### 1AC

#### Life is fundamentally pre-ontological – an essential openness that exists solely in relation to the world around it. We have no essence aside from our ability to read possibility into the objects around us – this interaction makes the world intelligible and fosters our being within it.

Sheehan 15 [Thomas Sheehan (PhD. American philosopher who is the current professor at the Department of Religious Studies, Stanford University and Professor Emeritus at the Department of Philosophy, Loyola University Chicago.) “Making Sense of Heidegger: eA Pardigm Shift.” Chapter 4. Rowman & Littlefield International. 2015] \*brackets in original\* ~bxnk

**The most astonishing thing about everyday life is not that things exist out there in the world, standing over against us as independent objects, but that they impinge on us, touch us, intrude on our lives, concern us, in short, are significant to us**.1 In the normal course of our daily lives, **things are not indif- ferently “out there in the universe,”** located within some neutral coordinates of space and time. **Rather, they are meaningfully present to us.** They do not just exist; **they make sense,** and the sense they make is their “being.” Things are present and available.2 **I take note of them, name them, admire them, perhaps possess them. I may also fear and flee them, but even so, I am still involved with them. They still have a place within the world of meaning in which I live.** As far as I can see or think or do, whatever I meet (or could meet) is understandable to one degree or another, whether it is currently so, or once was, or will be when I gure it out. Meaningfulness is the mostly unnoticed dimension through which alone I can encounter whatever shows up. Thus **everything I meet is in a sense “mine.”** It is **familiar to me,** part of my “family,” a participant in the meaningful narra- tive that is my life. Or **if they are not immediately familiar**—if the only sense I can make of them is that I do not immediately understand them—**I can still make interrogative sense of them by dealing with them as potentially intelligible phenomena whose specific meaning I do not yet grasp**: “How many members comprise the lepton family?” “Is this an opisthokont?” In both cases I have already intro- duced “the lepton family” and “opisthokonts,” however tentatively, into my world of meaning At least since Homo sapiens came on the scene some 200,000 years ago, “to be” has meant “to be meaningful.” Meaningfulness is inevitable for us. **I have contact with things only through this mediating medium, and without it I would not be human.** This is the “wonder of all wonders”3—not that things merely exist in space and time but that they make sense to us. Being itself is understood in a de nite way, and as something so understood, it is open to us.4 Whatever we understand, and in whatever way it is opened up to us in under- standing, we say that it has intelligibility.5 **For Heidegger, “being” refers not to the mere physical presence of a thing to the sense organs. Rather, it refers to the meaningful presence of things, which is given only with human beings.** “Being comes into play with us, with human- kind.”6 There is no way I can get around meaningfulness or outside of it—I cannot step out of my pan-hermeneutical skin. Nor should I want to, because for humans, “outside” of meaningfulness there is only death. I am ineluctably thrown into meaningfulness simply by being human, and I am human only to the degree that I am immersed in meaning. I a priori “exceed” things insofar as I am always already “beyond them,” related to their signi cance. **The different and constantly changing worlds I live in—as student, worker, parent—are saturated with meaning, as is everything that shows up within those meaning-giving worlds. Everything I attend to—**everything I can “mind”—turns out to make sense**, whether actually or potentially.** Vague and indeterminate though it may be, this acquaintance with meaningfulness is what guides us in everything we do. We do not rst of all under- stand things “empirically”—that is, by merely bumping up against them with our senses—but the other way around: **only because we are a priori engaged with their possible significance can we relate to things at all. Meaning is closer to us than are the things we deal with. It is not only “more real” than they are, but in fact constitutes their realness-at-all for us.** And yet, we constantly ignore or remain unaware of such meaningfulness in and for itself. It seems to be a necessary element of our makeup that we look through meaning without noticing it, whilst focusing instead on (meaningful) things. The transparent medium of meaningfulness is so much in evidence that I rarely attend to it, any more than I normally focus on the air I breathe. I overlook the meaningfulness of things as I go about dealing with (meaningful) things in the usual way. I overlook the cardinal fact that every time I say “is” I mean “is meaningful as” or “makes sense as.” Meaning is the barely heard white noise enveloping everything I meet, and the unnoticed gleam that lets everything shimmer with reality. I have— indeed, am—a familiarity with meaning, even though I need not explicitly say to myself that something “is meaningful as” this or that. Yet I do oper- ate with such an implicit understanding in my silent comportment towards everything, whether in theoretical re ection on things or in the practical use of them. Meaningfulness is already self-evident to me prior to all thematic understanding and speech. And this pertains not only to things in my external environment but also to myself. Without this pre-conceptual familiarity with meaning, I could not understand myself, much less anything else. Without it I could not say “I,” “you,” or “it.” (Of course, I could become a philosopher and doubt that anything in the world has meaning. But then, in spite of myself, I would be making sense of the world and, as Leopold Bloom said, I would meet myself coming around again: “So it returns. Think you’re escaping and run into yourself.”7) Intelligibility is the name of the world I inhabit as I live into and out of an array of possibilities that I am thematically aware of or not, that I welcome or am indifferent to, that excite or bore me, possibilities that in a sense I myself am in the inevitable process of always having to become myself (cf. Zu-sein).8 But if meaning is to occur, my ex-sistence as the clearing is required. On the one hand, the clearing determines the concrete, existentiel me: it is the reason why I exist at all.9 But, on the other hand, without my ex-sistence there is no clearing: I am its sine qua non. That bondedness, wherein the “two” are one, is the very heart of what we mean by “human.”10 It is the ineluctable if hidden fact that determines my life and that I can never get back behind. That my ontological fate is to be the clearing **is evidenced time and again as I talk with others, manage the things of my life, imagine the future, or remember the past: I cannot not make sense of everything I meet because** I cannot not be a priori opened up. By our very nature we are both **the** demand for and the reason for intelligibility**, for a meaningfulness that determines us and yet has no reality apart from us. And there is no way out but death.** In fact, the whole process of making sense is mortal. Why “mortal”? To answer that we step back once again into Heidegger’s philosophical narrative about the original, non-subjective Greek sense of mean- ingful presence, an experience available to us as well. We nd the things of the world already opened up, accessible, and meaningful before we ourselves have any chance to make it so. The wondrous fact is that things already make sense and that “something” (although the Greeks knew not what) has antecedently opened the world for human use and enjoyment, knowledge and exploitation, creativity and appreciation. Plato and Aristotle were quite aware of the wonder of meaningful presence (τὸ ὄν ὡς ἀληθές = ἀλήθεια-2), but what they did not know is how and why that is the case. They missed the fact that it is our own nature—the very way we are: thrown-open/appropriated—that has “preceded” us and, as ἀλήθεια-1, has always already opened up the world of ἀλήθεια-2. But the poets and tragedians of ancient Greece were attuned to this basic hu- man fact to the degree that they understood our desperate need to hold things together against the onslaught of chaos, to gather them into a coherent whole within which we strive to ful ll our needs and desires. Sustaining and living in such a world is our response to the fact that all around us things are changing, going their own way, unfolding in multiple directions, and at the same time falling apart. Everything is in a state of ux, everything is becoming. And be- coming not only generates novelty but also leads things to their demise. On the one hand, in the return of things and seasons, in the world’s “slow rotation suggesting permanence,”11 the Greeks saw some hope of constancy and eternity—what Heidegger calls “stable presence.” But on the other hand, their tragedians had a strong sense of the struggle to the death, the πόλεμος, that underlies such ultimately transient stability. We are enveloped both by riotous becoming and by death-dealing entropy, and nowhere is this more evi- dent than in our own lives, which ever shoulder up against mortality: nascendo et moriendo.12 Our urge to survive resists death and the chaos of things going their own way apart from us—and yet our mortality is our very bondedness to the chaos that will nally swallow us. We struggle for a secure space where we can, at least for a while, hold things together. We are born as λόγος, the need and ability to gather disparate things into a tentative unity of sense and thereby secure a shared human world (perhaps overseen and guaranteed by the gods) that we can inhabit for these few years. Our inescapable need of meaning is both the passing remedy for and the surest sign of our mortality. We cannot have one without the other. Ours is a ght to the death against death in the name of a fragile and ultimately futile stability. And out of this struggle come the glory of creativity and the grandeur of accomplishment, the openness of things in all their bright innocence and dark terror, as well as the tragedy of ul- timate defeat. Meaning staves off chaos for a brief stretch of time in the losing battle of life. Realizing all this is crucial for understanding the phenomenological turn that underlies Heidegger’s work, and thus the central role played by rst-per- son experience. To continue in that vein: I begin to see that I “mind” whatever I meet, whether in the sense of car- ing about something for my own sake (“Yes, I mind if you smoke”) or mind- ing people for their own sake (“I’ll mind the baby while you’re out”). I also “mind” the things in my immediate world of purposeful activity in the sense that I understand and am involved with what they can do and what they are for. I am structurally a matter of minding (Besorgen, Fürsorge), of being con- cerned about whoever and whatever comes into my ken.13 In my everyday ex-sistence I do not perceive things as objects standing over against me. Rath- er, I am involved and concerned with them. In fact, structurally I am such concern (Sorge), and this structure cuts across the disastrous mind-body split (νόησις/αἴσθησις). I am a bodily minding, which is the same as a minding body. I mind people and things as meaningful in different ways. The “object” of minding is the meant. And the meant is always meaningful. Just as I usually do not thematize the meanings of the things I mind, so too I usually overlook myself as both a priori immersed in meaning and necessary for there to be meaning at all.14 Occasionally I may thematically recognize that I am interpreting this literary text or that historical event—that is, active- ly guring out how they t within certain coordinates of signi cance. But it would be quite a different occasion, and no doubt rare, for me to ask why it is that on this side of death I cannot not make sense of things. I virtually never ask why there must be meaning at all. Yes, perhaps I do during a second-order “philosophical re ection,” when I ask why there are things at all rather than nothing. Or perhaps in rare, shocking moments when meaning seems to drain out of everything, such that my very ex-sistence is threatened, and I anxiously wonder “what it’s all about.” But ask as I might, the question will always re- main aporetic: everything is intelligible except why there is intelligibility at all. And above all, the more I focus on the meaningful, the more I forget that I am the thrown-open clearing that makes meaning possible and necessary. This is what Being and Time means by “fallenness” (das Verfallen), which is the quite ordinary fact of overlooking the clearing despite the fact that “what is closest [= the clearing] is the farthest, and what is farthest [= meaningful things] is closest.”15 The clearing is “the innermost re of human ex-sistence,”16 just as meaning is the invisible air I breathe, absent which I would be dead. And yet, although I am a priori de ned by—and indeed am—the clearing, I cannot grasp and conceptualize it, much less say why it is necessary for being human. In that sense the clearing is intrinsically “hidden”: always present-and-operative but unknowable in its why and wherefore. Heidegger argues that the ancient Greeks lived in a similar situation. They also lived within the world of meaning, but rarely thematized that fact. However, the thinkers among them were struck by the astonishing fact that everything in the world is powerfully present (anwesend, παρόν)—not just existing in space and time, indifferent to the people who live with those things, but always present to them (although not like objects to Kantian subjects).17 Their philosophers called this presence “being” (τὸ εἶναι, οὐσία). However, in re-reading the Greeks Heidegger puts a twist on the word and nally dismisses it. “I no longer like to use the word ‘Sein’,” he said,18 and in fact William J. Richardson noted of the later Heidegger that the word Sein “has almost com- pletely disappeared from his vocabulary.”19 “Sein” remains only the provisional term. Consider that “Sein” [= οὐσία] was originally called “presence” in the sense of a thing’s staying-here-be- fore-us-in-disclosedness.20 “Staying-here-before-us-in-disclosedness” (her-vor-währen in die Unverbor- genheit) is Heidegger’s term of art for “phenomenality”—that is, for the mean- ingful presence of something to someone. The phrase expresses three things: (1) the relative stability and constancy of the meaningful thing (währen); (2) the locus of its meaningful appearance—namely, the world of human concerns (-vor-); and (3) a certain movement into appearance, from an undisclosed, merely potential intelligibility into an actually operative one (in die Unverbor- genheit). He emphasizes the elements of light and brightness that characterize the Greek vision, an element (as we noted earlier) that classics scholar John Finley noted with regard to Homer’s epic poems: [E]verything that he describes keeps a ashing concreteness and beautiful knowability.21 Each [thing] . . . keeps its inherent nature, and a chief marvel of the poems might be said to be the ineffable act of concentration whereby men and women, great people, small people, towns, elds, animals, seas, rivers, earth, sky, and the lucent gods themselves, remain each distinct while jointly comprising the brilliant world.22 Finley speaks of Homer’s universe as “the brilliant world that draws to bril- liant action,” attuned by “an outgazing bent of mind that sees things exactly, each for itself, and seems innocent of the idea that thought discerps and colors reality.”23 In Heidegger’s view the brilliant “presence” of things (Anwesen, παρουσία) bespeaks the Greeks’ proto-phenomenological view of the world. One of Heidegger’s rst tasks in reading the Greeks was to re-enact the phenomenological attitude at work in Greek philosophy and culture and there- by thematize the rich but implicit sense of meaningful presence within which the Greeks lived their lives. To that task, beginning with his early Freiburg courses, he brought to bear on Greek thought, and particularly on Aristotle, the phenomenological way of seeing that he was then learning from Husserl. The keystone of that phenomenological vision was the inevitable fact of mean- ing in human comportment—this as over against a supposed dumb encoun- ter with isolated sense data that are only subsequently gathered into a uni ed sense. Human beings always encounter things within an intelligible ensemble of other meaningful things. Signi cance accrues to the things of this ensemble due to their orientation to the human concerns and interests that de ne that intelligible whole. Heidegger designates such a context by the technical term “world”—a speci c context of signi cance, such as the world of the business woman or the world of the cleaning staff. [T]o live means to care. What we care for and about, what caring adheres to, is equivalent to what is meaningful. Meaningfulness is a categorial determination of the world; the objects of a world—“worldly” or “world-some” objects—are lived inasmuch as they embody the character of meaningfulness.24 In his rst course after the Great War Heidegger used the example of the lec- tern from which he was speaking in the classroom. He took the occasion to make one of the earliest presentations of what he would later articulate as the contextualizing world of meaningfulness (Welt als Bedeutsamkeit), which oc- curs a priori in and with human being. In the experience of seeing the lectern something is given to me from out of the rst-hand world around me [Umwelt]. This lived world (teacher’s lectern, book, blackboard, notebook, fountain pen, beadle, student, fraternity, streetcar, automobile, and so on) does not consist of mere things, objects, which are then conceived of as meaning this or that. Rather, what is primary and what is immediately given to me without some mental detour through a conceptual grasp of the thing is something meaningful [das Bedeutsame]. When we live in the rst-hand world around us, everything comes at us loaded with meaning, all over the place and all the time. Everything is within the world of meaning: the world of meaning holds forth [es weltet].25 Which means: If things are the meaningful (das Bedeutsame), their being is their meaningfulness (Bedeutsamkeit).26 Heidegger equates “the question of the meaningfulness of things” with “the question of the being [of things].”27 Whether in Heidegger’s reading of the Greeks or in his own philosophy, his implicit phenomenological reduction of things to their meaningful presence recasts their being as their signi cance to human beings. The lectern, of course, appears in a meaning-giving context: the classroom, where the students and the professor already know their way around and are familiar with what ts and doesn’t t. Coming into the lecture-room, I see the lectern. . . . What do “I” see? Brown surfaces, at right angles to one another? No, I see something else. Is it a largish box with another smaller one set on top of it? Not at all. I see the lectern at which I am to speak. You see the lectern from which you are to be addressed and from which I have previously spoken to you.28 It is a bad reading of the situation, Heidegger insists, to pretend to see de-con- textualized “things” that subsequently get meanings slapped on them, as if I rst of all would see intersecting brown surfaces that then reveal them- selves to me as a box, then as a desk, then as an academic lecturing desk, a lectern, so that I attach lectern-hood to the box like a label.29 It is not the case that objects are at rst present as bare realities, as objects in some sort of natural state, and that they then in the course of our experience receive the garb of a value-character, so that they do not have to run around naked.30 In other words, there is a priori operative a context of lived experience that already “places” things in relation to my needs and interests. I see the lectern in one fell swoop, so to speak, and not in isolation, but as ad- justed a bit too high for me. I see—and immediately so—a book lying upon it as annoying to me (a book, not a collection of layered pages with black marks strewn across them), I see the lectern in a certain orientation, within a certain light, against a background.31 Even if someone from an entirely different lived context—“a farmer from deep in the Black Forest”—enters the room, he does not see, in Heidegger’s words, “a box, an arrangement of boards.” Instead, “He sees ‘the place for the teacher,’ he sees the object as fraught with a meaning.”32 Suppose, likewise, that some- one from a tribe remote from Western civilization enters the classroom and notices the lectern. It is possible that he would not immediately understand what it is. It is dif cult to say precisely what he would see: perhaps something to do with magic, or something behind which one could nd good protection against arrows and ying stones. . . . Even if he saw the lectern as a bare something that is just there [bloßes Etwas, das da ist], it would have a meaning for him, a moment of signi cation. [Even if the tribesman is entirely perplexed by the lectern,] he will see the lectern much more as something “that he does not know what to make of.” The meaningful character of “instrumental strangeness” [for the tribesman] and the meaningful character of “lectern” [for the professor and students] are in their essence absolutely identical.33 Heidegger’s early lectures are replete with his insistence that every en- counter with a thing is an encounter with something meaningful. For example, in his lecture course of 1921–1922 on “Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle”: The category of meaningfulness indicates how objects are in life according to the basic sense of their content and how and as what they hold themselves and comport themselves in a world.34 We do not meet things by taking on board dumb sense data; rather, we always encounter things as something or other, even if (as in the example above) it is as something we cannot gure out. The as-what and the how of the encounter may be designated as meaningful- ness. This itself is to be interpreted as a category of being.35 Heidegger continued with this theme in his 1919–1920 course “Basic Prob- lems of Phenomenology.” He advises his students: You should put aside all theorizing and reject what epistemologists say about the matter. Instead, see the sense in which factical experience ever and anew has what it experiences in the character of meaningfulness. Even the most triv- ial thing is meaningful (even though it remains trivial nonetheless). Even what is most lacking in value is meaningful.36 There is nowhere else for a human being to live except in meaning. I live factically always as a prisoner of meaningfulness. And every instance of meaningfulness has its arena of new instances of meaningfulness. . . . I live in the factical as in an entirely particular matrix of meaningfulnesses. . . . In this unobtrusive character of meaningfulness stands whatever is factically experi- enced in factical life-contexts.37 Meaningfulness is a thing’s relatedness-to-oneself (Mich-Bezogenheit),38 and the phenomenologist studies this relatedness of the subject matter and the person involved with it. Phenomenology, as Husserl said, is “correlation research,” and for Heidegger “the philosophizing individual belongs togeth- er with the matters being treated.”39 In the everyday, meaningfulness mostly remains implicit and unnoticed and need not be thematically known or ex- pressed. In one’s daily life “[m]eaningfulness as such is not explicitly expe- rienced, even though it can be experienced.”40 In fact, “The phenomenon of meaningfulness is not what we originally see.”41 But that in no way speaks against the reality that “factical life lives in factical relations of meaningful- ness.”42 Indeed, “In factical life the meaning of ‘ex-sistence’ lies in forms of meaningfulness, whether actually experienced, or remembered, or awaited.”43 Even “just anything” that I experience . . . as inde nite and without determina- tion, I nonetheless experience in the indeterminacy of a determined context of meaningfulness—as a noise in the room “which I can’t understand” (“Some- thing’s not right,” “it’s something eerie”).44 This meaningfulness functions at every moment and in every comport- ment. Taking “world” not as a technical term (as in Being and Time) but as referring to “whatever’s out there,” Heidegger says, “I experience the world by living in contexts of meaningfulness. The world announces itself as actual and real in those contexts.”45 Indeed, “the ‘objective’ comes forth in the mean- ing-context of one’s factical life-situation.”46 In fact, I do not live in a given meaningful context; rather, I live it.47 This position is again enunciated in Heidegger’s lectures and writings of 1924—for example, in his course “Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy”: For a long time now, I have been designating the ontological character of hu- man ex-sistence as meaningfulness. This ontological character is the primary one in which we encounter the world.48 Or in reading through his essay “The Concept of Time” (1924; the essay meant for publication, not the Marburg address), one can hardly take a step without stumbling over the word Bedeutsamkeit. The lived world is present not as a thing or object, but as meaningfulness.49 We have now identi ed the basic character of encountering the world: mean- ingfulness.50 We identify meaningfulness as the world’s primary ontological characteristic.51 . . . the primary character of encountering the world—meaningfulness.52 That same year Heidegger explicitly identi es being and meaningfulness in his course on Plato’s “Sophist,” when he speaks of metaphysics as the inquiry into the intelligibility of things, that is, the inquiry into being.53 And the following year, on the verge of writing Being and Time, he again sig- nals the centrality of meaningfulness in his course on logic and truth: The very being of ex-sistence is to make sense of things, and therefore ex-sistence lives in meanings and can express itself in and as meanings.54 Thus, for Heidegger, whether in his own phenomenology or when reading the Greeks, his rst move is to focus on meaning. But the question then be- comes: What kind of meaning? In his earliest course after World War I, Hei- degger’s main attack was on the primacy that Husserl attributed to theory over lived experience and to the pure transcendental ego over what Heidegger at this point was calling the “historical ego” and the “ego of the situation.”55 “We nd ourselves at a methodological crossroads,” he remarked, “where it will be decided whether philosophy shall live or die.”56 And survival depends on rst getting clear about what philosophy’s true issue is. “What is distorting the real problematic is not just naturalism as some people think,” he said with obvious reference to Husserl, “but the overall dominance of the theoretical.”57 To keep the focus on our lived world as where we primarily experience meaningfulness, Heidegger radically recasts the “principles” that Husserl had laid down for phenomenology in Section 24 of his Ideas for a Pure Phe- nomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy (1913).58 If, according to Husserl, rsthand intuition is the starting point of phenomenology, such in- tuition—“even though Husserl does not say this in so many words”—is not some theoretical comportment towards objects but an “understanding intui- tion, a hermeneutic intuition,” from which theory is but a precipitate.59 This hermeneutic intuition, which already understands the world as meaningful in a lived way prior to any theorizing, and which is the basis of all the rigor that phenomenology claims for itself, is the primordial intention of genuine life, the primordial bearing of lived expe- rience and of life as such, the absolute sympathy with life that is identical with lived experience. Prior to anything else—that is, if we take this path away from theory and more and more free ourselves from it—we see this basic com- portment all the time, we have an orientation to it. This basic comportment is absolute, but only if we live in it directly. And no conceptual system, no matter how elaborately constructed, can reach it. Only phenomenological living, as it gets continually more intense, can get to it.60 ❖❖❖ Heidegger carries into his magnum opus the conviction that phenomenology is strictly about meaning. In Being and Time he designates the very structure of world (Welt) as meaningfulness (Bedeutsamkeit),61 and he referred implicitly to SZ I.1 as his “doctrine of meaning” (Bedeutungslehre).62 He explicitly equates being and intelligibility when he says that ontology, which deals with the being of things, is in fact “the explicit theoretical inquiry into the intelligibility of things.”63 And he calls the (usually unnoticed) being of things their “intelligibil- ity” (Sinn).64 With such formulations, Heidegger was announcing his phenom- enological re-interpretation of the central topic of “ rst philosophy” as not the being (existentia and essentia) of things but their meaningfulness. At the core of that doctrine is the phenomenology of ex-sistence as “being- in-the-world.” But since the essence of world is meaningfulness, we should interpret In-der-Welt-sein more precisely as In-der-Bedeutsamkeit-sein: the very structure of ex-sistence is its a priori engagement with meaning and its source, expressed as “ex-sistence . . . in its familiarity with meaningfulness.”65 Absent that engagement, we cease to exist. When we can no longer relate to meaning, we are dead. This a priori engagement with intelligibility—as our only way to be—entails that we are ineluctably hermeneutical. We necessarily make some sense of everything we meet, and if we cannot make any sense at all of something, not even interrogative sense, we simply cannot meet it. We can have no encounter with things that lie outside our hermeneutical horizon of meaningful Anwesen. As we saw, Heidegger insists that meaning—which is always discursive— is con ned to the realm of the human. But then how exactly do things become meaningful to us? In Being and Time Heidegger writes: Intelligibility is a structural characteristic of ex-sistence, not a property attach- ing to things. . . . Only ex-sistence “has” intelligibility.66 And at the same time: When things within the world are discovered with the being of ex-sistence— that is, when they come to be understood—we say they make sense.67 That is, we alone have the ability to make sense of things, and we do so by connecting a possibility of ourselves (a need, interest, or purpose) with a pos- sibility of something we encounter. **We take whatever we meet as related to our everyday concerns and goals.** When things are discovered in **such a** relation with human beings within a given context **or world,** they make sense**. And world is what brings that about**.68 Heidegger says, “As existing, the human being is its world.”69 That is, **the world** is ourselves writ large as a matrix of intelligibility. It **is our thrown-open- ness structured as a set of meaning-giving relations. The world consists of lines of referral to our concerns and possibilities** (represented by the arrows above) **that** in turn **establish the meaningfulness of things**. We are a hermeneutical eld of force, like a magnet that draws things together into unities of sense insofar as these things are connected with a possibility of ourselves as the nal point of reference.70 Anything outside the scope of our embodied hermeneuti- cal ken does not make sense. ❖❖❖ “**The world**,” as Heidegger understands the term, **is the prior “open space” or “clearing” that we need in order to understand X as Y or use something in terms of one of its possibilities**. In doing so we make sense of the thing—or, in traditional language, we “understand its being.” But **why do we need such a prior openness in order to make sense of something? Making sense of something is a matter of synthesizing it with a possible meaning: “Socrates is a Theban”—no, wait: that possible meaning is wrong. So we might try another possible meaning: “Socrates is an Athenian.” The need to synthesize a thing with a possible (correct or incorrect) meaning is an index of our nitude.** The highest form of knowing, says Heidegger, is not a matter of synthesis (which entails the possibility of getting things wrong) but direct and unerring intuition of what a thing actually is. But traditionally it is God, not man, who has such an intellectual intuition. God does not make sense of things but simply makes them. **Heidegger describes Kant’s position: [W]hat remains closed off to us are the things themselves insofar as they are thought as objects** [i.e., noumena] **of an absolute knowledge,** i.e., as **objects of an intuition that does not first need an interaction with the things and does not first let them be encountered, but rather lets them first of all become what they are through this intuition**.71 **In our case, things do not show up directly as what and how they are, the way they might to a divine intellectual intuition. Rather, they appear only to a me- diating and dis-cursive intellect, one that must** “run,” so to speak, from subject to predicate, or from tool to task, and back again (dis-currere: to run to and fro) in order to **synthesize two things that lie apart one from the other: subject and predicate or tool and task.72 According to the classical tradition, a perfect in- tellectual intuition requires a fully actualized and self-present subject, whether that be the self-coincident act-of-thinking-about-itself-as-thinking, the νόησις νοήσεως, of Aristotle’s Metaphysics, or the perfect reditio completa in seipsum (the perfect return to itself) of Aquinas’ God.73 But for Heidegger**, **discursivity, unlike the “closure upon itself”** of Aristotle’s self-thinking God, **requires open- ness. Human reason must traverse an open “space”** (constituted by ex-sistence as thrown-open) **within which alone reason can synthesize disparate things. This prior openness is “the realm a person traverses every time he or she, as a subject, relates to an object**.”74 Apprehension and presence—in order for both to be possible and at the same time to be for one another—require a free space and an open domain, within which they pertain to one another.75 But we are able to do such “traversing of an open space” in existentiel knowl- edge and action only because we already are such an open space in our existen- tial essence (a priori and structurally, of course, and not of our own volition). Our essence is to be the existential wiggle-room required for existentiel acts of taking-as. We [erroneously] think that a thing becomes accessible when an “I” as subject represents an object. But in fact prior to that, there must be already operative an open region within whose openedness something can become accessible as an object for a subject and in which the accessibility itself can be traversed and experienced.76 Over the course of Heidegger’s career this open domain would ride under various titles: the clearing, ἀλήθεια-1, the thrown-open realm (Entwurfbere- ich) for being, and so on. This open region—along with the opening of it by our being thrown-open or “brought into our own” (ap-propri-ated)—is the core fact, die Sache selbst, of all Heidegger’s philosophizing. ❖❖❖ To return to the question of the being of things: As we have seen, Heidegger never understood it as the raw existence of things out there in space and time. That was what he called existentia, the ontological “substance” of things when they are considered apart from human involvement with them, which is to say, before the enactment of a phenomenological reduction. It is wrong to think that Heidegger refused the phenomenological reduction and instead conducted his early investigations of the everyday world within the natural attitude. Husserl, however, thought that was the case, and he always accused Heidegger of not understanding the reduction. Heidegger himself gave Husserl reason enough to doubt his protégé when in October of 1927 Heidegger drafted signi cant sections for Husserl’s eventual Encyclopedia Britannica article, speci cally on the idea of phenomenology and the method of pure psychology, including the phenomenological reduction.77 In that draft Heidegger argued that the proper topic of phenomenology is being (das Sein), but always in cor- relation with some form of human being78 (hence as Anwesen). When that cor- relation is made explicit by way of a phenomenological reduction, the things out there in the universe come to be seen as meaningfully present phenomena: the perceived of a perception, the loved of an act of love, the judged of an act of judgment—that is, always in correlation with a human concern or practice. In his early work, of course, Heidegger focused the reduction on practical action, and there the phenomena are the things with which we engage (τὰ πράγματα) in our practical dealings (πρᾶξις, Umgang). A few months before composing that draft for Husserl, Heidegger had clar- i ed the phenomenological reduction in his course “Basic Problems of Phe- nomenology,” where he contrasted (4 May 1927) his own understanding of the reduction with that of Husserl. For Husserl, he said, it means leading things back to “the transcendental life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic ex- periences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness.” On the other hand: For us phenomenological reduction means leading the phenomenological vi- sion back from the apprehension of a thing, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the being of the thing (i.e., under- standing the thing in terms of the way it is disclosed).79 We see here that “being” in Heidegger’s sense does not stand on its own with no relation to ex-sistence. Even prior to the reduction the being (= meaning) of the things is already operative in our everyday understanding. The phe- nomenological reduction merely draws the re ective philosopher explicitly into the already-operative correlation between the φαινόμενον on the one hand and the λόγος that lets it be seen on the other: the reduction thematizes for the phenomenologist the meaningful disclosedness of the thing. In other words, leading one’s philosophical vision away from a thing and onto its “being” means seeing the thing in terms of its current form of meaningful presence. The reduction “puts the breaks on” (see epoché) our natural tendency to over- look meaningfulness as we look through it to the entity—even though meaning is the most ob-vious (etymologically, “in-the-way”) element of the process.80 The reduction takes us back re ectively and thematically to where we always already stand in our everyday lives: in relation to the thing as meaning this or that. Therefore, as long as we take the word λόγος in the broad sense in which Heidegger meant it—as encompassing every kind of intelligent activity (“minding”), whether practical, theoretical, or whatever—we may say that the thing’s presence, which the phenomenologist focuses on in and through the reduction, is the thing’s current meaningfulness and never its mere “out-there- ness” apart from human engagement. Of course, neither Husserl nor Heidegger doubt that things remain “out there” after the reduction. Husserl explicitly said that we must not overlook the most essential thing of all, namely that even after the purifying epoché, perception still remains perception of this house, indeed, of this house with the accepted status of “actually existing.”81 We have seen that for Heidegger “Questions like ‘Does the world exist inde- pendent of my thinking?’ are meaningless.”82 He added that the thing in nature shows up in the reducing gaze that focuses on the act of perceiving, because this perceiving is essentially a perceiving of the thing. The thing belongs to the perceiving as its perceived.83 For Heidegger as well as for Husserl, a thing is still out-there (vorhanden) after the reduction; it’s just that, as such, it is not the focus of their philosophy. The subject matter of a phenomenological inquiry is things only insofar as we are in some way meaningfully engaged with them. After the phenomenological reduction, the only philosophical problems one may properly pursue are those of sense and meaning–that is, hermeneutical questions. In its most basic form, the phenomenological reduction is a matter of learn- ing to stand thematically where we always already stand in lived experience. **The upshot of Heidegger’s phenomenological reduction is that we engage with things from a contextualized, first-person, embodied-experiential involvement with things, which inevitably makes sense of them. Even if I get information about a thing from someone else, it is still I who get that information in the first person**. (This is the unavoidable truth of Descartes’ ego cogito.) And no mat- ter where I get that information from, I cannot not make sense of it. (In other words, human being is pan-hermeneutical.)84 **No matter how much we forget about meaningfulness and get absorbed in things,** we **always** remain, by our **very** structure, phenomenological**. This first-person experiential sense-making is where I already stand prior to any subsequent move into the** theoretical or the practical.❖❖❖ In Being and Time **Heidegger** refocuses and crowns his earlier investiga- tions into meaningfulness by grounding it in human being. “The doctrine of meaning is rooted in the ontology of ex-sistence.”85 He **sees human being as possibility** (i.e., as ex-sistence: “**being made to stand out and beyond”) while** at the same time, as **always related to itself** (mineness).86 Ex-sistence is a form of movement of the self in which possibility always outrides actuality.87 **Man** is a unique kind of κίνησις that, of and as itself, is related to itself: a self-related relation (i.e., its self-understanding is part and parcel of what man is) that is itself in its incompleteness (it **will never fulfill all its possibilities**). For Hei- degger that movement is grounded in the most basic fact of human being, its a priori understanding of meaningfulness.88 **If we cannot encounter anything except by understanding it, then our facticity—the necessity that determines the structure of our being—is our bondedness to the world of meaning and, a fortiori, to what makes that world possible**.89 Heidegger begins his analysis of the world of meaning with where we live our ordinary lives, the “everyday,” as he calls it, where **we deal with things by handling them, using them, and managing them as extensions of ourselves, rather than merely observing them as objects of theory or speculation**. Whether we attend to this fact or not, **all such things are significant to us, meaningful in a practical way. We use them instrumentally to achieve a purpose: cooking dinner, painting the garage, researching an event. They are not merely “avail- able” for mental observation but are functionally accessible and usable**. Hence we call these things “the useful” (Heidegger’s das Zuhandene). **They fulfill a need, achieve a purpose, help us to reach a desideratum**. Before functioning as mere observers of our world, we work in it to satisfy our needs. We are lacking, and we seek satisfaction; we are concerned and seek to work things out. We want to change some things, accomplish others, and do away with yet others. Another characteristic of human being is that **we** usually **see things not as scattered and unrelated but rather within wholes or sets, as somehow unified and interacting with each other**—perhaps because we are de facto the perspectival center that denies our encompassing horizon, perhaps **because we see our own selves as a whole, an open-ended narrative unity that gathers things into significance for ourselves and manifests them in such a way that we can relate to them. We live in meaningful contexts, worlds of meaning shaped by our interests and concerns, which confer meaning on the things that inhabit those contexts**. We live in many such contexts at the same time.

#### However, the natural world itself is now consumed by the nihilism of technology that strips life of value – only by reorienting our epistemic stance as per the ethical demand of the aff can allow us to embrace our pre-ontological openness to being.

**Blitz 14** [Mark Blitz is the Fletcher Jones Professor of Political Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College. “Understanding Heidegger on Technology” (The New Atlantis). <https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/understanding-heidegger-on-technology>]

The heart of the matter for Heidegger is thus not in any particular machine, process, or resource, but rather in the “challenging”: the way **the essence of technology operates on our understanding of all matters and on the presence of those matters themselves** — the all-pervasive way we confront (and are confronted by) the technological world. **Everything encountered technologically is exploited for some technical use**. It is important to note, as suggested earlier, that when Heidegger speaks of technology’s essence in terms of challenging or positionality, he speaks of modern technology, and excludes traditional arts and tools that we might in some sense consider technological. For instance, the people who cross the Rhine by walking over a simple bridge might also seem to be using the bridge to challenge the river, making it a piece in an endless chain of use. **But Heidegger argues that the bridge in fact allows the river to be itself, to stand within its own flow and form**. By contrast, a hydroelectric plant and its dams and structures transform the river into just one more element in an energy-producing sequence. Similarly, **the traditional activities of peasants do not “challenge the farmland.” Rather, they protect the crops**, leaving them “to the discretion of the growing forces,” whereas “agriculture is now a mechanized food industry.” Modern machines are therefore not merely more developed, or self-propelled, versions of old tools such as water or spinning wheels. Technology’s essence “has already from the outset abolished all those places where the spinning wheel and water mill previously stood.” Heidegger is not concerned with the elusive question of precisely dating the origin of modern technology, a question that some think important in order to understand it. But he does claim that well before the rise of industrial mechanization in the eighteenth century, technology’s essence was already in place. “It first of all lit up the region within which the invention of something like power-producing machines could at all be sought out and attempted.” **We cannot capture the essence of technology by describing the makeup of a machine**, for “every construction of every machine already moves within the essential space of technology.” Even if the essence of technology does not originate in the rise of mechanization, can we at least show how it follows from the way we apprehend nature? After all, Heidegger says, the essence of technology “begins its reign” when modern natural science is born in the early seventeenth century. But in fact we cannot show this because in Heidegger’s view the relationship between science and technology is the reverse of how we usually think it to be; **natural forces and materials belong to technology, rather than the other way around**. It was technological thinking that first understood nature in such a way that nature could be challenged to unlock its forces and energy. The challenge preceded the unlocking; **the essence of technology is thus prior to natural science**. “Modern technology is not applied natural science, far more is modern natural science the application of the essence of technology.” **Nature is** therefore “the fundamental piece of **inventory of the technological standing reserve** — and nothing else.” Given this view of technology, it follows that any scientific account obscures the essential being of many things, including their nearness. So when Heidegger discusses technology and nearness, he assures us that he is not simply repeating the cliché that technology makes the world smaller. “What is decisive,” he writes, “is not that the distances are diminishing with the help of technology, but rather that nearness remains outstanding.” In order to experience nearness, we must encounter things in their truth. And no matter how much we believe that science will let us “encounter the actual in its actuality,” **science only offers us representations of things**. It “only ever encounters that which its manner of representation has previously admitted as a possible object for itself.” An example from the second lecture illustrates what Heidegger means. Scientifically speaking, the distance between a house and the tree in front of it can be measured neutrally: it is thirty feet. But in our everyday lives, that distance is not as neutral, not as abstract. Instead, the distance is an aspect of our concern with the tree and the house: the experience of walking, of seeing the tree’s shape grow larger as I come closer, and of the growing separation from the home as I walk away from it. In the scientific account, “distance appears to be first achieved in an opposition” between viewer and object. By becoming indifferent to things as they concern us, by representing both the distance and the object as simple but useful mathematical entities or philosophical ideas, we lose our truest experience of nearness and distance. Turning To and Away from Danger It is becoming clear by now that **in order to understand the essence of technology we must also understand things non-technologically; we must enter the realm where things can show themselves to us truthfully in a manner not limited to the technological**. But technology is such a domineering force that it all but eliminates our ability to experience this realm. The possibility of understanding the interrelated, meaningful, practical involvements with our surroundings that Heidegger describes is almost obliterated. The danger is that technology’s domination fully darkens and makes us forget our understanding of ourselves as the beings who can stand within this realm. The third Bremen lecture lays out just how severe the problem is. While we have already seen how the essence of technology prevents us from encountering the reality of the world, now **Heidegger points out that technology has *become* the world (“world and positionality are the same”). Technology reigns, and we therefore forget being altogether and our own essential freedom — we no longer even realize the world we have lost. Ways of experiencing distance and time other than through the ever more precise neutral measuring with rulers and clocks become lost to us**; they no longer seem to be types of knowing at all but are at most vague poetic representations. While many other critics of technology point to obvious dangers associated with it, Heidegger emphasizes a different kind of threat: the possibility that it may prevent us from experiencing “the call of a more primal truth.” The problem is not just that **technology** makes it harder for us to access that realm, but that it **makes us altogether forget that the realm exists. Yet, Heidegger argues, recognizing this danger allows us to glimpse and then respond to what is forgotten. The understanding of man’s essence as openness to this realm and of technology as only one way in which things can reveal themselves is the guide for keeping technology within its proper bounds**. Early in the fourth and last Bremen lecture, Heidegger asks if the danger of technology means “that the human is powerless against technology and delivered over to it for better or worse.” No, he says. The question, however, is not how one should act with regard to technology **— the question that seems to be “always closest and solely urgent” —** but how we should think, for technology “can never be overcome,” we are never its master. Proper thinking and speaking, on the other hand, allow us to be ourselves and to reveal being. “Language is … never merely the expression of thinking, feeling, and willing. Language is the inceptual dimension within which the human essence is first capable of corresponding to being.” It is through language, by a way of thinking, that “we first learn to dwell in the realm” of being. The thought that opens up the possibility of a “turn” away from technology and toward its essential realm is the realization of its danger. Heidegger quotes the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin: “But where the danger is, there grows also what saves.” **By illuminating this danger, Heidegger’s path of thinking** is a guide for turning away from it. The turn **brings us to a place in which the truth of being becomes visible as if by a flash of lightning**. This flash does not just illuminate the truth of being, **it also illuminates us: we are “caught sight of in the insight.” As our own essence comes to light**, if we disavow “human stubbornness” and cast ourselves “before this insight,” **so too does the essence of technology come to light.** The Way of Nature and Poetry Acloser look at “The Question Concerning Technology” and some of the ways it adds to the Bremen lectures will help us further to clarify Heidegger’s view. In the Bremen lectures, Heidegger focuses on the contrast between entities seen as pieces in an endless technological chain on the one hand, and “things” that reveal being by bringing to light the rich interplay between gods and humans, earth and sky on the other. His example of such a “thing” in the first lecture is a wine jug used for sacrificial libation: The full jug gathers in itself the earth’s nutrients, rain, sunshine, human festivities, and the gift to the gods. All of these together help us understand what the wine jug is. In “The Question Concerning Technology,” it is products understood in a certain way that Heidegger contrasts with technology’s revealing. Drawing on Aristotle’s account of formal, final, material, and efficient causes, Heidegger argues that both nature (*physis*) and art (*poiesis*) are ways of “bringing-forth” — of unconcealing that which is concealed. What is natural is self-producing, self-arising, self-illuminating, not what can be calculated in order to become a formless resource. Poetry also brings things to presence. Heidegger explains that the Greek word *techne*, from which “technology” derives, at one time also meant the “bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful” and “the *poiesis* of the fine arts.” In contrast to Heidegger’s notion of a thing or of revealing stands the kind of objectivity for which our natural sciences strive. But in spite of what Heidegger himself borrows from Greek thought, he emphasizes that there is a link between modern technology and classic philosophy because of Plato’s understanding of being as permanent presence. For Plato, the “idea” of a thing — what it is — is its enduring look, which “is not and never will be perceivable with physical eyes” and cannot be experienced with the other senses either. This attention to what is purely present in contemplation, Heidegger argues, ultimately leads us to forget the being of things, what is brought forth, and the world of human concern. Heidegger’s brief sketches in these lectures suggest powerful alternatives to technological understanding that help us to recognize its limits. In “The Question Concerning Technology,” **Heidegger’s hope is to “prepare a free relationship to [technology]. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology.” It is not the case “that technology is the fate of our age**, where ‘fate’ means the inevitableness of an unalterable course.” **Experiencing technology as a kind** — but only one kind — **of revealing**, and **seeing man’s essential place as one that is open to different kinds of revealing frees us from** “the stultified **compulsion to push on blindly with technology or**, what comes to the same, to **rebel helplessly against it** and curse it as the work of the devil.” Indeed, Heidegger says at the end of the lecture, **our examining or questioning of the essence of technology and other kinds of revealing is “the piety of thought.” By this questioning we may be saved from technology’s rule.**

#### Western metaphysics, consequentialism, and liberal philosophy requires a divorce from the world – separating us from being and seeing subjectivity as objectivity

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Regardless of their avowed metaphysical positions regarding the being of the subject vis-à-vis objects, **ethical theorists of the next few centuries** and persisting today **have largely retained the primacy of the subject-object distinction in posing and attempting to answer such paradigmatic questions what is right/wrong**, what is the good, or what should I do**. From a Heideggerian perspective, these approaches are metaphysical in that they fundamentally consider entities or beings, retaining an implicit distinction between the subject as** knower of moral truths**, as** agent of moral acts**, as** source of moral value**, and the** objects as the object of knowledge**,** the consequences of acts**, the bearer of value**, just to name a few manifestations of this distinction. We can see how this distinction plays itself out by briefly considering a few of the more prominent sorts of moral theory in modern philosophy – hedonism and utilitarianism. Hedonistic (or egoistic) theories give priority in ethical analysis to the interests and desires (usually closely connected with pleasure and absence of pain) of an essentially atomistic and detached subjectivity, thereby reducing the questions of ethics to questions of self-interest. In some forms, our more familiar moral duties are explained as the optimally rational choice of an individual concerned only with pleasure, desiresatisfaction, avoidance of pain, and, in evolutionary ethics, survival and propagation. **This finds echoes in such approaches to ethics as Rawlsian liberalism,7 in which moral norms are a kind of contract between self-interested individuals who consider what sorts of principles they would accept if they did not know what social position they occupy, what ‘comprehensive conceptions’ they adhere to, etc.** **These ethical theories**, **whether in hedonistic or liberal forms**, articulate principles of right action and **analyze moral concepts in terms of the subject abstracted from the lived world** and made into an object essentially for itself; ‘external objects’, whether they include other people or ‘things’, are relevant to ethical principles insofar as they may satisfy or hinder the subject’s interests. They are the data, essentially distinct from the principles which have their source in the subject, that one ‘plugs into’ the principles in order to arrive at right action. **Utilitarianism (in most forms, at least) shares to some degree the presumption that the ground of morality is in desire-satisfaction, but maintains that the determination of right or wrong actions lies in the quantity of utility** (pleasure or absence of pain, say) in their consequences. In this way, **moral deliberation and judgment must consider not simply the individual but the aggregate sum of utility across all people: the individual’s own preferences are still relevant, but only insofar as they one set of preferences among the total set of all individuals.** Actions are/were right just in case they lead/led to the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people, and wrong just in case there are/were alternative actions with greater consequent utility. In this case, **morality becomes a matter of quantifying various empirical data, so to speak, and determining moral judgment based on these calculations.** Some types of utilitarianism attempt to motivate their theory by appealing to the claim that maximizing desire-satisfaction across all people is somehow most likely to satisfy one’s own desires, and so its principles are the most rational for a person to live by; others argue that the theory is to be understood as just an account of what it means for an action to be right or wrong, not necessarily a motivating account. Like hedonism, however, **utilitarianism begins with the presumption that the fundamental locus of morality is subjectivity: a certain subject has certain desires and interests or is capable of experiencing pleasure and pain, and states of affairs have moral value by reference to these subjective possibilities, aggregated across a collection of essentially disparate individuals**. Kant, of course, cannot be lumped together with these sorts of theories as another example of the same sort of subject/object distinction, though the distinction remains. Kant’s subject, considered as moral agent, is determinable through freedom by pure practical reason, while objects are determinable through the categorial forms of pure theoretical reason. In this way Kant’s morality becomes grounded in the notion of a duty, an unconditional obligation that is independent of the vicissitudes and contingencies of consequences and subjective interests and inclinations that characterize utilitarianism and egoism. The locus of moral duty lies in the act itself, or more specifically, the maxim that is the ultimate reason for an act. For an act to have genuine moral worth, the maxim upon which the agent acts must fulfill the demands of the categorial imperative, viz., that one act only on those maxims that can be willed to be universal laws. However, by grounding moral principles solely in pure reason, independent of desires and inclinations, conceptions of the good, and consequences, subjectivity, and by extension morality, become radically abstracted from the world of objects. Kant’s moral principle is one of absolute self-legislation, a feature which respects genuine freedom in requiring an autonomous, self-imposed rational ground. While Kant is careful not to consider subjectivity in terms of subjective substance as the other theories we have considered do, moral principles nevertheless take their departure from a wordless ‘I’ as the determinable of freedom. Each of these instances of ‘ethics’, insofar as they are theoretical, share to some extent the ‘inward turning’ characteristic of Cartesian philosophy, and along with it the presumption that such disengaged subjectivity is the starting point in formulating the questions and concerns of moral theory. Moral truth in these theories is a function either of subjective desires, whether conceived individualistically or aggregately, or in the free self-legislation of the will. **The ‘subject’ is that entity that can be examined in abstraction from its world, and from such an examination we can discern those elements that determine ethical principles which can then be ‘applied’ to the world of objects**. **Overcoming the subject-object distinction is one of the basic tasks of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology**, at least in his earlier days, and so it is impossible to give a comprehensive account here; but there are a few points we can make that indicate his resistance to the model of ethical theory represented above. **To think the question of Being in its primordiality, that is, to make the being of beings ‘transparent’, he has us first consider the being for whom the question of Being is important, namely, human being**. But so far the idea of ‘human being’ is meant only as a rough indicator of the being we’re to consider: it should not be taken in any substantial way, because this would already presuppose its being in some important way – namely, as substance – without considering what it is to be substance, which itself is illegitimate before we address the question of what it is to be. Similarly for other ‘definitions’ of human being, such as ‘rational animal’, ‘material thing’, ‘person/soul’, etc. The posing of the Seinsfrage, that is to say, precedes any account of essence as conceptually distinct from existence,8 a distinction that underlies all philosophy since Plato, on his account. What we can say first about the being for whom the question of Being is an issue is that it is Dasein, being-there, which is being-in-the-world. The use of hyphens in the English translation of this term indicates that being-in-the-world is not to be understood as denoting the location of the subject within an objective world, where the two are considered co-existent yet nevertheless essentially distinct. **It is already there, both constituting and being constituted by the world. It is, thus, not something that can be isolated and examined as an entity, as something present-at-hand. To do so would require us to take it in isolation from its world, to see what it is essentially in terms of properties: metaphysically, not existentially**. Heidegger interprets even Kant, who tried to limit the ‘I think’ to an apperception, a transcendental condition of knowledge instead of a thing-in-itself or even a concept, as falling prey to this reduction of subjectivity to presence-at-hand simply by defining the ‘I’ ontologically as subject.10 **Being-in-the-world, then, precludes identifying subjects and objects as essentially distinct entities.** As Heidegger puts it, “If, in the ontology of Dasein, we ‘take our departure’ from a worldless ‘I’ in order to provide this ‘I’ with an Object, then we have ‘presupposed’ not too much, but too little.”11 Each of these **subjectivizing approaches to ethics divorces the ‘theoretical subject’ in some way from its ‘world’, and so has to “tack on an ‘ethic’” to “round it out ‘on the practical side’**”.12 **This object then becomes “artificially and dogmatically curtailed”. This last statement opposes the utilitarianism approach in that objects have moral relevancy insofar as they are objects for us.** We certainly encounter objects in this way, a kind of relation that Heidegger calls zuhanden. But this is a mode of encounter with entitles in the world, not an articulation of essence. Furthermore, **due to the objectification of everything not subjective, other persons become objects for us.** The being of Dasein with regard to other Daseins, however, can never be one which isolates Dasein from the Other. Being-with-Others, Heidegger insists, “belongs to the Being of Dasein, which is an issue for Dasein in its very Being. Thus as Being-with, Dasein ‘is’ essentially for the sake of others.”13 In contrast to moral theories which begin with the isolated self, and from there construct principles under which the moral value and relation to others is determined, Heidegger insists that being-with and being-for are primordially part of our essence at its core.

#### The technical rationalization of education policy has entrenched socioeconomic inequality and political passivity – the totalization of calculative metaphysics subverts deliberative politics and enrolls students in an abhorrent process of endless economic commodification

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Introduction The relationship between policy and politics is marked by mutual imbrications (Ball, 1990; Dale, 1989) and reflects a shared etymology. As Codd argues, 'fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process' (1988, p. 235). Both politics and policy are normative, rather than merely technical domains, in that each is concerned with values — their formulation, institution, reproduction and contestation. But whereas policy concerns 'the authoritative allocation of values' (Easton, 1953), politics concerns the process of prioritising those values (Strath, 2005). The inseparability of educational policy and politics stems from the social and economic value attaching to education and the inevitable requirement, given finite resources, to make decisions regarding its allocation. Yet, contemporary neo-liberal discourses, for example, those around issues of standards and accountability, are typically presented by politicians and policymakers as matters of technical efficiency rather than normative choices. As a consequence, their political nature, including the deep implication of these discourses with issues of sociopolitical power, is effectively backgrounded. My aim in this article is to examine some of the strategies through which this shift from the political to the technical is achieved, using the Australian 'education revolution' as a case study, and to consider possibilities for reinserting politics. The assertion that education policy has been reduced to a technical discourse is in itself not new. Writing over two decades ago, Shapiro (1990, p. 13) made the following, by now all too familiar, observation in relation to the educational pronouncements of Democratic candidates in the 1984 and 1988 US elections: Notions of quantifiable results, demonstrable competencies, the search for verifiable and empirical criteria for judging excellence (of students and teachers), an emphasis on performance and discrete skills —these permeated all the candidates' statements. There was a strongly shared desire to assimilate the process of schooling to the forms and methods of technology . . . to shape teaching and knowledge to a technical discourse. Since Shapiro wrote these words, the educational policy arena has been subject to the full onslaught of neo-liberal political intervention in the form of marketisation, privatisation, standardisation and accountability measures. Yet, although the assertion of the political nature of education policy may seem obvious to many readers, my argument here is that, despite its ideological saturation, contemporary neo-liberalism in education disavows its political nature in a number of ways. It does so, most notably, by refraining political issues in economic terms through processes of commodification and by assuming and promoting a broad consensus in relation to this economising agenda — in each case, backgrounding the struggle over values central to both policy and politics. Contemporary neo-liberal policy tendencies thus simultaneously undermine the democratic potential of education, posing the challenge for educators, in many ways a 'captive' profession (Reilly, 1996), and edu-cation policy analysts, of how to resist 'the process of de-politicisation of policy-making, the erasure of ideology, and the legitimisation of common sense' (Pykett, 2007, p. 307) and reinsert the political into policy debates. In what follows, I will illustrate this depoliticisation at work in neo-liberal education policy, using Australia's education revolution as an example. I will then take up the issues this example raises in a broader discussion of the nature of politics in education policy, drawing on the key distinction made by Mouffe (2000, 2005) and others between 'politics' and 'the political' in order to argue that a focus on the latter is key to renovating the absent politics of neo-liberal education policy. Depoliticisation and the performative production of the education revolution A key policy agenda of the Australian Federal Labor government since their election in 2007, after 11 years of Liberal (conservative) government, has been the so-called 'edu-cation revolution', announced in the 2008 policy manifesto, Quality education: The case for an education revolution in our schools' (Rudd & Gillard, 2008). As is evident in its design, including features such as the setting of the text against a deep red background and the choice of the somewhat dramatic term 'revolution', Quality Education is clearly a 'symbolic' (Privity, 1984, p. 5) policy document. Indeed, its deployment of the term 'revolution' can be read as an attempt to reference a wider social democratic tradition, while also suggesting a radical and dramatic shift in policy and practice. This conceit of new policies representing a clean break with the past is reiterated in subsequent pub-lic policy pronouncements making reference to the education revolution. For example, in a 2010 speech the then education minister and current Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, argued, 'As Australians we have an obligation to the future, an obligation to ensure the Australian school students of today and tomorrow each get a world class education .. . Through the Education Revolution, as a nation we are fatally shouldering that obligation and making progress' (Gillard, 2010a, emphasis added). The revolution trope also features prominently in the titles of a number of speeches (e.g. Gillard, 2008a, 2010a), while the 'clean break' theme can be found in the titles of media releases relating to the My School website,2 My School website to provide unprecedented school performance data (Garrett & Gillard, 2010) and My School 2.0 delivers a new era of school transparency (Garrett & Gillard, 2011). The use of such speeches and media announcements for the dissemina-tion, promotion and 'spinning' of policy (Gewirtz, Dickson, & Power, 2004), in addition to reflecting the increasing mediatisation of education policy (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004; Wallace, 1993), creates the space in which a high profile policy like the education revolu-tion can be (re)iterated, (re)cited and (re)performed. The result is that these rhetorical media acts to a large extent produce the very thing they claim to describe — politics via packaging rather than sustained debate (Franklin, 2004a, 2004b). But aside from its rhetorical and performative dimensions, what of the substantive content of the education revolution: in what ways is this also depoliticising? Depoitticisation and the substantive content of the education revolution The policy document, Quality Education, makes numerous references to the unprece-dented competitive global economic climate confronting Australia and the consequent need to reform Australian education. The following from the ministerial foreword to Quality Education (p. 5) is typical in this regard: Australia faces significant challenges to its social and economic environment though an aging population and increasing international competition. The nation must invest in developing a world class education system and drive development of a workforce that is highly skilled, flexible and adaptable in responding to increasing global competition for skills. Notions such as 'the tough reality of international competition' and the dominance of an economic agenda in general are stated categorically as matters of incontrovertible fact. Yet, as Steger (2008, p. 187) notes, 'public policy based on economic inevitability appears to be above politics', while simultaneously facilitating the political project of increasing the penetration and entrenchment of market modalities in all domains of society by inter-weaving ideological prescriptions with 'factual' explanations. This imperative modality reoccurs elsewhere in Quality Education, for example, page 35 emphasises the need to build a 'world-class' education system 'ready to face the challenges of a globally compet-itive world', while the conclusion reminds us of the 'fact' that 'as other countries continue to advance, we cannot afford to delay' (p. 36). This message is repeated in subsequent media announcements and speeches: as one example, in a speech in March 2010 to the Independent Education Union, Minister for Education, Julia Gillard (2010b), argued: The education revolution is about offering the best opportunities Australia can provide. But in the global village in which we live there is also a tough reality. The tough reality of international competition. A reality which gives us a moment of pause. A moment in which to ask in which areas do we really achieve a world class standards? The references to 'the global village', 'the tough reality of international competition' and the need to achieve 'world-class standards' reflect the powerful influence of the global imaginary on education policy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). But it is worth noting that the anx-ieties expressed here have surfaced regularly in times of socio-economic change or turmoil, both in Australia and in other international contexts, as reflected, for example, in the debate surrounding A Nation at Risk in the United States (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Indeed, such anxieties are inherent to the competitive nation-building aims of modern state education systems (Green, 1990). Against the background of this dis-course of tough global economic competition, the promise of the education revolution to offer 'the best opportunities Australia can provide' suggests an unproblematic link between education and individual economic success, reflecting the hegemonic penetration of human capital theory in education and ignoring the positional, rather than purely substantive, nature of educational qualifications (Marginson, 1997; Wolf, 2002). It is important to note that a concern with the instrumental in education is not new or unique to neo-liberalism. As long ago as 1864, Herbert Spencer lamented 'the truth that with the mind as with the body the ornamental precedes the useful' and decried the Cinderella-like position of science in education, 'kept in the background that her haughty sisters might flaunt their fripperies in the eyes of the world' (1864, pp. 25 and 96). Concern with the economic imperatives of education was heightened in the attenuath of the Second World War (e.g. Halsey, Lauder, Brown, & Wells, 1961), receiving a further boost from human capital theory in the 1960s and becoming hegemonic from the 1980s onwards as education, like many other domains of life, came under the auspices of neo-liberalism's master signifier, the market. But importantly for the purposes of this article, neo-liberalism's augmentation of the instrumentalisation of education is also symptomatic of a wider shift in the relationship between the neo-liberal state and its citizens, one which 'has become less a political relationship — that is, a relationship between government and citizens who, together, are concerned about the common good — and more an economic relationship — that is, a rela-tionship between the state as provider and the taxpayer as consumer of public services' (Biesta, 2010, pp. 53-54). As Biesta goes on to argue, this pattern reflects the wider ero-sion of the political in contemporary neo-liberal society: 'Not only can it be argued that the relationship between the state and its citizens has been depoliticized. One could even argue that the sphere of the political itself has been eroded' (2010, p. 54). The instrumental conception of education evident in the education revolution relies on another key component of neo-liberal education policy, a logic of competition whereby students, teachers, schools and education systems are evaluated and compared in the belief that such a competition will improve the performance of all. In this vein, Quality Education asserts, 'there is good evidence, primarily from the United States and the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), that the publication of school-level test scores tends to improve the performance of all schools' (p. 31). Yet, there are good rea-sons to query whether high-stakes testing and the publication of test results are forces for democratic openness as they claimed to be. Aside from the reduction of educational excellence to test scores (as if teachers and schools were previously unable to monitor and assess student progress), with its constraining effects on professional trust and collabora-tive relationships (Carless, 2009), and its narrowing effects on curriculum and pedagogy (Alexander, 2009; Au, 2009; Hursh, 2008; Stobart, 2008), competition is depoliticising insofar as it naturalises the current forms and content that are at stake in the game of education. In the process, it occludes wider structural and socio-economic factors that impact on educational achievement (Hyslop-

#### Scientific rationalism, ideals of social progress and efficiency results in the worst atrocities – an embrace of radical responsibility that imagines social justice as an ontological imperative is a prerequisite to political theorization

Kalanges 10– Kristine Kalanges is Associate Professor of Law and Concurrent Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. From the Violence of Positivism to the Ethics of Encounter: Restoring Relationality to International Relations, 9-23-2010, msm//rehighlighted *~bxnk*

Levinas’s reference to Reason encapsulates the long intellectual history rooted in Enlightenment thought and including subsequent developments in scientific and social theory, which came to be grouped under the rubric of modernity. I identify among the formative thinkers of the modern era Hegel, whose dialectical theory of history imbued modernity with the ideal of progress through time. Hegel’s work cemented the relationship between Western consciousness and the seemingly unalterable course of history, particularly for those who attempted to understand (and utilize) his philosophy in isolation from his theology. Like Kant before and Kierkegaard after him, Hegel maintained a dialectical division between faith and reason, one that flourished during industrialization and fast became the hallmark of modern thought. Indeed, the division inspired a humanist movement which sought to improve the condition of humanity without reference to divine inspiration or authority. Paradoxically, humanism found its greatest challenge in a coincident occurrence – the dawn of mass production. The Industrial Revolution had ramifications throughout economic, cultural and martial relations. Individuals as laborers, citizens or soldiers were transformed into commodities to be manipulated by managers, politicians and other ancestors of today’s technocrats. Left with little local or even regional political significance (apart, of course, from their role as cogs in the machine of the new economy), the expanding lower classes found identification within the freshly-delineated borders of 12 the nation-state. Benedict Anderson illustrates how the fires of nationalism spread throughout the Western world, stoked by capitalist necessity for resources and new markets.14 In this way, the advancement of the nation-state (taken to include both economic and military might) was inextricably tied to that of humanity. This relationship assumed fascist dimensions in Nazi Germany, where the German working classes rallied behind a message triumphing their state, economy, culture and race. The rise of Hitler and the success of National Socialism can thus be read as the reification of modern ideals; specifically, Nazism embraced the rational discipline of progress via purity of the nation-state and its fractal counterpart, the body. It is important to recall that the dialectical system of history marked the continuing presence of the Jewish people as an historical aberration (the coming of Christ, in fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, had rendered Judaism obsolete).15 Therefore, Nazi anti-Semitism, insofar as it participated in the intellectual culture of modernity, conformed to the rationality of historical progress. The true significance of Hitlerism for modernity, however, lies not in historical theory, but in the objectification and subsequent processing of the human body for ends that were both scientific and rational. Earlier in the nineteenth century, political scientists had introduced the systematic construction, maintenance and improvement of the nationstate via the manipulation of strategic resources and statistical accounting. By the time of Hitler, the implementation of scientific methods into policy formulation and enforcement was gaining in popularity, particularly after the disaster of World War I. The German dictator’s unique contribution was embracing the body – in all its composite parts and signifiers – as a strategic resource of the state. 13 The Nazis, operating within an essentially Euclidean conception of the nation in political space, relocated the borders of the nation-state along racial lines. Human bodies, eugenically-delineated, became the basis of nationalist identity and the target of competitive aggression. The logic of nationalist conflict, in which the opponent is acted upon without consequence to the actor, was transferred into the calculated elimination of the Jewish body. In its faceless savagery, genocide is the progeny of modern scientific warfare. The fact that the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki happen concurrently is not a coincidence. Characterizing modernity as the elimination of the human face and the scientific processing of the human body recasts the introduction of the atomic bomb (a sterile, faceless technology of holocaust) as the exclamation, rather than the unexpected event, of modernity and the modern nation-state. The Holocaust emerged, for Levinas, as a powerful and painful example of rationalized hell. By reducing human identity to blood and genetics, Nathan Bracher argues, the Nazis had renounced ‘in no uncertain terms the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of freedom, according to which the soul, distinct from the body, stands apart from the material conditions of existence and can freely choose its destiny, therefore transcending the bonds of history’.16 Instead, a Nietzschean will-to-power was embraced, and the moral Self was sacrificed to the biological Self in pursuit of a society based on race. This was but one socio-political outcome of philosophical solipsism. A second one was the incredible ability of the German ideology and its foot soldiers to deny the community of their non-Aryan fellows. In an account of his experience as a Nazi prisoner of war, Levinas describes how he was placed in a unit solely composed of Jews. Their interactions with other soldiers and citizens, denigrating 14 in the extreme, stripped them of their humanity, made them ‘subhuman, a gang of apes’. 17 Only a stray mutt named Bobby, whose barks and yelps simultaneously called for play and demarcated animal and man, helped them to recall their fundamental humanness. Raoul Mortley rightly points out that the final and most significant horror of the Holocaust was, for Levinas, not so much the number of his fellow Jews and other innocent people murdered, but the way they were processed and killed…without faces, without names, without recognition that the bodies ransacked for resources were indeed human.18 Ultimately, the horrific thread unifying these three observations is the rationality informing each of them – the scientific reductionism of race, the ideologically-based denial of community, the production-minded processing of human bodies. …And a Philosophical One For Levinas, the evidence of God in the Other’s face confers extraordinary significance upon the human person. In this sense, his philosophy might be considered humanist. However, this would only be true in a sense radically different from the contemporary humanism of secular intellectual culture. Levinas is deeply troubled by the secularization of ideals originally rooted in the Scriptures.19 Absent the patient character of Scriptural study, Greek wisdom ‘demystifies, depoeticizes, demythicizes’ the Infinite; in short, it risks dissolving into ‘lie and ideology’ masked by the rhetoric of humanism.20 Levinas is thus disappointed but not surprised by an academy that takes delight in fetishizing difference, while falling dramatically short of assuming responsibility for the Other. He denounces humanism as inhumane,21 and charges ‘the little humanity that adorns the earth’ with pursuing justice via responsibility and sacrifice, not rhetoric and Self-indulgence. ‘One has to find for man another kinship than that which ties him to 15 being’, Levinas exhorts, ‘one that will perhaps enable us to conceive of this difference between me and the Other, this inequality, in a sense absolutely opposed to oppression’.22 Levinas directly criticizes Western philosophy and the State for their refusal to acknowledge the interruption of the ontological by the transcendent. This criticism, including its origins and formulation, is explored in greater detail throughout this and the following sections. For now, briefly, he argues that while philosophy and government rest upon true human relationality (which for him necessarily includes an element of transcendence), their ontological structure precludes language vested with originary meaning in favor of the thematized ‘said’. 23 Put another way, philosophy and government go astray because their essential foundations – human relationships infused with transcendent responsibility – are obscured by language that filters everything, even the mysterious, through the lens of scientific rationalism. T

#### The standard and role of the ballot is thus to embrace ontological thought, a form of thought that interrupts our pre-conceived hegemonic understandings of being.

Thomson 16 – Iain, associate professor of philosophy at the University of New Mexico, Rethinking education after Heidegger: Teaching learning as ontological response-ability, Educational Philosophy and Theory, msm//recut ~*bxnk*

The later Heidegger abandons this misguided metaphysical quest for a fundamental ontology capable of unifying the University. Instead, he comes to recognize that all the different academic disciplines are already unified; they all implicitly derive their guiding understandings of the being of the classes of entities they study from the nihilistic ontotheology that underlies our late-modern age of technological ‘enframing’. In Heidegger’s later view, all the academic disciplines increasingly understand the being of the classes of entities they study in terms of ‘eternally recurring will-to-power’, that is, they understand the being of all entities as nothing but competing forces coming together and breaking apart with no end beyond the maximal perpetuation of force itself. (We can see this in biology’s guiding understanding of life as a self-replicating pattern of information interacting with an environment; in psychology’s guiding under- standing of consciousness as a randomly emergent faculty that confers evolutionary advantages by coordinating the competing information from the earlier emergence of the various sensory modalities; in **the understanding of literature as an arena for the struggle between competing voices and perspectives**; in the historian’s understanding of history as a study of those clashes between forces which subsequently shaped us the most; and so on.) This nihilistic Nietzschean ontotheology, Heidegger insightfully sug- gests, increasingly leads all the academic domains, and all of us, to pre-understand entities technologically, as mere ‘resources’ or Bestand, intrinsically meaningless stuff on stand by for efficient optimization. As a result, Heidegger’s later goal for education in general and the university in particular becomes to teach the other disciplines to think ontologically in order to help them uncover other, non-nihilistic ways of understanding being at the frontiers of their own research.17 Heidegger’s hope is to uncover ways of thinking being that no longer reductively preconceive ‘it’ as a modern realm of objects to be mastered and controlled by a subject, nor as an undifferentiated late-modern domain of intrinsically meaningless resources standing by to be efficiently optimized. Heidegger hoped the other disci- plines could instead help us discover other, more meaningful ways of thinking being, just as he thought he had already found a genuinely postmodern understanding of being at work in the art of Van Gogh and the poetry of Ho ̈lderlin. Their artwork is postmodern avant la lettre, in Heidegger’s view, because it helps us understand ‘the being of entities’ neither in terms of modern objects to be mastered, nor as late-modern resources to be optimized, but, instead, as a phenomenologically dynamic source of intelligibility that both informs and also exceeds our every meaningful attempt to conceptualize or otherwise make sense of things.18 It is precisely here, in my view, that we should situate Shepperd’s insightful focus on the pedagogical significance of the ‘gap’, that is, the situational encounter with a profound breakdown, aporia, or interruption which exceeds our mastery and so frustrates our pre-existing plans and intentions. When we teachers of learning effectively ‘open up a space, a gap in the world’, we not only serve the important Socratic first step of disabusing (all of us) students of our ignorance about our own ignorance; by enduring such an initially humbling and anxiety-provoking confrontation with genuine aporia, we can learn to step beyond the limits of our current world into an unmastered space beyond. Doing so helps us see (in the Heideggerian terms Shepperd adduces) that learning is not primarily about acquiring ‘information’ but, rather, about ‘freeing vision’. Stepping into the open beyond what-is (I would emphasize), we can encounter that ‘noth-ing’ from which the not-yet comes to be. A positive encounter with this dynamic ‘noth-ing’—or this texture-rich ‘earth’, or this phe- nomenologically unstillable ‘presencing’—becomes the crucial pivot that helps us learn to respond ontologically and so ‘turn’ beyond our current technological under- standing of the being of entities as nothing but meaningless resources. By learning to creatively and responsibly respond to this initially inchoate ‘noth-ing’ as the ‘not yet’ of what is coming to be (and so not as nothing at all but instead as ‘the noth-ing’ of that which needs our disclosive efforts to help name and so bring it into being), we post-Heideggerian thinkers of ontological education can help serve a larger historical transformation from nihilism into a genuinely meaningful postmodernity. It is, in my considered judgement, this vision of spiritual revolution that makes Heidegger’s think- ing so dangerous and yet also so suggestive, important, and inspiring (Thomson, 2011, chapters seven and eight).

#### I contend that the appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust. Now affirm:

#### [1] Appropriation is fueled by the will to mastery – a dangerous illusion of control to dominate new “frontiers” and flee the impacts of destruction on Earth.

**Rahder 19** - “Home and Away The Politics of Life after Earth” by Micha Rahder. Rahder, Micha (2019). Home and Away. Environment and Society, 10(1), 158–177. doi:10.3167/ares.2019.100110 [https://sci-hubtw.hkvisa.net/] // ahs emi

This article examines the reinvigoration of outer space imaginaries in the era of global environmental change, and the impacts of these imaginaries on Earth. Privatized space research mobilizes fears of ecological, political, or economic catastrophe to garner support for new utopian futures, or the search for Earth 2.0. These imaginaries reflect dominant global discourses about environmental and social issues, and enable the flow of earthly resources toward an extraterrestrial frontier. In contrast, eco-centric visions emerging from Gaia theory or feminist science fiction project post-earthly life in terms that are ecological, engaged in multispecies relations and ethics, and anti-capitalist. In these imaginaries, rather than centering humans as would-be destroyers or saviors of Earth, our species becomes merely instrumental in launching life—a multispecies process—off the planet, a new development in deep evolutionary time. This article traces these two imaginaries and how they are reshaping material and political earthly life. Outer space imaginaries are booming. Reborn from Cold War projects into the post-9/11 securitized era, imaginaries of expanding life—human and otherwise—beyond the surface of the planet Earth are proliferating, creating new material impacts and new politics of expansion, exploration, and exclusion. Motivated by fears of looming environmental or sociopolitical disaster, including the Anthropocene, many extraterrestrial imaginaries rework earthly fantasies of technoscientific progress and human mastery over nature. Space programs are increasingly privatized, with tech entrepreneurs leading the way to extraterrestrial futures. I refer to these projects, oft en framed as a necessary step in human social and evolutionary history, as in search of Earth 2.0—a new and improved human future enabled by Silicon Valley innovation. Other narratives about extraterrestrial futures, which I call eco-centric, displace human uniqueness, stretching beyond human timescales to the longer evolutionary history of life on Earth. Th ese share with Earth 2.0 the assumption that our planet is defi ned by its living systems, but mark the Anthropocene as only the latest biological revolution to reshape Earth’s surface. In this frame, humans are not unique in our planetary impact; whether we are unique in our potential to take life beyond Earth’s surface is an open question. Eco-centric extraterrestrial imaginaries present alternatives based not on mastery, innovation, or human exceptionalism, but on unruly evolutionary ecologies that displace intention from life’s expansion. Earth 2.0 and Home and Away 159 eco-centric imaginaries off er diff erent understandings of the human, life, time, space, and the relations between these categories. Th is article traces these two imaginaries for the future of life aft er Earth, both of which are flexible and internally varied. Th e word “imaginaries” builds on the definition of sociotechnical imaginaries, or ways in which “science and technology become enmeshed in performing and producing diverse visions of the collective good, at expanding scales of governance from communities to nation-states to the planet” (Jasanoff and Kim 2015: 11)—and now beyond. I mobilize “imaginaries” to encompass the range of effects and entanglements between language, cultural production, scientifi c research, technological innovation, politics, temporal frameworks, and more-than-human evolutionary ecological trajectories. If (or when) life moves beyond Earth, humans will likely be instrumental, but not necessarily in control. As attention to the political and environmental geographies of outer space proliferates (Olson 2018), this article instead turns its gaze back “inward” toward Earth, exploring the current and potential terrestrial impacts of extraterrestrial expansionary megaprojects. Displacing the Earth “Displacements” describe how imagined extraterrestrial futures work to rearrange human/life relations in the earthly present. As multiple possible futures materialize in research programs, policy proposals, social movements, and private investments, they bring displacements of ontological, epistemological, and temporal orders into the present—with both oppressive and liberatory possibilities (Valentine 2017). Displacements describe scalar reconfi gurations such that phenomena that might be incomprehensible or beyond human sensorial reach are brought into the scales of human experience (Messeri 2016). Extraterrestrial displacements work through analytical double movement: making extraterrestrial environments familiar by incorporating them into earthly epistemic and aesthetic frameworks, and making terrestrial environments strange by way of new perspectives (Markley 2005; Messeri 2017a, 2017b; Olson 2018; Praet and Salazar 2017). These two directions work together to co-constitute terrestrial presents with extraterrestrial futures. Rather than a straightforward outward gaze, space expansion imaginaries always involve seeing Earth from a new perspective (Lepselter 1997). Th ese visions range from the widespread use of “Spaceship Earth” metaphors in twentieth-century US environmental movements (Fuller 1969), to Carl Sagan’s (1994) “pale blue dot” emphasizing Earth life’s uniqueness in the universe, to the politically unifying “overview eff ect” proposed by Frank White (1987). Early space programs coproduced the emergence and coherence of the global scale, which has come to dominate political and environmental ideologies (Jasanoff 2004; Lazier 2011). Scientifi c understandings of life on Earth are increasingly framed with reference to the presence or absence of other life in the universe, and how we might recognize it if it is there (Helmreich et al. 2016). Extraterrestrial displacements are temporal as well as spatial. Imaginaries of futures displace linear time such that their potentialities can be materialized in the present (Denning 2013; Mathews and Barnes 2016). Space expansion imaginaries reinstantiate what many argue is the dominant temporal framework of the early twenty-fi rst century, anticipation: “a moral economy in which the future sets the conditions of possibility for action in the present, in which the future is inhabited in the present” (Adams et al. 2009: 249). Critical scholars can be fearful of the “dangers of prognostication” (Valentine et al. 2012) but increasingly attend to how prognostication fi gures as a key political and material practice for creating new worlds. In this case, these new worlds may be brought into existence on or off Earth. 160 Micha Rahder Leaving Earth—Fact or Fiction? Th ere is a huge range of extraterrestrial research and development projects around the world, both public and private. In this article, I focus on those that work toward the expansion of life (human and otherwise) beyond Earth in a more or less “permanent” fashion. Th e boundary drawn for this article mirrors trends in public interest and political rhetoric that prioritize human expansion over other investigations of the universe (Messeri 2017b; Wright and Oman-Reagan 2017). Th ese projects and imaginaries share signifi cant overlap with others, such as new capitalist resource frontiers (Genovese 2017a; Valentine 2012) or the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, known as SETI (Battaglia 2006; Denning 2001a, 2011b, 2011c; Vakoch 2013). More than 70 countries have national space programs, including many that train humans for spacefl ight, but only the United States, Russia (and the former Soviet Union), and China have successfully launched humans into space. Th is article has a bias toward US-based projects, both public and private, as these are most prolifi c and have generated the most media attention and academic analyses to date. In addition, most national programs, especially in the Global South, focus on satellite systems, launch facilities, and vehicle manufacture, with private companies extending these ventures toward resource extraction and potential tourism. Yet NASA, the European Space Agency, Russia’s Roscosmos, the UAE Space Agency, China’s National Space Administration, and private SpaceX have all declared intentions to send humans to Mars in the next few decades, moving toward expansion. Th e charisma of expansion imaginaries can displace attention from the more substantial material investment in other extraterrestrial infrastructures. For example, Ted Cruz, Republican Chairman of US Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness, has claimed that NASA is not (and should not be) a scientifi c institution but rather one focused on exploration—a strong contrast to the agency’s present and historical activities (Showstack 2017). While the bulk of space programming is not expansion-oriented, expansionist imaginaries are on the rise as the international publics of Mars rover adventures, Silicon Valley cultures, and climate catastrophe narratives intersect. As a result of the mismatch between material investments and circulating space narratives, expansionist imaginaries are political as well as material megaprojects: most humans on Earth doubt or dismiss the possibility of life beyond the planet, so making these narratives salient enough to mobilize resources is a megaproject in itself, one that works to reshape the relations between humans, other life, and Earth itself. Outer space has long served as a canvas for sociopolitical imaginations, calling up the worlds of science fi ction and fantasy long relegated to the “genre” peripheries of literature and considered irrelevant to “serious” scholarly work (Dickens and Ormrod 2007; Haqq-Misra 2016; Markley 2005). Th is division is breaking down as the accelerating pace of interconnected technological, geopolitical, and environmental change leaves many with the sense that they are already living in the sci-fi future (Collins 2003, 2005). Th e Anthropocene has itself been called an academic science-fi ction imaginary (Swanson et al. 2015), and scholars across fi elds are drawing attention to how science fi ction has long infl uenced technological and scientifi c developments, particularly in extraterrestrial projects (Cheston 1986; Haraway 1991, 2016; McCurdy 2011; Praet and Salazar 2017). As Peter Redfi eld notes, “fi ctions provided space exploration with a recognizable future, and thus helped engender fantastic practices. Th ese dreams found engineers, eager to materialize them” (2002: 799). Dreams fi nding engineers (not the reverse) describes how imaginaries reshape sociotechnical worlds. Whether metaphor becomes material or vice versa, language is central to exchanges between fi ctional and factual extraterrestrial worlds. It matters whether Mars is to be “settled” or “colonized” (Wright and Oman-Reagan 2017), whether space is “discovered” or “conquered” by the Home and Away 161 scientifi c gaze (Redfi eld 2002). Language can shape the materiality of space projects and draw lines of exclusion around who might participate in them. Refl ecting this, I use “humans” instead of “humanity” to retain a sense of multiplicity and diff erence as opposed to a unifi ed singularity. Similarly, I use “expansion” to collect diverse extraterrestrial imaginaries that might elsewhere be described under terms like settlement, colonization, or terraformation. While imperfect, these choices follow this article’s concern with the categories of the human, life, and the relations between the two on Earth. Life, as distinguished from nonlife (rather than death), is a grounding metaphysics of modern colonial ontologies (Povinelli 2016). While biological and philosophical debates over the defi nition of the category are as lively as ever (Helmreich et al. 2016), I follow theorizations that defi ne life as more verb than noun: life is an energetic process that characterizes certain material things on the planet Earth (Margulis and Sagan 1995; Mautner 2009). “Expansion” captures a facet of life’s evolutionary histories that imaginaries of technological progress into space do not: “Life may not progress, but it expands” (Sagan and Margulis 1997: 235). What this imagined future expansion might mean—at home or away—is being shaped in the earthly present. Following a brief history of human projects oriented toward life’s expansion beyond Earth, I examine Earth 2.0 and eco-centric extraterrestrial imaginaries in detail. I then turn to the implications of both imaginaries for humans and life on Earth in the present, exploring the social and ecological politics of competing expansionist visions. Th is focus on the earthly now excludes many works that examine the extension of human environmental ideas, impacts, and management into space itself (as in rich debates over “space junk” or “planetary protection”). Th is choice follows the framework of displacements to turn our gaze collectively back inward, examining space projects as not only shaping possible futures but also as reconfi guring environmental and political worlds here and now. Space and Environment: From Cold War to Anthropocene “ Th ings that happen in Silicon Valley and also the Soviet Union: . . . promises of colonizing the solar system while you toil in drudgery day in, day out” —Anton Troynikov (@atroyn), Twitter, 5 July 2018 Narratives projecting human expansion into space have been present since at least the late nineteenth century but proliferated in response to the military-technological developments of the Cold War (Andrews and Siddiqi 2011; McCurdy 2011). The threat of nuclear warfare was enmeshed with narratives of modernist scientifi c progress, resulting in the satellite infrastructures we now take for granted for navigation, communication, weather forecasting, and so on. Twentieth-century extraterrestrial military research and infrastructures developed in close relation with terrestrial sciences and environmental movements, both through collaborations and oppositions (DeLoughrey 2014; Olson 2018). Terrestrial and extraterrestrial science programs shared funding streams, codeveloped cybernetic systems theories, and led to concepts that have become fundamental to environmental management on Earth, such as carrying capacity, island ecology, or the dominance of engineering approaches to ecological problems (Anker 2005). These “one Earth” environmental sciences and politics emerged in and from the cultures of colonialism, reinforcing ideologies of militarized surveillance and rational management of more-than-human worlds (DeLoughrey 2014). Through linked terrestrial and extraterrestrial technosciences, “one Earth” imaginaries grew deeper entrenched even as the projects of colonialism and development were unraveling into irrevocably damaged socioenvironmental orders. Despite space’s centrality to the ecological sciences, mainstream environmental movements in the United States and Europe have oft en been opposed to space expansion programs. Opponents argue that resources would be better spent attending to Earth’s problems rather than imagining others we might one day escape to (Cockell 2006). Narratives of new capitalist frontiers led many environmentalists to view space exploration as a “jingoistic boondoggle**,”** fearing it will lead to ideologies of a disposable planet (Hartmann 1986). Yet expansion imaginaries took on new significance in the 1970s and 1980s in relation to globalized debates about the human population limit of Earth (Dickens and Ormrod 2007). Space has alternately figured as a solution or distraction from earthly environmental problems, a shared point of reference for a global humanity. The end of the Cold War brought a short lull in expansionist space imaginaries, with extraterrestrial colonization set aside in favor of earthly applications of satellite technology. But while government funding of space programs has declined since the early 1990s, entrepreneurial capitalists—or NewSpace—have now stepped in to fi ll this gap, collectively investing billions of dollars into extraterrestrial technologies, projects, and futures. Anton Troynikov, a writer and robotics researcher, noted the displacement of this techno-fantasy in his humorous series of tweets from 2018 comparing life in Silicon Valley to the Soviet Union. NewSpace extends far beyond Central California, however: the growing accessibility of computing and other technologies has led to space programs beyond the former superpowers or colonial centers (these are mostly satellite focused, though Nigeria plans to launch humans into space by 2030). Public interest in space expansion is on the rise again, most oft en articulated in connection to global environmental change. Before his death in 2018, Steven Hawking projected that the human species will last no more than one hundred years unless we expand into space. In the NewSpace era, the push for expansion beyond Earth is no longer defi ned by competing capitalist and communist superpowers but by the divisions (and collaborations) between public and private entities. A sense of impending apocalypse remains, though this has shift ed from sudden nuclear annihilation to the slow violence of a warming atmosphere, rising seas, and other environmental devastation (Ahmann 2018; Nixon 2011). Th ough understood as new or diff erent, Cold War space science was instrumental in transforming the “threat” of nuclear annihilation into that of climate crisis (DeLoughrey 2014; Masco 2010, 2012). Space infrastructures enabled not only new futures but also the possibility that there might be an “end of ends” negating futurities altogether (Masco 2012). These contradictory possibilities are co-constituted such that the end of Earth becomes the inevitability of extraterrestrial expansion, and vice versa. As Anthropocene discourses mix with NewSpace futures, human ecological relations with other living matter are entering extraterrestrial imaginaries in a new way. These sometimes amplify urgency and reinscribe humans as “saviors” of Earth, and other times challenge conventional thinking about managerial control. This contradictory Anthropocene sets the stage for the emergence of Earth 2.0 and eco-centric imaginaries Earth 2.0 Dominating current eff orts to expand human life beyond Earth are public-private partnerships, mostly based in the United States, Europe, and the United Arab Emirates. Participants in NewSpace worlds are dominated by older white men from the United States, though are still surprisingly diverse in political and demographic makeup (Valentine 2012). With names like the Lifeboat Foundation, the Space Frontier Foundation, or the Alliance to Rescue Civilization, motivations for these projects range from imperialist nationalisms to profi ts to new utopian Home and Away 163 social orders, oft en mixed together in unexpected confi gurations. Yet these Earth 2.0 visions are resolutely united by one thing: the centering of the human species as the ontological basis and scale for extraterrestrial futures.

#### [2] Space colonization is the will to will that affirms our inability to appropriate the Earth.

**Karamercan ’21** [O. PhD in philosophy and gender studies from the University of Tasmania. Could Humans Dwell beyond the Earth? Thinking with Heidegger on Space Colonization and the Topology of Technology. ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment. doi:10.1093/isle/isaa164] *bxnk*

That a cogent understanding of humans’ worldly experience of space and place does not figure in biological, moralist, or technological accounts of space colonization is suggestive as to how space itself is considered merely as a neutral territory or field unless colonized by human beings. It suggests that, as long as space is not the property of a subject who can turn it into a place by providing meaning to the place by owning, transforming, or cultivating it, it remains intrinsically meaningless and without meaning, which belongs to the nihilistic spirit of the colonization discourse. This can be observed also in the anthropological-biological understanding of “culture,” whereby Homo sapiens set up the earth for the fulfillment of their needs, transferring their “know-how” from generation to generation without inheritance from genes.22 The simplistic logic at issue is that if the planet Earth will be uninhabitable one day, and if the most important human project is its survival, then humans must explore and colonize neutral space by using their technical-cultural capacities of adapting to their environments. Yet, **one could certainly ask whether forcing the environment to adapt to the habits of a singular life form could really count as a cultural achievement**. Such a line of thinking illustrates why the idea of space colonization does not stem from a genuine interest in understanding humans’ particular relation to space and place,23 but only Could Humans Dwell beyond the Earth? 17 Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/isle/advance-article/doi/10.1093/isle/isaa164/6128700 by Carleton University Library user on 04 June 2021 comes to signify more and more exploitation of resources that are infinitely available for a small fraction of the human population with a certain economic-political agenda. Now, although Heidegger clearly thinks against space colonization, there are no indications in his thought that he considers that all space exploration missions must be abandoned altogether. Here let us then consider a positive aspect of space exploration and distinguish it from space colonization. (1) So long as what threatens human ethos is not science or technology per se, but our technological relation to techne as the only possible world-disclosure, space exploration in itself does not threaten the human being. (2) In relation with that, if grasped and practiced appropriately, space exploration can even disclose the human being’s particular relation to the question of the meaning of being by awakening a more comprehensive understanding of what “emptiness” means, distinct from a nihilistic sense of nothingness. Today, ongoing space missions continue to manifest a way in which we must learn to encounter and appropriate what belongs to us while we are here on the earth, and face the nihilistic essence of modern technology via the idea of space colonization. Heidegger writes in his 1929 lecture course What is Metaphysics: “Da-sein means: being held out into the nothing” (Pathmarks 85/GA 7: 115). It is possible to interpret the Blue Marble image as an indication of humanity’s situation holding out into the nothing, revealing both our “uncanny” (unheimlich) and “homely” (heimisch) situatedness. Indeed, for Heidegger, the earth is not simply the home of human existence, but it is also where humanity’s homelessness takes place. The fact that we exist on the earth as human beings rests on a groundless ground, an abyss (Abgrund). In the following passage, Heidegger discusses the notion of homelessness in his 1942 lecture courses devoted to Ho¨lderlin’s hymn The Ister: What is of the fatherland is itself at home (bei) mother earth. This coming to be at home in one’s own in itself entails that human beings are initially, and for a long time, and sometimes forever, not at home. And this in turn entails that human beings fail to recognize, that they deny, and perhaps even have to deny and flee what belongs to the home. Coming to be at home is thus a passage through the foreign. And if the becoming homely (Heimischwerden) of a particular human kind sustains the historicality of its history, then the law of the encounter (Auseinandersetzung) between the foreign and one’s own is the fundamental truth of history, a 18 ISLE Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/isle/advance-article/doi/10.1093/isle/isaa164/6128700 by Carleton University Library user on 04 June 2021 truth from out of which the essence of history must unveil itself (Ister 49/GA 54: 60-1). Heidegger’s claims regarding the necessity of confronting the other may seem contrastive, considering his ideas on belonging to a tradition as we read in the interview. In that regard, what must not be overlooked is the philosophical relationship between the German notion of Heimat and human existence. Heimat is a difficult word to translate into English, as it has a wide range of meanings and connotations. However, originally stemming from the word Heim (home, homeland), it primarily has a meaning of belonging-place. In that sense, it is possible to approach space exploration not only in terms of the exploitation of new planets, stars, and galaxies beyond Earth, but as an awakening experience by which we can remind ourselves of the meaning of being related to the world and place, and interrogate the unquestioned assumptions of modern technology. Thus, exploring space can serve as a passage through the foreign in order to achieve a homecoming to where we already are and have been.24 Through space exploration, we can come to revise our metaphysical stance with regards to environment and place, and thus reinterpret the meaning of human existence. Therefore, if humans could manage to achieve a “free” relation to modern technology, by not refusing to use technological devices, but also not allowing modern technology to become the only way of making sense of everything around us, we might come to a more complete understanding of the universe and our planet. In fact, this would allow us to problematize and undergo an experience with the foreign: the outer space. This is the sense in which Heidegger interprets the line in Ho¨lderlin’s hymn Patmos: “But where danger is, grows/The saving power also” (Question Concerning Technology 42/GA 7: 29). A thoughtful encounter with the modern technology rather than blind subjugation to it discloses that technology need not be merely experienced as the systematic regulation of objects by means of the technical, but as the world-disclosing activity that “brings the true into the beautiful” (Question Concerning Technology 34/GA 7: 55). This would be the kind of saving that safeguards the possibility of dwelling poetically rather than mastering the earth. Seen from that perspective, I propose that Heidegger’s philosophy delves into the origins of an eco-logical thinking, since, as saving the earth becomes a matter of question, a reconsideration of the meaning of being homebound turns out to be necessary. In that context, while Rentmeester suggests that Heidegger’s contribution to environmental philosophy should be considered as eco-phenomenology rather than deep environmentalism (xviii), we can add that eco-phenomenology Could Humans Dwell beyond the Earth? 19 Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/isle/advance-article/doi/10.1093/isle/isaa164/6128700 by Carleton University Library user on 04 June 2021 already implicates a certain topological way of thinking of our being bound to home in its taking place. At the same time, one can indeed say that Heidegger’s topology of being contributes to such an environmental thinking from an “eco-phenomenological” perspective, for the oikos of the human being is also where a phenomenological conception of the world comes into view. Primarily by inquiring into the openbounded situatedness of human existence, we can go on to question the oikos, i.e., the home of the human being. The fact that we call the planet Earth our home remains without a basis insofar as we remain incapable of appropriating our dwelling on the earth, making sense of it only in terms of a territory to be colonized. The uprooting of the earth has already been taking place ever since we started living according to a technological understanding of being, which continues to define our modern relation to space and place. We must acknowledge that if space colonization ever occurs, it involves the risk that the future settlers on exoplanets and exomoons may no longer remain humans. This is because humans have a certain ethos that is inextricably linked to their topos on the earth. If this is the case, we will never know whether “not having gone extinct” will have any meaning for those who will continue their biological lives beyond the earth. If humans will technologically evolve into beings that lose the capacity to exist as placed beings, emigrating to “places” where they will lack dwelling and a world, to what extent does this concern the “survival” of humans? Whether human beings go extinct or not cannot be a matter of experience viewed from a phenomenological standpoint, just as space colonization cannot promise the continuation or the preservation of human existence per se. For Heidegger, what we need today is to find a way of dwelling on the earth where our world no longer overpowers the earth and its inhabitants, while still being capable of disclosing the earth through a nontechnological relation to the world. Engaging with Heidegger’s topological thinking shows us that (1) dwelling does not amount to mere biological life, but it means, as Thomson puts it, sojourning back to ourselves to become who we are (Heidegger on Ontotheology 159), to embrace our finitude; (2) the idea of space colonization can enter into our intellectual purview insofar as we appear to be the kind of beings that can question our existence. Thinking that space colonization is the only way to avoid extinction, one falls into an oblivious denial and a profound forgetfulness of dwelling.More than the BlueMarble image, what must terrify us is that we have already abandoned the earth, are disoriented in an endless progress of exploitation, and are still perishing. What about first decolonizing the earth, its skies and waters, rather than colonizing space?