

HEIDEGGER'S HÖLDERLIN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

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Introduction

In 1961 Heidegger suggested that his *Nietzsche* volumes provided a view of the path of thought that his work had taken from 1930 to the 'Letter on Humanism' (1947), whereas the book *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* (*Commentaries on Hölderlin's Poetry*) "shed only indirect light on that path".¹ Even indirect light can provide some illumination, and Hölderlin is certainly central to the later Heidegger's thought. Quite how important has been difficult to ascertain, especially for the English reader who has been able to access only two essays from the book, and none of the three lecture courses given on Hölderlin.

The recent translation of Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister', the final course that Heidegger gave on the poet, has greatly helped this understanding. In this paper this course is read along with the first course on Hölderlin, Hölderlin's Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein', and *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* to provide a picture of the development of Heidegger's thought.² A number of important parts of Heidegger's work now become much clearer. This paper attempts to show how Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin develops, and how this sheds light on his later work. Though there are potentially a number of avenues that could be explored,³ for reasons that will become clear the emphasis here is on the issue of space, or rather place.⁴ It should be noted that I will not attempt to discuss the validity of Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin: as Heidegger said of his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, "it may not be good Kant, but it is awfully good Heidegger".⁵

Before Hölderlin

Despite the temptation to see Heidegger's terms *Dasein* and *In-der-Welt-Sein* as primarily spatial, at several points in *Being and Time* the existential nature of these terms is stressed in preference. This makes the translation of *Dasein* as 'being there' or 'être-là' problematic. In *Being and Time* the most useful discussions of spatiality are found in the passages on equipment (*Zeug*). These passages highlight an important point: for Heidegger, we encounter things in space in a way that stands in opposition to Descartes' view. Heidegger's thoughts on the spatiality of the ready-to-hand suggest that our encounters with equipment are not primarily determined by geometry and measurable distance, but by the more prosaic notions of

closeness or nearness (*Nähe*) and directionality (*ausgerichtet*). "The 'above' is what is 'on the ceiling'; the 'below' is what is 'on the floor'; the 'behind' is what is 'at the door'; all "wheres" are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our ways in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurement of space" (GA2, 138; B&T 136-7).⁶ What Heidegger has given here is a more commonsense understanding of how we relate to space. Space is encountered in everyday life, and lived in, not encountered in geometrically measurable forms and shapes.

As with Heidegger's thoughts on using equipment and coping with life, he believes that standard investigations begin at the level of abstraction, rather than at the level of everyday *reaction*. Just as he believes that we encounter the hammer only as a hammer if there is a problem with it, we encounter the room or space geometrically only when something is wrong, when we purposively think it in that way (see GA2, 146; B&T 144).⁷ All of this links to his thoughts on place (*Platz*). Heidegger suggests that all things have their place, but that often "the region of a place does not become accessible explicitly as such a region until one fails to find something in *its* place" (GA2, 139; B&T 138). Our coping with space in life is therefore essential, but is usually understood at a level removed from the everyday.

Despite this important insight around space, however, Heidegger still believes in a hierarchical ranking. Consider the following two quotations: "The temporality of Being-in-the-world thus emerges, and it turns out, at the same time, to be the foundation for that spatiality which is specific to *Dasein*" (GA2, 443; B&T 384); "*Dasein*'s spatiality is 'embraced' by temporality in the sense of being existentially founded upon it... (but this) is also different from the priority of time over space in Kant's sense" (GA2, 486; B&T 418). Notwithstanding the caveat in the final clause of these two, Heidegger has perpetuated the primacy of time over space found in, amongst others, Kant, as spatiality is 'founded' upon temporality.⁸ It is worth noting that in several places in *Being and Time* Heidegger warns against founding time on space, even when it appears that time is measured by movement in space, by, for example, observation of the sun or shadow clocks (GA2, 552; B&T 470-1). The precise nature of the difference with Kant is rooted in the difference between mathematically conceived and lived space, but the more essential nature of time is very clearly seen throughout *Being and Time*.

The Thinker and the Poet

Heidegger describes his *Commentaries* as having their place in the dialogue between thought (*Denken*) and poetry (*Dichten*) (GA4, 7). As is evident from his later work, he sees thought and poetry, thinkers and poets, as having a close and special relationship. Though Heidegger discusses other

poets – George, Rilke, Trakl, Hebel – Hölderlin is the only one he treats at such length, and the one he certainly takes the most interest in.⁹ Heidegger delivered three courses on Hölderlin at the University of Freiburg. The first, given in the Winter Semester of 1934-35 was dedicated to the hymns 'Germania' and 'The Rhine'; the second, given in the Winter Semester of 1941-42, looked at the 'Remembrance' hymn; and the final course, given in the Summer Semester of 1942 examined 'The Ister' hymn and Sophocles' *Antigone*. Heidegger also wrote a number of essays and lectures on Hölderlin outside of these main courses, dating from 1936 to 1968, most of which appeared in successive editions of *Commentaries*, and some in *Holzwege, Vorträge und Aufsätze*, and *Unterwegs zur Sprache*.

It would be amiss to neglect the political context of these lectures. Heidegger became Rector of Freiburg University in April 1933, and resigned in early 1934. The Hölderlin lectures therefore post-date his explicit political career, but they are all written by a card-carrying member of the NSDAP (he remained in the party until 1945). Various links become evident: the visit to Karl Löwith in Italy in 1936 was to deliver the lecture 'Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry', found in *Commentaries*, and criticised in the Hitler Youth magazine *Wille und Macht* (*Will and Power*).¹⁰ As Löwith remarked to Karl Jaspers, "what the essential nature of this poetry has to do with the swastika is hard to see". It seems clear that Löwith felt there was nothing in common, but on this trip Heidegger famously wore a swastika badge.¹¹ The publication of the first edition of *Commentaries* came on the heels of the publication of an NSDAP edition of Hölderlin for the troops on the front. Similarly Heidegger's final lecture as full professor in 1945 – before his ban from teaching under the Denazification laws – was on Hölderlin.¹² Remarks in the lectures on Hölderlin regularly mention the wider political events in Germany and the world. In these texts we must hear the distant roar of battle; we must confront the political in the thought.¹³

The Germania and Rhine hymns

Heidegger's first course looks at the hymn 'Germania', and, in its second half, 'The Rhine', one of Hölderlin's many hymns to rivers. Though Heidegger considers Hölderlin's poetry, he does not simply see him as a poet. Indeed he suggests that he "is one of our greatest, one of the most rich prospects as *thinker*, because he is our greatest *poet*" (GA39, 6). The engagement with the poetry opens up many avenues of thought. Right from the beginning of the course it is clear that Heidegger sees in Hölderlin an understanding of Being that avoids many of the modern pitfalls.

One considers Hölderlin 'historiographically' and one is unaware of what is essential, the fact that his work – which has not yet found its time-space – has already overcome our historiographical fuss (*historisches Getue*) and has founded the beginning of an-other history

(*Geschichte*), that history which starts with the struggle (*Kampf*) deciding the arrival or flight of the gods (GA39, 1).

This is, of course, the distinction suggested in *Being and Time* between history (*Geschichte*) and historiography (*Historie*), or between experiential and clock-time. This is regularly emphasised in Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin. Heidegger argues that the standard understandings of time are totally insufficient for mastering the poetically thought experience of time in Hölderlin (GA39, 55ff). Such a critique is made clearer in the 1939 lecture on the poem "As on a holiday..." Here, Heidegger focuses on the first line of the third strophe – "But now day breaks! (*Jetzt aber tagts!*)".¹⁴ He suggests that the 'Now' is clearly Hölderlin's time, but that it needs to be understood in a different way to standard understandings of time: "Such a time can never be dated, and is never measurable in numbers of years or the division of centuries". This time is historical not historiographical (GA4, 75-6).¹⁵

'Germania' is a hymn to the German homeland – Heidegger's discussion therefore also looks at the spatial aspects of the poetry. Here too he finds the problem of relying on the modern understanding, in this case geography: "the earth of the homeland is not simply a space delimited by exterior frontiers, a natural region, a locality (*Örtlichkeit*) destined to be a scene for this and that to take place. The earth which is the homeland is readied for the gods" (GA39, 104). Later Heidegger warns against allowing this space to be thought of as a storeroom (*Abstellraum*) (GA39, 108). What Heidegger is suggesting is that Hölderlin's poetry, and his conception of historical time and of the homeland are more poetic, more experiential, than those of modern metaphysics. This can be designated the lived: "The poet moulds something... which is 'lived' (*erlebt*) in his interior and exterior world, a so-called 'Experience' (*Erlebnis*)" (GA39, 26).

However, the attitude of *Being and Time* remains, as the passages on space are relatively rare, and the spatial characteristics of the homeland are not considered as important as those on historical fate (*Geschick*). Time and space need to be thought differently, and there is a linking of these two characteristics – "neither place spatially (*Ort räumlich*) nor time temporally (*Zeit zeitlich*) understood in the habitual sense" (GA39, 141) – but the hierarchical ranking still remains. Indeed, at one point Heidegger shows that he has not departed from the attitude of *Being and Time*, citing §§65ff as his exposure of the essential constitution of originary temporality (GA39, 109).

Such an attitude is, to an extent, amended in the second part of the course.¹⁶ To make the transition, Heidegger asks what Hölderlin means by the "waters of my homeland" in line four of the 'Germania' hymn. He suggests that ordinary poets sing of forests and meadows, streams and shrubs, mountains and sky. Why then does Hölderlin's late poetry speak so often of rivers – 'At the source of the Danube', 'The Rhine', 'The Ister',

etc?¹⁷ These poems, suggests Heidegger, have an intimate relationship with the 'Germania' hymn (GA39, 90-1). It is for this reason that this course moves from a consideration of the 'Germania' hymn to 'The Rhine'. The first is the general topic, the second a particular aspect of it (GA39, 137-8). This leaves us in no doubt that the later lectures on 'The Ister' also fall within this general project.

In the first part of the course Heidegger had quoted a couple of lines from Hölderlin, lines he would continue to quote throughout his entire engagement with the poet.¹⁸ The lines come from a poem known by its first line, 'In lovely blueness...'

Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch, wohnet der Mensch auf dieser Erde.

Full of acquirements, but poetically, man dwells on this earth.

These lines pinpoint the entire project at stake here. Heidegger suggests that the opening words mean that "what man works at and pursues, is through his own endeavours earned and deserved". The line hinges on the next word: "But" – says Hölderlin in sharp antithesis – all this does not touch the essence of his dwelling on the earth, all this does not reach the foundation of human existence. The latter is fundamentally 'poetic'... To 'dwell poetically' means: to stand in the presence of the gods and to be involved in the proximity of the essence of things" (GA4, 42; EB 306). Therefore, as Bernstein has noted, in Hölderlin Heidegger finds "a contrast between a dwelling place and an abstract space".²⁰ Space is characterised as Cartesian; place as experiential, lived: it is to be understood *poetically*.

In 'The Rhine' hymn, Heidegger immediately notices that the first strophe of the poem indicates a place, rather than a time (GA39, 167-8). This seems to prefigure an increased stress on the spatial, or rather the *patial*. In these works Heidegger tends to use the word *Ort* and its compounds *örtlich*, *Ortschaft* and *Örtlichkeit*. *Ort* had been rarely used in *Being and Time*, where *Raum* (space) and *Platz* (place) had been used instead. The logic behind this is clear from the discussion of Plato's *Timaeus* in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Here Heidegger suggests that "the Greeks had no word for 'space'. This is no accident; for they experienced the spatial on the basis not of extension but of place (*Ort*) (*τόπος* (*topos*)); they experienced it as *χώρα* (*khora*), which signifies neither place nor space but that which is occupied by what stands there (GA40, 70; IM 66).²¹ The whole modern approach to space is founded upon this notion of bodies extended in space, but this concept was not found in early Greek thought; rather there was a conception of space that is far closer to the notions Heidegger suggested in *Being and Time*. The Greek understanding of place was far closer to experiential than mathematical. Heidegger goes on to suggest that the shift from *topos* and *khora* to space (*Raum*) defined by extension was initiated by Platonic philosophy, because of its interpretation of being as *idea* (GA40, 71; IM 66).

Such a change seems to be initiated in the lectures on Hölderlin, where Heidegger seems to designate 'space' as conforming to Cartesian notions, and to replace it with a more originary understanding of 'place'. In *Being and Time*, as noted above, the remarks on place were largely confined to the place of equipment, for which the word *Platz* is appropriate; when the discussion has moved onto the place of humans, the word *Ort* is used. *Ort* can be variously translated as 'place' or 'locale'; its compounds usually as 'local' or 'locality'. There is something to be said for working with 'place' and 'placing', coining the neologism 'patial' to reflect its use in adjectival forms. This is perhaps particularly apt given the Latin roots of 'local', but the Greek roots of 'place'. Local also gives rise to the misunderstanding that the term is about scale.

The rivers in Hölderlin's poems do not simply have their own place, but also make the places around them. We must not think of the rivers as symbols or images for something else, "they are themselves in question, and with them the earth of the homeland (*die heimatliche Erde*)" (GA39, 195). This shows the link between 'Germania' and the river poetry. In Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin, "the river... founds the country (*das Land*) as a country, the homeland for the people" (GA39, 259). The links between the founding power of the river, the spatial characteristics it delivers and the notion of poetic dwelling are well illustrated in the following passage:

The river now founds (*schafft jetzt*) in the country a characterised space (*geprägten Raum*) and a delimited place (*Ort*) of settlement, of communication, (giving) to the people a developable (*bebaubares*) country which guarantees their immediate Dasein. The river (*Der Strom*) is not a watercourse (*ein Gewässer*) which passes by the place of men, it is its streaming (*Strömen*), as country-developing (*als landbildendes*), which founds the possibility of establishing the dwelling of men (GA39, 264).

It was seen in the earlier part of the course that Heidegger found problems with the standard modern understandings of time and space. In the second part of the course, and in a later essay, he elaborates this in more detail. It is well known that Heidegger felt that the pre-Socratics had understood Being in a more fundamental way, and he sees Nietzsche and Hölderlin as being two thinkers who paved the way for this recognition (see GA40, 135; IM 126; and GA39, 269). A particular example of this affinity comes when Heidegger discusses Hölderlin's use of the word 'nature' (*Natur*). Both English and German come from the Latin *natura*, which is in Greek φύσις (*physis*). Heidegger suggests that the translation of φύσις by *natura* immediately transfers in later elements and replaces the originary meaning with something alien (GA40, 15-6; IM 13-4). "Φύσις, φύειν (*phyein*) signifies growth (*Wachstum*)... Hölderlin's word nature poetises its essence from the basis of the truth reserved for the initial word: Φύσις... In the word nature, Hölderlin poetises the Other..." (GA4, 56-7).²²

In this criticism of the modern view of nature, Heidegger is laying the

foundation for his later questioning of modern technology. He suggests that because the metaphysical sense of nature, *natura*, φύσις, in the originary nominative force of the word (*in der uranfänglichen Nennkraft des Wortes*), is already an essential (*wesentliche*) interpretation of Being, it has little to do with the sciences of nature" (GA39, 195). This is an example of how his later thought recognises the historical aspects of the question of Being. Rather than the attitude of *Being and Time*, which tended to set universal conditions, the later works realise that this is a historical problem. We must therefore leave behind the standard representations of nature: "Earth and homeland are understood in a historical sense. The river is historic" (GA39, 196).

It must be remembered that this is a course delivered only a few months after Heidegger had resigned as Rector. Throughout the course there is a stress on the national character and words that cannot fail to carry political overtones in mid 1930s Germany – people (*Volk*), homeland, soil (*Boden*), earth. That said, towards the end of the course he criticises the "contemporary snivelling about national character, blood and soil" (GA39, 254).²³ The tension in the course is illustrated in the conclusion to a 1939 lecture: "Hölderlin's word calls the Holy and also names a unique time-space (*Zeit-Raum*)... This word, is, however, still unheard, and is stored in the Western German language" (GA4, 77). Here we have a statement both of the philosophical project – the possibility of a different understanding of time and space – and of its potential political overtones – the uniqueness of the German. If the Rectorship address was a politicising of the philosophy of *Being and Time*, in these lectures we find a philosophising of the Rectorship's politics. In particular, *Dasein* is now taken to refer to a people, rather than an individual (GA39, 8).

Heidegger cannot fail to realise that the political situation he is lecturing within – even without his own political involvement – charges the language he uses. For someone so attentive to the use of particular words it defies belief that he was not aware of this. His remembrance of Norbert von Hellingrath, editor of Hölderlin's works, who fell at the age of 28 at Verdun in 1916 (GA39, 9) has clear echoes of the praise of the war-dead found in mainstream Nazi discourse.²⁴ His evocation of Hölderlin as "the poet of the poet and of poetry" and "the poet of the Germans" (GA39, 214), even when he suggests that the latter should be understood "not as subjective genitive, but as objective genitive: the poet who has poetised the Germans" (GA39, 220),²⁵ is understood as a political project: to make Hölderlin a "power in the history of our people (*die Macht in der Geschichte unseres Volkes*)" (GA39, 214). In the discussion of the 'Germania' hymn poet and thinker are joined by State-Creator as the three creative forms of the historical *Dasein* of a people (GA39, 51; 144).²⁶ These cannot fail to stress the nationalist and political overtones of the course.

However uncomfortable Heidegger's nationalism is, he does engage in criticism of the uses it is being put to in contemporary interpretations of Hölderlin. Hölderlin himself was made, like Nietzsche, part of the mythologised pantheon of Nazism. In his work were found elements of the leadership principle, division of the German race from others and recurrent references to the fatherland. However, as Megill notes, Heidegger "did not take up this aspect of the Hölderlin myth: his attachment was not to the mighty fatherland but to the more intimate and personal native region, not to the *Vaterland*, but the *Heimat* (home, homeland). Instead he emphasises the notion of Hölderlin as seer and prophet".²⁷ Heidegger suggests that the 'patriotic' element (*das Vaterländische*) is that which is emphasised, but argues that this is one strand (*Inhalt*) among others, and that the praise of Greece and the apparent censure of the German could equally be emphasised (GA39, 224). He is unequivocal in his critique of the racist, biologising aspects attached to contemporary German nationalism. Heidegger's nationalism is cultural, linguistic, praising the landscape of the Black Forest and the poetry of Hölderlin; it is not the same as the race-based nationalism of Alfred Rosenberg. In this course, Heidegger quotes Kolbenheyer's pronouncement made in spring 1932 in the universities that "poetry is a necessary biological function of the people".²⁸ Heidegger remarks that "the same observation is as true for digestion: that too is a necessary biological function" (GA39, 27).²⁹

Heidegger's failure as Rector seems to be attributed not to an error of his judgement, but to a failure on the part of the movement as a whole. The decisive political situation still exists, and Heidegger's "confrontation (*Auseinandersetzung*) with National Socialism" in the Hölderlin and Nietzsche lectures³⁰ is one in which he thinks the movement misguided as to its true aims: the reassertion of the national and cultural aspects; the confrontation with global technology (GA40, 208; IM 199). Heidegger's letter to the Academic Rectorate of Albert-Ludwig University is useful here: "I thought that Hitler, after taking responsibility in 1933 for the whole people, would venture to extricate himself from the Party and its doctrine... This conviction was an error that I recognised from the events of 30 June 1934 (the Night of the Long Knives). I, of course, had intervened in 1933 to say yes to the national and the social... the social and the national, as I saw them, were not essentially tied to a biologist and racist ideology".³¹ Heidegger however, ends this course with a dangerously prophetic call to arms: "The hour (*die Stunde*) of our history has struck" (GA39, 294).³²

The Ister hymn

It was to be six years before Heidegger returned to lecturing on Hölderlin. But, as we have seen, he wrote a number of shorter essays, some of which appeared in the intervening years. Other courses, notably *An Introduction to*

Metaphysics, given in the summer of 1935, and the Nietzsche courses, furthered the overall project at stake here: more so than the second course on the poet, which discussed the 'Remembrance' hymn.³³ The third course, however, both broadens and deepens the understanding developed in the first. In this course Heidegger again looks at a 'river hymn', one that Hölderlin himself never published, that was given the title 'The Ister' (the Danube (*die Donau*)) by von Hellingrath (GA53, 2; HHI 2). 'The Ister' begins with what Heidegger describes as a calling (*ein Rufen*): "Now come, fire!" (GA53, 5; HHI 6). Once again Heidegger suggests that Hölderlin's 'Now' cannot be grasped 'historiographically' and that it cannot be related to historical dates of well-known historical events: "No calendrical date can be given for the 'Now' of his poetry". However, though the poem begins with a 'Now', in line 15 there also follows the naming of a 'Here': "Here, however, we wish to build" (GA53, 8-9; HHI 9).

Before we examine the way in which the 'Now' and the 'Here' work together, which is an important element of this course, it is worth devoting a little more space to the discussion of place, an understanding that is enriched here. From both 'The Rhine' hymn, and now from 'The Ister' hymn, Heidegger suggests that we learn that "the rivers are a distinctive and significant place (*Ort*) at which humans (*der Mensch*), though not only humans, find their dwelling place (*Wohnstatt*)" (GA53, 12; HHI 12). The river determines the dwelling place of humans upon the earth, but this dwelling is not to be understood as the possession of accommodation and housing. Whilst such things are indeed dwelling, they do not fulfil or ground its essence: "Dwelling takes on an abode and is an abiding in such an abode, specifically that of humans upon this earth". The crucial thing pertaining to the abode is its place, and the placing of the place (*die Ortschaft des Ortes*). Therefore, "the river 'is' the placing that pervades the abode of humans upon the earth, determines them to where they belong and where they are homely (*heimisch*)" (GA53, 23; HHI 20-1). As Heidegger later makes clear, "the river does not merely grant the place (*Ort*), in the sense of the mere place (*bloßen Platzes*), that is occupied by humans in their dwelling. The place is intrinsic to the river itself. The river itself dwells" (GA53, 41; HHI 35).

Heidegger suggests that Hölderlin's other poetry emphasises the 'Now', a moment (*Augenblick*), but that in this poem "equal intonation" is given to the 'Here'. Slightly further on he suggests that the river "abandons the Now", by which he means not that space is prioritised over time, but that the time does not remain static, it "passes into what is bygone, or into what lies in the future" (GA53, 16; HHI 14-5). This helps us to understand the sense of the following passage:

The river is simultaneously vanishing and full of intimation in a double sense. What is proper to the river is thus the essential fullness of a journey. The river is a journey in a

singular and consummate way. We name the consummate essence of the journey (*Wanderung*) a journeying (*Wanderschaft*), corresponding to the placing (*Ortschaft*) of the place (*Ort*). The river is the journeying... Becoming homely and dwelling upon this earth are of an-other essence. We may approach it in giving thought to the essence of the rivers. The river is the place for dwelling. The river is the journeying of becoming homely. To put it more clearly: the river is that very place that is attained in and through the journeying (GA53, 35-6; HHI 30-1).

What is clear here is that not simply has the prioritisation of time over space been abandoned, but space and time – as placing and journeying – are understood as an "originary unity... the one belongs to the other". Clearly journeying has resonances of space as well as time; place, in the sense of an abiding, is also temporal. In order to understand them, there is clearly a temptation to look back to the unity of space and time, understood in their modern sense. It is this temptation that Heidegger tries to avoid. The reason for this is linked up to one of the major themes in the later Heidegger: the questioning concerning technology. As Heidegger suggests, "via our calculations and machinery, we have such convincing power over its 'spaces' and 'times' that the space of our planet is shrinking and the annual seasons and years of human life are being condensed into diminutive numerical values for the purposes of our calculative planning far in advance" (GA53, 46-7; HHI 39). In these terms, space is understood as coordinates – *x*, *y*, *z* – and if the spatial element is understood as being in motion, changing its location through time, the fourth co-ordinate, one-dimensional time – *t* – is added (GA53, 47-8; HHI 40). These coordinates, which Western philosophy, modern science and technology have used to designate the unity of time and space, allow the exploitation of the world. They are considered to be so clear that to further explain them, to question them, is looked at as a worthless pursuit. There is therefore a great temptation to reduce place and journey back to this understanding. To avoid this is Heidegger's aim (GA53, 50; HHI 41-2).

Heidegger is not successful in this aim, but lays the foundation for one of the major projects of his later thought: the overcoming of metaphysics.³⁴ First Heidegger questions whether time and space are objective – gigantic containers in which all positions (spatial and temporal) are accommodated. If so, he asks, *where* is space – the container? And, *when* is time – the container? "Or is space itself to be found nowhere, and time itself not to be found at any time? So long as we continue to think space and time as appearing within a space and time, we are not yet thinking space itself or time itself". Second, Heidegger asks if time and space are subjective. He suggests that if people fight wars over space – a comment that cannot fail to have resonance in 1942 with the talk of *Lebensraum* and the Russian campaign – space is unlikely to be something they subjectively imagine. Heidegger is therefore reluctant to see them as subjective – as constructs.

Time and space are something that "cannot be accommodated within the schema of 'either objective' – 'or subjective'. And in that case the unity of space and time cannot consist in space and time being thought together in the representational activity of the thinking subject either, as is the custom". Therefore, resorting to space and time to understand placing and journeying does not help, as "that which is meant to shed light here is itself obscure" (GA53, 55-6; HHI 45-6).

Heidegger's conclusion is that neither time or space in Hölderlin's hymnal poetry – which post-1799 "is not concerned with symbolic images at all" – can be understood by metaphysics, or by the metaphysical doctrine of art – aesthetics (GA53, 20-1; HHI 18-9). Why then do we turn to metaphysics at all, "why are we even becoming involved in these representations (*Vorstellungen*) of space and time that have prevailed now for two thousand years?" The answer is that we cannot free ourselves overnight, and "simply because only an explicit look at the commonplace representations of space and time and their metaphysical (rather than historiographical) provenance permits us initially to become attentive to that Other that Hölderlin poetizes. In poetizing the rivers, Hölderlin thinks his way into the essential realm of placing and journeying" (GA53, 58; HHI 47). Heidegger concedes that Hölderlin himself never speaks of placing and journeying, but suggests that it could be "that the essential origin of space and time lies concealed in what we are attempting to think in a unitary manner in the names placing and journeying" (GA53, 58-9; HHI 47-8):

Between the spatio-temporal (*raumzeitlich*) grasping that extends toward world domination and the movement of settlement subservient to such domination on the one side, and humans coming to be at home via journeying and placing on the other, there presumably prevails a covert relation whose historical essence we do not know (GA53, 60; HHI 49).

The river hymns of Hölderlin help in Heidegger's attempt to provide a non-metaphysical understanding of time-space. Time is not understood in terms of calendrical dates, it is understood as the passage, as the journeying of becoming homely. Space is not understood in terms of Cartesian co-ordinates, extension or, indeed, space, but in terms of locale or place. Neither of these understandings can truly be said to have overcome metaphysics, but the project certainly takes its departure from this point.

A potential problem in the Hölderlin lectures, and a spectre that will return to haunt other later texts of Heidegger's is the notion of the origin. Hölderlin himself is said to have remarked that "nothing is dearer to me than the things that are as old as the world itself",³⁵ and there appears to be in Heidegger's work a desire to return to an original, rural state. In one remark in a 1943 piece on Hölderlin, commenting on the poem 'Homecoming', Heidegger suggests that "homecoming is the return into the proximity of the origin (*Ursprung*)... then must not the return home consist chiefly, and

perhaps for a long time, in getting to know this mystery, or even first of all in learning how to get to know it" (GA4, 23-4; EB 278-9; see GA 53, 202; HHI 164). Heidegger's analyses of equipment, of dwelling and building can perhaps all be related to this notion of the origin, one that runs close to the idea of nostalgia. It has been suggested that the 1934-35 lectures are more open to accusations of nostalgia than the later work on Hölderlin:³⁶ but the rural was clearly a very important element in Heidegger's own life – see for example his refusal to move to Berlin for a teaching post in the 1930s, and his eulogising of his Black Forest existence.³⁷

Whilst an element of rural nostalgia is found in Heidegger's work, and perhaps increasingly in the later pieces which further develop the notion of poetic dwelling and introduce the concept of the fourfold (*das Geviert*) of earth, sky, gods and mortals, Heidegger does make a series of important remarks in this course, furthering a discussion in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, which shows the importance of place in areas other than the rural. This discussion focuses on line 370 in Sophocles' *Antigone*, which begins "ὕψιπολις ἀπολις (*hypsipolis apolis*)" translated in a standard English version as "he and his city rise high but the city casts out".³⁸ This line clearly hinges on the Greek word *polis*, from which political is derived, and which is usually translated as city (*Stadt*) or city-state (*Stadtstaat*). Heidegger suggests that this does not capture the full meaning: "Πόλις means, rather, the site, the there, wherein and as which historical *Da-sein* is. The πόλις is the historical site (*Geschichtsstätte*), the there in which, out of which, and for which history happens". Only afterwards does *polis* take on its political meaning (GA40, 161; IM 152). These brief remarks are greatly developed in 'The Ister' course. Here Heidegger sees *polis* as a particular realm of *poros* (πόρος) – "the passage through to something" – "one field in which the latter emphatically comes to pass". Heidegger suggests that the contemporary interpretation is that everything in Greek thought is politically determined. This, he suggests, is a mistake: one which is being put to the cause of National Socialism. Heidegger argues that it is evident that the political is that which belongs to the πόλις and can therefore be determined only in terms of the πόλις. Yet the converse is precisely not the case. If the political derives from the *polis*, then we cannot use our understanding of the political to explain the *polis*: "The πόλις cannot be determined 'politically'" (GA53, 98-9; HHI 79-80).

Alternatives to seeing it as political would include seeing the *polis* as 'state', or as 'city', but Heidegger argues that the first leads us to relate it to modern state formations; the second is distinguished from village only because it is stately, again leading to confusion. Instead, "perhaps the πόλις is that realm and place around which everything question-worthy and uncanny (*Unheimlich*) turns in an exceptional sense. The πόλις is πόλος

(*polos*), that is, the pole, the swirl (*Wirbel*) in which and around which everything turns" (GA53, 100; HHI 81). The *polis* is therefore "neither merely state (*Staat*), nor merely city (*Stadt*), rather in the first instance it is properly 'the stead' ('*die Statt*): the site (*die Stätte*) of the abode of human history". The essential thing about the *polis* therefore is this site of abode: which means that the political "in the originary and in the derivative sense, lies in its being the open site of that fitting destining (*Schickung* – related to *Geschichte*) from out of which all human relations toward beings... are determined" (GA53, 101-2; HHI 82). To be political means to be at the site of history.³⁹

Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin therefore opens up a number of the paths in his later thought. The project of overcoming metaphysics, the questioning concerning technology, and poetic dwelling all become clearer and more developed if we follow the confrontation between thinker and poet. The later essays on technology suggest that man is attempting to dominate, to challenge nature, partly because man has lost sight of what it means to dwell poetically. The modern understanding of time and space is fit only for world domination. To find a way to overcome metaphysics is the later Heidegger's project: to avoid the nihilism. More broadly, Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poetry provides us – in the concepts of journey and place – with a new understanding of temporal and spatial relations. Geography and historiography are no use for understanding these concepts: they are deaf to the Other that Hölderlin poetises. As Dominique Janicaud has noted, we need to use instead the notions of historicity and topology.⁴⁰

The understanding of historicity is certainly mentioned in these lectures, but it owes more to the second division of *Being and Time* – notably the discussion of Nietzsche's second *Untimely Meditation* – and to the *Nietzsche* volumes. What is particularly important in these lecture courses is the notion of poetic dwelling, an understanding of locale or place; *topos*, *Ort*. Understanding this turn in Heidegger's thought – from the prioritisation of time in *Being and Time* to the later relationship of unity between time and space – makes much of his later discussions of space and place much clearer. It also, I suggest, makes the intellectual debt Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre owe Heidegger much more apparent. At the very least, reading the Hölderlin lectures shows how Heidegger came to realise that, as he notes in the 1962 lecture 'Time and Being', "the attempt in *Being and Time*, §70, to derive the spatiality of *Dasein* from temporality is untenable".⁴¹

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Abbreviations to works by Martin Heidegger

- GA *Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975ff.
 GA2 *Sein und Zeit*, 1977.
 GA4 *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, 1981.
 GA39 *Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein'*, 1980.
 GA40 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 1983.
 GA53 *Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'*, 1984.
 B&T *Being and Time*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
 EB *Existence and Being*, London: Vision, Third Edition, 1968.
 HHI *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
 IM *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

References

1. Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, *Gesamtausgabe Band 6.1*; Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996, p.xii; *Nietzsche Volume I: The Will to Power as Art*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, p.xl. Using 'Commentaries' for *Erläuterungen* follows David Farrell Krell; other suggestions have included 'Interpretations', 'Elucidations' and 'Soundings'. See André Schuwer, "Nature and the Holy: On Heidegger's Interpretation of Hölderlin's Hymn 'Wie wenn am Feiertage'", in John Sallis (ed.), *Radical Phenomenology: Essays in Honor of Martin Heidegger*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978, p.231; James F. Ward, *Heidegger's Political Thinking*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, p.290n3.
2. In order to read these texts, I have made extensive use of the French translations: *Approche de Hölderlin*, Paris: Gallimard, 1973; and *Les hymnes de Hölderlin: La Germanie et Le Rhin*, Paris: Gallimard, 1988.
3. The standard text is Beda Allemann, *Hölderlin und Heidegger*, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1954; though this is somewhat dated and cannot, of course, take into account the *Gesamtausgabe*. For a useful discussion of some of the other issues at stake see Werner Marx, *Is There a Measure on Earth? Foundations for a Nonmetaphysical Ethics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987; George Kovacs, *The Question of God in Heidegger's Phenomenology*, Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990; Christopher Fynsk, *Heidegger: Thought and Historicity*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986; the essays in the special edition of *Research in Phenomenology*, Volume XIX, 1989; *Philosophy Today*, Vol 37 No 4, Winter 1993; and Krzysztof Ziarek, "Semiosis of Listening: The Other in Heidegger's Writings on Hölderlin and Celan's 'The Meridian'", in *Research in Phenomenology*, Volume XXIV, 1994.
4. Bruce V. Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics and the Metaphysics of Nature*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995, pp.33-4 n2, claims that Heidegger's *Kehre* is not at issue in his work. In distinction I suggest that the issues of earth, nature, space and time are the very substance of the *Kehre*. The *Kehre* is political and philosophical certainly, but immanently spatial.
5. Reported in Bernd Magnus, "Foreword to the English Translation", in Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p.xvii n5. See also the "Author's Preface to the Second Edition" in Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik, Gesamtausgabe Band 3*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991, pxvi; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990, p.xxv. On Hölderlin as understood in mainstream literary scholarship, see Ronald Peacock, *Hölderlin*, London: Methuen & Co, 1973 (1938); and David Constantine, *Hölderlin*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
6. For a discussion of some of the issues that arise from this, see Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, Cambridge, MASS: MIT Press, 1991, p.130ff; Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp.52-4; Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of*

- Being and Time*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp.360-1; Maria Vilella-Petit, "Heidegger's Conception of Space", in Christopher Macann (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, London: Routledge, Four Volumes, 1992, Volume I.
7. Heidegger's examples in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie, Gesamtausgabe Band 24*; Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975, pp.231-3; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, p.163, are tailored to the situation of the lecture course: "Sitting here in the auditorium, we do not in fact apprehend walls – not unless we are getting bored. Nevertheless, the walls are already present even before we think of them as objects... When we enter here through the door, we do not apprehend the seats, and the same holds for the door-knob. Nevertheless, they are there in this peculiar way: we go by them circumspectly, avoid them circumspectly, stumble against them, and the like. Stairs, corridors, windows, chair and bench, blackboard, and much more are not given thematically. We say that an equipmental contexture environs us".
 8. Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, p.200; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, pp.136-7.
 9. For some of the reasons for this see Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, London: HarperCollins, 1993, p.14.
 10. Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us", p.102. See also, Karl Löwith, "My Last Meeting with Heidegger in Rome, 1936", both in Richard Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993.
 11. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, pp.133-4. Löwith's postcard to Jaspers is quoted from the personal papers of the latter in the German Literary Archive in Marbach.
 12. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p.305.
 13. This approach is greatly shaped by Dominique Janicaud's *The Shadow of That Thought: Heidegger and the Question of Politics*, Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996.
 14. The best English collection of Hölderlin is found in the bi-lingual Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
 15. On the role of time in Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin, see the dispute between Richard Rorty and Michael Murray. Rorty, in "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey", in Michael Murray (ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, p.251, argues that "there is no indication that Heidegger thinks that poetry has a history. Less crudely put, there is no indication that Heidegger thinks that the historicity of Being can be seen in poetry". Murray's response, in "Heidegger's Hermeneutic Reading of Hölderlin: The Signs of Time", in *The Eighteenth Century*, Vol 21 No 1, 1980, convincingly shows this to be an error.
 16. On this part of the course see Arthur Grugan, "Heidegger on Hölderlin's *Der Rhein*: Some External Considerations", in *Philosophy Today*, Vol 39 No 1, Spring 1995.
 17. On place and locale in Hölderlin more generally, though without reference to Heidegger, see David J. Constantine, *The Significance of Locality in the Poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin*, London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1979. Constantine suggests that place need not interest a poet, that many make no use of it, but it was important for Hölderlin, especially in his later work. He argues that Hölderlin celebrates rather than describes the places in his poetry.
 18. See particularly, Martin Heidegger, "Bauen Wohnen Denken", "Das Ding" and "Dichterist Wohnt der Mensch" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen: Günther Neske, Vierte Auflage, 1978; "Building Dwelling Thinking", "The Thing", and "...Poetically Man Dwells...", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
 19. See Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961, p.246n for Michael Hamburger's note on the status of this poem.
 20. J.M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p.115.
 21. For a critical discussion of Heidegger's reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, see Jacques Derrida, "Khora", in *On The Name*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. In this context Joseph Fell argues that the "Kehre is the 'turn' of space (dissimulated place) 'into' place, which it originally and always is". See his *Heidegger and Sartre: An Essay on Being and Place*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1979, p.204.
 22. On this, see Schuwer, "Nature and the Holy".
 23. For a discussion on the topic of blood, soil and earth, see Karsten Harries, "Heidegger as Political Thinker", in Murray (ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*. The conclusion (p.324) is that Heidegger "came to see that his hope had been in vain and misguided, that the Nazi's *Blut und Boden* had little in common with Hölderlin's *Erde*. This recognition forced Heidegger to reinterpret the nature of their leadership". It does not necessarily follow that Heidegger's use of earth and soil in his analyses is a move following Nazism, but it is certainly a dangerous political manoeuvre.
 24. See for example, Heidegger's own address of May 26th 1933 on Albert Leo Schlageter in "Political Texts, 1933-34", in Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy*, pp.40-2. On this issue see also GA39, pp.72-3.
 25. See the 'Letter on Humanism' for a more detailed discussion of the reason for this. Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken, Gesamtausgabe Band 9*; Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976, p.314; *Basic Writings*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.218.
 26. In the discussion of 'The Rhine' Heidegger suggests that no Dasein is purely poetic, thinking or acting, but that we must think them together (GA39, pp.184-5). For a discussion of these issues see Janicaud, *The Shadow of That Thought*, pp.99-100. Some important themes are also discussed in Jacques Derrida, "Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemiology (Geschlecht IV)", in John Sallis (ed.), *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
 27. Alan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p.172. See *Wegmarken*, pp.337-8; *Basic Writings*, p.241 for Heidegger's explicit distancing from the patriotic and nationalist overtones to *Heimat*.
 28. E.G. Kolbenheyer, *Vorträge, Aufsätze*, Darmstadt: Reden, 1966. Quoted in GA39, p.27.
 29. See Otto Pöggeler, "Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding", in Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy*, p.203.
 30. Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us", p.101.
 31. Quoted in Jacques Derrida, "Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand", in John Sallis (ed.), *Deconstruction and Philosophy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.165.
 32. For more detail about the political implications of this and later courses on Hölderlin see, particularly, Miguel de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political: Dystopias*, London: Routledge, 1998; Ward, *Heidegger's Political Thinking*; and Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
 33. See Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymne 'Andenken'*, *Gesamtausgabe Band 52*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982.
 34. See Dominique Janicaud, "The 'Overcoming' of Metaphysics in the Hölderlin Lectures", in Sallis (ed.), *Reading Heidegger*. Though Janicaud provides much useful detail, and is correct to see a shift between the first lecture course and the later two regarding the attitude to metaphysics (a shift from an attempt at a replacement to an overcoming) he neglects the differences between the attitudes to space and time, claiming that the project of a poetic dwelling is common to both.
 35. Michael Hamburger, "Introduction" in Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, p.xxi.
 36. Andrej Warminski, *Reading in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p.67. Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth*, p.x, does not consider that the return to the rural is an example of nostalgia, and uses this as an opportunity to berate "recent French philosophers" for not having much "to say about the natural environment or about the world outside of large cities in general".

37. See Martin Heidegger, "Schöpferische Landschaft: Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?" and "Der Feldweg" in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens, Gesamtausgabe Band 13*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983; "Why do I Stay in the Provinces?" and "The Pathway" in Thomas Sheehan (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981.
38. Sophocles, *Antigone in The Three Theban Plays*, New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1994, p.77. Heidegger's own translation of this choral ode is found as "Chorlied aus der Antigone des Sophokles" in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, pp.35-7.
39. On this see also Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides, Gesamtausgabe Band 54*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982, pp.130ff. This is further discussed in Stuart Elden, "Re-thinking the Polis: Implications of Heidegger's Questioning the Political", forthcoming.
40. Janicaud, "The 'Overcoming' of Metaphysics in the Hölderlin Lectures", p.384.
41. Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976, p.24; *On Time and Being*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p.23.

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