

The Structural Turn of Heideggerian Ontology and the Task of Topology¹

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Abstract

Heidegger's early ontology has inner contradiction. It not only led himself to his philosophical "turn" in the 1930's, but also has been the source of creativity for important philosophers who criticized him for ignoring the Other or radical contingency. This paper aims at systematic explanation of this contradiction and deduction of its possible solutions mainly by interpreting "*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*" (1929). Firstly, I will show the trilogical structure (existence, Being in general, and other worldly entities) of the early Heideggerian ontology, and secondly make clear the cause of its inconsistency as the necessary result of his early genetic method. Finally, I will try to suggest three different solutions which would be aspects of topological thinking by the later Heidegger.

Introduction

The question of Leibniz's "why is there something rather than nothing?"³ is the most difficult, and thus the sublimest of philosophical questions. It might sound all too ambitious, which makes today's academic philosophy back away from it. But surely one of the most serious motivations for philosophy is the impulse for asking the reason for the existence of the world where we are living with "the other"⁴.

In this paper, we chose the early ontology of Martin Heidegger as the guideline for exploring

¹ This work is supported by KAKENHI (19-5461), JSPS.

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³ "*que rien ne se fait sans raison suffisante*, [...] Ce principe posé : la première question, qu'on a droit de faire, sera, *pourquoi il y a plus tôt quelque chose, que rien?*"; Leibniz, G., *Die Philosophische Schriften*, Bd. VI, Olms, 1978, p. 602

⁴ Wittgenstein famously said "der Mensch hat den Trieb, gegen die Grenzen der Sprache anzurennen. Denken Sie z.B. an das Erstaunen, daß etwas existiert."; Wittgenstein, L., *Wittgenstein und Wiener Kreis*, Suhrkamp, 2001, p. 68f.

this question, because his work was one of the most universal and unique projects in ontology in the last century, and has further influenced important philosophers after him as their object of criticism. The relevance of his ontology is namely that it involved a great contradiction from which we can further develop our own thinking. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is firstly to show the structure of the early Heideggerian ontology so that the essence of its contradiction will be clear and secondly to consider possibilities on how to solve this difficulty, which would lead us to a new ontological challenge. In particular, we would like to defend the following three theses:

- (A) The early Heideggerian ontology has a trilogical structure composed of the ontology of the self, that of intraworldly (innerweltlich) “other” entities and that of a universal ontology. This structure has an organic dynamism aiming at a universal ontology.
- (B) This project is enabled by Heidegger’s early genetic method. But it inevitably falls into contradiction by the same method.
- (C) To address this difficulty, there are three ideal solutions corresponding with the moments of the trilogical structure. “Topology” will then be required to deal with the issue of considering these solutions.

In the first chapter, we will examine the concept of “the time as pure auto-affection” and the “synthesis of the time by transcendental imagination” in “*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*” (1929, “*Kant-book*”) and explain the former as the culmination of the ontology of the self and the latter as the germ of universal ontology. We will also see the position of intraworldly entities in Heidegger’s ontology at that time. In the second chapter, we will firstly confirm his contradiction in the relation between auto-affection and imagination and secondly explain its cause by focusing on his early genetic method. In the third chapter and conclusion, we will try to deduct three possible solutions and suggest our ontological role after Heidegger.

1 The Structure of The early Heideggerian Ontology

1.1 The Self as Transcendental Condition of Situatedness and Auto-affection as its Origin

Now, we will sketch out Heidegger’s early ontology of the self taking his concept of “the time as pure auto-affection (Selbstaffektion)” into consideration. It originally was inquired by Heidegger under the title “hermeneutics of facticity (Faktizität)” or “fundamental ontology”, which has its own theoretical difficulty. But here we confine our task to Heidegger’s conclusion in “*Kant-book*”. The main points are firstly the transcendental character of the self and secondly the temporal account of the foundation of the self.

(A) **Transcendental character of the self:** In Dreyfus’s expression⁵, ontological relevance of the self by the early Heidegger is that it gives transcendental condition for “situatedness” as a fundamental character of our experience. Situatedness means that we are always being thrown in

⁵ Dreyfus, H., “The Return of the Myth of the Mental”, in *Inquiry*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 2007, p. 364, small modification

a specific situation and comporting ourselves (verhält sich) to intraworldly entities (like tools) in our environment before we make an epistemic judgment about them. It is namely the facticity of our being-in-the-world (In-der-Welt-sein) for which we cannot find any intraworldly sufficient reason. This truly implies an ontological incompetence of the self for constituting the meaning of entities. But the self has an ontological necessity for the existence of situatedness because situatedness presupposes “possibility (Möglichkeit)” of the self that the self “can (kann)” comport itself to and be affected by something around it⁶. In this sense, the self provides a transcendental condition for situatedness. This implies that the self also conditions the encounter with an entity in general because situatedness is the fundamental dimension in our experience. Such relevance of the self is expressed in “*Kant-book*” as follows. Here, facticity of situatedness is called “resistance (Dawider)” and is conditioned by apperception as “possibility”.

Resisting character which enables standing-against (Gegenstehen) is shown in keeping-in-advance (Vorweghalten) of unity. [...] As pure thought, representation of unity necessary has the character of “I think”. [...] It is essentially “I can (Ich vermag)”. (KM, 78f.)

(B) Auto-affection of the time as origin of the self: Understanding of entities as entities, is in this way conditioned to the self. This would naturally lead to the question “how is the being of the self as the self possible?”. In “*Kant-book*”, Heidegger answered it with the concept of auto-affection of time.

The basic strategy of auto-affection theory is to explain the condition of an encounter with entities in temporal vocabulary (rather than egological one) and thus to regard the structural foundation of the time as that of the self. In particular, this theory has two logical steps. Firstly, following Kant’s definition of time as “the formal *a priori* condition of all appearances whatsoever”⁷, Heidegger regarded time as the ultimate foundation of the encounter with entities in general. But his concept of time is not equal to that of Kant. From Heidegger’s statement that pure intuition of “now (Jetzt)” must “look-forward (vorblickt) its at-once (Sogleich) and look-backward (rückblickt) its just-now (Soeben)” (KM, 174), we can understand the concept of time in “*Kant-book*” as being equivalent to the concept of “Zeitlichkeit” as the meaning of being of “Dasein” in “*Being and Time*”⁸. That is to say, the time he talks about is the temporal interpretation of the self which is the condition of an encounter with all entities. Secondly, taking up Kant’s claim that time is a non-empirical pure intuition and that time must affect the pure concepts of understanding, Heidegger asked the question “where could time come from, if it should affect”, even if it is non-empirical? (ib. 189). His answer to this is the concept of “auto-affection of time” which would also account for the origin of the self. According to Heidegger, if time as pure intuition should be affective, pure intuition must form the time by itself and also receive what it has just formed. In other words, only on the ground of such circulation of formation and reception, can the time be affective even if it

⁶ Pippin gave the critical and essential assessment about this point.; See, Pippin, R., *The Persistence of Subjectivity*, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2005, p. 61ff.

⁷ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trs. by. Smith, N.K., Macmillan, 1961, A. 34, B. 51

⁸ SZ, §65

is non-empirical. It is in this circulation that Heidegger sees the origin of the self because what he defined as the ultimate foundation of the encounter with entities is found in its self-relation or self-formation. In Sakakibara's expression about Husserl, the self, where "all meaning of the I and the world is constituted" is itself the time which is "temporalizing and temporalized"⁹. According to Heidegger's own formulation:

The time is only so pure intuition, that it forms-in-advance (vorbildet) the image (Anblick) of the succession (Nacheinander) by itself and connect this image to itself as the forming reception (das bildende Hinnehmen). [...] The time is essentially auto-affection of itself. [...] Insofar as the essence of the finite subject is its ability for being affected as the self, the time as pure auto-affection forms the essential structure of subjectivity. (KM, 189)

Husserl understood this as "auto-constitution of immanent time"¹⁰, which is basically right but needs conceptual correction. Heidegger namely calls the time in its self-formation "primordial time (ursprüngliche Zeit)" (ib. 193). It is equivalent to "primordial and authentic time (Zeitlichkeit)" of "being-toward-its-end" (SZ, 329) in "*Being and Time*" which is strictly distinguished from inauthentic time of comportment to intraworldly entities (ib. 352ff.).

1.2 Transcendental Imagination as the Germ of Universal Ontology

Next, we will examine the germ of universal ontology by the early Heidegger by summarizing his concept of transcendental imagination (transzendente Einbildungskraft). Temporal interpretation of "meaning of being in general (Sinn von Sein überhaupt)" as his final goal at that time basically remained just a notice of a plan in his main writings like "*Being and Time*". But, as we will see in the following, "*Kant-book*" shows the most developed consideration about universal ontology with the concept of imagination. The point is that imagination is substantially described as something which is prior to the time and makes it possible, while auto-affection is the description of self-formation of the time. What is then the motivation to introduce the concept and its concrete function?

(A) **The motivation to introduce the concept:** Formally speaking, the concept of imagination was introduced for explaining the condition which must be presupposed for the existence of something which is already occurring. In particular, Heidegger first interprets the problem of synthesis of intuition and concept in "*Critique of Pure Reason*" as the problem of the condition presupposed for the existence of the horizon of the time which already is synthesized with the universal possibility of the self. As Henrich critically said¹¹, Heidegger regarded the synthesis of intuition

9 Sakakibara, T., "Das Ethos der Phänomenologie und die Phänomenologie des Ethos bei Edmund Husserl", in *Ronsyu* (the University of Tokyo, the Faculty of Humanities and Sociology, the Department of Philosophy), 24, 2005, p. 46: "Husserl on Static and Genetic Theories on Experience of the Other: In View of Nishida's Thought on I and Thou", in *Ronsyu*, 2007, p. 58

10 Husserl, E., "Randbemerkungen Husserls zu Heideggers *Sein und Zeit* und *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*", in *Husserl Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1–2, 1994, p. 54

11 Henrich, D., "Über die Einheit der Subjektivität", in *Philosophische Rundschau*, Bd. 3, 1955

and concept as a primitive fact which itself needs no deduction, and he rather tried to find the prior presupposition for this factic synthesis (KM, 90). Secondly, as the solution to this problem, Heidegger took up the Kantian concept of “the schema of imagination”¹² which is “homogeneous”¹³ to sensible phenomenon and concept and thus makes their synthesis possible. The following is Heidegger’s formulation. Take note that imagination is described as the prior condition for the horizon of the time opened by the self.

Ontological cognition “forms” transcendence, namely the keeping-open (das Offenhalten) of the horizon which became in advance (im vorhinein) visible by the pure schemas. As “the transcendental product”, these schemas “spring out of (entspringen)” transcendental imagination. It forms as original pure synthesis the essential unity of pure intuition (the time) and pure thought (apperception). (KM, 127, emphasis by speaker)

(B) The concrete function of imagination: Then, the next problem is *how* imagination forms the horizon of the time. Heidegger answered this by interpreting Kant’s “imagination” in the deduction of categories in the first edition, as a function which synthesizes and makes possible the time. In particular, regarding imagination as the only power of synthesis which originally was attributed also to intuition and concept by Kant, Heidegger interpreted “triple synthesis” in A-deduction as the synthesis of the time with three temporal moments, namely the now, the past and the future (KM, §33). This point is of great importance. Imagination namely makes possible the ability of the self to condition an encounter with entities because it forms “the time as the now, the past and the future” (KM, 177) which is the temporal interpretation of the self. This power of imagination is called “primordial time (ursprüngliche Zeit)” since it is the origin of the time.

Because transcendental imagination forms and generates (entspringen läßt) the time, there is no escape from the thesis above: “transcendental imagination is the primordial time”. (KM, 187)

(C) Imagination as the germ of universal ontology: Here, we can conclude that according to Heidegger’s early work, the theory of imagination is certain progress to universal ontology. As we have seen, imagination is the prior condition of the horizon of the time, while auto-affection is its structural condition which exists simultaneously with pure intuition. This implies that the theory of imagination tried to discover a more radical dimension than that of auto-affection of the time, which gives answer to the ontology of the self. Our interpretation can be reinforced by Heidegger’s own statement. As is well known, Heidegger named “the meaning of being in general” as his final target “temporality (Temporalität)”. In reality, his concept of imagination is just another name for “temporality” (KM, 250)¹⁴. Further, he stated in “*Contributions to Philosophy*” (1936–1938)

¹² Kant, I., op. cit. A. 141

¹³ Kant, I., op. cit. A. 138f.

¹⁴ Therefore, his concept of imagination is so called just because it enables all kind of manifestation of entities prior to it (KM, 131). Needless to say, this is totally different from daily meaning of the word. (KM, 133)

that “we understand under *imagination* (Einbildung) not only the ability of soul or transcendental ability but also Ereignis itself” (GA65, 312, italic by Heidegger, underline by speaker)¹⁵, which indicates the important role of “imagination” for the development of his later thought of being¹⁶.

1.3 Intraworldly Entities as “the Other”

Finally, we will briefly examine the characteristics and position of intraworldly entities like nature, mind, event or formal object etc. as a whole (im Ganzen) in the early Heideggerian ontology. This surely is a very important issue, but Heidegger’s analysis is surprisingly poor compared to that of Husserl or Merleau-Ponty. However, as far as his total project is concerned, Heidegger left an essential consideration that could be divided into three points and will further bring important consequence for Heidegger’s later philosophy.

(A) **Linguistic articulation of intraworldly entities:** The foundation for ontological analysis of intraworldly entities is given by the structure of the encounter of the self with those entities. In reality, this must be examined by detailed interpretation of “being-in (In-sein)” in “*Being and Time*”, but here we confine ourselves to indicating the most important moment of “being-in” in our context. It is “discourse (Rede)”, namely the articulation of the possibility to comport itself to intraworldly entities which is linguistic in a broad sense. That is to say, according to the early Heidegger’s philosophy, intraworldly entity as a whole presupposes and is determined by the form of comportment to it, namely the form of life which is called linguistic for its publicity (Öffentlichkeit).

(B) **Entities as “the Other”:** Further, intraworldly entities are characterized by their radical otherness to the self. This otherness is essentially inescapable and total in that the self is always embedded in the factic situation with entities, and in that its transcendental function can never be identified in the relation with those entities. This is the necessary but ambivalent relation between the self and intraworldly entities by the early Heidegger’s ontology, which also demands us to understand his ontology in its trilogical structure including the ontology of other entities¹⁷. Concretely, such otherness of entity as a whole is revealed in the experience of “anxiety (Angst)”, where “discourse” as the form of life breaks down with the understanding of entities. At the same time, this experience also reveals the transcendental function of the self, since it is the experience of difference between the self and intraworldly entities.

Negation (das Nichten) is not just a occurrence. Rather, as it is a rejecting indication

¹⁵ In this paper, we avoid to translate the later Heidegger’s central terminology “Ereignis”, since we’re not prepared.

¹⁶ See also the statement in 1938/39: “The Kant-book should show that Kant was *certainly* lead to the region of the truth of being (Wahrheit des Seyns). [...] The interpretation of Kantian transcendental philosophy with regard to “schematism” and “imagination” consciously exaggerate that there is necessity of essential transformation of the question in the history of metaphysics itself.” (GA66, 377)

¹⁷ This point has an important consequence for the later Heidegger. See the note 30 of this paper. By the way, Heidegger’s philosophy has often been regarded as the philosophy without the otherness partly because of his Nazi-engagement. But the citation above tells us that this is an inaccurate assumption. As being-in-the-world, Heidegger’s Dasein *must* always encounter with the other entities. I think it is the same also in the case of “anxiety” where “entity as a whole” is said to collapse, because the act of collapsing (=Nichten) as “rejecting indication” to entity never loses the relation to the otherness.

(abweisendes Verweisen) to a collapsing entity as a whole, it reveals entity as the absolute Other (das schlechthin Andere) to the nothing (das Nichts), in its total and previously hidden otherness. (GA9, 114, emphasis by speaker)

Anxiety deprives us of the word (das Wort). [...] Facing the nothing, any statement of “is” falls into silence. (ib. 112)

(C) **Ontological relevance of the experience of difference:** Finally, we should take note that such experience of radical difference between the self and intraworldly entities is what the early Heideggerian ontology tried to reveal, since it is necessary for the progression towards universal ontology as its telos. This experience namely provides the phenomenological ground both for the ontology of the self and for that of intraworldly entities by differentiating them radically, which doesn't occur in our daily life (Alltäglichkeit) (GA9, 112, 121). Especially, assuring the *ideally pure* revelation of the existence of the self (“authenticity” in “*Being and Time*”), it is supposed to provide the ground for examining the condition for the manifestation of all beings including the self, which the theory of auto-affection above attempted, and which would further lead to the Leibnizian question “why is there entity at all, rather than nothing?” (GA9, 122). This is the dynamism of the early Heideggerian ontology that we suggested in our introduction¹⁸.

2 The Contradiction in the Early Heideggerian Ontology

We have thus sketched out the trilogical structure of the early Heideggerian ontology which is surely of great importance and has itself, potential for further development. However, as is well known, Heidegger accomplished the “turn (Kehre)” of his philosophy in the 1930's. Moreover, his early philosophy has often been regarded as a springboard for philosophers after him, as the object of their criticism which itself must be overcome. Bearing this historical fact in mind, we will try to understand the contradiction in his ontology as immanent and necessary to it, namely, without criticizing it from the outside as “elimination of the other” or “metaphysics of subjectivity”. In the following, we will firstly check the contradiction in “*Kant-book*” and secondly make it clear as the necessary result of Heidegger's early genetic method.

2.1 Odd Coincidence of Auto-affection and Imagination

In the first chapter, we have examined the theory of auto-affection and that of imagination and confirmed that the former explains the structural condition of the self with its temporal interpretation and the latter the prior condition of the time itself. Heidegger's description in “*Kant-book*” shows an odd coincidence of both concepts that indicates the contradiction in his theory.

(A) **Coincidence of both concepts and its error:** We can find the coincidence of both concepts where Heidegger called them the same name, i.e. “primordial time (ursprüngliche Zeit)” (KM, 193,

¹⁸ In the other paper, I have discussed this point in detail as my interpretation of the early Heidegger's “hermeneutics of facticity (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)”. See, Kageyama, Y., “The Aporia of the Self and the Early Heideggerian Ontology” (in Japanese) in *Ronsyu*, 2009, (forthcoming)

187)¹⁹, which means that Heidegger regarded them as the same thing or couldn't distinguish them theoretically. But seen from what we have discussed above, it is obviously a strange conclusion. To explain the non-empirical reception of the time, the theory of auto-affection claims that the time forms and receives itself. Unlike this, the theory of imagination aims to explain the presupposition prior to the factic synthesis of the time with the universal "possibility" of the self, and therefore to discover the prior condition of the time itself. Auto-affection is the structural condition of the time, while imagination is its prior condition. Thus, Heidegger contradicts himself in calling both of them "primordial time" which is only applicable to auto-affection according to the terminology of "*Being and Time*"²⁰.

(B) Ambiguity of universal ontology: Such confusion shows the ambiguity of his early plan for universal ontology which can also be seen in his other writings where he discussed "Temporalität (temporality of being in general)" and "Zeitlichkeit (temporality of Dasein)"²¹. For example, in a summer lecture in 1927, he said:

"Temporalität" doesn't coincide with "Zeitlichkeit". [...] Insofar as "Temporalität" is itself the subject as the condition of possibility for the understanding of being and ontology in general, it means "Zeitlichkeit". (GA24, 524)

For it not to have been a clear contradiction, Heidegger could have meant that "Temporalität" was a subclass of "Zeitlichkeit". But this would obviously ruin the project of universal ontology and have made it absorbed into the ontology of the self, since we would thus lose the particular subject of universal ontology. The same is the case with "*Kant-book*". As Heidegger couldn't make a theoretical distinction between the matter of auto-affection and that of imagination, his progress towards a universal ontology was basically miscarried.

2.2 Heidegger's Early Genetic Method and its Necessary Limit

Now, we would like to focus on Heidegger's early philosophical method as the ground for this frustration. Famously, he formulated his method as phenomenology in "*Being and Time*" (SZ, §7). However, in the following, we will discuss its substantial content which could be characterized as the research of "genesis" or "the prior" and then try to show that Heidegger's failure was the necessary result of this genetic method.

(A) Genetic method and the early Heideggerian ontology: In Nam-In Lee's words about Husserl, genetic method means "discovery of what must be genetically preceding for the constitution of something"²². In Husserl's own expression, this is the method to discover "the total concrete

¹⁹ See 1.1 and 1.2 of this paper.

²⁰ I basically agree with Henry's suggestion to distinguish "affection par soi" and "affection de soi". See, Henry, M., *L'essence de la Manifestation*, Pr. Univ. de France, 1990, Chap.24; If the concept of auto-affection is understood in the latter sense, there is no contradiction between auto-affection and imagination. But, as we will see in the third chapter of this paper, Henry's suggestion is not only solution for this inconsistency. Therefore, we understand auto-affection in the sense of "*Kant-book*".

²¹ For clear distinction of terminology, We don't translate "Temporalität" and "Zeitlichkeit".

²² Lee, N., *Edmund Husserls Phänomenologie der Instinkte*, Kluwer, 1993, S.28

nexus (Zusammenhang) like “temporality of the life” with which the subject (the self by Heidegger) always and already gets involved as presupposition for “consciousness and its intentional object”²³. Between 1910 and 1919, Heidegger developed this genetic method partly under the influence of Emil Lask and Husserl²⁴. And thanks to this, already in 1919, he had an insight into the transcendental of the self conditioning the encounter with entity as a whole: “original meaning of existence (Existenz), from which every meaning of the reality of object meaning-genetically (sinngenetisch) becomes intelligible” (GA58, 167). Such a genetic approach to discover the transcendental of the self basically stayed the same in the late 1920’s, though his terms changed into “in advance (vorgängig, im vorhinein)” or “the prior (das Früher)”: “In the bright night of the nothing in anxiety, original openness of entity itself firstly takes place. [...] (This is) making-possible-in-advance (vorgängige Ermöglichung) of appearing (Offenbarkeit) of entity in general” (GA9, 114, bracket by speaker). Briefly speaking, the early Heideggerian ontology was made possible by its genetic method.

(B) The impossibility of a universal ontology by a genetic method: Then, Heidegger stepped further into universal ontology with the same method, which necessarily leads his ontology to self-contradiction. Firstly, as we have seen, transcendental imagination in “*Kant-book*” was introduced as the prior condition of the time. Also in the summer lecture in 1927, Heidegger tried to explain “Temporalität” by a genetic point of view (take note of the ambiguity above).

What enables (understanding of being) is [...] “zeitlich”, namely “temporal”. Because what originally enables, i.e. the origin of possibility itself is the time, the time itself is temporalized (ist gezeitigt) as the most prior (das Früheste). (GA24, 463, bracket and emphasis by speaker)

Secondly, however, such an attempt necessarily contradicts itself. Insofar as a genetic approach is the inquiry of a presupposed “total concrete nexus (here, the horizon of the time)” in which the self always and already gets involved, it is logically impossible for this method to discover what is genetically prior to the self as a transcendental condition of facticity. Precisely, it is true that we can theoretically talk about something which is prior to the self, but we can never acquire phenomenological verification (Ausweisung) about it. Further, from here, we can understand the reason why the distinction between the ontology of the self and Heidegger’s early universal ontology was ambiguous. He namely introduced the concept of “Temporalität” or “transcendental imagination” as the meaning of being in general, along with the genetic method, by which he could nevertheless only discover the origin of the self in “primordial time”. Therefore it was theoretically impossible for Heidegger to distinguish them. In sum, Heidegger’s early genetic method played an ambivalent role: on one hand it gave Heidegger an insight into universal ontology which goes beyond the self; on the other it necessary and immanently made impossible for him to reach it by binding him to the ontology of the self. In the late 1930’s, Heidegger himself noticed this and presumably abandoned

²³ Husserl, E., *Formale und Transzendente Logik*, Niemeyer, 1981, S. 278; It seems to me that the scholars of Husserl differ with each other about the essence and consequence of genetic method. Therefore, I’d like to confine myself to the meaning of the method by the early Heidegger.

²⁴ Kageyama, Y., “The Formation of the Concept “Existence” by the Early Heidegger”, presentation in OPO III Meeting in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 15–20 December 2008.

(or at least modified) his early method.

The subject is the first object (Objekt) of ontological representation in the order of transcendental genesis of object (Gegenstand). (GA7, 72, emphasis by speaker)

Original-being (Seyn) is not “the more prior (ein >Früheres<)”, [...] but Ereignis is the time-spatial simultaneity (Gleichzeitigkeit) for original-being and entity. (GA65, 13, emphasis by speaker)

3 The Structural Turn of Heideggerian Ontology —Solutions to the Contradiction

Finally, on the grounds of the discussion above, we should consider possible solutions for the contradiction of the early Heideggerian ontology. The point is that his early method ambivalently gave him the insight for what it necessarily conceals. Then, this ambivalence needs solutions, which would be logically threefold, and which would correspondently accentuate one of the three moments in the trilogical structure we examined above²⁵.

(A) Egological solution: Firstly, focusing on the impossibility of a genetic method to discover what is prior to the self, we can deduct a solution to our problem which could be characterized as “egological”. Here, we must simply give up the theory of imagination in “*Kant-book*” and acknowledge only the theory of auto-affection. Then, there would be no contradiction, since we won’t exceed what is methodologically possible. In this case, we must also give up universal ontology. What is left for us is the self and intraworldly entities. The ontology of the self would be the final goal of ontology in general, as intraworldly entities are supposed to stand dependently against the self²⁶.

(B) Solution by transcendent Otherness: Secondly, focusing on the ability of the genetic method to escape from represented knowledge, there is also the possibility of an unconditional acknowledgement for imagination as something whose advent is always and already accomplished without our understanding. This means a resignation to methodological rationality of universal ontology, but it is also a solution to the contradiction above. However, we would be then lead to a totally different kind of ontology which is a *reversal* of the early Heideggerian ontology as we described. That is to say, in this system, the starting point would be the unconditional function to synthesize the time, which should rather be called “transcendent Otherness” in that it arrives to us without our grasping. Then, since this Otherness can only be understood as what we can never fully comprehend, linguistically-articulated “other” entities would acquire the second ontological

²⁵ These solutions should be *Idealtypen* for interpreting the later Heidegger’s concepts, since they are the logically possible solutions for the relation between auto-affection and imagination. That is to say, in the vocabulary of the early Heidegger, they provide extreme exemplar for what was possible for Heidegger after his “turn (Kehre)”.

²⁶ The later Heidegger always criticized this type of solution as the final result of metaphysics, but he couldn’t deny its existence. See his post-war consideration about “Making-stand-against (Vorstellen)” which leads to the problem of technique (Technik) and the concepts concerned like “Gestell” or “Bestand”. (GA79, 24ff.)

relevance as a medium of its arrival. The self, here has, only the role of subjection and response to the advent of the Otherness²⁷.

(C) **Solution by contingent reception of the encounter:** Finally, we can solve the contradiction also by making the most of both imagination and auto-affection, which requires reinterpretation of Heidegger's theory in "*Kant-book*". Firstly, if we hypothetically accept the concept of transcendental imagination as the genetic condition of the time, then we need to distinguish two kinds of receptivity, as Henry suggested²⁸. One is the "pure intuition" which forms and receives the horizon of the time as auto-affection, and the other is a more radical receptivity which only receives the fact that the time is synthesized²⁹. *Unlike pure intuition*, the latter receptivity cannot or needn't be deducted from the horizon because auto-affection suffices for its structural condition. Seen from the time, thus, it could be presupposed but it is totally contingent. And *unlike imagination*, it has logically nothing to do with "outside" of the horizon of the time, since it can be conceived of just as supervening to the time. Therefore, as far as such receptivity is concerned, we won't fall into the contradiction, though we're talking about something other than the horizon of the time. Secondly, this solution further implies that the encounter with intraworldly "other" entities would be the starting point for ontology, because the received fact of the synthesis should also be regarded as the contingent reception of the encounter with other entities³⁰, which I think is the meaning of the quoted statement about "simultaneity" of "original-being" and "entity" in "Ereignis"³¹.

27 Supposedly, this leads to the problematic of "God" by the later Heidegger. In the late 1930's, he began to talk about god or gods that have little to do with positive religion. For example, the statement like this would reinforce our supposition: "Ask the original-being (Seyn)! And in its stillness (Stille), as the beginning of the word, the god replies." (GA66, 353). See also the claim in "*Contributions*": "Being available for gods. [...] The word means: available for being employed in the opening of this openness." (GA65, 18). As "openness" is of temporal nature by Heidegger, his position is similar to that of Levinas in "*Le temps et l'autre*" (PUF, 1979, p.68f.).

28 Henry, M., op. cit.

29 To make the distinction clearer, I would like to add that this radical receptivity doesn't receive the horizon of the time.

30 It is this consequence that necessitates to seriously take the role of intraworldly entities and the encounter with them in the early Heideggerian ontology, which surely was in the background. In Derrida's expression, Heidegger always acknowledged the necessity of *basically linguistic "hetero-affection"* by intraworldly entities as we discussed in the 1st chapter, even when he discussed "pure auto-affection of the time". This leads us to regard the radical receptivity of the synthesis of the time as the receptivity of the absolutely contingent fact that the self and other entities encounter with each other in differentiation.

31 Ultimately, this option would lead to *entitism* (my coinage!), since its subject precisely coincides with entity as a whole which is prior to understanding of being of Dasein. As far as I know, Heidegger once seemed to undertake such extreme consequence in 1941 (let me quote it in German): "Weil aber das Sein in das Seinlose dazwischen ankommt, deshalb ist das Seiende—nämlich als das nachmalige seiende Seinlose—in gewisser Weise >früher< und älter denn das Sein." (GA70, 121). I suppose that this line of Heidegger's thought lead to his later concept of "Geviert" and "Ding". About the relation between them with regard to "Ereignis", he said that "der Unter-Schied für Welt (=Geviert) und Ding ereignet Dinge in das Gebärde von Welt, ereignet Welt in das Gönnen von Dingen" (US, 24f.).

Conclusion: The Task of Topology

In this paper, we have interpreted the “*Kant-book*” and examined the structure of the early Heideggerian ontology, its methodological contradiction and three possible solutions. What we have acquired are three totally different possibilities of ontology, each of which we can trace in Heidegger’s later writings. Now, however, we and Heidegger himself, must reconsider the relation between these three answers. In particular, it is necessary to accomplish (1) a detailed analysis of the three systems, (2) their mutual evaluation and comparison of related concepts and finally (3) their best unification (reduction into one system / a reconciliation to a middle form). Presumably, these problematics guided Heidegger until his latest years. In “*the Art and the Space*” (1969), Heidegger stated as following.

To open the space (Räumen) is [...] uncovering of the places (Orte) where the destinies of inhabiting human beings turn (kehren) to ^(B)the bliss of the home, to ^(A)the misfortune of homelessness or to ^(C)the indifference to both. To open the space is uncovering of ^(B)the places to which a God appears, ^(A)the places out of which the Gods escaped, and ^(C)the places by which the appearance of those godlike (der Göttliche) hesitates for a long time. (GA13, 206, emphasis and mark by speaker)

This indicates that the three possibilities remained ununified until the end of Heidegger’s philosophy. However, we should take note that all of these are explained by “the place”. From here, we can suppose that the “topology of being (Topologie des Seins)” (GA13, 84) as the final stage of Heidegger’s philosophy was the task to integrate those possibilities into one problematic. Heidegger himself seemed to leave the task unfinished. Therefore, the task of topology left for us, is firstly to make Heidegger’s later concepts systematically available on the ground of this paper, and secondly to examine the systems of philosophers who criticized the early Heidegger and to integrate their concepts into topological questions and finally to find our own answer. This surely is an enormous task, which nevertheless needs a solution, if we seriously embrace Heidegger’s philosophy and try to answer the question of Leibniz today.

*References to Heidegger’s works that have been published in *Gesamtausgabe* are indicated by the abbreviation GA followed by the volume and the page numbers. References to “*Sein und Zeit*” (Niemeyer, 2001) is indicated by SZ, “*Unterwegs zur Sprache*” (Klett-Cotta, 2007) by US.