

HEIDEGGER ON THE NOTHING (*das Nichts*)

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INTRODUCTION

On July 24, 1929, in his inaugural lecture entitled, “What is Metaphysics?” delivered at Freiburg University, Heidegger posed a very intriguing question: How is it with the nothing?

The question tackled during the said lecture was not on what metaphysics is all about, for Heidegger would put it at the outset, thus:

What is metaphysics? The question awakens expectations of a discussion about metaphysics. This we will forgo. Instead we will take up a particular metaphysical question. In this way it seems we will let ourselves be transposed directly into metaphysics. Only in this way will we provide metaphysics the proper occasion to introduce itself.¹

Hans-Georg Gadamer says that the said lecture inquires into a being which is not a “what,” hence, it cannot be the “Being” that is thought of in metaphysics.² Heidegger addresses the question before the context of his time. Science abhors the nothing. The nothing has no impact to science. To Heidegger: “That with which the scientific confrontation in the irruption occurs are beings themselves – and beyond that, nothing.”³ Such question has become a metaphysical one – “a question into which one is necessarily drawn if one decides to dispense with the well-known system of logical defences.”⁴

The lecture indeed made an astonishing impact on the audience. As one writer puts it, “When I left the auditorium, I was speechless. For a brief moment I felt as if I had a glimpse into the ground and foundation of the world. In my inner being something was touched that had been asleep for a long time. Heidegger awakened it with his question, ‘Why are there beings instead of nothing?’”⁵

However, the lecture also drew negative reactions from people, as will be shown later. Indeed, we might wonder: what did Heidegger meant when he spoke of the nothing? Did he make any sense by asking such a dangerous question? As Petzet records, “It was as if a tremendous streak of lightning split apart the dark sky that had hung over the allegory of the cave.”⁶

“What about this nothing? Is it an accident that we talk this way so automatically? Is it only a manner of speaking – and nothing besides?” Heidegger asks.⁷

What about this nothing? This paper seeks to find out whether Heidegger in posing such a strange inquiry makes any sense. To achieve this we ask three questions:

What is our common, ordinary understanding of nothingness? What is Heidegger's understanding? What is the criticism of Rudolf Carnap regarding the matter? With this preliminary, we may now turn to our first consideration.

COMMON, ORDINARY UNDERSTANDING OF NOTHINGNESS⁸

Mr. Webster defines "nothing" as "not any being or existence; also, not any particular thing, act, or event; no thing: opposed to thing, anything, something." "Nothingness" is also defined as "a state of non-existence."⁹

Like Mr. Webster, we ordinarily equate nothingness with non-existence. Nothingness is commonly said as an opposite of something. What is nothingness? It is quite silly in ordinary language to speak of it as something. We define nothing as "a void, emptiness, oblivion, nought, nil and possibly zilch."¹⁰ These may describe what nothingness is all about, but I am afraid that with them we are only groping with mere concepts.

The experience of nothingness may be likened to our experience of darkness, silence. As Rudolf Allers in his article, "On darkness, Silence, and the Nought," comments, "In darkness and in silence we apparently become aware of 'nothing'."¹¹ We often say one "sees nothing" or "hears nothing." Such instance brings us a kind of an experience. Allers observes that to see "nothing" is to immerse oneself in complete darkness. Hence, one has a positive experience of it.¹² The experience of nothingness is also evident in our sense of sight and hearing.¹³ This is too common an experience.

Although how ordinary our experiences of nothingness are, these questions continue to linger: What is nothingness? Does our common understanding of nothingness correspond to what Heidegger has been trying to convey? Thus we proceed to what he is trying to say about our problem here.

HEIDEGGER'S IDEA OF THE NOTHING

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Heidegger's lecture, "What is Metaphysics?" deals with a particular metaphysical question: "How is it with the nothing?" In a book called, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, which contains the 1935 lecture of Heidegger, the same question appeared: "Why are there essents rather than nothing?"¹⁴ Earlier above we have seen some of our ordinary understanding of nothingness. In the philosophy of Heidegger, nothingness is no ordinary. As he asserts:

Clearly it is no ordinary question. "Why are there essents, why is there anything at all, rather than nothing?" – obviously this is the first of all questions, though not in a chronological sense. Individuals and peoples ask a good many questions in the course of their historical passage through time. They examine, explore, and test a good many things before they run into the question "Why are there essents rather than nothing?" Many men never encounter this

question, if by encounter we mean not merely to hear and read about it as an interrogative formulation but to ask the question, that is, to bring it about, to raise it, to feel its inevitability.¹⁵

Truly, our ordinary search concerns with something. Science, with all its vastness, only deals with something. It accepts nothing of the nothing. For how can the nothing be tested, verified? We need not trouble about the nothing. “Science,” observes Heidegger, “wishes to know nothing of the nothing.”¹⁶ As Richard Polt comments, “Heidegger starts by emphasizing science’s ‘submission to beings themselves’. Good chemists, economists or historians all have this in common: they want to know what is the case, what is true and only that. They are devoted to beings alone – and nothing else.”¹⁷

Science, in expressing its own proper essence, never calls upon the nothing for help.¹⁸ In the midst of this “controversy” the question begins to unfold and calls for an “explicit formulation: “How is it with nothing?”¹⁹ Such kind of inquiry may presuppose something. Thus we “posit the nothing in advance as something that ‘is’ such and such; we posit it as a being.”²⁰ We assume the nothing to be this or that.²¹ Hence Heidegger proceeds by saying that, with regards to the nothing, “question and answer alike are inherently absurd.”²²

The nothing cannot be an object of thinking. When we think, we are thinking of something; and that to think of the nothing is contrary to the essence of thinking, Heidegger argues.²³ Logic cannot be our basis in inquiring into the nothing. “According to Heidegger,” says Herman Philipse, “the dominance of intellect and logic has to be ‘broken’ in order that we may raise the question concerning being and nothingness.”²⁴ Heidegger even maintains that science’s avoidance of the nothing is an avowal of the intellect’s incapacity regarding the matter. For him science gives us the key to the “metaphysical question of nothingness.”²⁵

Reinhard May notices that the Nothing [*das Nichts*] “runs significantly [*wegweisend*] through Heidegger’s work like a red thread, and ultimately distinguishes itself from everything else that has been thought and said in Western philosophy about the topic of Nothing.”²⁶ Heidegger’s discussion on the nothing already differs from what has been previously thought of in Western philosophy. The whole of Western philosophy up to Hegel or Husserl thrives on reason, may it be the Absolute Knowledge of the former or the rigorous science of the latter.

Addressing the issue on logic, Heidegger asks, “But are we allowed to tamper with the rule of ‘logic’? Is not intellect the taskmaster in this question of the nothing?”²⁷ Thinking involves negations or contradictions. So much so that the problem on the nothing means a negation of something, for “negation is a specific act of the intellect.”²⁸ Yet Heidegger strongly claims that the nothing is more original when compared to the “not” and to the “negation.”²⁹

How do we seek out the nothing? If there are no objects before us how can this search be possible? “Is there ultimately such a thing as a search without that anticipation, a search to which pure discovery belongs?” Heidegger wonders.³⁰ He believes that,

Whatever we may make of it, we are acquainted with the nothing, if only as a word we rattle off everyday. For this common nothing that glides so inconspicuously through our chatter, blanched with the anemic pallor of the obvious, we can without hesitation furnish even a “definition”: The nothing is the complete negation of the totality of being.³¹

And yet we are finite, how can we have access to the totality of beings?³² How is it with the nothing? The question seems to make no sense. It becomes obscure – a puzzlement. But for Heidegger it is a question “each of us is grazed at least once, perhaps more than once, by the hidden power of this question, even if he is not aware of what is happening to him.”³³

The nothing as the “complete negation of the totality of being,” is possible only in our Dasein.³⁴ As Heidegger puts it poetically:

The question looms in moments of great despair, when things tend to lose all their weight and all meaning becomes obscured. Perhaps it will strike but once like a muffled bell that rings into our life and gradually dies away. It is present in moments of rejoicing, when all the things around us are transfigured and seem to be there for the first time, as if it might be easier to think they are not than to understand that they are and are as they are. The question is upon us in boredom, when they are equally removed from despair and joy, and everything about us seems so hopelessly commonplace that we no longer care whether anything is or is not – and with this the question “Why are there essents rather than nothing?” is evoked in a particular form.³⁵

With the above attunement, beings are manifested as a whole. “Beings as a whole” unveiling in many ways, “but this unveiling” is not just “incidental,” but “is also the fundamental occurrence of our Da-sein.”³⁶ Moreover, Heidegger asserts:

...if this question is asked and if the act of questioning is really carried out, the content and the object of the question react inevitably on the act of questioning. Accordingly this questioning is not just any occurrence but a privileged happening that we call an *event*.³⁷

The nothing is manifested in anxiety. Heidegger says, “Anxiety robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that precisely the nothing crowds around, all utterance of the ‘is’ falls silent in the face of the nothing.”³⁸ Polt observes, “We get a sense of beings as a whole, in anxiety and experience of nihilation. This transcendence makes it possible to relate to particular entities, including *ourselves*.”³⁹ Heidegger defines Da-sein as “being held out into the nothing.”⁴⁰ Dasein transcends

“beings as a whole,” he asserts.⁴¹ Henceforth, there must be an original manifestation of the nothing in order for Dasein to have “self-hood and freedom.”⁴²

This is the reason why logic can never be of help in the original revelation of the truth of our existence. Heidegger’s declaration that logic has no “primary importance for philosophy” means that logic merely deals with the “surface phenomena of meaning – theoretical propositions.”⁴³ The nothing is no object or any being at all.⁴⁴ With the nothing, the manifestation of beings as such is possible.⁴⁵ Heidegger believes that “in the being of beings the nihilation of the nothing occurs.”⁴⁶ With this original nihilation of the nothing, Dasein is brought “for the first time before beings as such.”⁴⁷

It must be noted that Heidegger speaks of the process of nihilation as revealed in the experience of the nothing. Nevertheless, he interprets the nothing not with nihilism as has been understood since Nietzsche.⁴⁸ Heidegger’s aim is rather to overcome nihilism.⁴⁹

Heidegger claims, “Originary anxiety can awaken in Dasein at any time.”⁵⁰ Polt gives an example of this phenomenon. He says, “...teenage Angst, clichéd though it may be, is a real phenomenon: young adults often experience a crisis of foundations, in which the established interpretation of Being-in-the-world becomes unstable and unsatisfying. According to Heidegger, this experience is always possible for Dasein.”⁵¹ This “originary anxiety” does not need an “unusual event to rouse it.”⁵² Heidegger adds, “Its sway is as thorough going as its possible occasionings are trivial. It is always ready, though it only seldom springs, and we are snatched away and left hanging.”⁵³ Polt makes an analogy about the nothing saying that from troubled artists come great works of art, so from nothing comes fresh illuminations.”⁵⁴

In his book, *What is a Thing?* Heidegger claims that science has been transformed only through centuries of discussing basic concepts and principles of thought, directed solely to things and to what is at all.⁵⁵ Again we marvel: Why are beings rather than nothing? The nothing has a role to play in Being.⁵⁶ Being can only find meaning if we put “limits to its meaning, a boundary where Being verges on meaninglessness.”⁵⁷

Therefore, Heidegger demands,

Our inquiry concerning the nothing is to bring us face to face with metaphysics itself....

Metaphysics is inquiry beyond or over beings that aims to recover them as such and as a whole for our grasp.

In the question concerning the nothing such an inquiry beyond or over beings, beings as a whole, takes place. It proves thereby to be a “metaphysical” question.⁵⁸

“Beings,” remarks Polt, “can now have more meaning than they did in the hackneyed, dull interpretations of everyday life. Being itself is now open to creative transformation.”⁵⁹

Having gone through our discussion above, we proceed to a very notable criticism of Heidegger's question on the nothing. Heidegger's lecture, "What is Metaphysics?" has provoked harsh oppositions from the Anglo-American philosophers.⁶⁰ For our own purposes, we only need to consider Rudolf Carnap's denunciation of Heidegger in his essay, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language."⁶¹ This will help us in our analysis whether the question on the nothing makes any sense at all. Thus our next point may now turn.

RUDOLF CARNAP'S CRITICISM

Rudolf Carnap accuses Heidegger of violating a logical syntax. Roughly, in his analysis, supposing "a" is any word and "S (a)" is the elementary sentence, words can only have meaning if the following requirements are fulfilled: 1) the *empirical criteria* for "a" are known; 2) it has been stipulated from what protocol sentences "S (a)" is *deducible*; 3) the *truth-conditions* for "S (a)" are fixed; and, 4) the method of *verification* of "S(a)" is known.⁶² Take note of the emphasis of Carnap's conditions: *empirical criteria, deducibility, truth-conditions, and verification*. Can we apply these requirements to Heidegger's question on the nothing?

Carnap argues that there are "pseudo-statements of metaphysics" which are left unnoticed.⁶³ Examining these statements, he argues:

The fact that natural languages allow the formation of meaningless sequences of words without violating the rules of grammar, indicates that grammatical syntax is, from a logical point of view, inadequate. If grammatical syntax corresponded exactly to logical syntax, pseudo-statements could not arise. If grammatical syntax differentiated not only the word-categories of nouns, adjectives, verbs, conjunctions, etc., but within each of these categories made the further distinctions that are logically indispensable, then no pseudo-statements could be formed.⁶⁴

How does this violation apply to Heidegger's discussion on the nothing? Heidegger claims that if his thesis is correct, that, "the nothing is more originary than the 'not' and negation," then "the possibility of negation as an act of the intellect, and thereby the intellect itself are somehow dependent upon the nothing."⁶⁵ But this assertion of Heidegger, according to the criticism, is a mistake. As Philipse maintains:

Heidegger's expression 'the authority of logic' (...) is misleading, as if the rules of logic were an external authority that one might shake off. Rules of logic are not like the laws of taxation which one may try to dodge. They are rather like rules of grammar: if one does not stick to them, one will end up producing meaningless noises or empty marks. There seems to be no point at all, then in attempting to interpret the question of being, if raising this question really violates the principle of noncontradiction.⁶⁶

In a schema,⁶⁷ Carnap shows the pseudo-statements found in Heidegger's use of the word "nothing." Heidegger commits a contradiction here. The "nothing" it introduced as a "name or description of an entity," would be admissible, but "the existence of this entity would be denied in its very definition," argues Carnap.⁶⁸ Hence, to affirm the existence of the nothing is a contradiction, an absurd assumption.⁶⁹

In fairness to Heidegger, the nothing he speaks about has absolutely another meaning as compared to our common understanding. And for Carnap this is evident in Heidegger's discussion of anxiety as a revelation of the nothing.⁷⁰ The nothing as such is present in anxiety. However, "the word 'nothing' seems to refer to a certain emotional constitution, possibly of a religious sort, or something or other that underlies such emotions," observes Carnap.⁷¹ If this is admitted, then Heidegger commits no "logical errors." But Carnap detects that in Heidegger's use of the word "nothing," a shift in meaning occurs. He says, "The combination of 'only' and 'nothing else' shows unmistakably that the word 'nothing' here has the usual meaning of a logical particle that serves for the formulation of a negative existential statement."⁷² Heidegger himself affirms that "his questions and answers are irreconcilable with logic and the scientific way of thinking."⁷³ This is clearly implied in his rhetorical questions: "How can the intellect hope to decide about the nothing? Does the ostensible absurdity of question and answer with respect to the nothing in the end rest solely in a blind conceit of the far-ranging intellect?"⁷⁴

Finally, Polt has this comment:

For Carnap and other logical positivists, philosophy should clarify the rules of coherent, meaningful discourse. Meaningful discourse is scientific; it expresses objective facts in unambiguous propositions. Philosophy, then, is a system of propositions about systems of propositions in general. In other words, philosophy is logic, theory of theory.... When we use the tools of logic to clean the Augean stables of philosophy, babble such as *das Nichts selbst nichtet* will be the first to go.⁷⁵

With this criticism of Carnap which was then popular in the Anglophone world, the philosophy of Heidegger was reputed to be "the worst sort of verbal trickery, a wooly-headed and dangerously confused concoction that did not deserve the name 'philosophy' at all, and certainly was not worth reading."⁷⁶

As a summary, we have discussed the ordinary understanding of the word "nothing." Commonly speaking, "nothing" would mean an opposite of something. Granting that it is just due to the poverty of the human language that we limit the word "nothing" to this kind of meaning, but still, who can argue that? Ask the man in the street, he would tell you that the nothing is none at all. But Heidegger is trying to go beyond the ordinary in order not to be "*disburdened* by the 'they'."⁷⁷

Why are there beings rather than nothing? This may be illogical for Rudolf Carnap. It is only a pseudo-statement of metaphysics, as he calls it. But why are we trapped always in logic? Is there nothing else beyond logic? Can existence be so bounded only by logic that there can be no more frontiers beyond it? Life is most often illogical. Paradoxical! Contradictory! When what is at stake is the question of existence, logic always comes short.

Heidegger is only trying to show us that “philosophy can never be measured by the standard of the idea of science.”⁷⁸ Why are there beings alone? How about the nothing? And this is philosophy for Heidegger. Philosophy is not just logic. It is more than that. As Heidegger puts it, “Philosophy gets under way only by a peculiar insertion of our own existence into the fundamental possibilities of Dasein as a whole.”⁷⁹ And lastly, borrowing the words of Dahlstrom, “The uphill task that Heidegger sets for himself is obvious. He must be able to kick away the very ladder (‘worldly’ or ‘theoretical’ assertions, ‘objectifying’ concepts, and so on) on which he is forced to make his climb.”⁸⁰ This way we can judge Heidegger as making any sense at all. And it is for the individual person to decide in his life: *whether to make the climb like Heidegger does or not at all.*

ENDNOTES

¹ Martin Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” trans. David Farrell Krell, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 82. This lecture, according to Richard Polt, was a “concentrated, powerful exploration of anxiety and its relation to nothingness owes much to Being and Time, but its spirit is one of opening new questions and provoking fresh thought. The lecture was not meant as a clear statement of a doctrine, but as a challenge to philosophize” (Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 121).

² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 47.

³ Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” in *Pathmarks*, p. 84.

⁴ Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways*, p. 46.

⁵ Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 1929-1976*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, intro. Parvis Emad, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993, pp. 12-13.

⁶ Petzet, *Encounters and Dialogues*, p. 12.

⁷ Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” p. 84. Henceforth cited as “WM?”

⁸ In this paper the words nothing and nothingness are interchangeably used.

⁹ See Nothing, Nothingness, *The New International Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, Naples, Florida: Trident Press International, 1999 ed.

¹⁰ “The Theory and Concept of Nothingness,” [http:// www. aambury. freeseve. co. uk/NOTHIN~1.HTM](http://www.aambury.freeseve.co.uk/NOTHIN~1.HTM).

¹¹ Rudolf Allers, "On Darkness, Silence, and the Nought," *The Thomist*, vol. IX/4 (October, 1946): p. 515.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 517.

¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁴ M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, New York: Yale University Press, 1959, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 84.

¹⁷ R. Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, p. 123.

¹⁸ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 84.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* It is for Heidegger controversial when what determines our lives is science (*Ibid.*).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* Here Heidegger challenges the authority of logic. He asks, "How can the intellect hope to decide about the nothing? Does the ostensible absurdity of question and answer with respect to the nothing in the end rest solely in a blind conceit of the far-ranging intellect?" (*Ibid.*, p. 86). If we recall what logic is all about, basically, it concerns really with objects. It may be described generally "as a mental manipulation of objects. This mental manipulation of objects is sound only so long as it is achieved according to the demands of the relations that accrue to objects as known and that order them one to another" (See William A. Wallace, Op, *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, New York: Alba House, 1977, p. 13).

²⁴ Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Science teaches us about the nothing (Heidegger, "WM?" p. 85). In Heidegger's lecture "What is Metaphysics?" the phrase "and with nothing else" was mentioned six times in "different variations" in order to bring us to conclusion "that when the scientist tries to say what he is up to, he inevitably speaks of something else, namely the Nothing" (Philipse, p. 10). Therefore, when we speak of science, this metaphysical question cannot be avoided (*Ibid.*).

²⁶ Reinhard May, *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*, trans. with complementary essay by Graham Parkes, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 21. May argues that we can possibly show East Asian influences to Heidegger's question on the nothing. For fuller discussion of May's argument see especially chapter 3 of his work above on pp. 21-34.

²⁷ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 85.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 1. Heidegger affirms that such possibility of the whole of beings “happen all the time in our Dasein” (Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” p. 87). He adds that “no matter how fragmented our everyday existence may appear to be, however, it always deals with beings in a unity of the ‘whole,’ if only in a shadowy way” (*Ibid.*).

³⁴ *Ibid.* Heidegger declares, “When Dasein exists, world-entry has simultaneously also already happened with it, and it has happened in such a way that extant things entering there in principle undergo *nothing*. They remain so completely untouched that it is on account of world entry that Dasein can, on its part, approach, encounter, and touch them. But if what enters world undergoes nothing in the occurrence of world-entry is then the world itself nothing? In fact the world is nothing – if ‘nothing’ means: not a being in the sense of something extant; also ‘nothing’ in the sense of no-thing, not one of the beings Dasein itself as such transcends; but Dasein transcends itself as well. The world: a nothing, no being – and yet something; nothing of beings – but being. Thus the world is not nothing in the sense of ‘*nihil negativum*’” (Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 195). “In existing,” says Mariana Ortega, “Dasein has already, so to speak, ‘stepped beyond,’ and already dwells in the world. The reason for this is that Dasein transcends objects, things in the world, and, in so doing, uncovers an equipmental whole, a range of functional relations or what Heidegger refers to as ‘significance’ (*Bedeutsamkeit*)” (Mariana Ortega, “Dasein comes After the Epistemic Subject, But Who is Dasein?” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XL, no. 1 (March 2000): p. 55).

³⁵ Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 1-2.

³⁶ Heidegger, “WM?” p. 87.

³⁷ Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 5. For Heidegger the question “Why are there essents rather than nothing?” is not a play of words. This “privileged question ‘why’ has its ground in a leap through which man thrusts away all the previous security whether real or imagined, of his life,” Heidegger asserts (*Ibid.* pp. 5-6). This is philosophy for Heidegger. Thus for him “to philosophize is to ask ‘Why are there essents rather than nothing?’ Really to ask the question signifies: a daring attempt to fathom this unfathomable question by disclosing what it summons us to ask, to push our questioning to the very end. Where such attempt occur there is philosophy” (*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8).

³⁸ Heidegger, “WM?” p. 89.

³⁹ Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, “WM?” p. 91.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Cf. Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 126. Heidegger, according to Daniel O. Dahlstrom, even considers formal logic “not really formal at all since it springs from a region of objects that has already been determined and a corresponding manner of comprehension” (Daniel O. Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Method: Philosophical concepts as Formal Indications,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 47 [June 1994]: p. 784).

⁴⁴ Heidegger, “WM?” p. 91.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴⁸ May, *Hidden Sources*, p. 24.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Reversing the “question of Being” also focuses on the “question of Nothing.” The “meaning of Being” has been forgotten and to inquire into it is also to ask about the nothing. Thus the question on the nothing is not similar to nihilism (*Ibid.*, p. 22). Hence, in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Heidegger even writes, “Directed toward the other beginning, nihilism must be grasped more fundamentally as the essential consequence of the abandonment of being” (Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999, p. 96).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁵¹ Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 124.

⁵² Heidegger, “WM?” p. 93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Heidegger, *What is a Thing?* trans. W. B. Barton, Jr., and Vera Deutsch, with an analysis by Eugene T. Gendlin, South Bend, Indiana: Gateway Editions, LTD., 1967, p. 65. Dahlstrom comments that the center of Heidegger’s criticism of the Western philosophical tradition “is his charge that it has repeatedly ‘passed over’ the world as a phenomenon in favor of nature, conceived as a collection of substances or things present” (Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Method,” p. 776). According to Heidegger, Dahlstrom continues, the dominant conception concerning metaphysics is that it is “loosely understood as the tendency to regard things as being only insofar as they are in some sense present and thus potentially available and accessible to human concerns” (*Ibid.*).

⁵⁶ Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 124.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

⁵⁸ Heidegger, “WM?” p. 93-94.

⁵⁹ Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶¹ It is not my intention to give a thorough discussion of the said essay. For fuller details please see Rudolf Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language,” trans. Arthur Pap, in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Alfred Jules Ayer, New York: The Free Press, 1966, pp. 60-81.

⁶² See *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

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- ⁶⁵ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 86.
- ⁶⁶ Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being*, p. 13.
- ⁶⁷ For fuller details see Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 70.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71. As we have seen earlier in this paper "nothing" is defined as non-existence. Really common language can attest to that.
- ⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- ⁷⁴ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 86.
- ⁷⁵ Polt, *Heidegger*, p. 122.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ Dasein must always be careful not to allow the "they" to retain and enhance "its stubborn dominion" (See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., p.165).
- ⁷⁸ Heidegger, "WM?" p. 96.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Method," p. 788.

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