involves the inversion of the relation of control between man and machine, the nature of this historical emergence and examples of machine technology as correlate to ontological nihilism are dealt with next chapter, only the nature of the relation will be considered here. This inversion is held to be completely novel to modernity and characterized by two facets. Firstly that through the machines embodiment of the laws of nature “human /// life and work as a whole have become progressively mechanized and impersonalized”¹⁷³ through the abstraction of scientific rationality and rendering nature mechanistic. Whereas man controlled and realized the laws of nature in the development of machines now the laws as so embodied again begin to control us, “This situation is usually referred to as the tendency toward the mechanization of man, toward the loss of the human.”¹⁷⁴ Secondly, that this leads to “a mode of being in which man behaves as if he stood entirely outside of the laws of nature...a mode of being at whose ground nihility opens up”¹⁷⁵ estranging us from nature so that we behave as if we “were using the laws of nature entirely from without.”¹⁷⁶ A reification of the nothing (Gestell /nihilism) into external coercive forces akin to Hodge's interpretation of the true danger. Like in Science and Zen this mode of awareness not only renders the natural world a mechanism but “has increasingly permeated not only the social structures of the modern world but the inner life of man as well”¹⁷⁷ so that “the perversion that occurred in the original relationship of man to the laws of nature has taken the shape of a fundamental intertwining of the mechanization of man and his transformation into a subject in pursuit of its desires, at the ground of which nihility has opened up as a sense of the meaninglessness of the whole business.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 109.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 110.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 84.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 85.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 86.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 88.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

In both texts the loss of the human arises from “the mutual alliance of abstract, impersonal intellect and the mechanistic image of the world”¹⁷⁹ with the result that “The world has come to appear completely unfeeling and altogether indifferent to human interests. The certainty of this manner of understanding rests not only on its ontic accomplishments but more so “upon the certainty inherent in mathematical reasoning”¹⁸⁰ bringing it into line with Heidegger's division between calculative and meditative thought. This picture of science originates in the mode of awareness on the field of consciousness, initially presupposing both the subject-object dichotomy and an understanding of the nature of truth as related to subjectivity. It's two-fold certainty is also grounded on the field of consciousness; objectively as factual knowledge, subjectively as “conviction as the immediate consciousness of self-evidence.”¹⁸¹ But science cannot ground the concurrence of these forms, making scientism Nishitani's real object of critique as it “takes scientific certainty in itself to be the same as philosophical truth.”¹⁸² thus adopts it “as the standard for a system of value. In philosophy, this is a dogmatism altogether divorced from science itself.”¹⁸³

Science as Existentialized

Through this mechanization of man the subject-object dichotomy of the the field of consciousness is dissolved in a correlate manner to the Great Doubt as both man's inner life and the world of objects are rendered meaningless. Such “‘nullification’...is nothing more than a display of the form of ‘illusory appearance’ essential to all beings”¹⁸⁴ it is the disclosure of the unreality of the positive aspect of the sunyata process opening the way for the disclosure of the process in its entirety. Nihilism, like the Great Doubt, “is a sort of fate assaulting man as a ‘fatal’ question, so that man once more gets reduced fundamentally...to a question mark.”¹⁸⁵ requiring we think essence of science existentially. Such a fate is meant in the same sense as the destiny of Gestell ; just as the oblivion of Being is from Being so too are our actions upon the fields of consciousness and nihility “not something we are free to do as we please...The force of destiny is at work here, impelling us to be and to act in this manner.”¹⁸⁶ For Nishitani destiny is also not a simple external compulsion or fate “It is a destiny that appears only in the shape of the acts we ourselves perform, only as one with our own actions.”¹⁸⁷ That Da-Sein belong to each other means the falling of Being is manifested as our actions, Gestell only is as accomplished by us, so too is science an expression of the awareness on the field of nihility, and just as necessary to it as ego was to the field of consciousness; fields that are inextricable from the actions that constitute and are conditioned by such awareness, and as noted in previous chapters this mode of disclosure seems valid and natural in its appropriate context of applicability

It is not the nullification of the death axis itself that is the main point of critique but the failure to existentialize the problematic of science along the lines of the Great Doubt. It is the taking of positivistic science as paradigmatic and viewing “scientific certainty in itself to be the same as philosophical truth...scientific rationalism is adopted as the standard for a system of value”¹⁸⁸ that Nishitani critiques. “In science as well as in philosophy, when it assumes the standpoint of ‘scientism’, all phenomena in the universe

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 89.

¹⁸⁰ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 112.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 122.

¹⁸⁵ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 115.

¹⁸⁶Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 103.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 104.

¹⁸⁸ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 114.

are regarded as reducible to mechanical, material processes which are in themselves purposeless and meaningless”¹⁸⁹ yet those who hold this view still live purposeful lives, but we cannot simply live with this contradiction and try to instate one over the other “We must have the courage to admit that the ‘spiritual’ basis of our existence...has once and for all been completely destroyed.”¹⁹⁰

The focus of Nishitani's critique would seem to relate to a failure to realize the prior unity and balance of complementary axis; that science has necessarily obscured its own origin and requires revitalization to counteract the manner in which “the rootedness of the sciences in their essential ground atrophied.”¹⁹¹ When so viewed correctly “The life-inhibiting universe of modern science is thereby exposed as a field where death in the religious sense, or the Great Death as it is called in Zen Buddhism, is to be realized existentially”¹⁹² once existentialized science reveals itself as a social correlate to the personal religious quest of the Great Doubt.

Science and Gestell

The meaninglessness of uniformity and levelling (that in nihility all things are equally unreal) unites Gestell and science, but the death axis is characterized by a more explicit relation to the Great Doubt on the field of nihility than Gestell's to anxiety, and as revealing real reality shares a relation to the disclosure of pure presence-at-hand in anxiety. Whilst the nihilation of What is Metaphysics? was purely an ahistorical precondition of disclosure, Gestell as anxiety writ large is not, despite the latter being an existential instantiation of the former. Nishitani more explicitly relates the experience of the self and world as meaningless on the field of nihility (which is largely spoken of in positive terms) to science and modern secularism (largely spoken of in negative terms of critique). The following two chapters will deal more thoroughly with the issue of this difference between the historic-social aspects of nihilism (its accomplishment through our actions) and the ahistorical disclosive aspects of nihility, and how this relates to the concrete examples of nihilism given by Heidegger and Nishitani

Like with Gestell the dominance of the death axis can also be seen as terminating the anthropocentric, such “utter detachment of the modern scientific view of nature /// from anthropomorphism”¹⁹³ meaning “The image of the universe it sees is wholly exempt from the restriction of being an environment for man and is not in any sense man-orientated.”¹⁹⁴ The mechanistic de-centring of man contributes to the overcoming of anthropocentrism to balance any prior over-emphasis of the life axis, but in doing so itself obscures the *sive/soku* that unites them. Instead the question of man settled by metaphysics and the telos of religions is re-opened, yet in such a way that “it has been unable to make a contact with the essence of man and so has exposed its own inadequacy as a way of investigating man /// himself”¹⁹⁵ the social sciences attempt this but it is “impossible without an existential quest of man by himself. Only such a quest can open the way for really coming in contact with the essence of man, a way which can then serve to channel all the results of the scientific research on man and the world into investigation of man proper and lend them significance for that investigation.”¹⁹⁶ Just as Gestell obscures its ground and endangers itself in its essence so too does science in reducing man to mechanism prevent inquiry into the essence of man as “The realization of such a

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 8.

¹⁹² Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 119.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 109.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 131.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 132.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

possibility...has been impeded by the upheavals wrought by modern natural science, as well as by the later establishment of the social sciences.”¹⁹⁷ Neither metaphysics and technology for Heidegger, nor science and mechanization for Nishitani, can address the question of themselves and their relation to man. Whilst Hodge interprets Heidegger as claiming the question of the human must remain open and to settle it is the actualization of metaphysics in nihilism for Nishitani the openness of this question is itself a sign of nihilism, as seen in how “Confusion reigns in today's world at the most basic level concerning what human beings are and how they are to live.”¹⁹⁸

Whilst Science and Zen says science must become existential this is only a preparatory stage; Religion and Nothingness saying that some modern forms of nihilism become existential by making “the claim that only by taking a stance on nihility can man truly attain to subjectivity and freedom...Here the autonomy of man truly came into being for the first time. The anxiety of having nothing to rely on...was directly transformed as such into the standpoint of creative freedom...for the self-existence of man, nihility became a field of ecstatic self-detachment. Nihilism had become existential.”¹⁹⁹ Yet despite this “the representation of nothingness in nihilism still shows traces of the bias of objectification, of taking /// nothingness as some ‘thing’ called nothingness”²⁰⁰ as external to existence of the self, although such objectification does not take away from nihilisms “awareness of the real experience of nihility at the foundation of ourselves and all things”²⁰¹ these are traces only, showing nihilism once existentialized is on cusp of its own self-overcoming.

Shared Implications

The same three implications regarding mechanization in Heidegger's thought can also be seen in Nishitani's; that the nihility leading to the scientific death axis is integral and ineliminable to disclosure, that the true danger is the totalizing of the scientific paradigm into scientism rather than its precise manner of disclosing (although again they are heavily related), with the shared implication that these nihilistic manners of disclosure are to be preserved even as their attendant dangers must be countered by continual effort. Just as Gestell too must be saved in a mutual freeing so too must the scientific death axis be saved through its existentializing then reconciliation with the telos of the religious life axis.

Despite these similarities Nishitani's thought highlights different problems than Heidegger's; nihilism for Nishitani is both real reality and also insufficient for real reality, required for existential realization even as it requires it; paradoxes that are to be questioned in chapter 2.4 that takes up this idea of nihilism as a necessary stage. For now we turn to the ontic examples of such mechanization and their place within the narrative history of nihilism's emergence before dealing with the reconciliation that is to save science and religion.

2.3 Historical Danger

Gestell as a revealing only is as our manner of comportment, in terms of how we disclose ontic entities. Whilst Heidegger emphasizes and focuses on the danger as ontological the ontological only is as its ontic realization so Gestell both results in and is comprised of behaviours with ontic consequences; consequences that are portrayed as dangerous not so much due to their concrete empirical effects but due to the manner of revealing they

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ K. Nishitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism* (State University of New York Press, 1990), 190.

¹⁹⁹ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 95.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 96.

attest to. The implications of this for the context of the danger, the projective criteria for its surmounting and its viability are taken up in chapters 5 and 6, for now the way such tendencies are not unique to Gestell and the implications this has for that which saves are to be considered.

Heidegger offers examples intended to highlight how in Gestell responsibility becomes mere production and *stellen* changes from 'bringing forth' the power of nature to 'challenging-forth' and exploiting nature as energy. Under the auspices of such an 'unreasonable demand' "Not only are living things technically objectivated in stock-breeding and exploitation; the attack of atomic physics on the phenomena of living matter as such is in full swing. At bottom, the essence of life is supposed to yield itself to technical production." ²⁰²

Whilst he makes clear that he does not appeal for a return to a prior more 'primitive' state his attempt to highlight the differences between bringing-forth and challenging-forth seem prone to slip into this tendency. Because Heidegger gives no practical example of a step forward beyond challenging-forth there is a strong temptation to take his examples as suggesting just such a backward step; that whatever new destining issues from the sending of Being will be more reminiscent of prior epochal revealings than challenging-forth despite Heidegger's claim no such predictions can be made. The possibility of such predictions is considered in the second half of the chapter, his examples are first to be considered as raising issues pertaining to how determined by a single revealing an epoch can be and whether such examples themselves rely upon a certain epochal understanding to act as criticisms of Gestell, both themes which will inform later chapters.

Heidegger's distinctions between windmills and hydroplants, sailboats and motorboats, try to bring out how "Regulating and securing even become the chief characteristic of the challenging revealing" ²⁰³ so that flexibility and efficiency are sought for their own sake in an endless search for greater control. Yet in both cases the latter can be seen also as bringing forth the power and resistance of water and natural forces in the same ways the former do, albeit under an altered epochal understanding of such forces. The distinction between a peasants ordering of the field in the sense of cultivating its natural enabling of growth and the mechanised food industry's challenging of the soil to increase efficiency through setting-upon also seems to be quantitative not qualitative. The difference is even conceivable as a fuller bringing-forth; if it is in the nature of the field to bring forth life through growing crops then the maximized yields of agri-business can be seen as enabling the field to fulfil itself more, bringing-forth its latent nature more fully. Gestell would then be a heightening of the 'unlocking' in medieval crop rotation, of the 'storing and distributing' of ancient granaries that saved up the fertility of the earth so that it would be on-hand at other times and more efficiently distributed.

The Rhine example is to bring out how its scenic features are "an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry." ²⁰⁴ Yet some who 'sight-see' the Rhine may still be regarding it in the poetic sense and there is a pervasive element of homogenization in Heidegger's characterization of how we reveal the real. The paradigmatic example for Heidegger is the production of atomic energy, but only certain contexts see us conceiving of an entity in terms of atomic structure, and these contexts are far from dominant for the vast majority. The implications that the focus upon such a 'chief characteristic' rather than cluster of competing understandings within both

²⁰² Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 110.

²⁰³ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 16.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

individual and collective Dasein has for the viability of Heidegger's notion of danger is returned to in chapter 5.

If Gestell is chiefly characterized by the unreasonable demand upon nature with counter-examples intended to highlight approaches that "mesh with nature and do not simply 'set it up' for exploitation"²⁰⁵ then what counts as challenging-forth would seem to be determined by a historical conception of nature. Heidegger gives a definition of nature as both beyond and concealed by the categories of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand in *Being and Time* as "the Nature which 'stirs and strives', which assails us and enthrals us as landscape".²⁰⁶ On the *Essence of Truth* speaks of nature as the totality of beings as such; "Being as a whole reveals itself as physis, 'nature', which here does not yet mean a particular sphere of beings but rather beings as such as a whole, specifically in the sense of upsurgent presence."²⁰⁷ Whilst physis as self-arising might be taken as such an ahistorical conception that 'stirs and strives', a notion of nature that surpasses and is not conditioned by Ereignis, the origin of meaning in the relation of appropriation seems to rule out Dasein disclosing a definition of nature 'itself' independent of any specific epochal understanding and provides for no prior horizon of judgement to provide criteria for claims as to what counts as an unreasonable demand placed upon it. *Being and Time*'s characterization of seeing wind as 'wind in the sails' (ibid) as grasping nature as ready-to-hand also indicates that the nature revealed by the counter-examples of *The Question Concerning Technology* (such as the windmill) does not attain the level of purely 'that which stirs and strives'; but only of the epochally determined manner in which the ready-to-hand comes to presence. The dynamism implied by stirring and striving would also seem inapplicable to the inanimate nature of that which atomic energy is unlocked from; uranium cannot bring-forth its own potential and would seem to lay outside the understanding of nature as physis.

The term nature has a dual resonance; the 'natural world' as a collection of entities prior to human influence or technology, and 'what comes naturally' as the inherent tendencies or characteristics of a thing. What comes naturally for man as Dasein is to live in accord with the claim resulting from withdrawal; including how nature in the former sense is to be revealed. Nature as conceived under the claim of Gestell can make even the production of atomic energy a releasing of natural energy to stand-forth as it does in stars; fusion as a poetic testament to the most creative force in the natural world. This notion is to be taken up in later consideration of science and suchness; Gestell's disclosure in terms of energy as revealing the homeground of *jitai* and the relation of this to Heidegger's changing characterization of scientific disclosure from presence-at-hand to the setting-upon the real of Science and Reflection.

Heidegger's definition of nature (in both resonances), thus what counts as an unreasonable demand upon it, is seemingly based on a projected epochal determination that allows Gestell to be contextualized as a supreme danger. His critique on the basis of these criteria has led to ecological appropriations of his thought interpreting him as endorsing "more meaningful and natural ways of living that allows us to contact the mystery of nature"²⁰⁸. Man as shepherd of Being is often taken to entail shepherd of nature; seeing "ourselves as the 'custodians' rather than the 'users' of the world in which we live"²⁰⁹. Whilst Heidegger's lamentations that in Gestell "Nature becomes a gigantic

²⁰⁵ Otto Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 54.

²⁰⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 100. SZ 100

²⁰⁷ Heidegger, McNeill, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 126.

²⁰⁸ Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 228.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 225.

gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry"²¹⁰ easily lend themselves to such concerns they apply equally to the preservation of the environment as a resource indicating ecological ramifications are derivative to the true danger. At the end of *The Thing* natural features and animals, "heron and roes, deer, horse and bull"²¹¹ are also characterized as things that gather world; as of concern for the role they play in the appropriative mirroring in relation to gods and mortals. It is earth as ontological not ontic that Heidegger seems most concerned with, and whilst ontological earth may have an ontic correlate related to ecological concerns the latter is subsumed into a notion of human dwelling rather than an ethics of deep ecology. The nature that stirs and strives and exists beyond Ereignis or the to categories of the ready-to-hand and presence-at-hand is ultimately a conception in service to a projected saving of human existence. Heidegger cannot be truly appropriated to environmental ethics as he lacks a criteria of judgement for future destinings in terms of ramifications for the natural world that provided the conditions for the evolution of Ereignis itself beyond its service to human existence as claimed.

Hodge characterizes such ecological appropriation of Heidegger as "a one-sided, objectifying, externalising version of the crisis. More important that these objective effects are the transformations in human beings which both result from and cause the processes giving rise to these ecological effects."²¹² Thus the most pertinent feature of Gestell in relation to ecological concerns is the divisive elimination of otherness that Heidegger places under the heading 'earth' that "leads to a suppression of wonder at strangeness...in favour of the accumulation of knowledge in the positive sciences, for which nothing is alien."²¹³ Hodge thus also joins Heidegger in his ceding of science to the positivists and the obscuring of the awe and wonder that as a compulsion towards the other is the source of scientific curiosity.

Whilst the examples in *The Question Concerning Technology* highlight flexibility and efficiency in regards to the demands placed upon nature as the essential traits of Gestell a great variety of negative ontic consequences are also attributed to Gestell, even when they are arguably equally present in former epochs. Given that environmental preservation is not necessarily incompatible with viewing nature as a resource, such as for tourism or future renewable consumption, the tendency to attribute misfortune specifically to Gestell when it comes to ecological concerns is questionable. But in the sphere of human relations the ease with which and extent to which Gestell can have various ontic ills attributed to it, even if they remain only contingently related to the supreme danger, is even more so and helps explain the appeal of Heidegger's critique. In relation to the transformation of the human (specifically the inter-human relations that form traditional ethics) Hodge links the claimed eclipse of otherness and wonder by science in Gestell to the exploitation of others caused when "the strange, the alien, the uncanny, the monstrous all the same find a site: they are placed by one group of human beings in other such groups."²¹⁴

Heidegger claims both "Modern science and the total state, as necessary consequences of the nature of technology, are also its attendants."²¹⁵ His relation to politics and ethics is to be considered more in later chapters but the linking of the total state and Gestell is often taken as a belated condemnation of fascism placing how others were treated by such total states under the aegis of Gestell. In relation to this Watts claims

²¹⁰ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 50.

²¹¹ *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 180.

²¹² Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 153.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., §53.

²¹⁵ Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 109.

Gestell "causes us to define cultural and racial differences that allow us, when we are powerful, to exploit those 'not like us'." ²¹⁶ Hodge that the "breakdown of the everyday, traditional ethics of community and a breakdown of the discrete groupings within which everyday ethics can flourish" ²¹⁷ in preventing the ethical question of what it means to be human also leads "to death for those who are not useful in relation to the needs generated by technical relations and technical processes" ²¹⁸ and informed the Nazi 'approach to marked groups'. Yet not only is such divisive thinking nothing new but the breakdown of discrete groupings and communities through Gestell's erasure of the ethics-metaphysics distinction would also seem contrary to such divisive thinking.

Heidegger's comments on Gestell as a levelling that makes the notion of rank impossible makes it hard to reconcile the placing of this ancient human tendency to divide and exclude as fundamentally stemming from a modern sending of Being. The reduction of humanity to a resource can lead to the camps but genocide and dehumanization pre-date Gestell, and the open question of what it means to be human has in all epochs given rise to answers that excluded some groups. The camps were ideologically based on denigrating 'others' that had long been discriminated against rather than for the sake of efficiency; the very notion of a 'marked group' requires the community ethos Hodge claims would prevent it. The relation of otherness within Gestell is considered more in chapter 5 and later ethics chapters; here it is to be noted that the oppression and exploitation of others whilst taking a different form under the claim of Gestell is not integrally related to or dependent upon it.

It is in terms of equivalence not difference that the appropriation of the human into the standing-reserve is portrayed. Such a manner of exploitation is more related to an Orwellian vision of consumerism marked by built-in obsolescence. In such calculative thinking "the humanness of man and the thingness of things dissolve into the calculated market value of a market" ²¹⁹ in which "objects are produced to be used up. The more quickly they are used up, the greater becomes the necessity to replace them even more quickly and more readily....What is constant in things produced as objects merely for consumption is: the substitute". ²²⁰ Yet again such commodifications of the human in terms of market value are not unique to the epochal understanding of Gestell. Many modern surnames originate in the identifying of the family with its economic function, the humanness of man was reduced to market value in the *wergeld* of the German tribes and slave markets of antiquity in an equally thorough sense as found in modern exploitative work practices such as Walmart's 'Peasant Tax'.

Despite Heidegger's separation of machine technology from the essence of technology it ultimately seems to be the only ontic correlate unique to the epoch and remains emblematic of Gestell in a way other ontic correlates are not; being the paradigmatic examples for both *Discourse on Thinking* and *The Question Concerning Technology*. The increasing flexibility and efficiency of ontic technology enables an increase or change in form of the tendencies highlighted in the other examples (an increase to be considered in chapter 5 as a shift from Gestell as partial to dominant understanding) in that "These forces, which everywhere and every minute claim, enchain, drag along, press and impose upon man under the form of some technical contrivance or other" ²²¹ suggesting the ontic correlates to Gestell are more related to devices rather than divisive thinking.

²¹⁶ Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 218.

²¹⁷ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 28.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

²¹⁹ Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 112.

²²⁰ Ibid., 127.

²²¹ *Discourse on Thinking*, 51.

Both the relation of otherness (human and non-human) and wonder to science and Gestell are critiqued in future chapters but the considered examples have indicated the most pertinent elements of ontic cases of Gestell ; an increase in the prevalence and tendency towards the exploiting and commodification of non-self thus ultimately also self. The realization of Gestell is not the individual disclosures of some humans as standing-reserve but the maximization of human potential in total mobilization and the compulsion to control and dominate, to exercise power for the sake of more power in an institutional fashion rather than to render man a commodity in service to a further end or the power of the few. The ontic realization of Gestell thus seems only quantitatively not qualitatively different to the ontic states of affairs in previous epochs, and to focus on specific examples of revealing as standing-reserve obscure that it is no specific novel instance of revealing but the systematic totality of the framework that is critiqued. The difference between prior and modern disclosures seems to be one of the possibility of alternate revealings rather than how beings were actually brought to presence. It is not that challenging-forth did not occur but there was an "absence of the illusion of domination and the absence of the necessary attempt at domination in the earlier technologies"²²² the necessity of the domination rather than its actual presence is most pertinent and such necessity cannot be fully articulated by specific examples. Yet that such a tendency is not new nor necessarily increasing but only emerging as more overtly systematic is obscured by the backwards look to highlight the differences, serving only to conceal the continuity of the withdrawal of being; portraying the quantitative change as qualitative. At times the implications of this can seem perverse or absurd; that in ancient times challenging-forth was not systematic so slavery was not the mechanization of man as standing-reserve whilst a 'Human Resources' department that tries to increase worker satisfaction thus productivity is. Each is an instance of the same revealing with only the possibility of alternate revealings having changed, such emphasis seems to do a disservice to the experiences of those so reduced as the context of ontic distress seems emphasized above actual human suffering.

The examples given in *The Question Concerning Technology* seem primarily to highlight the increase in a tendency latent and ever-present within the very essence of revealing, highlighting the continuity of the process of withdrawal; the increasing emergence of nihility rather than a significant paradigm shift between disconnected epochs. The manner of disclosure in Gestell seen as the fullest revealing of the nihility of the real is inherent to the very nature of disclosure itself as conditioned by withdrawal, only reaching its fullest and most explicit manifestation in the challenging-forth of the standing-reserve. The epoch marked by Gestell thus retains elements of bringing-forth just as the disclosures and activities of previous epochs had elements of challenging-forth. This leads to a continuum full of grey areas, of uncertain distinctions between windmills and wind-turbines or hydro-plants and canals, rather than any clear-cut distinction between bringing and challenging forth. Heidegger claims that poiesis and Gestell are "fundamentally different, and yet they remain related in their essence"²²³ as revealings, and in *The Question Concerning Technology* this essential relation pertains to that both are manners of revealing rather than any epochal co-existence. Taking other texts into account Heidegger's position as to the novelty of challenging-forth seems less certain with two possible interpretations of the relation between epochal revealings; that they represent radical paradigm shifts that determine distinct epochs, or that they form a linear process of shifting emphasis as a constellation of understandings that co-exist with some more prominent at times.

In *The Age of the World Picture* Heidegger addresses what seems to be traces of

²²² Alderman, "Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology," 48.

²²³ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 21.

Gestell in Greek thought through discussion of Protagoras' claim that man is the measure of things, claiming that whilst such thought prepared the way for later humanistic reinterpretation it remains qualitatively different as 'man' remains particular. The ego of Protagoras that tarries in the horizon of unconcealment, belonging in the midst of what presences and keeping safe its measure, is not the subjective Cartesian ego. Man's finitude is thus emphasized as such measure is not subjectively determined but granted by that which presences so that "there is given to him the measure that always confines a self to this or that."²²⁴ Such finite receptivity preserves the concealed and acknowledges that truth as unconcealedness determines that which presences, whilst the subjectivity that leads to Gestell sees all as accessible so overlooks the concealed and holds the unconcealed as stemming from universally accessible representation. Whilst this suggests a qualitative difference in concentrating on human subjectivity it deals primarily with the subject-object dichotomy that is dissolved in Gestell ; with the field of consciousness rather than the field of nihility. Discourse on Thinking is more specific in identifying Gestell as radically new, claiming "This relation of man to the world as such...developed

in the seventeenth century first and only in Europe. It long remained unknown in other continents, and it was altogether alien to former ages and histories." ²²⁵

Contrary to this What are Poets For? seems to suggest that the revealing of challenging-forth has occurred previously but not in any systematically ordered fashion. It is only in the current age that such disclosure has begun "to unfold as a destiny of the truth of all beings as a whole; until now, its scattered appearances and attempts have remained incorporated within the embracing structure of the realm of culture and civilization."²²⁶ A trace of challenging-forth was there (Da) but has now quantitatively increased to emerge as the predominant understanding of beings as a whole; it is the extent of the ordering that becomes significant rather than the possibility of disclosing that which presences in terms of such ordering. Between the above two positions can be placed the claim that "the distinctive character of modern knowing consists in the decisive working out of a tendency that still remains concealed in the essence of knowing as the Greeks experienced it". A tendency latent yet related; whose origin was concealed yet present in the former revealing whilst not definitive of it. Challenging-forth was thus a possibility of prior revealings yet such traces of it were not experienced as such since they were still incorporated into another overall ordering.

Epochal History and Linear Narrative

The issue of the relation between the epochs, thus the nature and possibility of the danger of a sole epochal revealing, is rendered problematic by the way Heidegger uses the term Ereignis to denote both the originary event of Being's appropriation of man that begins the epochal history and the transitions between epochs within that history. The epochs that determine Being are realized through their givenness to man, the epochal history of Being given by Ereignis expressed through man. Being is thus the unfolding history of our appropriation and does not exist separate from this history; yet paradoxically is also what gives this history. Ereignis is transhistorical yet is also within history as the temporal sequence of epochal transformations; "Being is as the destiny of thinking. But destiny is in itself historical."²²⁷

The epochs are given through the withdrawal of both Sein and the mutual

²²⁴ Ibid., 145.

²²⁵ *Discourse on Thinking*, 50.

²²⁶ *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 109.

²²⁷ "Letter on Humanism," 264.

appropriation so that "The history of Being begins, and indeed necessarily, with the forgetting of Being";²²⁸ with metaphysics. The histories of Being and metaphysics begin at the same moment (yet are not identical); when Dasein asks as to beings as a whole so that "beings themselves are expressly drawn up into their unconcealment and conserved in it...The primordial disclosure of beings as a whole, the question concerning beings as such, and the beginning of Western history are the same"²²⁹. The necessity of this history as Being's withdrawal derives from the ontological meaning of the 'not'; the need of human existence for Being's claim stemming from the nihility of our nature that manifests in progressive withdrawal culminating in Gestell. Ontological nihility is that which gives the epochal history of Being. In each epoch Being conceals itself differently determining that epochs understanding of the meaning of Being; the self-withdrawal in Ereignis is the nihility that gifts the clearing for meaning to come to pass. The history of Being is a succession of epochal grantings through withdrawal; a withdrawal that increases until it is no longer experienced as such and completes itself in the double concealment of the nothingness that gives and the giving so that history is the realization of the danger of nihility. History as destiny is inherent danger resulting from the manner in which history is given. Despite the vocabulary of danger Heidegger held that whilst metaphysics as the withdrawal of Being makes nihilism the fundamental movement of Western history such withdrawal "is not meant in a negative sense"²³⁰ so it is "not a history of decline, in which we stand".²³¹ If withdrawal into oblivion is not intended in a negative sense but only "in the Greek sense Lethe i.e., self-hiddenness, self-withdrawal of Being"²³² as how Sein is appropriated in Ereignis then Gestell as the completion of withdrawal itself cannot be intended in the negative sense or compared as a decline from earlier epochal understandings such as poiesis. Yet danger implies negativity, and the greatest danger implies decline. If the history of Being is not one of necessary linear withdrawal or decline then the completion of this history in Gestell is too not to be considered in a negative sense, yet it is hard to interpret Heidegger's stance towards Gestell otherwise.

Both Heidegger and commentators on him oscillate between both implying and explicitly stating that metaphysics as withdrawal is a linear narrative of necessity and that there is no teleological relationship between the epochs. A linear interpretation would both bring Heidegger's thought on history into accord with Nishitani's on the nature of the progression through the fields; a narrative of nihilism that would also cohere with the thesis fore-having of the relation between nihility and nihilism. That once inaugurated there is a teleological necessity of progression through the fields in which "the contemporary era of modern technology inevitably unfolds from the history of Being, which finds expression in the evolution of Western philosophy".²³³ Whilst Ma and Brakel hold Heidegger attributes such necessity solely to Western thought rather than any universal experience of nihility, I would claim Nishitani's Buddhist experience of nihilism stems from same source (our absence as source of meaning) but has a different historical manifestation.

The inherent tendency of Being to disclose through withdrawal implies a necessary linearity; each epoch must have Being as more concealed, the exact nature of each epoch might not be fateful but that each is progressively more oblivious is a destiny. At times the precise sequence of epochs is also presented as a fateful necessity. Heidegger says that "modern world civilization is executing the transition to the final phase of the

²²⁸ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 109.

²²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* (HarperCollins, 1993), 126.

²³⁰ Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 41.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Lin Ma and Jaap Van Brakel, "Heidegger's Comportment toward East-West Dialogue," *Philosophy East and West* 56, no. 4 (2006): 523.

epochal destiny of Being in the sense of a determination of Being as the unconditional orderability of what is, including being human (der unbedingten Bestellbarkeit alles Seienden, das Menschen mit inbegriffen)”²³⁴ and the notion of the final phase only makes sense in the context of a linear narrative. Such comments by Heidegger are often taken to mean he holds to a linear teleological process of withdrawal, yet his comments to the contrary also lead some to simultaneously both affirm and deny such a position. Bernstein claims both that "In Heidegger's strong reading of the history of philosophy, the 'movement' from Platonism to the nihilistic triumph of Gestell (enframing) is the inexorable working out of 'prefigured' possibilities"²³⁵ and yet Heidegger "is not claiming that there is a predetermined logic of history that is working itself out behind our backs and which entraps men in the iron grip of Gestell."²³⁶ The Question Concerning Technology's distinction between fate and destiny casts doubt on the interpretation of a linear necessity, but refers to the coming self-surmounting of oblivion at its most extreme point thus does not entail that which came before was not inevitable given the origin of metaphysics, only that Gestell is not necessarily an eternal fate.

Rather than a cumulative linear progression Hodge holds Heidegger believes that the epochs do not emerge from the previous ones but are granted by Language with each transition occurring when Language speaks man in a different fashion. Whilst the source of the epochal transformations is Language's own disruption of given meanings mediated by poets ultimately Heidegger's view of history is judged as "rendering completely inexplicable how one epoch might be replaced by another."²³⁷ Sheehan also proposes the interpretation of seeing the history of metaphysics as a constellation of related perspectives on Being in which "linear progression is swallowed up in a grand circularity whereby these modes of beingness revolve around, and in the process hide, that which renders them possible."²³⁸ Each epoch arising from retrieving the same origin in a different manner. As was said in previous chapters on Ereignis if Sein is both self-caused and beyond causality then the epochs granted by Ereignis cannot result from each other in sequence but only from the same appropriative event. Withdrawal might not be an ongoing process but a consistent manner of how presence arises. Being does not progressively withdraw, Being withdraws in each epoch in a different way unrelated to previous withdrawal. But Heidegger's descriptions of the history of metaphysics often reads too much like a teleological narrative for such an element to be overlooked. If the transition between epochs is non-linear they would resemble sudden ruptures; a new understanding of the real spontaneously emerging. Yet the previous consideration of Gestell and poiesis would seem to favour the shifting of a cultural paradigm over time; The Question Concerning Technology's analyses of causality and etymology imply a direct relation between epochal understandings rather than abrupt changes in how man is spoken.

Heidegger may have wanted to avoid any possible reduction of epochal transformation to notions of causation or production related to Gestell to stress that "that the ontological event of appearing is acausal and, hence, incapable of being explained by any narrative...regarding how things may have been produced".²³⁹ This onus on Sein as uncaused possibly leading to the tendency critiqued in previous chapters concerning how Heidegger's prioritizing of Sein as sending the historical modes of presencing means

²³⁴ Ibid., 547. (quoted from "Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges" 1910–1976. GA 16. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.)

²³⁵ R.J. Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Polity Press, 1992), 251.

²³⁶ Ibid., 106.

²³⁷ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 105.

²³⁸ Sheehan, "The Turn: All Three of Them," 302.

²³⁹ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 260.

“Ereignis seems to take on a generative, directive dimension that threatens to transform it into a metaphysical category, thereby undermining the nondualistic thrust of Heidegger’s thought.”²⁴⁰ The reification of the 'not' that gives making the relation of appropriation causal rather than the self-identity of absolute nothingness with its mask.

The possibility that Heidegger offers a seemingly linear narrative in service of his own projective interpretation is taken up in chapter 4. Such linearity may only apply to the narrative of the history of metaphysics; yet linear necessity is denied to avoid the new destinal claim being "logically and historiographically predicted or to be metaphysically construed as a sequence belonging to a process of history" ²⁴¹ since such appropriative destining determines history. Thus the new claim is portrayed as a recollection of origin rather than a linear progression. But Heidegger also says that once the epoch of Gestell is surmounted by a new destining then Gestell itself "is not simply submerged and lost" ²⁴² or done away with; previous destinings endure and still influence the current revealing of the real in a way expressible as a linear teleology. The possibility of and ramifications in relation to the notion of danger of such epochal interpenetration are considered in chapter 5.

The situation is complicated by Heidegger's contradictory comments on the predictability of future destining. Heidegger claims "We do not know what possibilities the destining of Western history holds in store for our people and the West" ²⁴³ yet that we do know that as fundamentally nihilistic "its unfolding can have nothing but world catastrophes as its consequence," ²⁴⁴ despite its history not being meant in a 'negative sense'. That in the era of the atomic age "No one can foresee the radical changes to come"²⁴⁵ but that "technological advance will move faster and faster and can never be stopped"²⁴⁶ so that "No prophecy is necessary to recognize the sciences...will soon be determined and regulated by the new fundamental science that is called cybernetics." ²⁴⁷ Heidegger speaks against the possibility of man foreseeing the future of Sein that is beyond his direct control, yet sometimes in the same breathe speaks such prophecies as if they were foregone conclusions. The notion of such inevitability is again considered in chapter 5, for now it is noted that predictability implies linearity, the impossibility of prophecy the opposite.

Despite his comments as to the impossibility of teleological necessity in the unfolding of the epochs Heidegger ultimately treats epochal history as a coherent narrative yet "failed to clarify satisfactorily the nature of that other kind of necessity which governs coherence"²⁴⁸ The epochs of metaphysics according to Heidegger can "be represented historically in their sequence as an event"; ²⁴⁹ an event that is not the history of Being as such but stems from the ongoing process of Ereignis. Whilst talk of sequence implies linearity that they are represented as sequence implies an imposed narrative subordinated to the purposes of the subject. His commitment to a new beginning causes him to deny a linear progression yet also to form a narrative based on the succession of withdrawals to enable a self-surmounting of Gestell guided by his axiological

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 39.

²⁴² Ibid., 37.

²⁴³ Ibid., 56.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 62.

²⁴⁵ *Discourse on Thinking*, 51.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 434.

²⁴⁸ Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World*, 23.

²⁴⁹ Heidegger, "The Question of Being," 87.

presuppositions. The coherence of the linear narrative would thereby arise from the projective interpretative moment.

Hodge identifies two aspects to the history of Being that Heidegger conflates; partially revealed sendings of Being that are a complete process beyond comprehension, and an incomplete but available historical narration of these (the related histories of Being and metaphysics). The linear narrative of the history of metaphysics is thus a projective interpretation of non-linear sendings, "Heidegger constructs this history of metaphysics as a history of words for being which conceals their origin in the sending or history of being."²⁵⁰ The mysteriousness of the relation between Ereignis and the epochs only arises when the former is not seen in terms of Heidegger's futural projection (in terms of the unity of the ontological and axiological).

A linear narrative is both required for the coherence of Heidegger's thought and brings his thought into coherence with Nishitani's charting of the progression through the fields of awareness; in line with the thesis's fore-conception as to withdrawal progressively increasing to reveal pure nihility. Such withdrawal is not a decline nor a necessity yet despite their denial they are both required by Heidegger for the narrative in service to his projective interpretation. But the necessity of this narrative is the experience of the progression through the fields, an existential not logical necessity made necessary by its very process of realization so that the epochal history and its completion in the supreme danger only are in terms of the projective retrieval predicated upon it that acts as its own condition of possibility. The danger only is as danger in terms of a narrative that gets its coherence from that which is to save the danger. This raises the possibility of differing projective narratives relating to the nature of danger and culmination to be considered later after explication of the relation between the saving and the danger.

2.4. The Danger that Saves

Danger as revealing Ereignis

Every destining "keeps itself everywhere concealed to the last" ²⁵¹ and only when its end draws nigh, in the case of Gestell when heralded by physics, can its nature as danger be beheld and its power threatened by the possibility of other possibilities. Once the essence of technology is understood as a destiny the very possibility of the possibilities it conceals is opened to us and Gestell brings to the fore the possibility of the mutual freedom of Da and Sein (human existence and Gestell) disclosing human existence as determined by the integral Da-Sein relation so that "we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim."²⁵² Only as completed can metaphysics be understood in its essence and the way opened back into its essence as Ereignis; a return to the origin of metaphysics that is required for the retrieval of new possibilities due to its exhaustion. When freed through retrieving the primordial notion of causality from 'correct' instrumentality Gestell as "the saving power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence" ²⁵³ as the mortal of the fourfold. Whilst there has yet to be the thinging of the thing "In the frame, we glimpse a first, oppressing flash of the appropriation," ²⁵⁴ so that the mirroring of world as the truth of Being first flashes "when Enframing lights up, in its coming to presence, as the danger, i.e., as the saving-power." ²⁵⁵ The realizing of Gestell as highest

²⁵⁰ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 145.

²⁵¹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 22.

²⁵² Ibid., 25.

²⁵³ Ibid., 153.

²⁵⁴ *Identity and Difference*, 38.

²⁵⁵ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 27.

danger for the first time reveals our belonging to Ereignis and is a transitive stage to the transformation of the danger through the experiencing of Ereignis as such.

The realization of Gestell is thus a transitioning from the field of consciousness to that of nihility. In the completion of metaphysics man discloses the real as standing-reserve, as nothing; including his own subjectivity. The dissolution of the subject-object dichotomy into the reality of standing-reserve that marks the end of the anthropocentric dominance of modern egoistic subjectivity and a paradigm shift in the manner of exploitation parallels the movement between the fields of consciousness and nihility and is the ground for the beneficial transitional nature of both notions. Gestell as the realization of nihility is a necessary step towards understanding (realizing) Ereignis and thus becoming receptive to the transformation of Nothingness that is to be accomplished through us once we have prepared for it through thought. The turn in Being's self-withdrawal occurs only at its extreme point; only as the supreme danger that exposes itself as total withdrawal can this take place by revealing the pure nihility of the reality of the real thus our existence. Alone amongst the epochs Gestell is the opportunity to realize that epochal destiny is defined by the withdrawal of Being.

Heidegger even compares the thoughtlessness of Gestell to letting a field lie fallow, "only that can lie fallow which in itself is a ground for growth"²⁵⁶ and a field must periodically lie fallow for such growth to be possible so that thoughtlessness is first required to prepare for that time when "the seed will come up and ripen."²⁵⁷ Whilst *Discourse on Thinking* also suggests the field of consciousness does not first need to be dissolved in nihility in claiming that "authentic releasement may come about without necessarily being preceded by such being-released-from horizontal transcendence"²⁵⁸ this is outweighed by contrary statements such as that things must "have become objects before they attained their nature as things"²⁵⁹ and the understanding of the human as ego must have "likewise emerged before the nature of man could return to itself".²⁶⁰

The completion of metaphysics in nihilism (nothingness fully befalling Being) that makes possible the self-surmounting of Gestell is the realization of nihility as the origin of thought so that in Gestell's indicating of Ereignis we are for the first time brought into the realm of essential religion according to Nishitani's definition of the actualization of such absolute nothingness as the self-realization of reality through our awareness. Only in Gestell is such awareness first realized in revealing the reality of the real as pure nihility, thus as the suchness that is self-identical with Śūnyatā; "Only there where the consummation of the modern age attains the heedlessness that is its peculiar greatness is future history being prepared."²⁶¹

The condition of possibility for the granting of the next destining is that this destining as danger comes to awareness; it is through the awareness of man (reflection on danger) that reality is to realize itself (Being turn towards its own essence rather than concealing that essence). Whilst this shows the supreme danger as indicating the possibility of saving the relation of the danger and that which saves must be deepened in light of Nishitani's reflections on samsāra-sive-nirvāṇa, and of the existential nature of such realization that is required for the ontological turn.

The Necessity of Danger

The identity of the danger and the saving power is thought by Nishitani in terms of the

²⁵⁶ *Discourse on Thinking*, 45.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 27.

self-identity of the fields. The fortuitousness of the oblivion of metaphysics shows its parallel to the field of nihility in that it is both self-identical to its origin and the way back to this origin; in Nishitani's terms only can the emergence of nihility as real reality indicate the possibility for the realization of the field of *Sūnyatā* as the self-transformation of nothingness through the realization of that very nihility.

The existential realization of Gestell as supreme danger was earlier defined in relation to anxiety as the experience of nothingness; the self calling to itself both from and to its own null nature. Homelessness when thought as such "is the sole summons that calls mortals into their dwelling";²⁶² to think Gestell as the danger is to heed the call of the self as appropriated so that Gestell as the nothingness which befalls Being (Being's self-denial) is itself the call for us to dwell. From Gestell as Ereignis man is called to himself from and by the current way of appropriation. Dallmayr cites Heidegger's interpretation of Holderlin as indicating homecoming is a process of self-discovery through sojourn in otherness, that "Homecoming and being at home are not...ready-made acquisitions: they are possible only through intense estrangement or exposure to otherness; to this extent, appropriation is closely linked with expropriation, homecoming with the need for exodus"²⁶³. Homecoming first requires homelessness, meditative thought first requires calculative; we can only meditatively dwell if we have first experienced homelessness. Gestell or the field of nihility as homelessness are thus a necessary stage to the homecoming of true appropriation (nearness to Being); that like for Nishitani must remain in the final self-realization of their identity that transforms our self-awareness.

The realization of this call reflects the identity of the ontological and existential; that authenticity as the personal existential correlate to Gestell 's self-surmounting also requires the sojourn in inauthenticity and the uncanniness of anxiety. As authenticity retrieves a destinal heritage the self-surmounting retrieves the latent possibilities in the origin of thrown Gestell. The projective moment of Gestell 's self-surmounting is the ontological correlate to the existential readiness for anxiety. The call of conscience that claims man is the voice of silence calling from man's essence as a relation to Being, thus it is the call of appropriation calling us to realize this self-surmounting. Resolute authenticity in anxiety is attending to the nothingness of self; the authentic response to Gestell as its self-surmounting is also to attend to this nothingness as origin.

As a relinquishing of the desire to overcome metaphysics (thus the desire to overcome the desire at the root of representation) the surmounting of Gestell is also a psychological event. The reflective return to origin (the realization of the identity of the fields) must be seen in the contexts of the identity of the ontological and existential as the self-surmounting is a transformation of both the origin of thought and the thinkers who realize this origin. Both personal authenticity and epochal transformation are self-identical aspects of the call of appropriation (the call of conscience) that issues from the ground of the elemental subjectivity of the true self. Whilst Nishitani emphasizes the personal transformation through death of the ego for Heidegger the dual transformation of human existence and metaphysics emphasizes shared epochal understanding, but for both the self-surmounting of Gestell must be realized in a personal existential transformation (that as collective is also social).

The necessity of of this transitional nihility arises from the self-withdrawal that permeates disclosure, but chapter 3 dealt with how this narrative of withdrawal arises from a projective interpretation guided by the very realization it is the condition of

²⁶² Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 159.

²⁶³ Fred Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism* (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 161.

possibility for. Despite the identity of samsāra-sive-nirvāna, of the danger and that which saves, this narrative and the fact that such identity only is as a process of realization (not an end state) leads both thinkers to portray nihility/danger as transitional. The necessity stems from the need for the Turn, but brings no guarantee that such a transition will be realized. The nature of such realization now leads to consideration of its conditional nature.

Identity and Difference calls Gestell a prelude to Ereignis, but Heidegger's first raising of this prelude through quotation of Holderlin makes heavy use of conditionals. 'If' there is truth in Holderlin's words then Gestell 'might' give rise to the saving power, and even if true then "according to the words of the poet we have no right whatsoever to expect that there where the danger is we should be able to lay hold of the saving power immediately and without preparation."²⁶⁴

Gestell contains only "the possible arising of the saving power,"²⁶⁵ it is both conditional and ambiguous; both its danger and its saving are conditional on its manner of realization or accomplishment, through man's co-responsibility for the coming to pass of revealing. Its ambiguity arises through its relation to human existence, more strictly speaking how we relate our existence to Gestell as a destining that starts us upon the way of revealing. "Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth"²⁶⁶ the dual nature of technology, its radical ambiguity, preserves resonances of and parallels Heidegger's earlier thought on authenticity and inauthenticity. Inauthentic challenging-forth as ordering conceals Ereignis so endangers the relation to truth, but Gestell comes to pass from the granting that lets us endure showing us as needed for truth thus indicating the saving power. These two trends ambiguously dwelling near to each other show us "the constellation, the stellar course of the mystery"²⁶⁷ mirroring the dual nature of the field of nihility for Nishitani. Both Gestell and the field of nihility can be inauthentically experienced as anxious meaninglessness or authentically experienced as the integral self-identity of self and absolute nothingness, and the manner of this experience of their realization would seem to determine whether Gestell is indeed a destining.

Gestell as given by Ereignis is called a granting by Heidegger "For it is granting that first conveys to man that share in revealing which the coming-to-pass of revealing needs"²⁶⁸ revealing the responsibility of and Being's need of mortals for bringing to presence. The essence of Gestell as a granting seems to be itself conditional upon man's adopting a free relation to it; challenging-forth as supreme danger is only a granting "if in this destining the saving power is said to grow."²⁶⁹ Gestell is a granting if as a destining it gives rise to the saving power, it only gives rise to the saving power if we begin to pay it heed. Heidegger's use of conditionals seem to imply the status of the essence of technology as a granting, is determined by our stance towards that truth. Gestell is a granting once seen as a destining that starts us on a way of revealing; it is only a destining when we realize it as such.

This is a consequence of the identity of ontology and its existential realization; that the ontologies of Heidegger and Nishitani are a condition of possibility for their existential realization yet are also only made possible by such realization. Gestell only is as both danger and destining on the basis of a projective interpretation based on the experience of Gestell as danger. This problem was outlined in previous chapters on

²⁶⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 28.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 32.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 32.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Śūnyatā acting as its own condition of possibility and is to be addressed over the following chapters in terms of the Turn as a projective moment.

Origin of Danger and Saving

The origin of both metaphysical and meditative thought is the withdrawal of Being that calls thought to Ereignis from the null self as so claimed. Such origin as "that from which and by which something is what it is and as it is"²⁷⁰ is the nothingness that both gives metaphysics and will give rise to its surmounting, and only is in terms of what it realizes, or can possibly realize. Nihilism names this realization of appropriation that is determined by the nihility of reality so that Gestell is the completion of this realization of Nothing. This problematic relation of realization relates to the previous discussion of epochal history in chapter 3, that this origin that is to be retrieved can be seen as pertaining both to ahistorical Ereignis that gives history (elemental awareness), yet is also to events within the given history of Being. The former sense is to be reached by stepping back along the way thought has traced in the latter sense so that "thinking in a way leads us away from what has been thought so far in philosophy"²⁷¹ so that we may "behold it with respect to what constitutes the source of this entire thinking";²⁷² oblivion itself as such that gives metaphysics.

Ma and Brakel explore the ambiguity in Heidegger's notion of origin; that the "expression seems to refer to the historically concrete beginning of 'European-Western philosophy.' On the other hand, Heidegger stresses that this term should not be simplistically taken in a literally geographic sense."²⁷³ That the homecoming to origin that counters homelessness does not pertain to a nation but "in the context of a belongingness to the destiny of the West. But even the West is not thought regionally...merely as Europe, but rather world-historically out of nearness to the source."²⁷⁴ But this view is mitigated by Heidegger's references to Greek language (and thus its German descendant) as being most rooted in the primordial experience of Being so that "It is hard to believe that the German language as mentioned...is a reference only to something that is ontological or epochal, rather than to the German language as normally understood and used."²⁷⁵ That the danger for Europe is that its thinking "is falling behind in the essential course of a dawning world destiny which nevertheless in the basic traits of its essential provenance remains European by definition"²⁷⁶ also roots Gestell as world-historical to a specifically Western source.

Ma and Brakel suggest these contradictions on the nature of historical origin can be reconciled by seeing them in "the epochal/ontological and ontic senses simultaneously"²⁷⁷ as both ontologically word-historical and in the more everyday notion of history as taking place in a specific time and place. Such a reconciliation would require simultaneity not to be taken as exclusive; if the Western metaphysics originating in the Greek is the only realization of the originary event then Being seems reduced to a single specific history. Such exclusivity is suggested by Heidegger's ruling out of a non-Western origin for the saving power; as he sees such manners of thought as sharing a fundamentally different origin even when those traditions stem from the same ahistorical sense of appropriation (albeit manifested in different historical actualities). But if it is

²⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings* (HarperCollins, 1993), 143.

²⁷¹ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 50.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ma and Van Brakel, "Heidegger's Comportment toward East-West Dialogue," 525.

²⁷⁴ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 241.

²⁷⁵ Ma and Van Brakel, "Heidegger's Comportment toward East-West Dialogue," 526.

²⁷⁶ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 244.

²⁷⁷ Ma and Van Brakel, "Heidegger's Comportment toward East-West Dialogue," 526.

origin in the ontological sense prior to the Greek that is to be retrieved then the Greek is not the only way back into that origin.

Whilst the ontological sense of origin is Ereignis Heidegger's in regards to the linear narrative of metaphysics completed in Gestell "The beginnings of that interpretation reach back to Plato and Aristotle"²⁷⁸ placing the origin of that narrative in Greek thought with "the development of the sciences within the field that philosophy opened up"²⁷⁹. But such thought did not emerge in an intellectual or historical vacuum, whilst its historical origin may be lost to recorded history it can only be called primordial in relation to the incomplete narrative history constructed by Heidegger; the locating of the beginning in the Greek only makes sense in terms of the completion of metaphysics in the greatest danger. The Greek "is ultimately only one beginning of thinking among others and perhaps discloses the origin of thinking in a one-sided and distorted way"²⁸⁰ an origin shared by other historical manifestations of nihilism. Western metaphysics is not a discrete historical process and Heidegger seems to overlook non-Greek influences upon it and to be "thinking metaphysically in accordance with a binary opposition between 'East' and 'West'".²⁸¹

In terms of the narrative history the Greek is closest to an ahistorical origin thus the most fitting signpost to that which must truly be retrieved; closer than the metaphysics that it forms the earliest known influence upon. But if Heidegger's earlier comments that the origin gives history in a manner non-reducible to a linear sequence (and that Gestell is the first flashing of such Ereignis) are taken into account such ontological origin permeates every epoch of Western history. Greek thought could be no closer to the origin of thought than the epochs it precedes; and Gestell as the realization of nothingness (suchness/nihilality) would be closer to the universal origin of human Dasein than any epochal stage of the narrative of Western Dasein. Heidegger later moves away from prioritizing a retrieval of Greek thought as a primordial experience, claiming "The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not in the philosophy of the Greeks either...only...in the sense of correctness and reliability, not in the sense of unconcealment...we must acknowledge the fact that *alētheia*, unconcealment in the sense of the clearing of presence, was originally experienced only as *orthotēs*, as the correctness of representations and statements."²⁸² The Greek becomes a signpost on the way to Ereignis so that we must "experience *alētheia* in a Greek manner as unconcealment and then, above and beyond the Greek, think it as the clearing of self-concealing"²⁸³ to reach the true origin of thought.

Hodge questions whether an origin such as the Greek is capable of being identified, that Gestell and the Greek are not integrally linked to each other or inaugural Ereignis; "The irreversible historical event of the emergence of Europe as Europe seems to be conflated by Heidegger with the ontological event of the repeated self-presentation and erasure of ontological difference,"²⁸⁴ with such conflation previously mentioned as between the history of Being beyond comprehension and the incomplete historical narrative of metaphysics. Where Ma and Brakel see simultaneity Hodge sees unwarranted conflation that once removed means thought can return to questioning without returning to the Greek and that whilst Western metaphysics was conducive to Gestell did not lead necessarily to it.

²⁷⁸ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 218.

²⁷⁹ "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 433.

²⁸⁰ Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 51.

²⁸¹ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 251.

²⁸² Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 447.

²⁸³ Ibid., 448.

²⁸⁴ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 170.

Such simultaneity and conflation are not mutually exclusive. A necessary connection between the two senses of origin does not entail a conflation of the ontological and ontic if this identity does not exhaust the possible realizations of the ontological origin; if the Greek thought that starts metaphysics on its way is seen as one signpost back to the true origin of that way. This possibility is considered in *A Dialogue on Language* where Heidegger accepts the possibility of a single shared source yet remains hesitant to the point of doubtful due to not yet having thought the nature of Western language that he sees as necessary preparation for such dialogue. Despite lamenting that as the Japanese language was unknown to him he did not know whether what he was "trying to think of as the nature of language is also adequate for the nature of Eastasian language"²⁸⁵ Heidegger also presumes a difference in houses of Being that his self-professed ignorance would seem to rule out him making. His collaborator who thinks in both language-groups seems more hopeful; to the extent of taking the Western phenomenon of metaphysics as appropriate for certain Japanese terms (like *Iki* as aesthetics).

Heidegger claims *Gestell* must first self-surmount as a precondition for planetary dialogue; future thought might be planetary but the preparatory dialogue for this first requires separate responses to *Gestell*. The dialogue with the Greek origin that "everywhere comes to encounter us and approaches us"²⁸⁶ in *Gestell* "remains for us the precondition of the inevitable dialogue with the East Asian world"²⁸⁷ that for "which participants are by no means equal today."²⁸⁸ Ma and Brakel hold the dialogue has a misleading title as it is not true dialogue since "step by step Heidegger turns the essay into an elaboration of his own philosophy of language"²⁸⁹ as the search for the home of essential Western Saying. They conclude that Heidegger only engaged with Eastern thought in terms of a possible future dialogue once the Greek and Eastern origins had been independently retrieved as ways back to the true originary appropriation. Implicit in this is the idea that the Nothingness that befalls Eastern Being is not purely that of European nihilism under the guise of *Gestell*, else that which saves outside the West would have a wholly other origin to the danger. The origin to be retrieved as precondition for planetary dialogue must be one indicated by the early thought of its participants but in no way simply reducible to them.

The retrieval of the essential Saying of the Greek origin as leading to that of the universal sense of origin makes such a return the basis for universal dialogue; "The thinking of the unthought of this imperishable Western beginning, however...is also the liberation of thought from its parochial mould and its meeting with the unthought of the other few, really great beginnings in human history."²⁹⁰ The new beginning comes from a nihility that is not culturally bounded like the nihilisms it gave rise to. The origin of Western metaphysics is nothing Western, yet its realization as metaphysics is so. The self-surmounting is achieved from this universal origin yet (perhaps correctly) for Heidegger retains its culturally bounded nature due to its relation to metaphysics. The transformation has universal source "Yet it is finite, in the sense that it does not claim to make an absolute beginning but can emerge only as mediated by the course of the Western metaphysical tradition and its thinking of Being, as still linked to that which it seeks to overcome."²⁹¹

²⁸⁵ Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 8.

²⁸⁶ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 158.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ "The Question of Being," 107.

²⁸⁹ Ma and Van Brakel, "Heidegger's Comportment toward East-West Dialogue," 539.

²⁹⁰ J.L. Mehta, "Heidegger and Vedanta: Reflections on a Questionable Theme," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 23.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 24.

If the retrieval of the ontic Western origin is preparatory to the inevitable dialogue to come then the Western surmounting of Gestell gets its meaning from the projected planetary dialogue that thus guides the retrieval of metaphysics. The planetary dialogue permeates and conditions the prior Western dialogue with its own historic origin, constituting the self-surmounting of Gestell and guiding what is to be retrieved from metaphysics; a universal sense of origin prior to both cultural realizations to provide the horizon for such a dialogue. Such is to be found in the affinities between Ereignis and Śūnyatā as the shared nothingness of Da-Sein; both houses of Being are founded upon this abgrund.

Man as determined by Da-Sein is a universal conception of the human not just Western man else it would be historically contingent rather than what gives history. Origin as ontological only seems to make sense with a universal aspect, all cultures have structures of meaning thus a shared relation to how meaning arises (the conditions of its possibility). Metaphysics as nihilism is a contingent cultural manifestation of universal nihility; the Greek is the earliest recorded part of this process that flows from universal Da-Sein not Western Dasein. If Ereignis gives history and is thus not part of its linear temporal structure then this nihilism that gives seems best understood as universal and innate to human disclosure given other affinities.

That the self-transformation of nihilism into the self-realization of reality is always of a specific historical kind means we can realize universal nihility only through its cultural manifestation that began in the Greek. Eastern thought cannot be solely used but can help contextualize Western nihilism and explicate its relation to original universal nihility; if the origin of Western nihilism is an instantiation of the universal origin of nihility then approaches to other manifestations are a valid aid. Whilst the self-transformation of nihilism must always be that of a specific cultural manifestation of nihility Heidegger's onus on the Greek seems to be an over-emphasis on how such nihilism originates in a uniquely Western source rather than universal nihility. The supreme danger as necessary to all destining is a universal danger; that thereby can entail a universal response. The cure can only come from same source as the danger, but this source must be seen in ontological not ontic sense; with the latter (history of Western metaphysics) only indicating the former as what is to form future projective criteria so that pluralistic universality is the projective interpretation of the preparatory dialogue.

Danger and Saving as Projective

The possible conflation of the senses of origin in the narrative of linear withdrawal and Heidegger's talk of a retrieval of poiesis and primordial experience of Being leads to some commentators holding that "The world of the fourfold as articulated in 'The Thing' is essentially a Presocratic Greek world ruled by myth".²⁹² But in such an interpretation of oblivion "we presuppose what we should perhaps not presuppose at all, that such a way to Being has at some time existed and that a thinking on Being has already thought Being as Being."²⁹³ Given that Gestell is the first flashing of Ereignis (and Śūnyatā first requires the transition through nihility) the shared origin to be retrieved cannot be historically (or ecologically, theistically, mythologically, etc) interpreted as a return to a more natural pre-metaphysical experience of Being. Yet the very notions of origin and retrieval, and Heidegger's earlier discussed projective narrative raise the question of on what basis the new saving epoch is to be projected if not such a return.

The completion of metaphysics is the condition of possibility for its self-surmounting, but the projected self-surmounting itself determines the nature of what was completed by the gathering of its utmost possibilities. It is a projected destiny "that

²⁹² Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 195.

²⁹³ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 103.

permits the significance of the beginning of a process to be grasped only at its moment of completion.”²⁹⁴ Hodge remarks on how human existence as “structured through given meanings and the production of new meanings, in the twin structure of thrownness and projection”²⁹⁵ leads to Heidegger's narrative of the self-surmounting of metaphysics prioritizing thrownness (claim of Being) in the history of metaphysics and projection in the overcoming of Gestell. This relates to what was earlier said on Heidegger's manner of interpreting the meaning of texts in the context of present concerns for the sake of projection; of previous thinkers as means for his futural projection based on his experience of a need. Hodge argues Heidegger's readings form a prospective history guided by his ethical commitments in which “He is using these readings to address himself to current and future conditions, understood to be in a state of extreme crisis”²⁹⁶ opening him up to accusations that he reads modern oppositions back into the tradition and then declares the tradition to lead to them.

Mizoguchi considers how the grounding of the new destining in the prior historical unfolding of the shared origin makes the self-surmounting of Gestell essentially projective; “the world of the Fourfold presented in 'The Thing' covertly plays the role of fore-project for Heidegger's thought”²⁹⁷ that is anticipated as “the critical horizon for the ontological interpretation in a broad sense of the present technological world.”²⁹⁸ Not only does the coming first thinging of the thing depend upon the completion of metaphysics; only such thinging enables the characterization of the 'deficiency' of the modern age to make sense. In the absence of a prior horizon for evaluating the new and old destinings (Gestell and Fourfold) Mizoguchi suggests that releasement as their simultaneous affirmation and negation provides this horizon; “The fore-project guiding Heidegger's thought may best be sought within the 'and' linking Enframing and the Fourfold - and the domain opened up through their relationship might provide for the first time a criterion for interpretation.”²⁹⁹ That Heidegger is not so much aiming for the poetic dwelling of the fourfold but a horizon for a unifying dialogue between Gestell and Fourfold; between calculative and meditative thought.

The circular nature of interpretation and understanding is not necessarily thereby rendered into a vicious circle; but the fore-having of the projective moment must be drawn non-arbitrarily and held open to constant revision and whether what calls for thought from out of the self can provide criteria for the fore-having is to be addressed in chapter 6. The fore-having is derived from the call of the self as absolute nothingness that speaks of the need and destitution of the modern age, but this experience of destitution only is in light of the projection based upon it; Śūnyatā/Ereignis is both origin and what is retrieved thus beyond the normal horizon of significance from which criteria of retrieval are derived. The ground for the projection is the danger, but the danger only is in terms of the projection; Ereignis and Śūnyatā only are when realized as such. Yet both Heidegger and Nishitani, when speaking of Ereignis and Śūnyatā as ontological, speak as if such ontologies are operative even when not brought to awareness. That their realization is marked by the sive of understanding-sive-actualization suggests that as projective they are only operative when we realize them as such in the awareness of Da, a realization based on their being already operative thus a more vicious circle than normal projective interpretation.

²⁹⁴ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 85.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 154.

²⁹⁷ Kōhei Mizoguchi, “Heidegger’s Bremen Lectures: Towards a Dialogue with His Later Thought,” in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 194.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 197.

If the self-surmounting is taken as projective to allow the first thinging yet is also a return to the prior ontological origin of universal nihility the new destining must be radically new yet preserve the nothingness that manifested in Gestell from a universal origin as contingently shaped by the Greek experience of nothingness.

Danger saves as danger

Whilst *The Question Concerning Technology* talks of the danger indicating the saving power *The Turning* talks more of it as the saving power; "In the coming to presence of the danger, where it is as the danger, is the turning about into the safekeeping, is the safekeeping itself, is the saving power of Being."³⁰⁰ As the advent of the saving power is to arise from a claim of Being that currently is as Gestell then Gestell does not simply reveal the possibility of saving, Gestell itself as the oblivion of Being is also that which saves.

Gestell is the current destining and any new destining must issue from the same origin that manifested as Gestell. The turn in the withdrawal of Being is "neither a destruction nor even a denial"³⁰¹ of metaphysics but a full working out of the tradition that thus gives rise naturally to its successor through understanding its origin. There is only the language of metaphysical philosophy with which to try to articulate the new thought; "only what has already been thought prepares what has not yet been thought".³⁰² The completion of nihilism in Gestell is also a restoration of metaphysics that "is the restoration of the oblivion of Being."³⁰³ The nothingness that belongs to Being is the essence of metaphysics that is to be restored. The self-withdrawal of Being (which belongs to its essence) is itself the essence of metaphysics; "The oblivion belongs to the difference because the difference belongs to the oblivion. The oblivion does not happen to the difference only afterward, in consequence of the forgetfulness of human thinking."³⁰⁴ Gestell as the completion of this is also accordingly "in its essence, the mystery of Being itself, a mystery that is unthought because withheld."³⁰⁵

Such restoration and claims as to a shared origin implies shared elements drawn afresh, not simply that Gestell and the saving power have a shared essence as sendings but that Gestell as its own specific kind of revealing is related to that which saves. If every destining is necessarily dangerous and characterized by a manner of withdrawal as the way that Being directs us to beings then the destiny Heidegger seeks to retrieve will share such features with the metaphysical tradition that leads to the greatest danger. As was said in chapter 3 "If a change in Being - i.e., now, in the coming to presence of Enframing - comes to pass, then this in no way means that technology, whose essence lies in Enframing, will be done away with" ³⁰⁶ with the implication that if technology remains then Gestell as its essence must also still endure in some fashion (albeit altered). Not only is danger as such to be preserved in the new sending, Gestell as itself is to be preserved (saved).

The tension between transition and continuity within the relation of the new thought to that which shares its origin leads to an ambiguity in how any new destining may resemble Gestell. If the self-surmounting of Gestell is paralleled to the progression towards the unity of the fields then it must be asked in what way the field of nihility is to be found in Śūnyatā in the final realization of this self-identity of the fields; how the new

³⁰⁰ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 44.

³⁰¹ *On the Way to Language*, 20.

³⁰² *Identity and Difference*, 48.

³⁰³ "The Question of Being," 91.

³⁰⁴ *Identity and Difference*, 50.

³⁰⁵ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 110.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

poetic dwelling is to be shaped by the Gestell that realized its shared null origin. One possible interpretation of such simultaneous affirmation and negation of Gestell is a delineation of spheres of applicability, that Nishitani would deny as a simple restricting of religion and science to separate domains, another that it permeates the new thought and retains an identity with it.

Spheres of applicability

Heidegger's later dichotomy of calculative and meditative thought seemingly reverses the inter-penetration of the danger and saving power leading to the impression that the current epochal revealing is to be contextualized but partitioned from thought. That "There are...two kinds of thinking, each justified and needed in its own way: calculative thinking and meditative thinking"³⁰⁷ yet we must also "pit meditative thinking decisively against merely calculative thinking"³⁰⁸ this distinguishes them as discrete and denigrates the 'mere' calculative thinking despite saying each is needed. Whilst both thinkers stress an identity of fields, or of saving and danger, they also at times prioritize one amidst what should be a self-identical unity, as was said in the introduction at times both Heidegger and Nishitani seem to take a polemical approach that obscures the truth of their thought.

These comments imply calculative thought is to remain as it is rather than being transformed leading to commentators interpreting the simultaneous affirmation and negation of Gestell in releasement as a separating out of spheres of influence/applicability so that our approach to Gestell should be to "learn to live with it by not paying excessive heed to it or getting obsessed with surmounting it."³⁰⁹ Havas believes that Heidegger thinks we cannot resist Gestell but must "express our obedience to it in a form other than blind acceptance"³¹⁰ and must instead confine technological-calculative thought to the appropriate aspects of our life without letting it dominate; "The doctrine of the will to power is the metaphysics of the marketplace; it shows us what it makes sense to say there. But it also tempts us to think that we are confined within the marketplace, unable to hear any voices from outside."³¹¹ That all is required is a re-contextualizing of Gestell as no longer the sole possible disclosure; "that it become aware of its own foundations and through this self-awareness rid itself of the pretence of being the ur-voice of Being."³¹² But this overlooks that beholding the danger is only the first necessary step and that without a transformation of Gestell itself "the attempts that are being made...to master technology with the help of traditional values"³¹³ only attest to its power by treating the world of the marketplace as estranged from the self, reinforcing the alienation of self and world as in the subject-object dichotomy.

As was said in chapter 3 Discourse on Thinking also treats machine technology as the ontic correlate to Gestell leading to the free relation being portrayed in simpler terms of bondage to technical devices so that it is contextualizing machines rather than more radical change that is needed; "We can use technical devices as they ought to be used, and also let them alone as something which does not affect our inner and real core. We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature."³¹⁴ The simultaneous affirmation and negation here seems to be towards technical devices not the essence of technology;

³⁰⁷ *Discourse on Thinking*, 46.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁰⁹ Stambaugh, "Heidegger, Daoism, and Metaphysics," 89.

³¹⁰ Randall Havas, "Who Is Heidegger's Nietzsche?," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. H.L. Dreyfuss and H. Hall (B. Blackwell, 1992), 239.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 240.

³¹² Alderman, "Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology."

³¹³ Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 110.

³¹⁴ *Discourse on Thinking*, 54.

treating such devices as "things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon something higher"³¹⁵ rather than a concern with the freeing or saving of Gestell itself. This lends credence to the view that Heidegger desired a contextualizing or partition of types of thought; that the affirmation of Gestell is simply the conditional acceptance of machine technology in a way that inverts a relation of mastery placing calculative thought in service to 'something higher'. This would seem to be a much less nuanced approach to technology than in his earlier concerns with the question.

Such a preservation of Gestell would maintain it in distinction from meditative thought rather than realize the identity of the danger with that which saves indicated by the simultaneous yes and no to technology. If Gestell is to be affirmed then it must be so on the basis of the claim that it is, rather than its shared origin with poiesis or what it may lead to, and if it is to be denied simultaneously this cannot simply be delineating a sphere of validity, which would remain partial affirmation rather than true negation. Nihilism and thus nihilism must be affirmed and denied equally and totally; the simultaneous affirmation and negation cannot be a simple partitioning of spheres or contextualization that moves no further. What is needed is a realization of the self-identity of affirmative-negation in releasement; that Gestell is the saving power and in the new epochal dwelling both the danger and saving are both affirmed and denied as the same since both calculative and meditative thought stem from the same claim of nothingness. The new rootedness to "be granted again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man's nature and all his works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic age"³¹⁶ must be a rootedness specific to the current age, our flourishing remains one within the age of Gestell as what is already granted as our destining. Simply recognizing the contingency of technological understanding to re-contextualize it and behold the danger is not enough, although it is a necessary preparatory step towards realizing the self-identity of the calculative and meditative within nihilism.

The affinities between Heidegger and Nishitani's thought on the danger also highlight four related pertinent differences that bring out themes to be addressed.

Firstly; that for Nishitani the transition between the fields is a more personal than epochal transformation due to his greater emphasis on ontology as existentially realized, highlighting problems with how both thinkers deal with the relation between ontology and its existential realization. Secondly and related to this is that for Nishitani nihilism is (like anxiety) by necessity transitional and must revert to the field of consciousness or pass beyond into that of *Śūnyatā*, whereas for Heidegger there is the danger that Gestell is a lasting or even final destining. Both of these points are to be addressed in the next chapter in terms of the tension in Heidegger's thought between the plurality of *Dasein* and the singular epochal understanding of Being and what this means for the viability of the notion of danger.

Thirdly; whilst the danger of nihilism and Gestell are both portrayed as positive opportunities their relation to what came before differs in emphasis. The field of nihilism is presented as more 'real' than that of Consciousness but Gestell is not presented as a more primordially real view of reality than metaphysical epochs, despite its closer relation to the indicating of *Ereignis* than that of such understandings. Combined with Nishitani's stronger emphasis on the identity of the saving and danger (*samsāra-sive-nirvāna*) this implies a different role for Gestell within the saving destining. The manner in which Gestell could be said to be revealing real reality and its identity with that which saves is to be the main concern of the third section of the thesis.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 53.

Fourthly, whilst both the appropriative belonging of Da-Sein and the field of Śūnyatā are primordial and self-identical with nihility for Nishitani Śūnyatā has already been realized in the enlightenment of Bodhisattvas and does not represent anything as unprecedented as the thinging of the thing or as radically new as the coming destining. Thus Nishitani has a more readily defined set of criteria for the realization of that which saves; both narrowing its possibilities yet also providing a more well defined framework for the retrieval of those possibilities, the former point is taken up in third part of thesis the latter in chapter 6.

2.5. Viability of the Danger

The Nature of Danger

An experience of danger presupposes a horizon of concern; the very notion of danger implies a threat to something taken as of value. The experience of danger in Gestell thus shares the structure of anxiety as its personal correlate; just as anxiety requires a 'for' and 'in the face of' the notion of danger requires a horizon of concern for what is threatened and a viable threat. For anxiety Dasein is both the for and in the face of which Dasein is anxious, so too for the supreme danger both the threat and threatened is Ereignis itself. But the anxiety of Dasein can be personally attested and relates to a very real possibility of impossibility disclosed in death. Such attestation and impossibility do not seem applicable to Ereignis.

Discourse on Thinking comes closest to presenting Heidegger's thought on the danger in the form of a traditional argument; if calculative thought becomes the only way of thinking "Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature - that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive."³¹⁷ Two issues are raised by this argument. Firstly, if human existence simply is the appropriative relation and cannot come to presence differently then the danger of losing our 'essential nature' through the total obscurement of the Da-Sein relation does not seem viable. Secondly, if it is possible that human existence as Dasein may succumb to the supreme danger, thus how human existence comes to presence be transformed, then the criteria for the preservation of this 'special nature' must be established. The first issue is to be dealt with in this chapter, the second in the following chapter.

Viability of Danger

The question of the viability of the danger revolves around the issue of whether it is possible for the human not to be Dasein. As has been noted Heidegger at times seems to both affirm and deny this as a possibility but on ultimate balance his comments are to be taken as saying no matter how forgetful, fallen or inauthentic Dasein is we always are Dasein. The danger is not so much that we lost the nature of our existence as claimed but that we become forgetfully claimed in a certain way so as to prohibit the possibility of alternate epochal understandings.

If the supreme danger is that Gestell becomes the sole valid revealing of the real then the viability of such danger depends on whether any destinal understanding can be totally determinative of an epoch and the disclosures of Dasein. Whether Gestell as a manner of appropriation is so all-encompassing that counter-understandings and other possibilities are obscured completely and Ereignis ends 'itself' by no longer giving considering chapter 3's questioning as to the co-existence/interpenetration of epochal understandings.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

Heidegger portrays each epoch as determined by a single understanding of the real that "holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguish the age".³¹⁸ Identification of what counts as 'distinguishing an age' would seem to be determined by the single understanding of the real, that itself is made pre-dominant in light of the features selected as distinguishing the age. If not all phenomena within an age distinguish it (as Heidegger implies in *What are Poets For?* with reference to scattered appearances of challenging-forth) then the perspective from which the judgement regarding distinguishing phenomena is to be made would seem to be from that of the single understanding of the real, that must itself have been gleaned from already pre-distinguished phenomena. The question of what can be said to distinguish an age is not thereby rendered into a vicious circle, but nor must the question of how distinguishing phenomenon are to be determined by the projective interpretation be begged, and why Heidegger holds that it must be a single understanding that determines an age remain unquestioned.

The one who determines the phenomena that distinguish the age from the perspective of the single understanding is Dasein. Yet as was discussed Dasein names both the individual and collective and both senses of the term have differing implications for the question of whether their revealing of the real can be determined by a single understanding with complete dominion. Heidegger would perhaps suggest that those who reveal what distinguishes an age are the poets and pivotal thinkers; those who shape the shared destinal heritage whom the vast majority stand under the claim of. Watts point out the discrepancy that Heidegger must hold that "some leading-edge thinkers and poets who, well ahead of their time, have already been 'appropriated' by Ereignis, in spite of the fact that it has not yet become the epochal event of appropriation".³¹⁹ Heidegger is committed to the idea that the single determinative understanding does not have sole dominion over revealing (and if we can never not be Dasein, cannot have sole dominion) as the poets speak both of that which determines an age and also the possibility of its transition. The role of the poets is taken up later in consideration of that which saves but for now implies that Gestell is not the primary revealing for the poets who also stand most under the current claim. Whether that which determines the epochal understanding characterizes collective Dasein or pivotal individual Dasein in order to prevail over the phenomenon that distinguish an age it must also be realized by at least the majority of individual comportments. This raises the question of the possible extent to which a plurality of disclosers can be meaningfully determined by a single unitary understanding.

Harries holds Heidegger's world-view idealizes unity at the expense of plurality. That his view of Western destiny is too monolithic and "Only this linear view of history leads Heidegger to his despairing analysis of the present age as so deeply fallen that all attempts to criticize and reform are already caught up in that fall...Heidegger's one-dimensional interpretation of the modern world is only a caricature of our world."³²⁰ By dealing with destinal history in terms of prominent thinkers Heidegger conceals other vocabularies that co-exist; he reinforces the danger of Gestell by concealing the dynamic plethora of disclosures that exist within each epoch. Bernstein accuses Heidegger of downplaying the plurality of Dasein in later works when he "speaks of man – not men or human beings in their plurality – beings who are at once alike and different in their otherness and who in their speech and deeds reveal their uniqueness."³²¹ Bernstein claims that in *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger "speaks as if there are a plurality of modes of revealing, but he only explicitly considers two modes; poiesis (bringing-

³¹⁸ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 115.

³¹⁹ Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 160.

³²⁰ Karsten Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," *The Review of Metaphysics* 29, no. 4 (1976): 669.

³²¹ Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, 124.

forth) and Gestell (challenging-forth).”³²² Whilst Harries also notes that in his treatment of the Fourfold Heidegger himself indicates other understandings still run throughout his narrative; it is not that Heidegger paints a monolithic picture as much as he seems to act as if it is when considering possible reactions to Gestell, overlooking alternative solutions to his own. Portraying each epoch as under the claim of a single understanding results in other modes of revealing, both past and projective, being concealed, creating a false either/or decision which results in seeing all human action as a variation of Gestell (cause-effect) or the higher thinking of poiesis. The notion and viability of the supreme danger seem almost imposed upon the history of understandings by Heidegger's characterization of an epoch as determined by a single understanding.

Olafson holds that this failure to sufficiently differentiate Dasein as individual from Dasein as plural leads to the core problem for Heidegger stemming from how in *Being and Time* "he had associated being too closely with individual Dasein and as a result was unable to reconcile the singularity and unity of the one with the plurality of the other.”³²³ Olafson claims that this led Heidegger to assert Sein as too independent from entities and existence rendering the epochal understanding of Being singular and shifting errancy from a structural tendency of Dasein to a feature of epochal withdrawal. But this failed to clarify how Sein is prior to those through whose understanding it is realized so that “the problem of the unity and singularity of being as presence in its relation to the plurality of the entities that understand being or... think it.”³²⁴ remains and leads to the seeming over-emphasis on the determinative nature of epochal understanding.

Since “Dasein reveals itself as rooted in its historical community only by exploring the full depths of its own subjectivity – of its finitude, its freedom, its guilt” an epochal understanding of Being (thrown historicity) only is as existentially realized within the existence of the individuals living under its understanding. Yet it does not seem possible for the reality of lived existence to be dominated by a single understanding of the real. Dreyfus highlights the problem when he gives an example from the film *2001* of a rational entity only wanting to use all capacities to the maximum and calls it “a brilliant expression of what anyone would say who is in touch with our current understanding of being.”³²⁵ But the current understanding of Being is not something separate from us, it is self-identical with the Dasein that needs it and is needed by it. Dreyfus implies there are those living in the cultural clearing of Gestell who are not in touch with the current understanding of Being, either they do not realize they are determined by it or that they operate with a different understanding of Being (to a lesser or greater extent).

But as was said previously if one is not realizing (understanding-sive-actualizing) the current understanding then one is not determined by it. Heidegger and Nishitani were said to be charting their own way of experience; how they are called from the self to undergo an experience of the self as nothingness. Gestell as a destinal claim is such a response when realized (experienced) as such, yet not all experience the call of nihility along the way they trace. In positing Gestell as the sole determinative understanding rather than the dominant tendency Heidegger implies those who do not experience this epochal claim are either in denial or not realizing they are so claimed, rather than realizing the current claim in a different fashion, potentially mischaracterizing the experience of many living in the shadow of ontological danger. If the ontological only is as its existential realization then it must be noted that many do not reveal reality simply in the manner of Gestell, thus indicating that other forms of disclosure are equally present. Distinction

³²² Ibid., 121.

³²³ Olafson, "The Unity of Heidegger's Thought," 109.

³²⁴ Ibid., 112.

³²⁵ H.L. Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," Ibid., 306.

needs to be made between the manner of revealing that orders the dominant social system and the experiences of those who are partially subsumed within that system. People may be partly enframed as passengers in the transport system used to fill planes but for many that flight is still a sublime experience bringing them into a greater appreciation of the heavens, an experience opened up by the nature of Gestell that thus enables greater access to and appreciation of alternate manners of revealing for increased numbers of people.

As a public realm Olafson suggests that in language “a kind of reconciliation is effected between the plurality of speakers and the singularity of the medium in which, as speakers, they move.”³²⁶ Language as a singular medium takes precedence over the plurality of the speakers as the way the singularity of Sein manifests in the plurality of its Da; the epochal understanding of Being as Saying requires a plurality of ontic speakers to manifest. The relation of man and language thus correlates to that of Da and Sein, with the poet as the conduit for this reconciliation. The relation of language and Ereignis will be addressed later with emphasis on the providing of guiding criteria for the epochal transformation through the poets naming of the gods. But it should be noted now that for Olafson this understanding of language fails as a reconciliation since it is “language itself that is being understood in terms of presence.”³²⁷ reinforcing the priority of unitary Sein,

possibly due to the emphasis on the speaking of select poets rather than competing and complementary shared vocabularies.

Olafson claims the fourfold is a similar attempt at such reconcilliation; requiring the co-responsibility of the mortal maker to bring about the mirroring that claims us as Saying does. Language as Saying and Fourfold as mirroring both provide the contexts that make possible individual interpretations of meaning, the prior givenness that allows the uncoveredness articulated in human speech. Language and the Fourfold need their speakers and mortal makers yet retain a priority over their own conditions of possibility. Neither reformulation of the tension in the relation of dependence between presence and existence (ontological and ontic), language and its speakers or the fourfold and mortals, satisfies Olafson leading him to conclude Heidegger fails to resolve the core tension that unifies his thought.

Epoch and das Man

Schatzki argues against Olafson, claiming he assumes Being must have a single clearing else be plural and that this is a mistake. For Schatzki the singularity of Being involves the commonalities and references between plural clearings; epoch is not mentioned by Schatzki but could be understood as “a commonality that holds between a plurality of clearings concerning the specific ways of being in which things can manifest themselves.”³²⁸ Schatzki thus posits plural clearings each constituted by an individuals possibilities drawn from a communal destinal heritage that reigns as the epochal understanding. A parallel is thus drawn with the relation of fate and destiny in Being and Time, the latter is not a collection of the formers but prior to it and guides them, yet also does not consist in anything beyond them. An epoch (the singularity of Sein) would thus be the unifying theme of a plurality of understandings of the real; Language as Saying would be Sayings, as it is most properly under the withdrawals of Being which we stand.

In his later writings Heidegger talks of the clearing, in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* the only reference to multiple possible clearings is the claim that

³²⁶ F.A. Olafson, “The Unity of Heidegger’s Thought,” *Ibid.*, 113.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

³²⁸ Theodore Schatzki, “Early Heidegger on Being, the Clearing, and Realism,” in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. H.L. Dreyfuss and H. Hall (B. Blackwell, 1992), 89.

"presence as lingering in the open always remains dependent upon the prevalent clearing."³²⁹ which still implies a singular dominant understanding. In concentrating on Being and Time Schatzki overlooks Heidegger's later onus on a single epochal determination of all possibilities, and the issue of whether any single revealing of the real can prevail in all (or most / all significant) clearings. But whilst not fully defending Heidegger from Olafson's critique Schatzki does indicate how core notions from Being and Time can inform the characterization of Gestell from The Question Concerning Technology. One such way is how Schatzski attributes the resolution to the singularity-plurality tension identified by Olafson to how the same present-at-hand entities are showing themselves in all clearings in common modes of Being, according to shared traditional possibilities. This invoking of the present-at-hand relies on Being and Time's stance towards entities as bereft of Being, and accords with the discussion of the homeground of *jitai* as that from which revealings of the real emanate. The notion of the presence-at-hand of entities is less pronounced in Heidegger's later thought, but its possibilities and relation to Gestell will be later considered in discussion of science and suchness. The more immediately relevant theme of Being and Time to the total nature of epochal understanding is that of *das Man*.

In making an epoch determined by a single understanding Heidegger identifies a tendency he previously attributed to *das Man* as structurally constitutive of *Dasein* and widens its scope to the destinal sending of Being. The Memorial Address gives the ontic correlates to ontological homelessness as television and other forms of mass communication that have become closer to Germans than their native village life, so too does Being and Time's discussion of the uniformity of *das Man* invoke how "In utilizing public means of transport and in making use of information services such as the newspaper, every Other is like the next."³³⁰ Just as Gestell is the leveling of every rank down into uniformity the "care of averageness reveals in turn an essential tendency of *Dasein* which we call the 'leveling down' of all possibilities of Being."³³¹ Yet *das Man* as a primordial existentielle "belongs to *Dasein*'s positive constitution"³³² as the source of *Dasein*'s ontological understanding, so that authenticity "is rather an existentiell modification of the 'they' - of the 'they as an essential existentielle."³³³ The plurality of understandings levelled by Gestell and the uniformity of *das Man* are both manners in which metaphysics as nihilism preserves the treasures of Being as noted in chapter 4, the notions can be paralleled as both shelter possibilities preserving them for retrieval and are in necessary relation to an authentic counter-tendency.

Whilst *das Man* was a dominant revealing we tended towards it was also always integrally related to authentic retrieval as a counter tendency, it was the prevalent understanding of Being *Dasein* falls towards but far from the only mode of revealing. Furthermore *Das Man* did not seem to be an entire cultural understanding but one that was tied to a single identity within a society; what 'one' does was relative to ones position and role thus *das Man* was never a single unified force that determined entire epochs but a structural tendency within each context of disclosure. How 'one' reveals is dependent on context; challenging-forth is only what 'one' does in certain situations. An epochal destining seems more absolute than this in the determining of the possible self-understandings of the individual; which themselves thus seem far more restricted. Human revealers of meaning are extremely capable of cognitive dissonance and grasping a single thing under many paradigms, of inhabiting multiple vocabularies as the situation

³²⁹ Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 443.

³³⁰ *Being and Time*, 164. SZ 126

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 165. SZ 127

³³² *Ibid.*, 167. SZ 129

³³³ *Ibid.*, 168. SZ 130

demands, and the understanding of an age is determined by the plural ontic disclosers who live under that claim. As Nishitani earlier noted; even scientists do not think scientifically in their personal lives.

The earlier noted move from 'Dasein' to 'man'; from 'mineness' to 'ourness', that accompanies shifting the onus on errancy from falling to the withdrawal of Being obscures the plurality of understandings operative even within the perspective of a single individual. The individual responsibility for disclosure is increasingly subsumed into a collective responsibility, disclosure becomes epochal-communal and Dasein's numerous worlds (Umwelt, etc) become a singular shared epoch. Through this shift moods such as anxiety that previously attuned individual Dasein now attune communal Dasein within an epoch. The fundamental attunement of moods become how we correspond to the epochal claim and moods that in Being and Time seemed ahistorical and possible of attuning Dasein in different ways in rapid succession now become historically discrete and all-pervasive within an age. Anxiety made epochal becomes Gestell, with all the attendant problems previously outlined in relation to how Heidegger and Nishitani universalize from their own experience in a manner that allows no counterpoint.

Rather than determined by a single dominant understanding an epoch seems best understood as a cluster of understandings that are related but non-reducible to each other. This plurality of understandings of the real are related to each other by a dominant attunement, but what characterizes the phenomenon that distinguish an age is this relation rather than the dominant attunement itself or any single understanding of the real. The understanding that determines an age is nothing more than the plurality of our societal understanding, that conditions the possible understandings of the individual. Heidegger tends to subsume such plurality into a singular understanding of Being, his shifting interpretation of the nature of Dasein results in a deceptively monolithic interpretation of epochal disclosure. Once such a view is taken it becomes inevitable that a total disclosure like Gestell will be perceived, but the viability of the supreme danger first requires that world-views be considered as inherently determined by single understandings.

If Gestell is the determinative understanding of the modern epoch then it is related to all phenomena that distinguish the age. One of the phenomenon that distinguishes the age is a proliferation of co-existing understandings and concern with the role and status of 'otherness', an increased embrace of pluralistic theories, multiculturalism and a resistance to totalizing narratives which informs the lived existence of those under the claim of Gestell as much as the unifying revealing of challenging-forth. Seeing Gestell as the sole understanding rather than a manner of relating a plurality of understandings leads to Dreyfus' claim that modern Western culture "is the only culture that tries to make the social and natural order total by transforming or destroying all exceptions"³³⁴ and that the only resistance to Gestell comes from marginal practices that are levelled. Yet Gestell can also be seen as the preservation of all marginal practices within a greater shared framework required for differences to open up.

If Gestell is seen as a dominant attunement that relates an increasing plurality or diversity of understandings, and this relation is what characterizes the phenomena that distinguish the age, then Gestell 's relation to alternate revealings of the real is more complex than that of a danger; even of one that also indicates a saving power. A multiplication of ontic ways of being seems to have accompanied the ontological totalizing of Gestell ; a more total and dominating attunement has paradoxically been accompanied by the relating of an increasing plurality of understandings. The relation of tension between Gestell and plurality can be paralleled to that of authenticity and

³³⁴ H.L. Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 302.

inauthenticity; two structural tendencies the tension between which opens up the clearing of the modern epoch. They could even be said to be mutually constituted; the attunement of Gestell providing a horizon of equality required for and realized by a proliferation of understandings a mutual homelessness that provides a horizon in which disparate vocabularies can dwell together.

The leisure industry, mechanization of agriculture, mass communication and universal yet narrower education; all demonstrate and are made possible by Gestell yet also enable increased numbers access to experiences conducive to more authentic multifarious ways of revealing. Hodge takes this “completion of metaphysics in the spread of technical relations throughout the world to be the occasion for the dispersal of philosophy to all human beings, in place of a more traditional exclusiveness”³³⁵ her claim that this can represent the realization of democratic ideals is to be considered more later in relation to ethics. This ambiguous tension within Gestell ; of the ethical danger of the loss of specific communal contexts, yet also the abolition of ethical specificity and the “implicit ethical commitment to a Euro-Christian will to superiority”³³⁶ highlights the double-edged sword of Gestell's levelling of rank and uniform universality. Gestell thus contains its own inherent resistance to its danger; it is necessarily related to a pluralism of understandings and this relation can itself provide an alternate saving power to poiesis. Whilst this balancing of a relation of mutual tension is reminiscent of the earlier discussed relation of calculative and meditative thought this tension is within Gestell not a balancing of Gestell ; the realization of Gestell as the sive of nirvāna-sive-samsāra rather than its contextualization as one element of such an identity.

2.6 Context for Danger

Dreyfus characterizes Heidegger's questioning of nihilism as asking “What is it to have a nihilistic clearing, how did we come to have one, and what can we do about it?”³³⁷ This overlooks the prior question 'what is it to have a clearing where nihilism shows up as problematic', as wanting to do something about it presupposes and indicates a further unarticulated clearing that sees nihilism as a problem. The greatest danger of the nihilistic clearing is the possible oblivion of the clearing as such; that this oblivion be grasped as a danger requires a prior horizon to Heidegger's articulation of that danger. If the danger is that this destining has the potential or tendency to be more enduring than any other, that this may well be the last destining unless we take action (or more precisely inaction) then it remains unclear why we should view this as a necessarily negative outcome, a value judgement that destining ought to follow this pattern is operative. Heidegger and Nishitani both posit the identity of 'ought' and 'is', this axiological element of their thought represents the limited nature of the koan as applying to those with a specific experience of nihility, there is a reliance upon a shared experience of the problematic; of the nature of modernity and the religious quest or experience of Being.

Human existence is entwined with nihilism as the self-withdrawal of Sein; the oblivion of Being with the meaning of Being. If the inherent tendency of the appropriative process is for Sein to progressively withdraw in order to reveal beings more completely, if destining is danger as such and Gestell the most dangerous destining as the fullest withdrawal of Being, then the greatest danger is also the greatest revealing that discloses the bare suchness of the reality of the real, the pure nihility that surpasses what is disclosed on the field of consciousness in its reality. To be human is to disclose beings in virtue of our relation to Being as it withdraws, if Gestell is the most total disclosure of beings then

³³⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 6.

³³⁶ Ibid., 19.

³³⁷ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 296.

so long as the danger is beheld as such it may be seen as the most appropriate appropriation; the destining most befitting the nature of Ereignis. If Heidegger's conception of what it means to be human culminates in Gestell as the relation to that which claims then the imperative to move counter to the withdrawal that culminates in the double forgetting also moves against the nature of appropriation itself. The impossibility of conceiving of an epochal transformation which also "makes it impossible to conceive of the present framing...as a transient structuring rather than a permanent fixed frame of reference"³³⁸ is only problematic in concert with the desire to keep human existence as transitional. If there is a viable danger to the manner in which human existence comes to presence then why this radical paradigm shift is to be seen as negative rather than the fullest expression of appropriative withdrawal must be laid out. If the double forgetting of the supreme danger prevents anxiety (the realization of danger as distress) then such forgetting can be seen as a form of thanking; and those who forget rather than experience the realization of anxiety are more in accord with the current claim of appropriation as sheltering how Being comes to presence in the manner of withdrawal. As shepherds of Being and attending to how Being discloses itself we are called to respond to the claim of Gestell in such a way that preserves it as Gestell rather than attempt to prepare for an alternate destining, given that such preparation co-determines any epochal sending.

Whilst Heidegger characterizes thinking in terms of values as pure nihilism; as a forgetting of Being that "clothes itself in the illusion that it does think Being in the most exalted manner, in that it esteems Being as a value"³³⁹ this critique is limited to the reduction of meaning to external chosen objects; to representational objects obscuring Being so that values becomes sole measure and goal. This limited notion of values stem from the desire at the ground of representation; "Value is the objectification of needs as goals, wrought by a representing self-establishing within the world as picture."³⁴⁰ Values as expressions of will are desires projected onto the world so form an aspect of Gestell as the desire to control and reveal totally, objects of choice rather than what claims us. As objects values accordingly 'are' only as for a subject and securing that subjectivity rather than meaning originating as a gift of Being; objectivity does not exhaust a things being "Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid - solely as the objects of its doing."³⁴¹ Heidegger's "opposition to values not as a rejection of value, but as a rejection of the subjectivism that he supposes is necessarily built into the affirmation of any system of values. His opposition to values is based in his sense of the devaluation of value inherent in supposing that there is value only because human beings make evaluations"³⁴² it is valuation as devaluing rather than value as action-guiding that is critiqued. Just as Heidegger's opposition to humanism is not defence of the inhuman but the opening of new vistas to think against values is "to realize that precisely through the characterization of something as 'a value' what is so valued is robbed of its worth...by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object for man's estimation."³⁴³ This view of value as as a pale shadow of true worth leads to the claim that "No one dies for mere values"³⁴⁴ whilst preservation Being's truth demands sacrifice at the expense of our human being.

Emad regards Heidegger's critique of value as entwined with that of truth as

³³⁸ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 111.

³³⁹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 104.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 142.

³⁴¹ "Letter on Humanism," 251.

³⁴² Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 98.

³⁴³ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 251.

³⁴⁴ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 142.

validity; as a critique of the desire for total disclosure of beings and Being so that "Heidegger's critique of value begins and ends by revealing the extent to which value is tied to, and embodies constant presence"³⁴⁵ rather than thinking in terms of withdrawal and concealment. Heidegger's claim that "thinking in values is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being"³⁴⁶ only serving to "to stress the inaccessible nature of the holy."³⁴⁷ Such critique is limited to values as conditions of preservation and enhancement in service of subjective will, of valuation as anthropocentric, but all action is guided by values if seen in terms of criteria for choice. A looser definition of values as what gives meaningful criteria to our lived existence is implied in Heidegger's identification of ought and is; values in a wider sense are just the 'ought', what is seen as worthy of preservation. The essence of value is that it is 'for' something, if all critique is also for something then Heidegger's critique of value is for the awareness of human existence as Ereignis; yet to be for something is to hold it up as of value, as worthy of reflection and sacrifice. Heidegger keeps his axiological assumptions as unquestioned background thus does not render them 'values' in his narrow technical sense, but certainly maintains them in looser sense. In preparing a new destinal understanding meditative thought seeks to preserve the understanding of our coming-to-presence as appropriated, criteria generated from attending to Saying that are to achieve this can be seen as values. Such values are integral to Heidegger's project and the notion of value remains as a form of 'saved' calculative thought preserved in self-identity with meditative thought; an element of the field of consciousness that is transfigured and retained in sunyata as will soon be discussed in terms of anthropocentrism-sive-nonanthropocentrism.

Danger only is in reference to a criteria of value; by an evaluation of Being. But as the condition for the possibility of disclosing something as significant thus of value it seems difficult to discuss the appropriative relation that gives meaning in such terms, thus to make sense of how there can be a contextual horizon to apprehend it as endangered. Ereignis as the appropriative Da-Sein relation is the condition of possibility for horizons of significance, a horizon of significance is the condition of possibility for the notion of danger, it seems difficult to coherently discuss possible dangers to the condition of possibility for the very possibility of danger. Such a context often seems assumed by commentators; Dallmayr says Heidegger "carefully weighs the advances and losses of modernity"³⁴⁸ Dreyfus that if we overcome thinking in terms of value and calculation "we can, in each case, discuss the pros and cons"³⁴⁹ of Gestell. But such a weighing of pros and cons remains a calculation guided by a context of value thus within the remit of a particular epochal understanding rather than being capable of adjudicating between such understandings.

If the justification for any epochal understanding is that it is how Being claims us such sendings are in a sense beyond justification and we can no more or less question why we should accept a new understanding of the sense of Being than we can question why we should have accepted previous ones. This raises the issue of the basis on which Heidegger claims we should prepare for (thus co-determine) a new epochal sending. Gestell can only be critiqued from the perspective of another epoch, yet this would seem to require we already stand under the claim of such an epoch. There seems to be no basis for favouring any epochal understanding over another; Gestell as a bestowal of Being requires a horizon of criteria beyond epochal claims themselves to be seen as danger, a

³⁴⁵ Parvis Emad, "Heidegger's Value-Criticism and Its Bearing on the Phenomenology of Values," *Research in Phenomenology* 7 (1977): 209.

³⁴⁶ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 251.

³⁴⁷ Emad, "Heidegger's Value-Criticism and Its Bearing on the Phenomenology of Values," 207.

³⁴⁸ Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 66.

³⁴⁹ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 308.

horizon prior to the destinal sendings of Being itself. The priority of meditative or authentic understanding may be justified in the context of an ontological inquiry, such as Being and Time where the criteria of grasping the totality of our own way of being are derived from the aim of the questioning, but widening their applicability requires a wider horizon of concern.

A destinal sending is granted its warrant from the giving of Ereignis; a giving that withdraws. Only Ereignis itself can provide the horizon for criteria by which epochal revealings could be compared; that such destinings not conceal their own source of possibility thus that of other destinings. Zimmerman holds that "The issue of whether and how to resist the technological transformation of nature is made more complex by the following question: Does a phenomenalist ontology and its doctrine of anatma (no self-existence, no essence) provide a basis for criticizing or resisting the technological disclosure of entities?"³⁵⁰ can an ontology of nothingness (Ereignis) as trans-historical itself provide historical criteria? That Gestell obscures its own relational condition of possibility can only serve as such criteria if our essence is taken in the traditional sense, if the 'special nature' of man as a meditative being to be preserved is both viably threatened and already showing up as worthy of preservation; "Yet the 'law of the earth' cannot be conceived as a 'ground' for things analogous to eternal essences."³⁵¹ The prior horizon for Heidegger's experience of the danger and his notion of essential human existence must be considered in more depth.

Heidegger, Humanism and Existence

As discussed in chapter 2.2 whilst Heidegger occasionally uses essence in the sense of 'whatness' it mostly denotes coming-to-presence; the way a thing presences/endures as granted. Essence can thus mean both the beingness of man (what we are) and how we come to be that (our appropriation). Our essence is not the eternal 'what' of man, but how we emerge into presence as appropriated, thus how we must be to accomplish this. The essence of human existence, man's coming-to-presence, is thus dwelling in openness through thinking on language that that is to free Gestell as Sein. Since coming-to-presence is an active engagement, and Heidegger believes we must come-to-presence by engaging in a certain way, his very notion of what it is to be human is guided by a presupposition concerning the way we are to dwell. Heidegger does not posit a metaphysical eternal 'what' concerning man, but an eternal 'how'.

Heidegger's notion of essence, and his treating it as both a noun for how we are claimed and a verb for that process of appropriation, leads to a tension between seeing his view of what humanity is as both eternal and historical. The manner in which man is claimed is historical, that we are as claimed is not so despite this claiming only being as realized historically and (for the supreme danger to be viable) capable of not being so realized. Our existence as historical is related to Ereignis as prior to history, which thus makes the manner in which we exist historically (as claimed in Ereignis) ahistorical. If we are as claimed then what we are is thereby posited as an eternal essence; "Man is essentially this relationship of responding to Being, and he is only this."³⁵² In offering this strict definition of man Heidegger both renders questionable the viability of the supreme danger and conflates the noun and verb senses of essence. Heidegger holds to a set ahistorical interpretation of what it means for humans to be, one prior to any epochal claim but used as the projective horizon to adjudicate between such claims. That our existence has always been open and appropriated is taken as meaning it should always be so, the ought derived from the is, despite that the coming to presence of this manner of

³⁵⁰ Michael Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," *Ibid.*, 263.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 31.

existence is marked by a withdrawal leading to oblivion; an oblivion taken as in need of countering (as a danger).

As outlined earlier Hodge holds the supreme danger is that the question of the human is given a fixed universal answer as Gestell appears to be the sole possibility restricting the diversity of relations to others and choices for the self. The question of what it means to be human must remain open and lived, it is an experience, a process of transformation realized as but not reducible to metaphysics; "Thus the problem is not one of finding a more adequate answer to the question 'what is it to be human?', but of ceasing to want general answers to it at all"³⁵³ thus to move beyond the metaphysics that "regards such truth as the imperishable and eternal, which can never be founded on the transitoriness and fragility that belongs to man's essence."³⁵⁴ This forms the basis for Heidegger's critique of humanism; the human essence is to ask what it is to be human and metaphysical humanisms conceal this restricting possibilities. Hodge claims Heidegger's critique of humanism in Letter on Humanism is to free us "from the restrictive presumption that what it is to be human is given in advance of our individual and collective existences"³⁵⁵ which conceals the ontological difference as the condition for how things can 'be' thus conceals the possibility things could be different. Gestell represents "the failure to pose questions about what it is to be human. This failure conceals the fact that what it is to be human is different in different epochs, depending on the structural conditions constraining what possibilities present themselves to human beings."³⁵⁶ More than a mere failure as metaphysical humanism "even impedes the question by neither recognizing or understanding it."³⁵⁷

For Hodge the non-givenness of what it is to be human is thematic in Heidegger's work; but for both her and Heidegger it is a given that to be human is have an open relation to these possibilities and be claimed in Ereignis. By concealing their ground humanisms conceal "that the form of existence of human beings is quite different from the modes of existing of other kinds of entity, in that human beings have a relation to their essence and to their identity".³⁵⁸ Yet this seems to define the human in contrast to non-human entities, which whilst Heidegger accepts as correct "when we do this we abandon man to the essential realm of animalitas even if we do not equate him with beasts but attribute a specific difference to him"³⁵⁹ which is to think "of man on the basis of animalitas and does not think in the direction of his humanitas."³⁶⁰ Dasein is still necessarily a living being thus within the animalitas, the difference between defining man as 'living being with reason' and 'living being with relation to Being' seems uncertain. Both Heidegger and the humanisms he critiques define humans as what makes them unique amongst other entities; whether reason or that "Man alone of all beings, when addressed by the voice of Being, experiences the marvel of marvels: that what-is is."³⁶¹

Heidegger says as proper only to man "ek-sistence can also never be thought of as a specific kind of living creature among others - granted that man is destined to think the essence of his Being and not merely to give accounts of the nature and history of his constitution and activities"³⁶². This seems to overly stress that other animals are

³⁵³ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 106.

³⁵⁴ Heidegger, McNeil, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 87.

³⁵⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 89.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 56.

³⁵⁷ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 226.

³⁵⁸ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 93.

³⁵⁹ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 227.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 232.

³⁶² "Letter on Humanism," 228.

"separated from our ek-sistent essence by an abyss"³⁶³ as prior to and the condition for Dasein is the animalitas of man, an entity as essential to Ereignis as the divine Heidegger calls "more familiar to our ek-sistent essence than is our scarcely conceivable, abysmal bodily kinship with the beast."³⁶⁴ Heidegger's claim our essence is not our bodily nature does not automatically entail such essence is integrally related to such nature nor separated by a gulf from other organisms. Only when claimed in appropriation do we dwell and have language thus preserve the Sein that determines us as Da. Heidegger claims animals have no relation to Sein as they are without language or relation to their own mortality; lacking awareness of death they are without relation to meaning and free possibilities. It would seem more accurate to say we cannot know whether animals have this relation to mortality (thus whether the relation to language is essential to Da-Sein) all we can say is that it is essential to all Dasein we can communicate with, an exemplary sampling bias. What beings can be named Dasein does not change the pre-eminence of Dasein, the former would seem to be an empirical issue related to the verifiability of different beings manner of awareness, the latter an axiological issue of the privileged value accorded such awareness.

Whilst they are not strictly identical Heidegger claims every humanism is a metaphysics and defined by determining our humanity "with regard to an already established interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of world, that is, of beings as a whole."³⁶⁵ As such humanism "is nothing but a moral-aesthetic anthropology;"³⁶⁶ the ethical correlate to metaphysical subjectivism "which explains and evaluates whatever is, in its entirety, from the standpoint of man and in relation to man"³⁶⁷ taking the human to be the source of meaning and value. Heidegger's critique of humanism is limited to a narrow conception of humanism, that "the highest determinations of the essence of man in humanism still do not realize the proper dignity of man"³⁶⁸ and should be replaced by another aspect of human existence, so that "Humanism is opposed because it does not set the humanitas of man high enough,"³⁶⁹ he critiques humanism for not being humanistic enough. Accordingly humanism is "a concern that man become free for his humanity and find his worth in it...humanism differs according to one's conception of the 'freedom' and 'nature' of man."³⁷⁰ Heidegger's concern is also the freeing of man for his existence and as was discussed in relation to the examples from *The Question Concerning Technology* has an established interpretation of the nature of man that Gestell places an unreasonable demand upon. To think our appropriation in Ereignis "means to think the humanity of homo humanus. What counts is humanitas in the service of the truth of being".³⁷¹

Heidegger accepts his thought "is a humanism that thinks the humanity of man from nearness to Being. But at the same time it is a humanism in which not man but man's historical essence is at stake in its provenance from the truth of Being."³⁷² Yet he seems reticent to retain the term humanism as to "To restore a sense to it can only mean to redefine the meaning of the word"³⁷³, preferring to risk accusations of affirming

³⁶³ Ibid., 230.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 225.

³⁶⁶ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 133.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ "Letter on Humanism," 233.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 233-4.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 225.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 254.

³⁷² Ibid., 245.

³⁷³ Ibid., 248.

inhumanity to claim his thought "contradicts all previous humanism".³⁷⁴ But to redefine how man is to be taken essentially only contradicts prior forms of humanism in the narrowest and most incidental sense rather than the most essential sense of humanism as "meditating and caring, that man be human and not inhumane, 'inhuman', that is, outside his essence"³⁷⁵ in terms of which his thought in no way contradicts previous humanisms. Given his retention of the terminology of divinity and gods that is intended in a more radically different sense than his proposed changes to humanism this decision seems particularly perplexing.

Humanism in its prior metaphysical incarnations is best defined in terms of the concerns it shares with Heidegger rather than its relation to metaphysics. Metaphysical humanism with its onus on the rational subject and the anthropocentric is displaced by a humanism of *Existenz* with an onus on man as appropriated; but both operate with an antecedent notion of what man is and seek to form a desired futural projection on basis of this. The centrality of human existence as constituted by an integral relation remains, "that the essence of man is essential for the truth of Being, specifically in such a way that what matters is not man simply as such"³⁷⁶; and both Nishitani and Heidegger place value on *Śūnyatā*/*Ereignis* thus the humanity that constitutes such integral relations.

There are two conception of the human inter-twined in Heidegger's thought; as always open to the claim of Being, and as a determinative metaphysical understanding that is historically conditioned by that claim. Both are necessary to be human and are presupposed interpretations of the human, but only the latter is identified by Heidegger as such and critiqued on this basis. The claim that human existence is to remain open and should not fall into a fixed metaphysical understanding of itself is itself a fixed understanding of what it means to be human (to remain open to changes in the meaning of Being). Heidegger has a clear notion of what it means to be human; one that whilst historical and open is also ahistorical and fixed and seems to be in competition with metaphysical humanism rather than a prior horizon for humanism as such.

Zimmerman holds Heidegger's later thought was marked by an "attempt to abandon any remaining anthropocentrism discernible in his earlier work"³⁷⁷ but his claim that *Da-Sein* as the conditions for disclosure "cannot be reduced to anything merely human"³⁷⁸ overlooks that the essence of man as *Da* mutually constituted with *Sein* means the appropriative relation is the human. If to be appropriated is the essence of the human then the region for disclosure is not the 'merely' human but it is the essentially human.

Nishitani, Anthropocentrism-sive-Nonanthropocentrism

Nishitani shares this ambivalent relation to humanism in seeking a transformation of the human by bringing forth its essence as a relation to what is not human, yet also retains the primacy of this transfigured essence within the process of disclosure even if realization is not grounded on man alone as self-subsistent subjectivity. As noted in chapter 1.2 Nishitani and Abe even critique Heidegger as remaining too anthropocentric, metaphysical and subjective through retaining an emphasis on the self as grounded on a reified nothingness; indicating their intention towards a more thorough critique of humanism. Yet as previously discussed regarding his thought on elemental subjectivity and the self-identity of man with absolute nothingness Nishitani appears to re-centre man in more radical terms leading Heisig to conclude that "for Nishitani the structure of self-

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 224.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 248.

³⁷⁷ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 247.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

awareness was a paradigm of how all reality is constructed”³⁷⁹ as self-awareness is essential to the realization of reality in both senses of manifestation and apprehension. Heisig concludes that as the suchness of reality is revealed as the elemental subjectivity of self as non-self in the circuminsessional process of gathering and “this connection is not directly questioned, let alone justified, much of the anthropomorphism that is thrown out the front door returns creeping in through the back...the human is set more firmly at the centre of reality than it is in the subject-object model”.³⁸⁰

Nishitani's comments on other forms of possible higher sentience distance him from Heidegger's comments on the gulf between man and other animals and justify his claim to dehomocentrism in a narrow sense. Yet such awareness is taken as constituting the essence of man as opposed to jítai in general, and man as the highest currently known exemplar of such awareness can be taken as a truly universal paradigm. Whether or not the Da is gathered by one species or a certain select category of them the claim that religion in its ontological sense of sunyata must “hold true even for any other species of intelligent beings that might be living somewhere else in the universe...they ought to possess a cosmic universality”³⁸¹ means not only is essential religion as found at the core of Zen held to be the most primordial articulation of the human essence but such an understanding of elemental awareness is truly universal; Nishitani's thought cedes more to non-human life only at the cost of reducing every other possible awareness to a human-derived model thus remaining thoroughly anthropocentric. The priority of elemental subjectivity seems to go deeper than its requirement for jítai to attain their suchness, raising the question of how Nishitani's critique of anthropocentrism is to be understood and the extent to which the human self could be decentred without falling into a

uniformity of value or meaningless aporia; the implications for the value of that existence that provides for the self-awareness of the self-realization of reality.

Nishitani's critique of anthropocentrism is mostly characterized as the overcoming of the conception of the human on the field of reason, of the self-enclosed ego and traditional subject, mirroring Heidegger's critique of humanism as metaphysical and sharing the same narrow focus. Such overcoming leads to an awareness “that goes beyond the perspective of the merely ‘human’ and stops to rest on a field rid of a mode of being determined by a ‘human’ ego”³⁸². Its heart seems to remain the critique of an ontology based around the subject rather than a total critique of any notion of self-awareness “on a field that has gone beyond the scope of a man-centred outlook and taken leave of a subjective, ‘egoistic’ mode of being”³⁸³ as primordial, as outlined in chapters 1.4 and 1.5 concerning elemental subjectivity. Given the human and egoistic perspectives are clearly differentiated by Nishitani a critique of the latter would not seem to justify claims to a ‘radically dehomocentric’ worldview that moves beyond man-centredness. Instead this critique “points to the realization of a ‘new man’, that originates from the absolute negation of the ‘human’”³⁸⁴, and this ‘new-anthrocentrism’ of non-objective man is what replaces the old subject-centric view; not a cessation of anthropocentrism but its negation-sive-affirmation. In line with Nishitani's other formulations this could be termed ‘non-anthropocentric anthropocentrism’ and pertains to chapter 2.4's discussion as to the relation of the fields of nihility and sunyata. Despite the negation of man a human self-awareness remains firmly planted centre stage even if the human essence that is such awareness is

³⁷⁹ Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, 224.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 265.

³⁸¹ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 133.

³⁸² Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 175.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 35.

no longer self-enclosed or oblivious to the thought of the ontological difference. The nature of Nishitani's anti-anthropocentrism (his humanism critique) must then be elucidated through the negation of man on the field of nihility in terms of the self-identity of axiology and ontology.

Simple non-anthropocentrism is to be found in the levelling of the field of nihility that renders man standing-reserve. Science and Zen's discussion of "the utter detachment of modern scientific view of nature from anthropomorphism"³⁸⁵ indicates that Nishitani agrees with Kasulis that "Modern scientific thinking, especially systems analysis, undercuts both anthropocentrism and egocentrism"³⁸⁶. Such a simple negation of anthropocentrism remains for him on the field of nihility and is as such unsatisfactory, but the impersonal view of anti-anthropocentrism must be incorporated into Nishitani's reconciliation of the science religion dichotomy understood as the opposition of the teleological and mechanistic worldviews. The axiological implications of Gestell as the non-anthropocentric must be explicated to highlight the role it plays in the priority of self that comes about through the movement of anthropocentrism-sive-non-anthropocentrism.

In defending against claims of simple non-anthropocentrism; Abe, and to a lesser extent Nishitani, seem more concerned with diffusing the Christian criticism that Zen overlooks the special place of man than with resolving the troublesome issues of self-priority their replies raise. Kasulis interprets Nishitani's theory of circuminsession whereby the world manifests at the homeground of even the tiniest thing as saying that as "every phenomenon is perfectly and completely preaching the dharma...From the standpoint of *Śūnyatā*, everything is equal"³⁸⁷. This is taken as problematic for Christianity as it means humans are as important to God as rocks and Christ is no more divine than the 'piss and shit' that Zhuangzi says contains the Dao. He attributes to Nishitani the view that the sacred is equally explicit and manifest in every phenomena and that Christians should kill Christ as Lin-chi claimed we should kill the Buddha. The self as manifestation of absolute nothingness mutually constituted with world entails that "I preach the dharma (thereby giving the world value), but so does every other thing preach the dharma as well. We each preach it fully insofar as we are emptiness's emptying itself"³⁸⁸, and such an equality of value implies the levelling of the mechanistic worldview that truly decentres man as source of value and meaning.

Abe's reply to Kasulis is to stress that whilst "From the standpoint of sunyata, it is true, everything is equal in its as-it-is-ness or suchness...This suchness, however, does not exclude, but rather includes everything's distinction...Accordingly Buddhists, including Nishitani, may say that everything is equal in its suchness and yet each human being is more important in its distinctiveness than a rock...the symbol 'Buddha' better preaches the Dharma in its distinctive way than 'piss and shit'."³⁸⁹ If suchness denotes the in-itself expressed by reality-sive-illusion, or more specifically the nothingness of being-sive-nothingness as opposed to the distinction or differentiation retained within the sive, then Abe would seem to agree to an equality of value in terms of reality or nothingness, but that some illusory appearances better express suchness; and that we are to resurrect the Buddha after briefly causing his demise during the transition through the field of nihility. The human being is prioritized by its central role in the realization of the real self-awareness of reality; "suchness implies value judgement. Each human being is more important than a rock not to God nor to the human self, but to absolute no-thingness.

³⁸⁵ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 109.

³⁸⁶ Kasulis, "Whence and Whither: Philosophical Reflections on Nishitani's View of History," 272.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 274.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 269.

³⁸⁹ Maseo Abe, "Nishitani's Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology," Ibid., 296.

Precisely because each human being is more important than a rock to absolute nothingness, human beings and rocks are equal.”³⁹⁰; as was the case with Heidegger and metaphysical forms of humanism it is only the reason why man is the central source of value that divide the Kyoto and Christian commentators. Overlooking the implied reification of absolute nothingness in Abe's phrasing it seems unclear as to why the paradoxical equality of rocks and humans is grounded on the greater value of the human self, in what sense does equality flow from the greater value of the human as derived from its expression of and necessity for the realization of such phenomenon, given that the realization of human awareness is itself mutually constituted with and requires such phenomenon? The ontological priority of elemental subjectivity stemming from its role in awareness only translates to axiological priority if awareness of absolute nothingness is given value beyond that which it enables and is self-identical with; just as Ereignis only is as the epochal meanings it makes possible yet is given meaning and value by Heidegger beyond this despite meaning and value being dependent on specific epochal claims.

To address this issue of axiological priority the nature of anthropocentrism-sive-antanthropocentrism will be explicated using Abe's essay *Man and Nature in Christianity and Buddhism*, a direct response to Waldenfels query as to whether the positive finitude of man is taken seriously in Buddhism. Abe's defence of Nishitani in the face of claims he devalues the human are here joined with claims of his thoughts dehomocentric nature even whilst emphasizing the priority of self-awareness in things attainment of suchness, encapsulating the core problematic of Religion and Nothingness. In the context of human finitude as residing in the cycle of birth and death that is the concern of enlightenments liberation Abe holds that that “by going beyond the ‘living’ dimension to the ‘being’ dimension. Buddhism develops its non-man-centred nature to its outermost limits”³⁹¹ to find the “appearance-disappearance (kimetsu) or being-nonbeing (umu)”³⁹² that lies behind this cycle and as how beings manifest is said to be beyond any sort of ‘centrism’. The ‘outer most limits’ of the dehomocentric view does not necessarily entail a total overcoming of anthropocentrism, and to completely move beyond the personal self that is constituted as the mask of absolute nothingness may also be to move away from the nothingness that only ‘is’ in unison with its mask, as a living nothingness.

Abe stresses that in sunyata “both man and nature are equally enlightened and disclose themselves each in its own original nature”³⁹³, that the enlightenment of man is self-identical with the attainment of suchness for the things in the world and that in this “the non-man-centred, cosmological emphasis of Buddhism is very conspicuous.”³⁹⁴ But in the mutual manifestation of koto dehomocentrism paradoxically sits beside the claim that the primacy of the self arises from that “the very act of transcending man-centredness is possible only to a human being who is fully self-conscious”³⁹⁵, that the field of sunyata can only be attained by moving through the fields of consciousness and nihility due to the sive of realization joining the manifestation of reality inextricably to the self-awareness of man. The enlightenment of all things, their attainment of suchness, occurs only through the self-transcendence of human consciousness that is the realization of the field of sunyata, the real self-realization of reality, since “Man alone can be aware of universal transitoriness as such. Accordingly, the fact of transitoriness, common to all beings, is a problem to be solved by him as man.”³⁹⁶ The priority of elemental subjectivity stems from the necessity of investigating Being through our way of being, the regional ontology of

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 298.

³⁹¹ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 149.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid., 150.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 151.

Dasein is fundamental ontology as only we have our own being as an issue so reach meaning of Sein through that of its Da. Chapter 1.5 said that for Nishitani the self-gathering of jitai meant that every being has its being as an issue for it, and chapter 1.6 that the priority of self was mitigated by the 'for us'. The previously noted imbalance in the equiprimordiality of ontological constitution, the paradoxical precedence of elemental subjectivity, is now rooted in the axiological dimension; that transitoriness (nihility as reality) is a problem man ought to solve. Non-aware beings as transitory lack awareness of the problematic of their transitoriness, and denial of material realism and objectivity makes their manifestation as transitory radically dependent upon the confrontation of this universal problematic by the human self. Only the negation of ego in the Great Death opens the way for the "transcending the duality of appearance-disappearance, i.e. the duality of being-nonbeing"³⁹⁷ that is the realization of sunyata from the standpoint of the sive. The subject-centred view of the field consciousness is replaced with the view that the overcoming of egoistic subjectivity is central to the meaning of all things, but just as an inversion of metaphysics remains metaphysical the prioritizing of elemental subjectivity as self-identical with absolute nothingness retains the centrality of man even whilst negating the human. The human as non-self remains as a non-objective absolute centre whose centrality is more radical and deeper than other such absolute centres circuminsessionally gathered through the precedence of elemental awareness.

For Abe the dissolution of all centrisms lays in how the realization of transitoriness joins the realizer and realized in accordance with Nishitani's understanding of the essence of reason as the nonduality of seer and seen; the self as transitory realizes such transitoriness in the twofold sense of the term. In doing so the true self as the real self-realization of reality "is no longer merely 'human'...It is sheer being-in-the-world in its straightforward sense, existentially more essential than being-in-the-world as man."³⁹⁸ Existential self-awareness requires that the self grasp itself in its suchness as determined by that which is neither man nor self and to then return to the self-awareness of personal human existence; in the same manner as sunyata was the field of 'be-ification' that renders jitai substantial again but as non-substantial substantiality, or in which Dasein returns to the everyday world through authentic retrieval. Abe interprets the kingliness of King Samadhi as the existential realization of sunyata as meaning "one can be genuinely existential and personal only when one's existence is based on the boundless cosmological dimension that transcends the human dimension. But this cosmological dimension is opened up, not objectively, but subjectively through one's existential realization of absolutely universal transitoriness."³⁹⁹ The primacy of the individual self is maintained but only as essentially non-self whilst the human remains an essential component to the process of the gathering of beings into world, the ego retains a mitigated role with the formulation self-sive-nonself through the subjective realization of transitoriness. As the self that acts as a paradigm for reality is the self as a non-self whose awareness is constituted by a knowing of non-knowing that is self-identical with the process of the manifestation of meaning as sunyata Nishitani remains anthropocentric. But here the 'anthro' is a man-sive-nonman, the egoistic/subjective notion of the human is placed within a wider context; man is 'decentred' but remains integral as constituted in essence by the relation to the non-human. Ultimately claims of sunyata as 'radically dehomocentric' appear to be polemical, the strength of the anti-anthropocentric claim misleadingly obscuring that the role of the transfigured non-self is still explicit, a negation of the ego that is reaffirmed in anthropocentrism-sive-nonanthropocentrism.

The claim that human being is equally transitory and has the same ontological

³⁹⁷Ibid., 152.

³⁹⁸ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 175.

³⁹⁹ Franck, *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, 152.

form of suchness as other sentient or inanimate beings does not necessarily contradict the belief that the realization of this through the manifestation of sunyata is only possible in the clearing of our Dasein. In the compliance of the awareness of realization to the suchness of kokoro Nishitani lessens anthropocentrism whilst retaining the centrality of human awareness in the self-realization of reality, but the nature of the mirrored light of world as issuing from the homeground of elemental awareness prior to circuminsessional interpenetration renders such compliance problematic. That Heidegger and Nishitani's though remains humanist or anthropocentric is only a criticism if it is accepted that ontology should (or could) be rendered radically dehomocentric, but highlights how the features of modernity they critique in regards to value/ethics remain integral, and perhaps inescapable, in their thought so their presentation seems polemical as intended to counter the over-emphasis of one side of the sive or appropriative relation.

It is in relation to the notion of value that Abe makes his only explicit divergence from Nishitani. For Abe the suchness of things and self differs as our suchness requires confrontation and overcoming the problem of 'oughtness' that "is inescapably involved in the problem of disobedience or non-compliance with logos or dharma"⁴⁰⁰, a problem only faced by the reflectively self-aware. In Abe's view Nishitani limits himself to the ontological view of this 'oughtness' overlooking the axiological even when it is implied by his thought. This results in an undercurrent of unaddressed value judgements in Religion and Nothingness that relates to the issue of the centrality and priority of the self as "Suchness in which the ontological and axiological dimensions are dynamically identical can be fully realized in its deepest sense only in the human being who awakens to his or her suchness by overcoming the problem of oughtness in its most radical sense"⁴⁰¹. Abe's attempt to bring out the axiological implications of Nishitani deal with the core problematic within both his and Heidegger's thought that stems from the mutual constitution yet precedence of the self in relation to the disclosure of world (that the horizon for meaning is also taken as of value despite being the precondition of value), a problem compounded by Nishitani's ambivalent relation to reason when it comes to the justification of such values. Sunyata as both ontological and existential, or in Unno's terms prajna as self-identical with sunyata within the knowing of non-knowing that is the real self-realization of reality, results in an axiological element to the paradox of elemental awareness being constituted by the realization of reality it also precedes. The equivalency of value in Abe's cosmological of suchness is constituted with and by the greater value of the self as preceding such equivalency as its ground, a value that stems from the equivalency it makes possible. Nishitani and Abe do not just deny Hume's belief that an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is', in bringing them into identity through sunyata as a process of self-realization they render 'ought' and 'is' self-identical, grounding the latter upon the former whilst offering no more justification for the 'ought' than what is thereby grounded. Chapter 1.5 discussed how an element of truth understood as certainty in compliance with suchness remains in koto as the confirmation of the true self by all things of the world as that's self 'original part'; for Nishitani truth means enlightenment understood as the precedence of the self as identical with absolute nothingness. Given that sunyata as ontological is self-identical with the axiological truth is also derived from this 'ought'. Being and Knowledge are identical so for Nishitani truth is ultimately value; not that truth and value originate from elemental subjectivity but that such elemental subjectivity is truth and value, and in this sense Nishitani's thought surpasses the modern subject-centred view in the priority given to the human essence if the meaning and value of reality.

This element of 'oughtness' raises issues of how sunyata operates as an injunction

⁴⁰⁰ Abe, "Nishitani's Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology," 298.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 299.

and the normative force in relation to the ontological necessity of the progression through the fields of self-awareness, returning us to themes of Nishitani's problematic relation to reason and the paradox of realization; how and what epochal criteria flow from the conditions for such meaning and whether an epoch or field of awareness can be meaningfully critiqued beyond its own self-positing criteria. The issue is complicated by Nishitani's claim to absolute universality and true reality, a reality that despite emerging historically is prior to any notion of time, just as Ereignis is the prior condition for meaning/value but emerges through them as discussed in chapter 2.3.

Way as Imperative

Zimmerman notes that in virtue of the priority of human awareness "Heidegger and Mahayana Buddhists...both also argue that this fact brings with it a distinctive responsibility: not to dominate or constrict the appearing of entities, but rather to let things be".⁴⁰² From the role of human awareness within disclosure there issues an injunction that as pertaining to one's basic stance towards self and world is more far-reaching than any simple ethical code. Heidegger focuses on the questioning that builds a way rather than the thought that strives for answers, but all questioning is guided by the fore-conception of the answer it seeks and Heidegger's way is guided by an experience of the call of appropriation. All critique is for something, all preparation is co-determining even when provisional, and Heidegger clearly desires any new destining to be a certain manner of appropriation, in a stricter sense than just other to Gestell. A definitive metaphysical answer to the 'problem' is not offered, but a way of being is put forward as an existential answer to the danger of Being that only is danger in light of that which saves.

If Gestell could be prevented from culminating in total forgetting; challenging-forth into standing-reserve maintained as a destiny that does not appear fateful, then this would still not seem satisfactory to Heidegger. Heidegger argues that the warrant for his 'thought' is the same as that of any sending of Being, that "Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a philosophy is the way it is,"⁴⁰³ yet as Rorty points out Heidegger also "makes all sorts of invidious comparisons between the less forgetful people...-the Greeks- and the more forgetful ones...us"⁴⁰⁴ Heidegger clearly prefers some epochal understandings to others; but again the horizon and warrant for such judgements seem to be lacking; no normative framework exists beyond how we are currently appropriated. Hodge identifies a tension between Heidegger's construction of a history of Being wherein the epochs are equally how we are claimed and his attempt to counter Gestell with a new way of thinking, a commitment "to be justified, if at all, in terms of what it seeks to make possible and in terms of future developments."⁴⁰⁵ Heidegger's commitment to this projective interpretation is what Hodge characterizes as the ethical element in his thought (which I have been calling the axiological element).

Heidegger believes we should have a grateful realization of appropriation, even if this is counter to how we are appropriated in Gestell and so runs counter to the current claim of Being; despite also saying we are only as responders to this claim. Heidegger's critique seems to presuppose a notion of what the appropriative relation of Da-Sein should be (open to new epochal sendings) and thus wants Ereignis to be different (not leading to Gestell through withdrawal). As was said in the introduction to view the nihilistic manner Ereignis claims us as problematic (as a danger to be countered) is to render reality itself a problem. Our existence as appropriated is primordial truth; to truly be human then seems

⁴⁰² Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 259.

⁴⁰³ Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 433.

⁴⁰⁴ Rorty, "Heidegger, Contingency, Pragmatism," 217.

⁴⁰⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 149.

to mean coherence with the process of Ereignis and a dispensation of Being (to realize both of Heidegger's conceptions of what it is to be human). Nishitani has an even stronger imperative element in aiming at enlightenment as a given notion of what our realization of absolute nothingness would entail based on Zen presuppositions. Despite reflection on nothingness being seen as a kōan there is a clear answer given by both; the attuning of the self to its identity with absolute nothingness, thus bringing-to-presence our existence in accordance with a certain way even if this is contrary to the inherent tendency to withdrawal embodied in the current epochal claim. The metaphysical notion of truth as certainty remains in the secure belief as to the truth of human existence as coherence with Ereignis that neither Heidegger nor Nishitani doubt. The need for such reflective preservation is an unexamined presupposition regarding human nature at the ground of Heidegger's thought, a belief he places beyond doubt and verification despite it moving counter to how Being has been as withdrawal. Alone this is not a criticism, only a statement on the nature of interpretation, but in combination with his assertion we can only respond to Being and not determine the new epoch it raises the question as to the nature of our responsibility for the projection of the saving destining and by what criteria such epochal projection is to be adjudicated; "it becomes unavoidable to ask whether or not Heidegger did set standards, did set forth rules for thought, poetic creation and action"⁴⁰⁶ and more pertinently whether epochal claims are capable of being subjected to such standards.

Whilst neither Heidegger nor Nishitani offer ethical codes both address the issue of how one should approach one's existence, and make recommendation in this regard; that we must live in a certain way to fulfil our true nature as absolute nothingness or shepherds of Being. Their thought implies an imperative; that we should favour certain destinings over others and strive (albeit in a unique way) to prepare to bring about such a change. The fact that such an epochal self-surmounting requires a shift in shared paradigms that are constituted by those that live under such claims means such changes require a communal discourse; thus some manner of justification is required for its effective realization and for Nishitani such realization is the only way Śūnyatā as ontological is. The warrant for the ontological element of their thought may be that "the best way of accounting for the possibility of our understanding of entities is to postulate that we humans simply are the temporal openness or nothingness in which entities can appear as entities."⁴⁰⁷ Placing the mystery of Being beyond why is apt for an ontology; but not when normative principles are generated from within that ontology. The warrant for thought is that as called to thought it is our essence to 'think'; but if essence used as a verb not noun then it is only our essence to think if and when that is how we come-to-presence. Ereignis simply is; no justification is needed. It is when the should/ought is attributed that it becomes required. Whilst both Ereignis and Śūnyatā are prior to the division between ontology and axiology/ethics in conventional thought they have implications for both requiring different standards of justification within the sphere of conventional thought, and both thinkers require the move into this sphere to realize their ontologies.

Way as Warrant

Dreyfus claims Heidegger's thought "must convince us by the illumination it casts on our current condition, especially on our sense of ontological distress or emptiness, if we have one".⁴⁰⁸ The answer to the question of why we should counter Gestell by realizing our nature as claimed seems to require a shared experience of nihility as distress. As was said

⁴⁰⁶ Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World*, 29.

⁴⁰⁷ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 244.

⁴⁰⁸ H.L. Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," *Ibid.*, 314.

previously a shared horizon of concern is required for Heidegger and Nishitani's thought to have impact on the reader; the warrant for thought is its response to the call of the self that claims us in anxiety. The necessity of the imperative to thought is nihilism as what impels us towards Being, that "thinking answers to the demands of Being in that man surrenders his historical being to the simple, sole necessity whose constraints do not so much necessitate as create the need (Not) which is consummated in the freedom of sacrifice."⁴⁰⁹ To experience the call in this way is what it means to have a clearing in which nihilism shows up as problematic; an experience of the responsibility for the truth of Being stemming from the freedom of elemental awareness that comes from its relation to possibilities of meaning. To see the greatest danger as a danger requires a specific experience of the call of the self in nihility, other ways of experiencing such nihility may lead to not encountering it as danger or to wanting a different way through it. Heidegger and Nishitani's *kōans* or ways require their readers to have experienced nihility in a similar fashion and are only as compelling as the extent to which their experience accords with our own. In portraying such a call as a universal ontology they both subsume the experiences of others into their own and strive to encourage others to realize the danger even if the danger only is for those who realize it in this way.

But if such ontological understanding is held as self-identical with an existential transformation communal in nature then the problem is whether such an experience can provide for meaningful discourse with those who do not experience the claim in the manner of distress. Marx asks of meditative thought as the pre-thinking of an epochal sending "is it possible to give an account of such thought in a fashion that admits of inter-subjective validity and verifiability?"⁴¹⁰ Marx finds it troubling that errancy as constitutive of disclosure removes the possibility of criteria for thought, that an epochal claim provides no standard by which "he who hears the claim might decide whether what he has heard is in a given situation right or wrong"⁴¹¹ whether the attending to the Saying of Ereignis is capable of setting criteria for discourse. Whilst Marx also points out this does not entail Heidegger is mistaken it does indicate that the communal discourse required for the realization of the epochal self-surmounting cannot be provided for by meditative reflection upon Ereignis alone.

In relation to Nishitani Chapter 1.2 raised the issue of how the progression through the fields as the self-realization of *Śūnyatā* was both ontological, existential, axiological and ethical; thus contains an imperative towards the progressive realization of the fields of awareness. As ethically normative as well as ontologically real self-realization is an injunction, but what is the nature of its necessity? Why should such self-realization be a priority? Why not stay tranquilized upon the inauthentic field of consciousness? If both Heidegger and Nishitani rely to an extent on experiential attestation then an altered form of normative force is still required for them to safeguard their ways in the face of alternatives. "If the no-self is a cipher for the ideal of the most radically detached, liberated, and awakened state that the human individual can attain, the value of this state needs to be clarified relative to other states of existence"⁴¹², if this is even possible once the nature of meaning and value are held open to radical questioning. The progression through the fields seems to be powered by an internal necessity; upon the field of nihility existence becomes problematic "But if existence is transformed into a question, then its disclosure in nihility cannot provide the standpoint for resolving that question"⁴¹³, since

⁴⁰⁹ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 390.

⁴¹⁰ Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World*, 28.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 30.

⁴¹² PoN 266

⁴¹³ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 112.

“Nihilism cannot shake free of nihilism by itself”⁴¹⁴. The troublesome move comes in the claim that “this brings us to the necessity of having nihilism go a step further and convert into Śūnyatā”⁴¹⁵, as such necessity seems predicated more upon Nishitani’s presupposition of the viability of Śūnyatā than any formal argument.

Abe characterizes such necessity as arising from how in the attempt to grasp the self on the field of consciousness “the human ego-self falls into an ever-deepening dilemma. At the extreme point of this dilemma, the ego can no longer support itself and must collapse into emptiness...the human ego must die.”⁴¹⁶ The ontological necessity of the progression is tied to the experience of the existential realization of the self and requires such experiential necessity to ground the ontological. In the essay Nishitani’s Challenge to Western Philosophy and Theology Abe gives three reasons why nihilism must be overcome with Śūnyatā, but none seem to provide persuasive force for those not already beginning down the way Nishitani charts. Firstly; that from the perspective of the Buddhist tradition “one must realize true Śūnyatā without clinging to it nihilistically”⁴¹⁷ thus move beyond nihilism’s objectification of nothingness, a statement of tradition not an explanatory argument. Secondly; he invokes Nishitani’s critique of Western philosophy to claim “that Western existentialism’s understanding of nothingness is still not thoroughgoing enough, and fails to realize the necessity of radical conversion from nihilism to Śūnyatā”⁴¹⁸, that authentic Śūnyatā has not been realized in the West is neither an argument for or against as the ‘ecstatic self-transcendence of nihilism’ that has been reached may be the only viable endpoint, and such a criticism already assumes that nihilism must be overcome with Śūnyatā. Thirdly; Abe claims the most important argument for Śūnyatā is that it is necessary “to awaken to ultimate reality”⁴¹⁹ as this requires the overcoming of representation and dualities such as negative-positive through negating the negation of nihilism in radical affirmation. This again seems to be a restatement of the nature of Śūnyatā and its necessity rather than an argument for the viability of such necessity. There seems to be a reliance upon the idea that there is a problem, thus there must be a solution, that is to be found in Buddhist doctrine; with what Abe claims as the most important argument simply being a restatement of these presuppositions. Nishitani and Abe seem to explain a position rather than argue for it in any traditional sense, they join Heidegger in having an experientially attested unargued for framework of value judgements, and such an approach may be unavoidable within the context of Nishitani’s aims (indeed Abe may be flawed in presenting ‘reasons’ for the movement between the fields). The necessity of Śūnyatā lies in trying to describe the mode of beings on their own homeground (in themselves) and resolve the question of nihilism. It is only the element of quasi-ethical injunction that renders the warrant of the idea problematic, once the ontological sense of Śūnyatā is seen as identical to its existential realization and ethical ramifications (along with their social consequences), pertaining as it does to the self that precedes world and relating to the transformative injunction that gives rise to the progression of the fields yet is dependent upon this progression.

Nishitani criticized Cartesian doubt for not doubting itself, yet the Great Doubt itself is also portrayed as ‘doubt without doubt’ due to its nature as a primordial experience of the self; “Despair is the truly real Form of existence: it makes its presence felt as something that allows for no skepticism. Whereas skepticism is a matter for the dimension

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁴¹⁶ Maseo Abe, “Emptiness Is Suchness,” in *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, ed. Frederick Franck (World Wisdom, 2004), 212.

⁴¹⁷ Unno, *The Religious Philosophy of Nishitani Keiji: Encounter with Emptiness*, 25.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

of reason, despair belongs to the dimension of transcendence. It is the Form that existence itself assumes in the nihility that has opened up.”⁴²⁰ Strictly speaking no such experience may be doubted, only its relation to reality (even Descartes cannot doubt that he is experiencing what he is, only its veracity in the face of possible delusion), yet Nishitani claims a direct experience of reality validated solely by that experience. This may render it immune to skepsis for those who have undergone the experience but Nishitani also portrays this experience as the only form of reality (as the manner of existence on the field of nihility that is more real than that of consciousness) even when such nihility only is when realized. Science and subjectivism cannot question the cogito as their ground, but neither can Heidegger's thought question whether and why our existence is or should be conceived in terms of appropriation (nor possibly how it should be appropriated), nor Nishitani's why Śūnyatā should be realized.

It is not simply those who undergo the crisis of doubt who require the breakthrough to the field of Śūnyatā to soothe themselves, nor just that such doubt is the only path to Śūnyatā; the further claim is made that we should undergo such anxious doubt to reach Śūnyatā as something prior to but only realized with such doubt. If the doubt and the reality of Śūnyatā as existentially realized are self-identical, if the doubt is existential not epistemological, then a universalizing of ones existential condition and the correlate view that all others must affirm such elemental subjectivity as themselves is also posited. In the previous discussion of religion Nishitani was criticized for not questioning Buddhist presuppositions (such as the primordality of field of Śūnyatā) and whilst he claims religion as an individual affair only understandable by those on the religious quest he also assumes the universality of this mode of experience as primordial. For Nishitani the warrant for the realization of Śūnyatā is that we already are this realization, but if realization is actualization-sive-understanding Śūnyatā only is through its realization in the Great Doubt that it makes possible. Justification is unnecessary if we simply are as a thinking being, but we only are this when we realize it in awareness. This problem has been touched on already but the added element of an imperative requires trying to explain to those not undergoing the nihilistic crisis that they require a breakthrough to that which is self-identical and reliant upon that which they are not undergoing.

The paradoxes in Nishitani's thought are laid out explicitly by both himself and his foremost commentators, yet that they are not considered as problematic as the paradoxes within reason they are to overcome stems from a lack of self-critique regarding the axiological framework of that thought; of the normative force and value of realities self-realization in accordance with traditional notions of sunyata that retains a transfigured form of anthropocentrism within enlightenment. Chapter 2.5 began with reference to Discourse on Thinking's argument for seeing Gestell as the supreme danger, noting that meditative thought was to be preserved in order to save man's 'essential nature'; if the context of the danger is preservation of our essence as claimed then Heidegger also remains fundamentally anthropocentric. As said in chapter 1.4 the field of Śūnyatā is that on or through which things appear in their suchness but it is that which the self in its suchness appears as so too does sunyata axiologically conceived appear as awareness through which the equality of jītai arises grounded by man greater value for absolute nothingness, that itself only as man retains a homocentric worldview. The critiques of ego-centric value go hand in hand with placing paramount value on safeguarding the process of disclosure, the move away from secular modernity's placing of man as measure of things due to his rationality moves towards his centrality in virtue of responsibility for disclosure or manifestation of meaning and reality due to an identity

⁴²⁰ Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 176.

with nothingness that is experienced in nihilism as the problem of the transitoriness of things.

Epochal Criteria

A horizon of comparative critique for epochs is implied and necessary to Heidegger's thought (and Nishitani's on why we should favour the awareness of one field over the other), Heidegger claims Sein is beyond our power yet wishes it to withdraw differently; but there are no criteria with which to judge between manners of withdrawal. The only possible source of such criteria is Ereignis itself which only is in terms of the way we are currently appropriated. Yet such calling to a way admits of no verification beyond the experience in thought to which a thinker is called to thus lacks the ability to form the communal discourse required for epochal transformation. Meditative thought is the awareness of the horizon for meaning, yet is also required to generate criteria for how to realize such awareness. The question is whether an epoch (Gestell or nascent/projected) or Ereignis itself can provide such criteria and whether it is possible to make a coherent case for adopting such criteria; does the manner in which nihility manifests as non-nihilistic provide criteria for how it is to manifest apart from in negative terms (non-nihilistically)?

Hoy considers this problem in context of Being and Time claiming that whilst criticism is essential to the retrieval of heritage Heidegger "fails to support his insistence on the necessity of criticism with an account of how criticism is logically possible and with an account of the criteria for judging and evaluating different historical interpretations."⁴²¹ It is not enough to say the repeatable possibilities of existence themselves are the only source of criteria for retrieval as this still requires us to choose the possibilities to guide the criteria. If Ereignis itself must provide criteria "The question is, on what grounds can such criteria be derived from 'merely' ontological conditions?"⁴²² The moving from ontological structures of meaning (Ereignis) to their ontic realization requires criteria for rational discourse that Heidegger needs yet cannot supply; "For the ontological account to have ontical force or applicability, further criteria for determining the validity or even the value of historical accounts must be specified."⁴²³

Ereignis as Criteria

Rorty interprets Heidegger as having a normative criteria of 'primordially', that since shepherding Being requires the preservation of alternate possibilities of understanding "an understanding of Being is more primordial than another if it makes it easier to grasp its own contingency."⁴²⁴ The epochal understanding to be prepared for is to be thoughtful in maintaining awareness of its own contingency and preserving the greatest possible plurality of understandings of the real within itself; through the characters of the teacher and scholar Heidegger portrays noble-mindedness as "Apparently emptier, but richer in contingencies."⁴²⁵ The criteria to be derived from attending to Ereignis would pertain to the preservation of as many possibilities concerning the guiding understanding for the revealing of the real with the constant danger inherent to all destinings meaning such wary beholding of the danger would likewise be continual. This was touched on earlier in relation to the connection between Gestell and plurality; an understanding within the danger in accord with the criteria provided by that which gives such danger. The provisionality of thought can be seen as responding to danger by maintaining awareness

⁴²¹ David Hoy, "History, Historicity, and Historiography in Being and Time," in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays*, ed. M. Murray (Yale University Press, 1978), 343.

⁴²² Ibid., 345.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Rorty, "Heidegger, Contingency, Pragmatism," 220.

⁴²⁵ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 82.

of the contingency of any perceived claim and a conduciveness to alternate understandings so that the epochal claim to be prepared for would be marked by such traits.

Harries seems to support the criteria of contingency in pointing out that "the possibility of error cannot in principle be avoided, and that because of this the decision must continually be questioned and renewed or perhaps revoked."⁴²⁶ Yet the problem seems deeper than this; the possibility of error cannot even be identified in the absence of criteria to adjudicate coherence with Saying. Criteria must be provisional, but provisionally choosing a heritage to retrieve still requires an antecedent criteria for that provisional choice. Provisionality is a necessary condition for meditative thought but still requires content selected by provisional criteria drawn from somewhere in line with some standard. The need for a new destining to simply ensure there will be further new destinings is itself reminiscent of Gestell as efficiency for the sake of more efficiency; thought as goalless leading only to continued thought.

Harries claims criteria beyond heritage as repeatable possibilities of existence are needed for the choice of ones here since "The past event becomes one which should be repeated only when it is recognized to be worthy of repetition."⁴²⁷ If Heidegger's thought on the Fourfold is projective then its force comes neither from the past nor future but his own current experience as "There must be something about the present individual and his situation which allows him to recognize in the precursor's stance the measure of his own. If the present is mute without the voice of the inherited past, it is nevertheless only the present which can lend authority to this voice."⁴²⁸ The criteria for choosing a role model is self-validating as the choice is guided by what is chosen. This is the personal/psychological aspect of the problem of adjudicating between epochal destinings that form their own warrant, there is little explication of how we are to judge what is worthy of retrieval (thus to be preserved in the new destining) beyond conduciveness to preserving further destinal possibilities.

Whilst only as claimed in Ereignis "can there come from Being itself the assignment of those directives that must become law and rule for man."⁴²⁹ and "Only such dispatching is capable of supporting and obligating",⁴³⁰ Ereignis as such cannot grant prescriptive norms. The event of Ereignis itself "is not law in the sense of a norm which hangs over our heads somewhere, it is not an ordinance which orders and regulates a course of events: Appropriation is the law because it gathers mortals into the appropriateness of their nature and there holds them."⁴³¹ The call of the self as appropriated cannot give concrete content nor prescriptive criteria, but in calling us to our nature provides the framework and possibility of such by indicating the origin thus contingency of such claims.

Heidegger holds that thought itself should not be "subjected to the presumptuous demand that it know the solution of the riddles and bring salvation" ⁴³² as to do so is subject it to the demands of calculative criteria. Yet Heidegger seeks a more concrete indication of the new destining in the nature of Ereignis than the framework of contingent plurality; that entities be revealed as the things of the Fourfold so that the self may realize its true nature. Nishitani clearly holds his thought as fully in service to salvation as enlightenment and as an attempt to attend to our existence as claimed by Ereignis the

⁴²⁶ Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," 663.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 650.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 262.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ *On the Way to Language*, 128.

⁴³² "The Question of Being," 73.

success of meditative thought as projective retrieval of origin would seem to place some demand upon thinking to prepare for thus co-determine the epochal self-surmounting. Taylor addresses how Ereignis as Saying itself determines how we are to understand the new destining, that "the clearing itself, or language itself, properly brought to light, will show us how to take it."⁴³³ In so attending to language Taylor gives Saying both normative and prescriptive elements; that in hearing Saying we also hear that "entities will demand that we use the language which can disclose them as things"⁴³⁴ so that in responding to Ereignis as Saying we must "think of the demands of language also as a demand that entities put on us to disclose them in a certain way. This amounts in fact to saying that they demand that we acknowledge them as having certain meanings."⁴³⁵ Such submission to Saying that is to reveal entities as the things of the Fourfold is a submission to the nothingness anxiety reveals; of allowing the true self explicated in the ontology of nothingness to guide ones comportments through heeding the call of that self (Nishitani's elemental subjectivity as absolute nothingness). To act in accordance with the nothingness of self and world (their self-identity) so that "forgetting the self means opening it up to allow one's action to be guided by the authentic self, which, itself nothing, is one with the nothing of the world."⁴³⁶

Spinoza echoes the claim that Ereignis "is the tendency of the revealing of language to reveal particular things in the mode that is best suited to the kind of thing they are"⁴³⁷ so that responding to Saying "would be a way of letting any particular thing show itself in its ownmost (most resonant) being."⁴³⁸ For Spinoza such responding is in a way that resonates with a specific way of life rather than the relation between such possible ways. Whilst Rorty take primordiality as criteria to mean awareness of contingency thus plurality Spinoza takes it as one in which "we become more sensitive to our relation with the thing as one that focuses our shared revealing practices...a primordial relation with a thing is one where the thing makes us sensitive (generally in the spirit of thanks or celebration) to the way of life we lead that makes us take cognizance of the thing in the first place."⁴³⁹ In letting-be we let a thing be as indicating our specific dwelling as most resonant rather than its contingency. Although Spinoza also indicates that Ereignis would draw together a collection of related revealing practices without any one dominating, so that awareness of contingent plurality remains integral to the true attending to Saying.

Negative criteria can be derived from both stances; not to understand beings only in terms of instrumentality and not to impose totalized understandings upon entities thus overlook their contingency. The stance of releasement must preserve a horizon for a plurality of possible meanings to allow things to manifest appropriately. But for things to manifest according to their own possibilities rather than as instrumental value still requires a horizon of meaning co-determined by our preparation to receive such a sending to understand what letting-be a being involves; criteria for adjudicating if we are letting it be. But when it comes to how entities are to speak to us there seems to be little guidance provided by Saying for how we are to know (realize) when it is the authentic self at one with the nothing of the world that is guiding our revealing of things. Taylor acknowledges this problem in commenting that Heidegger over-emphasizes the positive potential of Language overlooking that the inherent danger of language comes not only from its

⁴³³ Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Harvard University Press, 1995), 120.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Parkes, "Thoughts on the Way," 129.

⁴³⁷ Charles Spinoza, "Heidegger and Derrida: Iterability and Ereignis," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. H.L. Dreyfuss and H. Hall (B. Blackwell, 1992), 288.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 289.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

devolution into a totalizing understanding like Gestell but that "much can be retrieved from the grey zone of repression and forgetfulness. There are also resentments and hatreds and dreams of omnipotence and revenge, and they can be released by their own appropriate words of power."⁴⁴⁰ Positive criteria are lacking for the 'shared revealing practices' that are to resonate with the demands of entities; as such resonance does not seem demonstrable beyond accordance with the current epochal claim (which in the age of Gestell forms the negative criteria for Heidegger).

To let a being be only makes sense if we are letting it be in accordance with the sending of Being; the meaning of beings cannot be distinct from the epochal truth of Being which currently is as Gestell. Letting-be involves allowing a thing to realize its inherent potential through using it in a manner that is suitable to its Being but that it could not achieve by itself, "The question is at what point the use of a natural thing as Zeug in such a way as to realize its possibilities with respect to human concerns begins to impinge overly on the unfolding of its possibilities"⁴⁴¹ which itself would seem to depend on our prior projection of what its possibilities are that determines what counts as an 'unreasonable' demand upon its nature. For example; whether to allow the river to realize the potential of its course as energy source through hydroelectricity, the soil its potential for growth through industrial farming or to help the iron realize its potential sharpness by crafting it into nails are reasonable demands.

Guarding concealed possibilities for their own sake leads to lack of horizon for judging between them, and to let human being be under the current claim as challenged to challenge-forth is counter to letting other beings be as other to standing-reserve. Harries claims that Heidegger blocked any possibility of giving positive content to that which meditative thought prepares for so that the partial affirmation of Gestell previously discussed stems from that "Lacking the strength to oppose to this world another, better world, the philosopher acquiesces in the technological world, permits it to enter his life, and at the same time keeps his distance."⁴⁴²

Ontic criteria

If more positive criteria cannot be found in Ereignis the criteria to guide our response to Saying must come from beyond the bare event of claiming itself, from how entities (both human and otherwise) as non-Dasein claim us in Gestell as the current epoch. Meditative thought requires the criteria of a destinal claim to guide its co-determination of such sendings, and such epochal claims only are as accomplished through our comportments to self and others. The meaning and value of Ereignis only is as the manners in which we have been claimed; the openness for meaning is only as worthy of preserving as the meaning that comes to pass through it. Ereignis as the origin of meaning and value derives its own meaning and value from what comes to presence and cannot be considered as separate from this or provide a horizon for adjudicating itself beyond what comes to pass through it by our dwelling. To preserve human existence as appropriated in Ereignis requires elements of calculative thought not only for its realization but also to guide the conception of human flourishing that itself must be based on the presence-at-hand of the entities prior to Ereignis, the ontic entities (the animalitas of man) capable of suffering and joy that are prior to and the sole viable criteria for Ereignis. The issue of an horizon of concern for the danger returns us to the relation between Gestell and its ontic manifestations; that the ontic distress correlate to the ontological distress seen in terms of the current claim form possible criteria to guide the new epoch.

In previous discussion of ontic instances of Gestell it was said that the significance

⁴⁴⁰ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 452.

⁴⁴¹ Parkes, "Thoughts on the Way," 130.

⁴⁴² Harries, "Heidegger as a Political Thinker," 668.

of the supreme danger for Heidegger does not seem to rely upon the ontic consequences of Gestell, that it was the totalized revealing of standing-reserve rather than any specific commodification of man that formed the horizon of concern for the danger. The need that gives warrant to Heidegger's thought and originates in reflection upon the origin of thought "to preserve the truth of Being no matter what may happen to man and everything that 'is'...this sacrifice is the expense of our human being for the preservation of the truth of Being in respect of what-is"⁴⁴³ thanking is a sacrifice that "brooks no calculation, for calculation always miscalculates sacrifice in terms of the expedient and the inexpedient, no matter whether the aims are set high or low. Such calculation distorts the nature of sacrifice."⁴⁴⁴ Whilst man does not die for mere values he is called to sacrifice himself for the truth of Being; that Heidegger lived through two world wars yet maintained his preference for the latter over the former speaks strongly of his commitment to the worth of Sein over the woes of its Da. There can be no weighing of the pros and cons of Gestell and specific ontic cases of Gestell separate from their incorporation into the total ordering cannot be used to indicate counter-examples from which criteria can be derived since it is the relation of these examples to the total ordering that is pertinent to Heidegger rather than the actual cases themselves. Yet Gestell is inseparable from its realization in terms of these consequences and the strength of the claim that preservation of Being is paramount 'no matter what may happen to man' only heightens the need to question the warrant of such sacrifice.

Chapter 2.3 dealt with how Heidegger's thought could not be appropriated to ecological concerns, such would remain a simple non-anthropocentrism and within the sphere of Gestell. Although in line with some of Nishitani's Buddhist and Daoist influences total equivalence in value of all life and the wider conditions for life is formally near identical with the equivalency of mechanization and ultimately a utilitarian ethic that simply spreads the notion of happiness or suffering to all beings. The tired old cliché that a deep ecology ethics cannot distinguish between the extinction of the Bengal tiger on the one hand and the eradication of small-pox on the other is easily diffused by considering the neurological capacity of a creature for suffering and its integrity to an ecosystem. Such a view treats beings as scientific objects of study but with the over-riding aim of minimizing sentient suffering rather than maximizing efficiency and can be seen as a transfigured form of Gestell /nihility that is affirmed in the Great Compassion or new epoch after its negation. For both thinkers the world of nature remains an ontic system and the responsibility to which we are called is not for the ontic world (although does concern it) but for the realization of Da-Sein (enlightenment). Yet these ontological concerns only are in terms of ontic comportments, so that criteria for any new epoch must necessarily involve responsibility for the other personal selves that are required as the mask of absolute nothingness and for the non-objective homeground of jítai separate from the ethical homocentrism of elemental subjectivity. Only through human awareness does enlightenment come to pass and only man as the shrine of nothingness shepherds Being, but these themselves only are as an attending to the entity-nature of ontic beings.

For Heidegger it is not death by atom bomb that is the true danger "In this dawning atomic age a far greater danger threatens - precisely when the danger of a third world war has been removed."⁴⁴⁵ That despite the hardships of ontic homelessness "the real plight of dwelling does not lie merely in a lack of houses...The real plight of dwelling lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell."⁴⁴⁶ In terms of the 'unreasonable demand' upon our nature ontic death is a lesser

⁴⁴³ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 389.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 390.

⁴⁴⁵ *Discourse on Thinking*, 56.

⁴⁴⁶ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 159.

danger than the death of our existence as claimed so that "What threatens man in his very nature is the willed view that man, by the peaceful release, transformation, storage, and channelling of the energies of physical nature, could render the human condition, man's being, tolerable for everybody and happy in all respects."⁴⁴⁷ It is not this rendering of the human condition that is rejected, but the idea that they are to be achieved by means of embracing a certain appropriative claim; "that man still does not even think of the real plight of dwelling as the plight"⁴⁴⁸ by prioritizing mere ontic well-being.

Dreyfus holds that whilst Heidegger concludes "that focusing on loss and destruction is still technological"⁴⁴⁹ he is concerned with "the human distress caused by the technological understanding of being, rather than the destruction caused by specific technologies."⁴⁵⁰ The greatest danger may lead to ontic distress but Dreyfus seems wrong in pinpointing human distress as of concern since even if Gestell leads to a lessening of distress Heidegger does not consider the danger any less severe. The danger that calculative thinking becomes the sole thinking seems distinct from the claim that such a state of affairs results necessarily in human distress, and Heidegger spends little time establishing any connection between the two. The idea of ontological distress divorced from correlative ontic distress caused by loss and destruction does not seem to be a coherent notion, the danger of Gestell only is for those in whom the distress is existentially realized in an ontic state of affairs. The double forgetting that characterizes the supreme danger entails that we no longer experience the oblivion of Being as a privation thus almost by definition feel no distress unless we are one of those for whom this absence is existentially realized as anxiety/Doubt. If the ontological distress of anxiety is not experienced then the prime concern remains the potential loss of the ontological relationship to Being regardless of the ramifications for the practicalities of human life; yet it seems to make no sense to talk of 'ontological' distress without a correlate ontic-existential realization.

Gestell as criteria

The event of Ereignis, the self-emptying of Śūnyatā previously laid out in terms of circuminsessional interpenetration self-identical with nihility, must itself be what gives content to the emptiness of resolve as self-emptying. The only standard for judgement of this new destining is the fore-conception of such saving that itself makes the notion of danger coherent; the experience of the circuminsessional structure that as a trace in Gestell calls us along the way that provides for its own critique. If Ereignis itself is accepted as an ultimate self-validating horizon (that is implies ought) Heidegger does not have to justify his criteria beyond attentiveness to Saying; but seems to lack criteria to prioritize any future destining that meditates on its origin without universalizing his own experience of such a call. The retrieval that sets this fore-conception itself lacks a horizon unless it comes from the current destining; destinings can only be evaluated in terms of other contingent destinings and we may change our thrown ethos through retrieval but the value criteria for this change are still thrown. Only the values of the present that are used to judge the past seem possible of lending authority as the claim of appropriation is mutually constituted with the meaning bestowed by the current claim; with the affirmation of Gestell and humanism within anthropocentrism-sive-nonanthropocentrism. Ereignis itself forms the fore-conception for the projective surmounting yet Ereignis currently only is as what currently comes-to-presence under the claim of Gestell. As discussed in chapters 2.3 and 2.5 no ontic example indicates Gestell which is most pertinently a relation between a plurality of disclosures, so that it is the relation of these

⁴⁴⁷ "What Are Poets For?," 114.

⁴⁴⁸ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 159.

⁴⁴⁹ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 304.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 305.

ontic cases to the overarching plural understanding of Being that is pertinent. No isolated ontic example can either be ruled out of the saving epoch or used as an example of future dwelling separate from consideration of their relation to a plurality of understandings; so that it is the tension between plurality and totality that provides the critical horizon of retrieval guided by the relation between Gestell and Ereignis (between samsara and nirvana; nihility and sunyata). Ontic cases of distress alone cannot be used to derive criteria, yet as Gestell only is in terms of them they are also the only valid horizon for its critique. It is the manner in which they are related to Gestell as the mutual challenging of Da and Sein, as previously outlined in terms of how multiple understandings are related within the horizon of an epoch that provides the only possible projective criteria.

As discussed in chapter 2.4 the fore-conception by which the danger is as danger comes from the 'and' linking Fourfold and Gestell ; as the current thrown epochal understanding only Gestell once itself freed can supply the criteria for the new destining. Attending to the event of appropriation always is as mediated by the current manner of appropriation, determined by the 'and' linking the Fourfold and Gestell (the sive of samsāra-sive-nirvāna), so that the identity of the danger and saving (the unity of the fields of awareness) provides the horizon for the new epochal sending. The criteria for the projected moment of epochal transformation (nihilisms self-surmounting) can only come from the present understanding (the claim of Gestell) and the realization of its relation to that which gives this understanding, nothing else can guide the selection of the elements within the shared epochal understanding to be retrieved. The critique of any epochal understanding as a way to which we are called must be immanent to that way so that Gestell provides the context for its own critique and what is to be retained in the saving destining, as was suggested in previous consideration of plurality and planetary dialogue.

The criteria of attending to Ereignis (realizing the self as absolute nothingness) provides the framework for guiding a retrieval of Gestell as how Ereignis currently is, the nature of this retrieval and how it is guided by this framework is now to be considered.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Reflection, Action and Preparation

Section 1 laid out the form and conditions of possibility for that which saves in terms of the mutual appropriation (self-identity) of man and absolute nothingness, Section 2 that Nothingness is the origin of both nihilism and its salvation/self-transformation as the realization of identity with reality (samsara-sive-nirvana); it is to transformed from relative to absolute. This section is to address how this transformation is accomplished; how the ontology of nothingness in terms of circuminsessional belonging is to be realized and nothingness unfold in the new destining through remembrance of Ereignis and responsibility for bringing forth this ontological nihility in a way befitting it.

The essence of nihilism is the truth of Being; the ontology of nothingness that 'gives' metaphysics as a withdrawal experienced as nihilism. Nihilism as an experience of nihility can only be transformed through an alternate experience of the same ontological origin. That which gives (the nothingness of Da and Sein that calls to and from the self) must now be thought in a new way related to withdrawal and from the same origin. As metaphysics cannot think its own ground a new thinking from its origin is required to transform the essence of both man and metaphysics. As man only is in the manner of how we are claimed such epochal self-surmounting is also a transformation in human existence along Nishitani's lines of realizing the self as absolute nothingness; nihilism emerges from the nothingness of the human so is overcome in/through the human. These self-identical transformations of man and metaphysics are both retrievals through inquiry into the nothingness that gives man and metaphysics; this retrieval itself is the transformation.

Nature of Saving

In the turning of nihilism both human existence and Gestell must be brought into a free relation thus saved, and "That which genuinely saves is that which keeps safe"¹ by fetching "something home into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its genuine appearing."² The saving power is to allow Da and Sein to come to presence in the manner most befitting their essential belonging through realizing the free relation between human existence and Gestell. As a mutual freeing Gestell is also brought into its essence thus saved through the same realization of the danger that allows the saving of human existence, as realizing the truth of Gestell brings the possibility of saving human existence so too does realizing the truth of human existence bring the possibility of saving Gestell.

The saving power is to bring forth the essence of the human as the one who responds to the claim of a destining, as the field of nihility brings the self to face its nothingness and realize itself as absolute nothingness. As discussed in chapters 2.5 and 2.6 this understanding of saving requires a projected notion of what the human essence should be for reflection on Sein to be what preserves our special nature. Through this Sein is also saved "as Being's coming to presence needs the coming to presence of man, in order to remain kept safe as Being in keeping with its own coming to presence in the midst of whatever is, and thus as Being to endure as present"³. How Gestell as the current coming-to-presence of Sein in Ereignis is saved is more problematic. To keep safe the

¹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 42.

² Ibid., 28.

³ Ibid., 38.

danger is to put it in proper place, but danger is omnipresent yet nowhere; "It has no place as something other than itself. It is itself the placeless dwelling place of all presencing."⁴ To save *Gestell* as danger is to behold it as the danger it is; as inherent to the nature of destining due to the relation of nothingness to meaning. Such beholding preserves the danger thus brings *Gestell* into its essence not as a single (totally determinative) understanding of Being or epochally specific claim, but a continual possibility that indicates the origin of claiming. This latter theme is soon taken up in terms of the relation between plurality and absent gods (chapter 3.2), first how such saving is to be accomplished must be considered.

Reflection

Heidegger first recommends we reflect on Being to "experience to what extent we are called upon first to trace a path for such experiencing";⁵ to hear the call of self/nihility that frees our existence to be used by the self-surmounting of *Gestell* in our "essence that *corresponds* to that surmounting."⁶ Such reflection as realization of the danger leads us back to our free existence so that the self-transformation of man can allow us to correspond to the self-transformation of Beings turning. Reflective thought as response to appropriation is how human existence comes-to-presence in the way most essential to our capacity to be so is how we are *Dasein* in the verb sense of essence. *Science and Reflection* defines such reflection as the response to the call of the self as appropriated; a "calm, self-possessed surrender to that which is worthy of questioning."⁷ calling us along the way to where we are already claimed. Reflection is then the retrieval of the originary experience of ourselves as responders to Being (claimed in *Ereignis*); the realization of man and Being as both characterized by nothingness. To think *Ereignis* is to reflect on nothingness as the origin of meaning and hear the claim of the call of the self; thought as reflection is an experience, a process of being called underway. Reflection is thus a coming to awareness of the field of awareness, the bringing to realization of the self-awareness of the origin of meaning in Appropriation.

Through such reflection the realization of the possibility of the saving power begins with the bringing of *Gestell* to its essence (its saving) by "our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological"⁸ by attending to its true rather than correct essence. This prepares for a free relation to *Gestell* by acknowledging it as a happening of truth; yet the identity of the saving and danger, that *Gestell* saves as *Gestell* since it the is purest expression of this nihility (that only once completed can we ponder prior epochs) alone does not define saving. The call to reflect remains somewhat abstract; what is the nature of such reflection, and what is the content of the experience we are to reflect upon?

Reflection as Preparatory and Provisional

The nature of reflection must be both preparatory and provisional; this was first addressed in chapter 2.6 concerning the criteria of contingency for the preservation of multiple understandings of Being and allowing things to manifest as they are rather than how we will them to be.

Thought prepares for the coming to presence of Being, but such reflection on the essence of the danger is only preparatory for the self-transformation of the *Da-Sein* relation; a readiness to heed the call to experience *Ereignis*'s turn. Our reflection must be "content with awakening a readiness in man for a possibility whose contour remains

⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁷ Ibid., 180.

⁸ Ibid., 32.

obscure, whose coming remains uncertain." ⁹ In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger says such thinking of essential identity may require its own lengthy epoch during which we look "toward that which approaches us as the call of the active nature of identity between man and Being." ¹⁰ As preparatory thus transitional reflection is drawn into affinity with anxiety and the field of nihility, the reflector dwells in "that 'between' in which he belongs to Being and yet remains a stranger amid that which is." ¹¹ Preparatory transition implies an awaiting for a new epoch, an ambivalence between how despite being needed for its accomplishment "Man cannot, of himself, abandon this destining of his modern essence or abolish it by fiat" ¹² but only reflect on such need and freedom. Reflection as beholding danger is a precondition for the possibility for dwelling, also required is a new epochal sending. Yet this sending itself only is when realized through man and so first requires a new self-understanding, itself only possible in response to such a sending.

As that which saves will grow in its own time and man in "his essence is the one waits, the one who attends upon the coming to presence of Being in that in thinking he guards it" ¹³ any attempted realization of possible saving must be provisional and stem from an open response to the claim of Being. Heidegger contrasts the starting us on the way of reflection with the setting-forth of a pre-established rule or giving form to inherent tendencies of cultivation that requires a model in advance, instead we must reflect on our axiological assumptions; "Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called in question" ¹⁴. Thought must be provisional as well as preparatory since "The ways of reflection constantly change, ever according to the place on the way at which a path begins, ever according to the portion of the way it traverses, ever according to the distant view that opens along the way into that which is worthy of questioning." ¹⁵ Thought as always under way is tentative response, yet chapter 2.6 raised the issue of whether Heidegger's own reflections question his goal, and preparation itself is a determining of what is awaited. Preparatory and provisional; these terms are seemingly at odds with heeding a claim in the extreme sense Heidegger indicates as preparation is an activity guided by criteria (leading to problem of adjudicating destinings in absence of already sent epochal criteria), and as shall emerge more over the following chapters consideration of poetry and dwelling by necessity determines what is sent.

What we Reflect upon and Await

The content of preparatory reflection is given positive formulation in that "human reflection can ponder the fact that all saving power must be of a higher essence than what is endangered, though at the same time kindred to it," ¹⁶ indicating from where the saving power is to grow; from the null origin that gave Gestell. Such awareness of the essence of nihilism requires us to "reflect on old, venerable words the language of which gives us promise of the realm of the essence of nihilism and of its restoration." ¹⁷ As outlined in chapter 2.1's guiding definition The Question Concerning Technology is to build a way through language as language "is the primal dimension within which man's essence is first able to correspond at all to Being and its claim, and in corresponding, to belong to Being. This primal corresponding, expressly carried out, is thinking." ¹⁸ Reflection as an

⁹ "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 436.

¹⁰ *Identity and Difference*, 136.

¹¹ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 152.

¹² *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷ "The Question of Being," 109.

¹⁸ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 41.

attending to essential language as poetry is how we prepare for the self-surmounting of Gestell, how Appropriation comes to pass by our reflecting on Saying. Such thought as correspondence is how "we first learn to dwell in the realm in which there comes to pass the restorative surmounting of the destining of Being, the surmounting of Enframing." 19

Language and man's relation to it is the matter of reflection, and preparatory reflection upon this has already set on the way to the surmounting, yet "It is of the essence of such transitions that they are, within certain limits, compelled to speak the language of that which they help us to overcome."²⁰ Reflection on the history of language means preparatory thinking as attending to Ereignis "maintains itself necessarily within the realm of historical reflection".²¹ Reflecting on the historical emergence of Gestell is how we ponder the connection between the saving and danger; how we return to the originary primordial experience that gives history by withdrawing to enframe enframing and understand new ways are possible. Whilst the new destining lays beyond the prophecy of man it must be rooted in the tradition that culminated in Gestell ; "Only when we turn thoughtfully toward what has already been thought, will we be turned to use for what must still be thought"²² and capable of retrieving the null origin that was most fully realized in such oblivion. Thought must be freed in dialogue with its history to reach the origin of that tradition, not in the sense of its first thinkers but as chapter 2.4 laid out its primordial origin that provides thought with its matter and measure.

This matter of reflection is "the open region for everything that becomes present and absent,"²³ and the specifics of what we are to reflect upon come from an attentive questioning listening of this phenomena. What we are to hear and respond to is the gathering of world explicated in Section 1 as the understanding of nihilism lost in Gestell yet indicated/retrieved through it, just as Sunyata is prior to the Field of Nihilism yet reached through it. Reflection requires allowing oneself to be appropriated by this inter-referential totality of presencing thus bringing out (letting-be) our own essence more fully, reflection is a letting oneself be appropriated by thinking on appropriation. The relation to that-which-regions as waiting means "to release oneself into the openness of that-which-regions"²⁴ and to be held to our nature by this relation.

Reflection on language is to bring about the realization of the circuminsessional ontology laid out in previous chapters and accordingly first requires awareness of this nature of self; we "learn to 'let beings be' only by gaining insight into the nothingness that pervades all things."²⁵ That-which-regions as the circuminsessional totality only is as realized in man's awareness of belonging to it, yet the new epoch we are to be open for accords with the circuminsessional Fourfold as criteria derived from Ereignis (absolute nothingness as the origin that 'gives' destiny) and can be discerned by reflection on (heeding the Saying of) such nothingness.

Letting be is how we authentically bring-forth by allowing beings to unfold in terms of their epochal claim, allowing *jitai* to emerge as they are on their homeground. The axio-ontological identity entails this realization brings normative responsibility for *jitai* ; reflection itself is the warrant for this. The mutual lingering of jointure "does not happen at the behest of a subjugation suppressing one's own wishes under a moral imperative or result from bitter compromise. Only a being that knows itself through others...able to experience its own retreat and absence (non-being) as a genuine manner

19 Ibid.

20 *What Is Metaphysics?* , 381.

21 *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 27.

22 *Identity and Difference*, 41.

23 "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 442.

24 *Discourse on Thinking*, 72.

25 Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 240.

of its selfhood, is able to take itself back, in order to let the other be, to make room for the other." ²⁶ Yet this includes disjointure; letting beings be is also letting the self be and to let ourselves be is to act in accord with ourselves as claimed, thus also as challenged-forth.

Accomplishing Appropriation

Chapter 1.2 spoke of *Da* and *Sein*'s mutual need, this need has now emerged as resulting from a projected saving that defines the danger it is to counter. Yet the problem of how appropriation is realized remains. Being is both said to have no equal and that the turn happens without mediation, yet also that this turn is in need of man, who in preparing is both determined by yet also partially determining the nature of the new claim. Heidegger claims both that "The turning of the danger comes to pass suddenly. In this turning, the clearing belonging to the essence of Being suddenly clears itself and lights up." ²⁷ yet also that "This may happen, not of and through itself, but in virtue of the readiness of man for a determination which, whether heeded or not, always speaks in the destiny of man, which has not yet been decided."²⁸ Releasement and openness to mystery do not happen by themselves "They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking"²⁹ yet we do not decide to inaugurate the new epoch nor its nature "Man is rather 'thrown' from Being itself into the truth of Being, so that ek-sisting in this fashion he might guard the truth of Being".³⁰ Preparation makes no sense as an injunction if the manner of the claim in no way way depends on the manner of the preparation so that we partially determine that destining through the manner of openness we provide through our sheltering. That Heidegger makes recommendations concerning our preparation implies our accomplishing of appropriation shapes *Sein*, yet he remains committed to attributing a priority to *Sein*'s arrival rather than *Da*'s preparation both reifying *Sein* and inviting the criteria problems laid out in chapter 2.6. For Heidegger the realization of the epochal turn is beyond human agency yet requires human responsiveness to occur, a responsiveness attained through a relinquishing of will and ego (releasement and anxiety respectively). For Nishitani ego-death as the religious quest requires Sunyata as absolute nothingness yet is realized only within the personal self that as self-identical with absolute nothingness requires no sending beyond this; there is nothing to await.

As said in chapter 1.2 if 'Being' is heard in the sense given to it in *Identity and Difference* as standing for the *Da-Sein* relation as prior to its constituents and the clearing belonging to this essence that clears itself is the *Da* of man then the position becomes more coherent. We may not have the power to compel Being but what Being *is* is still determined by our communal actions and preferences, it is not a causal relation but a relation of definition. But this then requires far more than just 'awaiting', the reflection that prepares must be related to a more active sense of accomplishment. The new epochal appropriation requires both a sending of Being and that *Dasein* constructs "a thrown, partial understanding and interpretation of that sending;"³¹ as *Ereignis* that grants history is *Da-Sein* not just Being, and *Gestell* a mutual challenging encompassing both aspects of the relation. This responsibility towards accomplishing the turn is a collective one as the understanding that determines an age is nothing more than the plurality of our societal understanding that conditions the possible understandings of the individual. How is such realization to be accomplished; how do we 'do' it and thereby refuse it or alter the manner of its accomplishment?

²⁶ Elmar, "Thinking in Transition: Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger," 238.

²⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 44.

²⁸ "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 437.

²⁹ *Discourse on Thinking*, 56.

³⁰ "Letter on Humanism," 234.

³¹ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 67.

Reflection as Action

That Heidegger recommends we realize the saving power through reflection on the danger is often taken to mean that rather than taking any action contrary to Gestell we are to take a more meditative stance. Bernstein believes for Heidegger "the answer to the question, 'What are we to do?' is to ponder, to recollect, to reflect, to question, to think, to prepare, to wait"³² Watts that "Heidegger does not suggest taking any practical action for dealing with the negative effects of technology"³³ Staumbaugh claims that in *Discourse on Thinking* Heidegger "is not talking so much about the way we should lead our everyday lives as about what the philosopher should stop doing in order to get out of metaphysics."³⁴ Yet it is within the everyday that we are challenged-forth and towards which releasement comports; epochal transformation requires more than changes in philosophy departments. Whilst reflection "reveals that the question of technology requires a questioning of what it is to be human"³⁵ such questioning is only realized in a way of being human that forms an answer. A passivity and limitation of reflection to cognition is implied in the claim that Being's "truth will be given over to man when he has overcome himself as subject, and that means when he no longer represents that which is as object."³⁶ Man and Being are saved when they "achieve their active nature by losing those qualities with which metaphysics has endowed them,"³⁷ but reflection cannot be defined by negation alone lest it remain a relative nihility, and as chapter 2.6 addressed; all critique is as much for something as against. As an experience of what we already are the call must not only chart a way away, but also towards.

Discourse on Thinking characterizes the supreme danger in terms of Will (desire) as at the ground of representation and objectification; the supreme danger manifests as the metaphysics of will in the subject, the willing of total organization that obscures the essence of Gestell. Reflection then involves a relinquishment of the metaphysics of will which only is as the subjective will/desires of the individual; thus the psychological realization of reflection is portrayed in terms of the abnegation of will that correlates to the ego's self-denial as it passes through Nishitani's fields of awareness. Non-willing means "a willing in such a way as to involve negation...willingly to renounce willing...further, what remains absolutely outside any kind of will."³⁸ Releasement as the non-willing that negates will through will before even that trace of will evaporates; such preparatory willing to not have a will must (like reflection) be a continual yet sporadic state (preparatory and provisional). At times we must will as calculative thought is still tarried in by meditative, this attitude cannot be achieved once and for all but must be sporadically maintained in face of continual encounters with the technological world. Yet such releasement remains passive, an awaiting for Sein to bring us into Ereignis so "We are to do nothing but wait".³⁹ But awaiting as beyond Will is beyond the passive-active distinction so cannot truly be said to not be an activity, sunyata as both affirmation and negation of the fields marked by desire, like the critique of humanism the denial of action pertains only to a narrow interpretation of activity.

Heidegger's talk of reflection and pondering cannot be mere cognitive activity; to counter nihilism, writes Takeichi, "One must existentially bring to self-awareness the fact that Being is immediately 'danger'"⁴⁰ such existential awareness is a psychological lived

³² Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, 115.

³³ Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 220.

³⁴ Staumbaugh, "Heidegger, Daoism, and Metaphysics," 86.

³⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 65.

³⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 154.

³⁷ *Identity and Difference*, 37.

³⁸ *Discourse on Thinking*, 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ G. Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 185.

transformation to complement the self-surmounting of Being. Just as chapter 2.3 discussed the ontic correlates to the supreme danger so too must the beholding of the danger as danger also have its ontic correlates; political movements and marginal practices that resist totalized understandings, or social movements concerned with safeguarding the environment. Both the initial preparatory reflection and the epochal transformation must have concrete ontic manifestations beyond abstract changes to will and representation lest reflection remain in the remit of Gestell as "The characterization of thinking as *theōria* and the determination of knowing as 'theoretical' behaviour occur already within the 'technical' interpretation of thinking."⁴¹ Reflection is a questioning, questions a path. "If the answer could be given it would consist in a transformation of thinking, not in a propositional statement about a matter at stake,"⁴² as said on chapter 2.6 Heidegger and Nishitani provide an answer to the question of the human, one that can be indicated propositionally but only realized existentially and thus requires action. Mere activity is warned against, but if it is to avoid metaphysical dichotomies then true thought must also be action; calculative thought must dwell with meditative. Gestell must be affirmed and denied as "No age lets itself be done away with by a negating decree,"⁴³ so abnegation of will alone is insufficient. Gestell cannot be countered by human action as currently conditioned by Gestell, yet such action can no more be rejected in favour of an abstract reflection than can Gestell itself; the reflection on the danger that is a simultaneous yes and no to Gestell must as such a partial affirmation retain an element of such activity.

"No merely human organization is capable of gaining dominion"⁴⁴ over Gestell, yet the abnegation of will that is to free us and Gestell also involves humans collectively living in certain ways. The realization (accomplishment) of that-which-regions through our preparatory activity means "something like power of action and resolve also reign in releasement"⁴⁵ so long as such action remain open for "a receiving of the regioning of that-which-regions"⁴⁶ such receiving is also a realizing involving action (and higher action). Non-willing is not an activity but it is an achievement requiring social practices and personal endeavours conducive to realizing such a state of awareness (e.g traditions of meditative practice). The creation of such receptivity is an active process, willing to cease willing on a social scale or in an individual existence requires much activity. Waiting is then not passive, but a preparing for a certain form of epochal understanding that is accomplished in activities. Only a god can save us; but gods as mediators between man and the Holy are themselves constituted by their relation to mortal making (as addressed in chapter 1.6).

The nature of this transformed ontic way of life that corresponds to the epochal surmounting is to be addressed over the following chapters in terms of the relation between thought, art, poetry, dwelling and building. Reflection as action is realized as a form of dwelling thus building, if thought is not theory but a higher action then to reflect on art is to live (thus act) poetically-artistically; thought is a poetic building that traces a way. The dialogue of Discourse on Thinking (in which the scientist represents modernity) shows how releasement is to come about through attending to the saying of poetic teachers and thoughtful scholars; the conversation as the path to waiting is releasement itself. The building of our dwelling in the age of Gestell is guided by thought and poetry, yet such poetic thought "is not necessary for all, nor is it to be accomplished or even found bearable by everyone. On the other hand, absence of reflection belongs to a very great

⁴¹ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 218.

⁴² "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," 431.

⁴³ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 138.

⁴⁴ *Discourse on Thinking*, 52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

extent to certain definite stages of achieving and moving forward." ⁴⁷ How reflection is complimented by and requires calculative thought is to be thematic over the following chapters.

Poiesis

Despite the provisionality and rejection of prophecy Heidegger offers a possibility for the new destining to be realized, that the "more primally granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining forth in the midst of the danger" ⁴⁸ to be prepared for through such reflection is to be retrieved from the poiesis of the fine arts that the Greeks also called *techne* so shares an origin with technology, and that inquiry into poiesis gives form to how the new destinal claim is to be prepared for. This shared origin means art is a non-arbitrary yet contingent choice for the revealing that can allow for the emergence of the saving power for "essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it." ⁴⁹

Art is not strictly speaking to be the saving power; only what allows the saving power (new destining) to emerge through providing for a retrieval of the origin of *Gestell*, "in terms of its essence, art is a consecration and a refuge in which the real bestows its long-hidden splendour upon man ever anew, that in such light he may see more purely and hear more clearly what addresses itself to his essence." ⁵⁰ Reflection upon poiesis is to prepare us to respond to the new claim by enabling the elements of the Fourfold to encounter each other. Heidegger claims that for the Greeks art as revealing safeguarded truth as it "brought the presence of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destining, to radiance";⁵¹ in allowing for the dialogue of mortals and gods the poetical as the essence of art brings forth truth by gathering the Fourfold in the thing, leading Heidegger to cite Holderlin in claiming that man dwells poetically upon the earth.

The poetic is named as the condition of possibility for human dwelling that is to be actualized by our attending to the nature of the poetic. The turn towards dwelling not only requires us to heed the poetic, but "How and to what extent our doings can share in this turn we alone can prove, if we take the poetic seriously."⁵² The nature of its poetry can indicate the extent to which man allows himself to be appropriated in any given epoch and the manner in which we accomplish that which Being grants. To dwell poetically is Heidegger's imperative, such dwelling is still part of our projected verbal essence and only is when realized as such, as outlined in chapter 2.6, yet is also portrayed as primordial and attested to by the danger itself "For dwelling can be unpoetic only because it is in its essence poetic." ⁵³

In his discussion of poiesis in *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger seeks the saving in the same origin as the danger rather than within the danger itself as danger, implying it is the origin of *Gestell* rather than *Gestell* itself that we are to have our free relation to; but the origin only is in terms of its current dispensation/realization. That which saves is to be retrieved from the same origin that gives Greek poiesis; the pure nihilism of absolute nothingness that is itself indicated by *Gestell* as the revealing of bare suchness. Although thought is to reflect on tradition and Heidegger seeks clues as to the new destining in the Greek understanding of art such reflection must be a transformative

⁴⁷ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 137.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵² "'...Poetically Man Dwells...'," 226.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 225.

retrieval not a simple return as "The flight into tradition, out of a combination of humility and presumption, can bring about nothing in itself other than self-deception and blindness in relation to the historical moment."⁵⁴ The status of the Greek as an origin to be retrieved has been addressed over chapters 2.3 and 2.4; if every epoch flowers from the same source in a non-linear fashion then the Greek experience of art as "that brief but magnificent time"⁵⁵ which art was but can never be again is no closer to the true origin (or a more original revealing) than Gestell.

Whilst art "may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants"⁵⁶ such a founding anew must differ from the Greek understanding of art in light of Gestell. As was said in chapter 2.4 such granting is conditional; the retrieval of poiesis may never occur "Instead, the rule of metaphysics may rather entrench itself...Or, everything that results by way of the step back may merely be exploited and absorbed by metaphysics in its own way"⁵⁷ Heidegger's use of conditionals stresses that arts fostering of the saving power is only a possibility and also possible is that art will not foster it; that something else will or that nothing will. As said in chapter 2.6 no context seems possible for favouring poiesis over other possible savings. The new autochthony indicated by releasement and openness-to-mystery "which someday even might be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing autochthony in a changed form"⁵⁸ must allow us to dwell in the absence of the gods by appropriating Gestell into a free relation that preserves the manner of revealing the real as challenging-forth (preserves nihility within sunyata); bringing Gestell into its own essence as the revealing it is rather than returning to any pre-Gestell notion of poiesis.

Saved Gestell

Danger as danger is what saves, "The saving power is not secondary to the danger. The selfsame danger is, when it is as the danger, the saving power."⁵⁹ Heidegger's discussion of poiesis implies that it is the danger inherent to the origin of Gestell as a destining that is to bring forth a saving power that itself will be other to Gestell; "The danger is the saving power, inasmuch as it brings the saving power out of its - the danger's - concealed essence that is ever susceptible to turning."⁶⁰ Ereignis itself as withdrawal is the essence of both danger and saving. and only currently is as the epochal understanding of Gestell; Being is the source of both awe and anxiety and its mystery is ambiguous in the same sense as Gestell. Heidegger's belief that the more the way leads into the danger the closer it comes to the saving power implies that the danger itself must be preserved within the way of thought that is itself the growth of the saving power. All destinings are necessarily danger; danger must be embraced as such, what is needed is a destining that preserves that danger in sight so as to not become one that reveals in line with a single understanding but in terms of the relation between understandings.

Previously it was noted how the self's realization both enables and is enabled by the attainment of the suchness of things, that the realization of sunyata paradoxically forms its own condition of possibility. Both Heidegger and Nishitani try to clarify what we already are yet remains obscured; yet if uncanny homelessness as revealed in anxiety is primordial, if things have never thinged and Ereignis/Sunyata only are in their existential realization then the field of nihility is equally primordial and never truly obscures the field with which it is identical and attests to. Both Gestell and Nihility

⁵⁴ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 34.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁷ *Identity and Difference*, 72.

⁵⁸ *Discourse on Thinking*, 55.

⁵⁹ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 42.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

themselves as themselves must be integrally related to the saving power and suchness in order for Ereignis and sunyata to be realized. There are two related ways this saving can be emphasized, both seem consonant with Heidegger and Nishitani's remarks to different extents.

Firstly; that poiesis can be retrieved from Gestell as both necessarily contain a trace of the other. This was discussed earlier in relation to the examples Heidegger uses in *The Question Concerning Technology*; that the progression through the fields is a deepening of self-understanding that also transforms the self, a clarification of self. This would be a retrieval of the 'original countenance' we are all thrown into through virtue of our nature as nothingness, the elemental awareness that is the possibility of enlightenment. This relates to previous discussion on whether we can ever not be Dasein; the priority of the Da-Sein relation over its constituents means we cannot talk of Being prior to our having a relation to it. The self-surmounting can never be a case of regaining our relation to Being as our belonging to Being is so determinative that we cannot "even say any longer that 'Being' and 'man' 'be' the same in the sense that they belong together; for in so saying we still let both be for themselves."⁶¹ Heidegger seems to tend more towards this interpretation.

Secondly; rather than seeing the fields as containing traces of each other to be retrieved their self-identity can be stressed. That we are realizing what we already are not so much in the sense of a projective retrieval of latent or trace possibilities but that we realize samsara-sive-nirvana; that Gestell is the saving power as it already is, just as nihility is reality as it is in its suchness. In stressing the self-identity of the fields over the transitional nature of nihility, and the identity of Gestell with its origin then we can attain enlightenment because we already are enlightened and to dwell amidst Gestell as Gestell is already to be saved. The essence of Gestell to be freed/saved is not just that it claims but that it claims us in a certain way; we must learn to dwell within the destiny that is Gestell, so our dwelling is partially determined by the current danger as the specific form of that danger which it is. Art and technology would then be brought together reflecting the self-identity of calculative and meditative thought. Nishitani seems to tend more towards this interpretation.

Both thinkers speak the identity of nihilism and that which saves, yet as first said in intro1+2 their presentations downplay the retaining of nihilistic elements of experience. Nishitani in relation to the reconciliation of science and religion, Heidegger in relation to calculative and meditative thoughts mutual need (the 'and' linking Fourfold and Gestell as their sive).

The nothingness that befalls Being in nihilism (the danger) is also how Sein claims Da in Ereignis determining them both. Withdrawal (nihilation/forgetting) of Being is how it discloses (comes-to-presence), it is the essence of Sein that is to be saved, forgetting is as integral to human existence as remembrance. If the danger must be beheld as such and Gestell is the supreme danger then Gestell as the culmination of withdrawal once seen as withdrawal could be seen as the increase of the disclosive power of Being, a continual heightening of its mystery. Gestell is a twofold forgetting; but only one of these forgettings is the supreme danger; one is simply integral to Ereignis as withdrawal. Man is the being who both remembers and forgets "He is in the needful condition of being constrained by the one and the other"⁶² forgetting too is a form of thanking. Such preserving of withdrawal is to soon be seen in terms of holding open the absence-of-gods. The preservation of Gestell is constant anxiety without resolution thus dwells amidst homelessness (that as uncanny should be primordial and grasped as destiny). The stand

⁶¹ "The Question of Being," 77.

⁶² Heidegger, McNeill, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 151.

in nihility is to be maintained on a social/communal level in a pluralistic fashion to enable the individual attainment of enlightenment.

Following chapter guide

Poetically we must dwell else forget the concealed and lose the saving power (if such a change to our essence even be possible), but how we are to dwell post-Gestell is now the main concern; the nature of a return to poetic dwelling in the absence of the gods. Such dwelling must reconcile and contain the dichotomies of the calculative and meditative and the unity of the fields. Nothingness does not vanish at the completion nor overcoming of nihilism "overcoming is only attained when, instead of the appearance of negative nothingness, the essence of nothingness which was once related to 'Being' can arrive and be accepted by us mortals."⁶³ ('Being' here designates the belonging of Ereignis; both Da and Sein). In Nishitani's terms when relative nihility becomes the absolute nothingness as true self (elemental subjectivity); how thoughts/disclosures twin aspects of revealing and concealment are realized in their self-identity by transitioning through yet retaining nihility. The following chapters will inquire into the possible saving power of Gestell ; clarifying dwelling and poetry's and relation to Gestell as criteria/origin of that which saves, what forms of art and dwelling would save Gestell and bring it into its authentic essence in a way that preserves the mystery of concealment.

Firstly how we accomplish our share of the self-surmounting by allowing beings to gather a place for Being through us thus saving of Gestell in terms of poetic language as the mediation of the singularity of Sein and plurality of Da that as ontological, existential and psychological is at once a transformation of both self, society and Being will be addressed. The human-divine relation is core of Heidegger's thought on the self-surmounting so will first be explicated in terms of the divinities and absent gods. The plurality of possible manners of revealing the real would seem to be the key counter-tendency to the supreme danger; letting-be must apply equally to understandings as to beings. How poetic dwelling draws its criteria from ontological nihility was addressed in chapter 2.6 and relates to chapter 2.4's discussion of the universality and plurality retrieved from Gestell as projective criteria for the planetary dialogue. Chapters 3.2 and 3.3 will address how these themes relate to Heidegger's thought on poetry, dwelling and building.

Secondly chapter 3.3 will explore the role of Gestell as total disclosure in terms of the elemental objectivity required to balance one of the core paradoxes in Nishitani's thought. How Gestell as extreme withdrawal is related to the scientific revealing of brute nihility or suchness (jītai on its homeground that gives appearances) and the relation of science to anxiety and presence-at-hand will be considered. These themes are related to those of poetic dwelling as the receptivity to new words for Being can be found in experimental science as interpretations of elemental objectivity, poetry and art as not defined in opposition to scientific discourse but as belonging to the same realm of Saying. That "it is precisely the spectacular achievements of science and technology - atomic power and space flights - that remind man of his finitude. The antagonism between enframing and fourfold improperly absolutizes the methodical and technological tendency of our behaviour in the world, in order to oppose to it a different thinking as poetry"⁶⁴ consideration of the viability of the danger in chapter 2.5 and the 'and/sive' linking Gestell and Fourfold in chapter 2.4 providing the context for this bringing together of opposed disclosures. Hodge also claims Heidegger fails to subsume the art-science relation into the Dichten-Technik relation concealing how the distinction between poetry and physics can be disrupted and that the latter, rather than representing the danger of an

⁶³ Heidegger, "The Question of Being," 79.

⁶⁴ Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 74.

enduring epoch, may be capable of inaugurating the new epoch by displacing “the humanist privilege assigned to literature, to poetry, to art, in favour of another form of thinking combining the expertise of science and of artistic creation”.⁶⁵

Finally chapter 3.5 will consider the ethical and political implications of Heidegger and Nishitani's thought; the nature of the Great Compassion and whether their injunctions require a further ethical context to act as criteria. Themes first outlined in chapter 2.6 will lead to consideration of whether the ethical aspects of metaphysics are to be an integral part of any new destining. That if withdrawal is part of how Being discloses, if nihilism is reality (and thus can't be rendered a problem) and essential to disclosure then Gestell as its fullest expression must be preserved as the framework for pluralism that is both ethical and allowing of ontological diversity so long as its tendency to totalization is beheld as the danger.

3.2 Destitute Poets and Absent Gods

“Wide open. Nothing Holy!” - First Patriarch Bodhidharma

Previous chapters have referred to Language as how the relation of Da and Sein comes to pass, “the primal dimension within which man's essence is first able to correspond at all to Being and its claim, and in corresponding, to belong to Being.”⁶⁶ However man is it is language that is speaking him; reflection is when we actively attend to this relation so that “primal corresponding, expressly carried out, is thinking”;⁶⁷ reflection on language is reflection on Ereignis as how we are appropriated thus how we are as claimed. As said at the end of chapter 2.1 it is through reflection on language that the self-surmounting of Gestell will come to pass from within language itself but requiring us, as our relation with language is how we realize the self-surmounting. We are to reflect on language as it pertains to the danger and saving; to the experience outlined in section 1 and how we attain this through the experience of nihilism outlined in section 2. Chapter 2.3 indicated epochal transitions are granted by Ereignis and responded to by thought; the creative language of poetry is a dual response and influence on this so that language in its essence is historical (thus reflection is on the history of words to free them).

The first half of this chapter will focus on language and poetry as Ereignis and reconciliation of the singularity of Sein with the plurality of Da respectively. The second half connects this theme to the absence of the gods to highlight the saving of Gestell. What do Heidegger's reflections on language say of Ereignis and its new sending?

Language as Appropriation

Through language we are appropriated and beings are disclosed as such. In his writings on language Saying becomes what Heidegger used to mean by Being and is now thought as Ereignis; “only Saying confers what we call by the tiny word ‘is’...Saying releases the ‘is’ into lighted freedom and therewith into the security of its thinkability.”⁶⁸ That language is the house of Being truly means that Sein only is in its appropriative belonging with Da, that “Language is the house of Being because language, as Saying, is the mode of Appropriation.”⁶⁹ The relation of Saying and its speakers is the mutual need of Da and Sein; “Saying is in need of being voiced in the word. But man is capable of speaking only

⁶⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 136.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 41.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *On the Way to Language*, 108.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 135.

insofar as he, belonging to Saying, listens to Saying, so that in resaying it he may be able to say a word." ⁷⁰

The relation of language and its speakers occurs when "Appropriation appropriates man to its own usage...Appropriation is the way-making for Saying to come into language." ⁷¹ Heidegger's way is one through language that realizes Ereignis; "The way-making of Saying into spoken language is the delivering bond that binds by appropriating." ⁷² We are appropriated as called along our way by the nothingness of self (as outlined in anx chap) to undergo an experience with language; an experience of language calls us along the way to an experience of nihilism and as such an experience of nothingness Appropriation occurs.

In his speech man as shepherd of Being also keeps Saying safe, our "speaking gathers the ways in which it persists as well as that which persists by it - its persistence, its presencing," ⁷³ human existence as the place for Sein to come to presence means it is in human speech as response that Sein is sheltered and by which our share of appropriation is accomplished. The meaningfulness of language precedes any current speakers, but again is nothing more than those speakers and equally mutually determinative. Language needs speakers just as the Fourfold needs man but is beyond their control and prior to them, how does this relation come to pass and we play our part in it?

Saying as Sein is integrally related to Silence as Nichts. To speak is to show, "The essential being of language is Saying as Showing." ⁷⁴ Saying is the revealing that also conceals and must precede speech; that which is unspoken is yet to be shown and still lies in concealment. The meaningfulness of world as prior to discourse and language as a silent saying means our speech is preceded by a hearing of the silent saying that constitutes the realization of presence. Our speaking corresponds to the saying by listening to this unspoken; "Silence corresponds to the soundless tolling of the stillness of appropriating-showing Saying." ⁷⁵ Poetic/essential language is silent indication originating from and expressing the voice of Being.

We accomplish (not cause) showing (Saying) by following the indication of what lets itself be shown. Thus speaking is a listening that attends to the mirroring/showing of language and responds to what we hear; "Mortal speech must first of all have listened to the command, in the form of which the stillness of the difference calls world and things into the rift of its onefold simplicity. Every word of mortal speech speaks out of such a listening, and as such a listening." ⁷⁶ As we can show in many ways; sign language, body language, all manners of artistry and creation, then these too must be forms of belonging to Saying thus Language. Speech is paradigmatic but by no means primary, as will emerge over chapter 3.3's consideration of art and building.

Language and Fourfold

How the Fourfold gathers can now be seen in language. Language is how things come to presence; how the mirroring of the Fourfold occurs by calling world and things to each other by naming the elements; Saying gathers the Fourfold through the naming words of the poet. Naming brings beings to appearance through words, a gathering of meaning that also preserves the concealed possibilities of meaning. Such naming is always a response

⁷⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁷¹ Ibid., 130.

⁷² Ibid., 131.

⁷³ Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 192.

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 123.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁶ "Language," 206.

to a call from the thing, poetry is thus the call to and from mortals that calls them to their mortality; an experience of being called to/from the self as nothingness. Such naming is a communal response, for Heidegger discussion is “to point out the proper place or site of something, to situate it”⁷⁷ in chapter 3.1 said that to place something in proper place was to save it. Discussion is what gathers a thing on its homeground; the discourse of a plurality of speakers how we behold danger and saving to gather, call forth and respond to the Thing.

Jointure and disjuncture move in accord with language as "Saying sets all present beings free into their given presence, and brings what is absent into their absence";⁷⁸ it is the manner in which the circuminsessional master-servant relation is realized as through it "all things are open to one another in their self-concealment; thus one extends itself to the other, and thus all remain themselves; one is over the other as it guardian watching over the other, over it as its veil."⁷⁹ The mirroring of world comes to pass in Saying "as showing, reaching into all regions of presences, summons from them whatever is present to appear and to fade."⁸⁰ Saying as "the gathering that joins all appearance of the in itself manifold showing which everywhere lets all that is shown abide within itself"⁸¹ allows *jítai* to come to reciprocal presence; thus brings *jítai* to rest on their homeground; "brings all present and absent beings each into their own, from where they show themselves in what they are, and where they abide according to their kind."⁸²

This occurs in the poets naming that calls things to presence as the gathering of world allowing us to dwell. The essential language of poetry is how we speak the fourfold thus allow its mirroring to presence as world; "The word makes the thing into a thing - it 'bethings' the thing."⁸³ Only once named in response to the call do "The things that were named, thus called, gather to themselves sky and earth, mortals and divinities"⁸⁴ and allows the mirroring of the Fourfold. Things gather world, but first words gather things as that which "retains the thing within itself in such a manner that it 'is' a thing"⁸⁵ preparing the thing as vessel and complementing the role of the mortal maker; a necessary precursor to the our dwelling as *Ereignis* occurs only “by virtue of beings, that is, works of art, deeds, things, and above all and first of all— words.”⁸⁶ Words are the gathering “which first brings what presences to its presence,”⁸⁷ yet also as a response do not precede world and thing; which themselves are also equiprimordial. The mutual appropriation of world and thing is an integral relation like *Da-Sein*, Heidegger names their relation difference that "carries out world in its worlding, carries out things in their thinging. Thus carrying them out, it carries them toward one another."⁸⁸ Naming brings about this identity of world and thing "It entrusts world to the things and simultaneously keeps the things in the splendour of world. The world grants to things their presence. Things bear world. World grants things."⁸⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 159.

⁷⁸ *On the Way to Language*, 126.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 104.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 124.

⁸¹ Ibid., 126.

⁸² Ibid., 127.

⁸³ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁴ "Language," 197.

⁸⁵ *On the Way to Language*, 66.

⁸⁶ Daniela Vallega-Neu, "Ereignis," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 286.

⁸⁷ Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 155.

⁸⁸ "Language," 200.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 199.

Poetry in naming speaks of the mutual appropriation of thing and world that is prior to that which it relates so that "In the bidding that calls thing and world, what is really called is: the dif-ference."⁹⁰ Poetry is the calling together of world and thing into the dif-ference where they are joined as the Fourfold to save each other. The poets word gathers the dif-ference by standing and enduring in the rift through speaking the silent appropriation of Saying. In naming the thing the word of the poet is the relation that brings together world and thing, as this relation the word itself is no-thing; "It shows what is there and yet 'is' not."⁹¹ The word is the giving that withdraws by giving, Ereignis itself realized through Sein's claiming of the poet who like the mortal maker shapes the word as vessel. We must try to name the relation of word and thing yet cannot directly experience it, only what it relates.

Danger and Reconciliation

Man as *Da* accomplishes appropriation in reflection as a responding that forgets itself in ceaseless questioning so that "responding loses the character of questioning and becomes simple saying."⁹² Such "Thinking gathers language into simple saying"⁹³ so that human reflection accomplishes saying, yet Heidegger's thought on language also often seem to reinforce the primacy of *Sein* in *Ereignis* as "thinking in its saying merely brings the unspoken word of Being to language"⁹⁴ so that the *Da* is passively appropriated as "Being comes, clearing itself, to language."⁹⁵ Such was Olafson's critique mentioned in chapter 2.5, which along with chapter 1.2 raised the issue of responsibility for epochal transformation and understanding, both communal and individual.

Word, Thing, Saying and Poet; all in a singing silent relation to mediate the singularity of *Sein* with the plurality of *Da*. We are to be obedient to language, "Obedient to the voice of Being, thought seeks the Word through which the truth of Being may be expressed."⁹⁶ and we must sacrifice in order that "thought of Being guards the Word and fulfills its function in such guardianship, namely care for the use of language."⁹⁷ Yet the response-naming relation means the realization of appropriation (how singularity and plurality is mediated) remains mysterious, and as chapter 2.6 outlined such sacrifice and obedience to a mystery without criteria is its own form of supreme danger.

The supreme danger is the forgetting of our relation to language; that language is no longer a true revealing of hidden possibilities but only an instrument in service to efficient manipulation. Poetic language becomes metaphysical, no longer creative but a set interpretation of what it means to be human. That the supreme danger is both from and to *Ereignis* also applies to Language; even poetic language is inherent danger (devolving to idle talk or totalized understandings that allow for no criteria of critique), reflection on language is the beholding of this danger. That in the epoch of *Gestell* "Man acts as though *he* were the shaper and master of language, while in fact *language* remains the master of man...it is before all else man's subversion of *this* relation of dominance that drives his nature into alienation"⁹⁸ implies it is man's inversion of this relation that gives rise to the danger. Yet the oblivion of Being stems from how "Language withdraws from man its simple and high speech"⁹⁹ so that the danger is inherent to how language itself sends

⁹⁰ Ibid., 200.

⁹¹ *On the Way to Language*, 87.

⁹² *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 182.

⁹³ "Letter on Humanism," 265.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 262.

⁹⁵ Heidegger, McNeil, and McNeill, *Pathmarks*, 87.

⁹⁶ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 391.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 144.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 146.

meaning. The subversion of the relation requires language to have first withdrawn, yet such withdrawal only is as the subversion of the relation; whilst Language is to provide the reconciliation of singularity and plurality, explicating how *Ereignis* appropriates, it ultimately returns us to the problematic addressed in chapter 1.2.

If the provisional solution of chapter 1.2 is proffered; that integral relation means question of priority is meaningless; man is both *Da* and *Sein* as the hyphen between them, then "language speaks solely with itself alone."¹⁰⁰ Properly speaking there is no priority between Saying and its speakers as both are equally determined by the hyphen, leading Rorty to claim "There is just us, in the grip of no power save those words we happen to speak, the dead metaphors which we have internalized."¹⁰¹ We are alone with our responsibility, there is only man and the empty words of poets revitalizing dead gods. This would appear a more Sartrean than Heideggerian picture, a reducing of talk of *Da* and *Sein* to that of man alone heard collectively so that the poet alone crafts the name. What it could mean to be alone with our absent/dead gods is returned to later after looking to the divinities that have died and the poets that heed them.

Poetry as Epochal Transformation

The previously sketched role of poets in language means the reflection that saves must reflect on poetry. Poets and thinkers enable us to dwell in the house of Being, "Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home".¹⁰² Thought and poetry are the same and different in responding to the silence of Being; in poetry wonder sings whilst in thought it does not, so that in facing each other as both Saying "poetry and thinking are in virtue of their nature held apart by a delicate yet luminous difference".¹⁰³ The close relation of poetry and thought "originates in that distance where earth and sky, the god and man reach one another";¹⁰⁴ thinkers, poets and artists all articulate how the Fourfold are to belong together yet in different inter-dependent ways. Poetry and thinking are both related to Saying and through this relation belong to each other; poetry calls for reflection that itself brings poetry to its nature, Saying "is itself the occurrence of appropriation by which poetry and thinking are directed into their proper nature."¹⁰⁵ They mutually enable each other and Heidegger's thought was to aid poetry by thinking the relation between them as their mutual belonging and dialogue is required "to call forth the nature of language, so that mortals may learn again to live within language";¹⁰⁶ for us to make our way into Saying. Alone neither thought nor poetry give voice to Saying. To do this we must think their relation by way of the relation of word and thing; this poetic experience with the word leads to the possibility of a thinking experience with language.

In his writings Heidegger at times seems to give both thought and poetry priority as enabling the other, most commonly poetry as only pure speaking truly reveals *Ereignis* and what "What is spoken purely is the poem."¹⁰⁷ Bruzina argues this is a necessary result of his attempt to "proceed from within this situation of distinction and division toward the 'other' worded 'Saying' he tries to find, promote, and follow...from within thought and from within poetry in their established separateness toward overcoming that dichotomy, toward a wording that...would be, simply, language as 'the Saying'".¹⁰⁸ A struggle he never truly overcame, a true dialogue between thought and poetry perhaps impossible within the context of a philosophical corpus. From the same origin "The thinker utters Being.

¹⁰⁰ *On the Way to Language*, 111.

¹⁰¹ Rorty, "Heidegger, Contingency, Pragmatism," 215.

¹⁰² Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 217.

¹⁰³ *On the Way to Language*, 104.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "Language," 192.

¹⁰⁸ Bruzina, "Ronald, Heidegger on the Metaphor and Philosophy", 198.

The poet names what is holy.”¹⁰⁹ yet that “we know nothing of the dialogue between poet and thinker, who 'dwell near to one another on mountains farthest apart'”¹¹⁰ despite knowing something of the philosophy-poetry relation implies that whilst Heidegger's preparatory thinking has shown the need for this relation it still awaits the sending that can inaugurate dialogue.

Thinkers speak Being as a listening response "in such a way that this speaking takes place as that which grants an abode for the being of mortals." ¹¹¹ Such reflection ponders how danger is not a necessary fate by undergoing an experience of language that enables poetry as the naming of the Holy that responds to the call (accomplishes our share in epochal transition) and allows us to dwell. Thinkers are to attend to language preserving primordial meanings of words; "The thinkers who say Being prepare the way for the poetical, so that poets stay on the track of the divine".¹¹² Poetry in turn gives content to thought and is preserved by such thought, filling in the context of reflective thought. Reflective thought prepares for epochal transformation, but poetry accomplishes this transformation of language so that the way built through language is one from metaphysical to poetic language through the mutual appropriation of poetry and thought in Saying to experience Ereignis as a freeing claim.

Language claims us to bring forth the thing and "the responding in which man authentically listens to the appeal of language is that which speaks in the element of poetry" ¹¹³ this response must be guided by those attending most to language, and this is the poets who submit/respond to the claim thus move us between the fields. The transformation of our relation to Gestell into a mutually free one is achieved through the creative ambiguity of poetry that (unlike metaphysical language) unveils new meanings and understandings. New epochal understandings are thus revealed and ambiguity of meaning also preserves concealed meanings. This frees the question of what it means to be human so that poetry “as creative of new forms of life is an ethical form of language, by contrast to a metaphysical subordination to already established interpretation and practice.”¹¹⁴ As the most projective form of language poetry is the purest expression of essence of language; "Projective saying is poetry: the saying of world and earth, the saying of the arena of their strife and thus of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods." ¹¹⁵ The Fourfold is the projective retrieval that makes Gestell the danger; Heidegger's projective interpretation of our essence is thus a poetic philosophy, the gods to come as the projection that determines previous divinities in terms of their absence.

This transformation is accomplished by poets who reconcile the plurality of Da and singularity of Sein, enabling the encounter of mortals and the Holy through the divinities whom the poets have prepared a place for in naming the thing. The poet is one who experiences the call to bring together word and thing through naming guided by the divinities. Poetry allows thing thus Fourfold to presence by naming the gods that claim us, we are responsible for this naming and by so naming poetry grounds our dwelling accomplishing Ereignis. The naming of the poet that brings together world and thing is how the divinities take part in the playful mirroring of the Fourfold. Whilst the Turn is said to happen suddenly it "does not take place by some new god, or the the old one renewed, bursting into the world from ambush at some time or other." ¹¹⁶ but requires the

¹⁰⁹ Heidegger, *What Is Metaphysics?* , 391.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 185.

¹¹¹ "Language," 190.

¹¹² Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 70.

¹¹³ Heidegger, "'...Poetically Man Dwells...'," 214.

¹¹⁴ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 88.

¹¹⁵ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 198.

¹¹⁶ "What Are Poets For?," 90.

poets first to prepare a place for the divine by reaching into the abyss (nothingness/mortality) of absence to find the traces of the fugitive gods.

Chapter 1.6 asked the nature of the divinities and their self-emptying, they are now seen as introducing another element into the Fourfold (in addition to the mortals who also make and name) as "The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. /// Out of the holy sway of the godhead, the god appears in his presence or withdraws into his concealment."¹¹⁷ We only dwell when divinities partake in the mirroring, but they only do so when sent by the Holy. If divinities in the Fourfold are seen as denoting heritage as the repeatable possibilities of existence then as standing between mortals and the Holy poets are interpretative retrievers; divinities an interpretation through retrieval of how the poets feels they have been claimed. The naming of the mortal poet can then be seen in light of the making aspect of mortals; not only do they constitute an element of the Fourfold but they provide the place for the Fourfold in the shaping of language, preparing the thing (as physical vessel or name) and thus defining what is to be retrieved through that heritage.

As with Da-Sein the relation of the poet and word is one of mutual need, a need that originates in Sein that also determines the relation as poets must renounce control over words and thus let a thing be as thing by listening to the grant of Saying; "Renunciation says: a thing may be only where the word is granted"¹¹⁸ so that poetry's indicating of divinities is "a letting come of what has been dealt out."¹¹⁹ It is through renunciation that we experience the claim of Sein most fully, and poets exemplify the abnegation of will in their willingness to be so claimed. Poetry takes the form of releasements denial of will as outlined in chapter 3.1, yet also at the same time poets are more willing to heed Being that currently presences as willing; "They will nothing, in this sense, because they are more willing."¹²⁰ They behold the danger and in response renounce themselves, as raised in chapter 3.1 the passive view of the preparation for self-surmounting of nihilism conceals how renunciation itself is a determination of the new sending.

Chapter 2.6 questioned Heidegger's call for man's sacrifice for Being, such sacrifice is a thanking as of Saying; "The speechless answer of his thanking through sacrifice is the source of the human word, which is the prime cause of language as the enunciation of the Word in words."¹²¹ Poets submit to Saying, sacrificing themselves for Being as a thanking; such submission is a transformative self-denial, an emptying self to more fully partake in circuminsessional mirroring. In this way poets are trail-blazers who in their self-abnegation live "the mighty death in which he who died early leads the way"¹²² and are the most mortal of mortals. Poets are those who most readily face anxieties disclosure of the nothing that is experienced "most readily in the reserved, and most assuredly in those who are basically daring. But those daring ones are sustained by that on which they expend themselves- in order thus to preserve the ultimate grandeur of existence."¹²³ The self-abnegation of the poet is a response to the call of the self as an experience of nullity, akin to anxiety. Section 2 characterized Gestell as a form of anxiety writ large, a communal attunement to Sein as nothing so that oblivion is itself a thanking and a widening of precondition for individual enlightenment.

Poetry as silence is experienced in anxiety's erosion of meaning, as the call of the

¹¹⁷ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 147.

¹¹⁸ *On the Way to Language*, 150.

¹¹⁹ "'...Poetically Man Dwells...'," 222.

¹²⁰ "What Are Poets For?," 138.

¹²¹ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 389.

¹²² *On the Way to Language*, 197.

¹²³ *What Is Metaphysics?*, 106.

self speaking of its own nothingness "One of the essential theatres of speechlessness is dread in the sense of the terror into which the abyss of Nothing plunges us".¹²⁴ By bringing together speech and silence poetry reveals the nature of revealing as such requiring Nothingness as concealment; as silence/unsaying releases us from former meanings, yet is also a saying that gathers new meanings; thus is how new names for Being are accomplished; the silence of poets allowing Being to speak. As was said of Zen in intro 1 Heidegger also speaks loudly concerning the need for silence as to best indicate Ereignis "language requires much less precipitate expression than proper silence."¹²⁵ Responsive language is marked by silence and may lead to "a form of speechlessness, even madness, not, perhaps, as a result of having nothing to say, but from having no way to say it."¹²⁶ For Kotoh it is the experience of language as silence that is the most basic attunement to our nature as nothingness, the true language of self that "is an echo of true reality...the positive ground for the production of a language to describe the world"¹²⁷ silence as the source of language enables the transformation of our relation to language. This relation to anxiety means the listening response of the mortal poet "can then be described as a process in which the normal relationship between language and reality breaks down into silence, and language then revives through such silence"¹²⁸ so we attain a true relation to creative language through anxiety.

If the divinities are metaphors for meaningfulness then the Holy that sends them is Sein, and the poets preparation for the Holy is the manner in which man accomplishes his share of Ereignis by preparatory reflection for the new epochal sending. The divinities are messengers of the Holy, yet the Holy (Sein) itself cannot be brought to presence; "there cannot be any immediate, that is unmediated, experience of the holy. But neither can there be a mediate experience of the holy which directly attains the holy as the immediate."¹²⁹ Being and Nothingness are both only experienceable in terms of the meanings they make possible, the word cannot be named in words nor Being spoken, only indicated by the silent responding of poets. The divinities are thus only a trace of the Holy so the poet does not stand between man and the Holy, but between man and gods; receiving the epochal sending as mediated by the gods who "brings, collects, and shapes the holy into the impact of a single ray, through whose reception the soul of the poet is inflamed."¹³⁰ Schuwer raises possibility that the poet indirectly attains the Holy which "as the immediate becomes mediated because its self-disclosure comes to pass in the poetic word, that is, in the language of the poet."¹³¹ Yet this shifts the mediation as accomplished by Da to once again emphasise the singular presence of Sein over the plurality of existence, whilst the relations of poets and gods is meant to illuminate the manner in which appropriation is accomplished (Sein and Da brought together). Chapter 2.5 cited Olafson's view that language ultimately fails to reconcile singularity and plurality within appropriation; Being needs Da yet cannot be mediated. This tension remains within poetry; the Holy needs the poet yet this mutual need is accomplished by its sending of divinities rather than their naming by the poet so that it is the gods not men who accomplish appropriation.

The problem first outlined in chapter 1.2 concerning Ereignis and sunyata acting

¹²⁴ Ibid., 393.

¹²⁵ "Letter on Humanism," 246.

¹²⁶ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 88.

¹²⁷ Kotoh Tetsuaki, "Language and Silence," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 207.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 204.

¹²⁹ André Schuwer, "Nature and the Holy: On Heidegger's Interpretation of Hölderlin's Hymn "Wie Wenn Am Feiertage", " *Research in Phenomenology* 7 (1977): 235.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 237.

¹³¹ Ibid.

as their own condition of possibility that poetry is to help reconcile also applies to poetry itself. Man only is mortal as appropriated by Saying yet "the very nature, the presencing, of language needs and uses the speaking of mortals in order to sound as the peal of stillness for the hearing of mortals"¹³² we must be poetic naming mortals in order to be called to our mortality, yet only are mortals as first called. We are only mortal when we dwell between earth and sky as opening up this space through taking our measure from the divinities; poetry as man's measuring himself in accordance with the earth-sky dimension allotted by divinities "brings dwelling into its ground plan...is the element within which human dwelling has its security, by which it securely endures."¹³³ Dwelling rests in the poetic as "the taking of measure by which the measure-taking of human being is accomplished."¹³⁴ Poetry thus accomplishes dwelling but itself requires we dwell as the space cleared by projective language that makes dwelling possible is only realized such by dwelling. This connects to the problem concerning Heidegger's stance to poiesis in chapter 3.1, there can be no return to the Greek, yet if poets are those who call forth thing and world Heidegger's claim as to the thing never thinging seems in contradiction to his characterization of what poetry once was. The word that brings together men and gods; "the word as it was once word"¹³⁵ that allowed the gods to approach in Saying is clearly a concrete historical occurrence related to the Greek experience of poiesis as remembered in Holderlin.

Zhang seeks the solution to this problem in Being and Time's account of temporality and ecstatic unity "the poet must say according to the essence of poetry; but at the same time, the essence of poetry must be formed during the saying. To avoid a vicious circle, the poet can only petition for the existential time process of Dasein (historical, ecstatic, or situational human being)."¹³⁶ Poetry is thus a projective retrieval of tradition, both a pre-saying of the coming epoch and an after-saying as a response to the call of Being (destitute poetry is between gods yet names them), poetry as a projective interpretation is thus between Gestell -and-Fourfold. Zhang holds this 'between' as origin of Being and Nothingness is what gathers and we must attend to as "poetizing must be constituted in between what the poet speaks and hears"¹³⁷ so that poetry is the temporal aspect of circuminsessional gathering; the 'meanwhile' complementing 'in-the-midst'. The essential emptiness of man through self-abnegation must be realized "through the experiencing of which we are able to pay genuine attention to the coming time".¹³⁸ Such projective retrieval from the sive of Fourfold-and-Gestell that refers poetry back to temporality returns the issue to the problems of criteria for selecting such a heritage outlined in chapter 2.6; how do we know if the pre-saying is genuine? The pre- means preparatory and provisional yet has nothing to measure these terms against except what the poet names as measure; Zhang's answer relies on the validity and force of the projective interpretation, an interpretation that his answer was to explain. Ultimately Heidegger's understanding of poetry describes a case of the mystery of Ereignis without detailing how appropriation occurs. Response is an act of creation, hearing a preparation that determines what is heard, to know how this occurs requires a criteria and a wider context than the poet alone (given that divinities are shared meanings).

The difficulty for language's reconciliation of the tension between singularity and

¹³² Heidegger, "Language," 205.

¹³³ "'...Poetically Man Dwells...'," 219.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 220.

¹³⁵ *On the Way to Language*, 139.

¹³⁶ Xianglong Zhang, "The Coming Time "Between" Being and Daoist Emptiness: An Analysis of Heidegger's Article Inquiring into the Uniqueness of the Poet Via the Lao Zi," *Philosophy East and West* 59, no. 1 (2009): 72.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 75.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 77.

plurality is that in occurring through individual poets it does not do justice to the plurality of speakers. Poets are uniquely claimed and their role and significance stems from what they personally heed; "The poet experiences an authority, a dignity of the word than which nothing vaster and loftier can be thought."¹³⁹ Yet we cannot all be poets and the word of the poet admits of no verification nor doubt to those who do not share this experience, "Such an experience of Being is withheld from the greater majority of men- but then the greater majority of men are forgetful of Being."¹⁴⁰ If we are only Dasein when we reflect (and are not all Dasein), then poets may be mediators, but if we all are and must be Dasein then epochal transition requires we all be poets or that what they heed can be assented to by others in communal discourse. Poetry's relation to art is the further required step for this reconciliation as "such language permits the constitution of the being of a people - by opening up a historical space for its deeds and accomplishments as well as its failures and catastrophes."¹⁴¹ Poets as individuals enable communal dwelling through art, yet after *Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger's examples of poetry relate much more to the work of individuals than any incorporation into a community of preservers.

Poetry would seem to have a wider definition than Heidegger's discussion of poets indicates; he appears to generalize from a small selection of ontic poems he takes to be most essential. As was pointed out in chapter 2.5 the choice of essential poetry is based on it's speaking of the phenomena which distinguish the age, yet the determination of what phenomena this includes is made by essential poetry. In order to judge a poet as genuinely claimed by the new epoch we must already stand under that claim; there is no way to adjudicate who has been so appropriated until the event arrives. Just like the heroes and heritage of Being and Time poets and divinities still requires criteria to judge what is determinative of an epoch (thus genuine poetry), worthy of retrieval and futural projection. The poets Heidegger characterizes as most of the destitute age are those who experience homelessness (the anxious call of the self) in a similar fashion to him. If a poet hears the Saying of Being differently to Holderlin how are we to tell which is the call to follow? How do we judge whether Holderlin was a genuine poet claimed by Being or whether a contrary poet with a different divinity should be heeded? These problems have been thematic throughout the thesis, especially anx chap, 2.6. The provisional answer explored has been criteria stemming from preserving plurality of possible disclosures and elemental objectivity, heeding the saved claim of Gestell ; criteria comes from attending to Ereignis poetically so that preserving multiple meanings is how we dwell.

Chapter 3.1 called poetry a way of life, poetry must be wider reaching than the poetry Heidegger analyses to achieve a communal epochal transformation, how we as a whole and personally realize the self-surmounting of nihilism must be sought in the dwelling that follows from poetry. Poetic art is festival as the meeting of men and gods, and as a communal imperative must be subject to a wider warrant than the hearing of a single poet or thinker. Heidegger's examples of jug and temple are paradigmatic for such a reason. A new festival is needed and poetry prepares for this, yet also requires it. The full accomplishment of epochal transformation is considered more next chapter on dwelling after considering the nature of the gods we heed in a post-destitute age; what poetry is and must be in this destitute age.

Poetry for a destitute time

Heidegger portrays the epoch of Gestell as a double forgetting in terms of the failure of the divinities (sent by Sein) to arrive and gather us to dwell in the Fourfold; "Not only have the gods and the god fled, but the divine radiance has become extinguished in the

¹³⁹ Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 66.

¹⁴⁰ Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God*, 100.

¹⁴¹ Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Politics," *Heidegger Studies* 2 (1986): 135.

world's history...it can no longer discern the default of God as a default" ¹⁴² so we do not see age as destitute. In the destitute age of Gestell we are between the gods who have departed and the gods yet to come, it is a time of absent gods.

The poets of such an age speak and respond to the call and claim of the current epoch, of both the oblivion and the remembrance of "the oneness of the two, insofar as that oneness has already come to be as the saving unification"¹⁴³ they speak of the common origin of the saving and danger (Ereignis). Thus the poet does not defuse the danger but allows us to dwell within it as the danger it is; does not try to alter homelessness or provide refuge from it (such as religion or a flight to the Greek). The poets for a destitute time take the homeless danger into its own essence, their speaking mirrors the thinking of the danger as danger in the saving/freeing of danger. They must speak the silence of Saying (role of nothingness in Ereignis) as the epochal origin, speak of our mortality (as ones who wait and are determined by the call, of our primordial homelessness) thus prepare for the new epochal sending. In such nearness to origin "a decision may be made as to whether and how God and the gods withhold their presence and the night remains, whether and how the day of the holy dawns, whether and how in the upsurge of the holy an epiphany of God and the gods can begin anew."¹⁴⁴ Such a decision is not made by the poets for the destitute age that Heidegger analyses, they are only preparing for the decision not yet heralding the new divine.

Instead poetry in this age must attend to poetry itself to keep alive essential poetry (as its relation to Saying) and prevent the poetic becoming completely forgotten; "poets in a destitute time' must especially gather in poetry the nature of poetry."¹⁴⁵ The supreme danger threatens the very possibility of the divine so "It is the task of the poet to remain in the region of this absence in order to keep the space open for a return."¹⁴⁶ by poeticizing about poetry. The thinkers and poets for a destitute time are those who speak of the essence of poetry and its relation to thought and dwelling; thus of the potentiality of the self-transformation of the fields (self-surmounting of Gestell).

Heidegger's discussion of poetry favours the first approach outlined at the end of chapter 3.1; what is needed is poets who retrieve traces of the gods from the festival gatherings where "traces of the fugitive gods still remain for god-less men."¹⁴⁷ revealing hints of the divine to prepare for its advent. Heidegger's phrasing "Song still lingers over their destitute land. The singer's word still keeps to the trace of the holy."¹⁴⁸ seems to run counter to his previous claims that the thing has never before thinged, which would seem a pre-requisite for there to have been divinities. This tension in his thought between projection and retrieval; whether the saving is a return or is only now possible for the first time thanks to the danger, has direct bearing on the traces destitute poets are to retrieve and speak; the sense in which the gods are absent as not-yet or once-were.

To now dwell poetically we must ask what gods are to be needed in the destitute time; awaiting the gods is preparing for them and as has already been said preparation is a form of determining; even awaiting itself determines/names the gods as those who may come yet are not. Heidegger's chosen poets speak the danger and its shared origin, they do not yet accomplish (realize) the possibility of the identity of the danger and saving (Gestell as the claim it is); a poet is still needed for the age that follows the destitute one.

¹⁴² Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 81.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁴ "Letter on Humanism," 242.

¹⁴⁵ "What Are Poets For?," 92.

¹⁴⁶ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 129.

¹⁴⁷ Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 91.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 94.

The new poetry must speak of man's self-identity with absolute nothingness, thus the poet for a destitute time speaks Ereignis as revealed in the silent heeding of its anxious call. Silence as readiness for the mystery responds to Saying and is thus required for poetry; but this is still the poetry of destitution. As sunyata requires beification and is equally absolute being as it is nothingness so too must the new poetry break the silence in a way that preserves and is permeated by it. Such poetry would speak of how we dwell within Gestell (how we preserve plural possible understandings in the face of withdrawal's inherent tendency to forget) and could fall within a different paradigm to the poets Heidegger holds up as paradigmatic of a destitute time; one that no longer discerns the default of God as a default but as itself that which saves. As said in chapter 3.1 poiesis cannot be simply restored so poetry must be born anew for the new epoch, preserving the absence of the gods default. Speaking such absence is one way of speaking silence, silence as to the gods would be another way of preserving them as absent.

How the phrase 'absent gods' can speak of both the danger and saving is now considered in relation to post-destitute dwelling; gods that return/remain as present-sive-absent and speak the tension of plurality and totality within Gestell as sketched out in chapter 2.5.

Absent Gods

Given how carefully Heidegger chose his terms, always with an eye to their etymological roots and connotations, it is curious he chooses words such as God and gods; especially considering his decision to risk accusations of inhumanity rather than association with any metaphysical connotations of the term humanism. Why say only a God can save us now rather than 'only a new understanding of Being'? The gods as discussed in relation poetry are certainly not the ontic God and gods of everyday religions or metaphysics, as Gestell cannot simply be diffused by ensuring "other interests besides - such as, perhaps, the interests of a faith - retain their currency"¹⁴⁹ through "mere 'religious experience'" ¹⁵⁰ that only attests to God's default. We cannot return to anything resembling old gods in a post-destitute age for "Heidegger knows full well that myths have historical contexts, historical meanings, and historical viability; he knows that when one context gives way to the next, the myth is no longer viable."¹⁵¹ Perhaps they are in honour to the words of Nietzsche and Holderlin who articulated the danger under such headings. Yet Heidegger's thought has its own headings of Being, Appropriation, heritage, destiny and mystery that seem equally apt and less entangled in extraneous religious concerns.

Heidegger was personally religious and if his thought is his way of experiencing Being then his way remains rooted in a fundamentally religious experience, in a personal crisis of faith and religious longing that has struck a chord with many of non-traditional religious conviction yet retained theistic yearning. Despite speaking against a flight into the refuge of past divinities and recognizing the necessity of homelessness Heidegger's experience of the loss of gods led to a desire for reunion thus an emphasis on anticipatory readiness in preparation for this desires fulfilment, he experienced Gestell as a yearning lack and awaiting, then universalized this experience as definitive of his age. Meditative thought on Ereignis says nothing on the existence of God; it is neither atheistic, theistic nor indifferent as "Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of the holy is the essence of divinity to be thought. Only in light of the essence of divinity can it be thought or said what the word 'God' is to signify."¹⁵² Yet intro2 discussed how the theism-atheism opposition does not correlate to religious-

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 114.

¹⁵⁰ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 117.

¹⁵¹ Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God*, 90.

¹⁵² Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 253.

secular, and like Nishitani Heidegger remains anchored in a religious spirit and concern that whilst not simple theism remains fundamentally religious in a more limited sense that Nishitani's ontological definition of the term; 'God' must signify something for him rather than remaining empty/absent. The Christian themes of original sin and salvation through grace are omnipresent throughout Heidegger's ontology, and like Nishitani his comments are easily misappropriated into theistic interpretations reifying Holy Being as "powerful, mysterious, worthy of reverence and superior in every way to things and men."¹⁵³ Poetic divinities are historical (thus secular in the original sense as opposed to eternity) rather than theistic but still retain the vague religiosity of salvation through faith in a power beyond oneself that is absent in the Greek and modern understandings that both lay closest to the origin.

As for Nishitani Heidegger's choice of terms leads to theistic implications concerning the nature of what will save, implications of faith and narrow ontic religious concerns. The divinities are but a single element of the Fourfold, the Holy not the only name for Sein, and the gods to come are not theistic beings or a simple return of what has fled. Faith is not the saving power and the default of the gods spoken by Nietzsche's word does not entail that "man put himself in the place of God, because the essence of man never reaches the essential realm belonging to God"¹⁵⁴ but that the dangerous relation of mutual challenging open an uncanny/homeless realm belonging to neither God nor man "but with which man comes once more into a distinctive relationship"¹⁵⁵ as claimed by challenging-forth. Yet the terminology of divinity often leads to a narrow focus amongst commentators on the meaning of the absence and awaiting of divinities. Umehara considers the problem in terms of whether we can survive without a god concluding the only options are that "[1] that man can survive without god and should become a kind of god himself (Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, etc.); [2] that man must have a god and a new rebirth is possible for man by regaining his old beliefs in god (Berdyayev, Dawson, D. T. Suzuki, etc.); [3] that god is necessary, but he should not be the god of the past, and thus a new god must be sought, though mankind has not yet met him"¹⁵⁶ claiming that Heidegger favours the third approach and that the new god must be revealed in the same place as the old.

Stambaugh questions why the place the old god revealed himself should be the place for the new and whether there is only one place, asking "Is it possible to separate god from his 'place' in this manner? What would the meaning of this empty place then be? How could it preserve itself as place until a new god appeared?"¹⁵⁷ Umehara's later clarification that the phrase 'place for god' signifies "the meaningful centre in terms of which man can understand his existence and finitude...something in terms of which man can understand himself as something other and more than just 'the sum of his actions' (Sartre)"¹⁵⁸ does not seem to answer these questions; why the term god, why a single place, and why the need to understand man in this way? This understanding of the gods coheres with chapter 1.6's connecting of them to the repeatable possibilities of historical existence, the new god is to be an ultimate 'for-the-sake-of' retrieved from destinal heritage. For Umehara the sole criteria for this 'for-the-sake-of' seems to be 'not man's actions alone' (yet as chapter 2.6 said meditative thought for sake of more meditative thought resembles Gestell) as "in the absence of such a meaningful centre man's actions are becoming more and more monstrous".¹⁵⁹ This would seem both to place the

¹⁵³ Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God*, 120.

¹⁵⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 100.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Takeshi Umehara, "Heidegger and Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 20, no. 3 (1970): 272.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 283.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

meaningful centre (god) in service of a further ethical imperative derived from our actions, thus rendering gods values in service to the sum of our actions (the use of divinities solely to preserve our essence as indicated in chapter 2.6 would be a similar conception), and also to overlook that our actions have always been monstrous, only our capacity has increased. The need for a single centre and abhorrence at the monstrosity of an empty place echoes the feelings of Heidegger who also only allows a limited set of options in his opposing of calculative and meditative thought, either a privative lack of the divine or a return to rooted autochthony; whether "man's work in the future still...thrive in the fertile ground of a homeland and mount into the ether, into the far

reaches of the heavens and the spirit? Or will everything now fall into the clutches of planning and calculation, of organization and automation?"¹⁶⁰

Notable in its absence from Umehara's options is the fourth possibility; that there is to be no new god and man not become a god, we remain suspended between ether and Gestell 's clutches, homeless yet free. That the absence of gods renders us capable of dwelling in homelessness indefinitely preserving a place for gods who never arrive and remain defined by this absence in a manner other than default. Such would be a holding open the possibility for multifarious understandings of being by maintaining the divinities in continual absence whilst aware of such as absence to prevent the oblivion of a double forgetting. As once yet no more the coming of the gods is a return; a transformation of what gods are in light of the sojourn in homelessness. Heidegger says little on how the new gods must be different to the old in light of their tarrying in oblivion, how they must have taken this absence within themselves. What is most determinative of the gods in a post-destitute time is that they keep alive this destitution (preserve the beholding of the danger) and continually withhold themselves. This connects to poets as the sive of Fourfold-and-Gestell ; Zhang holds that Heidegger's poetic dwelling entails this dwelling in-between, that we "live between heaven and earth, past and future, brightness and darkness, subject and object, and exist as the final measure of the in-between's maintaining itself."¹⁶¹ Poetry's silent preservation of concealed meanings entails we are not saved so much by an arriving god but by tarrying between the default and arrival.

An equal risk to the awaiting of the divinities is that they should actually arrive, lest we forget we only are as awaiting. Chapter 1.6 questioned in what sense the divinities were self-emptying in the playful mirroring of the Fourfold, and how this emptying was for earth and sky in a parallel manner to their emptying for mortals and divinities. The nature of this divine emptying that preserves gods as absent will now be considered in terms of homelessness, before chapter 3.3 considers how it must be accomplished, and chapter 3.4 its relation to scientific disclosures that allow earth-sky to stand on own homeground as they are.

Homelessness as Primordial

The default of the gods leaves us homeless and "*From an existential-ontological point of view, the 'not-at-home' must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon.*"¹⁶² The call of the self in anxiety reveals the absence of divinities as the primordial existence of man; uncanny homelessness is truly primordial and dwelling our flight from it. As called the mortal poet's soul "goes in its search toward the site where it may stay in its wandering... This fulfils the soul's being: in her wandering to seek the earth so that she may poetically build and dwell upon it, and thus may be able to save the earth *as earth*"¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 49.

¹⁶¹ Zhang, "The Coming Time "Between" Being and Daoist Emptiness: An Analysis of Heidegger's Article Inquiring into the Uniqueness of the Poet Via the Lao Zi," 77.

¹⁶² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 234. SZ 189

¹⁶³ *On the Way to Language*, 163.

integral to a poetic soul is its uncanniness/homelessness. Heidegger characterizes nihilism (thus *Gestell*) as the uncanniest/unhomeliest "because as the unconditional will to will, it wants homelessness as such."¹⁶⁴ The primordial uncanniness of anxiety is the homelessness of *Gestell*, at once an historical epoch resulting from progressive withdrawal and primordial and the mood that impels philosophy as homesickness, the desire to be at home everywhere thus to exist amidst beings as a whole and to render world. There is a tension in Heidegger's thought between these understandings of homelessness as both primordial and derivative stemming from his problematic rendering of epochal history into a linear narrative as discussed in chapter 2.3 and 2.4. As derivative Heidegger connects homelessness to the metaphysical search to feel at home everywhere through constructing universal systems, avoiding coming to terms with how homelessness in its primordial sense cannot be dispelled.

Hodge claims that in a destitute age we lack a way of naming what there is so the gods are absent since "Neither 'technology' nor 'humanism' are words for being, but are indications of the unavailability of a word for being and of the difficulty of retrieving a relation to being".¹⁶⁵ This would seem to favour an interpretation of homelessness as derivative since the "overcoming of this homelessness requires a return of being into language and into theories of what there is, such that a context of a non-human otherness can be retrieved".¹⁶⁶ But despite the gods default the destitute age remains a poetic epochal claim, "This era is neither a decay nor downfall. As destiny, it lies in Being and lays claim to man"¹⁶⁷ in accordance with *Ereignis* so *Gestell* names Being as non-Being; one might say destitute poetry would rather speak nothing than not speak anything at all. Such homeless lack of naming is also related to what Hodge identifies as the most pertinent form of homelessness; "a homelessness to which struggling into the future, with no fixed hope of homecoming, is the only possible response,"¹⁶⁸ the primordial homelessness revealed by ahistorical anxiety. Rather than any actual return of the divine this open-ended homecoming is a continual preparatory awaiting in which we poetically dwell between 'what is and how it comes to be that way'.

Whilst Hodge holds Heidegger prioritizes belonging to a locality to counteract universal abstractions (that metaphysics is a universal abstraction and ethics rooted in concrete existence) she also claims "it may be possible that an ethical retrieval will require a dislocation of the presumption that human being should have a sense of belonging to particular geographical locations, with particular gods for particular communities"¹⁶⁹ so that the homelessness of godlessness becomes a valid form of dwelling in the new epoch. Homelessness would then be the maintaining of communal anxiety as the holding open for absent gods; it can never be mastered, resolved or dissipated, but only preserved in a resoluteness that maintains the danger as open possibility and preserves withdrawal. As said in chapter 3.1 to save the danger is to put it in its proper place, yet it is placeless and necessarily homeless. If *Gestell* as danger is to be saved as such, and the nihilism of nihilism preserved in its self-surmounting, then its homelessness must be preserved as integral to the experience of dwelling in a post-destitute age.

Nishitani finds a similar meaning in Heidegger's thought on homelessness as covered over by metaphysics, "the veil of the homesickness, which is a longing for the home, a drive towards the home."¹⁷⁰ that both prepares us for the homeland and preserves it. As outlined in chapter 2.4 homelessness is necessary to homecoming; not merely as a preface but must be self-identical with the homeland in a post-destitute age. For Nishitani it is absolute nothingness that is the homeland,

¹⁶⁴ "The Question of Being," 37.

¹⁶⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 114.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁶⁷ Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 139.

¹⁶⁸ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 132.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁷⁰ K. Nishitani, "Reflections on Two Addresses by Martin Heidegger," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 148.

this homeland is the homelessness of the Buddha who "went down to the basis of human existence prior to any sort of 'home'"¹⁷¹ a stance of absolute nothingness Nishitani characterizes as a 'universal standpoint'. To dwell amidst transitoriness is to dwell amidst homelessness, to dwell in the transitional nihility that as absolute homelessness is at home everywhere; "In this Nowhere he is absolutely free. And in this absolute freedom he is everywhere."¹⁷² This homelessness is the dwelling of the self on its homeground as circuminsessional interpenetration that as primordial Nishitani characterizes as original countenance. Such homelessness is the true dwelling of the Enlightened (not just a sojourn before dwelling at home under a new god), to dwell in Sunyata as a post-destitute (post Field of Nihilism) age retains an element of universality at odds with specific saving gods, a relation to the divine that preserves the absence of the gods and our homelessness. Homelessness as dwelling transfigured by passing through the destitute age is a universal dwelling at home everywhere thus nowhere, an absolute homelessness that is also an absolute dwelling; an appropriation of the nothingness of homelessness in sunyata as samsara-sive-nirvana. The preservation of godlessness is that of the positive retention of the field of nihilism in the self-identity of sunyata, so the new gods are ones permeated with their own absence, the holy with the profane.

Whilst for Heidegger it is the poets who herald the divine and indicate our relation to the gods for Nishitani it is the Buddha's (and the Bodhisattva's who followed him) example of homeless dwelling that highlights the required relation of man and nothingness (Da and *Sein*).

Godless Saving

Can only a god save us, or would his arrival be the greatest danger of all, continuing the metaphysical epochs rather than signalling the 'and' of Gestell -sive-Fourfold? Can instead the preservation of his default save both the essence of man and Gestell? Can Heidegger's emphasis on awaiting rather than the nature of the new gods be seen as indicating that it is the possibility of new gods that is desirable, not the actual advent of them? As for the double forgetting it is not the God's absence that is the true danger, but that this is not experienced as an absence. As mortals we dwell awaiting the gods; thus we can dwell in the absence of gods so long as we behold that absence as and for what it is so that it is godlessness rather than the god to come that is to save us, matching the preservation of withdrawal indicated at the end of chapter 3.1. The preservation of absent gods as a thanking of Being for its withdrawal, as forgetting too can be a form of thanks when held in remembrance. To save man as the one who awaits the gods must remain absent so we can await thus attend to Being, an attending to the absence that maintains it as such thus safeguards the true essence of technology. The question of how we should live, which dangerous destining we should live under, is not one to be answered, but one to be kept open to safeguard concealment and pluralistic possibilities of Being.

If the thought of Heidegger and Nishitani is not a simple theism yet remains religious then the preserved absence of gods would not be a simple atheism yet remain secular. Not the denial of god but the experience of the default as not a lack or destitution at all, yet not simply through the destitute ages inability to perceive default but from the experience of such default as equally that which saves as well as danger. This was first indicated in intro2, the experience of Nishitani's ontological religion from the standpoint of the profane/scientific side of the sive.

The absence of the gods connects the difficulties concerning epochal criteria discussed in chapter 2.6 to Heidegger's understanding of poetry as awaiting such a sending. Poets naming the divinities as absent speak as to the impossibility of absolute understandings, of the contingency of heritage thus the holding open of destinies and the null origin of chapter 2.4 that is to be retrieved as destiny. Heidegger speaks of gods more

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷² Ibid., 152.

often than God; yet he most explicitly refers to God in the singular when referring to the coming saving power and, as was discussed in chapter 2.5, views an epoch as characterized by a single dominant understanding that determines the phenomena that distinguish an age. Dreyfus questions whether a single unifying new god “sounds either unrealistic or dangerous”¹⁷³ as “there is no interpretation-free criterion for testing a new god, and such mistakes are always possible”.¹⁷⁴ Whilst Dreyfus considers this a risk of committing ourselves to something monstrous the problem is deeper as the very judging of something monstrous requires criteria provided either by the new gods or the horizon for their co-habitation. Whilst a plurality of gods might be better than a new God such a plurality would still require such a horizon, it is the absence of the gods that speaks the relation between understandings that allows the revealings to co-exist. The plurality inherent within the totality of a saved Gestell (as first suggested in chapter 2.5) is such a horizon thus an ever-open place for new gods that never come, a beholding of Ereignis as both the essence of the danger and saving.

To name the absent gods the word must speak an absence of meaning, Ereignis and sunyata are such words, but so too could be the scientific naming under Gestell that speaks the pure suchness of presence-at-hand. This connection of science and poetry will be the concern of chapter 3.4. First how we are to accomplish dwelling as homeless will be considered in terms of art and building that does not reconcile mortals and divinities but brings-forth the latter’s absence as no longer default.

3.3 Destitute Art / Homeless Dwelling

The mirroring of the Fourfold as previously laid out is the ontological constitution of poetic dwelling. Its possibility stems from reflective thought's preparation for Sein's Turn from oblivion by attended to the origin, preparation leading to a new epochal sending first heralded in poetry's attending to Saying. The thing and the divine must first have been named for there to be earth and sky to dwell on and under, mortals and gods for there to be dwellers; "Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling."¹⁷⁵ In naming the divine poetry founds a world (epochal understanding) “in the triple sense of bestowing, grounding, and beginning”¹⁷⁶ that must be realized through art and building and is nothing other to this. Not only do thought and poetry need one another but combined they are not enough, the divinities heeded are only one element of the Fourfold and making must first provide the place for their gathering. Poetry calls thing and world, building then accomplishes poetry's call; naming and making are equiprimordial in the Fourfold. The focus of this chapter is to be the relation between this sending to our accomplishment of it through dwelling (art and building).

Such poetry must be a communal endeavour and is not easily distinguished from thought. Reflection on origin leads to a poetic heeding that opens the space for art and building through which we dwell; but each of these 'ontological moments' is equiprimordial and without temporal sequence, with Heidegger at times making little distinction so that "Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building."¹⁷⁷ Like thought and poetry so too poetry and dwelling belong together “each calling for the other”¹⁷⁸, whilst thought on dwelling itself is a form of dwelling and “belongs to dwelling in

¹⁷³ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 313.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Heidegger, "...Poetically Man Dwells..." 216.

¹⁷⁶ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 202.

¹⁷⁷ "...Poetically Man Dwells..." 213.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 225.

the same sense as building, although in a different way".¹⁷⁹ That "Building and thinking are, each in its own way, inescapable for dwelling."¹⁸⁰ but must listen to one another and remain within their limits can be seen as a form of the relation between meditative and authentic calculative thought; a saved Gestell as techne (retrieved as mortal making) that both complements and is required for meditative thought. As poets we bring forth the thing in naming, as builders we bring it forth in making.

The communal building aspect of poetry was indicated in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, that as itself a reflection on art and poetry "prepares its space for art, their way for the creators, their location for the preservers."¹⁸¹ by attending to origin. Heidegger wrote for the reflectors and poets not the preservers leading to his thought seeming incomplete at times; a necessity flowing from reflection only being completed as a unity with poetry and building yet having to be presented in a distinct format. Whilst strife and mirroring, world-earth and the Fourfold, are related notions indebted to each other and the preservation of earth theme as concealed possibilities remain I'll be focussing on Heidegger's discussion of art in the context of the later texts, citing *The Origin of the Work of Art* when it is consonant and informative to these later texts, treating the artwork as a building that flows from poetry. The later texts can be seen as an elaboration and deepening of the earlier; world becoming mortals-divinities and earth becoming earth-sky. The strife between world and earth gives way to the gathering of the Fourfold (paralleling the move from Anaximander Fragment to *The Thing* from chapter 1.6); the building that sets up the space of a world still preserves the earth but no longer wrests truth from it in a relation of strife. Mutually definitive opposition becomes a playful mirroring, yet both as sites for truth preserve the other element and bring it into its own essential nature.

Poetic art founds (or transforms) a people through unifying a shared historical self-understanding, heeding divinities as heritage to retrieve a destiny preserved by the dwelling of that people. To dwell is to respond to the Saying heard in poetry by preparing a place for the divinities spoken by the poet, such preparation is itself what constitutes mortality and dwelling rather than the consummation of the gods arrival that would once again set us on the way to metaphysics and propose a foxed answer to the question of the human. Whilst poetry's naming is the province of poets alone (the artist or poet may be claimed so not an individual creator, but is still individual conduit) the destinal claim is not solely mediated through individuals, it is as builders and preservers engaging in the artistry of the everyday that non-poets attend to Saying and validate the words of the poet, making them poets for the first time. The poet alone on the mountaintop across from the thinker cannot reconcile singularity and plurality and resolve the tension Olafson identifies; but the poet never is as alone, poets and preservers exist only through each other.

Ontological disclosure (meaning) only is as constituted by a particular ontic way of life, Being only through beings. As builders (creators-preservers) we accomplish dwelling and "Mortals are in the fourfold by dwelling"¹⁸² so we are only mortal as builders (as makers and cultivators, practical accomplishers of a sending). Building, Dwelling, Thinking brings out the priority of the mortal maker noted in discussion of *The Thing*. The openness for truth requires the thing be made "Hence there must always be some being in this open region in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constance."¹⁸³ That only in the physical making of the temple is the possibility of the gods advent

¹⁷⁹ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 158.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 202.

¹⁸² "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 148.

¹⁸³ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 186.

accomplished. The emphasis on building, on the making of mortals, counters the emphasis Heidegger usually places on the sending of Being in the epochal turn by focusing on how we are to concretely accomplish thus co-determine that sending. In the making of the work "The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings...the truth of beings, happens in the work." ¹⁸⁴ not as an external force but in a mutual constitution so that the making/building is strife/mirroring itself; clearing and work are in an appropriative relation.

Whilst any entity seems capable of being a thing and sheltering the truth of Being historical dwelling is gathered most explicitly in art as the expression of a communities understanding of itself in terms of its divinities (heritage) and the earth upon which it dwells and builds, in such a way that preserves the contingency of such an expression. Art remains paradigmatic building as it draws together making and naming (poetry and building) and is a collective event, the work's originating in art as both individual creator and a historical people as preservers reconciling the singularity of Sein and plurality of Da in a way that completes the role of language. This is achieved through the relation of its two features; createdness and preservation.

Createdness is the bringing forth of world and earth into their relation of appropriation that realizes them for the first time, world and earth like Da and Sein are integral so first established by the work which "opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground." ¹⁸⁵ The world is the possibilities of a destinal heritage (mortals and divinities), earth the origin of such possibilities rooted to their factual situation (earth and sky); "The world is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The earth is the spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing." ¹⁸⁶ World defines itself as a possibility by indicating the concealment of alternative possibilities (earth) thus preserves them as alternatives, an such preservation counters the totalizing narrative of Gestell to shelter the saving power.

They are held in relation of appropriative identity that is realized as strife; the world strives to surmount earth since as self-opening it cannot bear the closed, earth as concealing/sheltering tends to draw world into itself. The work brings-forth strife as strife; heard in the later resonance in making the thing by our building we bring about the mirroring and show it as mirroring. Only in artistic building/making does world world as mirroring or strife; "In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth...The work moves the earth itself into the open region of a world and keeps it there. The work lets the earth be an earth." ¹⁸⁷ Earth is not passive but "is that which comes forth and shelters." ¹⁸⁸ things as they arise. Despite its characterization as prior to our experience and indifferent to world the earth only is as such once brought into relation with world; it cannot form notion of elemental objectivity as it is akin to the object 'for us' discussed in section 1. Whilst there is a respect or even reverence for earth this is an ontological earth, which along with things only are in relation with the world of men rather than on their own terms. Chapter 3.4 will return to idea of scientific exploration as the letting-be of earth as un-meaning; as resistance to disclosure of world, and what this means for elemental objectivity.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 165.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 168.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 174.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 172.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 171.

Creation as bringing forth clears the open region thus accomplishes appropriation. In relation to artworks Heidegger characterizes such creation as containing the essence of strife between world and earth, the appropriative identity is exhibited in the figure of the work so "Createdness of the work means truth's being fixed in place in the figure." ¹⁸⁹ Createdness accordingly does not withdraw like equipment but rather "the work is distinguished by being created so that its createdness is part of the created work." ¹⁹⁰ and stands out from the work. This definition of createdness as founding a world is partly applicable to later thought on building; whilst the connotations of strife are lost the way the made being is required and related to an appropriative identity, and are themselves appropriated to one another giving measure to each other, is retained. The collapsing of the distinction between poetry, thought and building, and the introduction of preservation as a form of building rather than as required for the work indicate that this physical aspect of the work is no longer so vital in his later thought.

The Origin of the Work of Art claims Greek *techne* was "a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth what is present as such out of concealment and specifically into the unconcealment of its appearance" ¹⁹¹. Such craft as createdness happens in midst of being that grows of own accord (*physis*). Such *techne* can be interpreted as what must be retrieved in order to save *Gestell* by attending to its origin, but by the time of Building, Dwelling, Thinking "The erecting of buildings would not be suitably defined even if we were to think of it in the sense of the original Greek *techne* as solely a letting-appear, which brings something made, as something present, among the things that are already present." ¹⁹² We must think beyond the Greek as a signpost back into ontological origin as sketched out in chapter 2.4.

Post-*Gestell* building is not exhausted by *techne* and its preservers are not those that brought *poiesis* into its own. Like poetry such making as attending to Saying also features a form of self-renunciation; a relinquishing of subjective ego in the process of ontic realization. Levin considers such building and craft as the ontic correlate to releasement. The ontological and ontic only are as each other, like the poet the builder abnegates will in releasement to allow Being to emerge in beings by handling things with care for their depth and innate possibilities engaging in one of the ways we build of which thought is only one. Levin cites Heidegger's claim that thinking means "to lend a hand to the essence, the coming to presence, of Being. This means: to prepare (build) for the coming to presence of Being that abode in the midst of whatever is" ¹⁹³ and gives such releasement both ethical and ontic interpretation in that we lend a hand to Being "every time we give a hand to other mortals; and we can lend it every time the hand we give to the various things we touch and handle is a gesture of care. The thoughtful maintenance of beings, moving out of respect for their ownmost, and even their most intangible ways of being, never fails to lend a hand to the coming-to-presence of Being." ¹⁹⁴ If such lending a hand is homecoming then it must first pass through the grasping manipulation Levin likens to how a child learns to handle things; *Gestell* is the learning process we must go through, learning of things to later release them. An apprentice must first learn of manipulation before becoming a craftsman who utilizes it in true releasing of possibilities, and our building in a post-destitute age will never again be suitably defined in terms of Greek *techne*. Levin's understanding of making would appear individual and reliant upon the notion of innate possibilities; a master craftsman is a solitary practitioner even when

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 189.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 184.

¹⁹² "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 157.

¹⁹³ *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 40.

¹⁹⁴ D.M. Levin, "Mudra as Thinking: Developing Our Wisdom-of-Being in Gesture and Movement," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. G. Parkes (University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 253.

directing others and one can only lend a hand to things if they reach out to meet us halfway. This notion has been previously critiqued (chapter 2.6) in terms of the difficulty in determining the true possibilities to be brought forth, and will be returned to later in consideration of cultivation, but the characterization of the transformation of the fields as an extended learning process, both individual and communal, accomplished in the buildings of both construction and thought highlights the role Gestell must consistently play.

The individual craftsmen cannot alone provide the paradigm for poesis for art is more than creation; the work only becomes so once it has attracted preservers; it is they who make it art. The work is created by one or a few, but making it an artwork "must be thought of as a collective creation."¹⁹⁵ Preservers respond to the truth happening in the work thus let it be as work. The complement to creation of preservation helps resolve the problem noted in discussion of poetry on the singular-plurality reconciliation. "Preserving the work means standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work."¹⁹⁶ and allowing it to guide ones actions and retrieval of possibilities, so that the truth founded by the work is heeded by and guides our comportments.

Art requires a resolute retrieval of heritage in those who engage with the art, it is only art when as preservers we realize latent possibilities of our origin indicated by it and thus an epochal understanding is founded. The creator-preserver relation is again one of appropriative identity in which "the creator and the preserver, originate, each in his own essence."¹⁹⁷ Preservers seems to passive a term for how such an integral relation is accomplished; building is preserving given a more participatory role in the founding of truth that heeds the poets words. Preservers (those who build once poet has named their dwelling) are the most important element in the epochal turn; they make the work into art and validate the poet's saying, making it a genuine heeding and addressing several of the issues raised relating to social discourse in chapter 2.6 et al.

The relation of poetry, dwelling and thought returns to the problematic originally raised in chapter 1.2 concerning the conditions of possibility for nihilism and its turning. Heidegger portrays dwelling as prior to building since "We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers"¹⁹⁸ yet such dwelling is nothing beyond the building that accomplishes the dwelling. Building is not a means to the end of dwelling, the two are essentially related and co-determined. Dwelling and the Fourfold are in relation of appropriative identity, building is how we are appropriated by that which is realized through such appropriation. To dwell we must first be makers/builders, yet we are only such when we already dwell; so they cannot be related as prior constituents. We build as appropriated to the fourfold mirroring yet such mirroring only comes-to-presence in and as our building.

Art founds a people, a 'we' whom are determined by that which we preserve; "we belong to traditions before they belong to, and are appropriated by, us"¹⁹⁹ through the authentic retrieval of what we are already claimed by. But there must already be a community of preservers for the work to become art, a people are not so much founded in the sense of created but as clarified and transformed. Dwelling requires poetic naming of divinities yet also such naming first requires the work be made. Art both requires and enables the truth of Being; it only is as artists and preservers yet is also prior to them as they respond to it. Heidegger is aware of the paradoxical nature of his claim that "Truth

¹⁹⁵ Gregory Schufrieder, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 205.

¹⁹⁶ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 192.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 196.

¹⁹⁸ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 146.

¹⁹⁹ Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, 232.

happens only by establishing itself in the strife and the free space opened up by truth itself." 200 so is not existent prior to the historical establishing that it enables; that the work must have "before its own creation and for the sake of its creation - have been brought into a relation with the things of the earth, with nature" 201 and created its own origin.

Heidegger laments that art and truth must be described ambiguously, "truth is at once the subject and object of the setting" 202 into work of truth giving rise to this paradox of being its own condition of possibility. The thing is named in poetry, the site for it is built, the fourfold is gathered by what is built "in such a way that it allows a site for the fourfold. By this site are determined the localities and ways by which a space is provided for." 203 Building is thus determined by the naming that calls the Fourfold, but this site is also a condition of possibility for the Four thus the naming; the paradox Heidegger notes in relation to art and work remains in Building as a form of higher activity that co-determines the fourfold in realizing it. This is the difficulty or articulating the appropriative Da-Sein relation whose paradoxical elements are posited by Heidegger as a mystery that cannot and should not be resolved. As chapter 1.2 laid out, the problem of priority is false if seen as an identity, but this identity is inevitably and consistently described as a duality; and in relation to the mediation of singularity and plurality the role of poetry over preservation seems to be overemphasized.

In relation to this Machado's reading of Heidegger on art is flawed yet illuminative; showing art based on a communal unifying experience, which although he denies can be poetic language showcases this aspect of Heidegger's thought on poetry. Machado criticizes Heidegger for overlooking nothingness in language so that "the description of the setting up of the world of the human being is severed from a consideration of negation as indispensable to such an enterprise." 204 overlooking the role of silence and nothingness as difference (alternate possibilities of meaning). Preserving the concealed is essential to language and poetry, thus perfectly consonant with Machado's "primordial element of language as negation." 205 Machado identifies the difficulty in language acting as mediator of the Da-Sein appropriation 206 but suggests a solution already present in Heidegger's thought, but whose importance is downplayed in his essay on art.

Despite near wilfully misinterpreting Heidegger's thought on nothingness Machado highlights a relation with the Kyoto school notion of Pure Experience that indicates the encounter with originary nihility (absolute nothingness / suchness) required for the new beginnings art. Machado criticizes Heidegger for seeing art in terms of discrete historical languages rather than as a universal, the community of preservers indicates why language not simply 'pure experience' is needed. But poetic art must also be preceded by a unifying experience in order for there to be a community of preservers; the poet attends to the attunement that binds together the people, an experience in the current epoch that indicates originary nihility through Gestell as anxiety writ large. Machado overlooks how far Heidegger in fact does pursue the question of nothingness but succeeds in offering a characterization of art that connects Heidegger more to Nishitani; art as "an invitation to pure experience...As such it is the very expression of identity, where questioned and questioner are brought together." 207 and "the ontological

200 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 195.

201 Ibid., 202.

202 Ibid., 204.

203 "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 152.

204 Roberto Pinheiro Machado, "Nothingness and the Work of Art: A Comparative Approach to Existential Phenomenology and the Ontological Foundation of Aesthetics," *Philosophy East and West* 58, no. 2 (2008): 247.

205 Ibid., 250.

206 Ibid., 256.

207 Ibid., 262.

function of art...promotion of the union of total being as undifferentiated from nonbeing.”²⁰⁸ which is expressed in poetic experience so that art realizes the true self (Da-Sein / absolute nothingness) by bringing-forth circuminsessional interpenetration into explicit awareness.

Related to this is the issue of whether we have yet to dwell, the extent to which the Fourfold is projective. For Heidegger our age is one in which "great art, together with its essence, has departed from among human beings"²⁰⁹, and although Heidegger later moved away from viewing the Greek as an age of thinging their remains a tension between whether we always poetically dwell; whether we are ever non-Dasein as indicated in chapter 1.1. For Heidegger man is as dwelling; "when I say 'a man', and in saying this word think of a being who exists in a human manner - that is, who dwells - then by the name 'man' I already name the stay within the fourfold among things."²¹⁰ (But if there has not yet been a thing then it would seem we have yet to dwell, and are not yet mortals, yet becoming mortal is integral to our existence. The nature of our existence is to dwell yet dwelling is also something we only are when living in a certain way. This relates to Heidegger's conflation of noun and verb usages of essence mentioned in chapter 2.6, man as mortal seems to operate both as a goal and pure description. As an ontological state of being dwelling both constitutes what it is to be human, "The way in which you are and I am",²¹¹ yet "also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for"²¹² specifically as tending/cultivating, and so contains an imperative as to how we should be upon the earth. The most obvious reconciliation of this tension was indicated in chapter 3.1; that verb sense is when we realize what we already always are. But this falls into problematic nature of how we only are this way when we realize it as such; it is not our essence prior to this.

Dwelling and mortality are an imperative or task we are called to by the nothingness we always are yet only is as covered over, meditative thought re-appropriating us as outlined at end of chapter 3.1 so that truth and art are latent in each other as trace and only made manifest in creative projection. The relation of dwelling, thought and poetry returns us to the criteria for poetic projection, whether this notion of art/dwelling is itself a projected essence of the human and from where is drawn the criteria for art/dwelling.

Chapter 2.4 dealt with how Gestell is only a granting if man adopts a free relation to it, chapter 2.6 and 3.2 asked how we know whether the poet's word is genuine and to be heeded. The named divinities only provide measure "if preservers are willing to submit to them: are committed to protect the truth that is happening through the work as a standard-setting event of unconcealment."²¹³ The saying of the poet is genuine if a community of preserver's heed it, for thought, poetry and building are equiprimordial, although Heidegger often misleadingly speaks of them as separate or in a temporal sequence. We do not choose what art to preserve or poetry to heed; for before this heeding and preserving they are not art nor poetry.

Chapter 2.6 indicated that both the origin and criteria of any projected epochal sending would be combination of own absolute nothingness (plurality), ontic states, and current sending of Gestell. Truth arises from thrown nullity "when the openness that makes its advent in thrownness is projected."²¹⁴, when poetry projects new

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 196.

²¹⁰ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 154.

²¹¹ Ibid., 145.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Schufrieder, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 205.

²¹⁴ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 196.

meanings/possibilities from our thrown heritage. Truth thus arises from nothing "if by nothing we mean the sheer 'not' of beings"²¹⁵, from poetic projection that renders the at hand unbeing that "has lost the capacity to give and keep Being as measure"²¹⁶. Poetry accordingly stems from an experience of anxious silence, the relation of which to the at-hand differently conceived will be addressed next chapter concerning science and presence-at-hand. Projected criteria stem from both this nothingness yet as Zhang said last chapter poetry speaks from the in-between, it comes from nothing "Yet it never comes from nothing in that what is projected by it is only the withheld determination of historical Dasein itself."²¹⁷ Projection arises both from originary nihilism and the current/previous epochal understandings, it opens an awareness of ontological nothingness and projects an understanding based upon the criteria derived from this drawing upon transformed thrown possibilities.

Building as Saving

It is in our creations that *Ereignis* is accomplished. We create truth, as such and as its own measure art has no antecedent criteria returning us to the problems of chapter 2.6. By attending to poetic saying we dwell and from this can be derived concrete context dependent criteria for the retrieval of a new destining and ontic way of life; but no criteria can 'say' that we must attend to saying and save our 'essential nature', nor decide which Saying we are to heed. Saving still requires a sending and cannot supply one, yet does provide a framework for adjudicating if it is a Saying that saves thus one to be heeded, not which saving. The preservation of earth may give criteria of provisionality and awareness of contingency but no indication of what contingent criteria to project, and the dangers of language in relation to communal identities means the notion of preservers relation to any universal enlightenment is unclear. This leaves open issue of whether Heidegger had a certain sending in mind and characterized building in terms of this, such as outlined in earlier consideration of the 'unreasonable' demand placed on nature. Once preserved the poet's word may guide us and give epochal criteria, but Heidegger is limited to an appeal to co-preservers who share his fundamental attunement.

Once granted what guide for dwelling flows from the desire for saving? As said in chapter 3.1 to keep safe is to bring something into its essence, to accord it its place. Building is how we guard the Fourfold and shepherd Being and through such building "give form to dwelling in its presence and house this presence."²¹⁸ We save by building, keeping safe the thing called in poetic saying, a preserving that lets *jítai* rest on its homeground thus also saves/frees the essence of man and *Gestell*; "*The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving.*"²¹⁹ We save by constructing, cultivating, poetically naming, and thinking, in such a way to preserve the coming-to-presence of the thing, to act in accordance with releasement as a reciprocal caring of *Dasein* and its dwelling place.

Since "dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold"²²⁰ which "preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things."²²¹ dwelling must save each element of the fourfold; the earth by not exploiting it, the sky by receiving it and keeping to the natural calendar and rhythm of seasons, the divinities by awaiting them, and mortals by guarding their capacity for death. Making must not be taken as instrumental

²¹⁵ Ibid., 197.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 200.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 173.

²¹⁸ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 156.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 147.

²²⁰ Ibid., 149.

²²¹ Ibid.

to the goals of man as subject but instead "*takes over* from the fourfold the standard for all the traversing and measuring of the spaces that in each case are provided for by the locations that have been founded."²²² Art and building must reveal and preserve the strife/mirroring of the elements it brings together; this preservation provides the guiding criteria so that dwelling as attending to poetic saying is what generates criteria (which are that which is to be conducive to dwelling and awareness of *Ereignis*). The mirroring of the four means man as mortal must be attuned to the other elements gathered

in the thing. Not as a total determination but a range of possibilities that guide the naming of the thing.

As "To set forth the earth means to bring it into the open region as the self-secluding."²²³, a commonly held major criteria for such making is to reveal that which resists appropriation into meaning. Heidegger's language in describing the Fourfold and characterization of dwelling is often given the sense of caring for and preserving ontic nature in sense of the epochal understanding of *physis*. This approach was critiqued in chapter 3.3, but can arguably be viewed as integral to the notion of preservation, although not to the extent of portraying "the question of the meaning of being as it stays with Heidegger throughout his life: what would it mean for human being to safeguard its home in nature?"²²⁴ Whilst the claim that "Heidegger's argument that human being dwells poetically is the claim that human being can dwell in nature thoughtfully, creatively, and symbiotically rather than exploitatively and destructively"²²⁵ is partly right it is not the sole nor determinative feature of his argument. The relation of Fourfold-sive-*Gestell* to nature thought under the earth-sky dyad is more complex.

Building includes both construction and cultivation (of growing things of earth); and in focusing on the former in Heidegger does not address the question of what counts as an 'unreasonable' demand on nature raised in chapter 2.2 and 2.3. The gathering/mirroring is what bridge/jug as thing primordially *is* rather than anything added to it like a property, yet as discussed in chapter 1.6 it is harder to see the examples of deer and other 'natural' things as related to mortal making in the same way without imposing an anthropocentric teleology on nature and obscuring the naturalness of things. Even *physis* is a word for Being and to say that deer or trees primordially *are* things would seem to move counter to asserting that *jítai* on its homeground (in its suchness) is most properly no-thing. Whether beings of 'nature' are primarily entities of nature is to be considered next chapter, but for now it must be noted that even in the later text the notion of cultivation relates strongly to a communal identity and not only to 'things' of nature.

This connotation is brought out by Young who, despite identifying building perhaps too strongly with physical constructs, observes that "Heidegger dwells on the heroic moment of place through creative activity that gathers the environment into a meaningful presence"²²⁶ rather than on the preservation of established meanings that would be more associating with cultivation. The originality of the artwork, that it "appears as an unprecedented revelation of the relation between world and Earth"²²⁷ distances it from Levin's understanding of craft and the everyday building of the

²²² Ibid., 146.

²²³ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 167.

²²⁴ Trish Glazebrook, "Heidegger and Ecofeminism," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. N.J. Holland and P. Huntington (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 241.

²²⁵ Ibid., 246.

²²⁶ Iris Marion Young, "House and Home," Ibid., 255.

²²⁷ Schufrieder, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 203.

preservers; art as poetry is paradigmatic in a way that building subsequent to the creation of the measure for unconcealment of beings is not. The privileging of the establishing of a world over its preservation might be explained by Heidegger's primary concern of epochal transformation, and a Nietzschean legacy of placing art over truth, with preservation being too connected with shared meanings reminiscent of *das Mans* keeping alive of possibilities for retrieval. Such a possibility is suggested by Young who sees preservation as forming a narrative given by how we dwell; "part of the creative and moral task of preservation is to reconstruct the connection of the past to the present in light of new events, relationships, and political understandings."²²⁸ Young also highlights preserving as a teaching, thus reinforcing the community of preservers, the meanings of everyday life are always repeated and reinforced "Thus preservation involves preparing and staging commemorations and celebrations, where those who dwell together among the things tell and retell stories of their particular lives".²²⁹ Such remembrance "is ambiguous; it can be either conservative or reinterpreted,"²³⁰ both art and building rely on a community of preservers for meaning set forth by artists and makers, in de-emphasizing the role of the preservers in artistic making Heidegger also downplays the dangers of levelling inherent in the manners of epochal transformation he outlines.

The Problem of Examples

To accomplish the new epochal understanding new examples of art and building must be found, and whilst Heidegger "does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction"²³¹ his examples revolve around physically made things and works. Just as each element of the fourfold has its ontic correlates so too does the building that allows us to dwell amidst them, allowing for empirical statement to be made of our dwelling and how it is to allow for the self-surmounting. Chapter 1.6 provided such a paradigmatic example of understanding craft products as non-instrumental ways of gathering in Heidegger's consideration of the jug, noting its limitations in highlighting features not transferable to other cases, that outpouring and gathering are not as clear in all things. Heidegger favours examples with a festival element; jug as libation to gods, temple as home for the divinities, etc.

That the temple is cited as an example in relation to both art and building is telling, partly as its original description cites all elements of the Fourfold in the earlier text showing the close relation of art and building. The temple establishes world by providing a referential context of meaning for the projects of shared destinal existence, "The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people."²³² that "first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves."²³³ by allowing them to measure themselves against the gods called by poets. Yet this relation to the divinities is more forced outside the temple and outpoured sacrificial libations, and in cases of examples where the divinities are less apparent they seem to find a place that is placeless. This draws into the remit of dwelling even examples *The Question Concerning Technology* portrayed as emblematic of *Gestell*. In his claim the bridge "grants their way to mortals"²³⁴ so that they may linger and hasten "to and fro, so that they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side"²³⁵ and thus gathers man to his mortality Heidegger adds the caveat that one of the ways the bridge does this

²²⁸ Iris Marion Young, "House and Home," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. N.J. Holland and P. Huntington (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 275.

²²⁹ Ibid., 274.

²³⁰ Ibid., 275.

²³¹ Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 143.

²³² "The Origin of the Work of Art," 168.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 150.

²³⁵ Ibid.

is as "tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield."²³⁶ so that Gestell too is an aspect of dwelling as gathering.

Even if we forget we are on our way to the last bridge and before the divinities the bridge still gathers us as mortals, despite only being mortals when we remember we are as before the divinities. If "that divine presence is obstructed or even pushed wholly aside"²³⁷ and we do not give thanks to the divinities the bridge is still said to gather mortals and divinities in the highway bridge calculated for maximum yield. A similar theme can be found in *The Origin of the Work of Art* in which the absence of divinities does not prevent the strife of world, "In a world's worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld. Even this doom, of the god remaining absent, is a way in which world worlds."²³⁸

Examples of art and building, thus dwelling, are diverse and troublesome to define. Both as they are conditional on preservers, meaning there are a store of potential artworks not yet realized as such, and because they depend on specific localities and communities (different heritages, gods, earths and skies). To dwell in a place is to adapt to the thrown situation you inhabit and watch over it as it is; thus is a way we are as claimed rather than as a specific claim. Examples are thus claim dependent and unified only by their realizing of appropriation, such as the farmhouse Heidegger says gathers the Fourfold, we should not return to such dwelling but "it illustrates by a dwelling that has been how it was able to build."²³⁹ Because of this Heidegger's practical examples of what counts as dwelling fall into the same problems and confusions as those discussed in chapters 2.2 and 2.3; they tend to look backwards not forwards to what new dwelling must be and risk confusing the content of the example with what it is intended to highlight.

The portrayal of prior manners of dwelling also confuses the issue of the extent to which the Fourfold is projective, the tension between the claim that things have yet to thing and Ereignis is only now flashing for first time and that despite this we are as dwellers and have dwelt in the past is paralleled by Nishitani's relation to history; that enlightenment has occurred in the past yet also the self-transformation of nihilism is to allow reality's realization for the first time. Despite the Fourfold being a projective interpretation yet to arrive it would also seem there is no way to make a bridge that does not gather mortals and divinities; even if the gods and our mortality are forgotten the Fourfold is still gathered so we must still be dwelling. This relates to shifting emphasis on the 'is' and 'ought', of our essential dwelling in noun and verb sense; of whether in the destitute age of Gestell we do not already dwell.

There is also a difference between the paradigmatic examples depending on whether the mirroring of the four or strife of world and earth is emphasized. The former tend towards a more humble or mundane everyday practice and the latter more grandiose original events, with the former requiring the communal understanding laid out in such art to guide the building of the vessels for the fourfold. This leads to a divide in examples given by commentators between focusing on world-founding and preservation in releasement, between great historic events/trends and simple crafts (and a noticeable dearth of examples concerning cultivation). A crude characterization could divide such examples between poetry and building, but Heidegger collapses such distinctions even as he draws them, broadening building to include thinking, cultivating, poetry and construction. Art is not even the only poetic founding, instead "we must leave open whether art in all its modes, from architecture to poesy, exhausts the essence of poetry."

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 151.

²³⁸ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 170.

²³⁹ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 158.

²⁴⁰ so that festivals or events can also gather a world; casting doubt on the requirement for the materiality of the work as demonstrating earth and createdness to fix strife in the figure; a festival to new gods is not made of stone but a transitory experience.

Dreyfus considers art as the clearing for strife to include all cultural paradigms that unify practices into coherent possibilities as exemplars for the beholder producing a shared understanding, not only the created works and made things of art and craft. For Dreyfus anything that unifies the practices and understanding of a community but also “shows that what is at stake cannot be captured in a system of beliefs and values” ²⁴¹ is an artwork, the elements of the paradigm that actively resist totalization into a single narrative the earth that indicates no single interpretation can completely capture the works meaning; “the conflict of interpretations it sets up generates a culture’s history.” ²⁴² In light of Heidegger's critique of values and his stress on the preserving earth Dreyfus holds we must return to favouring unarticulated communal mores over individual subjective choice as only the relation to the non-subjective can “give consistency, meaning, and seriousness to one’s life”.²⁴³ Everyday understanding should not and can not be fully articulated as “our cultural practices can direct our activities and make our lives meaningful only insofar as they are and stay unarticulated...as long as they stay the soil out of which we live...What is most important and meaningful in our lives is not and should not be accessible to critical reflection”²⁴⁴ (so that “Mattering lies not in what we choose, but in ‘that on the basis of which’ we choose”²⁴⁵ and critical thought on values erodes this basis.

This over-emphasis on earth over world portrays Heidegger as an enemy of reflection as the courage to think our presuppositions. Dreyfus's example of the unarticulated notions of distance and bodily contact in various cultures as embodying important element of the human condition highlights the flaw in this view. Not only are these accessible to critical reflection but the investigation of behavioural patterns that explains and articulates them in terms of biological or social history does not diminish their power over us, and are not necessarily treated as a resource for manipulation because of it. Such articulation can be a reflection of curiosity and wonder that our essential natures are so unified, or an appreciation of the contingency of everydayness, a relation between science and wonder elaborated more in chapter 3.4 and anx chap. Such hidden communal meanings even seem to require the subjectivity that is entwined with values as “only where man remains subject does the positive struggle against individualism and for the community as the sphere of those goals that govern all achievement and usefulness have any meaning.” ²⁴⁶ Only once the person as highest conception of man has appeared as the field of consciousness can the communal meanings of dwelling emerge through transitioning the field of nihility, subjectivity seems here to first provide basis for communal values Dreyfus argues for and remains in the self-identity of the fields of the future epoch.

The lack of anything in modernity that can solicit or sustain commitment from us that Dreyfus attributes to Heidegger's critique overlooks how commitments to contingent pluralism and values motivate so many and cause them to not be alienated from world and others, these are divinities who remain in having fled through ironic or contingent commitment that are as definitive as unarticulated structures of meaning. Dreyfus claims

²⁴⁰ "The Origin of the Work of Art," 199.

²⁴¹ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 300.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 292.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 294.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 296.

²⁴⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 133.

"Heidegger holds that only some shared meaningful ///concerns that grip us can give our culture a focus and enable us to resist acquiescence to a state that has no higher goal than to provide material welfare for all" ²⁴⁷ but such welfare as highest goal can also be seen as a commitment to enable the condition for a plurality of understandings to be explored, plurality itself acting as the single shared meaningful concern. Thinking in terms of values does not deprive the world of meaning if that meaning is the plurality of (epochally co-existing) values, in Dreyfus terms the paradigm to be gathered is that we are explorers of meaning authentically aware of this contingency as dwelling under absent gods; bringing out the relations between understandings in against the backdrop of entities nothingness in Gestell. Chapter 2.6 dealt with the mischaracterizing of the experience of many living in the shadow of ontological danger in relation to this, it is not that "ultimate goals like serving God, society, our fellows, or even ourselves no longer make sense to us" ²⁴⁸ but that they make a different kind of sense in a contingent pluralistic clearing. In a post-destitute age certain ultimate goals and ways of dwelling can no longer act as paradigms, or even models or how paradigms should operate, just as post Being and Time Cartesian dualism can no longer act as a philosophical paradigm.

Most pertinently, just as chapter 2.3 et al laid out that no single example was determinative of Gestell, no single artwork or example of building can properly indicate a saving epoch; only the manner such works are related can do so. Whilst Dreyfus's earlier characterization was flawed his abstraction of art and building into inaugural paradigms does indicate the breadth of what can count as an example of artistic building and captures this relational element as no single artwork or case of building truly sets forth a paradigm. The role of world-founding "happens in a few essential ways. One of these ways in which truth happens is the work-being of the work." ²⁴⁹ yet others are also possible, leading to the later much wider notion of building. Bowie's suggestion that "revelatory jazz performances, of the kind that helped constitute the world of Civil Rights by establishing new forms of cultural identity, are not best seen as "works"...Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech can be seen in this context as a happening of truth of the kind Heidegger is concerned with" ²⁵⁰ and Dreyfus examples of the Jewish covenant, crucifixion, and US constitution as collections of events that accomplish shared destinal understandings indicate could be joined by similarly wide-ranging social events such as the UN convention on human rights.

Post-Destitute Dwelling

That poetically we dwell is often held to be the opposite of the homelessness of Gestell that is contrary to art (an opposition certainly at play in *The Question Concerning Technology*) obscuring earth and portraying itself as the sole possible epochal understanding and total disclosure of what is, an anti-art that would "conceal the struggle between earth and world and celebrate our ability to get everything clear and under control." ²⁵¹ Yet in another sense we always are as dwellers, even as gathered under the highway bridge, so that Gestell too as a way we are claimed must have its artworks that gather this understanding; in our instrumental making an artistry is still possible so that "the technician is a kind of poet - a poet who makes technical beings". ²⁵²

If dwelling is in its essence saving then it requires prior danger, it first requires nihility to be passed through before we can fulfil ourselves as essential dwellers. Chapter

²⁴⁷ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 312.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 306.

²⁴⁹ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 180.

²⁵⁰ Andrew Bowie, "Art," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 262.

²⁵¹ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology and Politics," 301.

²⁵² Alderman, "Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology," 50.

2.4 characterized homecoming as a return to originary nihility; that all humans stand under Ereignis as masks of universal nothingness yet also within a finite context we recognize as contingent. The nearness of dwelling pertain to nearness to universal origin (homelessness). Homelessness is equiprimordial to dwelling in constituting our existence so that to truly come home is to realize absolute nothingness as the homelessness of the Buddha. If we must go beyond Greek poiesis to save Gestell, realize their shared origin in nihility, the question becomes what art will be in the post-destitute age that preserves both Gestell as Gestell and its origin as that which gave art as poiesis. Heidegger does not offer a suggestion as to the nature of art once transfigured by passing through the destitute age, "What art may be is one of the questions to which /// no answers are given"²⁵³ as we cannot know how the new epochal claim will occur. Homelessness rendered poetic by an art/building that preserves/beholds its origin and heeds absent gods. Rather than trying to counter Gestell with poetic art, the attempt to realize it as it is in terms of such art pursues the second approach from the end of chapter 3.1. To be at home as homeless and measured by absent gods can still be to dwell poetically.

As what prepares for and inaugurates epochal transformation the new saving epoch requires an artwork yet in a post-destitute age dwelling will be different after our sojourn in homelessness. Chapter 3.2 asked how post-destitute poetry must change, given Heidegger's wide definitions of art and building (ultimately only unified by the realizing of a claim) the manner post-destitute dwelling is to be realized need not bear surface resemblance to these examples, only being same in essence. They may be transitory and unlike anything defined as art or building in normal terms.

The divinities give measure to dwelling; post-destitute dwelling would accomplish the silence of absent gods as laid out in chapter 3.2's consideration of homelessness. Criteria of plurality and contingency have been posited, that we must preserve both the absence of the divinities and an awareness of this absence to remain those who await, expressly putting-forth the necessity of the preservation of alternate possibilities to any epochal understanding. Post-destitute art preserves earth by leaving the gods of our world absent, the work must show the possibility of alternate worlds. Art for the destitute age is to hold open for a new dispensation of Being that is awaited yet never arriving (an absent god), instead the play of Being and nature of revealing is fully revealed, the role of earth fully disclosed in such a way that preserves its concealment. The articulation of earth thus acts to preserve its possibilities in the sense of allowing for a pluralistic conception of Being in which disclosures stand side by side. As poetry for a destitute time attends to the essence of poetry, a post-destitute art must exhibit a self-awareness concerning the nature of art and building; preservers would do so in self-reflective awareness of preservation (counter-Dreyfus), it founds a people/community whose identity is permeated by a non-identity (a notion to be expanded in chapter 3.5 in consideration of politics).

In chapter 2.5 an epoch was characterized as comprised by competing voices which always have multifarious understandings of Being, suggesting Gestell was best seen as a relation between understandings characterized by a tension between both plurality and totality. Building is both a collective endeavour and a collection of endeavours; no single work can set forth what is determinative of an epoch, no artist or building although perhaps a collection of artistic movements or socio-cultural endeavours unified by a common horizon. The work must situate itself in relation to other such works in such a way that this relation is integral with strife as fixed in place with the figure, the works whose inter-relation determines the epoch must exhibit this relation, every temple indicating its place in the widest pantheon. Gestell as a relating of plural disclosures in

²⁵³ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 210.

the homeless absence of gods thus requires art that realizes this tension in the awareness and identity of its preservers; of the differences within the people founded by poetic art and the theme of universality as preparation for planetary dialogue thus that speaks of solidarity within contingency and plurality. This has been indicated earlier in relation to rights and values preserving the differentiation in levelling and bringing to awareness the contingency of meaning that earth grants thus most conducive to the plurality necessary to preserve Ereignis. The elements of modern humanism that are the ethical facet of metaphysics and Gestell are to be retained as those elements of conventional reality (field of consciousness) that allow sunyata/Ereignis to be most fully expressed. Heidegger's anti-subjectivism led him to dismiss such approaches, but a saving place for them can be found, and may even be required, for them in the transfigured thought of the new epoch.

Anx chap characterized Gestell as the call of the self writ large, thus a communal call to authentic retrieval that cannot be surpassed but must be beheld as danger to make us aware of contingency. The nihility of modernity is a social parallel to the call of conscience; "we are now, more than ever before in the history of Being, uniquely positioned to experience en masse the full impact of this groundless withdrawal of Being"²⁵⁴ thus the possibility of enlightenment. The articulation through critical reflection which Dreyfus identifies as the problem is the social setting for what saves as it contributes to preparing us for the freeing claim, to stand in nihility and to maintain such a stand could be a facet of a post-destitute art concerned with aiding the transition to the field of sunyata. The 'uniform distanceless' of modern mass communications also brings about the possibility of a greater homecoming through spreading the experience of sojourning in homelessness. Art in such an age would then showcase the relation between levelling and plurality to preserve awareness of other disclosures, maintaining the danger in beholding it. The increased range of what can constitute building allows for political movements or scientific projects of exploration and discovery to replace art in traditional sense of Greece's 'brief but magnificent time'. In the information age communal projects that transcend culture and nation can also gather homelessness, works with no single creator or poet that thereby highlight the plurality of understandings of the real. The very proliferation of what can count as art is itself an indication of the world Gestell opens up, the setting back of the figure into multiple mediums highlighting multiple possible understandings.

Spinoza gives a pertinent example of films that "brought us into touch with our own ways of revealing things and people"²⁵⁵ a whole new art form for the post-destitute age that seems particularly apt at laying open a world by dealing inherently with an alternate perspective in more explicit terms; showing that many worlds share the earth. It's very historical novelty and reliance upon machine technology for both creation and mass distribution (itself part of the figure of such art) fits Poggeler suggestion that modern art could poeticize Gestell by incorporating machine technology within itself as a structural element so "it can limit these from within: the reminder of the finitude and limitedness of every formulation checks the extravagant proliferation of the scientific-technological approach"²⁵⁶ to express how "Only enframing and fourfold together refer to the world"²⁵⁷ and bring out the -sive- of the projective *verwindung*. As it is a case of relations between works rather than single artists film as a whole, of the tension between

²⁵⁴ Watts, *The Philosophy of Heidegger*, 156.

²⁵⁵ Spinoza, "Heidegger and Derrida: Iterability and Ereignis," 290.

²⁵⁶ Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 57.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

the levelling of Hollywood and the independent cinema of marginalized groups and understandings it supports.

The possibility of plurality discussed in chapter 2.5 is a constant struggling against the totalizing elements in levelling that can be both liberating and oppressive to the marginalized (both individuals and groups). Leland identifies a form of this tension in her critique of the notion a destinal heritage can be retrieved from *das Man* understood as a single shared context of intelligibility that might not be conducive to solicitude, as “if that culture is fundamentally conflictual, a sense of solidarity rooted merely in a recognition that we belong to this culture is not likely to be achieved. The master and the slave are cultural “cohorts,” so to speak; yet the slave in rebellion is not likely to feel solidarity with her master based on their mutual cohort status.”²⁵⁸ As outlined in chapter 2.5 Leland's critique of Heidegger is misplaced and *das Man* can be seen as a critique of the politics of identity as eclipsing individual responsibility for self rather than capable of being critiqued by such a politics, but her identification of the plurality within each epoch can inform the notion of a dwelling that concentrates on a plurality of worlds. Leland's characterization of those in the borderlands is the homeless earth of a people yet to be truly founded, migrant and mixed populations yet to become 'a multicultural people' rather than a collection of cultural groups co-existing. Such a re-founding can be seen in political debates over 'British values and identity' within an increasingly demographically diverse nation. Such foundings throw established communities of preservers back to the earth for all worlds are defined in relation to their co-worlds; and this relation of worlds is what Gestell threatens to totalize in the Europeanization of the globe. Leland's view of identity politics is more a retrieval of resistance (of single counter understandings) than a retrieval of a pluralism that relates those understandings; Gestell is a more radical plurality than identity politics can survive in, an erasure of any dominant narrative for their to be reactions against.

Yet this movement is deeply ambiguous. Chapter 2.3 touched on Glazebrook's over-emphasis on the capitalist elements of Gestell, her connecting of this to wider impositions of developmental models through which “Eurocentrism disrespects, denigrates and ultimately displaces the world-opening truths of other cultures, and because of this rampaging through them, eventually destroys them”²⁵⁹ comes closer to Gestell, not capitalism per se but a relation to other possibilities that subsumes them into that reckoning. Glazebrook also warns of idealizing other cultures, and providing a criteria for the marginalization of pernicious practices such as honour killings or FGM is an element that must also be brought forth by a post-destitute building; plurality alone cannot form coherent criteria. Glazebrook also correctly identifies that levelling is counter-acted by material wealth divisions as these impose a hierarchy of rank, yet the welfare projects and human rights ideologies that counter the tendencies Glazebrook identifies stem from same epochal understanding.

These themes are to be expanded and the integral relation of ontology and ethics considered in chapter 3.5, the relation of welfare and compassion/solicitude and how wide-ranging social projects that wrestle with issues of plurality and totality, tolerance of intolerance, can be a poetic building for a post-destitute age. Firstly whether the sciences can help form an artistic paradigm that preserves earth as elemental objectivity and is related to awe and wonder rather than calculation will be explored in chapter 3.4; whether thingness names the homeground of *jitai* and does justice to the in-itself of the 'natural' world, of deer, tree, earth and sky. That the essence of science is exploration in awe of

²⁵⁸ N.J. Holland and P. Huntington, *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 122.

²⁵⁹ Trish Glazebrook and M Story, "Heidegger and International Development," in *Heidegger in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. T. Georgakis and P.J. Ennis (Springer Netherlands, 2015), 134.

mystery that shows finitude of man by showcasing entities resistance to our projects and observations; that on their homeground things are other to and prior to us (elemental objectivity).

Projects that articulate universal human rights or international co-operation; exploration of the wonders of the universe that show our nature in the face of its grandeur whilst allowing for discourse between non-final vocabularies. Individual building that when seen as a related whole allow both humans and other beings to come-to-presence under manifold understandings. Such broad building projects will be dealt with over the following chapters in terms of science, ethics and politics. Specific instances of such building will not be gone into in-depth as no single case ever encapsulates the paradigm, but might include Voyager, Cern, or the Mars rover that reveal wonder at the ground of curiosity and reveal the finitude of man in the face of the universe that he is a part of. Heidegger's comments as to Sputnik are often echoed in the sentiment that "It is ironic that a generation engaged in space trips should have so little awareness of the "wholeness" of the cosmos"²⁶⁰ yet those projects are often bastions of awareness of such wholeness and striving to be part of it.

3.5 Ethics and Politics

Traditional ethics as relying on metaphysical interpretations of Being are radically questioned by Heidegger and Nishitani but the question of how we are to live is unavoidable and all systems of thought have consequences for this question, and such consequences are the highest court of judgement philosophy can have. Lowith holds academic texts are in essential relation to their practical application which "justifies or condemns the philosophical theory that serves as the basis of this commitment."²⁶¹ After reflective thought and critique we must return to the political, Strauss believing "To justify philosophy before the tribunal of the political community means to justify philosophy in terms of the political community...by means of a kind of argument which appeals, not to philosophers as such, but to citizens as such."²⁶² This element is especially vital for Heidegger, who requires a community of preservers to be won to the word of the poet in order to achieve epochal transformation.²⁶³

Original and Practical Ethics

Heidegger produced no strict ethics, yet his thought as a response to homelessness was an imperative guided by an axiology that permeates ontology. He called such reflection on dwelling and homelessness "in itself the original ethics",²⁶⁴ and we dwell only with others, gathering ourselves into communities of preservers. Such ethics concerns not rules or norms to guide action but the conditions of the possibility for these derivative ethics as "The possibility of ethics is conditional on the existence of an entity, for which being is

²⁶⁰ Elizabeth Feist Hirsh, "Martin Heidegger and the East," *Philosophy East and West* 20, no. 3 (1970): 251.

²⁶¹ Karl Löwith, "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. R. Wolin (MIT Press, 1993), 169.

²⁶² Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 61.

²⁶³ *It should be noted that neither Heidegger's nor Nishitani's own personal political affiliation or actions are discussed in this dissertation. While there is a growing body of work dedicated to examining the implications of Heidegger's involvement with national socialism, and Nishitani's involvement in Japanese "hyper-nationalism" and the *chūōkōron* symposia, addressing these important questions are matters that demand their own dedicated study, which cannot be carried out here. For those interested, they will find these debates carried out by, among others: Asiner (2020), Collins (1996), Farmer (2018), Faye (2016), Fletcher (1982), Sluga (2014), Heisig (2001), Maraldo (1995), Najita and Harootunian (1988), Parkes (1997), Tansman (2009), Williams (2004), Young (1998).

²⁶⁴ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 258.

an issue...out of which emerges ethical questioning and the possibility of freedom.”²⁶⁵ Such thought is both preparatory but preparation is a form of determination requiring accomplishing in a building manifested in ontic comportments (if not directives that guide them), the poetic dwelling that guides us "into the realm of the upsurge of healing."²⁶⁶ requires a more traditional conception of ethics to complement it. The question is whether this derivative ethics as the realization of that ontological structure is conditioned by it. The terms ethics and politics speak of the relations between our building, so that which saves as highlighting these relations is also the highest ethics as a building that expresses the relation between plurality and singularity/totality.

In their introduction to *The Question of Being* Wilde and Kluback criticize Heidegger for failing to provide for an ethics due to his consideration of man only in an ontological not practical framework overlooking how ontological awareness required existential realization that historically describes the ontological yet cannot be reduced to it. The ontological and practical are mutually constitutive so that "To disregard the practical dimension is to hinder the full realization of the ontological dimension" ²⁶⁷ that ontological transformation is only as practical ethically guided changes in lived existence, they are equiprimordial so that "the uniqueness of man, given him ontologically, is realized and preserved in a political, social and economic life. The legitimacy of the political framework is rooted in the ontological dimension."²⁶⁸ The political and ontological dimensions are both required for the realization of Ereignis, they are a unity that reveal each other to each other by the former as practical communication and action "reflects the ground of Being in so far as the ground proceeds to externalization, externalizing its Nothingness (unrealized possibilities) into something." ²⁶⁹ The existential analytic is not objective investigation into universal structures, our finitude can only be grasped finitely as "commitment can only be understood by an understanding which is itself committed"²⁷⁰ and the realization of a political form is how the ontological is. Ereignis only occurs as its epochal realization in a lived existence necessarily given ethical and political form. This first requires reflection to bring awareness of appropriation and the circuminsessional nature of meaning, but to preserve meditative reflection a form of such existence that remains conscious of itself as the dangerous realization of appropriation is also required; one derived from the current thrown epochal understanding retrieved in accordance with the criteria of preserving awareness of its null origin. Only when preserved by builders does the thought that saves become such so requires a social ethics equiprimordially constitutive with it.

Whilst Heidegger laid out the possibility of "a thinking of Being which would take place in the practical world of human existence...when we ask his texts for some guidance in understanding the process of embodying this thinking, we find that he has virtually nothing to say"²⁷¹ focussing solely of reflection prior to sending. Heidegger's denies a social mandate for his thought since "today's society is only an absolute image of modern subjectivity; therefore, a philosophy which has overcome the standpoint of subjectivity may not join in the discussion at all."²⁷² yet in calling for a change in how we conceive of society (dwelling instead of image of subjectivity) Heidegger calls for social transformation without engaging in discussion of the social consequences for such a

²⁶⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 202.

²⁶⁶ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 260.

²⁶⁷ "The Question of Being," 14.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 19.

²⁷⁰ Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 37.

²⁷¹ Levin, "Mudra as Thinking: Developing Our Wisdom-of-Being in Gesture and Movement," 265.

²⁷² Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 39.

change. Partly as he saw himself as a thinker preparing way not a poet who would announce new sending, and partly as to do so would have involved incorporating calculative elements into meditative thought, thus subject it to presumptive demand to produce results, but this dichotomy must be reconciled as the calculative and meditative require and realize each other, despite yielding no 'results' Heidegger's thought requires such for its completion.

The identity of ontology, existential realization and axiology in Heidegger and Nishitani's thought means their ontologies are not pre-ethical but prior to the divide between ethics and ontology and of politics and ethics (as indicated by earlier consideration of the Anaximander Fragment). Heidegger's thought collapses the ethics-ontology distinction, Letter on Humanism asking that if reflective thought is neither ethics not ontology "does thinking remain only a theoretical representation of Being and man; or can we obtain from such knowledge directives that can be readily applied to our active lives?"²⁷³ He places reflective thought on original ethics as prior to theoretical-practical division, yet grounds/contextualizes practical ethics, so is still integrally related to the question of ethical criteria. The ontological Turn as always actualized in self-identity with the ontic is also an ethical transformation with practical ramifications for lived existence;

and as a projective moment requires guidance by future flourishing such that there is a primordial value system operative.

Whilst holding that "One cannot pose a question about Being without posing a question about the essence of man."²⁷⁴ one also cannot address the social change required for this epochal reflection without at least provisional answers to the question of this essence that are to be realized in our existence. Hodge claims Heidegger is wrong to disconnect reflection from "any determinate answer, as given in the various humanisms grounded in philosophical anthropology, that is in generalized theories of what it is to be human" ²⁷⁵ whilst agreeing there is no answer and the question of the human must be open (preparatory/provisional). As necessarily open such issues must be constantly dealt with in an anticipatory manner (one which recognizes its contingency and opens up future as radical transformation) yet must involve a determinate (though provisional) answer to counter Gestell as the termination of asking the question of the human. Hodge argues ethics as recognition of the transitory nature of understandings of the human is the other to metaphysics instead of nothingness and is what keeps open possibilities and makes questioning transform the questioner. Nihilism is thus not countered by "the affirmation of nothingness but rather a revival of another aspect of the philosophical tradition, an ethical affirmation of the possibility of transforming not just the self, as in will to power, but the self in relation to being, to world, time, meaning and tradition." ²⁷⁶ But Heidegger and Nishitani do not simply affirm nothingness, they affirm its location within the process of disclosure that situates nihilism as integral to meaning; the unmeaning that indicates the transitoriness ethics recognizes.

Questions of meaning and identity "prompt philosophical puzzlement and then the responses of either setting out a relation to these questions, in ethical enquiry, or attempting to answer these questions, through metaphysical construction"²⁷⁷ whilst Hodge sees Gestell as the collapsing of this difference between ethics and metaphysics I would argue it is the context for the necessary tension between these two approaches to

²⁷³ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 259.

²⁷⁴ Wisser, *Martin Heidegger in Conversation*, 40.

²⁷⁵ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 12.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

the question of the human. The epoch of absent gods would cohere with this ethical project of relating ourselves to these questions not answering them, “Ethics then would be the event of Dasein, revealed as a relation to being. It is an event, which opens out possibilities, rather than an occurrence, which presents what there is.”²⁷⁸ Gestell as the completion of metaphysics transforms ethics into a mediating of the continual tension between the the ontological and practical dimensions of existence so that Gestell makes “negotiation between abstractness and experience a constant feature of experience”.²⁷⁹ For Hodge such ethical openness makes collective identity unavailable and unnecessary and modernity errs in the “doubly mistaken presumption that what previous societies constructed through superstition and prejudice can now be constructed through reason and debate.”²⁸⁰ Yet for preservers thus epochal transformation some form of shared attunement thus identity is necessary, an identity based in nothingness (equiprimordial with non-identity) as the practical realization of the circuminsessional relation.

What this means in relation to ethical and political particulars is returned to after considering related problems for Nishitani.

The Bodhisattva and Ethical Discourse

Wargo characterizes Zen as as apolitical, ascribing its success and Daoism's failure in Japan to “the fact that Taoism is very much concerned with the nature of government, whereas Zen is not”²⁸¹ further claiming Japanese thought lacks “elaborate and systematic ethical proscriptions”²⁸² favouring more community specific ethics. (Wargo's essay characterizes kami in similar way to Heidegger's gods indicating interesting parallels, alas beyond the purview of the thesis, but Shinto connection to Heidegger's view of primordial dwelling might be future topic). Given that Nishitani writes from the position of Japanese Zen it may be an unreasonable demand to expect anything resembling a traditional Western ethical or political philosophy. Asakura even posits a separation of ontology and ethics in Nishitani claiming “although his field of emptiness has no ethical element, ontology cannot be identical to morality, while it surely contains the latter as an important component”²⁸³ seemingly separating out the Great Compassion completely from the circuminsessional totality (or, at the very least, denying the Great Compassion as morality). This seems to deny the self-identity of absolute nothingness with its personal mask, accepting the 'amoral and impersonal' aspects of his thought without mitigation so that the real self-realization of reality “is also an affirmation of the controversial and even disturbing aspects of our world”²⁸⁴ without also being a denial, and absolute nothingness no longer wears its mask as “It is realizable in its awareness and in its all-embracing and no longer personal compassion.”²⁸⁵

But Nishitani seems to be surpassing such dichotomies as personal-impersonal, affirmation-negation; and even the difference between ontology and ethics. The field of sunyata is not external to the fields of consciousness or nihility, self as the manifestation of absolute nothingness is not different from the mask of the conscious self; morality cannot be relegated to either a problem of the discriminatory mind nor absolute nothingness as the source of value/meaning. Jones distinguishes between an “enlightenment

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 177.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 51.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 193.

²⁸¹ J. J. Wargo Robert, "Japanese Ethics: Beyond Good and Evil," *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 4 (1990): 500.

²⁸² Ibid., 504.

²⁸³ Tomomi Asakura, "On Buddhistic Ontology: A Comparative Study of Mou Zongsan and Kyoto School Philosophy," Ibid.61 (2011): 672.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 673.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 672.

experience and the resulting enlightened state”²⁸⁶ the latter is a return to differentiations and commitments of the field of consciousness, a return to ethics and politics. Such everyday commitments cannot be “derived in any simple manner from the mystical experiences themselves”²⁸⁷ but are informed by them and affected through the transformation of the ethical agent.

As outlined in chapter 1.5 concerning koto for Nishitani being is knowing so that compassion simply is how one is when enlightened. Nishitani's form of original ethics is the identity of compassion (*karuṇā*) for all and wisdom (*prajñā*) so that one's own enlightenment cannot be distinguished from helping to save (enlighten) others; enlightenment thus requiring ignorance as samsara-sive-nirvana. Nishitani collapses the enlightenment-compassion relation into an identity so neither is cause of nor in service to other; such is the Boddissatva vow; my enlightenment is less important than helping others achieve theirs, but in doing so I will achieve mine in the manner of the circuminsessional Master-Servant relation.

Fox considers Dogen in relation to ethics as the expression of Unborn (original countenance as sunyata), 'do no evil' “is the self-expression of the Unborn, and the *practice* of it is the Unborn itself in action”²⁸⁸ the injunction 'do not commit evil' “is, in a sense, the *verbal* self-expression of the Absolute and its fulfilment is the *active* self-expression of the same Absolute.”²⁸⁹ The issue of warrant may thereby be settled; once released we simply are compassionate rather than a subjective agent who needs compassion justified to them, but still requires a guide for how to express such compassion. It is most commonly connected to provoking insight in others, “our obligation is not merely to do good in an amorphous fashion, but especially to do good which will provoke the awakening of our fellows”²⁹⁰ yet discussion of solicitude will soon question whether this is an epochally conditioned notion of compassion.

For Zimmerman the ethical self-transformation of compassion/solicitude is grounded upon the realization of the ontology of nothingness as the “direct insight into the interrelatedness of things, insight that transforms the very structure of the one ‘person’ gifted with the insight.”²⁹¹ But the view that liberation from egocentrism “frees one for spontaneous compassion toward other beings, human and nonhuman alike”²⁹² and “enables one to become the compassion (Buddhism) or care (Heidegger) that one always already is.”²⁹³ overlooks that freeing and enabling alone are only conditions for such possibilities, necessary but not sufficient for their realization. Instead of living by moral standards “the Zen Buddhist achieves his humanity by letting go of external standards of value and by becoming more spontaneous.”²⁹⁴ Yet spontaneity alone is not enough and the claim that our doing “becomes just an expression of nature itself”²⁹⁵ once we are enlightened is problematic as a model of ethical agency in regards to social verifiability and knowing how to implement one's compassion (dukkha too is historical).

Enlightenment as saving others requires a means for doing so and a element of social engagement to fulfil the Bodhisattva Vow. To work for the enlightenment of all sentient beings requires many skilful means; in modernity one cannot rely on convincing

²⁸⁶ R.H. Jones, *Mysticism Examined: Philosophical Inquiries into Mysticism* (State University of New York Press), 274.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 289.

²⁸⁸ Douglas A. Fox, "Zen and Ethics: Dōgen's Synthesis," *Philosophy East and West* 21, no. 1 (1971): 36.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 39.

²⁹¹ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 263.

²⁹² Ibid., 264.

²⁹³ Ibid., 256.

²⁹⁴ T. P. Kasulis, "Truth and Zen," *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 1 (2001): 463.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

people to a leap of faith in God or Buddha (as Nishitani invokes in intro1), on paradoxes of representation, and if people are happy in avidya amongst the comforts offered by *Gestell* one cannot rely on distressful experiences of nihility to power them through the fields. Nishitani makes strong claims that entail far-reaching changes to our conduct and hefty investments of time and energy, this wording belies the epoch of *Gestell* in its implication of requiring justification, yet it is precisely this epoch to which the Bodhisattva now speaks and has its own forms of social discourse, this element of reason-giving must be emphasized to save those under the aegis of the current epoch (who may never know dukkha like an Indian peasant 3,000 years ago).

Satori is explicitly self-validating and incommunicable so alone cannot fulfil the Vow that has a social imperative thus discursive element; communal discourses non-dependent on others enlightenment (ethics and politics) are required to create the necessary conditions/attunements. This is related to the problem of poetry requiring a shared attunement (a poet must convince others the word they hear should be heeded to gather preservers otherwise the word they heed is not valid). Reason is not sufficient for enlightenment, but it is required, both initially and as part of final original unity.

Finnigan explores how the enlightened can have ethical agency without conceptual discriminations, only direct awareness. Finnigan deals with spontaneity in relation to intentionality, whether this is return to original countenance or acquired, asking “when enlightened persons act spontaneously, do they do so in a way that is (at all) informed (however latently) by their internalized discourse, or are their actions purely automatic expressions of their inherent nature?”²⁹⁶ Intentionality and agency concern the possibility for action not whether the enlightened are capable of giving reasons to others thus drawing their revelations into the social discourse required for it to be realized, but her statement that “The deconstructive approach allows no room for a buddha to direct his behaviour, let alone to provide reasons that explain the directedness of his behaviour. In this model, a buddha simply reacts to particulars”²⁹⁷ relates to the issue of communal verifiability and practical criteria.

She suggests the tension may be resolved by foundational spontaneity being required to cultivate spontaneity in action. The former only is when realized within and by the latter; as nothingness requires its mask. The unity of the fields explains the possibility for evaluative norms thus social discourse but not the criteria for the justification of norms to the unenlightened, how the enlightened may be spontaneously responsive yet “correcting his disciples' interpretations by means of his own interpretations presupposes that these discriminatory capacities are, to some extent, conceptualizable”²⁹⁸ So that transmission of enlightenment requires joining enlightened action with the discriminations of field of consciousness. Nishitani's analysis does provide a solution to Finnigan's problem as the modes of thinking required for the agency she seeks are those of the field of consciousness that is realized as one with sunyata. The possibility for such action is thus explained, but such action also requires Great Compassion be joined by ontic criteria that Buddhahood alone does not bequeath, once we pass through nihility to realize the identity of conventional and ultimate truth what manners of discrimination should be retained? Finnigan appeals to the circuminsessional model to explain how the enlightened could give reasons for their actions as “a buddha would be able to appeal to, among other things, his realization about the ultimate nature of reality (i.e., *pratītyasamutpāda*), his desire to eliminate the suffering of others, and his intention to transmit his dharma to his disciples”²⁹⁹ this would solve the intentionality problem but does not provide a model for discourse without all participants sharing such an attunement.

Hansen and Garfield's replies to Finnigan focus on the paradigm of skills but can communal ethical action itself be considered a skill? Hansen seems to apply a Daoist notion of

²⁹⁶ Bronwyn Finnegan and Koji Tanaka, "Don't Think! Just Act!," in *Martial Arts and Philosophy: Beating and Nothingness*, ed. G. Priest and D. Young (Open Court, 2010), 143.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 146.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 151.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 150.

all ways (so long as done naturally) being equally meaningful, avoiding any naturalistic fallacy as “The existing discourse is all natural, but being natural entails nothing about being right or wrong.”³⁰⁰ One can 'naturally' do some heinous things, and find meaning in them, to the horror and suffering of those around me especially if they're oxen, Butcher Ding cannot tell us whether we should be vegetarian. Garfield takes a stronger position presupposing we know what it is to be naturally moral and can therefore “eliminate the obstacles to its spontaneous manifestation”³⁰¹ as our awakened nature. A Buddhist ethics would then be “about cultivation of virtue, elimination of vice, practice of path, and so forth—in short, about self-transformation, about transforming oneself into a buddha”³⁰² but transforming oneself into a Bodhisattva is all about the enlightenment of others not oneself, it is about being the teacher not a student to a master. From the position of enlightenment the discriminations of discursive reason that explain intentionality are critiqued by Hansen and Garfield, yet the skill of rational social discourse is also a way that must be developed for the Vow, an idea developed in consideration of Strauss later in the chapter.

The Bodhisattva are akin to Heidegger's poets, both know what saves and must try to transmit it to those who do not share their undoubtable experience, a model perhaps suitable for a trusted teacher but difficult to apply to a social ethics. Just as there is great danger in heeding poets whose Saying admits of no verification there is a danger within Nishitani understanding of ethics; the enlightened “does not merely know truth, he *is* Truth and consequently does Truth, which is to say that he inevitably does no evil.”³⁰³ Jones points out that “the skilled means used to end the suffering of others could involve a *bodhisattva* in violating any norm of the standard Buddhist code of conduct (while still living free from any consequences).”³⁰⁴ The placing of the enlightened beyond moral laws and the priority of others insight over their ontic welfare is dangerous given that beyond the gainsay of other enlightened ones there is no criteria for verifiability for enlightenment. There appears to be a relation of definition 'that action must be ethical as a Buddha is doing it' but this means we cannot tell who is a Buddha by their actions. Without a standard of compassion separate from enlightenment how do we know we are acting from our Buddhanature, or more pertinently if those advising us are? There is no way to distinguish between the self-validation of an enlightenment experience and self-delusion, and no way to validate if another is enlightened.

Epochal Compassion

When we reflect and realize we are challenged-forth “a longing necessarily awakens for a peremptory directive and for rules that say how man, experienced from ek-sistence toward Being, ought to live in a fitting manner.”³⁰⁵ The need for ethical foundations in the face of contingency may only be desired because reality is unsatisfying to creatures who crave meaningful foundations, but they are also practically required in a social context (albeit in a new or lessened form). Philosophy as poetic reflection is preparatory and gives no answers “But the task of philosophy (let alone politics!) is not to be defined solely by analogy with such poetry.”³⁰⁶ Poetically we dwell, but man cannot dwell on openness alone; such open receptivity must guide and be guided by a concrete ethos that comes to pass through the epochal clearing. A context for compassion is required, a horizon that can determine the communal heritage to be retrieved and thus cannot be simply tied to that heritage but must stem from both *Ereignis*/Sunyata and its actualization in a thrown metaphysical heritage. The clearing for meaning and the meaning that comes

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 168.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 182.

³⁰² Ibid., 183.

³⁰³ Fox, “Zen and Ethics: Dōgen's Synthesis,” 36.

³⁰⁴ Jones, *Mysticism Examined: Philosophical Inquiries into Mysticism*, 280.

³⁰⁵ Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” 255.

³⁰⁶ Poggeler, “West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu,” 299.

to pass in it are not separable, the former cannot be given value distinct from the latter and the meaning/value of *Ereignis* only is in terms of what it enables.

Lowith claims the pure awareness of *Dasein* "presupposes that all traditional truths and contents of life have lost their substance"³⁰⁷ so is an ontology for a nihilistic age. *Ereignis* itself as the projective saving that only is in terms of the danger it is the condition for means the emptiness of resolve thus solicitude is an epochal compassion, attuned to inauthenticity and homelessness as the greatest woes and thus is only compassionate by the framework of the projected epoch. Compassion needs its context, the notion of suffering varies (as Barnhart TCBE points out) as impermanence takes many forms and dukkha too is a historical concept. Compassion is epochal (salvation, material comfort, absence of suffering, equality) and compassionate action requires a shared understanding of cruelty, kindness and suffering. Calling another to their responsibility for own-most Being can be both state-funded drug rehabilitation programmes and an end to prohibition, or the dismantling of the NHS and refusal of state-funded rehab.

This returns us to the theme of generating criteria for the retrieval of ethics (new sending) from the nature of *Ereignis* itself; the relation between the preparation for a destinal sending and the criteria to guide such a retrieval, how they determine each other. The projective moment gets its warrant from the criteria of the present and *Ereignis* itself must provide the horizon for adjudicating the epochal understanding from which ethical principles are derived. Some of these criteria were explicated in chapter 2.6 in terms of a combination of attending to *Ereignis* as the preservation of plural possibilities guiding a retrieval of the plurality latent in *Gestell* as the realization of null origin; a contingent pluralism that guards against the supreme danger whilst preserving it.

Ethics is determined by the gods our poetry names or leaves absent and post-destitute dwelling has been characterized as bringing-forth the plurality within *Gestell* to counter its totality. Multiple meanings of *Sein* cannot be grasped by a single perspective, so to truly let-be the homeground is to put forward a relational paradigm that allows many possibilities to co-exist. Yet the preserving of the marginalized against totalizing disclosure lacks criteria for judging when marginalized discourses should be eclipsed and how the plurality should be related. Pluralism must be preserved but within a framework of adjudication that does not totalize yet retains the ability to make critical discriminations, the plurality of *Da* carries it's own tension; namely the question "How can people simultaneously adopt a heart-bound and sincere willingness to embrace multicultural values with the utmost seriousness and yet regard them playfully and with complete humility as unable to deliver ultimate freedom by themselves? How can people both believe and critique without self-contradiction?"³⁰⁸

To let beings be includes fellow human beings so that releasement is also an allowing of difference, yet paradoxically also an encouraging of uniformity in terms of desiring a conscience thus shared attunement.

Before moving on to consideration of the implications for political philosophy the possibility of deriving a stricter ethics from certain features of Heidegger's thought is to be considered.

Ethical Form and Ethical Emptiness

I speak therefore I am, and language is a communal activity, Saying the horizon of intelligibility that opens the *Da*. *Dasein* only is in terms of referential totality of world

³⁰⁷ Löwith, "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism," 174.

³⁰⁸ Patricia Huntington, "Stealing the Fire of Creativity: Heidegger's Challenge to Intellectuals," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. N.J. Holland and P. Huntington (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 373.

that includes others “from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself”³⁰⁹ so that “*Dasein* in itself is essentially Being-with...even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived”.³¹⁰ *MitSein* essentially makes oneself collective and dependent, *Dasein*'s care is also always concern for others as “So far as *Dasein* is at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being,”³¹¹ so that the call of conscience equally comes from Thou as it does Mineness.

Despite that “as Being-with, *Dasein* 'is' essentially for the sake of Others,”³¹² this denotes a shared world and precondition for empathy (both moral and perceptual) rather than any ethics with no connotation of *how* to be with others. The nullity conscience calls us to is a guilt “sufficiently *formalized* so that those ordinary phenomena of 'guilt' which are related to our concerned Being with Others, will *drop out*.”³¹³ The call solely calls us to appropriation rather than any claim, it “fails to give any such 'practical' injunctions, *solely because* it summons *Dasein* to existence, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self,” and is thus epochally neutral. In wanting to have a conscience (heeding the call of the self as nothingness) *Dasein* “on the null basis of its null projection, it has, in Being with Others, already become guilty towards them.”³¹⁴

MitSein means responsibility for self is also for others. Yet this same call is later portrayed as announcing the need for a new destining, so that solicitude is an epochal compassion for the destitute age rather than ahistorical structure of *Dasein*.

Heidegger focusses on the holy and hale whose malignancy concerns freedom alone not ontic suffering. The non-self that calls us to responsibility “is, equiprimordially, the existential condition for the possibility of the 'morally' good and for that of the 'morally' evil - that is, for morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually.”³¹⁵ and is the condition of possibility for the opposite of compassion, such concern is equally for, with, or against Others. This remains constant throughout his works; “The essence of evil does not consist in the mere baseness of human action, but rather in the malice of rage”³¹⁶ and “To healing Being first grants ascent into grace; to raging its compulsion to malignancy.”³¹⁷ *Dasein* means to be called to responsibility for *Ereignis* and the evil of malignancy is withdrawal and danger, the flight of gods and nothing more, true compassion is to then attend to the Holy as “what is distinctive about this world-epoch consists in the closure of the dimension of the hale. Perhaps that is the sole malignancy.”³¹⁸ This view has been questioned throughout chapters 2.3. and 2.6, that such malignancy belongs to an epochal understanding yet also is constitutive of what gives such epochs.

Heidegger talks of dwelling requiring 'kindness the Pure' to stay with our hearts; that “As long as this arrival of kindness endures, so long does man succeed in measuring himself not unhappily against the godhead.”³¹⁹ The new epoch requires both kindness and sacrifice; but as the latter is self-abnegation of poets rather than any usual meaning of sacrifice so too is the former a kindness to counteract malignancy understood as the flight of gods. Kindness understood in terms of empathy is proximal not primordial as

³⁰⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 154. SZ 118

³¹⁰ Ibid., 156. SZ 120

³¹¹ Ibid., 163. SZ 125

³¹² Ibid., 160. SZ 123

³¹³ Ibid., 328. SZ 283

³¹⁴ Ibid., 334. SZ 288

³¹⁵ Ibid., 332. SZ 286

³¹⁶ “Letter on Humanism,” 261.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 254.

³¹⁹ “...Poetically Man Dwells...,” 227.

“only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible: it gets its motivation from the unsociability of the dominant modes of Being-with.”³²⁰

Solicitude must be distinguished from anything resembling the everyday (or 'correct') understandings of compassion. Such "'welfare work', as a factual social arrangement, is grounded in *Dasein*'s state of Being as Being-with. Its factual urgency gets its motivation in that *Dasein* maintains itself proximally and for the most part in the deficient modes of solicitude,"³²¹ that treat co-*Dasein* as present-at-hand and are thus indifferent to their needs. Solitude itself has two possible modes; the inauthentic "In such solicitude the Other can become one who is dominated and dependent, even if this domination is a tacit one and remains hidden from him."³²² Authentic solicitude frees the others potentiality for Being "helps the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it,"³²³ it focuses on the other as *Dasein* rather than to any specific 'what' with which that other is concerned

Just as selfhood occurs in the space opened up between authenticity and inauthenticity so too solicitude requires a balance between "that which leaps in and dominates and that which leaps forth and liberates".³²⁴ Resoluteness brings the self "into solicitous Being with Others"³²⁵ not only must we desire to have a conscience "When *Dasein* is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others,"³²⁶ calling them to face anxiety. Solicitude thus concerns itself with the enlightenment of others as true compassion and mirrors the concern of the Bodhisattva Vow. Solicitude is a refusal to take responsibility for others, but the attempt to call them to responsibility means encouraging others to face anxiety resolutely and bring their attunement into coherence with one's own, which itself requires an ontic realization in action, despite Heidegger's comments on 'welfare work' freeing the other to his freedom would first seem to require a level of material welfare for *Dasein* to be capable of realizing projects (the freedom from/with are related), the everyday sense of compassion that relates to material welfare would seem to include both authentic and inauthentic senses.

The 'correct' everyday view of compassion concerns itself with calculative action intended to alleviate physical suffering motivated by empathy, the 'true' is solicitude that frees others for their appropriation, promulgating reflection upon Ereignis in preparation for epochal self-surmounting. As noted in chapter 2.6 Heidegger's comments on the relation of homelessness to the lack of housing leads many to see his notion of compassion as having "no room for the immeasurable misery of the masses, the suffering of the oppressed, the countless, untold tears of those who neither think nor poetize."³²⁷ Yet the correct and true are samsara-sive-nirvana, whilst the identity of the ontological and its ontic actualization indicates that the true danger only is as the 'correct' Heidegger's over-emphasis on meditative thought as divorced from calculative does lead to an incompleteness in his thought, the relation of solicitude and 'welfare work' is an integral one, especially when welfare is a building that gathers.

Olafson and MitSein as an Attunement of Trust

The relationality of man would not seem to be normative but the ground of all social relations, despite this Olafson attempts to draw out a more concrete ethics from consideration of MitSein, holding a traditional normative ethics cannot be grounded but

³²⁰ *Being and Time*, 162. SZ 125

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 158. SZ 121

³²² *Ibid.* SZ 122

³²³ *Ibid.*, 159. SZ 122

³²⁴ *Ibid.* SZ 122

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 344. SZ 298

³²⁶ *Ibid.* SZ 298

³²⁷ Holland and Huntington, *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, 161.

that ethical constraints on conduct are still required and can be derived from the relationships between co-disclosers. This provides no single objective morality, Olafson noting the precariousness of ethical life with no compulsion nor obligation in the traditional sense being possible.

This precariousness arises from needing to trust (the reliance on the other that is equiprimordial with responsibility) yet always having to account for the self-interest of others, "and therefore there is always a pressing need to strengthen it in any way we can, even when our own interests may suffer."³²⁸ We are all at times on different sides of the relation of trust making us aware of 'natural obligations' such as honesty and helping others that form the minimum requirement for considering an other a moral partner. The Master-Servant circuminsessional dynamic means self-interest must be balanced with the interests of others and that the community of mutual recognition is always insecure, "we are compelled to live with the peculiar uncertainty that attaches to the status of the very commitments that we would like to think of as being irrevocable and free of all ambiguity." ³²⁹ Olafson tries to show this conflict of interests can also be seen in terms of others interests not limiting us but constituting our own well-being, a concern soon to be seen as shared by Strauss.

Olafson seeks ethics in the communal nature of truth, that art needs preservers. From the fact of plurality comes "something like the priority of certain interests over others - claims that, if sustained, would be expressed by an 'ought'. The datum for ethical reflection is, accordingly, a number of (possibly) conflicting claims to this status rather than a collection of brute facts and equally brute demands." ³³⁰ Ethical truths are not disclosed at-hand but are what "shows itself to be such that it constitutes a limit on the choices we can make." ³³¹ so that ethical co-disclosure requires something that when our interests conflict "establishes a responsibility for them to resolve the issue between them in some other way." ³³² For Olafson it is implicit that as co-disclosers we try to arrive at a common disclosure we can all agree on, shared responsibility for disclosure and community means an action must be co-disclosed as acceptable to those it affects rather than any other possible action. Co-disclosure of truth implies what I disclose must be compatible/complimentary with what others disclose, responsibility entails the same for an action so that "if it can be shown to be preferable to any other in terms of the way it affects people's lives, then there is a sense in which these consequences will be the same for all; and in that respect it will be like truth." ³³³

MitSein is thus a form of ethical recognition so that if our actions affect another's interests then it is subject to their judgement as well as ours, in authentic MitSein there is thus an "obligation that can be satisfied only by a good-faith effort to understand what is being done on both sides in its relation to the two sets of interests."³³⁴ Yet the desire for authenticity is a conditional imperative, first posited to ensure the completeness of analysis and later transformed into projected epochal understanding. In line with Heidegger Olafson acknowledges MitSein is the grounds for both good and evil, so fundamentally pre-ethical, yet maintains "What is fundamentally unjustifiable and therefore wrong is to deny our distinctively human commonality with one another by treating someone as though he or she were not a partner in MitSein and had no claim to

³²⁸ F.A. Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 94.

³²⁹ Ibid., 73.

³³⁰ Ibid., 44.

³³¹ Ibid., 51.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., 55.

³³⁴ Ibid., 58.

any consideration in decisions we make about how to act." ³³⁵ Olafson defines evil as "what someone does intentionally to pervert a system of human cooperation based on mutual recognition by making it an instrument of private and intrinsically unshareable purposes." ³³⁶ ; but evil is ultimately condemned as incoherent, yet coherence is a value of analysis not life and reality need not be coherent.

A motive beyond self-interest or coherence is required to build trust, legalistic or rights based systems are judged as insufficient as "the principle of the right is a principle of criticism and not of motivation" ³³⁷ Ultimately it is necessary to make others happiness a condition of ones own. MitSein alone is not enough, MitSein be experienced/realized as self-emptying by building upon the need for moral recognition for our own happiness. Olafson (like Zimmerman) holds that once true relationality is realized "a distinction between self-interest and the general well-being will simply not be at all plausible." ³³⁸ so that insight is compassion, but a separate motivation towards such realization is required; an initial motivation for trust arising from the legalistic and rights based theories Olafson dismisses yet are required to complement MitSein.

There is an element of ontological need for others, a reliance on world as shared, that some element of trust and loyalty to the other is required for the ontology of nothingness to be realized, but this alone cannot provide a social ethic. The interdependence of world says little of duty to others and only provides ground for responsibility towards others being integral to responsibility to oneself. Olafson lays out the possibility for both practices he wants to say are ethical and evil, but like authenticity/inauthenticity preferring one over the other requires a further step, that trust as precondition means "evil is parasitical upon good." ³³⁹ does not entail parasitism is bad; foetuses are parasitic upon mothers, children upon parents and students upon teachers.

It is true by definition that "the coming into being of a framework of mutual recognition is a necessary condition for the possibility of a violation of the ethical relationships predicated upon it." ³⁴⁰ , but this does not entail any imperative to avoid violation. Primordality is warranted for ontological analysis and has no normative force, the claim that we cannot reject the constraints of MitSein without incoherence provides no injunction to coherence once metaphysical foundations of reason are abandoned. We cannot compel others to think rationally, to be enlightened, nor to act ethically; obligation applies to all "and compliance with it has to be predicated on their willingness to respond appropriately" ³⁴¹ , obligation only holds when the others hold to it also and so is fragile and conditional, yet must be treated as unconditional. To build upon Olafson's ground of ethics thus requires a shared attunement of trust, a community of preservers for the epochal truth of balancing a plurality of interests thus a return the political arena.

Post-Destitute Politics

As meditative thought is provisional/preparatory so too must the ethics that realizes it, the danger is that the "thinking which Heidegger himself characterizes as 'preparatory' is marked by a certain 'emptiness' or formalism" ³⁴² leading to the spectre of moral and political relativism. Hodge defends Heidegger from such charges as, whilst context independent, resoluteness is the condition of possibility for making truth claims which "are about

³³⁵ Ibid., 69.

³³⁶ Ibid., 78.

³³⁷ Ibid., 85.

³³⁸ Ibid., 92.

³³⁹ Ibid., 68.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 75.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 76.

³⁴² Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 110.

real, independently existing structures and are thus falsifiable. Thus the belief in the thousand-year *Reich* was both false and falsifiable."³⁴³ Yet the commitment to such a belief does not seem similarly falsifiable without recourse to a system of valuation beyond that provided by *Ereignis* alone so that Heidegger's thought cannot rule out specific political projects.

Heidegger's later thought is often seen as characterized by a scrupulous apoliticism, which Bernstein considers itself to be a political position as "to condemn the 'political realm', to characterize it as only a manifestation of *Gestell* is an *extreme* political gesture – one that contributes to Heidegger's exclusive focus on art and the poetic revealing as the saving power."³⁴⁴ Despite this Heidegger's thought does have political implications, even if just in negative terms of denying democracy was the best political form to realize poetic dwelling, and releasement as a form of activity beyond the active/passive distinction is still a form of engaged political agency based upon a retrieved heritage. Dallmayr holds that whilst Heidegger has little to say on ontic political decisions he can contribute to "the paradigmatic level, the level of a reassessment of Western metaphysics, including Western political metaphysics",³⁴⁵ that he is not apolitical but thought as highest politics radically questions current political ideologies.

Heidegger focused solely on preparatory reflection rather than the presumption demand that thought provide political solutions. Poggeler holds Heidegger's thought was "blind to specific political questions but which felt challenged by politics and got deeply entangled in it"³⁴⁶ asking "To what sort of philosophy does a thinking lead which, like Heidegger's, sees itself called to politics but fails in its concrete engagement?"³⁴⁷ Such a politics must prepare the way for planetary dialogue through retrieval of universal nihilism, yet cannot join Heidegger's denial of "a human 'right' to freedom of belief and security of life and that philosophy is foremost to defend this right."³⁴⁸ Poggeler claims Heidegger misunderstood the autonomy of the political sphere, that it cannot be like preparatory reflection and "stake everything on the transformation of man, but must accept the fact that out of fear of the consequences of their actions human beings must submit these actions to norms"³⁴⁹ the risk of destruction through technology brings with it a new responsibility for a pluralistic politics of prudence "and will not allow the actions of the politician the freedom that can be granted to the creative artist in his field."³⁵⁰

The political form to cohere with post-destitute dwelling is to be one that expresses the relation between a plurality of understandings in the absence of gods providing a framework for epochal co-existence. Such politics must be retrieved from the null origin that manifested as *Gestell*; saving *Gestell* and apportioning nihilism its place as an authentic response to the current epochal claim that remains open to new possibilities by giving poetic form to the tension between plurality and totality. Meditative political thought guides and is self-identical with a retrieval of calculative thought preserving diversity among people as the ontic correlate to sheltering alternate possible understandings of Being and giving content to the clearing guided by the criteria of its preservation through beholding of the danger. Such a politics is inherently a work in progress that recognizes its contingency and insufficiency.

Wilde and Kluback hold that the State limits the existential realization of ontological/reflective ground, endangering it, yet that such danger is inherent in the

³⁴³ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 196.

³⁴⁴ Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*, 124.

³⁴⁵ Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 122.

³⁴⁶ Otto Poggeler, "Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. R. Wolin (MIT Press, 1993), 200.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 237.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

ontological's need for such realization. Such is the constant supreme danger; that "The possibility of estrangement from the ontological dimension in consciousness is the realization of it."³⁵¹ That danger is inherent to destining necessitates a form of post-destitute politics that maintains awareness of this danger and in this regard they suggest that "The richness of Heidegger's thinking can be fulfilled by its union with the richness of Anglo-American political philosophy."³⁵² Meditative reflection on concealed possibilities of meaning and a humanistic theory of rights complete and implicate each other. Heidegger denied democracy's role in the saving epoch, yet what we pick out as characterizing a political ideology is determined by our understanding of the age; which as indicated in chapter 2.5 Heidegger viewed in an overly narrow fashion, overlooking its capacity to counter its own danger through a retrieval of the pluralistic aspects of *Gestell* (that are inherently related to its levelling) found in liberal democracy facing its own tensions of multiculturalism, of preserving the Other whilst rendering it the Same and facing up to the contingency of its commitments.

Strauss and the Liberal Democracy of Heidegger

The relation of Heidegger to the problematic tensions within modern democracy is was outlined by Strauss who saw liberal democracy as in crisis due to the replacement of absolute moral principles with historically contingent values, that it "cannot live without an absolute basis and cannot live with an absolute basis."³⁵³ This contradiction of awareness of and commitment to the contingency of conviction, that we must live by an answer to the question of the human whilst also holding that question open to other answers, was seen by Strauss as incompatible with a rational and universal ethics of human rights. Even if we try to ground reason as a debate between perspectives reason cannot ground itself so is caught in contradiction; both posited as adjudicating between commitments yet also making them immune to rational criticism. Justifying the reliance on reason without recourse to reason was seen by Strauss as "the most pressing question for social science today."³⁵⁴ Such mitigated relativism fails to understand the non-rational commitments of others, modern pluralistic liberal democracies cannot understand nor tolerate the intolerance and difference of others nor coherently condemn it; "the field within which relativists can practice sympathetic understanding is restricted to the community of relativists who understand each other with great sympathy because they are united by identically the same fundamental commitment, or rather by identically the same rational insight into the truth of relativism."³⁵⁵ Liberal democracy is a building requiring a shared attunement for its preservation, an attunement that like any other has no objective basis.

Strauss sought to save liberal democracy as a context for political discourse and counter its levelling aspect through an ideal never attainable but always sought, such saving requires a great thinker for the age "But here is the great trouble: the only great thinker in our time is Heidegger."³⁵⁶ who "declared that ethics is impossible, and his whole being was permeated by the awareness that this fact opens up an abyss."³⁵⁷ For Strauss the first step towards this saving was the mutual critique of liberal democracy and socialism, the dangers of both being set forth as "the friend of liberal democracy is not its flatterer",³⁵⁸ and such a friend is Heidegger, whose thought as a reaction to relativism

³⁵¹ Heidegger, "The Question of Being," 25.

³⁵² Ibid., 17.

³⁵³ Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 16.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 29.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 28.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 6.

belongs to the question of “liberal democracy, or, more precisely, a liberal democracy which has become uncertain of itself or of its future.”³⁵⁹

Reflective thought and political philosophy are in a relation of productive tension between critique of our guiding values and commitment to them. A philosophy aimed at epochal transformation requires political engagement and just as Heidegger's thought must be completed by a practical ethics so too must *Gestell* “return from the abstractions or constructs of scientific social science to social reality, to look at social phenomena primarily in the perspective of the citizen and the statesmen, and then in the perspective of the citizen of the world” ; to counter its tendency to totality by retuning it to its belonging with plurality. From this perspective the function of philosophy is the resolution of disagreements between groups in a political community, “it is the duty of the good citizen to make civil strife cease and to create, by persuasion, agreement among the citizens”,³⁶⁰ to partake in preservation and build a horizon of attunement more primordial than any specific differences through developing the skilful means of rational discourse as itself a way.

We cannot simply accept liberal values but must “find the ground of the variety of comparative views in the human soul, or, more generally stated, in the human condition.”³⁶¹ , in the ideal of a world society that requires “a world culture, a culture genuinely uniting all men.”³⁶² Strauss sees the claim that 'only a god can save us' as the need for a world religion we cannot make but must be receptive to in recognition that reason rests on an abyss, echoing Heidegger's call for planetary dialogue that by delving into “the problematic character of the Western understanding of Being, we may gain access to the deepest root of the East....From here one can begin to understand the possibility of a world religion.”³⁶³ The necessary shared attunement for homeless dwelling that our building is to bring-forth.

For Heidegger modern politics of state are based on metaphysical subjectivism and from this Dallmayr concludes political theories based on a community of subjects are ruled out; nationalism, collectivism and communitarianism are eschewed as are “compactly or substantively ethical lifeforms, as found, for example, in the ancient Greek *polis* (held together by a common *ethos*).”³⁶⁴ Despite his preference for a locally rooted Volk held together by art the notion of such a people is inadequate to Heidegger's thought as “his nonobjectivist ontology and his stress on ontological difference should have suggested to him a greater heterogeneity among people”.³⁶⁵

Dallmayr takes Heidegger's critiques of nationalism as implying such post-metaphysical politics must be global. Compassion necessarily has a universal element, a solidarity for a 'we' that stand together, the self-emptying/abnegation of ego-death means an elements of universality is a criteria for the ethics of the new epochal sending. Nishitani's characterization of Great Compassion clearly implies such a universality that even extends beyond humanity Zimmerman claiming “enlightened humanity exhibits compassion equally for all beings, not just for humans”³⁶⁶ man may be of greater value ontologically as in chapter 2.6 but the ethical realization of the Great Compassion has

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 39.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 8.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 51.

³⁶² Ibid., 42.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 113.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 291.

³⁶⁶ Zimmerman, "Heidegger, Buddhism, and Deep Ecology," 257.

more universal overtones than Heidegger's who "does not see man as connected through a universal sympathy with everything that exists".³⁶⁷

Hodge sees implications for such universal solidarity in that Heidegger "makes it clear that there are better and worse ways of exercising care, on an individual level, which can be extended to insisting that the affirmation of collective *Dasein* must take place at the level of human beings as a whole and not at the level of arbitrarily delimited subgroups based on nationality and race"³⁶⁸ although perhaps not a kinship with abysmal bodily animals that remain things. Olafson also denies the ethical recognition of *Mitein* as limited to a single community, aiming for broadest possible 'we', but acknowledges Heidegger himself "disqualifies the mass of mankind for anything like moral partnership."³⁶⁹ But *MitSein* is the ground of such recognition, not a prescription to extend this to a wider community; it is the ground of *any* specific community not a universal community.

Heidegger considered the notion of a 'we' to remain a non-egoistic form of subjectivism connected to nationalism "Subjective egoism, for which mostly without its knowing it the I is determined beforehand as subject, can be cancelled out through the insertion of the I into the we. Through this, subjectivity only gains in power."³⁷⁰ Universality for Heidegger is a sacrifice for a specific community that "established the possibility for a true community, where each nation exists on its own"³⁷¹ in true mutuality. Yet this also requires a horizon in which to relate and adjudicate communities interests, a horizon reached through thoughtfulness as "By reflecting on what it means to be human being, one sharpens one's awareness of what is common to all human beings", to be a citizen of the world rather than a member of a discrete people.

Dallmayr holds that Heidegger's invocation of the polis as a dwelling place was meant as a political conception that preserves the nihility of Being in accordance with a co-letting-be of emancipatory solicitude rather than as bound by a common ethos; as "the arena of the perennial contest between being and nothingness, life and death - a rift that can be only partially remedied or domesticated by prevailing political structures";³⁷² a politic system that holds open like an artwork. Once the metaphysical notion of people as subjective collective is surmounted the notion of a people as constituted in a response to Being remains "but instead of exerting dominance through popular sovereignty this community persists only as an absent presence or in the mode of refusal"³⁷³ as attending to essential Saying. Their homeland as the retrieval of null-origin "is not a factual political entity but rather a hallowed site completely resistant to possessive appropriation"³⁷⁴ as a shared horizon for understandings of the real that preserves *Ereignis* and increases our sense of awe and wonder at its mystery.

Dallmayr points to the ambivalence in democracy between its liberal and populist aspects; as subservient to individual rights yet seeking to represent a collective people, claiming "the recent upsurge of democracy is the upsurge of a paradox, the upsurge of something that seems theoretically impossible while it is practically affirmed."³⁷⁵ Accordingly the notion of 'the people' is an ambivalent presence and absence, a relation

³⁶⁷ Poggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-Tzu," 53.

³⁶⁸ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 189.

³⁶⁹ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 53.

³⁷⁰ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 152.

³⁷¹ Karl Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. R. Wolin (MIT Press, 1993), 181.

³⁷² Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 114.

³⁷³ Fred Dallmayr, "Postmetaphysics and Democracy," *Political Theory* 21, no. 1 (1993): 124.

³⁷⁴ Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 114.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

of tension held open by absent gods. Heidegger's dismissal of democracy was due to his "identification of democracy with popular sovereignty (that is, with the kind of collective identity rendered dubious in our post-metaphysical time)." ³⁷⁶ seeing democracy only in terms of collective subjectivism that relies on the metaphysical authority of subject rather than the coming together of multiple perspectives and differences whose unity is elusive and forms the attunement for a community of preservers. In these "divergent tendencies which link themselves to the name 'democracy' one may see attempts to win back the covenant of the citizenry."³⁷⁷ To express null origin by retrieving plurality from totality, requiring the tensions identified by Strauss to be put forth in the art of the post-destitute age through the building of rights and welfare.

Building as Welfare and Rights

Dallmayr sees such rights as a planetary dialogue (that as indicated in chapter 2.4 is to guide the retrieval of Western destiny) post-*Gestell* planetary thinking requires a global dwelling implying the political form must be one based in this and conducive to such dialogue; a being at home through homelessness. For Dallmayr this dialogue "is not a simple negation of universality or moral universalism, but rather a rethinking of /// human rights in a direction that gives primacy to considerations of global justice"³⁷⁸ that treats universality as a hope and yearning. Morgans comments on this (and Dallmayr later agrees) that this fails to escape relativism as "A 'hope or yearning' cannot be its own explanation without reducing values, et cetera, to mere constructions"³⁷⁹ and we cannot "claim an *a priori* to rights in order to mark out a space for counter-disclosure, dissent, and critique of the prevailing state of in-the-world rights, formal and informal, in some time and place"³⁸⁰ without explaining compassion and the ontological presuppositions of this 'ought'. Dallmayr sees Heidegger as providing this; post-metaphysics the rights upon which modern liberal democracy relies cannot be given objective foundation or universal ground, but as a form of building are grounded on abyssal *Ereignis* as preserving plurality. The clearing and the meaning it makes possible mutually implicate each other; rights need a non-reductive ontological ground and *Ereignis* needs realizing in a system of pluralistic understandings.

Such rights must be balanced by equity issues as they can be both protection for the weak or weapons of the strong, we must always ask "Whose rights (or liberties) are asserted, against whom, and in what concrete context? Do rights-claims advance the cause of justice, equity, and human well-being, or are they obstacles on this road?" ³⁸¹ Dallmayr gives the example of the right to property that "leaves untouched questions of the amount of property and the rightness of its exercise."³⁸² Rights cannot be those of rational subjectivity alone, they must include socio-economic issues of public welfare and this tension between universal rights and their finite bearers be continually questioned and held open to change.

The nature of reck and jointure discussed in chapter 1.6 along the lines of the master-servant circuminsessional relation could be seen as carrying an imperative for a politics of equality of rights balanced by social equity, providing "the normative foundation for a right to belong to a political space."³⁸³ Dallmayr draws out the ethical consequence that "juncture and hence justice is the readiness to let others be and to attend to them

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 97.

³⁷⁷ Poggeler, "Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding."

³⁷⁸ Fred Dallmayr, "'Asian Values' And Global Human Rights," *Philosophy East and West* 52, no. 2 (2002): 184.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 575.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 580.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 174.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Peg Birmingham, "Heidegger and Arendt: The Lawful Space of Worldly Appearance," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. F. Raffoul and E.S. Nelson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 162.

with considerate care; by contrast, disjuncture or injustice involves the insurgence of selfish conceit bent on permanently monopolizing the space of presence while shuffling others out of the way." ³⁸⁴. Concluding economic and social practices should focus less on the current understanding of rights as equivalence that tends to "deteriorate into privileges, into the attempt to monopolize social control and to /// shuffle aside both past and future generations (or social groupings)" ³⁸⁵ by overlooking the difference in power and wealth of the bearer of those rights. Whilst I agree that attending to how we dwell together in jointure may entail attending to changing conditions of social equity rather than pure equivalence (rights), lingering jointure as transient presencing gives only a possible framework for justice rather than directly entailing or informing any such system. For Heidegger disjuncture is equally essential to presencing and diversity as the debate over values is itself a value and debate entails the possibility of one side fading to permanent concealment.

Chapter 3.3 considered welfare and legal commitments to rights as a form of building; understandings are also things once the *theoria-praxis* dichotomy is eroded in the higher action of reflection. Political and legal rulings are also a form of art, highlighting the contingency of constitutions and limitation on majority rule that would be tyranny of levelling. The strife between the will of groups and individual rights is the figure to be set-forth in legal constitutions and welfare states to exhibit the tension of plurality and totality within *Gestell*. The institutions of socialist liberal democracies are themselves a way of dwelling under absent gods so that all engaged citizens are both the poets who name its issues and the preservers who make such issues bind a people together.

Politics of Enlightenment

Religion and Nothingness says little of politics or social activism and Zen like most forms of mystical thought sees society and politics as what we freed from not what is reformed; focusing on I-Thou rather than the We.

Jones holds mystics have no sense of social progress and view societies as collections of individuals to be enlightened with even Buddha himself only having socio-political effects as incidental since "Legislation or reward and punishment on a society-wide scale would be an external attempt to dominate and manipulate others against their will...Such force would be ineffective or even harmful. Behaviour may change but not the dispositions and hence not the person."³⁸⁶ The view that as "people inherently have the capacity for enlightenment no special institutions are needed. A reform of social structures is insufficient, and the inner transformation makes any new societal institutions unnecessary" ³⁸⁷ seems to overlook certain societal organizations are more conducive to realization of the Great Compassion, social measures to aid enlightenment need be no more domination and manipulation than does the student-teacher relation. The attempt to provide an arena for enlightenment need not be founded on force but social discourse, rather than regular socio-political concerns there is the need for a social ethic conducive to enlightenment and political criteria are thereby derived from *sunyata*.

Puligandla and Puhakka take a mitigated version of this view. Despite holding that society is by definition unfree and Buddhism "finds the realization of freedom in the ultimate renunciation of social and political institutions of every kind"³⁸⁸ they also conclude Buddhists should "work toward the realization of such a society as would be most conducive to the attainment of true freedom"³⁸⁹ without succumbing to the "delusion that social and political

³⁸⁴ Dallmayr, *Critical Phenomenology, Cross-Cultural Theory, Cosmopolitanism*, 125.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 129.

³⁸⁶ Jones, *Mysticism Examined: Philosophical Inquiries into Mysticism*, 287.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ R. Puligandla and K. Puhakka, "Buddhism and Revolution," *Philosophy East and West* 20, no. 4 (1970): 352.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 354.

revolutions are in themselves adequate for the attainment of freedom and enlightenment.”³⁹⁰ They echo Heidegger's critique of man as commodity in chapter 2.3 and find common ground with socialism, going as far to claim that in opposing capitalism “Buddhism is led to advocate socialism, not because a socialist doctrine follows inevitably from some basic Buddhist presuppositions, but because, as a matter of expediency, socialism provides the best means for overcoming economic bondage and attaining the higher goal of freedom.”³⁹¹ This highlights that a politics conducive to freedom is an integral component of the Bodhisattva vow, a revolutionary spirit that “neither begins nor ends in the realization of *any* form of social order. Paradoxically, then, it is precisely this fundamentally asocial, negative view of Buddhism on society that renders it a philosophy of perpetual revolution.”³⁹² By this they hold Buddhism escapes from the 'paradox of the revolutionary' requiring a politics in line with its paradoxical self-identity of the fields; one that preserves both the personal individual and the absence which it masks.

Despite Japan's partial Westernisation Nishitani's thought cannot reasonably be held in the same relation to liberal democracy as that of Heidegger, yet the same holding open of meanings in continual immanent critique that sets forth the tensions within freedom coupled with issues of social welfare can be seen as complementing and following on from the political requirements of *sunyata*.

Conclusion*

It has been the aim of this study to approach the question of the experience of the self as it faces nihilism, and to do so from the point of view of the relation between Being and Nothingness as these concepts are discussed in the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Nishitani Keiji. Rather than attempting to solve or reduce the tension between, on the one hand, the disclosure of meaning associated with Being, or on the other hand, the lack thereof associated with nihilism, a different path has been sought that renders that very tension productive rather than problematic. By offering a novel interpretation of the similarities and differences between Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis* and Nishitani's treatment of the Buddhist term *Śūnyatā* as “Absolute Nothingness” this study has proposed the essential role that should be met, affirmed, and embraced in human experience, rather than avoided, solved, or ignored. The comparative dialogue has also sought to render productive inconsistencies within and discrepancies between the two philosopher's account of meaning associated with nihilism. Taken together, the differing paths through *Ereignis* and *Śūnyatā* as means of reaching the particularly modern form of nihilism, offers the possibility of a new reading of these two philosopher's projects that does not reduce their thought exclusively to ontological, existential or ethical interpretations, where a new possibility for emancipation and the proper human comportment to nihilism can be gleaned from the unity of the interpretations—both their virtues and shortcomings—appropriate to these various domains.

While both philosophers understand the necessary comportment in the face of nihilism as demanding a dual transformation of the human and the society the human evolves within, both under-develop this key feature. This study has thus sought to augment the dialogue between the two philosophers on this very point, thus pointing a way immanent to their respective systems towards a viable modification of the self in the face of meaninglessness, which does not simply reproduce the problem by treating the self as an autonomous subject separate from the world or the society it is embedded within. Thus, with a new focus undertaken here on the communal nature of Heidegger's *Dasein* thought in tandem with Nishitani's "true self" as "personal-sive-

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 349.

³⁹² Ibid., 354.

impersonal", a way forward is discernible, which capitalizes on the counter-tendency of nihilism, and remains within rather than retreating from the emptiness of meaning thus discovering a way forward, not to overcome but to modify how one abides within the modern crisis of meaninglessness, a way forward consonant with and immanent to a common core element of Heidegger's and Nishitani's philosophies of Being and Nothingness.

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