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Chapter 13

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: ANSTOß FOR EBERHARD JÜNGEL'S THEOLOGY¹

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During his year of study outside of the German Democratic Republic, Jüngel took a short train ride monthly from Switzerland to Freiburg (in the Federal Republic of Germany) to hear Heidegger lecture on 'The Nature of Language'.² Although he never connected with Heidegger on a personal level (his 'personality was really somewhat odd'³), Heidegger was nevertheless the 'genius',⁴ 'the profound thinker'⁵ and 'the teacher' who taught us 'to think in the struggle with metaphysics'.⁶ But even more so for Jüngel, Heidegger was the *Anstoß*⁷ – that

1. The present essay is a considerably revised edition of material that first appeared in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, titled: 'Eberhard Jüngel's Theological Anthropology in Light of his Christology' (Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 1996).

2. Martin Heidegger, 'Das Wesen der Sprache', in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen, 1959). The paper was delivered in three lectures at the University of Freiburg on 14 and 18 December 1957 and 7 February 1958.

3. Eberhard Jüngel, *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken. Ein Gespräch über Denk- und Lebenserfahrungen*, ed. Fulvio Ferrario (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009), p. 22.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

5. Jüngel, 'Geleitwort', in *Rudolf Buttmann/Martin Heidegger Briefwechsel 1925–1975*, ed. Andreas Großmann and Christof Landmesser (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann and Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), p. VII.

6. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism*, trans. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 153n1.

7. Cf. Jüngel (with Michael Trowitzsch), 'Provozierendes Denken. Bemerkungen zur theologischen Anstößigkeit der Denkwege Martin Heideggers', *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 23 (1984), p. 59. Jüngel can also speak of Heidegger as 'impetus' who 'proved helpful' for several key theological decisions (idem, 'Toward the Heart of the Matter', *CCe* 108 [1991], p. 232). This was also confirmed in a personal interview with Jüngel (Tübingen, 13 July 1995). While Mark Mattes's summary of the relationship between Heidegger and Jüngel ('Toward Divine Relationality: Eberhard Jüngel's New Trinitarian, Postmetaphysical

is, both impulse and offence – for a recognition of the dangers of metaphysics, *and* who *provoked* Jüngel to think theology from its own ground, that is, ‘to think God,’⁸ to *think* faith and the *being* of humanity without beginning with the self-grounding subject of metaphysics. ‘Heidegger’s thought is an *event* of philosophy,’ and Jüngel recommends that theology *as theology* does well not to evade Heidegger, but should ‘learn what may be learned from [this] philosophy.’⁹ In Jüngel’s own words, the encounter with Heidegger proved ‘to be of enduring significance.’¹⁰

This essay explores Jüngel’s masterful theological engagement of Heidegger’s thought and its contribution towards a contemporary post-modern Christian theology; the focus will be on nothingness, temporality and death.

Heidegger – The Witness to Nothing

Jüngel has praised Heidegger as the ‘witness to nothing.’¹¹ As metaphysics sought to secure existence in human self-reflection, an awareness of the possibility of nothing emerged, according to Heidegger. It is this nothingness which compels the basic question of metaphysics, that ‘last despairing question’ as articulated by Schelling: ‘Why does anything exist at all? Why is there not nothing? . . . If I cannot answer this last question, then everything else sinks for me into the abyss of bottomless nothingness.’¹²

Approach’ [PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1995]) is helpful, his judgement is incorrect when he suggests that the bearing of Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics on Jüngel’s thought is ‘unthematized’ (p. 310) and that Jüngel is inclined to see Heidegger’s response to the crisis of modernity as ‘superficial’ (p. 269); moreover, Mattes is certainly overstating the case when he proposes that ‘[t]he point of Jüngel’s critique of ontotheology’ is ‘to turn Heidegger’s view on its head’ (p. 318).

8. ‘The Passion to Think God’ – this is the English translation of title of Jüngel’s autobiographical reflections: *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken*.

9. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 153 n.1.

10. Jüngel, ‘Toward the Heart of the Matter’, p. 232.

11. Jüngel (–Trowitzsch), ‘Provozierendes Denken’, pp. 60, 61.

12. Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *Sämtliche Werke* II/3, ed. Karl Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858), pp. 7f. See Heidegger, ‘What is Metaphysics?’, in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Ferrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 112. Jüngel cites this passage frequently: for example, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. ix, 31, 246; idem, *The Freedom of a Christian: Luther’s Significance for Contemporary Theology*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1988), p. 44; idem, *Death: The Riddle and the Mystery*, trans. Iain Nicol and Ute Nicol (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1975), p. 61; idem, *Theological Essays II*, ed. John B. Webster, trans. Arnold Neufeldt-Fast (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), pp. 122, 209, 223 and idem, ‘The Christian Understanding of Suffering’, *JTSA* 65 (1988), p. 3.

In his early work, Heidegger sought to project a variety of *modes of human being* in his attempt to get behind the human penchant for metaphysics, in particular those questions of 'whatness', the idea or mental representation by which we propose to ourselves what a thing is.¹³ Following Kierkegaard, Heidegger explored *anxiety* as a mood over which humans have no control yet which offers 'one of the *most far-reaching* and *most primordial* possibilities of disclosure.'¹⁴ Heidegger showed how anxiety shocks us out of our metaphysical securities and domestic familiarities, and plunges us into a state in which we are made to feel not at home. In anxiety, referential contexts become inoperative and all beings within the world are 'nothing and nowhere' (i.e. without ground). What remains is the nothingness into which one is thrown. For Heidegger, this 'transcendence' into nothing does not lead to God as the infinite origin of all beings or to Descartes' subject upon which a whole world of objects can be secured. In view of the possibility of nothingness, Heidegger points to the ontological structure intrinsic to human finitude as *Dasein* [There-being] – that being which is concerned with its being (and non-being) and is this being. In anxiety, *Dasein* – which always finds itself in the midst of 'the totality of beings' – experiences that and how 'the totality of beings' sinks into indifference and offers no support to *Dasein*.¹⁵ For Jüngel as with Heidegger, it is precisely this thrownness¹⁶ and 'descent' into nothing that involves the surrender of one's role as a grounded subject which has grasped its own ground and also provides the ground for other objects. This is the case because the nothing into which *Dasein* 'transcends' is not at its disposal, but it comes upon *Dasein* in anxiety – in the vague dread of nothing.

Thus for Heidegger, 'nothing' is not an object or even a logical negation of beings as a whole, but more a 'hovering'.¹⁷ It is particularly the later Heidegger's work that explores nothing's role in 'giving' *Dasein* – from which beings-as-a-whole slips away in anxiety – an original openness to beings 'as such'.¹⁸ This phase of Heidegger's work is most significant for Jüngel's account of thinking. Heidegger shows that it is the experience of nothing that unveils beings in their being, that is, the surprising fact that there are really beings at all. 'Only because the nothing is manifest in the ground of *Dasein* can the total strangeness of beings overwhelm us. . . . Human existence can relate to beings only if it holds itself out into the

13. Cf. Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 94.

14. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 226; also 'What is Metaphysics?', pp. 102ff.

15. Cf. Heidegger, 'What is Metaphysics', pp. 100ff.

16. Cf. Jüngel, 'Meine Zeit steht in Deinen Händen (Psalm 31,16): Zur Würde des befristeten Menschenlebens', in *Indikative der Gnade – Imperative der Freiheit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2000), pp. 63f.

17. Heidegger, 'What is Metaphysics', p. 103.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

nothing.¹⁹ Existence is revealed as ‘irruption’ [*Einbruch*] into the totality of beings, by reason of which these beings as beings become manifest.²⁰ Thus Heidegger can say that in *Dasein* the essential ground on the basis of which humans are able to ‘*ek-sist*’ (i.e. stand outside of themselves in freedom) is preserved.²¹ Without the ‘original revelation of the nothing,’ *Dasein* ‘could never be related to beings nor even to itself . . . no selfhood, and no freedom.’²² Thus *Dasein* is revealed not as self-possession, but fundamentally as ‘being held out into the nothing.’²³ It is not that consciousness brings objects before it, reducing reality to the subject’s picture, forcing nature into the shape given it by humanity; rather beings as a whole ‘come to themselves’ ‘[o]nly in the nothing of *Dasein*.’²⁴

This ‘hovering’ of nothing which preserves *Dasein*’s *ek*-sistence is extremely important for understanding Heidegger’s and Jüngel’s distinction between fundamental ontology and (metaphysical) anthropology. It is in the experience of nothing that one exists (or *ek*-sists), according to Jüngel as ‘transcendence abounding in and surpassing toward possibilities,’ as ‘a creature of distance. Only through primordial distances . . . does a true nearness to things flourish in him.’²⁵ As such the essence of *Dasein* is essentially a coming-to-pass, the ontological structure of humanity which is prior to humanity, which grounds the finitude of humanity. ‘[M]ore original than the human person is the finitude of *Dasein* in the person,’²⁶ for it is as a creature of distance that one can first come into true nearness to things *and to oneself*. In other words, *Dasein* is not a (ontic) possession or property of the person (e.g. intellect); it is an attempt to think humanity not determined by the distinction between subject and object. Following Heidegger’s account of nothing, Jüngel notes that in anthropology – rightly understood – ‘one speaks of ontological structures as opposed to ontic structures, for one’s *Dasein* always implies a relationship to its (and not only to its) being.’²⁷

It is along this path that Jüngel’s theological thought as tutored by Heidegger tries to execute a reversal from metaphysical *representing* to a no-longer-metaphysical *thinking*. ‘What characterizes metaphysical thinking which

19. Ibid., p. 111.

20. Ibid., p. 97.

21. Heidegger, ‘On the Essence of Truth,’ *Basic Writings*, p. 128.

22. Heidegger, ‘What is Metaphysics?’, p. 106.

23. Ibid., p. 105.

24. Ibid., p. 110.

25. Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons*, trans. Terrence Malick (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 133; cited in Jüngel, ‘On Becoming Truly Human,’ in *Theological Essays II*, p. 235.

26. Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1951), p. 207.

27. Jüngel, ‘Die Möglichkeit theologischer Anthropologie auf dem Grunde der Analogie,’ in idem, *Barth-Studien* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1982), p. 216; Jüngel refers here to Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §4, pp. 3–35.

grounds the ground for beings is the fact that metaphysical thinking departs from what is present in its presence, and thus represents it in terms of its ground as something grounded.²⁸ In order to overcome this metaphysical distance, Jüngel (with Heidegger) seeks to 'take a "step backward", allowing us to enter into that which is to be mastered and to overcome it'.²⁹ Expressed differently, '[t]hinking does not overcome metaphysics by climbing still higher, surmounting it, transcending it somehow or other; thinking overcomes metaphysics by climbing back down into the nearness of the nearest. . . . The descent leads to the poverty of the *ek*-sistence of the *homo humanus*'.³⁰ Here, the nothing no longer emerges as nothing but, in Heidegger's terms, Being dawns.

With this move towards the granting of Being, an emphasis on language as an event of truth appears in Heidegger's work; and it is at this point that Heidegger's influence on Jüngel is most intense. In the non-objectifying thought that 'steps back' into a true nearness to things, transcendental questioning (e.g. of the conditions of the possibility of experience) ceases and – in terms used by both Heidegger and Jüngel – becomes a 'listening correspondence'. Here thought does not originate from the thinker, but rather 'springs forth', as it were, from the encounter with Being and in correspondence to Being as such.³¹ In this way, thinking 'lets itself be claimed by Being' so that 'Being comes to language. Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells'.³² This became decisive for Jüngel's later theology: 'I came to understand something decisive for my life: above all this, that in thinking, listening has priority over questioning'.³³ Stated differently, language is not a transcendental power *above* Being (that would be conceived metaphysically), nor primarily a means of objectifying and mastering reality; rather it is a 'word' which first opens up the difference between Being and beings, a prevailing which 'relates, maintains, proffers, and

28. Heidegger, 'The End of Philosophy', in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 56.

29. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 153 n.1.

30. Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism' in *Basic Writings*, p. 231; cited by Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 208; also in idem, 'Der Schritt zurück: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Heidegger Deutung Heinrich Otts', *ZThK* 58 [1961], p. 111; idem, 'Gott entsprechendes schweigen? Theologie in der Nachbarschaft des Denkens von Martin Heidegger', in *Martin Heidegger. Fragen an sein Werk. Ein Symposium* [Stuttgart: Reclam, 1982], pp. 44f; idem (-Trowitzsch), 'Provozierendes Denken', pp. 71f.

31. Cf. Heidegger's 1949 introduction to 'What is Metaphysics' (1929) in *Was ist Metaphysik?*, 13th edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986), p. 10; cited by Jüngel, 'Der Schritt zurück', p. 111. Cf. also idem, 'Zum Ursprung der Analogie bei Parmenides und Heraklit', in *Entsprechungen: Gott – Wahrheit – Mensch, Theologische Erörterungen II*, 2nd edn (Munich: Kaiser, 1986), pp. 69f.

32. Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', pp. 194, 193. Cf. Jüngel, 'Der Schritt zurück', p. 122.

33. Jüngel, *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken*, p. 22.

enriches the face-to-face encounter'.³⁴ Most importantly for Jüngel, the subject is decentred and the 'person addressed in such a case is included [*einbezogen*] in the word event'³⁵ which enables original co-respondence [*Ent-sprechung*]. This word brings about an existential distancing of the ego that first truly grants an 'abode' for the being of mortals in-the-world; the thinking of language in this respect 'accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man'.³⁶ Many years later, Jüngel wrote that 'in Freiburg I heard the following statement from Heidegger: "Language speaks [*spricht*]. The human co-responds [*entspricht*] to language". That was something I wanted to pursue'.³⁷

The later Heidegger understood the human being as that open region (*Da*) which stands open to beings within which beings – with regard to what they are and how they are – can take their stand and become capable of being said. Jüngel's anthropology develops this lingual 'essence' (not as 'whatness' but as 'lingering' or 'prevailing' which opens up paths) of humanity, that is, the existential distancing of the ego by language, in which a new qualification of the person's state of being-present results. Out of the primordial event of address, Jüngel can state generally: 'Man is the creature whose being is not in immediate correspondence with itself but is capable of being interrupted at any moment by other things that exist, and in fact is always being so interrupted. . . . Human life, therefore, is the interruption of the continuity of created life by the occurrence of truth'.³⁸

Jüngel speaks frequently of this lingual interruption as an *Ereignis* [event] of truth, that is, a word which intervenes and penetrates the everyday continuities of life such that one comes to oneself outside oneself in a new way. Jüngel points to poetry, a judge's judgement, a declaration of love or a word of repudiation as examples which effect one's self-relation and hence one's being.³⁹ In these

34. Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 107.

35. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 10; cf. also idem, "Even the beautiful must die" – Beauty in the Light of Truth. Theological Observations on the Aesthetic Relation, in *Theological Essays II*, pp. 65f. Jüngel found motifs of Heidegger, Luther and Barth converging in Fuchs's concept of being swept into [*Einkehr*] the Word or text with one's own present. "This legacy continues to influence me. I have pursued it, not simply out of obligation, but because it was so perspicuous to me" (Jüngel, *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken*, p. 27).

36. Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', p. 193.

37. Jüngel, *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken*, p. 26; cf. all of Heidegger, *Language, in Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), pp. 187–211.

38. Jüngel, 'The Truth of Life: Observations on Truth as the Interruption of the Continuity of Life', in *Creation, Christ and Culture. Studies in Honour of T. F. Torrance*, ed. Richard W. A. MacKinney (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), pp. 232f; cf. also Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 170ff.

39. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 10ff. Cf. also idem, 'Metaphorical Truth. Reflections on Theological Metaphor as a Contribution to a Hermeneutics of Narrative

Sprachereignisse or language-events, the entire person is drawn out of themselves into the word. *Ereignen* is the verb that names the appropriating by which there can be a meaningful mutual entrusting and belonging (correspondence = analogy).⁴⁰ Thus *ereignen* comes to mean the process by which beings are able to come into the light and clearing of truth, such that each exists in its own truth; moreover, *ereignen* implies an existing in appropriation of and to each other; here Being is revealed as *being-together* (rather than substance).⁴¹

In this respect, Jüngel's work is deeply informed by Heidegger's observation that the lingual *event* of being is the essence of truth⁴² – this openness as a domain of relatedness (co-respondence) which precedes and makes possible truth as correctness, that is, the correspondence of mind and thing, *adaequatio intellectus et rei*. Being [*Sein*] is understood as a verbal noun [*Wesen*], in the sense of arriving, coming to reside, taking place (which goes beyond the alternative of presence or absence), an event as a '*disclosure of appropriation*'⁴³ and domain of relatedness, which first makes truth as correctness possible. 'But if the correctness (truth) of statements becomes possible only through this openness of comportment, then what first makes correctness possible must with more original right be taken as the essence of truth'.⁴⁴

At this point, the profound significance of Heidegger's work on truth for Jüngel's theology, especially his anthropology, becomes clearer.

If, however, man wants to make his self-correspondence so secure that he can no longer be interrupted (i.e. metaphysics), the result is both the suppression of

Theology', in *Theological Essays I*, ed. and trans. John B. Webster (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), p. 52.

40. Jüngel adopts the following understanding of language from Ernst Fuchs: 'Language is not an *abbreviatur* of thought, but rather thinking is an *abbreviatur* of language. Language is gift. It appropriates and dedicates in occurring [*sie eignet zu und an, indem sie ereignet*]. . . . I consider the Johannine *ego eimi* as that language-event in which, very simply, God as Word, as Yes, expressed himself' (Ernst Fuchs, 'What is a "Language-Event"? A Letter, 1960', in *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, trans. Andrew Scobie [London: SCM, 1964], p. 210 [trans. altered]; cited by Jüngel, 'Der Schritt zurück', p. 120, n.4).

41. This of course calls into question the priority of the distinction between the knowing subject and object. In this respect, Jüngel argues that Heidegger's thought can have crucial implications for the relationship of humans to their environment. 'We must learn to conceive of being as a *being-together* instead of as substance. Then and only then will the usurped *Imperium* become once again the *Dominium terrae* that the Creator entrusted to his creation' (Jüngel, 'Toward the Heart of the Matter', p. 232); with Heidegger, Jüngel refers to humans as 'shepherds of Being' ('Menschwerdung des Menschen', *Evangelische Kommentare* 17 [1984], p. 448). Cf. also idem, 'Even the beautiful must die', pp. 80–1.

42. Jüngel, *Die Leidenschaft, Gott zu denken*, p. 56.

43. Hofstadter, 'Introduction', in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. xxi.

44. Heidegger, 'On the Essence of Truth', pp. 124f; cf. also Jüngel, 'Even the beautiful must die', pp. 69ff.

truth itself (as an occurrence which intervenes in and interrupts the continuity of life) and the restriction of the *occurrence* of truth to the sphere of the correctness of a particular correspondence.⁴⁵

In other words, this experience of interruption (or ‘ontological shock’) not only is more original than the experience of an object by a subject (that is, actuality) but also, as Jüngel argues with Heidegger, enhances one’s being (as *being-together*); it makes one ‘true’. In this event one ‘has a qualitatively new experience with one’s being. I call it *an experience with experience*, because in it not only every experience already had, but experience itself is experienced anew’.⁴⁶ This proposal is a massive attack on the self-understanding of moderns which is intent on securing its own self-certainty. Jüngel argues that what is ontologically distinct about human beings is that they are beings who can be interrupted and *enhanced*; and since this happens, the human being can have a relationship to self, and thus relate to his or her own existence. Thus in the event of the word as a disclosure of appropriation, the reality of the individual is enhanced – in Jüngel’s terms – made true.

Jüngel identifies this point not only as the centre of Heidegger’s thought, but also as the place where one finds a ‘hidden relationship’ to theology⁴⁷ in extreme tension. At this point, I can only indicate that beyond Heidegger, Jüngel suggests that this ‘experience with experience’ can unfold not only from *anxiety* as developed earlier, but also as the sheer *gratitude* or *joy* when being is experienced as creation out of non-being.⁴⁸ Where this is evoked through interruption and is assimilated, according to Jüngel, there emerges an ‘enhancing’ of life.⁴⁹ Moreover, it is not the call of Being, but for the theologian it is the listening correspondence (=analogy) in encounter with the Word of God in which the essence of humanity springs forth. For Jüngel, the Word of God as *Sprachereignis* ‘brings God and the addressed person together lingually. In the event of the Word, God is in our midst – not existing over us or as inconceivable – but as the one who draws us into this event’.⁵⁰ For Jüngel, Jesus Christ as the Word of God is that nearing by which God and humanity are gathered in a play of appropriating and self-appropriating in which God and humanity belong together. Jüngel can write that it was his encounter with Heidegger that prevented him ‘from an anthropomorphism’ in the doctrine of creation. ‘I made a mental note of his statement: “Philosophy perishes when it has become anthropology”. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same holds true for theology. We human beings must learn to conceive of being as a *being-*

45. Jüngel, ‘The Truth of Life’, p. 234.

46. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 32 [trans. altered].

47. Cf. Jüngel, ‘Der Schritt zurück’, pp. 111, 122; cf. also idem, ‘Zum Ursprung der Analogie bei Parmenides und Heraklit’, in *Entsprechungen*, pp. 52–3.

48. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 32.

49. Cf. Jüngel, ‘The Truth of Life’, p. 234.

50. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 12.

together instead of as substance'.⁵¹ Nonetheless, in these regards Jüngel argues that 'the speaking of Being and the proclamation of the cross apparently speak fundamentally different languages'.⁵² It is precisely at the points of closest proximity to Heidegger – which is crucial for an appreciation of Jüngel's theological anthropology – that Jüngel's theological anthropology distinguishes itself from Heidegger's fundamental ontology as well. For Jüngel, there can be no '*mixophilosophicotheologia*'.⁵³ On the one hand, the greater the influence, the more adamant is Jüngel's claim that theology will 'have to go its own direction, and it cannot simply be identical with the intellectual path of the philosopher'.⁵⁴ Yet, on the other hand, philosophy and theology remain two 'dissimilar sisters' who are bound by 'too much common history, too many common burdens [but] . . . also common promises'. To this extent, they will continue to live together – 'critically but neighbourly' – for some time yet in the house of academia.⁵⁵

Much more could be developed in detail on the centrality of non-being, language as an event of truth, experience with experience and correspondence in Jüngel's strictly *theological* anthropology. The earlier should suffice, however, to show in some detail the relationship between nothing (as ontological shock) and the thought of human being (as a creature of distance) that moves beyond the metaphysical question: 'What is humanity?' If Jüngel's theology can do without the *Nichts*, as Ernstpeter Maurer suggests,⁵⁶ then, contra Maurer, Jüngel's theological anthropology is of little significance. In either case, the earlier framework does

51. Jüngel, 'Toward the Heart of the Matter', p. 232 [trans. altered]; cf. Heidegger, 'Überwindung der Metaphysik', *Vorträge und Aufsätze* I, 3rd edn (Pfullingen: Neske, 1967), p. 79; for notion of 'Being-with', cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §26, pp. 153ff.

52. Jüngel, 'Der Schritt zurück', p. 115; cf. also idem, 'Provozierendes Denken', p. 69, and idem, 'Gott entsprechendes Schweigen', p. 41; with reference to Barth, Jüngel speaks of the theological possibility of correspondence as analogy of faith. Cf. esp. Jüngel, 'Die Möglichkeit theologischer Anthropologie', pp. 210–32.

53. Jüngel, 'Geleitwort', p. VII; cf. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 153n1.

54. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 153n1. Jüngel can be much clearer in distinguishing himself from Heidegger when it is suggested that the philosopher (Heidegger) and theologians are participating in the same search: 'Is the dialogue between theology and philosophy really carried out as a common search [*suzetein*]? Is the manner of questioning in theology not one that is totally different than in philosophy? And, for example, does not the problem of existence in both come to speech – even as a *problem* – in a totally different manner? Has not the problem which determines every theology come to speech in such a manner that binds theology precisely to the speech-events that characterize the New Testament?' (idem, 'Der Schritt zurück', pp. 114f; cf. also idem, 'Gott entsprechendes Schweigen?', pp. 37–45).

55. Jüngel, 'Vorwort', *Entsprechungen*, p. 8.

56. Ernstpeter Maurer, 'Tendenzen neuer Trinitätslehre', *Verkündigung und Forschung* 39 (1994), p. 12.

indicate at least how Heidegger's thought has provoked Jüngel to develop his theological anthropology independent not only of metaphysics, but also of Heidegger's own fundamental ontology. On the basis of this work we now look at one other area of significant influence, namely Jüngel's reflections on the relationship between death and time.

Temporality and Death

Jüngel's account of truth – parallel to Heidegger's – proposes a new understanding of the historicity of human being. In this section, we will profile and show how Jüngel's account of time in view of non-being follows Heidegger's lead in thinking the essence of time more originally than the tradition from Aristotle to Hegel.

Jüngel notes that, for Aristotle, time is 'the number of motion in respect of "before" and "after"':⁵⁷ The measured 'how long' of the duration comprises the essence of Aristotelian time: if something moved passes through two successive points of magnitude, the being of time is experienced. This definition of time is dependent on space, and is indifferent towards any and every content. Both Heidegger and Jüngel suggest that this representation of time as a distance from the now of a subject became decisive for modernity.⁵⁸ However, the problem is that 'obtaining the measurement, we forget, as it were, what has been measured as such, so that nothing is to be found except a number and a stretch.'⁵⁹ In contrast, Heidegger attempts to uncover a more primary experience of time from which the chronological measurement of time then also originates. Heidegger abandons the orientation of time to the here and now of the existing subject, and tries to understand time 'qualitatively', that is, as a condition of the possibility of human *Dasein* as that which understands Being. Rather than seeing the now as determinative of the past (i.e. as the now that was) and future (the now which will be), Jüngel with Heidegger attempts to show the now as derivative of an

57. Aristotle, *Physics* IV, 11, 219b 1f, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle I*, ed. Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 372; cited by Jüngel, 'The Dogmatic Significance of the Question of the Historical Jesus', and 'The Emergence of the New', in *Theological Essays II*, pp. 104f and 54.

58. Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus. Eine Untersuchung zur Präzisierung der Frage nach dem Ursprung der Christologie*, 6th edn (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986), p. 140, citing Heidegger, 'Das Wesen der Sprache', p. 209. In this context, it is important to note the significance of Ernst Fuchs's work on Jesus's understanding of time in mediating Heidegger's thinking on time to Jüngel. Cf. esp. Fuchs, 'Jesus' Understanding of Time', in idem, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 104–66; also Johannes Baptist Brantschen, *Zeit zu verstehen. Wege und Umwege heutiger Theologie. Zu einer Ortsbestimmung der Theologie von Ernst Fuchs* (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1974).

59. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 471, cited in Jüngel, 'The Dogmatic Significance of the Question of the Historical Jesus', p. 105.

'authentic present' of the 'moment' in which 'time is then experienced as "time for . . .".'⁶⁰

In order to understand this move, we must examine the role of death or 'the end' of human existence in the work of Heidegger and Jüngel. For Heidegger, it is not the past that is most important for human *Dasein*, rather the anticipation of what is not yet in being but which nevertheless concerns and influences me, in this case, my death. In *Being and Time*, *Dasein*'s anticipation of death is experienced existentially as being-toward-death.⁶¹ It is only because *Dasein* can anticipate and as such is oriented to the future, that it can return to what has been and retain it. Here Heidegger turns around the normal concept of time as moving forward, as it were, from past to present and into the future. 'Only so far as it is futural can *Dasein* be authentically as having been. The character of "having been" arises, in a certain way, from the future'.⁶² In contrast, when one's ability-to-be is comprehended in terms of the object of concern which lies before it in the present, *Dasein* temporalizes itself inauthentically, forfeiting itself to the object of concern. Authentic temporalization, however, temporalizes itself directly in terms of the future which Heidegger makes clear in the moods of fear and anxiety. He suggests that it is through this anticipation of the end (anticipatory resoluteness⁶³) that a *Situation* is disclosed in which *Dasein* 'is not only brought back from distraction with the objects of one's closest concern, but it gets held in the future and in having been. That *Present* which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is *authentic* itself, we call the "moment of vision" [*Augenblick*]'.⁶⁴ Thus, in contrast to an understanding of 'now' as that in which something arises or passes away, the *Augenblick* 'permits us to encounter for the first time what can be "in a time" as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand'.⁶⁵ The moment is not a point on a temporal series (oriented in terms of a subject), but the manner in which *Dasein* is opened up to what gives itself to be encountered.

Heidegger's understanding of time – which does not unfold from the perspective of the subject – breaks decisively with the metaphysical sense of time which emphasized the standing presence of being (*ousia*). For Heidegger time is a 'con-temporaneity' in which three dimensions of time are involved in a mutual interplay, both passing into one another, and holding one another apart, yielding a (disruptive) opening in the contemporary world with new and surprising possibilities and directions. It is especially in his later works that Heidegger speaks of the event of truth, that is, the opening up or revealing

60. Jüngel, "The Dogmatic Significance of the Question of the Historical Jesus", p. 105.

61. Cf. Jüngel, *Death*, p. 15; cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§46–53, pp. 235–67.

62. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 373.

63. *Ent-schlossenheit* suggests disclosedness and opening, versus a purely voluntaristic understanding of resolution.

64. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 387.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

of the Being of beings from the emergence of nothing, as that which first opens up a world, gives time and space and first makes people *historical*. ‘By opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening’ – that is, they become historical – and space is made ‘for spaciousness’: “‘To make space for” means here especially to liberate the free space of the open region and to establish it in its structure.’⁶⁶ Again Heidegger writes that ‘[h]istory begins only when beings themselves are expressly drawn up into their unconcealment and conserved in it . . . they occur together in a “time” which, itself unmeasurable, first opens up the open region for every measure.’⁶⁷ The event of truth which ‘makes space for . . .’ is the place of human wholeness: it gathers its world and also gathers my existence out of its actual scattering to a point that promises wholeness.⁶⁸

Jüngel’s understanding of time rests heavily on both Heidegger’s early and later work. Jüngel affirms that death as the *end* of humanity is not simply a naked fact, or a phenomenon of transience. Rather death ‘shapes man’s life at its most fundamental level and determines him in the most human of his relationships.’⁶⁹ In keeping with the later Heidegger, Jüngel can say that when the ego is addressed about something which is Not-Here-Now, the ego ‘is removed here and now into either the past or the future . . . It is out of that distance from oneself that the person approaches himself. Thus he *has* time. Thus he *is* man.’⁷⁰ According to Jüngel, this general anthropological content ‘is of the greatest theological significance,’ because ‘man is addressed by God about God, a *total distancing* of the ego takes place over against its being-here and being-now, and accordingly a *completely new qualification of man’s state of being present* results, which one could call *eschatological spiritual presence*.’⁷¹ Consequently, it is in this space of this total distancing that the human addressed about God is gathered and brought into a new, ultimate nearness to him- or herself, in other words, is made whole.⁷² Jüngel points to the Christian proclamation of God’s love in and through ‘the possibility of one’s own non-being (in Pauline terms: of death as the wages of one’s sin), and thereby also of the possibility of non-being in general (in

66. Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, pp. 170f; cf. also pp. 168, 181. Many parallels can be found in Jüngel’s very Heidegger-ian masterpiece, ‘Even the beautiful must die’, pp. 59–81.

67. Heidegger, ‘On the Essence of Truth’, p. 129.

68. Cf. Heidegger: *Nietzsche* I, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 195ff; also Jüngel, ‘Even the beautiful must die’, p. 66.

69. Jüngel, *Death*, p. 5.

70. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 173.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

72. ‘For before truth descends to be the conformity of the mind and object (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*) that is, as epistemological *correctness*, it is most fundamentally a matter of this: that which is becomes *present to itself*. To be true means: *to be present to oneself* and precisely thereby *to be lucid*’ (Jüngel, ‘Even the beautiful must die’, p. 72).

apocalyptic terms: of the end of the world)⁷³ which breaks through our present, judges the dominance of our past and grants us the new time and space of the kingdom.⁷⁴ The nearing of the kingdom of God teaches one to understand the 'now' from its future, or its end, and thereby from its essence. Here, future is not understood as a distance from the 'now', according to Jüngel, but as coming into the present which qualifies the present actuality of the person, and making historical existence possible.⁷⁵

Earlier, we have attempted to sketch Jüngel's argument from the eschatological coming of God that Christian faith sees the world against the horizon of a new history which is more original than the Aristotelian notion of time.⁷⁶ In partial dependence on Heidegger's thinking on time, Jüngel makes the wholeness of humanity thematic as an event occurring in a history constituted by the Word of God.⁷⁷ But more specifically, the influence of Heidegger on Jüngel's notion of time has become obvious, specifically the recognition that the present is originally accompanied by future (and past), that is, with possibilities beyond the fleeting moment. Both Jüngel and Heidegger, the theologian as theologian, and the philosopher, are concerned to take leave of a notion of time whose coherence is guaranteed by the subject of temporal experience.

Jüngel and Heidegger – Summary Remarks

In this chapter, we have attempted to show the significance of Heidegger's philosophy in clarifying for Jüngel the dangers of modern metaphysics and for provoking Jüngel to think theology from its own ground. The parallel concerns of Heidegger and Jüngel shown earlier provide a crucial framework for understanding and evaluating, in particular, Jüngel's theological anthropology. Jüngel, with Heidegger, is primarily interested in the possibility of our enhancement as linguistic beings who exist in a certain withdrawal from ourselves. Jüngel's account of truth, parallel to Heidegger's, proposes a new understanding of the historicity of human existence. Here truth is related primarily to being and only secondarily to knowledge; this is 'the where' of human wholeness. According to

73. Jüngel, 'Value-Free Truth', in *Theological Essays II*, p. 208. For Jüngel, God's love is defined in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as 'the unity of life and death in favour of life' (*God as the Mystery of the World*, *passim*).

74. Cf. Jüngel, 'The Emergence of the New', pp. 54f.

75. Cf. Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus*, pp. 154, 159, 169; also *idem*, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 300ff.

76. Jüngel, *Death*, p. 86; Jüngel, 'The Effectiveness of Christ Withdrawn. On the Process of Historical Understanding as an Introduction to Christology', in *Theological Essays I*, p. 224.

77. Jüngel, 'The World as Possibility and Actuality: The Ontology of the Doctrine of Justification', in *Theological Essays I*, p. 113.

both Heidegger and Jüngel, this ontological structure is prior to our actuality, that is, to that which we make of ourselves.

This study has also shown clearly the *fundamental* difference between Heidegger's thought of Being and Jüngel's own theological work. Whereas Heidegger sought to indicate the essence of humanity as the place in which the Being of beings reveals and gives itself, Jüngel makes the case that the being of humanity be thought out of the event of God's coming to humanity in the human Jesus (God's Word). Jüngel hears a different word than the philosopher, and has a uniquely theological basis for exploring humanity as a linguistic, *ek-static* being. Yet precisely in this way Jüngel does not think God as the highest being or highest good, but he 'steps back' into the 'nearness of the nearest' to think the being of God, humanity and the world in the *Ereignis* of encounter. This approach meets Nietzsche's demand (though for different reasons) to encounter reality as it is, without preconceptions that would determine the encounter – in other words, free from the 'Babylonian captivity' of metaphysics. This non-metaphysical, non-foundational thinking allows Jüngel to argue that one can be human without God; God is not a necessary function for the securing of humanity, the world or morality; but according to Jüngel's understanding of truth as interruption and enhancement, God is 'more' than necessary for us.

Perhaps, the most one can say about Heidegger's work in relation to Jüngel is that the latter finds it is profoundly 'interesting' in so far as 'it provokes theology to be nothing other than simply theology'.⁷⁸ It is in this way that Heidegger's thought is an *Anstoß* for Jüngel's, both as impulse and offence. On the one hand, Heidegger has taught Jüngel how to think (i.e. to overcome metaphysical reflection), and Heidegger's thought furnishes some of the elementary insights and tools which Jüngel employs to develop an eschatological ontology, that is, one in which the revelation of God has universally binding anthropological relevance. Yet, on the other hand, because Jüngel's is an eschatological anthropology, he is forced to say that the manner of questioning in theology is totally different than in philosophy, and even the problem of existence comes up in a totally different way.⁷⁹ Hence, Jüngel can say 'every statement in theological anthropology must be formulated in such a way that, without "God" being mentioned, that statement is understandable, meaningful and profitable'.⁸⁰ Thus the claims that we exist in a certain withdrawal from ourselves, that we are dependent upon being addressed, that we and our world are able to be increased – are all genuinely eschatological insights (though without content) which, Jüngel argues, can be generally appreciated apart from God, even though they remain 'ambivalent'.⁸¹

Overall, Jüngel's use of Heidegger's philosophy may be *ad hoc*; in other words, he only uses the insights gleaned from philosophy in so far as they help

78. Jüngel (–M. Trowitzsch), 'Provozierendes Denken', p. 69.

79. Jüngel, 'Der Schritt zurück', p. 115.

80. Jüngel, 'Extra Christum nulla salus – A Principle of Natural Theology?', p. 186.

81. *Ibid.*

communicate the view of humanity coming from the event of God becoming human in Christ.⁸² At one level, Jüngel and Heidegger work with very different presuppositions; at another level, Jüngel's use of Heidegger's work is pervasive and even systematic (e.g. much more so than Karl Barth's use of philosophy). On the whole, however, it can be said that Jüngel's theological work on truth and the essence of humanity cannot be understood fully or appreciated without a careful examination of his relationship to Heidegger. It is this intimate knowledge of Heidegger's thought that has allowed Jüngel to elucidate, clarify and reconstruct the affirmations of Christian faith in a manner that addresses the issues of contemporary experience in a way that is publically accessible and meaningful.

While Heidegger's 'intellectual eros' did not seek disciples, he did demand rigorous, independent thought from his students⁸³ – and in this regard Jüngel was a model student who demonstrates not only to theologians that Heidegger cannot be evaded. It is precisely Jüngel's Christological starting point that makes his reception of Heidegger's philosophical perspective both unique and of lasting significance for theology.⁸⁴

82. Cf. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 48. A most successful example of this approach is Jüngel's essay on art: 'Even the beautiful must die.'

83. Jüngel, 'Geleitwort', p. VII.

84. The argument that Jüngel's reception of Heidegger's thought is 'uncritical' (cf. Wilfried Härle and Eilert Herms, 'Hermeneutische Theologie' in *Verkündigung und Forschung* 28 [1983], p. 26) misses the heart of Jüngel's theology; any serious criticism will have to be directed at Jüngel's Christology.