

# Responses to Trisokkas, Torsen and McManus

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## I. Response to Ioannis Trisokkas

Trisokkas raises two objections to my defence of Heidegger's claim against Hegel. Heidegger's claim is that Hegel had dogmatically assumed the priority of 'logic' in any inquiry into the meaning of being, thus inheriting the metaphysical tradition's dual assumptions that what must be said to matter most of all in our attempt understand our place in the world and a possible reconciliation with the world is the knowability of being. Everything else can only matter if the world is first of all available as knowable. The claim is not that Hegel cannot develop a 'science of logic' or, to use Hegelian shorthand, that Being cannot be understood as Concept. The issue is the status of the *Logic*, what significance it has in our attempt to understand ourselves and the meaning of being in general. Ultimately Hegel counts as the culmination of the metaphysical tradition because he believes, citing Aristotle, that 'nous rules the world', that *everything* is primordially available to us as *rationally* available, explicable. This means that even the meaning of the being of human history, sociality, religion and art is as expressions of reason, even as modes of rationality. Trisokkas objects that it is question-begging to saddle Hegel with a question that he is not, in the *Science of Logic* at least, attempting to answer. He puts this by saying that Hegel is simply not addressing the question of the status or significance of the *Logic*, that he has not 'chosen' to raise any question about what matters to human beings or to Hegel himself, but has chosen an inquiry into being. ('Mattering is irrelevant at the beginning of Hegel's *Logic*.' 'All being is taken to be, is simply being.') According to Trisokkas the *Logic* is simply an inquiry into being's possible determinacy. Trisokkas's second objection is a classic Hegelian objection, the one he himself raised against Schelling. He alleges that any philosophical understanding, even of the nondiscursive sources of meaningfulness, must itself be discursive in some way, as in Heidegger's own analysis or as in my book, and he cites this as evidence against the priority, at least for philosophy, of a nondiscursive attunement to significances. Mattering is a concept and our account of its significance must remain conceptual, not itself 'poetic'.

I think it is important to begin by stressing that Heidegger's objections must be understood, as Trisokkas himself stresses, in the context of German Idealism

(as that tradition understood idealism) and that means in the context of Kant. I can't summarize the book's four chapters on Kant but two points are important and should be kept in mind. Hegel's claim that the *Science of Logic* is a science of 'pure thinking', that the subject matter of the logic is pure thinking's self-determination, and that it is also thereby a science of being, is derivative from Kant's revolution in the understanding of pure reason. What for him meant the end of any attempt at an a priori knowledge of substance, metaphysics, was the realization that pure reason was pure *Spontaneität*, a wholly active self-determining faculty, a making, and in no sense a passive or receptive faculty. Reason had no direct access to the world. For Kant, after the famous letter to Herz, this meant that a deduction was needed to establish that the forms of thought were the forms of things. Hegel disagreed but the central point was that he accepted the denial of any intuitive function for reason or pure thinking. The second revolutionary move coursed through all of German Idealism. It was the primacy of the practical. Kant was the first to argue that the source of human dignity, freedom, the capacity to determine as uncaused causality one's future among alternate possibilities, did not require for its defence a convincing account of human being as a distinct sort of substance, usually in the tradition, an immaterial one. The assumption of such freedom was *practically* undeniable, a fact of reason that could not be theoretically refuted. And such freedom itself had to be understood as the self-legislation of pure practical reason, a submission to the form of pure practical reason. (Heidegger denied that Kant had avoided a practical commitment to a substantial moral self.) In Kant's account, the significance of freedom is already at stake in the self-authorization of a spontaneous pure reason. These two points will be important later, since the latter bears on Hegel as well.

My claim is not that the *Logic* presents some account of its own significance and that such an attempt fails. That is, of course, the point of claiming that something has been merely assumed and then 'forgotten'. And Heidegger would be very suspicious of any unmotivated project, as if one were to set out the conditions of possible determinacy with no idea why or with what possible consequence. As he notes about the enterprise of metaphysics itself in his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures in the passage Trisokkas cites and that should be repeated:

The concept is thus something like a determinative representation. The fundamental concepts of metaphysics and the concepts of philosophy, however, will evidently not be like this at all, if we recall that they themselves are anchored in our being gripped [*in einer Ergriffenheit gegründet*], in which we do not represent before us that which we conceptually comprehend, but maintain ourselves in a quite different comportment, one

which is originarily and fundamentally different from any scientific kind. (*FCM*: 9)<sup>1</sup>

The exploration of what grips us in this way, the ground of metaphysics, requires a hermeneutical rather than analytical approach to such a ‘grip’, and such an approach is not an incantation or merely gestural. What it cannot be though is some sort of paraphrase or explication in discursive prose, any more than literary criticism, in its search for meaning in a text, should seek to translate the content of the work into propositions. Discursive prose may be necessary to point us to a phenomenon that can have no full discursive explication, but can be ‘circled’ by various formulations, guided by some sense of what metaphysics is for, why it matters, what is at stake in its success.

So, what is assumed and forgotten in Hegel’s enterprise? It is true that Hegel’s *Logic* begins with the ‘resolve’ to think being, but that is far from the only claim he makes about it. It is his version of first philosophy and thereby establishes the possibility of what comes ‘second’: the *Realphilosophie*, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit. And given that the central theme in all of Hegel’s philosophy is freedom, the *Logic* must also provide a way for our thinking about the relation between nature and spirit that makes his ‘self-realization’ and social theory of freedom possible (something the ‘philosophy of *Verstand*’ cannot do.) The *Logic* matters both because it is itself an expression of the absolute freedom of pure thinking, and establishes how objective freedom is possible, given the requirements of nature. (The *Logic* thus serves an analogous, although obviously very different function as the antinomies do in Kant, establishing the theoretical possibility of freedom, which has the same primacy in Hegel as it does in Kant.)

Second, since the first move in the *Logic*, the unthinkability of pure being, establishes the necessity of conceptual determinacy in the possibility of anything at all, it then saddles thought with the assumption Heidegger thinks is decisive for Western philosophy: beings are and can only be primarily substances, determinate beings with possibly differentiating predicates, and this *because* it is required by a logic, without which beings would not be available at all, at least not available to thought, or possible cognition. This assumes that cognizability is the primary mode of such availability. (Trisokkas interprets the *Logic* as the ‘self-explication of being as such’ but I do not understand how being explicates itself. The *Logic* is said to be the ‘science of pure thinking’, something not conceivable without a thinker.) This all matters because it insures that for Hegel what Heidegger calls *Dasein* and Hegel *Geist* must also be a substance, even if a spontaneously self-determining substance, with a fixed telos, realizable collectively over historical time. In the publication where Hegel makes clearest what the realization of such freedom (which, Hegel sometimes seems to claim, is the conatus of not just *Geist* but of all being) looks like, *The Philosophy of Right*, or the philosophy of objective spirit, he leaves little doubt why the *Logic* ‘matters’.

The science of right is *a part of philosophy*. It has therefore to develop the *Idea*, which is the reason within an object [*Gegenstand*], out of the concept; or what comes to the same thing, it must observe the proper immanent development of the thing [*Sache*] itself. As a part [of philosophy], it has a determinate *starting point*, which is the *result* and truth of what *preceded* it, and what preceded it is the so-called *proof* of that result. Hence the concept of right, so far as its *coming into being* is concerned, falls outside the science of right; its deduction is presupposed here and is to be taken as *given*. (PR: §2)

The second sentence of this paragraph establishes that the Logic has made an assumption about primordial significance, the concept. This is not an empirical point about what matters to individual subjects, but what cannot but matter if the realization of freedom is to be intelligible. Moreover, Heidegger deals with the suspicion that his approach imports the concerns of Dasein into a region of inquiry where it does not belong. He notes something Trisokkas implies, that his questions about significance might suggest that his project ‘is thereby unavoidably “subjectivized”’ (HG: 334). To which he responds:

Nevertheless, must the human being—which is what is being thought here—necessarily be determined as subject? Does ‘for human beings’ already unconditionally mean: posited by human beings? We may deny both options, and must recall the fact that *aletheia*, thought in a Greek manner, certainly holds sway for human beings, but that the human being remains determined by *logos*. [...] The human being is the being that, in saying, lets what is presencing lie before us in its presence, apprehending what ties before. Human beings can speak only insofar as they are sayers. (Ibid.)

There is much more that needs to be said about this issue and the putative continuity in Heidegger’s thought, but I need to turn to Trisokkas’s second concern. It is true that *Bedeutsamkeit*, significance or mattering, is itself a concept, or rather that when we are trying to understand the nature of such significances, we are exploring the necessary markers for a concept to pick out a phenomenon. But the phenomenon remains what it is, mattering; it is not as if in the experience of a case of mattering, we have to check the markers of the concept, that the first experiential moment is categorization of it as mattering. Things matter in the way they matter, and we can, to some degree, say what matters subsequently. But the emergence of saliences in our compartments does not depend on any conceptual apparatus or any derivation from reflection on what ought to matter, even though we use

concepts to indicate the phenomenon. And this is what is important to Heidegger, this prediscursive attunement, the primordial attunement to significance in the availability of anything at all. A conceptual discrimination of this moment is obviously not a transformation of the moment onto something conceptual.

But Trisokkas also wants to know about the proper understanding of philosophy itself in any supposed post-metaphysical enterprise. When I follow Heidegger in exploring a ‘poetic thinking’, Trisokkas wants to know about the relation between such poetic thinking and non-poetic or discursive thinking about that topic. His complaint: ‘Heidegger indicates a “new thinking” that will replace the old, philosophical-theoretical thinking, *yet this indication occurs via the old, philosophical-theoretical thinking*’ (This seems a reprise of Wittgenstein’s colleague Frank Ramsey’s famous insistence: ‘If you can’t say it you can’t say it, and you can’t whistle it either.’) And a similar response to the issue of mattering is appropriate. This objection confuses two different levels of inquiry. The indication, the reference to a poetic thinking, certainly does not mean that *that activity* ‘occurs via the old philosophical theoretical thinking’. Again, this is no more the case than the fact that literature inspires and requires criticism means the real work of literature is done by criticism.

There is a problem here, one deeper than the form of words used to point to a mode of disclosure that is not assertoric. That is the problem of truth, and whether Heidegger’s insistence on the primordially of unconcealment over propositional correspondence invites a toleration of so much indeterminacy in the exploring of what is disclosed that such explorations can never be said to have adequate truth conditions. I don’t deny that this is a problem, but I think it is one we are stuck with in hermeneutical claims about meaning, not one created by Heidegger’s account.

## II. Response to Ingvild Torsen

Heidegger’s critique of the Western metaphysical tradition originally rested on a claim about experiential primordially. Beings are primordially available in their significances, meaningfulness. Beings are manifest, salient, show up (or not) in practical compartments, a claim that Heidegger shows presupposes Dasein’s original attending as ‘care’ and that it is possible only because of an inheritance of a horizon of possible significance at a historical time, a world. Our perceptual apparatus takes in much more than this, of course, but Heidegger’s interest is in experiential salience and the issue of what is primordial. That primordial question is the question of the possible meaningfulness of beings; not what is there, what kinds of beings are there, is there a highest being, etc. Although he claims that Western metaphysics has ‘forgotten’ this question, it has still unthinkingly taken for granted an answer:

that beings show up primordially as substances, present-at-hand entities enduring in time, and, correspondingly, that their significance, how they show up in the way they most of all matter, is as potentially *knowable*. This is not, or not just, a dispute about a mode of practical intentionality as prior to any spectator or theoretical intentionality. For Heidegger, taking it for granted that what first of all matters in our engagements with beings and so accounts for salience is their knowability, that their significance in our attempt to make ourselves at home in the world is discursive cognizability, sets up claims for importance, authority, practical orientation, reliability, the status of the arts, and our relation to ourselves, our bodies, and to others that have so thinned out common sources of significance (relegating other matters of significance to the ‘merely subjective’) that the result is what he dramatically called ‘the age of consummate meaninglessness’ or nihilism.

So, I would not say, as Torsen does, that Heidegger’s main concern is the assumption that ‘what is, being, is available to discursive thinking’. It certainly is, but as an abstraction from a more primordial engagement, a ‘founded’ or derivative mode of intelligibility, and his main worry is what follows from assuming that what primordially matters is this cognitive relation to the world. We then understand the primary truth-bearer to be assertions, and so truth conditions, beings, including our being, must be understood in ways that make what there is suitable contents of assertions. To be is to be such a possible content. This he claims is a distortion, that we have forgotten what we ourselves experience as primordial.

This, the primordially of the question of mattering, is important not just to show that Heidegger does not think there is anything suspicious about physics or biology or conceptual analysis in themselves (but in how their status or meaning in human life is understood), but because it bears on the complex of questions Torsen asks concerning what is (a) ‘salvageable in Hegel’, (b) ‘what has happened to us’, and (c) how we should understand Heidegger’s picture of the future of either philosophy or some successor enterprise concerned with the question of the meaning of being. This is so because it is possible, in the case of Hegel for example, to argue that there is, as just conceded, a set of questions relevant to the possibility of a priori and a posteriori knowledge, and there is an ontological domain of the knowables that raises questions about form, unity, determinacy and mereology that can be pursued simply as questions without necessarily worrying about the primordially of questions of mattering. That latter could just be taken to be a distinct, interesting question, distinct from other forms of the practically normative. The domain of possible discursive intelligibility and its ontological implications could amount to a self-sufficient set of questions in itself.

But this demarcation of issues is not something, rightly I think, that either Hegel or Heidegger would accept. Hegel would locate the domain for an engagement with the questions that the early Heidegger poses (the meaning of Dasein’s being) as modern ethical life, *Sittlichkeit*, and he insists frequently that what Torsen

calls the mediating role of philosophical assumptions about individuality, dependence, dignity, purposiveness and freedom all also require the working out of these conceptual determinations at a theoretical level, in a ‘science of logic’ without which we could not understand how the basic source of meaningfulness in the modern world, rationality, could get a grip. But that means that the assumption that rational articulability, even in an unusual and ‘dialectical’ way, is still the sense that beings must make, even ‘the being’ of human societies, and thus still constrains what Hegel takes himself as entitled to make about domains like social being or artistic being. Heidegger’s question, then possible availability of meaningful being, remains forgotten, allowing the logical prejudice to remain dogmatically in force.

Kant and Hegel wrote in the run-up to and the consequences of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The end of the remnants of feudalism and the beginning of the modern world naturally placed on the agenda for both the question of the nature of and the realization of human freedom as what most of all matters, primordially orients us in a world. Both linked that issue to the practical role of reason, in Kant in a moral theory based on the form of pure practical reason, and in Hegel on the emerging ‘actuality’ of reason in the social roles and institutions of ethical life. A great deal of what both hoped would result from enlightenment came to pass; enough, it seemed to me in 1991 when *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem* first appeared, to counter the exaggerated claims about the ‘end of the Enlightenment’ and the dawn of a ‘postmodern world’ that became prominent in the nineteen-eighties. But, to make a very long story very short, that achievement, however significant, did not, and in Heidegger’s view could not, *create a sustainable form of life*, inspiring a depth commitment and a sense of collective purposiveness. The satisfactions of rights protection, moral accountability, and the reconciling roles of family, the modern market, civil administration, and a so-called *Rechtsstaat*, or the modern bourgeois world, were not satisfactions enough, produced a stultifying, boring world, where significance soon turned out to amount to consumption, entertainment and the decline of meaningful work. Instead, eventually a mass consumer society was created, as well as conditions of labour that were routinized, stultifying and exploitative; wealth in the West came to rest a great deal on a brutal and indefensible colonial enterprise, and we seemed to have produced Weber’s iron cage and Nietzsche’s last men. Heidegger began writing in the aftermath of the event from which European confidence in itself never recovered, the First World War. Almost his entire career occurred in an atmosphere of profound crisis, disenchantment, war, economic misery, and revolution, and he proposed a thesis that tried to go deeper than a socio-historical analysis of what had happened to us. This question about the sustainability of a form of life, a historical world, is not for him an empirical question. If posed as empirical questions, it is likely that the mere subjective expression of satisfaction in some form of liberal

democracy, globalized, finance capitalism, a kind of welfarism, mass consumer societies, increasing dependence on technology, especially digital technology, in all forms of life, could be empirically determined, absent a nuclear holocaust, climate disaster, or an even more deadly pandemic. But the so-called pathologies of late capitalism go beyond a statistical measures of satisfaction or survivability. Self-deceived self-satisfaction, a smug indifference to each other, the failure of any general commitment to a common good, withdrawals from the work force, 'deaths of despair', and much else are, to use Heidegger's later language, failures of 'care', an inability to find purposiveness in one's work, romantic life, family, political role or much else of significance beyond consumption, entertainment and widespread resentment.

In the face of all of this, Torsen claims that on the account I provide of Heidegger's career, there is not much of a 'positive' response to all of this, a clear path forward. (She also doubts that my 'resolute' reading is correct, but she does not say much about this, and I have tried to provide many instances in Heidegger's later works to support the claim of continuity.) Moreover, she claims that Heidegger's history of being 'is motivated by antisemitism rather than the history of Western metaphysics'. That is an extraordinarily stunning claim to drop into the remarks. There is certainly overwhelming evidence of Heidegger's personal antisemitism but his account of what she lists as 'domination, instrumental rationality or calculative thinking' is tied so often to the metaphysics of presence and in such detail that I cannot see what his vile personal animus against Jews has to do with the details of that account. His prejudice has as much to do with his history of being, most of which, of course, has nothing to do with Jews, as Gottlob Frege's antisemitism has to do with his revolution in logic. Finally, she suggests that placing Heidegger's attention to Kant and Hegel in 'isolation' from the larger project of the *Seinsgeschichte* amounts to a 'missed opportunity' to bring out the 'differences in resources available to a Hegelian versus a Heideggerian history of philosophy'. What 'differences'? What 'isolation'? The whole idea of a 'culmination' requires attention to the ground problem of all Western metaphysics and its various dimensions in the Greek, scholastic, early modern and late modern worlds, which I provide. The Hegelian idea of a progressive ever more self-conscious development in philosophy, the 'logical prejudice' that the meaning of the being of that history is and must be rationality, culminating and so ending in Hegel himself, seems to me so fanciful as not to be worth serious attention.

We come finally to Heidegger's reflections on a form of post-metaphysical thinking he often calls 'poetic thinking'. Torsen wonders how my prior work on the bearing of literature, visual art and film should be understood, since that work seems to her so 'thoroughly Hegelian'. The Hegelian inspiration of that work, from the Henry James book to my forthcoming book on Robert Bresson, was that these art forms could have a bearing on, and were important to,



philosophy. But Hegel considered these contributions to be incomplete versions of philosophy, philosophy in an affective and so inferior modality. This means that they only point towards their true realization in the speculative-logical language of absolute knowledge. Heidegger wants us to understand these modes of thought as an *alternative* to a philosophical tradition dominated by the logical, even the speculative-logical, prejudice. As Torsen of course realizes, this would require a fuller account on the notion of truth as *aletheia* or disclosive, but that already indicates how completely Hegel would reject this approach. There is something important, revealing, and I would say suspicious, in Hegel's rather contemptuous rejection of the romanticism of many of his contemporaries. This sets a clear alternative between the two, but I don't think that difference affects the substantive accounts of the artistic works engaged in those prior books.

In her closing remarks, Torsen points to Terrence Malick's *Thin Red Line* and my account of it to suggest a kind of hybrid account, disclosive, but accompanied by voice-over reflections that indicate a possible hybrid between such disclosure and philosophical self-consciousness. Aside from the fact that all the voice-overs are by characters in the film, and so are not independent of the film world, not about it but in it, her questions raise the issue of the relation between some manifestation of meaning (what is shown) and the articulation of something like what is manifested in discourse. This raises the issue of the task of a philosophical criticism. I've only space left to suggest that such a task cannot be understood as any sort of paraphrase or translation into assertoric prose. That would render the artwork itself otiose. Rather, it must be a way to recreate in criticism the experience of the artwork in other mode, one that brings out, allows to be re-experienced, the disclosure itself.

### III. Response to Denis McManus

There are four main questions raised by Heidegger's philosophy. (i) What does he mean by his fundamental question, the single question that he says is at stake in everything he wrote? (ii) How has this question been manifest, even if forgotten, not attended to as such, in the history of metaphysics, also called by Heidegger the history of being? (iii) What are the implications of this forgetting and the consequent 'metaphysics of presence' for the sources of meaningfulness (or the absence of such sources) in historical worlds in the West, especially our world, 'the age of consummate meaninglessness'? (iv) What is the post-metaphysical fate of philosophy; or what does Heidegger mean by 'poetic thinking'? These are the questions that raise all the subsidiary ones that famously interest Heidegger as well: truth, time, history, art, the meaning of modern technology.

McManus raises questions about (i) and (iv). He begins by suggesting that we need to distinguish something that I do not: the question of being (QB) on the one

hand and the question of the meaning of being (QMB) on the other. The former concerns not how being is manifest as meaningfulness (QMB) but ‘whether there is such a thing to manifest.’ (QB) I would not deny that Heidegger thinks the QB can be raised, but the issue in Heidegger is primordially and so orders of dependence. And since beings must be manifest for any question about them to be raised, and since he links that manifestness or salience, prominence in our experience, to meaningfulness, I cannot see that just making the distinction challenges the claims of primordially. McManus thinks it does because of what Heidegger writes, following Aristotle, about the problem of the unity of meaning, the problem raised by Aristotle’s claim that ‘being is said in many ways’. If there is no way to address such a fact with some account of the unity of the being and so the unity of the problem of being, there could be no ontology. So that question of being (QB), unity of the issue, must be primary. But in Aristotle, being is not said in many ways the way ‘bank’ is. Being qua being remains his question and his answer is that ontology is possible because being is a ‘pros hen equivocal’, a focal meaning even if not a conceptual one. And that meaning is finally *eidōs*, form, the distinctive being at work, *energeia*, of substance. But I claim that Heidegger’s issue is not such a focal meaning among many, but the primordial meaningfulness, availability as the first issue before any differently inflected versions of such a disclosure can be discussed. All the different ways being is said presuppose this fundamental availability, a question prior to that about ‘things’ to manifest. That latter is a perfect expression of the metaphysics of presence and its unasked, hidden question about availability.

McManus’s next point both cites my own 2019 invocation of a Hegelian critique of Heidegger’s position (loosely associated with Friedrich Schelling’s *Indifferenzpunkt*) as well as my own rejoinder in Heidegger’s name. That amounts to differentiating the identification of any possible being with discursive intelligibility, ‘logic’, as Heidegger calls it, from beings available in their intelligibility, where intelligibility does not mean a conceptual grasping but a prediscursive orientation to meaningfulness, what Heidegger calls in his early work an attunement or a *Stimmung*. This far, we agree. But the manner of what Heidegger calls ‘the belonging together of being and Dasein’ should not, I think, be viewed as on a par with but just different from the logical prejudice version. The Heideggerian version has Dasein as a ‘site’ or ‘clearing’, wherein meaningfulness can be said to ‘happen’ to Dasein, not alternatively grasped or rendered intelligible by discourse of any sort. Dasein’s ‘understanding’ of beings is an everyday and nonthematic familiarity in comportment; not an alternate version of *logos*.

On the revised or ‘unsaddled without distorting assumptions about *logos*’ view that McManus prefers, what is not available for discursive articulation need not look dark or obscure or ineffable. I agree. I meant only, as he suggests, that things look that way from the standard LM point of view. But McManus rightly goes on to formulate the problem of what Heidegger would call ‘always also

concealed' in any disclosure of meaningfulness. That is, on Heidegger's view of 'the ontological difference', or the difference between the attunement to beings in their significances, and the possibility of a source of meaningfulness at all (Being qua Being, not qua this or that being, but rather the 'event' of 'worlds worlding'), the fact that such a source, the horizon of possible significance, is and must be always oriented from the experience of beings, inevitably conceals or obscures its status as such a source, treating its mode of availability as another event of disclosure, as if in the same register as *Seiende*, beings. This concealment is not to subject it to 'doubt', nor is it to 'look' for something we then do not find. It is elusive, somehow present and absent as well in the way that Kant's 'I' is a condition of thinking but not itself available for thought. Treating it as a thought about a substance inevitably distorts it as either a psychological or metaphysical or moral substance (a person) and renders paradoxical how such a subject might itself be available for thought. Mattering is a kind of event, but beings possibly mattering at all, mattering itself, is not. That Being qua being in antiquity should be understood as form, or as *ens creatum* in the Christian period, or as representation/subjectivity in modern philosophy, or the technological enframing in ours, are really only placeholders for many different kinds of manifesting, none of which can capture fully what such labels point to. (And I agree with McManus on the valuable notion of *hinweisen* or the pointing function of language, especially poetic language in Heidegger.) Such a source should not then be called a 'nonthought', as if something completely unavailable, but something like 'caught only in the corner of one's mental eye while thinking'; available in a way until one 'turns' to 'look at it'.

I found McManus's last point about poetic thinking and 'Hegel's revenge' the most interesting and challenging. It is a point that will come up in other comments. My book is not poetic thinking, whatever that may be, but a discursus about, among other things, poetic thinking, and the same can be said of Heidegger's analysis (with some notable poeticizing exceptions, like his Hölderlin lectures). This would seem to undermine the notion that philosophy itself must be a new kind of thinking, or at least not that alone but also must be a thinking (rather conventional at that, an academic monograph) about poetic thinking. Does this not indicate that Hegel again 'envelops' his critics? Do not Heidegger's and my positions require a certain transcendence of historical locatedness and contingency, a claim-making about disclosure, an inquiry into how one might evoke, awaken us to, such disclosures, rather than such an awakening itself? Isn't Hegel right that that any attempt to escape such an analytic domain must be a futile attempt to escape the reflective self-consciousness required for a thinking to be a thinking at all, or whatever poetic or prosaic sort?

Here I want to accept gratefully the analogy McManus offers—affirming 'with Wittgenstein that our understanding of concepts always bottoms out in our capacity to "catch on" to a practice—to "get" it—rather than in learning

some body of propositions that might be thought to capture the understanding that that practice embodies?’—but to deny that that sentence itself undermines the point made about understanding. He is right that our attention to such nondiscursive modes of intelligibility can be directed to, pointed to, and Heidegger would go further in saying that we can be ‘awakened’ to *what this is*—this ‘catching on, getting it’—by evoking it in other ways, by other means (like the arts). But I would deny that this represents any Hegelian enveloping, or a capturing of his critics in his net. Hegel’s claim is that any sense we could make of any such catching on or attunement to meaning must be a rational sense and that means that it, not discourse about it, must occur within some sort of conceptual determinacy. Pointing out analytically the insufficiency of that encircling is not to encircle oneself again. That would simply assume, in a question-begging way, that the only sense we could make of things is their rational sense or their failure to make sense, whereas Heidegger’s attempt is an evocation of sense, an awakening, pointing, re-animating attempt to evoke the happening of meaningfulness. That we are saying that we want to show does not undermine the priority of the showing.

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used

FCM = Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

HG = Heidegger, ‘Hegel and the Greeks’, in *Pathmarks*, trans. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

PR = Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).