

Kevin A. Aho

Heidegger's Neglect of the Body

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Heidegger's Neglect of the Body

SUNY series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy

Dennis J. Schmidt, editor

Heidegger's Neglect of the Body

KEVIN A. AHO

SUNY
PRESS

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

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For information, contact State University of New York Press, Albany, NY
www.sunypress.edu

Production by Diane Ganeles
Marketing by Michael Campochiaro

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aho, Kevin, 1969-

Heidegger's neglect of the body / Kevin A. Aho.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4384-2775-1 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Heidegger, Martin, 1889-1976. 2. Body, Human (Philosophy)

I. Title.

B3279.H49A39 2009

128'.6092—dc22

2008050717

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Charles Guignon

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Acknowledgments

This project would not have been completed without the loving support of my beautiful wife, Elena. She, my parents, Jim and Margaret Aho, and my brothers, Ken and Kyle, have been a continual source of strength, inspiration, and joy. To my teachers at the University of South Florida, where this project was originally conceived, I am thankful to Stephen Turner, Ofelia Schutte, and Joanne Waugh. For their careful reading and recommendations, I am thankful to Hans Pedersen and Bill Koch. I am also deeply appreciative of my supportive colleagues at Florida Gulf Coast University, especially Sean Kelly, Kim Jackson, Glenn Whitehouse, Maria Roca, Jim Wohlpart, Karen Tolchin, and Tom Demarchi. Most of all, I am indebted to my teacher and dear friend, Charles Guignon. His intellectual guidance, encouragement, and wonderful sense of humor over the years kept this project going. His friendship has been a gift in my life, and this book is dedicated to him.

I would also like to thank the editors and publishers of the following journals for permission to reprint portions of the following articles:

"Metontology and the Body-Problem in *Being and Time*." *Auslegung* 28:2 (2006): 1–20. Peter Montecuolo, ed. (ch. 1).

"The Missing Dialogue between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: On the Importance of the Zollikon Seminars." *Body and Society* 11:2 (2005): 1–2. Mike Featherstone and Bryan Turner, eds. (ch. 2).

"Gender and Time: Revisiting the Question of Dasein's Neutrality." *Epoché* 12:1 (2007): 137–155. Walter Brogan, ed. (ch. 3).

"Animality Revisited: The Question of Life in Heidegger's Early Freiburg Lectures." *Existentialia* 16: 5–6 (2006): 379–392. Gábor Ferge, ed. (ch. 4).

"Logos and the Poverty of Animals: Rethinking Heidegger's Humanism." *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological*

Philosophy 7 (2007): 109–126. Steven Crowell and Burt Hopkins, eds. (ch. 4).

“Simmel on Acceleration, Boredom, and Extreme Aesthesia.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 37:4 (2007): 447–462. Charles Smith, ed. (ch. 5).

“Acceleration and Time Pathologies: The Critique of Psychology in Heidegger’s *Beiträge*.” *Time and Society* 16:1 (2007): 25–42. Robert Hassan, ed. (ch. 5).

“Recovering Play: On the Relationship between Leisure and Authenticity in Heidegger’s Thought.” *Janus Head* 10:1 (2007): 217–238. Brent Robbins, ed. (ch. 6).

For permission to reprint a selection from Thich Nhat Hanh I am grateful to Parallax Press for the excerpt from *The Heart of Understanding: Commentaries on the Prajñāparamita Heart Sutra*, by Thich Nhat Hanh (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1988), www.parallax.org.

Abbreviations

Works by Heidegger

"GA" indicates the volume of the *Gesamtausgabe* (*Collected Works*). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann. The lecture/publication date follows the German title. Unless otherwise indicated, all references are from the English translation and pagination.

- AWP *Die Zeit des Weltbildes*. 1938. (GA 5). "The Age of the World Picture." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- BDT *Bauen Wohnen Denken*. 1951. (GA 7). "Building Dwelling Thinking." In *Basic Writings*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- BP *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. 1927. (GA 24). *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- BQP *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte "Probleme" der "Logik."* 1937. (GA 45). *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic."* Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Shuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- BT *Sein und Zeit*. 1927. (GA 2). *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.
- CP *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. 1936–1938. (GA 65). *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- CT *Der Begriff der Zeit*. 1924. (GA 64). *The Concept of Time*. Translated by William McNeill. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

- DHW *Wilhelm Diltheys Forschungsarbeit und der Kampf um eine historische Weltanschauung*. 1925. (GA 80). "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview." In *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, trans. Charles Bambach. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- DT *Gelassenheit*. 1955. (GA 16). "Memorial Address." In *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- ET *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*. 1930. (GA 9). "On the Essence of Truth." In *Basic Writing*, trans. John Sallis. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- FCM *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit*. 1929–1930. (GA 29/30). *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- FS *Seminare—Zähringen*. 1973. (GA 15). "Seminar in Zähringen." In *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- HCT *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. 1925. (GA 20). *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. Translated by Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- HF *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*. 1923. (GA 63). *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Translated by John van Buren. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- HS *Seminare—Heraklit*. 1966–1967. (GA 15). *Heraclitus Seminar, 1966/67* (with Eugen Fink). Translated by Charles H. Seibert. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993.
- IM *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. 1935. (GA 40). *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- IP *Einleitung in die Philosophie*. 1928–1929. (GA 27). *Introduction to Philosophy*. Translation in preparation. References are from the German pagination. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996.
- KPM *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. 1929. (GA 3). *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Translated by Richard Taft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

- LA *Die Sprache*. 1950. (GA 12). "Language." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- LH *Brief über den Humanismus*. 1947. (GA 9). "Letter on Humanism." In *Basic Writings*, trans. Frank Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray. New York: HarperCollins 1993.
- LS *Logos (Heraklit, Fragment 50)*. 1951. (GA 7). "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)." In *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David F. Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- MFL *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*. 1928. (GA 26). *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Translated by Michael Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- N1 *Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst*. 1936–1937. (GA 6). "The Will to Power as Art." In *Nietzsche Vol. 1*, trans. David F. Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
- N2 *Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. 1937. (GA 6). "The Eternal Recurrence of the Same." In *Nietzsche Vol. II*, trans. David F. Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.
- N3 *Der Wille zur Macht als Erkenntnis*. 1939. (GA 6). "The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics." In *Nietzsche Vol. III*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, David F. Krell, and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.
- N4 *Der europäische Nihilismus*. 1940. (GA 6). "European Nihilism." In *Nietzsche Vol. IV*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.
- NL *Das Wesen der Sprache*. 1957. (GA 12). "The Nature of Language." In *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- OH *Hölderlins Hymnen "Wie wenn am Feiertage . . ."* 1941. (GA 4). "Hölderlin's Hymn 'As When On Holiday . . .'" In *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. Keith Hoeller. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000.
- OTB *Zeit und Sein*. 1962. (GA 14). *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- OWA *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*. 1935. (GA 5). "The Origin of the Work of Art." In *Basic Writings*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

- PA *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung.* 1921. (GA 61). *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research.* Translated by Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- PS *Platon: Sophistes.* 1924–1925. (GA 19). *Plato's Sophist.* Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- QCT *Die Frage nach der Technik.* 1949. (GA 7). "The Question Concerning Technology." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- RE *Hölderlins Hymnen "Andenken."* 1943. (GA 4). "Hölderlin's Hymn 'Remembrance.'" In *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. Keith Holler. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000.
- TDP *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie.* 1919. (GA 56/57). *Towards the Definition of Philosophy.* Translated by Ted Sadler. London: Continuum Books, 2002.
- TT *Das Ding.* 1951. (GA 7). "The Thing." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- TU *Die Kehre.* 1949. (GA 79). "The Turning." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- WCT *Was heisst Denken?* 1951–1952. (GA 8). *What Is Called Thinking?* Translated by J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- WIT *Die Frage nach dem Ding.* 1935. (GA 41). *What Is a Thing?* Translated by W. B. Barton and Vera Deutsch. South Bend, IN: Regenery/Gateway, 1967.
- WL *Der Weg zur Sprache.* 1959. (GA 12). "The Way of Language." In *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: HarperCollins, 1971.
- ZS *Zollikoner Seminare.* 1959–1972. (GA 89). *Zollikon Seminars.* Translated by Franz Mayr and Richard Askey. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001.

Works by Jacques Derrida

- G1 *"Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference."* In *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huntington. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.
- G2 *"Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand."* In *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, ed. John Sallis, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- MP *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- OS *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Works by Luce Irigaray

- JTN *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*. Translated by Alison Martin. New York: Routledge Press, 1993.
- SG *Sexes and Geneologies*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- SWN *The Sex Which Is Not One*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty

- PP *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 1962.
- VI *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968.

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Introduction

The Body Problem

It has been over fifty years since French philosophers began criticizing the “starting-point” (*Ausgang*) of *Being and Time* (1927)—specifically Heidegger’s account of everyday practices, practices that initially give us “access” (*Zugang*) to the question of the meaning of being. Alphonse de Waelhens, for example, argued that Heidegger’s phenomenology completely overlooks the fundamental role played by perception in particular and the body in general in our everyday understanding of things. “[In] *Being and Time*,” says Waelhens, “one does not find thirty lines concerning the problem of perception; one does not find ten concerning that of the body.”¹ Jean-Paul Sartre amplified this line of criticism when he emphasized the importance of the body as the first point of contact that a human being has with its world, a contact that is prior to detached theorizing about objects.

Of the early French phenomenologists, Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s work has been the most influential. He laid the foundations for a critique of Heidegger through his systematic analysis of the primacy of bodily perception, particularly in terms of our spatial directionality and orientation, a sensual orientation that makes it possible for us to handle worldly equipment in the first place.² Merleau-Ponty’s account of embodiment has since been developed and refined by English-speaking commentators such as Hubert Dreyfus, David Cerbone, and David Krell.³ Krell formulates the problem this way:

Did Heidegger simply fail to see the arm of the everyday body rising in order to hammer the shingles onto the roof, did he overlook the quotidian gaze directed toward the ticking watch that overtakes both sun and moon, did he miss the body poised daily in its brazen car, a car equipped with a turn signal fabricated by and for the hand and eye

of man, did he neglect the human being capable day-in and day-out of moving its body and setting itself in motion? If so, what conclusion must we draw?⁴

In *Being and Time* there is little acknowledgment of the "lived-body" (*Leib*) that prereflectively negotiates its way through the world, a body that is already spatially oriented in terms of directionality as it reaches out and faces the various tools and others that are encountered every day.⁵ Heidegger merely offers this remark:

Dasein's spatialization in its "bodily nature" is likewise marked out in accordance with these directions. [This "bodily nature" hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.] (BT, 143)

This Merleau-Pontyan criticism has been recently fortified by feminist critics following the 1983 publication of Jacques Derrida's essay "*Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference*." His essay helped pave the way for two decades of commentary, which attempts to enrich Heidegger's project by addressing the possibility of a gendered incarnation of human existence (*Dasein*). For Heidegger—specifically in his 1928 Marburg lectures on Leibniz—Dasein is regarded as "neutral" (*neutrale*) or "asexual" (*geschlechtslos*) insofar as it exists prior to and makes possible an understanding of sexed bodies and gendered practices. This position has left many feminist commentators dissatisfied. If one of the goals of Heidegger's early project is to recover concrete, embodied ways of being, ways of being that are more original than disembodied theorizing, then Heidegger would do well to acknowledge the ways in which these concrete practices are shaped and guided by sexual difference. By giving an account of Dasein's gendered incarnation, Heidegger's analysis of human existence would have recognized the social hierarchies and oppressive relations that already exist in our everyday dealings. This recognition would have allowed for a more complete picture of the way in which human beings dwell in an understanding of being.

In addition to these feminist criticisms, there has been a recent explosion of commentary in the secondary literature that addresses Heidegger's account of the relationship between humans and animals, particularly in his 1929–1930 Freiburg lecture course "The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics."⁶ In these lectures, Heidegger appears to perpetuate the oppositional prejudices of traditional humanism by arguing that there is a fundamental difference between animal "behav-