

Being at the Beginning: Heidegger's Interpretation of Heraclitus

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Herr Schulz, wenn ich nachdenke,

dann ist es manchmal so,

als ob Heraklit danebensteht.

– Heidegger to Walter Schulz¹

In Heidegger's lexicon 'being' usually designates what, in this or that historical epoch, it means for any entity to be. Hence, it is not to be confused with a term designating any entity or set of entities, though it necessarily stands in an essential relation to human beings, as creatures uniquely capable of differentiating beings from what gives them meaning. But the meaning of being, so construed, must also be distinguished from what grounds or constitutes its essential correlation with human beings. Heidegger labels this ground the *Ereignis*.² He also refers to it as *Seynsgeschichte* to signal the fact that, as part of this *Ereignis*, the history of interpretations of being constitutes and, in that sense, underlies our way of being and understanding being. In the process, this still-unfolding history takes hold of us in the ways we make this destiny our own, mindlessly or not. Indeed, in our preoccupation with particular beings (including the metaphysical preoccupation with them insofar as they exist, i.e., with the being of beings), this history easily escapes our notice. In the period from 1935 to 1945 Heidegger attempts to develop a kind of thinking that could become mindful of this history and thereby free from it (a

freedom, it bears adding, that calls, by no means for forgetting or dismissing it, but for paying final respects to it).³

Essential to this history and no less party to it are salient ways of thinking that privilege some entity or another (God, nature, matter, humans, scientifically determined reality) as the key to the meaning of 'being.' By thus obscuring the difference between being and beings, these ways of thinking unknowingly contribute to concealing – and waylaying any concern for – the grounds of that difference. Heidegger subsumes these traditional, obfuscating ways of thinking under a single term: "metaphysics". Against this metaphysical tradition but also thanks to it, Heidegger struggles to think in terms of this history – *seynsgeschichtliches Denken* – where the thinking understands itself as firmly part of that history and where the history is not a record or explanation of the past, based upon some reckoning in the present, but instead a process that essentially involves and appropriates us and is constitutive of our unfinished being. Or, as Heidegger also puts it, we have been thrown or appropriated into this history and it is in terms of this history that we have – and have yet – to come into our own.⁴

Not surprisingly, in Heidegger's scenario, Plato's thought plays a central role as the beginning of metaphysics.⁵ To be sure, he sharply distinguishes Plato from Platonists. While Platonism can be identified with idealism, "Plato was never an 'idealist' but instead a 'realist'" (GA 65: 215/CPh 150). However, he also takes pains to identify the long metaphysical shadow cast by Plato. The *Contributions to Philosophy*, for example, are replete with the locution "since Plato": "since Plato," we are told, there has been a "continual decline" (*währender Verfall*) (GA 65: 134/CPh 94); "since Plato, the truth of the interpretation of 'being' has never been questioned" (GA 65: 188/CPh

132; GA 55: 98); “since Plato, thinking is determined from the standpoint of a suitably purified way of representing beings” (GA 65: 458/*CPh* 322).⁶

But the expression ‘since Plato’ points in two directions, towards his predecessors as well as those who followed in his footsteps (that “series of footnotes” in Whitehead’s memorable phrase⁷) and both directions are necessary to evaluate not only Heidegger’s claim that Plato inaugurated metaphysics but also Heidegger’s efforts to prepare the way for thinking the history of be-ing, i.e., for non-metaphysical thinking. In other words, in order to understand and assess Heidegger’s view that Plato’s thinking marks the beginnings of Western metaphysics, we have to come to terms with his interpretation of its departure from the foregoing ways of understanding what-it-means-to-be.⁸

More specifically, Heidegger asserts at several junctures in his *Contributions to Philosophy* (1936-38) that Plato was able to interpret the beingness of beings as ἰδέα in no small measure because of the foregoing Greek experience of ὄν as φύσις.⁹ In other words, Plato’s thinking supposes the experience of being at the beginning, described by his predecessors as the experience of φύσις. This claim cries out for elucidation and one of the main tasks of the following paper is to try to shed some light on it. In order to do so, the first order of the day is to come to terms with what Heidegger understands by the Greek experience of φύσις. Although Heidegger points to the Pre-Socratics in general, with their writings “περὶ φύσεως,” for evidence of the nature of the supposedly foundational experience of φύσις (GA 55: 109), he does not identify sources for this experience by name in the *Contributions*. However, in his early 1940s lectures on Heraclitus, lectures that he gives one year after the initial publication of “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” he hammers out an interpretation of Heraclitean fragments that focus on φύσις

and, albeit briefly, its connection to ἀλήθεια.¹⁰ The main enterprise of the following paper is to examine Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus' description of the primordial experience of φύσις as a key to understanding being at the beginning of Greek thought.

As one might expect, given Heidegger's understanding of the history of be-ing in the sense glossed above, his interpretation of Heraclitus is not motivated principally by antiquarian concerns of setting the record straight. His interpretation of Heraclitus' fragments aims at understanding them not simply as the dawn of metaphysical thinking but more importantly as a way of thinking that, by stopping short of the thought of what grounds its own thinking, cannot take leave of that history. It is hardly coincidental that, for the better part of three decades beginning in the mid-1930s, Heidegger repeatedly finds inspiration and corroboration for his own thinking through reflections on Heraclitus' fragments.¹¹ Although he ultimately gives a certain nod to the importance of Parmenides over that of Heraclitus,¹² Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus' fragments provides important clues (*Winke*) to what he means by the need for a new beginning of our thinking.¹³ Not surprisingly, given these objectives,¹³ Heidegger reads Heraclitus' understanding of φύσις in terms of the ontological difference, such that the term 'φύσις' stands not for a particular being (*Seiendes*) or even for the set of all beings (*Seiendheit*), but for being itself (*Sein*).¹⁴

Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus, it hardly needs emphasizing, is audacious, if not tendentious to a fault. After all, what Heraclitus (ὁ Σκοτεινός) has to say about φύσις is not only obscure but also exasperatingly terse and, even if we indulge Heidegger's presumptions about reading notions from other fragments as synonyms or metonyms for the term, the net result is far from conclusive evidence of anything like a

unified conception of φύσις. Further complicating matters is Heidegger's tendency to interpret Heraclitus in light of subsequent treatments of being.¹⁵

Of course, there is also plainly a value to the audaciousness of Heidegger's interpretive style, not only for the incentive it provides to re-examine Heraclitus' fragments in light of that interpretation, but also for the window it provides to Heidegger's own effort to prepare for thinking that frees itself from metaphysics. The following study is undertaken with an eye to probing this potential of Heidegger's interpretation without overlooking its tendentiousness.¹⁶ The bulk of the following essay is an attempt to reconstruct how Heidegger, on the basis of Heraclitus' fragments, interprets the experience of φύσις as a key to the meaning of being at the beginning of Western thought. In a brief conclusion I address how this experience of φύσις supposedly underlies Plato's inauguration of metaphysics and how Heidegger's interpretation of this experience relates to his own post-metaphysical project of thinking the history of be-ing – and taking leave of it (GA 70: 21).

I. Φύσις as the ever-emerging self-concealment

When Heidegger observes that Plato's interpretation of the beingness of beings rests on the experience of ὄν as φύσις, Heidegger has in mind the constancy and presence of beings, emerging on their own (*vom ihm selbst her*), where 'emerging' precisely means coming out from being closed off, concealed, and folded in upon itself (GA 55: 87). As Heidegger puts it in another context, "φύσις names that within which, from the outset, earth and sky, sea and mountains, tree and animal, human being and God emerge and, as emerging, show themselves in such a way that, in view of this, they can be named

‘beings’” (GA 55: 88). Yet this formulation, he immediately warns, can be misleading if it suggests that the Greek essence of φύσις amounts to some all-encompassing container, the result of a generalization of experiences of things emerging (e.g., seeds and blossoms). As Heidegger puts it, “the pure emerging pervades the mountains and the sea, the trees and the birds; their being itself is determined and only experienced through φύσις and as φύσις. Neither mountains nor sea nor any entity needs the ‘encompassing’ since, insofar as it is, it ‘is’ in the manner of emerging” (GA 55: 102; see, too, 89f). Only on the basis of the primordial experience of the emergence from the hidden into the light is it possible to establish what emerges and thus is something at all rather than nothing.¹⁷

With these observations, Heidegger takes himself to be glossing the paradigmatic account of φύσις to be found in Heraclitus' fragments. Notably, he privileges a fragment in which the term φύσις does not occur at all: Fragment 16. He translates Fragment 16: τὸ μὴ δύνον ποτε πῶς ἄν τις λάθοι; as “the [process of], indeed, not going-under ever [*das ja nicht Untergehen je*], how might someone be concealed from it?” As Heidegger reads the fragment, it is important that each of the two words framing it – δύνον and λάθοι – suppose senses of hiddenness, ‘going-under’ (as in the setting sun) and ‘being concealed’ (as in the sun disappearing from our view) (GA 55: 47f, 68f; VA 259/EGT 110). Indeed, Heraclitus’ very question – how could what never goes-under (never hides) escape our notice? – gets any traction and force it has from the Greek experience of the all-pervasive interplay of hiddenness and unhiddenness. To be is to be present, but being present is itself always a “luminous self-concealing” (*gelichtetes Sichverbergen*), i.e., concealing itself behind the being (*Seiendes*) that it illuminates (VA 255/EGT 108). Like the word ‘ἀλήθεια’ (for reasons discussed more at length below), the opening phrase of

the fragment supposes this fundamental hiddenness. For the early Greeks, Heidegger contends, this underlying hiddenness is constitutive of the way beings are, not only in relation to themselves but also to other entities generally. In other words, they do not construe hiddenness merely or primarily in terms of entities' relation to human beings.

As a means of capturing this dynamic interplay of presencing and absencing, Heidegger takes pains to argue for translating the participle τὸ δύνων in the fragment verbally rather than substantively, i.e., as “the process of going under” (*das Untergehen*) rather than as “what or something that goes under” (*das Untergehende*).¹⁸ The verbal translation amounts to construing the term as signifying, not a particular being or type of being, but that in which “the hidden essence of what is called ‘to be’ [*>Sein<*] resides” (GA 55: 81; see, 100, 155). What Heidegger wants to flag with the word 'hidden' here is, among other things, the fact that this essence is something supposed but not duly understood by the founders of metaphysics (Plato and Aristotle). Precisely in this sense, i.e., not as any particular being or kind of being, the process of never going-under, of never passing-away or even – with suitable qualifications¹⁹ – of constantly emerging (τὸ ἀεὶ φύον, ἀείζωον) constitutes, Heidegger submits, the underlying significance of φύσις for Heraclitus.²⁰ Yet, even in this fragment, Heidegger emphasizes, φύσις is not to be understood as simply the ever-emerging. As the negative modifiers of δύνων indicate, the fragment presupposes the significance of “going-under” and thereby the hiddenness that is its constant companion (that is to say, not some happenstance down the road but rather a dimension integral to its emergence).²¹

Having thus signaled the central role played by hiddenness in Fragment 16 and identified the theme of the fragment with φύσις, Heidegger turns to the fragment where

Heraclitus explicitly characterizes it: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ (Fragment 123). This fragment is typically translated “nature loves to hide,” but Heidegger’s version reads: “the emerging bestows favor on self-concealing” (GA 55: 110, 121). Prima facie this fragment appears self-contradictory (and inconsistent with Fragment 16) if, following Heidegger, we take φύσις in the sense of the subject of Fragment 16 as what precisely never sinks into hiddenness. Or, if there is no contradiction or inconsistency here, then at least it needs to be explained how an emerging, a coming to be present that is never absent, that never “goes under” or “passes away” into concealment can be compatible with or, as Heidegger also puts it, “stands in an essential relation to” (namely, loves or favors) concealing itself.²² Heidegger begins to answer this question by construing φιλεῖ – translated “favoring” (*Gunst*) – as a reciprocal “affording and granting” (*Gönnen und Vergönnen*).²³ This reciprocal affording “secures” (*verwahrt*) the unity of their essence that is designated by the name φύσις.²⁴ Employing counterfactuals to drive home the necessity of this unity, Heidegger asks: What would bare emerging, shorn of any connection with self-concealing, be? “Then the emerging would have nothing out of which it emerges and nothing that it opens up in emerging.”²⁵

The term that Heidegger uses for self-concealing is *Sichverbergen*. The root of *verbergen* (‘concealing’) is *bergen* and Heidegger in fact proposes that the former, as the translation of κρύπτεσθαι, be understood in the sense of *bergen*.²⁶ Further qualifying *bergen*, Heidegger adds that it is to be understood, not simply as hiding something but also sheltering and securing it, getting it to a safe place. These word-plays are meant to reinforce the sense of coherence between φύσις, understood as the constantly emerging presence of things, and their absences or, as he also puts it, the “sheltering concealing”

(*bergendes Verbergen*) (GA 55: 160). Heidegger would have us think of them as one movement, viewed from two sides, each of which depends upon the other.

Recapitulating this point the next semester (summer semester, 1944), Heidegger characterizes φύσις as the "emerging" (*Aufgehen*) that is at once a "return-into-itself" (*In-sich-zurück-gehen*). Thus, while retaining the determination "going up, i.e., emerging" (*Aufgehen*), Heidegger substitutes "going-back-into-itself" for "going under" (*Untergehen*, his translation for τὸ δύνον in Fragment 16). These two counterpoints to "going up, i.e., emerging" are not the same, to be sure. But it is easy to see them as complementary, especially given his reading of φύσις as "the never going under" for which hiding is essential (as he interprets φιλεῖ). In constantly emerging, φύσις conceals itself. "If we heed the fact that going-up is of itself [*von sich aus*] a going-back-into-itself, then both determinations are not to be thought somehow only as on hand simultaneously and alongside one another, but instead they mean one and the same basic move [*Grundzug*] of φύσις" (GA 55: 299). Herein lies no doubt the most elusive sense of φύσις, bordering on contradiction.²⁷ They are not simply two aspects of some third thing, e.g., like the contraries, Ax and $\sim Ax$, that x may be at different times or at the same time in different respects. Nor are they dialectically resolved into some higher self-negating unity, yielded by the negation of a negation. Instead, this emerging and returning-into-itself are two mutual and mutually constitutive determinations of φύσις.²⁸ Indeed, talk of them as two sides or two aspects is fatally misleading, insofar as it suggests either that they are (and are understandable) apart from one another or that they inhere in something or some way of being that does not entail them.

The opposing forces responsible for the concavity and convexity of an arc or curve made by moving object may perhaps convey a sense of the contrasting mutuality signified by φύσις. Though really distinct from one another (no mere *distinctio rationis ratiocinati* here), you cannot have one without the other. Each is a condition of the other and the moving arc consists of the mutual opposition (represented by its concavity and convexity) differentiating itself from a foregoing opposition. Perhaps an even more helpful image in this regard, suggested by Susan Schoenbohm, is the way that background and foreground are differentiated and thus determined in the process of perception.²⁹ The differentiation is both diachronic and synchronic. This differentiation is a process that differentiates itself from the foregoing undifferentiation. At the same time, foreground and background differentiate themselves in one fell swoop, allowing things in the foreground to become determinate. Because this differentiation thus takes place both diachronically and synchronically and, indeed, seemingly as a condition for the encounter of anything at all, it has the character of a fundamental, i.e., originary process. Analogously, φύσις is at once (diachronically) the emergence from hiddenness and (synchronically) the differentiation and interplay of unhiddenness and hiddenness.

But we need not invoke our own metaphors and tropes for φύσις here. Heraclitus does this for us and, indeed, Heidegger turns to several images in other fragments to elucidate his interpretation of φύσις and demonstrate how it coincides with Heraclitus' own sense of the matter. Thus, in Fragment 54 Heraclitus speaks of the noble, unapparent (because ever-on-display) fit (ἁρμονίη ἀφανής), taken by Heidegger as yet another reference to φύσις. That constant emergence into presence (the “going-up”) counteracts and thus depends upon the concealment (the “going-down”) and in this way

they fit themselves to each other. In this respect, φύσις is their fit (*Fügung*) or, better, their very countervalance (τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρειν in Fragment 8) and more. The requisite tension in the span of the bow and of the lyre aptly illustrates this character of their fit; the ever-emerging presence stretches out from the self-concealing but this stretch requires the countervailing pull of the self-concealing and vice versa (GA 55: 141-153).

To round out this interpretation of the primordial, Heraclitean sense of φύσις, Heidegger weaves together glosses on Heraclitus' images of fire (πῦρ) and adornment (κόσμος). As a fire blazes, it at once initiates and separates light from dark, pitting them against each other; so, too, the fire's flames form an expanse (the primordial "measure"³⁰) even as they consume what lies in their path. That split instant we catch sight of a fire's flames (*das Augenblickhafte des Entflammens*) opens up a space for appearing and disappearing, the realm in which it is possible to point and show, but also the realm of "the rudderless and utterly opaque."³¹ Fire is thus an instructive name for φύσις. In the process of yielding, shaping, and consuming the burning coals (*Seiendes*), the image of φύσις as πῦρ is meant to capture the event of providing and constituting the light (*Sein*) and the darkness (*Nichts*), i.e., the interplay of concealment and unconcealment that allows things to be seen and conceals itself in the process.³²

Heidegger contends that similar considerations underlie Heraclitus' characterization of φύσις as κόσμος in the sense of the primordial adorning (*ursprüngliches Schmücken und Zieren*) that is not to be confused with any decoration or ornamentation of some thing already on hand or even entities as a whole. Nor, he insists, does the κόσμος in Heraclitus's sense have anything to do with the modern sense of cosmology. Instead, the image of φύσις as κόσμος is meant to convey what "provides the

splendor of the fit” of one being for one another, a fit that also enables them to be. So construed, φύσις as κόσμος can only refer to being not beings, again underscoring Heraclitus' appreciation of the ontological difference. "Κόσμος and πῦρ say the same," Heidegger contends, because, like fire, the κόσμος as the primordial adornment illuminates in one and the same event that produces the dark as light's counterpart, yet all the while is itself concealed or overlooked in favor of what has been illumined.³³

II. The seeming anachronism of thinking being at the beginning

In these glosses of φύσις, particularly as κόσμος, Heidegger repeatedly contrasts this interpretation with metaphysical interpretations of φύσις (i.e., as an all-encompassing entity, entities as a whole, or even the meaning of being for entities as a whole).

Heidegger himself warns against the anachronism of reading metaphysics back into Heraclitus' thought and insists on preserving its crucial difference from that of Plato and Aristotle (GA 55: 78f). Thus, Heidegger contends that “κόσμος does not primarily mean entities in their entirety [or beings as a whole: *das Seiende im Ganzen*], but instead the fitting of the fit of entities, the adorning in which and out of which the entities beam [*erglänzt*]” (GA 55: 164).³⁴ From this perspective, metaphysical interpretations of Heraclitus' fragments are *nolens volens* anachronistic interpretations.

Yet, as noted above, Heidegger does not shy away from equating φύσις with a sense of ‘to be’ (*Sein*) – i.e., the verbal sense of the participle ὄν – in contrast to entities and any metaphysical understanding of ‘to be’ in terms of entities. Since these terms are not to be found in the fragments of Heraclitus glossed by Heidegger, invoking them also appears *prima facie* anachronistic, albeit in a way different from the above mentioned

anachronism of metaphysical interpretations of Heraclitus. For example, after stressing how φύσις cannot be produced and is thus beyond gods and humans, Heidegger glosses φύσις here as follows: “Being itself prevails in advance of all beings and in advance of any origination of beings from beings. It is nothing made [*Gemächte* (!)] and hence has no beginning determined by means of a point in time and no corresponding end of its standing” (GA 55: 166).

As noted earlier, Heidegger also invokes the ontological difference in his glosses on the fragments.³⁵ He exploits the fact that the fragments themselves are emphatic about the difference between φύσις or any of its cognates (τὸ μὴ δυνόν ποτε, ἀρμονία, κόσμος) and what they are said to make possible. To be sure, it is hardly patent that the difference signaled is something else, for example, a difference between a cause and its effects, i.e., between beings rather than between being and beings, Heidegger's preferred way of understanding the difference. Nevertheless, the conclusion seems inescapable that his interpretation of the Heraclitean fragments provides a much greater window into his own later thinking than it does into the thought of Heraclitus.³⁶

Of course, one might respond that there are levels of anachronism and, while some are plainly egregious, others are unavoidable consequences of the human condition. As Marx puts it, “The anatomy of a human being is the key to the anatomy of an ape.”³⁷ From this perspective, Heidegger's reading is hardly an egregiously anachronistic interpretation. He gives a plausible reconstruction of the meaning that Heraclitus attaches to 'φύσις' and other terms to designate a basic Greek experience well in play prior to the time of Plato and thus likely shared by him, an experience of what Plato comes to designate and re-interpret as being. There is, after all, nothing implausible

about the contention that Heraclitus' fragments on their own terms point to an understanding of what is later ambiguously dubbed 'being,' one that, while forming the backdrop of Plato's understanding, is at odds with traditional metaphysical approaches to being. Moreover, there are good reasons not to limit interpretative possibilities to the presumed self-understanding of an author or even the members of his language community. So even if there is and, indeed, could be no explicit indication that Heraclitus understands φύσις as being in the pre-metaphysical sense Heidegger suggests, this does not rule out the plausibility, on other grounds, of interpreting it as such.

Yet this way of defending Heidegger from the charge of anachronism has the effect of undermining his very project. For, by accepting the ordinary meaning of 'anachronism' as "an error in computing time," for example, antedating some event or phenomenon,³⁸ this sort of defense presupposes a linear conception of time, where the past is something denumerable that has passed away and is long gone (*Vergangenes*). In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger argues that such a conception is derivative and, indeed, derivative of the temporality that provides the very meaning for human existence. Far from something that is over, the primordial sense of the past is what is always *already* before us, the *thrownness* of our finite, mortal existence that we project, one way or another. Each of us lives out this thrownness that informs all our projections and, in that sense, both overtakes us and comes to us in the form of our ending.³⁹ Similarly, the beginning (*Anfang*) of the history of Western thought is for Heidegger the inception of the event that continues to be ours (Western humanity). In language echoing the analysis of primordial temporality in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger contends that, far from something over and done so that our thinking of it is anachronistic, this beginning overtakes us and,

prevailing in advance of us, first comes to us (GA 55: 175). Hence, the need to understand Heraclitus' epoch-making sense of φύσις as being at the beginning of Western thought.

That need, moreover, coincides with the dire straits in which we find ourselves at the end or, alternatively, at the culmination of metaphysics. Accordingly, we can come to think being at the beginning only on the basis of our own experience of this fate. Not surprisingly, towards the end of the first Heraclitus lectures, Heidegger acknowledges the necessity of having already "come into the vicinity of being, on the basis of originary [*anfängliche*] experiences" in order to be able to hear "the originary terms of the originary thinking" (GA 55: 176). Following this acknowledgement, he does not directly answer the charge that he's reading his own philosophy into Heraclitus' fragments; instead he simply shrugs it off with the observation that "if unhiddenness is grounded in a self-concealing, if this [self-concealing] is part of the essence of being itself, then φύσις also can never be thought in a sufficiently originary way at all" (GA 55: 176).

But to think this beginning in a way that captures its originary, inceptive dimension is to come to understand being in a way different from yet underlying the Greek beginning and its understanding of being (*Sein*) as φύσις. It is, in other words, to understand be-ing (*Seyn*) as the historical grounding of the meaning of being and its difference from beings, i.e., as the ground that constitutes and thus appropriates to itself the essential correlation of that meaning and human understanding of it. Precisely in this connection, Heidegger proposes, recalling this first beginning amounts to thinking our way into another beginning.⁴⁰

III. Φύσις as the unproduced truth

Two further aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus' experience of φύσις warrant consideration, not least because they have a particular bearing on what he takes to be Plato's departure from this experience. The first concerns Heraclitus' remark that the κόσμος is not produced, either by gods or humans (Fragment 30). As noted above, Heidegger glosses this remark in terms of the ontological difference such that gods and humans are beings (*Seiendes*) in contrast to the κόσμος. For Heidegger, this remark also underscores what he interprets as Heraclitus' insight that being itself lies beyond all human caprice or arbitrariness; in contrast to beings, φύσις is not itself something that can be produced or, in a certain sense, even manipulated. Heidegger's concurrence with this insight explains why according the highest level of being to humanity is, in his view, tantamount to nihilism (VS 131f/FS 77).

But, taken together with Fragment 16 ("how might someone be concealed from it?"), the observation that being cannot be produced does not mean that being is opaque to gods and humans or far from them. To the contrary, hearkening back again – albeit with a marked difference – to the language of his earlier existential analysis, Heidegger glosses the "someone" (in Fragment 16) as ek-sistent, as herself emerging and standing out into the clearing, comporting herself to the emerging φύσις from which she cannot be concealed. The shift from the center of gravity in the existential analysis to that of this Heraclitus interpretation is noteworthy. In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger declares that *Dasein* is illumined (*gelichtet*), but such that it is itself the clearing. In the Heraclitus lectures Heidegger observes that the emerging someone who comports herself towards the emerging φύσις "stands out into the clearing."⁴¹

This reference to the clearing and our place within it introduces the final aspect of Heidegger's reading of the Heraclitean φύσις, namely, its relation to ἀλήθεια. Heidegger insists that Heraclitus experiences φύσις in a way that is intimately related to the meaning of ἀλήθεια, namely, with reference to those to whom φύσις manifests and conceals itself. Thus, as the "primordially unifying ground," ἀλήθεια holds sway, Heidegger contends, in the essence of φύσις as it does in the essence of those – Gods and humans – who correspond to φύσις by way of unconcealing (*entbergend*) and by opening themselves up (*Sicheröffnen*)(GA 55: 173f). Heidegger makes no pretense here that Heraclitus explicitly says as much; it also remains unsaid, Heidegger adds, by Anaximander and Parmenides. But he regards the fact that it is not said as anything but a strike against his interpretation. The fact that ἀλήθεια, as he interprets it, remains unsaid signals that it is the phenomenon "from which or on the basis of which the thinking at the beginning speaks" (*aus dem her das anfängliche Denken spricht*) (GA 55: 174).

Heidegger finds particular confirmation of this signal in his readings of Fragments 16 and 123. While Fragment 16, it may be recalled, is ostensibly about φύσις on Heidegger's reading, the depiction of it as the ever-emerging or, more precisely, "never going-under" and the plaintive question: "Who can hide from this?" clearly trade on the sense of ἀλήθεια as unhiddenness. However, just as it would be a mistake – an ontotheological mistake – to understand φύσις here as some entity (*Seiendes*) or even beings as a whole (*das Seiende im ganzen*) constantly on hand, apart from *Dasein*, so, too, it would be a mistake – an alethiotheological mistake – to understand ἀλήθεια here (a) as sheer and exhaustive presencing, devoid of any absence or (b) apart from those to/from it is present/absent. Contrary to (a), the unhiddenness of φύσις is in constant

interplay with hiddenness as its very condition. The fact that φύσις needs and thus affords absence is precisely confirmed by Heidegger's interpretation of Fragment 123 (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλει:), as noted above. So, too, contrary to (b), Heraclitus himself emphasizes that no one can hide from it. Accordingly, since "ἀλήθεια is, as the name says, not pure openness but the unconcealment of the self-concealing," it is the name for "the essential beginning of φύσις itself and the gods and humans belonging to it" (GA 55: 175). Thus, if the experience of being at the beginning is the experience of φύσις (*genitivus objectivus*), it is no less the experience of ἀλήθεια (*genitivus appositivus*).

Conclusion: from φύσις to ἰδέα

How, on Heidegger's view, does Plato take up but fundamentally transform Heraclitus' understanding of φύσις or (as Heidegger puts it) his understanding of being as φύσις (VA 255/EGT 107)? Plato presupposes that to be is naturally (i.e., in accordance with the very meaning of being, i.e., κατὰ φύσιν) to be unhidden and, indeed, that the ἰδέα is the really real (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) precisely as what is more unhidden than what it illuminates, indeed, the most unhidden (ἀληθινόν) and ever so. This presupposition echoes precisely the thought – or at least part of the thought – expressed by Heraclitus in Fragment 16 that Heidegger takes as a gloss on φύσις. Herein lies a central reason for Heidegger's contention that Plato's interpretation of being presupposes the Greek experience of ὄν as φύσις.

Yet even as Plato at one level supposes this understanding of being as φύσις, at another level he re-interprets being in terms of the ἰδέα that illuminates things, enabling them to be seeable and thus to be.⁴² The primordial significance of ἀλήθεια gives way to

the ἰδέα as something always unhidden relative to ἰδεῖν, a perceiving, albeit in the sense of νοεῖν, θεωρεῖν. Through this subordination of ἀλήθεια to the ἰδέα, it devolves into the alignment (ὁμοίωσις) of something perceived with a perceiver and, ultimately, the correctness of an assertion about them. By way of conclusion, I shall try to put some flesh on these bare-boned claims.

In Heidegger's 1931/32 lectures on Plato, he emphasizes that the Platonic ἰδέα is reducible neither to the particular being it illuminates (the object perceived) nor to the subject who perceives thanks to its illumination.⁴³ Exploiting the analogy that Plato himself draws between φῶς and ἰδέα, Heidegger construes the idea as what, like light, lets us see what an entity is, "allowing it, as it were, to come to us."⁴⁴ But the ideas can "let things through" only thanks to being seen in some way themselves.⁴⁵ "But both, the seen as such and the way of looking, *together* belong to the fact that an unhiddenness of entities emerges, that is to say, that truth *happens*."⁴⁶

This reference to the happening of truth and the emergence of unhiddenness hearkens back to the sense of ἀλήθεια that Heidegger identifies as a metonym for φύσις in Heraclitus. On Heidegger's reading, as we saw above, Heraclitus understands φύσις as the hidden unhiddenness of things that supposes hiddenness and can be equated with being as opposed to beings. The basic experience of truth is the experience of φύσις as "the never going under" such that no one can hide from it but, nonetheless, "ever-emerging" in a way that favors hiddenness.

While Plato's treatment of being and truth in terms of ἰδέα draws, in the senses suggested, upon the basic experience of φύσις and ἀλήθεια announced by Heraclitus, Heidegger finds clear signals that this basic experience begins to fade (*schwinden*) in

Plato's thinking. Heidegger sums up the two most important signals in his observation "that Plato already construes ἀλήθεια as something that pertains to *beings*, – in such a way that beings *themselves* are addressed as unhidden, that beings and unhidden are *lumped together* [*in eins gesetzt*], and that the question of the unhiddenness *as such* is not alive at all" (GA 34: 123f/ET 89f). The two signals mentioned here are complementary, i.e., the construal of ἀλήθεια solely in terms of beings and the obliviousness to the question of the meaning of ἀλήθεια as such. As for the latter signal, the evidence that unhiddenness is not questioned can be found in the fact that hiddenness is not questioned. Again, Plato presupposes this very understanding, since he addresses what is unhidden or beings insofar as they are unhidden. Yet as he focuses on what is unhidden, i.e., beings insofar as they are unhidden, he does not call into question, let alone, address unhiddenness itself, which would entail examination of hiddenness as well. "Precisely the absence of the question of hiddenness as such is the *decisive* evidence for the already starting ineffectiveness of the *unhiddenness* in the strict sense" (GA 34: 125/ET 91).

In his early lectures on the Cave Allegory, Heidegger makes specific note of Plato's departure from Heraclitus in this regard.

But if hiddenness is not seized upon primordially and entirely, then *unhiddenness* cannot be correctly conceived. And yet Plato treats of ἀλήθεια in his critical confrontation with illusion! But that can only mean then that the cave allegory treats, to be sure, of ἀλήθεια, but not such that it would, in its essence, come to light *primordially* – in the *position-of-the-struggle* against the κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ that is said of

φύσις (of being), hence, against hiddenness *in general* and not only against the false, the illusion. But if this stands as such, then in Plato the basic experience out of which the word ἀ-λήθεια sprung is already fading (GA 34: 93/ET 67).

In these lectures in the Cave Allegory as in the *Beiträge*, Heidegger adds that Plato's tendency to construe ἀλήθεια in terms of light is part and parcel of his obliviousness to hiddenness supposed by it: "And because the ἀλήθεια thus becomes φῶς, the character of the α-privative also gets lost" (GA 65: 332/CPh 233).

Heidegger also locates the onset of the transformation of truth into correctness in Plato's account of ἀλήθεια in terms of the illuminating ἰδέα. Insofar as beings can be seen – and thus can be said to be – thanks to the ἰδέα, "the brightness of the ἰδέα is the *yoke*, συγόν although characteristically this is never articulated" (GA 65: 335/CPh 234f). Plato construes truth, at least sometimes, with the way the brightness of the ἰδέα yokes subject and object. In this way he subordinates ἀλήθεια to the ἰδέα – the fatal move that forfeits the primordial sense of ἀλήθεια, epitomized by the Heraclitean φύσις, and opens the way to conceiving truth as the correspondence between subject and object, perception and perceiver, sentence and its reference. "For Plato ἰδέα moves above ἀλήθεια because the seeability [*Sichtsamkeit*] becomes essential for ἰδεῖν (ψύχη) and not the unconcealing as pre-vailing of be-ing [*Wesung des Seyns*]" (GA 34: 99n2/ET 84n2).⁴⁷

As noted above, the other signal of Plato's departure from Heraclitus in Heidegger's eyes is Plato's confinement of the discussion of ἀλήθεια to the realm of beings, indeed, to such an extent that the ἰδέα is itself a particular being.⁴⁸ Because Plato

restricts truth to the truth of beings, he omits consideration of the truth of being itself. From this vantage point, Plato's proclivity to focus on what is unhidden, even what is most unhidden, i.e., what unhiddenness (pre-eminently) pertains to, at the expense of unhiddenness itself, signals a failure to attend to the ontological difference between beings and being. Were Plato to have remained closer to Heraclitus' lead and tried to say what unhiddenness (ἀλήθεια, being) itself is, he would have had to come to terms with the significance of 'hiddenness.' For Heidegger, then, Plato's crucial misstep, his departure from Heraclitus consists in taking unhiddenness (ἀλήθεια) for granted as the illuminating look (the ἰδέα, εἶδος) of beings and, indeed, a look that is itself another being, rather than as the unhiddenness of the self-concealing of φύσις.

Φύσις is not the same as *Ereignis*, to be sure. But to think being at the beginning – and, not least, the movement and underlying hiddenness it signals – is a first step towards thinking the history of be-ing and, thereby, recognizing and being open to its end (*Untergang*).⁴⁹

¹ Walter Schulz, "...Als ob Heraklit daneben steht" in: *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1977), 228; Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel*, Band 3 (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1975), 291: "...obwohl ich mich...dem Heraklit nahe fühle, den Heidegger wie sein Vater behandelt (ich halte Heideggers Heraklit-Interpretation für absolut falsch)." On Heidegger's decision to maintain the engagement with Greek thinkers, called for by – or even regardless of – the project of SZ, see Rudolf Bultmann/Martin Heidegger, *Briefwechsel 1925-1975*, herausgegeben von Andreas Großmann und Chistof Landmesser (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009), 190 and

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege* in: *Gesammelte Werke 3* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 287. See, too, Otto Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger* (München: Alber, 1992), 178 .

² See Thomas Sheehan's essay "Facticity and *Ereignis*" in this collection.

³ GA 70: 21: "Erst in der Überwindung des Seyns selbst sogar ist die Überwindung der Metaphysik ereignet." In this same context, it should be noted that Heidegger, by way of qualification, adds that what needs to be ventured is the *Verwindung des Seyns* and that *Verwindung* is more originary (*anfänglich*) than all *Überwindung*. Ibid., "Die Verwindung des Seyns enthält die Gewähr der eigentlichen, d.h. anfänglichen Fragwürdigkeit des Seyns. Die Verwindung ist nicht Entwürdigung des Seyns, sondern die letzte Würdigung."

⁴ Thinking this history of be-ing is difficult since it runs counter to customary patterns of explanation, causal and/or chronological, and it runs counter because, unlike anything else, it can be grounded neither in any entity nor in any account of what it means for any entity to be. The singular difficulty is thinking this history of be-ing (*Seynsgeschichte*) that grounds the meaning of any entity's coming to be, i.e., grounds the being of beings. GA 65: 297, 303f/*CPh* 209, 214ff. For a review of the senses of *Ereignis*, the event of appropriation discussed in this paragraph, and its relation to *Seyn*, see Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 81ff.

⁵ GA 55: 113: "Seit Platon, d. h. seitdem die Metaphysik beginnt,...."; *ibid.*, 56f.

⁶ Similarly, "since Plato" *aletheia* stands as the bright light in which entities stand, their visibility as their presence, but in the process also yoking them to perceivers and thereby

yoking itself to correctness (GA 65: 333/*CPh* 233f); for other such remarks on developments "since Plato," see GA 65: 453, 457, 480/*CPh* 319, 322, 338.

⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1969), 53: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

⁸ Heidegger states explicitly that the thought of *Ereignis* does not belong to Greek thinking and, perhaps not surprisingly, he characterizes φύσις as ὄν, (even if it is thought with the emphasis on εἶναι), and translates it as *Sein*, not *Seyn*; see VS 104/FS 61: "Mit dem Ereignis wird nicht mehr griechisch gedacht"; GA 55: 73-84. See, too, Thomas Sheehan, "Kehre and Ereignis: A Prolegomenon to *Introduction to Metaphysics*," in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 14f; and Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 85n117.

⁹ GA 65: 126f, 184, 189-200, 222, 351, 381, 386, 425f, 457, 483/*CPh* 88, 129, 133-139, 155, 245, 266, 270, 300, 322, 340.

¹⁰ "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" first appears in *Geistige Überlieferung*, das zweite Jahrbuch (Berlin: Helmut Küpper, 1942), 96-124. However, already in his 1931/32 lectures on Plato's Cave Allegory, Heidegger registers the importance of Heraclitus' observations regarding φύσις in this connection; see GA 34: 93/ET 67.

¹¹ As do Hölderlin, Eckhart, and Hegel, Heidegger observes in the winter semester, 1934/35 (GA 39: 134). In both semesters prior to these lectures on Hölderlin's *Germanien*, Heidegger comments on Heraclitean fragments; see GA 36/37 (winter

semester 1933/34): 89-100; GA 38 (summer semester 1934): 112/LEL 93; This same engagement continues for the next decade, both in the Nietzsche lectures in the second half of the 1930s as well as in his 1943 and 1944 lectures (GA 55), the basis for the two Heraclitus essays "Logos" and "Aletheia", published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* in 1954 (VA 199-221, 249-274/EGT 59-78, 102-123). See, too, the Heraclitus Seminar conducted by Eugen Fink and Heidegger in the Winter Semester, 1966-67 in GA 15. For Heidegger's assessment of the enormous influence of Heraclitus on Hölderlin and Nietzsche, see GA 39: 128, 133f.

¹² On the change in the primacy Heidegger assigns to Heraclitus and Parmenides between the mid-1930s and his 1973 Zähringen seminar, see his response to Jean Beaufret in FS 81/VS 137f; see, too, Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger*, 180f, 247, 416 and GA 70: 21.

¹³ GA 65: 236/CPh 167; Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger*, 182f: "Es ist ohne Zweifel so, daß Heideggers Heraklitaufsätze und auch die Parmenidesdeutung am klarsten Heideggers eigene späte Gedanken offenlegen." In his Heraclitus lectures Heidegger does not speak of the need for "another beginning," as he had in the *Beiträge*; see Heinrich Hüni, "Heraklit oder 'anderer Anfang'" in *Heidegger und die Griechen*, herausgegeben von Michael Steinmann Volume 8: Schriften der Heidegger Gesellschaft. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2007), 43; on the first and the other 'beginning,' see Gregory Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos: From Being to Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 116-135 and Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy: An Introduction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 61- 71, esp. 66f.

¹⁴ GA 55: 58, 100. On Heidegger's reading, the Heraclitean φύσις is also clearly distinct from the being of beings (*Sein des Seienden*) that supposedly forms the subject matter of classical metaphysics (inspired by Plato, drafted by Aristotle), i.e., an inquiry into what-it-means-to-be, guided by a particular conception of beings. But, as already noted (see n. 8 above), Heidegger nonetheless reads φύσις as an understanding of *Sein*, not *Seyn*. Still, though Heidegger finds more than an inkling of the difference between being and beings in Plato and Aristotle, he contends that Heraclitus' appreciation of its significance puts him at odds with his illustrious successors and the metaphysical tradition inaugurated by them.

¹⁵ Buber, for example, considered Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus "absolutely false"; see n. 1 above. Pöggeler, too, questions whether Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus and Lao Tse are "not simply, constructs through which he articulates his own thinking." Although Pöggeler initially criticizes the supposed implication of Heidegger's interpretation that there are no new and other beginnings than the Pre-socratics, he later backtracks, acknowledging that Heidegger, after beginning his discussion with the East Asian tradition, speaks of many paths. Nonetheless, Pöggeler continues to challenge the degree to which the interpretation corresponds to "what was actually thought on the coast of Asia minor"; Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger*, 179, 184, 293f, 412, 439. See below, however, Heidegger's response to the charge of anachronism.

¹⁶ For instructive treatments of Heidegger's treatments of Heraclitus, see Manfred S. Frings, "Heraclitus: Heidegger's Lecture Held at Freiburg University" in *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 21 (1990): 250- 264; Ivo De Gennaro, *Logos-- Heidegger liest Heraklit* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001); and Parvis Emad,

"Heidegger's Originary Reading of Heraclitus – Fragment 16" in *Heidegger on Heraclitus: A New Reading*, edited by Kenneth Maly and Parvis Emad (Lewiston/Queenston: Mellen, 1986), 103-120.

¹⁷ Given this interpretation of the original sense of φύσις, Heidegger cautions against anachronistically equating it with modern uses of 'nature' (GA 55: 101f). As Susan Schoenbohm puts it in a valuable gloss on Heidegger's interpretation of φύσις in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*: "*Phusis* is a name for the emerging of the originary difference of determination and no determination, the very occurrence of an articulation of a primordial difference between something and nothing"; Susan Schoenbohm, "Heidegger's Interpretation of *Phusis*" in: *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, edited by Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 149.

¹⁸ GA 55: 52f, 58, 85. Heidegger belabors the parallel ambiguity with τὸ ὄν that has victimized metaphysical thinking; see GA 55: 71-80 (esp. 76f), 99f.

¹⁹ The positive formulation runs the risk of forfeiting the primordially of the hiddenness, such that we take the ever-emerging sense of φύσις as privileging presence over absence; GA 55: 86f. A few years before the lectures on Heraclitus, Heidegger in fact ascribes to the τὸ μὴ δῦνόν ποτε the springboard for the notion of constant presence (*ἀεί der Beständigkeit*); see GA 70: 86. This difference in emphasis, if not in the substance of the interpretation itself, suggests that Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus was anything but settled during this period; see n. 47 below.

²⁰ GA 55: 87, 90, 101, 124; VA 261/EGT 112; see Schoenbohm, "Heidegger's Interpretation of *Phusis*," 153ff.

²¹ GA 55: 86; VA 262/EGT 112f; Heidegger cites, as an illuminating contrast, Clement of Alexandria's theological interpretation of τὸ μὴ δυνόν ποτε; see VA 251f/EGT 104f.

²² At times Heidegger gives a more qualified interpretation of Fragment 123, such that *Aufgehen* "stands in an essential relation" to *Untergehen* (GA 55: 125, 35). Mostly, however, Heidegger stresses the patent inconsistency of Fragment 123; in other words, he contends there is not merely a discrepancy between the subject and the predicate or an obscurity about the signified relationship, but an outright contradiction (GA 55: 110-116, 125f, 134ff). This construal is apt if the fragment is taken to mean that φύσις is not merely inclined to conceal itself, but does so as part of its very essence. (Analogously, we might say, for example, that an introvert likes to hide from others or a camouflaged soldier likes to conceal himself, where the phrase "likes to" supposes that both the introvert and the camouflaged soldier do what is essential for them.) It bears noting that in these passages, Heidegger is working to ward off three misinterpretations, two based in "normal thinking" and a third inspired by Hegel. Normal thinking may (1) simply dismiss the fragment as "illogical," given its formal contradictoriness, or (2) construe the relation between "going-up" and "going-under" as two temporally distinct and thus non-contradictory processes. Finally, "speculative" thinking, having determined "the self-contradictory precisely to be 'the true'," (3) resolves the contradiction dialectically into a unity. In Heidegger's view, this dialectical approach avoids the effort to think what the fragment says and, instead, has recourse anachronistically to the "method of a late metaphysics" (GA 55: 112, 126f).

²³ GA 55: 132f, 136; VA 263/EGT 114. The φιλεῖ meant in Fragment 123 is, Heidegger observes, not just any *Gunst* and *Vergünstigung* but a specific *Gunst* that he characterizes as *Gönnen* and *Vergönnen*.

²⁴ GA 55: 136; VS 16, 81f/FS 6, 46.

²⁵ GA 55: 137, 153f. In his essay on Fragment 16, Heidegger reverses the counterfactual; see VA 263/EGT 114: “Was wäre ein Sichverbergen, wenn es nicht an sich hielte in seiner Zuwendung zum Aufgehen?”

²⁶ Heidegger in fact employs two word-plays in this connection. In addition to emphasizing that we heed the sense of *bergen* supposedly retained in *verbergen* (i.e., the rescuing and sheltering provided by concealing), he links *verbürgen* with *verbergen*, i.e., “the self-concealing secures [guarantees], in that it conceals” (Das Sichverbergen verbürgt, indem es verbirgt); GA 55: 138f; VA 263/EGT 114.

²⁷ Still, insofar as contradiction is a law governing assertions or judgments, it would not apply to φύσις but neither would contradiction's ontological counterpart if that counterpart requires constancy of something or some A (where A is some intrinsically defining property) obtaining without relation to its opposite.

²⁸ Alternatively, with a view to Aristotle's understanding, one might characterize φύσις as the enduring qua being constantly actualized out of the δύνάμις of the future and disappearing into the στέρησις of the past. I am grateful to Al and Maria Miller for this alternative characterization.

²⁹ See Schoenbohm, "Heidegger's Interpretation of *Phusis*," 149f.

³⁰ GA 55: 161. Heidegger sharply criticizes readings of Fragment 30 that construe its reference to μέτρα as an anticipation of the modern conception of nature following the laws of physics rather than as the original expanse (*Weite*, τὸ μέτρον) of expanse-forming φύσις, i.e., an expanse that qua original first yields and hence cannot be conceived as following measures or laws; see GA 55: 168-171.

³¹ Heidegger further supports this interpretation of φύσις as fire with a reading of Fragment 64 where Heraclitus observes that lightning (κεραυνός) – the concentrated essence of fire – steers beings as a whole; see GA 55: 162f.

³² This gloss aptly suggests how closely Heidegger's gloss of the Heraclitean φύσις comes to his own senses of *Ereignis* and *Seyn* in contrast to *Sein* and *Seiendes*; see notes 8 and 14 above. There are at least two (complementary) ways we might interpret this interpretation of φύσις as fire: (1) insofar as a fire, e.g., a campfire, provides light to see one another in the midst of the darkness, we may ignore the fire in order to attend to the presences and absences it makes possible; (2) insofar as, gazing at a fire, we see the coals and embers glowing and darkening in a regular rhythm, taking on different shapes before disappearing into the flames, we see not the fire itself but something on fire; in this sense, the fire may be said to conceal itself in the process.

³³ In making the latter point about the obliviousness to the adornment, Heidegger distinguishes the foreground adorned things (*das Gezierde*) from the original adorning (*das Zieren*) of the pure, but unapparent fit underlying them; see GA 55: 163-66; VS 20f/FS 7f.

³⁴ It is noteworthy that the ontological difference that Heidegger recognizes in some fragments is a matter of beauty. Thus, however riveting and beguiling any foreground appearance of entities, indeed, even if it is the most beautiful adornment (*Gezierde*), it is no comparison with the “sole, original adorning” or, as Heraclitus puts it, ὁ κάλλιστος κόσμος (Fragment 124; GA 55: 165; VS 20f/FS 8). See, too, Heidegger’s characterization of φύσις in the sense of ἀρμονία (*Fügung*) as the most beautiful (*das Schönste*) (GA 55: 144).

³⁵ See GA 70: 68-83, esp. *ibid.*, 68: "Wenn wir von >>der Unterscheidung<< sprechen, halten wir sogleich in zwei Hinsichten. Die eine geht auf ein Denken, das unterscheidet und die Unterschiedene (Sein und Seiendes) gleichsam vorfindet....Die andere Hinsicht ... geht auf das Seyn selbst und denkt aus ihm und als es selbst die Unterscheidung"; *ibid.*, 76: "Sein als Seyn >>ist<< selbst Unterschied und niemals ein Glied und eine Seite der Entscheidung und Eines der beiden Unterschiedenen"; *ibid.*, 80: "Der Unterschied wird nicht ausgelöscht. Aber er wandelt sich wesentlich."

³⁶ The fact that Heidegger largely ignores – at least in his 1943 Heraclitus lectures – other readings reinforces the impression that his interpretation is idiosyncratic. In his later seminars, Heidegger engages different interpretations, e.g., interpretations by his respective interlocutors, Fink and Beaufret.

³⁷ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse de Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Dietz, 1974), 26: "In der Anatomie des Menschen ist ein Schlüssel zur Anatomie des Affen....Man kann Tribut, Zehnten, etc. verstehen, wenn man die Grundrente kennt. Man muß sie aber nicht identifizieren."

³⁸ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, volume I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 75.

³⁹ This sort of beginning dictates both what it means to be caught up (*auf-gefangen*) in what is begun (*an-gefangen*) and the future of those caught up in it. For mundane examples of this convergence of the meanings of thrownness and beginning, consider fatefully beginning life as a slave or serf, the perilous inception of a revolution, or simply the ever-operative origins of any personal life-history. Given this convergence, the analysis of temporality in SZ, far from being abandoned, survives the *seynsgeschichtliche Kehre*; see GA 70: 176, 180.

⁴⁰ GA 55: 175; see, too, GA 70: 93-96, 105, 140f, esp. *ibid.* 141: "Das seynsgeschichtliche Denken ist Erinnerung in den ersten Anfang als Vordenken in den anderen"; for a particularly thoughtful treatment of *Anfang* (aptly translated 'inception') and inceptual thinking, see Polt, *The Emergency of Being*, 115-128.

⁴¹ GA 55: 168f, 172f; SZ 133. Heidegger acknowledges the shift himself; see VS 121f/FS 71. In the Heraclitus' lectures, Heidegger adds that someone who emerges and comports herself towards φύσις – in effect, mimicking it – "can, because she is emergent [*aufgegangenes*] in this sense, look back at herself and thus herself be herself, that is to say, be a Self as such an entity that we address through the τίς – someone" (GA 55: 173; gender specification added). Notable here is a basic continuity with the specification of the 'da' of *Dasein* as the *Lichtung* in SZ, particularly if due consideration is given to *Dasein's* thrownness and the irreducibility of its horizons to its projections, its ecstases.

⁴² The conception of being in terms of εἶδος is tied, Heidegger contends, to two further reinterpretations, consideration of which is omitted here: a reinterpretation of φύσις to make it conform to τέχνη, given the productiveness of the look, i.e., its role in production, and a reinterpretation of being as something common, given the commonness of the look; see, respectively, GA 65: 126, 184/*CPh* 88, 129 and GA 65: 63, 75f, 206, 209/*CPh* 44, 52, 144, 146.

⁴³ Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's ἰδέα reflects his phenomenological pedigree, indeed, his long-time fondness for Husserl's doctrine of categorial intuition. Thus, Heidegger emphasizes that Plato's "discovery of the 'so-called' ideas" was not some flight of speculation; instead Plato found "what everyone sees and grasps when he comports himself to entities," namely, the looks (*Anblicke*) of things, the way they present themselves as being what they are (freely translating: *als was seiend sich etwas darbietet*). In these looks "the individual thing *presents* itself; present and *presencing* [*präsent und anwesend*]" (GA 34: 51/ET 38; see, too, GA 65: 208/*CPh* 145). Heidegger rightly insists that the ἰδέα, so understood, is not to be confused with the notion of something re-presented in the mind [*das Vor-gestellte des Vorstellens*], the modern gloss that anchors everything in the perceiver and leads to idealism. As noted at the outset, Heidegger refuses to saddle Plato with responsibility for this sort of idealism since the term *ijdeva* signifies precisely the appearing or "shining forth" of the look itself, what offers a view or outlook *for* looking upon it.

⁴⁴ GA 34: 57/ET 42: ">>' Ἰδέα << meint das im voraus Gesichtete, das im voraus Vernommene und Seiendes Durchlassende, als *Auslegung* des >>Seins<<. Die Idee läßt

uns das, was das Seiende *ist*, sehen, läßt gleichsam durch es hindurch das Seiende auf uns *zukommen*." Ibid., 106/77: "Dem Bilde des Lichtes, der Helle, entsprechen die Ideen."

⁴⁵ GA 34: 70, 73/ET 51, 53. Cognizant that his interpretation goes beyond Plato on this point, Heidegger nevertheless insists on the need to take the meaning of "ideas" literally as something seen. If Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation is right on this score, the fact that the look of the book is a condition for seeing the book does not entail that the look exists or takes shape apart from looking that way to someone, i.e., apart from a seeing.

⁴⁶ GA 34: 72/ET 53. To the extent that the good is the highest idea, what applies in general to the ideas applies in the greatest degree to the good, namely, having an essential relation to a seeing that "forms the idea, pre-forms it for itself.... neither objectively on hand nor subjectively fabricated [*Erdichtetes*], it [the good as the highest idea] is precisely what empowers every objectivity and every subjectivity to what they are because it spans the yoke between subject and object" (GA 34: 111/ET 81).

⁴⁷ For Heidegger's discussion of 515c11 (ὀρθότερον βλέπει), heralding the shift to correctness, see GA 34: 34f/ET 26. Between the time of the *Beiträge* and his Heraclitus lectures, Heidegger may have changed his interpretation of the Heraclitean φύσις. In the earlier text he places φύσις in apposition to *Seiendheit* or *das Seiende als Seiendes* by way of explaining how it serves as a condition for Plato's thinking; see GA 65: 332, 351/*CPh* 233, 245 and GA 70: 86; but for a positive albeit qualified assessment of Heraclitus opposite Plato in another connection, see GA 65: 360/*CPh* 252.

⁴⁸ " The word ἀλήθεια stands for the most part simply for the being [*Seiende*] itself, for what the being is *that most pre-eminently is* [*das seiendste Seiende*]....The unhidden, that is to say, that *to which* unhiddenness *pertains* [*zu-kommt*] is the being that genuinely is [*das eigentlich Seiende*]; but it itself [the unhiddenness] is not meant as such.... ἀλήθεια stands here already for that to which it pertains [*zu-kommt*], but not for what it itself *is*" (GA 34: 124/ET 90).

⁴⁹ GA 70: 45: "Daß das Sein als Entborgenheit Anfang ist, ohne in die Verbergung zu wesnen, kündet, wie noch der Anfang kaum angefangen. Noch steht der Anfang bevor und deshalb ist der Untergang einziger denn vormals." Ibid., 19: "Der anfangende Anfang ist Er-eignis, ist Untergang in den Abschied. In der Vorsicht des vorbereitenden anfänglichen Denkens kann aber der anfangende Anfang erst nur der >>andere<< Anfang zum ersten genannt werden." I am grateful to Matthew Meyer and Al and Maria Miller for their critical readings of this paper.