

Einsicht, Seinsicht, Nichtsicht

“He owned a set of Freud’s works and read psychiatric journals. Once you had read *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* you knew that everyday life was psychopathology. That was all right with Humboldt.”¹

Wieviel Wahn, so viel »Sein«.

After *Being and Time* made him famous Heidegger must have got his share of crank mail. Anyway he tells his students in the Schelling lectures,

“Thus, we have again and again schoolteachers who have gone wild or retired privy councilors in a provincial court, good people in their profession who get the idea [*auf den Einfall kommen*] they have to ‘make’ a system of philosophy or world view. On a foundation of writings read at random to no purpose, large tables and compartments are then projected in which the whole world is stuffed, if possible decked out, with lots of numbers, figures, and arrows. And there are people and places who take this stuff seriously and perpetrate it.”

That such things go on, Heidegger says, that the species romance gets repeatedly fantasized, “is as necessary [*notwendig*] as the husks in wine pressing.”² Why ‘necessary’?

Contemporary example: Although David Birnbaum had made a fortune in the diamond trade he was not content with a life of wealth and found himself impelled to explain the meaning of the universe. Which he proceeded to do, at least to his own satisfaction, in his *Summa Metaphysica* (2012). *The Guardian* profile informs us that

“The answer, after years of fruitless reflection, dawned unexpectedly. Birnbaum was in Barbados on holiday in 1982, sunbathing on a beach and turning matters over in his mind. ‘I’m good on the beach,’ he explained. ‘My brain is working a little better . . . And then’ – he snapped his fingers – ‘it was clear to me.’ The answer was: potential.”³

Eureka; upon which experience Birnbaum built his *Summa*. For insight is an experienced event: “an insight is neither a definition nor a postulate nor an argument but a preconceptual event.”⁴

¹ Saul Bellow, *Humboldt’s Gift* (1975) 5.

² Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* (tr. Joan Stambaugh 1985) 26-27.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/19/david-birnbaum-jeweller-philosopher> .

⁴ *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 3* (ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran 1992) 82.

Yet insights, according to their analyst Lonergan, “are a dime a dozen.” So having learned the lesson that we love our insights as we love ourselves “critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure.”⁵ *Nullius in verbis*; where *verba* report insight, and ‘no one’ includes the dear self.

The publication in 2015 of Thomas Sheehan’s *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*⁶ has prompted renewed discussion of the very notion of paradigm shift. Paradigm shift, the large-scale changeover of understanding, depends in some measure on transformative insight. Scientific development, according to T. S. Kuhn,

“depends in part on a process of non-incremental or revolutionary change. Some revolutions are large, like those associated with the names of Copernicus, Newton, or Darwin, but most are much smaller, like the discovery of oxygen or the planet Uranus. The usual prelude to such changes of this sort is . . . the awareness of anomaly, of an occurrence or set of occurrences that does not fit existing ways of ordering phenomena. The changes that result therefore require ‘putting on a different kind of thinking-cap,’ one that renders the anomalous lawlike but that, in the process, also transforms the order exhibited by some other phenomena, previously unproblematic.”⁷

The conjecture jumps up here that ‘anomaly’ manifests in human being as the existential *Unheimlichkeit*, ‘uncanniness.’ If Dasein is natural selection’s obligate revolutionary (its hypervariator), then Dasein’s having a component “awareness of [its own] anomaly” would be a matter of course; with *Unheimlichkeit* functioning as the ever present anomaly – ‘the essential tension’ – which existence, as self-interpretation, must unceasingly strive to overcome, ‘render lawlike’; resulting in continual self-transformation by “escape to a different milieu,”⁸ iterated *Umschläge* of various scope and duration. The movement is not ‘toward’ but ‘from.’ As Kuhn says of the special case of science, “to understand scientific progress we need not suppose that science moves closer and closer to the truth; the same phenomena follow from the assumption that science, at any time, simply evolves from its current position under the pressure of currently available argument and observation.”⁹

⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (2nd ed. 1973) 13. ‘A-dime-a-dozen’ suggests that the magnitude of insights may vary, like earthquakes, as the inverse of their frequency.

⁶ https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2zuyt5_UZUqZ05hVktjWEZpVzA/view .

⁷ Preface to Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (1977) xvii. “Most are much smaller” – again, maybe their size varies as the inverse of their frequency: $M \propto f^{-1}$. For the techniques by which – if only, contrary to fact, scientific revolutions were a measurable quantity – critical reasonableness might check and make sure see Cosma Shalizi, “So, You Think You Have a Power Law, Do You? Well, Isn’t That Special?” <http://www.stat.cmu.edu/~cshalizi/2010-10-18-Meetup.pdf> .

⁸ “Escape to a different milieu (via facultative change, or genetic ‘bet hedging’), even with imperfect adaptation, can be more advantageous than improved adaptation to a grossly hopeless or deteriorating situation.” Mary Jane West-Eberhard, “Alternative adaptations, speciation, and phylogeny (A Review),” 83 *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 1388, 1389 (1986).

⁹ Afterword (1984) to Thomas S. Kuhn, *Black-Body Theory and the Quantum Discontinuity, 1894-1912* (1978) 362.

To resume: Kuhn tells the story¹⁰ of his “discovering history,” when his “own enlightenment began” as he was trying and failing to make sense of Aristotle’s mechanics. In 1947 Kuhn was a graduate student of physics and was asked to prepare a case study, for students not majoring in a scientific discipline, of the development of mechanics. As he read Aristotle’s work on physics he found, as the conventional view also held, that “Aristotle had known almost no mechanics at all. . . . That conclusion was standard, and it might in principle have been right.” Yet Kuhn is troubled by the anomaly. After all Aristotle was the West’s original logician, a wide-ranging natural historian, and a subtle analyst of human experience. Why then was Aristotle so clumsy with simple mechanics? “I could easily believe that Aristotle had stumbled, but not that, on entering physics, he had totally collapsed.” Kuhn suspects that the fault lies with him, that he has misunderstood Aristotle’s meaning. He goes on,

“Feeling that way, I continued to puzzle over the text, and my suspicions ultimately proved well-founded. I was sitting at my desk with the text of Aristotle’s *Physics* open in front of me and with a four-colored pencil in my hand. Looking up, I gazed abstractedly out the window of my room – the visual image is one I still retain. Suddenly the fragments in my head sorted themselves out in a new way, and fell into place together. My jaw dropped, for all at once Aristotle seemed a very good physicist indeed, but of a sort I’d never dreamed possible.”¹¹

With that transformation, Kuhn says, “Now I could understand why he had said what he’d said, and what his authority had been. Statements that had previously seemed egregious mistakes, now seemed at worst near misses within a powerful and generally successful tradition.”¹²

More consequential than his new understanding of Aristotle was Kuhn’s realization that the change he experienced as he gazed out the window that summer day was the **same** kind of central change which revolutionizes a scientific discipline:

“That sort of experience – the pieces suddenly sorting themselves out and coming together in a new way – is the first general characteristic of revolutionary change that I shall be singling out after further considerations of examples. Though scientific revolutions leave much piecemeal mopping up to do, the central change

¹⁰ In two places: the Preface to *The Essential Tension*, and in his contribution “What Are Scientific Revolutions?” to *The Probabilistic Revolution: Volume I, Ideas in History* (ed. L. Krüger, L. J. Daston, M. Heidelberger 1987).

¹¹ “What Are Scientific Revolutions?” 9. In ‘Preface’ he recalls “One memorable (and very hot) summer day those perplexities suddenly vanished. I all at once perceived the connected rudiments of an alternate way of reading the texts with which I had been struggling.” xi. “Insight is the apprehension of relations,” Lonergan says (*Insight* 4). Wittgenstein emphasizes the importance of such an apprehension: “The concept of surveyable model [*übersichtlichen Darstellung*, ‘perspicuous representation’] is of fundamental importance for us. It denotes the form of our representation, the way we see things. . . . This surveyable model brings about the understanding which consists precisely in the fact that we ‘see the connections’ [*die Zusammenhänge sehen*]. Hence the importance of finding *connecting links* [*Zwischengliedern*].” “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*,” in *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951* (ed. James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann 1933) 133; translation altered as indicated.

¹² “What Are Scientific Revolutions?” 9.

cannot be experienced piecemeal, one step at a time. Instead, it involves some relatively sudden and unstructured transformation in which some part of the flux of experience sorts itself out differently and displays patterns that were not visible before.”¹³

“While discovering history,” Kuhn says, “I had discovered my first scientific revolution.”¹⁴ Both discoveries came by way of insight, a changeover of seeing-as.

Aristotle depicts insight (ἀγχίνοια; ‘acumen’) as “some good shot [εὐστοχία τις] striking upon the middle term [of a syllogism] in the blink of an eye [ἐν ἀσκέπτῳ χρόνῳ; the ‘nick’ of time, *Augenblick*].”¹⁵ His examples are of two kinds: astronomical – “such as if someone sees that the moon always has its bright side toward the sun, and quickly surmises that the moon gets its light from the sun;” and social – “Or seeing someone talking with a rich man, that he is hitting him up for money; or that certain people are close because ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’ brought them together.”¹⁶

In his study of tragedy the phenomenon of insight shows up as *anagnorisis*, ‘unignorancing’ (‘recognition’). Aristotle observes that “*anagnorisis*, just as the word indicates, is a changeover [*metabolē*] from not knowing to knowing: for those within a horizon of good fortune, to sweet delight; for those without, to endless night.”¹⁷ He immediately remarks that “the finest [*kallistē*] *anagnorisis* occurs together with the reversal [*peripeteia*], as in *Oedipus*.”¹⁸ Yet the ‘not knowing’ – often, and certainly in the case of *Oedipus* – is not absence of knowledge but rather knowing ‘the wrong paradigm.’ Before the *anagnorisis* *Oedipus* is certain, all too certain, of many things about himself which will turn out to be false; in particular that aggressive-appetitive intelligence is his special *daimon*, his guardian and savior.

Elsewhere in the *Poetics* the phenomenon of insight shows up in the remark on metaphor:

“the biggest deal by far is metaphor (πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι), for it’s the one thing that cannot be got from another, and it’s the mark of the right stuff (εὐφυΐας σεμεῖόν), because to metaphor well is to see the connection (τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν).”¹⁹

¹³ *Id.* 8-9.

¹⁴ “What my reading of Aristotle [in light of the new physics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] seemed therefore to disclose was a global sort of change in the way men viewed nature and applied language to it, one that could not properly be described as constituted by additions to knowledge or by the mere piecemeal correction of mistakes. . . . While discovering history, I had discovered my first scientific revolution.” Preface xiii.

¹⁵ *Posterior analytics* 89b 10-11. The imagery – bow-shot, swiftness, hit – connects insight with *kairos*, ‘the sticking place,’ ‘the what-to-do.’ See Richard B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (1951) Part III, ch. III: Καῖρός.

¹⁶ *Id.* 89b 11-14.

¹⁷ *Poetics* 1452a 29-32.

¹⁸ *Id.* 1452a 32-33.

¹⁹ *Id.* 1459a 5.

‘Connection’ for τὸ ὅμοιον because to human understanding likeness²⁰ indicates connection. To metaphor at all is to trigger a connection-operator for taking something as something – *entwerfen etwas als etwas*. “Metaphor,” writes Davidson, “makes us see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight.”²¹

Building on the work of his mentor Roger Sperry²² Michael Gazzaniga’s research on split-brain persons suggests that the connection-operator resides in the brain’s left half, and that this “interpreter” produces insight. The left hemisphere “engages in the human tendency to find order in chaos;” it “persists in forming hypotheses about the sequence of events even in the face of evidence that no pattern exists.” This “powerful mechanism,” this “tendency to generate explanations and hypotheses – to interpret – lies within the left hemisphere.” The interpretative capacity “is driven to generate explanations and hypotheses regardless of circumstances. The left hemisphere of split-brain patients does not hesitate to offer explanations for behaviours which are generated [independently] by the right hemisphere.”²³

Gazzaniga recounts how his research team came upon the phenomenon by posing to split-brain persons a ‘simultaneous concept test.’ Two very different images were flashed to the person in such a way that the right visual hemifield – thus the left brain – saw one of the images, and the left hemifield, the right brain, saw the other; neither half saw both images, and neither half – the corpus callosum having been severed – could access the other’s image. In one run of this test a large bird’s claw was flashed to the left brain and a winter scene – a snowman in the front yard of a house covered in snow – was flashed to the right brain.

Having experienced these two distinct images the split-brain subject was then shown – in plain view to both halves – an array of cards with a different picture on each card – of a snow shovel (a ‘scoop’ in the South), a lawn roller, a ‘yard broom,’ a pickaxe, a toaster, a rooster’s head, an apple, and a claw hammer. The person was then asked to point to the card-pictures associated with the images that were flashed to him.

“Patient P.S. responded by choosing the shovel with the left hand [controlled by the right brain that saw the winter scene] and the chicken [rooster’s head] with the right [the left brain that saw the bird-claw]. When asked why he chose these items, his left hemisphere [ignorant of the winter scene] replied, ‘Oh, that’s

²⁰ Likeness which the eye may find obscure. So Lévi-Strauss on totemism where “*it is not the resemblances but the differences which resemble each other*. . . . The resemblance presupposed by so-called totemic representations is *between these two systems of differences* [animals and ancestors].” *Totemism* (tr. Rodney Needham 1963) 77.

²¹ Donald Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” 5 *Critical Inquiry* 31, 46 (1978).

²² E.g., R. W. Sperry, “Cerebral Organization and Behavior,” 133 *Science* 1749 (1961).

²³ Michael S. Gazzaniga, “Cerebral specialization and interhemispheric communication: Does the corpus callosum enable the human condition?” 123 *Brain* 1293; 1315-1319 (2000).

simple. The chicken claw goes with the chicken, and you need a shovel to clean out the chicken shed.’ Here the left brain, observing the left hand’s [choice of shovel], interprets that response in a context consistent with its sphere of knowledge – one that does not include information about the . . . snow scene. We called this left hemisphere process ‘the interpreter.’”²⁴

The lesson seems to be, rather than that human beings tend to find order in chaos, that our understanding hardly recognizes such a thing as chaos. In Lonergan’s phrase “the spontaneous anticipations of human intelligence” expect that anything encountered is intelligible. Evidence that no pattern exists is evidence only that we have not yet found the pattern which must exist. For everyday understanding everything connects, somehow, to everything else, however obscurely or to-be-determined. If meaning is not everywhere it is nowhere.²⁵ And meaning is everywhere; the ultimate, abounding resource of connections available to the interpreter for splicing as needed *ad libitum*; insights a dime a dozen and cheaper by the gross; a trivial infinity because “everything is like [connectable to] everything, and in endless ways.”²⁶

From his study of the phenomenon Lonergan concludes that “What we have to grasp is that insight

(1) comes as a release to the tension of inquiry, (2) comes suddenly and unexpectedly, (3) is a function not of outer circumstances but of inner conditions,

²⁴ “Cerebral specialization and interhemispheric communication” 1315-1319. The interpreter’s insight conforms to Peirce’s model: “The surprising fact *C* is observed. But if *A* were the case then *C* would be a matter of course. Therefore, there is reason to suspect that *A* is the case.” *A*, the abductive suggestion, “comes to us like a flash. It is an act of *insight*, although of extremely fallible insight.” *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce; Volume V, Pragmatism and Pragmaticism* (ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss 1965) paras. 189, 181; pp. 117, 113. *C* is the momentary anomaly prompted by the experimenter’s question – why those choices? Anyone can tell that rooster-head goes with bird-claw; but what about that shovel? *A* flares up as the ‘for-the-sake-of’ connecting chicken-raising with the chosen tool. Flares up from ‘world’ – the totalities of equipment, relevance, reference, significance, (*Zeugganze, Bewandnisganzheit, Verweisungsganzheit, Bedeutsamkeit*). “Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc.,—they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc.” Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright; tr. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe 1969) 62e.

²⁵ “Meaning cannot be decreed; if it is not everywhere it is nowhere.” Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* 91. *But*: “The real question is not whether the touch of a woodpecker’s beak does in fact cure toothache. It is rather whether there is a point of view from which a woodpecker’s beak and a man’s tooth can be seen as ‘going together’ . . . and whether some initial order can be introduced into the universe by means of these groupings. . . . Any classification is superior to chaos and even a classification at the level of sensible properties is a step towards rational ordering.” Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (tr. Anonymous 1962) 6, 10. Again it seems less a matter of ordering chaotic material by fiat than of discovering order implicit or hidden in that material. Meaning, from the first, ‘is everywhere;’ and the discovery of chaos, meaninglessness, randomness is a later achievement, through inverse insight.

²⁶ Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean” 39.

(4) pivots between the concrete and the abstract, and (5) passes into the habitual texture of one's mind."²⁷

The three principal moments of insight are tension, release, and absorption. That same three-part movement commonly occurs in psychosis, which for many sufferers progresses through

“a stage of heightened awareness and emotionality combined with a sense of anxiety and impasse, a drive to ‘make sense’ of the situation, and then usually relief and a ‘new awareness’ as the delusion crystalizes and hallucinations emerge.”²⁸

The *Wehrmacht* psychiatrist Klaus Conrad named the three principal moments of psychosis Trema, Apophany, and Anastrophe.²⁹

Trema designates the prodromal mood of various duration (years in some cases) which precedes the onset of delusions. During Trema “the patient experiences an increasing oppressive tension, a ‘feeling of nonfinality’ or expectation. The individual describes that something is ‘in the air’ but is unable to say what has changed. . . . The patient may feel not only excitement, ‘intoxicated’ anticipation, but also suspiciousness, fear, depressive inhibition, guilt, a feeling of separation from others, and often a combination of these.”³⁰

At Apophany the delusions “appear suddenly as an ‘aha experience’ (‘Aha-Erlebnis’ or ‘revelation’) concerning what had been perplexing during delusional mood and often bring relief.” The relieving delusions “are not primarily a psychoanalytic defensive reaction meant to protect the self but involve a fundamental ‘reorganization’ of the patient’s experience to maintain behavioral interaction with the environment despite the underlying disruption of perceptual binding processes.”³¹

²⁷ *Insight* 28. “To undergo an experience with something—be it a thing, a person, or a god—means that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us . . . transforms us into itself.” Martin Heidegger, “The Nature of Language” in *On the Way to Language* (tr. Peter D. Hertz 1971) 57, 74.

²⁸ Shitij Kapur, “Psychosis as a State of Aberrant Saliency: A Framework Linking Biology, Phenomenology, and Pharmacology in Schizophrenia,” 160 *Am. J. Psychiatry* 13, 15 (2003).

²⁹ Aaron L. Mishara, “Klaus Conrad (1905-1961): Delusional Mood, Psychosis, and Beginning Schizophrenia,” 36 *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 9, 11 (2010).

³⁰ *Id.* 10. “Most patients report that something in the world around them is changing, leaving them somewhat confused and looking for an explanation.” Kapur, “Aberrant Saliency” 15. Lacan: “A minimum of sensitivity that our trade gives us clearly demonstrates something that can always be seen in what is known as prepsychosis, namely the feeling that the subject has come to the edge of a hole. This is to be taken literally. . . . It’s a matter of understanding, not imagining, what happens for a subject when the question comes to him from where there is no signifier, when it’s a hole, a lack, that makes itself felt as such.” *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III The Psychoses 1955-1956* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. Russell Grigg 1993) 202-203.

³¹ “Klaus Conrad” 10. “Once the patient arrives at such an explanation, it provides an ‘insight relief’ or a ‘psychotic insight’ and serves as a guiding cognitive scheme for further thoughts and actions.” Kapur, “Aberrant Saliency” 15. Lacan: “What is the subject ultimately saying, specially at a certain period of his delusion? That there is meaning.

In Anastrophe the delusions have merged with the texture of the mind, and the patient feels himself to be the passive middle point of meaningfulness. Anastrophe is characterized by delusions of reference; events and perceptions are related to the self; “Everything revolves about the patient.”³²

No drastic rewiring is needed to connect the tension/Trema phase of insight/psychosis with authentic (*eigentliche*), originary (*originäre*) *Angst*; release/Apophany with *Augenblick*; and absorption/Anastrophe with *Entschlossenheit*.

“In *Angst* one has an ‘uncanny’ feeling.” (“During dread we say ‘It feels so strange!’”³³) “What *Angst* is about is completely indefinite. . . . *Angst* ‘does not know’ what it is about which it is anxious.” “The world has the character of complete insignificance.”³⁴ “All things, and we along with them, sink into indifference. . . . Dread reveals the nothing.”³⁵

Augenblick, the moment of vision, “brings existence to the situation and discloses the authentic ‘There’.”³⁶ *Augenblick* names “the suddenness of the clearing of *Seyn*.”³⁷

What meaning he doesn’t know, but it comes to the foreground, it asserts itself, and for him it is perfectly understandable.” *The Psychoses* 21.

³² “Klaus Conrad” 10, 11, Table 1. “Delusions in this framework are a ‘top-down’ cognitive explanation that the individual imposes on these experiences of aberrant salience in an effort to make sense of them. . . . Patients who have been psychotic for some time incorporate their psychotic beliefs into their larger cognitive schemas.” Kapur, “Aberrant Salience” 15, 17. Thus Lacan speaks of “an entire delusional reconstruction, following which the subject gradually resituates, though in a profoundly disturbed way, a world in which he is able to recognize himself, in an equally disturbed way, as destined . . .” *The Psychoses* 311. *Locus classicus*: “I wish to add another point in connection with God’s inability to understand the living human being as an organism and to judge his thinking correctly, which has in many ways become important to me. I can put this point briefly: *everything that happens is in reference to me*. Writing this sentence, I am fully aware that other people may be tempted to think that I am pathologically conceited; I know very well that this very tendency to relate everything to oneself, to bring everything that happens into connection with one’s own person, is a common phenomenon among mental patients. [Judge Schreber had been confined in asylums for a number of years when he wrote this, and he had read Kraepelin.] But in my case the very reverse obtains. Since God entered into nerve-contact with me exclusively, I became in a way for God the only human being, or simply the human being around whom everything turns, to whom everything that happens must be related and who therefore, from his own point of view, must also relate all things to himself.” Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (ed. tr. Ida Macalpine 1955, rev. Richard A. Hunter 2000) 233.

³³ Thomas Sheehan, “Reading Heidegger’s ‘What is Metaphysics?’”, 1 *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (2001). *In der Angst – wir sagen – »ist einem unheimlich.«*.

³⁴ *Being and Time* 176, 174.

³⁵ Sheehan, ‘What is Metaphysics?’ *Alle dinge und wir selbst versinken in eine Gleichgültigkeit. . . . Die Angst offenbart das Nichts*.

³⁶ *Being and Time* 319. *bringt Existenz in die Situation und erschliesst das eigentliche »Da«*.

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung* GA 66, 114. *der Jähe der Lichtung des Seyns*.

“In the early Heidegger the act of understanding and embracing one’s finitude is called ‘resolve’ (*Entschlossenheit* [‘unclosedness’]).”³⁸ *Entschlossenheit* in *Being and Time* means “letting oneself be summoned out of one’s lostness in the they.”³⁹ By 1929 (‘What is metaphysics?’) *Entschlossenheit* is to be “held out into the nothing”⁴⁰ “so that in the nothing [one] may learn to experience being.”⁴¹ That is, “to experience in the nothing the pervasive expanse of that which gives every being the warrant to be;”⁴² in “the horror of the abyss” to know “the scarcely broached realm of being from whose clearing every being first returns to what it is and can be.”⁴³

Such an experience, in Lonergan’s schema, is a member of the “relatively rare,” “small but significant class of inverse insights.” “While direct insight grasps the point,

or sees the solution, or comes to know the reason, inverse insight apprehends that in some fashion the point is that there is no point, or that the solution is to deny a solution, or that the reason is that the rationality of the real admits distinctions and qualifications. Finally, while the conceptual formulation of direct insight affirms a positive intelligibility though it may deny expected empirical elements, the conceptual formulation of an inverse insight affirms empirical elements [*Sein/Seienden*] only to deny an expected intelligibility [*Grund*].”⁴⁴

The truth of being and the truth of psychosis are homologous in that both descend from the nothing of senselessness, the abyss of non-meaning. That our sense-making is ‘without why’ – its provenance groundless, non-rational, unintelligible – runs counter to the spontaneous anticipations of Dasein that all things are intelligible.⁴⁵ Meaning is everywhere except – *surdibile scriptu* – at the origin.

Such, or some such, is the conceptual formulation of the inverse insight, “the fundamental experience,” “the real insight” in Sheehan’s words, which came to Heidegger “sometime before December of 1930 (the lecture ‘On the Essence of Truth’) when Heidegger saw for the first time

³⁸ Thomas Sheehan, “Being, Opened-ness, and Unlimited Technology: Ten Theses on Heidegger,” 59 *Rivista Portuguesa Filosofia* 1253, 1258 (2003). https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2zuyt5_UZUqemRQWlh2ZEt0YjA/view .

³⁹ *Being and Time* 275.

⁴⁰ Sheehan, ‘What is Metaphysics?’

⁴¹ “Postscript to ‘What is Metaphysics?’” (1943) in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks* (ed. tr. William McNeill 1998) 234. *damit er das Sein im Nichts erfahren lerne.*

⁴² *Id.* 233. *im Nichts die Weiträumigkeit dessen zu erfahren, was jedem Seienden die Gewähr gibt, zu sein.*

⁴³ *Id.* 234. *Die Tapferkeit erkennt im Abgrund des Schreckens den kaum betretenen Raum des Seins, aus dessen Lichtung erst jegliches Seiende in das zurückkehrt, was es ist und zu sein vermag.*

⁴⁴ *Insight* 43, 50, 44. “an inverse insight has three characteristics: it supposes a positive object of inquiry; it denies intelligibility to the object; and the denial runs counter to spontaneous anticipations of intelligence.” *Id.* 78.

⁴⁵ “Unintelligibility is felt as a particularly telling affront to *our* very mode of being. For obviously we are the ones (individually and in community) in whose conscious life process the real world which is present for us as such gains sense and acceptance.” “Phenomenology” (*Enc. Brit.* article 1927), in *The Essential Husserl: Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology* (ed. Donn Welton 1999) 329.

that the clearing—which is already opened up whenever and wherever there is ex-sistence—is *intrinsically hidden*.”⁴⁶ I.e., unintelligible:

“That is, while the clearing . . . enables meaningful presence of things . . . , it itself remains undisclosed or ‘hidden’ – unknowable in its why and wherefore. . . . The open space that makes possible the distinguishing-and-synthesizing whereby we understand things as meaningfully present is not available to the discursive intellect.” “The mystery of human being consists in both the endless comprehensibility of whatever we can meet and the incomprehensibility of why everything is comprehensible. Everything is knowable—except the reason why everything is knowable.”⁴⁷

This insight passed into the texture of Heidegger’s mind as a distinctive sensibility. Just as Schreber in his madness always insisted he did not **choose** to become God’s woman – it wasn’t **his** idea – so Heidegger’s recurring expression ‘it is not **we** who . . .’ characterizes our openness as in some sense the ‘obediential potency’ of sense-making, the passive middle point of meaning: “We never come to thoughts. They come to us.”⁴⁸ Sheehan cites a remark of Heidegger’s in an unpublished manuscript from 1940-41, “*Der Weg durch Sein und Zeit*”:

“The relation of the clearing [*das Seyn*] to man is the clearing itself, insofar as the clearing itself, in coming to pass, lets the essence of man come to pass as what is needed by the clearing and as what is detained and held by that need as such. In essence, man is man only as the one who is needed by the clearing for the sake of the clearing [*als der vom Seyn zum Seyn Gebrauchte*].”⁴⁹

And that, Sheehan somewhere says, is as far as Heidegger got.

“The enduring core of Heidegger’s work is his demonstration that, overlooked as it might be, radical human finitude [the ungroundable ground of the phenomenal world we inhabit]—with no need for a supervenient God or some preternatural ‘Being’—is the ultimate source of meaning-at-all and thus of culture in all its historical configurations. . . . After that, full stop.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Making Sense of Heidegger* 195.

⁴⁷ *Id.* 225, 227, 193. “ ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ I couldn’t agree more. But, before the beginning, where was it? That is what is truly impenetrable.” Jacques Lacan, *The Triumph of Religion* preceded by *Discourse to Catholics* (tr. Bruce Fink 2003) 73.

⁴⁸ “The Thinker as Poet,” tr. Albert Hofstadter in *Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings* (ed. Manfred Stassen 2003) 20.

⁴⁹ *Making Sense of Heidegger* 218-219. Cf. God’s plan to unman Schreber; as the one, transformed into female, needed by God for the sake of repopulating the Earth with human souls. (It’s complicated.) *Memoirs* 60-61. And: “The very words I say to you are not my own. It is the Father who lives in me who carries out his work through me.” *John* 14:10 (tr. J. B. Phillips). “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” *Galatians* 2:20 (ESV).

⁵⁰ *Id.* 292, 294.

Radical, ungroundable finitude is as far as Heidegger got because, in Lacan's apposite dictum, "there is no Other of the Other."⁵¹

'The big Other' is Lacan's term for the symbolic order; the pervasive field which, as the clearing, enables meaningful presence of things; i.e., who we are and how it is – the desirable, thinkable, speakable, do-able. A human being gets determined as 'subject' in the field of the Other. "One should see," says Lacan,

"in the unconscious the effects of speech on the subject—in so far as these effects are so radically primary that they are properly what determines the status of the subject as subject . . . the effects of language are always mixed with the fact, which is the basis of the analytic experience, that the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other, the subject proceeds from his synchronic subjection in the field of the Other. . . . The Other is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject—it is the field of the living being in which the subject has to appear. . . . Man's desire is the desire of the Other. . . . for analytic experience shows us that it is in seeing a whole chain come into play at the level of the desire of the Other that the subject's desire is constituted. . . . in so far as we are the subject who thinks . . . we depend on the field of the Other, which was there long before we came into the world, and whose circulating structures determine us as subjects."
"the Other [is] the locus in which the law is inscribed . . . the locus of the word."⁵²

Thus the big Other. The **Other** of the big Other is readily seen in the phenomenon of persecutory delusion; as Žižek notes, "in the form of the persecutor supposed to master the game of deception."

"the psychotic subject's distrust of the big Other, his *idée fixe* that the big Other (embodied in his intersubjective community) is trying to deceive him, is always and necessarily supported by an unshakable belief in a consistent Other, an Other without gaps, an 'Other of the Other' . . . a non-deceived agent holding the reins . . . a hidden agency manipulating this deception."⁵³

⁵¹ *Le grand secret, c'est – il n'y a pas d'Autre de l'Autre. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VI Desire and its Interpretation 1958-1959* (tr. Cormac Gallagher 2010) 206; <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Book-06-Desire-and-its-interpretation.pdf> .

⁵² Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. Alan Sheridan 1977) 126, 188, 203, 235, 246; *Desire and its Interpretation* 238, 260.

⁵³ Slavoj Žižek, "How the Non-Duped Err," 4 *Qui Parle* 1, 12 (1990). In the first of three frames Dilbert and Dogbert sit at a table and listen to an iPad. The voice from the iPad says, "Scientists confirmed that our reality is actually a software simulation created by an advanced civilization." In the second frame Dilbert says to Dogbert, "That makes no sense unless the advanced civilization is a bunch of psychopaths who like to see us suffer." In the third frame two ETs look into a transparent dome under which Dilbert and Dogbert sit at a table while listening to an iPad. The first alien: "One of the idiots in our simulation is insulting us." The second: "I'm going to break his phone screen." (Scott Adams; July 31, 2017).

Lacan insists: “there is I told you no Other of the Other. There is in the signifier itself no guarantee of the truth dimension established by the signifier. . . . When I tell you there is no Other of the Other, what does that mean if it is not precisely that no signifier exists which might guarantee the concrete consequence of any manifestation of the signifier?”⁵⁴

No Other of the Other, check. So ‘being itself,’ Sheehan writes, “as the sought-for X of Heidegger’s question is not at all something in and for itself, a Super-*Sein* as some Higher Form of Being that is different from and superior to the plain ol’ being of things.”⁵⁵ Yet the Right Heideggerians, as he calls them, even as they declare that Heidegger’s work has overcome metaphysics (deconstructed the Other of the Other), “go on to transform that work into a *crypto*-metaphysics that hypostatizes Ἀλήθεια into a Super-*Sein*, which in fact Heidegger himself derided as *ein phantastische Weltwesen*.”⁵⁶

How come? Why do Right Heideggerians imagine (desire) the Other of the Other? Here may apply Lacan’s earliest psychoanalytic insight, “the paranoid principle of human knowledge;” i.e., “man’s objects are subjected to a law of imaginary reduplication, evoking ratification by an indefinite series of notaries . . .”⁵⁷ Specifically with respect to our question the paranoid principle implies that ‘the Other Others.’ By some phenomenological correlate of serial homology the big Other – meaningfulness, the medium of manifestation of the subject – recursively generates spectral versions of itself; iterates *der vom Seyn zum Seyn Gebrauchte* at higher order. As in Lacan’s trope of psychosis: “in this continuous murmur of these sentences, of these commentaries . . . the signifiers begin to talk, to sing on their own.”⁵⁸ Or as Wittgenstein says, “If fleas developed a rite it would be based on the dog.”⁵⁹ Sense-making, the dog that is our sustenance and dwelling, founds the *cultus* of itself; and in a staggering variety of forms as prodigious as the husks in wine pressing.

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⁵⁴ *Desire and its Interpretation* 225, 260.

⁵⁵ *Making Sense of Heidegger* 19.

⁵⁶ “Heidegger and the Right Heideggerians: Phenomenology vs. crypto-metaphysics,” 6 *Kronos* 78 (2017); https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oCbTfkgNhPPIM9Ea5dgzyEAp_vGK9L4e/view p. 4.

⁵⁷ “The Freudian Thing” in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (tr. Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg 2006) 356. Lacan introduced the principle in his thesis, published in 1932, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*. See “On My Antecedents,” *Écrits* 51 and 57, note 1. Feuerbach and Durkheim had earlier pointed to the same.

⁵⁸ *The Psychoses* 294.

⁵⁹ “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*” 139.