Heidegger as a Post-Darwinian Philosopher

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Abstract
Heidegger responded to Darwin's displacement of the Created Universe by seeking value in a new materiality. His 1936 lecture *The Origin of the Work of Art* spelt out the need to get away from an Aristotelian concept of matter perpetuated by Aquinas and frame an approach more appropriate to a post-Darwinian age. The argument is not that Heidegger was a Darwinist or an evolutionist. It is that he responded to what Dewey called 'the greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions'.

Of all the scientists interested in Darwin's biological revolution, in his lifetime and shortly after, German scholars predominated. Twenty per cent of Darwin's correspondence was with German colleagues.[1]

The man who did most to relay Darwinian ideas to Germany, was the zoologist Ernst Haeckel. Haeckel, who lived until 1919, earnt parallel reputations as an artist and philosopher. In a country and a culture where, just as in England, feeling ran high as to whether to side with religion or evolution, Haeckel offered a Romantic and pantheistic interpretation of Darwin.[2] Goethe's idea of Ur-being, which owed much to a mystical reading of Spinoza, was Haeckel's key reference point.[3] Perhaps the Germanized *Origin of Species* pointed him there. The salient term in German translations of Darwin was 'Ursprung'. With the sense both of an ancient beginning and a leap forward, it was used for both 'origin' and

[1] *Prinz Albert und die Entwicklung der Bildung in England und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert* [Prince Albert and the development of education in England and Germany in the 19th century] herausgegeben von Franz Bosbach, William Filmer-Sankey und Hermann Hiery; unter Mitarbeit von Thomas Brockmann (2000), 182. For a more general picture see Alfred Kelly *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwin in Germany 1860–1914* (1981).

[2] Haeckel argued for nature as a self-generating artist. See Olaf Breidbach *Visions of nature : the art and science of Ernst Haeckel* (2006), 43.

[3] See Robert J. Richards *The tragic sense of life : Ernst Haeckel and the struggle over evolutionary thought* (2008) for the Goethean background.

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'descent'.[4] Haeckel published his own 'Ursprung' title in 1898, followed in 1899 by by *Die Welträthsel* (The Enigma of the World), a book that had sold more than 400,000 copies before the First World War.[5]

I suggest Heidegger, who was to use the term Ursprung quite significantly himself, may have read *Die Welträthsel* as a schoolboy. This was how he described his secondary education:

> In my first year in Freiburg [1906] the emphasis in mathematics shifted from simple problem-solving towards a more theoretical approach, and my natural liking for this subject now became a really serious interest, which soon extended to physics as well. I also derived a lot of stimulation from my classes in religion, which prompted me to read widely on the biological theory of evolution. In my final year at school it was primarily through the lectures on Plato… that I was introduced in a more conscious way to philosophical problems, albeit not yet with any theoretical rigour.[6]

This passage was written in 1915 for the examiners of Heidegger's habilitation thesis. Aged 17 Heidegger may not have gone directly to Darwin but 'read widely' on the theory that challenged his religious teaching. Or perhaps he did read *The Origin of Species* and/or *The Descent of Man*, but was disinclined to mention Darwin by name, since it was the Catholic Church had funded his research. Later, in *Being and Time*, he would see in biology 'an awakening tendency to inquire beyond the definition that mechanism and vitalism have given for "life" and "organism" and to define anew the kind of Being which belongs to the living as such.'[7]

[4] H.G. Bronn *Über die Entstehung der Arten* (1860) was the first translator of *The Origin of Species*. J.V. Carus who took over as Darwin's official translator told him while working on a revised translation of the 5th English edition that Ursprung would have been preferable to Enstehung to render 'Origin'. He agreed with Darwin not to make the change in order not to confuse the German public. See Carus to Darwin 3/6/1869 and Darwin's reply 21/6/1869. In fact the Carus translation immediately reverts to Ursprung for 'origin' in the body of the text, starting with the second sentence of Darwin's Introduction. *Der Ursprung des Menschen* as a translation of *The Descent of Man* was published by another hand in 1874.

[5] Robert J. Richards 'The Tragic Sense of Ernst Haeckel: His Scientific and Artistic Struggle' in *Darwin : Kunst und die Suche nach den Ursprüngen* herausgegeben von Pamela Kort, Max Hollein (2009), 92.

[6] Rüdiger Safranski *Martin Heidegger Between Good and Evil* (1998), 14–15.

[7] *Sein und Zeit* (1927) [H10]. This translation in John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans, *Being and Time* (1962).

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A feature of Heidegger's education was the way secular and religious influences competed for his loyalty. He experienced in person the challenge to which all believers in God's Creation were exposed after Darwin. In his early teens he attended the seminary in Konstanz as a first step towards his education as a priest. But under pressure from Bismarck's *Kulturkampf,* the nation-building policy that was Protestant in origin and secularizing in effect, the state took over running this establishment from the Jesuit priesthood a year before Heidegger was born. 'Two freethinking teachers… led me, as it were unnoticed, out of the Christian world of ideas.'[8] The Catholic Church in the province of Baden, with Freiburg as its capital, was actively opposed to evolutionary theory and secured a concession from Berlin to give religion in the region special weight,[9] yet evidently there were contradictions and laxities in practice, which affected Heidegger directly. Subsequently at the Berthold gymnasium he was by his own account free to study religion, biology and philosophy side by side. In 1909, when he did enrol at a Jesuit College, near Feldkirch in Austria, he was discharged after only a few weeks. Heart trouble was cited, but he was now twenty, and perhaps the intellectual and emotional pressures of commiting himself to Catholicism were too much. Heidegger went on to study theology and philosophy at Freiburg University, but after two years dropped theology and took up maths, physics and chemistry in a move that suggested he would rather become a schoolteacher than a priest to secure a living.[10] In yet another volte-face he took a grant from the Catholic authorities to fund the habilitation research which would allow him to become a university *Dozent* . That entailed a promise to defend the Church's 'treasure of truth'.[11] Heidegger officially broke with 'the system of Catholicism' in 1919, before his first child was due to be baptized,[12] and yet the theology never went away and what he became, was, in his own words, 'a Christian philosopher'.[13] Lutheranism, that huge influence on German Idealism, also affected him.

My concern here is how and to what extent the encounter with 'biological thought' affected Heidegger's theologically informed

[8] Safranski *Heidegger*, 11.
[9] Kelly *The Descent of Darwin*, 65.
[10] Safranski *Heidegger*, 42.
[11] Safranski *Heidegger*, 55.
[12] *Mein liebes Seelchen Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfride 1915–1970* (2005).
[13] Letter to Karl Lowith 1921 cited in George Steiner *Martin Heidegger With a New Introduction* (1991), xvi.

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philosophy. His 1915 curiculum vitae, showing the way his intellectual interests developed, suggested in its very formulation that philosophy would help him transcend the conflict between science and faith. But what kind of philosophy and what kind of conflict? There are scientists and philosophers today who insist they can reconcile evolutionary theory with a belief in God. They submit that God chose that theory (with all its randomness and blindness) to set the world in motion. Heidegger was not one of them. When, in 1949 at a conference on religion, he declared that he did not accept that God created the world the issue that both generated and challenged his ontology came to the fore: what it meant to reject the divine origins of being in favour of 'the biological theory of evolution' and still to defend a 'non-metaphysical relationship to God'.[14]

In this paper it's not directly this relationship I want to examine but how Heidegger came to make it plausible. My subject is the construction of his thinking about the thingliness of the world, which seems to entail both an acceptance of and even a strong influence from Darwin, coupled with a need to assert ontology as prior to science. Heidegger explicitly brushed aside both the temptation to believe in a Creator and the Aristotelian and Thomist descriptions of beings in terms of matter and form. These moves were related, and both had direct consequences not only for ontology. They also had their bearings on aesthetics.

> 'The inclination to treat 'the matter-form structure as *the* constitution of every entity receives a further special impulse from the fact that on the basis of a religious faith, namely, the biblical faith, the totality of all beings is imagined in advance as something created, which here means made. The philosophy of this faith is that [the totality of all beings] is to be thought of as different from what is humanly put together. Nevertheless, if at the same time or even beforehand, in accordance with a presumed predetermination of Thomistic philosophy for interpreting the Bible, the *ens creatum* is conceived as a unity of *materia* and *forma*, then faith is expounded by way of a philosophy whose truth lies in an unconcealedness of beings which differs in kind from the world believed in by faith.'[15]

[14] John D Caputo 'Heidegger and Theology' in Charles Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Second Edition (2006), 340.

[15] Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes' in *Holzwege*, Martin Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe* (1976–)V:14; 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in Albert Hofstadter (trans.), *Martin Heidegger Poetry, Language, Thought* (1971) [Hereafter Hofstadter], 29–30. The Hofstadter translation is quoted with

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I take this passage, from the 1935/36 lecture, *The Origin of the Work of Art,* to reject the Biblical faith in a world of beings which exist from their first moment fully formed by God. To this teaching of the Book of Genesis Heidegger opposes the truth of the unconcealedness of beings. It is their being in being, rather than their madeness (which an analysis in terms of matter and form would produce), that Heidegger wants to emphasize. *The Origin of the Work of Art* goes on:

> 'The idea of creation, grounded in faith, can lose its guiding power of knowledge of beings as a whole. But the theological interpretation of all beings, the view of the world in terms of matter and form borrowed from an alien philosophy, having once been instituted, can still remain a force. This happened in the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times. The metaphysics of the modern period rest on the form-matter structure devised in the medieval period, which itself merely recalls in its words the buried natures of *eidos* and *hule*. There the interpretation of the thing by means of matter and form, whether it remains medieval or becomes Kantian-transcendental, has current and self-evident. But for that reason, no less than the other interpretations mentioned of the thingness of the thing, it is an encroachment upon the thing being of the thing.'

Heidegger objects to things being set aside as 'mere things' because of the perfectionism inherent in ontology from Aristotle through Acquinas to Kant. The thing-being of a thing is indivisible, and can't be reached by subtracting the characteristics of a thing and then holding up the thing-being left over.

With passages like this at its heart, *The Origin of the Work of Art* is surely the place to look to understand Heidegger as a post-Darwinian philosopher. A contentious work from Heidegger's Nazi years, it is nevertheless comparatively neglected by scholars.

To relinquish a traditional Christian account of being and assert a kind of visionary naturalism in its place, which is what I think Heidegger achieved, he needed a philosophy that could speak for the beauty and truth of an immediate experience of being not mediated by intellect. Revolutionary in the German tradition, he would eschew talking about both reason (Kantian *Vernunft*) and spirit (Hegelian *Geist*). Kant's transcendental method struck him as

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slight changes. Heidegger seems to want to keep his references to the Catholic Church oblique.

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'an encroachment on the thing-being of the thing',[16] he wrote in *The Origin of the Work of Art*. He felt this encroachment strongly. He had an overwhelming, an ambush, a violation, in mind with *Überfall*. How to avoid this encroachment and let being be? A crucial step in the direction of what would become *Dasein*'s intellectually unmediated experience of 'being here' came with the writing of the habilitation thesis on Duns Scotus in 1915, which prompted him to remember his early difficulty reconciling faith with 'the biological theory of evolution'.

Duns, writing in the thirteenth century, gave Heidegger 'the impression of a deadly emptiness of all previous systems of categories'.[17] Aristotle had graded all things according to the degree, in their combination of matter and form, to which they grew towards perfection, whereas Duns referred to the distinct thisness of – to use Heidegger-like examples to come – the jug and the hat and the peasant woman. Duns's theory of *haeccitas* was specifically a dispute with Aristotle's medieval follower Acquinas, who had put forward what seemed to Duns the empty category of 'prime matter' to account for what individualized things. *Haeccitas* by contrast allowed all things in the world to be their thingly selves 'and nothing more'.

Duns's account of the thisness of all things paved the way for Heidegger to deliver a radical critique of Aristotle in 1922 and to capitalize on it in *Being and Time* five years later. Further, *haeccitas* opened his inquiry into the nature of the work of art in 1936. The aim of *Being and Time*, of which the art lecture was a late extension, was to release our true being here, *Dasein*, he said, from the hierarchical hold of an epistemology governed by an idea of perfection. Duns had shown how to undo the formal, universalizing categories imposed by the rapacious human mind that at the height of Greek philosophy had embedded its lethal categorizing into the propositional structure of the sentence.[18] When the human mind followed its notion of a perfect essential substance on which all things in being were predicated, it became predatory on the thingliness of those things and no longer dwellt among them in their full presence.

For a sense of what this liberation from essentialism felt like to a sensibility trained in Thomist philosophy a generation before Heidegger we can turn to the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose tribute to Duns included the lines:

[16] Heidegger V: 15; Hofstadter, 30.

[17] Quoted in Dorothea Frede 'The question of being: Heidegger's project' in Guigon (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (2006), 51.

[18] Heidegger V:8; Hofstadter, 24.

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Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves–goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

In 1875 Hopkins feared the 'bottomlessness' of Idealism, Heidegger's own target, and hoped for a quite different 'future of metaphysics'.[19]

We should note though what 'Idealism' meant here. By assimilating Hopkins to Heidegger I'm suggesting that what both objected to was a 'Mind-first attitude'. A Mind-first attitude is what Daniel C. Dennett sees Darwin as having most strongly challenged in classical philosophy.[20] Heidegger attacks Mind-first limitations precisely in those moments when he talks about encroachments on and violations of the thing-being of the thing. His target is an overreach of human intellect, and that coupled with an original belief in God the Creator of all things, for it was that Christian Ur-story which generated the model of mind breathing life into hitherto worthless matter, and carried over into an Idea-lism which separated idea from materiality.[21]

Heidegger's serious admirers see him as having 'transformed mainstream philosophy by defining its central task as asking the "question of being".'[22] My claim here is that Heidegger understood the need for a revolution in Western metaphysics because of the challenge of Darwinism to Creationism, which in passing showed up the limitations of the Mind-first attitude. Heidegger was not a Darwinian,

[19] Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, 20 February, 1875. See Bernadette Waterman Ward *World as Word Philosphical Theology in Gerard Manely Hopkins* (2002), 21–22.

[20] Daniel C. Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (1995), 26–28. Dennett notes (202) 'Heidegger blamed Socrates for much of what is wrong with philosophy, because he taught us all to demand necessary and sufficient conditions. It cannot be often that Darwin and Heidegger support each other, so the occasion is worth noting.'

[21] The sense in which Idea-lism was rejected by Heidegger and Hopkins alike entailed a perception of the world which distinguished between noumenon and phenomenon, the pure idea of something and its material appearance. On this point and the way it is grasped within the German Idealist tradition see *On the Aesthetic Education of Man In a Series of Letters* [by] Friedrich Schiller; edited and translated with an introduction, commentary and glossary of terms by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, (1967), 316–17 and 309, where 'Idee' is linked to 'Form' and contrasted passim with 'Stoff'.

[22] Guignon (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (2006), title page, unnumbered.

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or a Darwinist, far from it; but he derived a new marriage of theology and ontology from Darwin's revolution.

Darwin himself was fully aware what the evidence for evolution by natural selection meant for metaphysics. He noted in 1838: 'My… theory would revolutionize…. the whole [of] metaphysics.' 'He who understands baboon would do more towards metaphysics than Locke.' According to his biographers Darwin toiled in pursuit of 'the blind, stumbling, accident-prone mechanism' that kept life happening. From his base 'in Nature's workshop', Plato and Aristotle's understandings of being were his targets.[23] The doctrine of essences embedded in an early nineteenth-century Cambridge education was quite alien to the ordered but not designed plethora of natural forms Darwin found in the world at large.

For Darwin the order of evolution was like that of a tree in which some branches stopped growing and died, twigs broke off, others grew to huge length. How the tree stood at any one time, with its dead parts and its green shoots, showed a pattern, but not a design. The mature form of the tree was not a case of the tree becoming what it was, because its form was not pre-determined. The absence of teleology in Darwin's anti-Aristotelian account of living beings was crucial for what Heidegger was poised to take out of it. As Dennett puts it: 'Darwin's idea can be used to dismantle and then rebuild a traditional structure of Western thought.'[24] To be sure the issue of 'teleology' in Darwin seems to require a distinction between the teleological, meaning an injection of being with an anthropomorphic sense of purpose, and teleonomic, which gives to every biological cell its self-willed end.[25] But that only underlines what Heidegger was contesting, namely that perfection-seeking, mind-led anthropomorphism which didn't allow beings to be what they were. Heidegger's target was hylomorphism, or the thought of the architect God as moral author of the world.

When Darwin suggested that that state of all things in being was a much more haphazard business than had previously been acknowledged contemporary believers in a purposeful account of God's universe were offended by the implicit attack on the glory of 'Man'.[26] By

[23] Adrian Desmond and James Moore *Darwin* (1991), 237; 260; 420; 566; Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 39.

[24] Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 60.

[25] John Warrell 'Philosophy and the Natural Sciences' in A.C. Grayling (ed.), *Philosophy 2: Further Thought Through the Subject* (1998), 262.

[26] This made him seem also politically radical to religious conservatives. Cf. Desmond and Moore, *Darwin* (224) 'For conservative Anglicans

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linking the simplest forms of plant and animal life with the complexity of the human being, Darwin's 'materialism' questioned the unique moral status of mankind. It seemed terminally to threaten 'Man's' free will and to put into question traditional patterns of authority based on God's will.

Evolution had enormous consequences for politics, economics and society, drastic even to those not in frantic dialogue with their Christian faith. The painter Paul Gauguin, who, like Darwin, took himself off to faraway islands to find the meaning of life, asked in his famous painting of 1897 : 'Where Have We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?' Bertrand Russell wrote in 1946 that 'What Galileo and Newton were to the seventeenth century, Darwin was to the nineteenth'. Russell included Darwin as a philosopher in *A History of Western Philosophy*, but in fact he didn't treat him like a philosopher. He featured him more like a human event *sui generis*, after which the world was different.[27] Darwin seemed to Russell both to encourage the heedless expansion of capitalism and, qua materialism, to give rein to Marx's critique of a politics that hoarded material wealth for one socio-economic class. One class's cultural (which was to say, 'mind-led') superiority was also at stake in Darwin's uncovering of human origins based on chance.[28] Here was a scientific revolution which nourished political change on both the libertarian right and the social democratic and Marxist left. Heidegger, caught up in the revision of the social order that Darwin prompted, filtered some of its effects into philosophy. He avoided referring to 'Der Mensch' as the traditional expression for 'Man'. He opted for Dasein to point to human being-*here*. The implication was of each of us having our being-here-and-now, human certainly, but no longer to be seen as created entities with eternal souls.

The philosopher who best reviewed Darwin's implications for philosophy was John Dewey. His insights are much more fruitful, seen from today, than Russell's, because they still seem fresh. Dewey had foreseen in 1909 that 'the true nature of the [Darwin]

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terrified of man's brutalization to destroy mankind's unique status by stretching the life-force was like throwing muskets to the rabble. But Darwin, with his reforming Unitarian circle, treated nature's self-development quite casually. Apes failed to frighten him; the brutalization threat passed harmlessly overhead.'

[27] Russell didn't mention Heidegger. George Steiner considered this omission characterstic of a 'vulgar but representative book'. See *Martin Heidegger* (1991), 4.

[28] *A History of Western Philosophy* (2004), 657–659.

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controversy is easily concealed from us by the theological clamour that attended it'. 'In laying hands upon the sacred ark of absolute permanency, in treating the forms that had been regarded as types of fixity and perfection as originating and passing away…*The Origin of Species* was bound to transform the logic of knowledge.' Evolution was 'the greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions.'[29]

That transformation of the logic of knowledge began with Darwin but its theoretical acceptance has been slow and partial, for reasons spelt out by the Darwinian scholar Dennett only a few years ago:

> This anti-essentialist theme was recognized by Darwin as a truly revolutionary epistemological or metaphysical accompaniment to his science; we should not be surprised how hard it is for people to swallow. Ever since Socrates taught Plato (and all the rest of us) how to play the game of asking for necessary and sufficient conditions…this has sent us off on interminable bouts of essence-mongering. Our perceptual systems are even genetically designed to force straddling candidates for perception into one classification or another…Darwin shows us that evolution does not need what we need; the real world can get along just fine with the *de facto* convergences that emerge over time, leaving lots of emptiness between clusters of actuality.'[30]

'Candidates for perception', 'convergences that emerge over time, leaving lots of emptiness between clusters of actuality': Heideggerians cannot help but open their ears to a Darwin who is made to speak like this. The world *is* in a way quite distinct from the way traditional epistemology used to present it to us. If that tradition's defining concern was with how *we* know *it*, for Heidegger all three positions were wrong: the 'we', the 'know' and the 'it'.

Nevertheless Heidegger is both part of the revolution Darwin inspired *and* part of a more general resistance to Darwin led by, but not confined to, the theologians. While Heidegger accepts the new science he sees the need to define truth as something beyond the reach of science.[31] I would say that Heidegger espouses a

[29] John Dewey, 'The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy' (1909) in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays* (1910), 14.

[30] Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 201–2.

[31] See *Being and Time* [H50] 'We are not passing judgement on the positive work of these disciplines [psychology, anthropology, biology]. We must always bear in mind, however, that … ontological foundations can never be disclosed by subsequent hypotheses derived from empirical

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Darwinian naturalism, but one that allows for centuries of religious emotion to retain their relevance as ecstatic moments of truth. I call this his visionary naturalism.

To find a 'non-metaphysical relationship to God' to succeed the Thomism he rejected, Heidegger's first impulse was to define a new human relation to nature in place of the received formalistic attitude that had so flattened the glorious thisness. This, the matter of presence, was his answer to Dewey's 'new logic of knowledge'. Where the tradition from Aristotle to Locke stressed our intellectual capacity to understand and order nature, Heidegger's contention, since his first encounter with Duns, was that *das Seiende im ganzen*, everything in being, had stand-alone value as a proliferation of present thisnesses.[32] All things in being stood alone and were grounded in themselves. Only, as he noted in 1949, this did not rule out 'a non-metaphysical relationship with God' as we exist alongside and among them.

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As a first example of how Heidegger both moved with Darwin and against him we can take the question of Time. What had to be given up, what was discredited, was the Biblical account of Time: the notion that Creation had a beginning, that a date of 4003BC could be put on it, and, most importantly, that beyond Time, in Eternity, souls rested. Against that, 'time, unimaginable time' was what Darwin had to explain.[33] Dennett calls it a new Vastness and a new Vanishing.[34] Artists began painting the aons and the open spaces and the occasional clusters of beings in seas of emptiness that Darwin brought to mind. The unpeopled expanses of rock and empty shores of nineteenth-century painters Frederic Edwin Church and George Frederick Watts seem to have been immediate responses to a fear of chaos if Creation was discredited. In Europe

material, but that they are always "there" already even when that empirical material simply gets collected.'

[32] Dennett 204. 'The Darwinian campaign to overthrow John Locke's Mind-first vision of the cosmos' is a leitmotiv running through *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. The authority of the human mind over nature is heir to hylomorphism and both are subject to radical postmodern critique. See John Protevi *Political Physics: Deleuze, Derrida and the Body Politic* (2003). Dennett (400) finds that most recently a defence of Locke's mind-first vision occurs in the work of John Searle.

[33] Quoted in Desmond and Moore *Darwin*, 162.

[34] Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, passim.

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Odilon Redon in the 1880s and Heidegger's contemporary Max Ernst showed with their beasts and monsters what the Darwinian revolution meant to the perception of 'nature'.[35] Here, from painters of wilderness, were pictorial gestures towards the larger challenge Heidegger accepted, to take on board 'being in its entirety', *das Seiende im ganzen*, vast but not infinite, and to understand what being here, in it and part of it, is for us.

At [H348] in *Being and Time,* where temporality is a moral issue, Heidegger wrote a sentence so awkward to translate that Macquarrie and Robinson included the original German in a footnote. It's the italicized sentence here. 'The Present leaps away from its authentic future and from its authentic having been, so that it lets *Dasein* come to its authentic existence only by taking a detour through that Present. *The 'leaping away' of the Present – that is, the falling into lostness – has its source in that primordial authentic temporality itself which makes possible thrown Being-towards-death.*' Yet this passage seems to me fairly intelligible in the Darwinian context. Heidegger offers a picture of the biological conditions of our being here, each of us thrown by chance into finite existence, which condition, to lead authentic lives, we must accept without illusion. As the translators note, they can't reproduce all the leaping and bounding that Heidegger's German compounds encapsulate, although they do tell us the semantic centre of Heidegger's fizzling sentence is *Ursprung*, the word for source or origin. English has no echoing adjective but must resort to 'primordial'.[36] *Ur-sprung* suggested 'primal leap' and had both a temporal and a spacial aspect. The first morpheme signifies vast time past and the second morpheme indicates a future leaping into being that will soon also be in the past.

Heidegger sets Time in the unknowable but not unbounded future: a future with 'the character of having been'. [H329] Beings of every kind are finite. Like other living beings, each with their worlds, each of us too, with our worlds, will one day not be. What distinguishes an authentic sense of Time – and here one can imagine the priestly Heidegger, having 'read widely in the biological theory of evolution', advising his flock – is that our response be both

[35] See *Darwin Kunst und die Suche nach den Ursprüngen* (2009), note 4 above, and Diana Donald and Jane Munro (eds), *Endless forms : Charles Darwin, natural science and the visual arts* (2009). These two richly illustrated catalogues to the German and the English version of a joint bicentennial exhibition show the vastly different approach of curators in the two countries, and cultures.

[36] [H219]ff.

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'primordial' and 'ecstatic'.[37] For 'primordial' read an acceptance of Darwinian naturalism, without traditional metaphysical privileges for 'Man'. For 'ecstatic' read centuries of religious emotion attached to the meaning of our being here, not cancelled out by the news that God did not create us. On to the ecstatic tradition Heidegger grafts a moral imperative not to evade our finality but always to live authentically with our impending death.

In *The Origin of the Work of Art* it is not the priest talking about death and authenticity, however, but the philosopher acknowledging that the existence of a work of art can suddenly open up the primordial perspective. Like our feeling for the thisness of all things in being art too is on the side of ecstasy. In the presence of the work of art 'When we are suddenly struck that such a work exists amid all the vast possibilities of being there's a feeling of remoteness and unfamiliarity and everything that has seemed everyday until now is pushed aside.' A few pages earlier we read that this sense of what is no longer '*geheuer*' and might otherwise be terrifying is central to the disclosure of what-is-in- being. The monstrous truth – the primordial – comes as a shock to the believer so long consoled by the spectacle of a divinely ordered nature. Yet, through our awareness of the primordial, in this case through the occurrence of a work of art, the ecstatic truth can still *happen*.[38]

The reader of page 54 and page 66 of the Hofstadter translation may not recognize this graphic picture, of the kind Heidegger inscribed in almost every sentence of his lecture, because the weave of German morphemes is impossible to preserve in translation. Heidegger's dense German uses the disposition of morphemes in a sentence and in a paragraph to create a visual impression of what he has experienced in having this thought: of a continuity of being in which certain qualities and things step forward into a presence we can directly apprehend. Heidegger seems to expect us to prepare for truth to happen in the presence of his writing, as if it too were a work of art and not 'only' philosophy. The syntax is poetic, and the meaning non-linear. This follows from his sense of a contaminated traditional sentence-structure.[39]

Much of the content of Heidegger's claims for a new ontology based on the distinction between present-to-hand (available for science to classify) and ready-to-hand (all around us and ready to be lived with) will be familiar. And yet it seems to me a source of new insight to reread *Being and Time*, and *The Origin of the Work*

[37] [H219–226].
[38] Heidegger V: 54,41. My translation.
[39] See above note 19.

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of Art in the light of Heidegger's coming to terms with the biological revolution which had changed the world in his lifetime. When he has to imagine how things are without our epistemological intervention, it is Darwin who comes to his aid.

I want here to forge an illustration out of two passages from *The Origin* pasted together. My master-passage begins with Heidegger talking about 'the 'unconcealedness' (54) of truth and comes to fruition when he describes truth happening in the work of art. As this work of art exists, standing there, in its thisness, truth happens as a 'silent thrust into the Open of the "that"' (66). The passage goes on:

> The more simply does the thrust come into the Open that such a work is, and the more essentially is the extraordinary thrust to the surface and the long-familiar thrust down…the more cleanly the work seems to cut all ties to human beings…To submit to this displacement means: to transform our accustomed ties to world and to earth and henceforth to to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work.

This is the standard translation, but I've transposed two clauses to make it more readable. In it Heidegger seems to borrow from the vast upheavals in the world's surface that geology first described in Darwin's lifetime. If Darwin prompted his own investigation into non-created being and time, then perhaps the terms he drew on for the first time in *The Origin*, World and Earth, hark back to the earth science that was also emerging in Darwin's lifetime. Just as the surface of the earth folds and fractures, so truth too erupts in moments when Being is unconcealed. Heidegger doesn't concern himself with the science, but he borrows the imagery.

Where does this unique confection of some real science, some quasi-geological imagery and his own ontology lead us? In the first instance Heidegger seems to acknowledge that to pursue a different kind of truth, after Darwin, in the light of science, is madness. But we do 'submit to this displacement…' '*Diese Verrückung*' literally means 'displacement', but the past participle *verrückt* is everyday German for 'mad'. 'This madness' brings us once again to Heidegger's root task: how to retain the ecstasy of the saints alongside a primordial account of all things in being; how to accept the challenge of Darwin to hylomorphism but to persist, madly, in wanting 'truth' to arise out of our dwelling amidst everything that is. If we miss the pain of this dilemma because it simply isn't actual for most of us today, perhaps close reading of Heidegger's text can evoke it for us.

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Take the sentence that talks of our 'staying within the truth', which has a special resonance thanks to the verb *verweilen*. In a great moment in Goethe's *Faust*, Faust apprehends the fullness of being-here with the ecstatic cry: '*Verweile doch, du bist so schön*.'[40] We must linger. Being here is too magnificent. Our passionate unwillingness to let go, our heart-wrenching need to face up to our impending departure only sharpens the sweet appeal of our being here, in all its gorgeous and monstruous thingliness. (All this Mephistopheles knows too well. Nor does Heidegger the priest condemn us for flirting with the Mephistophelian moment.) In extremis we know this lingering is a kind of madness, because we are going to die, but the truth has this character of disclosing our finality that adds to the madness and what we actually feel is joy. Now about this truth philosophy must talk, not only about scientific truths.

In this passage I've assembled from *The Origin* three terms stand out. As part of one of Heidegger's most prominent pattern-weaves. There is *Verborgenheit*, normally rendered as concealedness or concealment. There is *geheuer/ungeheuer*, translated as (un)familiar, but meaning monstruous, enormous, immense, vast and terrible. Thirdly there are variations on the verb *stoßen*, 'to thrust'.

Picture a *Dasein* confronted with these manifestations of being. On the naturalistic side she comes to understand what once she might have called 'nature' as a primordial potency that bursts forth blindly, creating beings and seeing them vanish. She may hide from what is monstrous, or she may open herself to 'stay with the truth' of being. With what is *verborgen/unverborgen* Heidegger paints an elaborate picture of hiding and seeking, concealing and revealing, with the structure of truth given by the human need at once to search and to retreat.

If this is an ontological condition, it is evidently also an existential dilemma, and very personal to Heidegger, who projects his social anxieties into his theology of unconcealment. In the pre-war years Heidegger desperately sought seclusion from the chatter of society. Over his Freiburg house, constructed in 1929, stood the motto from Proverbs 4:23: 'Shelter your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life'.[41] *Verborgenheit* means seclusion, but not necessarily in a negative sense. In verbal phrases *verbergen* can mean closing one's eyes and ears to something one doesn't want to

[40] To ask whether Heidegger knew *Faust* would be like asking whether Russell knew *Hamlet*.

[41] Heinrich Wiegand Petzet *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger* 1929–76 (1993), 21.

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know about, but also it means keeping something out of sight, undetected. When Heidegger contemplates this weave of meaning it's not difficult to imagine the priest counselling his congregation to turn away from the chatter of the world and hold certain beliefs dear in their hearts. Heidegger himself made annual retreats to the abbey at Beuron to steady his soul and concentrate on his work; and to quell the aggression that the world of others stoked in him.[42] A synonym for *Verborgenheit* in its primary meaning is *Abgelegenheit*, with the adjective *abgelegen*, which means remote, isolated and in a figurative sense recondite. Recondite which once meant 'hidden from view, kept out of sight' has as it current meaning in English 'removed from ordinary apprehension, understanding or knowledge; deep, profound, abstruse.'[43] But now suddenly we are facing in two directions at once, for where on the one hand Heidegger wants to turn away from worldly chatter, on the other he challenges himself to abandon a practice of scholastic (medieval) study that is deep, profound and abstruse and for once face the shock of the new, which is after all good science. As a philosopher he must, as it were, face the facts. As he rethinks 'a non-metaphysical relationship to God', a fine weave of what Heidegger has learnt from Darwin, on the side of science, and from the saints, on the side of what is primordially, ecstatically and violently true, presents itself as 'the nature of truth', *das Wesen der Wahrheit*.[44] This truth which makes itself felt as *Unverborgenheit*

[42] Cf. Martin Heidegger to Elisabeth Blochmann, 19 September, 1931. 'Those three days' walking belong for me to the rare kind that tend to become a benediction for us human beings. And I need so much a benediction – more than other people do…That a man may struggle to secure the certain maturity and beauty of his being, that here a victory awaits him, that gives him the power to transform others into the truth of his being. Where such a transformation occurs, there awakens that loneliness of the heart, out of which a man can truly encounter others, so that from that moment on his heart proceeds in the clear presence of others.' *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, (ed.) Joachim W Storck (1990), 28.

[43] SOED.

[44] Heidegger V;41; Hofstadter, 54. In Thomas Sheehan's alternative English translation of Heidegger's 1929 lecture 'What is Metaphysics' he renders the conclusion to Heidegger Part III, section 2, 'What the Nothing Does' as 'The nothing is not just the opposite of beings; it is essential to their very emergence.' He translates Heidegger's fn 25 as 'Taking Wesen' in a verbal sense as in 'das Wesen des Seins', 'the emergence of being'. See Thomas Sheehan 'Reading Heidegger's "What Is Metaphysics?"', *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, **I** (2001). 'Emergence' brings out the post-Darwinian flavour of Heidegger's vision, I

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happens as an unconcealedness which is also his own theologically educated heart opening up to transience and death.

It was actually very hard for Heidegger to construct that *non-metaphysical* relationship to God, but there were potential starting-points in the responses of other philosophers and poets to what being was, and in the poetry of language. Here, in another point of cross-over, not only were the new sciences generating new imagery, but language itself was coming under new scrutiny as to how it had survived the passage of time.

After biology the two sciences that were most affected by Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection were linguistics[45] and geology. Darwin had worked closely with the geologist Charles Lyall to establish a new sense of the vastness of time; and geology led to paleontology. It was the fossil record which opened intermittent paths back into the vastness, and that in language prompted the thought that meanings from previous ages were quasi-fossilized in older forms, and that what were now dead usages were once vital responses to being here. The attempt to study language in terms of evolution has produced a great deal of wishful thinking. Husserl, Heidegger's teacher, may have been taken by the poetic appeal of the genealogical idea, when he said he believed that words became 'sedimented' with use. In any case this prompted a linguistic clean-up which became the almost entire raison d'etre of early twentieth-century philosophy.[46]

Heidegger made out of sedimentation a dramatic story that he retold in the opening pages of *The Origin of the Work of Art*. He believed of the Greeks that, before their science began to dull their senses, *hypokeimenon*, Aristotle's word for the core of the thing, expressed the intensity of human coexistence in a world of things 'always already there'.[47] Certainly it was different from what became encrusted in philosophical discourse as the Latin *subjectum*,

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would argue. Sheehan's text is also available as www.standford.edu/dept/relstud/faculty/sheehan/pdf/01-hd-wm.pdf

[45] In linguistics, which had previously taken the form of comparative philology, *The Origin of Species* prompted a unique attempt to reconstruct a notional language, Proto-Indo-European, from which it was surmised the family of Indo-European languages descended. The analogy didn't work, language has remained a difficulty for evolutionists ever since. But geology also influenced the approach to language and that was more fruitful.

[46] To the model that paleontology supplied phenomenology also added its insight into the degree to which the subject was both the key to the structure of experience and a constraint on the independent being of the world. Long before Heidegger, this theme had also been worked up by Duns Scotus.

[47] Heidegger V:7; Hofstadter, 23.

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which by that stage of history had reduced experience to a matter of things-versus-our-minds classification. The poetic-minded philosopher had it easier than the paleontologist, because, whereas no stone could be transubstantiated back into the living creature it had once been, Heidegger could try to breathe new life into the words of Greek, and their German derivations and equivalents, and persuade us that philosophy once had the true feeling of being here. When philosophy was new all beings in being spoke their presence. They cried, with Hopkins, 'what I do is *me*; for that I came'.

All this laid a kind of post-God intellectual shimmer over Heidegger's pre-war thinking in its most poetic formulations: why, with the ecstasy, I call it visionary. There's a poem by Rilke that seems to me to capture it. It's a draft for what would later become, although not obviously, one of the Sonnets to Orpheus.[48]

Know nothing but the stela
And in pure stone let the image melt:
So light and almost joyous,
As if effortlessly, not earthly-wise, it dwelt.

Feel nothing more than what is pure
Direction; into infinity withdraw –
Well, maybe the coldness of those stones endure
That of an evening she wore.

Otherwise cherish this ease
You recognize in each familiar thing.
Wind is consolation and fire release.

Let being-here as being-thereness
Startle you. Don't distinguish. Or you may fling
Being white from the whiteness of her dress.

Heidegger never quoted these lines. He would say that Rilke did not go far enough to escape the old metaphysics, but for me the mild picture, *das milde Bild*, that barely raises itself up out of the purity of the stone is a Heideggerian sentiment, as is the injunction to be startled by something being there, and not to try to distinguish between an object and its qualities. Something like the light, as Rilke said, from those cool stones she wore, was what Heidegger strove to convey through his inquiries into thisness. In his 1964 comments on 'Phenomenology and Theology' he made Rilke's point anew when he dwellt on the redness of a rose. 'The rose is an object

[48] Draft for the 8th Sonnet to Orpehus (Feb 1922) – although it seems more like the 9th sonnet of Part 2.

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and can be an object of thought. Its redness is not, although we can experience it. Accordingly, there are a thinking and a saying which do not in any way objectivize or present objects to consciousness.'[49] In other words a mind-led attitude cannot experience the redness of the rose, and phenomenology cannot grasp it. The kind of experience we can have of a rose's redness requires theology.

Darwin's sphere of influence was ontic, as befitted the sciences. Heidegger's was ontological, which meant dismantling (*abbauen*, sometimes translated as deconstruction) the ontic classifications of *Wissenschaft* to get to the foundations of being and rebuilding philosophy accordingly. But, again, not to move too far from the impact of Darwin, even Heidegger's talk of setting a new ontology in motion may have been influenced by Haeckel's own need to talk about 'ontogeny'. Onto- was the particle of the moment to describe thinking virtually hallmarked 'post-Darwin'.[50]

In *The Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger reprised the course of his post-Darwinian thinking to date. He told his lecture audience that none of western philosophy's three ways of classifying things to date was adequate to get at the truth of all beings in being. Neither were things simply substantial bearers of qualities, nor were they to be measured by the sensations they triggered, nor were they conflexions of form and matter. What they were only showed up in the truth of Being, which the work of art, itself a thing, could make to happen.

On behalf of a more adequate philosophy he described what originated, everything that had an *Ursprung*, as part of the ongoing contest between World and Earth. This was his poetic picture not only of the emergence (*Wesen*) of beings. He described the event of unconcealment, paralleled in *Being in Time* by talk of light and lightening, as a quasi-Darwinian emergence, prompted by the work of art which had no origin other than art itself. What Heidegger learnt from Darwin was not to answer the question of origins, in fact, but to plunge into the midst of being.[51] And this, one might think, prompted him to start with the ecstasy of our thrownness into being.

[49] *Wegmarken*. Heidegger IX:73.

[50] Haeckel's use of Greek overwhelmed Darwin 'The number of new words, to a man like myself, weak in his Greek, is something dreadful.' But they were good words. Haeckel for instance made early use of the term 'ecology'. See Desmond and Moore, *Darwin*, 541. Darwin's 'English gentleman' response to Haeckel recalls the response of most anglo-saxon readers also to Heidegger's Germanness.

[51] Because origins often aren't visible. Darwin would emphasize that a tree existing today does not carry all the twigs that have died since its beginning. If they were visible in their time, their traces vanished ages ago. By the

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Co-being is our joy: the simultaneity, the coinciding, the coincidence, the happening upon, the being among. Macquarrie and Robinson noticed over 40 compound expressions in *Being and Time* in which 'mit-' had been used as a prefix. To these variations on *Mitsein*, with trees, with grass, with plants and animals, and, of course, other human beings, one can add all the variations on nearness, continuousness and contiguity which abound in that book, and which account for Heidegger's constant forging of new substantives out of the present continuous of the verb, echoing the ancient legacy of the *hypokeimenon*. Always in being we are anchored in some life-situation or other.

The non-cognitive approach to things was first spelt out in *Being and Time* as the ready-to-hand of all the things ('equipment') that we use in everyday life and know without thinking. In the art lecture ten years later the emphasis falls on *Verläßlichkeit,* or the 'reliability' of equipment.[52] The word would normally apply to other human beings but Heidegger applies it to the material environment which makes it possible for us to build a world on the earth. Having, presumably, read about adaptation, he gives life to the thing-world by understanding it as inclined to make itself reliable. *Verläßlichkeit* I would translate as 'the offer of reliability' because for Heidegger this is where 'the god' enters. Samuel Weber has noticed how Heidegger makes analogous use of the term *Verschuldetsein*, an indebtedness-to, to build *Dasein*'s interactive, co-operative and morally engaged relationship with all beings in being.[53]

This co-being is surely what Heidegger has in mind as that 'non-metaphysical relationship with God'. This is a god of the prepositions, around us, above us, beneath us, a god of the places we find ourselves thrown into, rather than a god of the logical proposition. To the 'non-metaphysical relationship with God' belongs the idea of the earth as our shepherd, saviour and mainstay. '*Die Erde als das Bergende'*, Heidegger talks of in the art lecture. 'In the things that arise, earth is present as the sheltering agent.' Alas, translation cannot but deflate the poetic moment, and also cannot refer back to that spiritual weakness of Heidegger, at once to hide from truth and to seek it.[54]

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same token we can dwell in the presence of art, but we can't in fact say what the origins of art were.

[52] Heidegger V:20; Hofstadter, 34.

[53] Samuel Weber *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (1996), 63.

[54] Heidegger V: 28; Hofstadter, 42.

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Co-being highlights the contexts that both give us an ecstatic sense of truth and which we must one day give up. In the passage about Time I quoted earlier from *Being and Time* we read, in English, of a 'falling into lostness'. It sounds in English like a individual state of mind but in German it so clearly represents the process of biological decay, *das Verfallen in die Verlorenheit*. As well as to each of us personally, the term applies equally to whole ages and worlds, which inexorably slip away around us, as a lovely passage from *The Origin of the Work of Art* amplifies upon:

> Individual objects get used up and worn out; and with that the practice of using them declines, loses its shine and become banal. Something that existed for a purpose now rots away; sinks back into being any old thing. When something that once existence for a purpose declines into purposelessness its reliability vanishes from sight.[55]

What is the point of objects which once served us well and no longer do? It's difficult to resist reading this question in terms of a technology that has grown old and pointless in our lifetime. It is as if the technological revolution which dominated Heidegger's experience of the world (Germany industrialized much later than England) was yet another event which pinpointed the inadequacy of an Aristotelian teleology which said everything had a purpose which was its end in being.

The meaning of life, for the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, and as we saw in just a few lines at [H348] is to face up to the passing of our selves and our worlds. Bleak nothingness is our ultimate foundation.[56] What can a lapsed believer do about this prospect? It's with his concern for the losses of the individual believer like himself that Heidegger turns to the perspective of *Jemeinigkeit*, or how the biological reality Darwin uncovered is experienced by each of us individually. This is a phenomenological inquiry married to a pastoral concern. One outcome is Heidegger's frankly moralistic advice at [H261-3] not to think that by achieving worldly success we are successfully living up to the possibilities of *Dasein* in dealing with our finality. Our aim must be to befriend death while exercising care for all around us.[57]

[55] Heidegger V: 20; Hofstadter, 35. This is my translation.

[56] Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 68; 64.

[57] That the theme of death in Heidegger has been so well-worked without reference to Darwin's 'reduction' of human beings to mere matter without the promise of immortality is a strange omission, all the more as

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The philosopher on whom Darwin's impact has been more often noticed is Nietzsche. Here was another thinker locked in a struggle with religion, and whose perspectives on the world, and on art, and on the art of life, were transformed by a specifically Darwinian materialism that urged upon a new humanity the joys of transcience and a delight in non-essential identity. Without Darwin no *Genealogy of Morals* and no *Beyond Good and Evil*. But the story of Nietzsche's 'materialism' is not straightforward, no more so than Darwin's and Heidegger's. '[Nietzsche's] new world picture took Darwinism into account but was not nullified by it', as R.J. Hollingdale put it.

Dennett sees Nietzsche's confrontation of Darwin's 'eternal recurrence of blind, meaningless variation – chaotic, pointless shuffling of matter and law…as part of the foundation of what became existentialism.'[58] Setting Nietzsche beside Marx, he remarks that 'Nietzsche saw an even more cosmic message in Darwin: God is dead. If Nietzsche is the father of existentialism, then perhaps Darwin deserves the title of grandfather.'[59]

Evidently Heidegger was one of their progeny, although he resisted being called an Existentialist. I think Existentialism only didn't suit him because so much else was at stake in his response to 'the biological revolution in thought'. From Gide to Sartre the existentialist was prepared to contemplate 'the nothing' and exempt himself from cosmic absurdity through the *acte gratuit*. But exactly because of that resistance to cosmic absurdity Sartre never gave up the Mind-led attitude to meaning that the post-Darwinian Heidegger rejected. Heidegger himself emphasized that his concern was the ground of being, and not the self-assertion of the Nietzschean individual. He was not nearly so subjective, for instance with that 'falling into lostness', as he sounded in English.

Darwin is well-known for having hesitated to reveal his findings to a world at large he knew would be disturbed by them. The faith of his wife was of immediate concern, nor did he have the temperament to quarrel. Heidegger's work was marked by a parallel hesitation. That

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Heidegger is not so much taking over the nineteenth-century materialist heritage of a Feuerbach and a Büchner as advising the Christian faithful on their loss. Ludwig Büchner, author of *Force and Matter* (1855), described by Safranski in *Heidegger*, 29 as representing a 'robust kind of materialism characteristic of the middle of the nineteenth century.' In fact German nineteenth-century ideas on 'the forces regulating life and growth' had stimulated Darwin's own thoughts. See Desmond and Moore *Darwin*, 203.

[58] Dennett *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 181.

[59] Ibid, 62

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problem was the animal. The few commentators who have noticed Heidegger in the context of Darwin have wanted to emphasize Heidegger's insistence on humankind being distinct from the animals[60]. Derrida did the topic justice when he took it up in the sixth chapter of *Of Spirit Heidegger and the Question*. He pointed out that Heidegger had a difficulty with giving up the idea of specifically human progress which then threatened to undo his whole post-humanist ontological project.[61] Clearly, what an animal is marks the limit of what Heidegger can borrow from Darwin to ground a new philosophy of the ecstatic primordial.

Within that limit, and beside the theme of the 'primordial' vastness of time, Darwin or the biological way of thinking helped Heidegger get away from the teleological fixations of German Idealism.[62] Darwin offered an excellent vantage point from which, for instance, to attack Hegel. Heidegger hated Hegelian dialectic exactly for its Mind-first attitude.

Dewey spoke of a new 'realism and naturalistic idealism' as the field Darwin opened up for philosophy and declared the idea of philosophy as 'tucking knowledge away in a filing cabinet' was over.[63] Heidegger used a similar, more aggressive image when he said [H62] that truth was not booty acquired from a raid on nature. Like Heidegger Dewey felt himself to be working 'in a period of intellectual transition and reconstruction' affected by 'the marvel of adaptation'. Of concern were 'knowable energies [that] daily generate about us precious values'.

Similarities between Dewey (good) and Heidegger (evil) are contested,[64] but what these two philosophers shared historically, post-Darwin, was a sense that philosophy should focus on things and life ongoing, as they function, not determined by their origins or only judgeable when they reach some goal intrinsic to their being. This meant that philosophical activity was potentially much more morally and politically engaged than when its points of view were more recondite. Heidegger was shakier on what he was actually doing than Dewey. In this context I believe him when he said he

[60] Michael E. Zimmerman *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art* (1990), 191.

[61] Jacques Derrida *Of Spirit Heidegger and the Question* (1989), 55–57.

[62] Darwin is commonly used in German philosophy as a stick with which to beat Hegel. See Sandra Richter *A History of Poetics: German Scholarly Aesthetics in International Context 1770–1960* (2010), 133.

[63] *Darwin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, iv.

[64] See Martin Woessner *Heidegger in America* (2011), 28–29.

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was an unpolitical man.[65] He could never have imagined the appeal of his philosophy today to anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist, ecologically minded rejections of Mind-first attitudes.[66]

There is a major difference between Dewey and Heidegger, as between a philosophy that is fully in the social and political world in pursuit of those 'knowable energies' and one that 'insists that philosophic knowing is distinct from the sciences and offers another kind of reality.'[67] Heidegger's Christian pastoral training never quite deserted him, nor did he want to give up reflecting that 'beyond what is, not away from it, but before it, there is still something else that happens. In the midst of beings… there is a clearing, a lighting…this open centre is not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting centre itself encircles all that is, like the Nothing which we scarcely know.' [68] As he wrote the 1935/36 lecture he also had Schelling's portrait on the wall inside his mountain hut[69] and Schelling's Nature Philosophy retained a magical hold over him.

Still the challenge of 'the biological theory of evolution', which he read about in adolescence, matters, because at the heart of *Being and Time* and *The Origin of the Work of Art* is a version of Darwin wars played out and still to come: wars fought over ecology and the meaning of our being here, and what can art can be, after the death of God. Much of what is labelled postmodern is postdarwinian filtered through Heidegger. We're still actively responding to the greatest revolution for philosophy since Galileo.

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[65] Both Derrida and John Protevi in *Philosophical Physics* (2001) see in Heidegegger's refusal to give up human superiority over the animal a remnant of the old mind-centredness. Protevi suggests a tension between hylozoism and the openness that marks Derrida's reworking of Dasein and the hylomorphism signifying leadership and authorship which Heidegger couldn't quite leave behind.

[66] A study of this connection with Heidegger seems overdue. It is now of far greater relevance than his impact on psychotherapy.

[67] *Darwin and Philosophy*, 19

[68] Heidegger V:40; Hofstadter, 53.

[69] Heinrich Wiegand Petzet *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger*, 97.

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