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Ian Alexander Moore

Francesco Guercio

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Heidegger, Our Monstrous Site On Reiner Schürmann's Reading of the *Beiträge*

Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore

For try he will, and will assume all manner of shapes of all things that move upon the earth, and of water, and of wondrous blazing fire. Yet do ye hold him unflinchingly and grip him yet the more.

—Homer, *Odyssey*¹

1. Introduction

In a 1987 conference paper, published for the first time in this issue of the *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Reiner Schürmann points out a common, teleocratic strain shared by philosophers—those he would sarcastically refer to as, using Edmund Husserl's terminology, “mankind's foremost civil servants”—both on the right and on the left of the political-theoretical spectrum.² Whether it be Straussian nostalgia for natural law or Habermasian hope for a discursive community (to take just two examples), visions of a foundational philosopher-king still move philosophers today; only, now, they tend to see the king not in regalia, and certainly not naked, but in the suit of a sort of master bureaucrat at a meeting with other bureaucrats.³ Indeed, as Schürmann shows in his posthumous work *Broken Hegemonies*, the history of western philosophy, in all its guises, has been little else than the thetic performance of positing principles in order to secure unshakable grounds for human actions, an ultimate foundation or *fundamentum inconcussum* that would, as Schürmann puts it, “console the soul and consolidate the city” (see, e.g., [PS 10, 20](#); BH 9, 348, 560). By presupposing the separation between being and acting, theticism has served to establish and dispose of them according to a principal hierarchy in which acting had to be grounded in—and derived from—being (*agere sequitur esse*).⁴

Now, with Martin Heidegger—despite the myopia of many of his readers—the ineluctability of this history that is governed by the derivation schema from being to acting or, as in Fichtean idealism, from acting to being, comes to an end. Schürmann had already exposed this termination in his 1982 book *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (*Le principe d'anarchie: Heidegger et la question de l'agir*).⁵ But it was not until *Broken Hegemonies* that he demonstrated

¹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, vol. 1, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), bk. 4, lines 417–9.

² Reiner Schürmann, “‘Only Proteus Can Save Us Now’: On Anarchy and Broken Hegemonies,” ed. Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 41:1 (2021), [p. 1](#); henceforth PS, followed by page number. See also, for example, Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 8; henceforth BH, followed by page number; *Des hégémonies brisées* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2017), p. 16; henceforth DHB, followed by page number. Edmund Husserl's term is “functionaries of humanity” (*Funktionäre der Menschheit*) (Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970], p. 17; *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, vol. 6 of *Husserliana*, ed. Ulrich Melle [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1976], p. 15).

³ See Schürmann's literary parody of such meetings in his *Origins*, trans. Elizabeth Preston (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016), p. 241.

⁴ See, for example, Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, trans. Christine-Marie Gros and Reiner Schürmann (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 3; henceforth HBA, followed by page number.

⁵ Reiner Schürmann, *Le principe d'anarchie: Heidegger et la question de l'agir* (Bienne, CH: Diaphanes, 2013). In the 1987 English translation, this title has been rendered as *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*. Whether

how it was reached only by way of an extreme, even *monstrous* tension in Heidegger's own discourse, especially that of his *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, a text from 1936–1938, to which Schürmann devotes the final three chapters of *Broken Hegemonies* (see, e.g., BH 515, 529, 539).⁶ *Letztbegründung* or “ultimate grounding” (see, e.g., BH 9; see also PS 2n.6) is very much at work in the Heidegger of the 1930s, even as Heidegger labors to undo all recourse to what Schürmann calls the “hegemonic fantasms” of the West, i.e., those “referent[s] that signif[y] an obligation we have—a ligature, a liaison—with regard to which there is no outside” (BH 10).

Why read Heidegger, then? Not, or at least not primarily, because of his wide-ranging “contributions to philosophy” today, whether these be to neo-pragmatist theories of precognitive coping, to the development of critical race consciousness in the United States, to deep ecology, or to ontological pluralism, to name but a few.⁷ Nor should we read Heidegger—at least, not primarily—because of his creative, albeit violent, interpretations of philosophers of the past (such as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant), or his profound, albeit complicated, influence on philosophers closer to the present (such as Hannah Arendt and Jacques Derrida). Rather, we should read Heidegger, or “the body of writings which circulate, operate, put people to flight, or make them think—that is, which function—*under the name of ‘Heidegger’*” (HBA 2–3; emphasis added), because, according to Schürmann, and as we will show in this paper, he marks the Janus-faced site in which both the principal, archic current of natality and the an-archic undertow of mortality tragically—and most tellingly, for us today—reach their “most pathetic” now of readability (BH 524).

Far from outdated, we maintain that Schürmann's interpretation of Heidegger's *Beiträge* is even more relevant now than it was when Schürmann began writing on the book over thirty years ago.⁸ Schürmann's interpretation mines valuable resources, above all in Heidegger's own work, to critique not only the most damning of Heidegger's anti-Semitic utterances, which became available only with the 2014 publication of the first three volumes of his *Black Notebooks*, but also the

Schürmann himself opted for such a title or simply agreed to his publisher's choice, the English title, as compared to the French one, maimed the intentionally paradoxical simultaneity of a “principle of anarchy” by signaling an explicit teleological movement from principles to anarchy. Unfortunately, the current state of Schürmann scholarship does not allow us to determine whether Schürmann did in fact choose such a title. It is reasonable to assume, however, that he was aware that the English title would hint at a teleological movement that the French title was not signaling. Nonetheless, the English title has at least the merit of suggesting—by showing the coordination and hence the separation between “being and acting”—that the stake in Schürmann's reading of Heidegger is precisely to call into question the status of that ‘harmless’ conjunction and, by so doing, to dismantle the much less harmless function it has performed throughout the history of western metaphysics.

⁶ See Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 65 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989); henceforth GA65, followed by page number; all translations of this text are our own. For an alternative English translation, see Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

⁷ See, for example, Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Skillful Coping: Essays on the Phenomenology of Everyday Perception and Action*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Peg Birmingham, “On Heidegger's Concept of Destiny (*Geschick*),” *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual* 10 (2020), pp. 194–6; Arne Naess, “‘Here I Stand’: An Interview with Arne Naess,” interview by Christian Diehm, *Environmental Philosophy* 1:2 (Fall 2004), pp. 6–19; and Markus Gabriel, *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

⁸ Schürmann published earlier drafts of his reading of Heidegger's *Beiträge* in “[Review of] Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” in *Annuaire philosophique 1988–1989* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), pp. 107–30; “Ultimate Double Binds,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 14:2–15:1 (1991), pp. 213–56; “Des doubles contraintes normatives,” in *Penser après Heidegger*, ed. Jacques Poulain, Wolfgang Schirmacher, and Arno Münster (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), pp. 49–68; “Riveted to a Monstrous Site: On Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” in *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 313–30; “Technicity, Topology, Tragedy: Heidegger on ‘That Which Saves’ in the Global Reach,” in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, ed. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 190–213; “A Brutal Awakening to the Tragic Condition of Being: On Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*,” in *Martin Heidegger: Art, Politics, and Technology*, ed. Karsten Harries and Christoph Jamme (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1994), pp. 89–105; “Ein brutales Erwachen zur tragischen Bestimmung des Seins,” in *Martin Heidegger: Kunst, Politik, Technik*, ed. Christoph Jamme and Karsten Harries (Munich: Fink, 1992), pp. 261–78.

tantamount resurgence of autocratic nationalism around the globe today, whose theoreticians and even politicians have not, on some occasions, hesitated to claim Heidegger for their cause.⁹ As Mehdi Belhaj Kacem writes of the *Beiträge*, and in particular when it is read through Schürmann's interpretive lens: "This text is indeed the *internal* critique of National Socialism, hence the most *radical* that has ever been made; understanding it will allow us to understand the very heart of the contemporary imposition of democratic fascism."¹⁰ It is this *radicality* that Schürmann saw in the "Heidegger" of the *Beiträge*, a radicality that still demands to be brought to light—and eventually deconstructed in its manifold meanings—should one hope to grasp the monstrosity (*monstrum*) of our site and thus the warning (*monitus*) it has been sending.

In order to hear and heed this warning, it will, admittedly, be necessary to read Heidegger against himself, to exert a sort of violence upon the letter of the *Beiträge* that nevertheless aims at letting its deeper truth resonate. It will be necessary, in other words, to take Heidegger's text in a direction that, as Schürmann puts it in *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, "the man Martin Heidegger would not have wished to be led" (HBA 3).

Our paper will be divided as follows. We will first say a few words about the general reception and relevance of Schürmann's reading of Heidegger in and for contemporary thought (§2). We will then demonstrate how, in Schürmann's interpretation, the name "Heidegger" stands for the monstrous site in which the ineluctability of hegemonic fantasies meets its end (§3). Next, we will look more closely at how this comes about by examining four centripetal strategies and four centrifugal—de-centering and eccentric—counter-strategies that are, according to Schürmann, simultaneously operative in Heidegger's *Beiträge*, and at some of the implications Schürmann draws thereby (§4). Finally, we will contrast Schürmann's unique alternative with a variety of contemporary appropriations of Heidegger (§5).

2. Reception and Relevance of Schürmann's "Heidegger"

Judging from his commentators, Schürmann is best known for his 1982 book *Le principe d'anarchie*, wherein he reads Heidegger as a thinker of anarchy at the end of metaphysics. Hans-Georg Gadamer describes it as a book that "deserves particular consideration." "It is," Gadamer continues, "argued with extraordinary care and thoroughly follows Heidegger inasmuch as it takes seriously Heidegger's dismissal of the question put to him by Jean Beaufret: 'When will you write an ethics?'"¹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, who served on the committee for Schürmann's doctoral degree (*Doctorat ès lettres*), called it "a Summa of Heidegger's entire thought, one whose speculative and pedagogical value makes one

⁹ There are many examples: Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon, who said of Heidegger, "That's my guy" (Christoph Scheuermann, "Searching in Europe for Glory Days Gone By," *Spiegel International*, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/stephen-bannon-tries-rightwing-revolution-in-europe-a-1235297.html> [accessed November 19, 2021]); Björn Höcke, the former leader of Der Flügel, the now-banned far-right faction of Germany's Alternative für Deutschland, and who is also a promoter of the reactionary journal significantly titled *Die Kehre: Zeitschrift für Naturschutz*, which, not by chance, was described as "a foundational journal that goes to the 'radix,' to the root" (*eine grundlegende Zeitschrift, die an die Radix geht, an die Wurzel*) (*Die Kehre*, "Konzept," *Die Kehre: Zeitschrift für Naturschutz*, <https://die-kehre.de/konzept/>; our translation [accessed November 19, 2021]); and the Russian nationalist (or rather self-proclaimed "Neo-Eurasianist") Aleksandr Dugin, who takes Heidegger as the primary source of inspiration for his "fourth political theory," and who has been referred to as "Putin's brain" (Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, "Putin's Brain: Alexander Dugin and the Philosophy Behind Putin's Invasion of Crimea," *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-31/putins-brain> [accessed November 19, 2021]).

¹⁰ Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, "Contributions aux *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (être de l'événement, événement de l'être après Heidegger)," chap. 6 of *L'esprit du nihilisme: Une ontologique de l'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 2009), pp. 127–8; our translation; second emphasis added.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Review of Schürmann's *Heidegger on Being and Acting*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 13:1 (1988), p. 155.

strongly desire its publication.”¹² Even Gilles Deleuze took it seriously as a palatable interpretation of Heidegger.¹³ More recently, philosophers such as Catherine Malabou, Giorgio Agamben, and Gianni Vattimo have been engaging reverentially, although not uncritically, with Schürmann’s book.¹⁴ One of the problems with this engagement, however, is that it fails to consider the complex development of Schürmann’s reading of Heidegger as a whole, which culminates in the still-underappreciated final chapters of *Broken Hegemonies*. Indeed, some of these philosophers’ critiques—for example, of Schürmann’s “hypothesis of [metaphysical] closure” (see, e.g., HBA 1, 4) or of his supposed mysticism of a unitary origin and its accessibility—no longer hold for his reading of Heidegger in *Broken Hegemonies*, if they ever did for the earlier book. In the words of Élisabeth Rigal, “the fundamental lesson of [*Broken*] *Hegemonies* is no longer at all that of the *Principe* [*d’anarchie*]”; for, “between the 1982 text and the text published posthumously,” the period in which Schürmann discovered Heidegger’s *Beiträge*, “a veritable turn [*retournement*] in the thinking of *Ereignis* calls into question the initial thesis of the ‘plurification’ of the originary, and aims to establish that everyday knowing [*le savoir de la quotidienneté*] is tragic knowing.”¹⁵ Furthermore, Schürmann comes to recognize that natality (which, in contrast to Arendt, he understands as the tendency to efface the singular for the sake of the universal and of the particulars it subsumes) is an inescapable condition of the human being. Although we have arrived at a stage in which we no longer need to extend the universal across all conceivable domains and thereby render it hegemonic, we will never be able to live for the singular alone, however much we may try. Our very ability to communicate is dependent on universals. Schürmann therefore acknowledges that “anomy is bound to remain a dream” (PS 16; BH 343).

Schürmann’s reading of the *Beiträge* may well be “even more difficult to understand than the *Beiträge* itself,” as Dominique Janicaud once wrote.¹⁶ It may well be that the thinking of “the greatest Heideggerian of the 20th century” is “the most negative, the darkest in the history of philosophy, which is why he is no longer read,” as Kacem claims.¹⁷ Schürmann’s *Broken Hegemonies* is not, for all that, any less important.

Quite the contrary. As Gérard Granel already noted in his reading of Schürmann, the “desire

¹² See “Rapport sur la soutenance de la thèse de Reiner Schürmann, le 22 juin 1981,” in *Le principe d’anarchie*, 1976–1992, in Series II: Book Publication, 1971–1992, Reiner Schürmann papers, NA.0006.01, The New School Archives and Special Collections, The New School, New York, New York, box 1, folder 13; our translation.

¹³ See the letter from Daniel Charles to Reiner Schürmann, March 15, 1984, in the possession of Diaphanes Verlag, unprocessed private files, Zurich, Switzerland, in which Charles enthusiastically expressed Deleuze’s wish to welcome Schürmann in his seminar. Alan Badiou, on the other hand, greatly admired a draft of *Broken Hegemonies* (“powerful ‘local’ analyses . . . and . . . general categories . . . aim for a historical construction that is capable of rivaling, *all the while undoing* [*tout en le défaisant*], the Heideggerian montage”) (Badiou to Schürmann, May 4, 1993, Diaphanes private files; our translation; emphasis added); although, to our knowledge, he has never devoted significant attention to it in any of his published writings.

¹⁴ “Real Anarchism Has Never Been Philosophized: An Interview with Catherine Malabou,” *Acid Horizon*, April 26, 2021, podcast, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxHeRqphOzg> (accessed November 21, 2021); Giorgio Agamben, *The Omnibus Homo Sacer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), pp. 429, 1275–6. For Agamben’s stance in relation to Schürmann, see also the important essay by Malte Fabian Rauch, and Agamben’s response therein, “*An-arche* and Indifference: Between Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, and Reiner Schürmann,” *Philosophy Today* 65:3 (2021), pp. 619–36. For Gianni Vattimo’s interpretation and numerous references to *Le principe d’anarchie* in his corpus, see Ian Alexander Moore, “Anarchy,” in *The Vattimo Dictionary*, ed. Simonetta Moro (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁵ Élisabeth Rigal, “Des ultimes phénoménologiques,” in *Autour de Reiner Schürmann*, ed. Jean-Marie Vaysse (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2009), pp. 109, 113; our translation.

¹⁶ Dominique Janicaud, “Back to a Monstrous Site: Reiner Schürmann’s Reading of Heidegger’s *Beiträge*,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19:2–20:1 (1997), p. 292. The present essay can be read as an expansion and deepening of Janicaud’s initial treatment.

¹⁷ In the same vein, Kacem writes that this is “why he [Schürmann] must, in my opinion, be read” (Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, interview with Olivier Zahm, *Purple Magazine* 3:15 [2011], <https://purple.fr/magazine/ss-2011-issue-15/mehdi-belhaj-kacem-4/> [accessed November 21, 2021]).

of the *arche itself and qua itself*¹⁸ still moves a plethora of actors to pledge allegiance to fantasmatic posits or sovereign referents: to all those archic figures of the relation $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ (toward the one). Heidegger, it is well known, was no exception to this libidinal investment in “Firsts,” for example, when he pronounced the foul words in November 1933: “The Führer *himself alone* is the German reality of today and of tomorrow as well as its law” (GA16 184; cited in BH 554; DHB 639; Lilly’s trans.; see also GA16 569, 657). Nonetheless, Schürmann’s reading of the *Beiträge* shows that to comprehend the way in which Heidegger archically engaged with Nazism as the most radical and centripetal of *movements* (regardless of the an-archic undertow constantly working to pull his investment in $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ theticism out of its fantasized and fictionalized center) would require asking about “*the persistence, or the resurgence, of the metaphysical form* right at core of the only thought [namely, Heidegger’s] that has taught us to discern the fundamental traits of such a form and to attempt the ‘step-back’ in relation to it.”¹⁹ Thinking through the reasons and the consequences of this centripetalism—of this movement toward the center and the maximizingly universalist, $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ attraction it forces upon any constellation of phenomena—should allow one to better understand the metaphysical overdetermination of why National Socialism, with Heidegger’s complicity, willed and described itself as a movement (*Bewegung*) that centered a “**rude multitude**” (*multitudo dissoluta*) of *Dasein* in the German people (*Volk*) by means of one centering guide, the Führer.²⁰

If “*something incomprehensible . . . in the ontological arrayment of modernity . . . threatens to return,*” then the task Schürmann took upon himself in *Broken Hegemonies* of retrieving or “un-forgetting”²¹ the origin of the desire for denial (which is, of course, a denial of desire) assumes an even greater importance and deserves to be grasped in all its untimely contemporaneity. Perhaps only now, when the monstrosity of Heidegger’s site has grown even greater; when the house, and not just that of being, is burning and the world is choking on “planetary asphyxiations” (BH 3); when reactionary politics and their identitarian and foundationalist trends are again on the rise—perhaps only now are we ready for the tragic truth that *Broken Hegemonies* offers.²² This would mean, however, being ready for Schürmann’s “Heidegger.”

3. “Heidegger’s” *Beiträge* as Site of Peremption in *Broken Hegemonies*

Following Michel Foucault and Schürmann, we can understand “Heidegger” less as an individual than as a “discursive regularity” (HBA 3).²³ Using proper names as discursive regularities is a hermeneutical device that Schürmann employs in his topological reading of the history of western philosophy. It aims at separating what is stated *in* an author’s texts from the author *as* individualized

¹⁸ See Gérard Granel, “Untameable Singularity (Some Remarks on *Broken Hegemonies*),” trans. Charles T. Wolfe, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19:2–20:1 (1997), p. 218.

¹⁹ Gérard Granel, “Un singulier phénomène de mirement,” in *L’époque dénouée*, ed. Élisabeth Rigal (Paris: Hermann, 2012), p. 172; our translation.

²⁰ For “*multitudo dissoluta*,” see Thomas Hobbes, *De cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender, vol. 3 of *The Clarendon Edition of the Philosophical Works of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chap. 7, ¶11, p. 111; *De cive: The Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender, vol. 2 of *The Clarendon Edition of the Philosophical Works of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chap. 7, ¶11, p. 155.

²¹ Granel, “Untameable Singularity,” p. 219; second emphasis added. Granel seemed to have been well aware of the urgency that *Broken Hegemonies* was responding to: the book would in fact be released for the first time, posthumously (1996), in France by Granel’s publishing house, Trans-Europ-Repress.

²² For the metaphor of the burning house, see Giorgio Agamben, *Quando la casa brucia* (Macerata: Giometti & Antonello, 2020). On our readiness to receive the truth, see Schürmann’s similar claim about Meister Eckhart’s thought in *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart’s Mystical Philosophy* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne, 2001), p. 209. Incidentally (although, given what we just said, perhaps not accidentally), Schürmann’s later reading of Eckhart in *Broken Hegemonies* has been almost completely neglected in Eckhart studies, despite the major contribution of Schürmann’s early work to the field.

²³ See also Michel Foucault, “The Unities of Discourse,” chap. 1 of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 2nd rev.ed., trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 23–33, esp. 26–8.

and as supposedly captured in a biographical account. The purpose of this hermeneutical device is thus to sever the bond of referentiality between a name and its subject, hence to sever the bond that establishes self-identity. As Schürmann wrote of “Heidegger” in *Heidegger on Being and Acting*: “‘Heidegger,’ then, will take the place here of a certain discursive regularity. It will not be the proper name, which refers to a man from Messkirch, deceased in 1976. We might say ‘with Heidegger,’ but in all strictness we must say ‘in Heidegger’” (HBA 3). This move toward discursive regularities is a clear token of Schürmann’s anti-humanism, which is heavily influenced by Karl Marx’s, Friedrich Nietzsche’s, and Heidegger’s an-archic displacements of *the* subject of the western metaphysical tradition, in both senses of the genitive.²⁴

Heidegger, or the work thus bearing his “name,” demonstrates, like no other, both the desire for consoling consolidation (the *Führerprinzip*,²⁵ appropriation, the $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ relation, the *Volk*, the “secret Germany,” the founders and creators) and the recognition of an originary dissension in being (the abyss, fissuring, expropriation, a singularization to come, tragic knowledge).

Five hundred pages into *Broken Hegemonies*, after presenting a new interpretation of the nature of philosophy and testing it out in readings of both the architects of reigning epochal principles (Parmenides with the Greek *One*, Cicero and Augustine with the Latin *natura*, Luther and Kant with vernacular *self-consciousness*) and those who brought about their collapse (Plotinus in Greek, Meister Eckhart in Latin and Middle High German), Schürmann finally turns to the Heideggerian corpus as the locus in which a much more significant collapse takes place: one is faced not merely with a “destitution” of the modern epoch of self-consciousness but with the possibility of a “di-” or “peremption”—a *dessaisie*—of fantasmic recourse and of hegemonic thinking as such (BH 514; DHB 592; trans. mod.). “Our lot,” Schürmann explains in a précis of *Broken Hegemonies*, “is the relinquishment of any representation functioning as plainly and simply normative: what in legal theory is called peremption (also ‘quashing’), the annulment of a previously valid law” (PS 20).²⁶

Such a peremption will allow for what Schürmann variously calls anarchy, “life without why,” and *Gelassenheit* or “releasement,” among other things (HBA 10; 82). But, as Schürmann also articulates throughout his corpus, the “practical apriori” of *Gelassenheit* is also required for the realization of peremption’s “economic apriori,” that is to say, for conformity with an epochal decision

²⁴ See §§7–8 of Schürmann’s *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, titled “A Threefold Break with ‘Humanism’” (HBA 47–50) and “A Threefold Break with Principial Origins” (HBA 51–60), respectively; and *Reading Marx: On Transcendental Materialism*, ed. Malte Fabian Rauch and Nicolas Schneider (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2021). One should also be reminded of Schürmann’s reading of Heidegger’s concept of inauthentic temporality in his lecture notes on *Being and Time*, wherein the reduction of a *Da-sein*’s life to a biographical-anecdotal concatenation of present moments is genealogically “traced back” (*zurückgeführt*) to a calculative, linear understanding of time (see Simon Critchley and Reiner Schürmann, *On Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Steven Levine [New York: Routledge, 2008], p. 113). For more on the problem of (auto)biography in (and of a possible biography of) Schürmann, see Francesco Guercio, “Introduzione: Su *Le origini* di Reiner Schürmann,” in Reiner Schürmann, *Le origini*, trans. Ferruccio Scabbia, ed. Francesco Guercio (Rome: Efestò, 2020), v–xxxi. For a different interpretation of Heidegger, but one that nevertheless also takes Heidegger seriously as “an *occasion* for thought, not just a controversial figure in the history of thought,” see Gregory Fried, *Towards a Polemical Ethics: Between Heidegger and Plato* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), p. 20.

²⁵ See, for example, Martin Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us: *Der Spiegel*’s Interview with Martin Heidegger,” trans. Maria P. Alter and John D. Caputo, in *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Stassen (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 28; and “German Students,” in *Political Texts, 1933–1934*, in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 46–7.

²⁶ In his translation of Granel’s “Untameable Singularity” (pp. 216, 227n. 3), Charles T. Wolfe remarks that (at least on some occasions) “deremption” (*sic*) was “Reiner Schürmann’s choice of a juridical term with which to render *dessaisie*: a withdrawal, a relinquishment, a removal from court, or, better, a dispossession, which doubtless renders the *Ent-eignung* of the *Beträge*.” In any case, as Rauch and Schneider point out, “‘diremption,’” which is how the term appears in *Broken Hegemonies*, “strongly resonates with a falling into *two* or a bifurcation, a conceptual specification that is not contained in the French ‘*dessaisie*’ and that invests this notion with a decidedly [and misleadingly] Hegelian ring, given that ‘diremption’ is the standard English translation for Hegel’s ‘*Entzweiung*’” (Malte Fabian Rauch and Nicolas Schneider, “Of Peremption and Insurrection: Reiner Schürmann’s Encounter with Michel Foucault,” in Reiner Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold: Essays on Foucault, Anarchy, and the Singularization to Come* [Zurich: Diaphanes, 2018], p. 165n. 54).

within being itself (HBA 274).²⁷ As Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe once wrote in his own immanent critique of Heidegger's political philosophy, where he too uses the term *dessaisie*:

It is precisely the voluntaristic *habitus* that we must renounce. Relinquishment [*dessaisie*] in this sense is will without will, will no longer willing and no longer willing itself, abandoning itself and letting itself be disarmed. . . . Such a relinquishment assuredly calls for a "disposition." But it has little to do with a decision since it is in reality what is imposed upon us by the age. All that might arise from a decision is a certain "rectitude" towards the age.²⁸

What occurs with the *dessaisie*, in Schürmann's reading, is that *Seinsgeschichte*, the "history of being" (see, e.g., GA65 227–8), which Heidegger notoriously thought of as a history of *oblivion* (*Vergessenheit*) (see e.g., GA65 107, 116–9), reveals itself, and becomes retrievable through a topological reading, as an epochally broken history of blindness. Yet, what peremption also allows us to grasp is that, by means of the denial of the tragic "double bind," such a history of blindness has imagined itself instead as an unceasing search for the light—a search in which "substitutes for the Platonic sun [have] continue[d] to rule" (BH 540).²⁹ By positing principles and propping up princes, philosophers throughout the hegemonic epochs have thus concocted a metaphysical apparatus in order to trace their history as one of simple, monofocal— $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ —vision. However, and this is also why Schürmann speaks of *broken* hegemonies, while philosophers toiled to build the magnificent edifices of hegemonic theticism by blinding themselves and everyone else to their tragic denial, they were also, at the same time, laboring to grant the withering away and destitution of all vicarious agents of the archeo-teleocratic regime.

According to Schürmann, the *Beiträge* would paradigmatically show how peremption as monstrous site allows for this hubristic blindness to turn "visionary" (BH 553), and for the archi-violence of metaphysical theticism to finally become not only visible as blinding but potentially inoperable as simply hegemonic. By monstrously presenting both the thetic thrust toward principial thought *and* the anarchic undertow of ateleocratic thinking, Heidegger's *Beiträge* becomes a paradigmatic textual site in which the possibilities opened up by peremption, that is, by the "κένωσις, the emptying out of any ultimate authority" (BH 514), can be shown as being always "there" while also being always "to come." Peremption, the self-revelation of western metaphysics as an awesome, gigantic contraption set up in order to provide individuals and communities with stable foundations both for their being and their acting—by means of their separation and hierarchization—, would thus come to the fore and allow itself to be read in all its tragic, simultaneous dissension.

Schürmann explains that there is a differend between, on the one hand, a knowledge (*connaissance*; *Erkenntnis*) or science (*Wissenschaft*) that is conquered by blinding oneself in order *not* to see the suffering derived from the double bind under which every *Dasein* exists and, on the other hand, a knowing or wisdom (*savoir*; *Wissen*) that is instead given after being blinded by that very suffering. Peremption, as paradigmatically shown in Heidegger's *Beiträge*, is a post-epochal time in which this differend unfolds as the apocalyptic κένωσις of the historiographic/historical/evental differend between ἀρχαί and anarchy, which is always an-archically at play in the abyssality of the *Da* (see BH 546, 609, 680n.2). The very monstrosity of Heidegger's scandalous "greatest stupidity"

²⁷ See also Schürmann, *Le principe d'anarchie*, pp. 393–4. For references and a discussion of the polysemy of *Gelassenheit* in Schürmann's *œuvre*, see Ian Alexander Moore, "On the Manifold Meaning of Letting-Be in Reiner Schürmann," *Journal of Continental Philosophy* 2:1 (2021), pp. 105–130.

²⁸ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art, and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 5; *La fiction du politique* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1987), p. 19.

²⁹ Schürmann uses the Batesonian notion of the double bind (see, e.g., BH 3n. 1; DHB 9n. 1).

(*grösste Dummheit*),³⁰ both the warning and the revelatory character of his decision to affiliate himself with the Nazis, is then highlighted in Schürmann’s reading of the *Beiträge* as the eventual decision within the tragic site of *being*’s discordance with(in) itself, and, existentially, as the *Da* that assumes and thinks yet simultaneously denies itself as the *ἄγων* of such a “decision” (*Entscheidung*) (see GA65 455; cited in BH 544).

Schürmann thus privileges Heidegger’s *Beiträge*, not because, as Otto Pöggeler and others have touted for years, it is “another capital work” (*ein weiteres Hauptwerk*) (GA65 511) or even his only “authentic chief work”—claims which Schürmann strongly contests—but for the following five reasons.³¹ First, the work was written under the spell of Friedrich Hölderlin and Nietzsche, those great awakeners to tragic truth. Second, it does not lose sight of either the transcendental legislation that these figures transgressed or, third, of the long lineage of normative metaphysics from which it is in the process of unbinding itself. Fourth, in terms of content, it speaks, “without precedent” (BH 551) of—and, *a fortiori*, it speaks *from out of*—an originary, indissoluble dissension, a strife or a tragic antagonism that Schürmann understands on several levels: at the level of the “ultimates of everydayness,” between the universalizing thrust of natality and the singularizing thrust of mortality (BH 537; see also BH 4, 527); at the level of truth, between unconcealment (*ἀλήθεια*) and concealment (*λήθη*) (see BH 577); at the level of the event (*Ereignis*), between appropriation (*Ereignung*) and expropriation (*Enteignung*) (see BH 589); at the level of being, not between beings and beingness as their common noun but *within* being (crossed out, if you like, or written with a ‘y’) itself; and, at the level of space and time, “as an abyssal site and as a discordance of times” (BH 579). Fifth, and most importantly, in terms of form, a “libidinal investment” (BH 546) in grounding (*Gründung*) and stability paradoxically accompanies the text’s recognition of the insuperable abyss (*Abgrund*) of originary, an-archic dissension (BH 549). In other words, every “strategy”—of which Schürmann retraces and discusses four—that would center Heidegger’s discourse in a language, a land, or a people is accompanied and labored upon, from within, by a decentering “counter-strategy” (BH 589).

4. *De linea monstruosa*: Strategies and Counter-Strategies in the *Beiträge*

In order to grasp the way in which, according to Schürmann, these centripetal strategies and centrifugal counter-strategies are simultaneously at work in Heidegger’s *Beiträge*, a few words on what the terms “strategy” and “counter-strategy” mean in his thought are in order. If “strategy” betrays its Foucauldian genealogy and is already a crucial term in *Le principe d’anarchie*, “counter-strategy” gets to be specified later on, and progressively gains significance throughout the 1980s as a key word in Schürmann’s account of the double bind and topological reading of broken hegemonies. The term “counter-strategy” is not, for example, found in *Le principe d’anarchie*, although it appears already in a title for one of Schürmann’s longest essays, from 1984, titled “Legislation-Transgression: Strategies and Counter-Strategies in the Transcendental Justification of Norms.”³² Understood as being “not in relation to human actions and the art of coordinating them, but in relation to the economies of presencing” (HBA 10), “strategy” is taken by Schürmann in *Heidegger on Being and*

³⁰ Heidegger’s phrase, as reported in Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen: Begegnungen und Gespräche mit Martin Heidegger 1929–1976* (Frankfurt: Societät, 1983), p. 43; our translation.

³¹ Otto Pöggeler, “Heidegger und die hermeneutische Theologie,” in *Verifikationen: Festschrift für Gerhard Ebeling*, ed. E. Jüngel, J. Wallmann, and W. Werbeck (Tübingen: Mohr, 1982), p. 481. In contesting such claims of the *Beiträge*’s reception, Schürmann discusses what he calls the work’s “overdetermined legacy” (BH 515–6, 673n. 6); see also Iain Thomson, “The Philosophical Fugue: Understanding the Structure and Goal of Heidegger’s *Beiträge*,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 34: 1 (2003), pp. 57–62; and Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³² This 1984 essay now appears in Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold*, pp. 77–120.

Acting to be a term that refers to “soft facts . . . indissociable from interpretation” (HBA 299).³³ By punctuating a history of “givens” accessible at the “intersection of thought and practice,” strategies are to be located at an intermediate phenomenal level and lie wedged between the “entitative” and the “eventlike” strata (HBA 36, 299).³⁴

In the decade leading to *Broken Hegemonies*, Schürmann pairs “strategy” with “counter-strategy.” As “a power of dissolution counteracting [any] formative, law-bestowing force at its core,”³⁵ a counter-strategy labors upon a strategy so as to contaminate and break up its claims to simple nomotheticism. In the words of Derrida, which served as an epigraph to Schürmann’s “Legislation-Transgression”: “What if there were, lodged within the heart of law itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? What if the condition for the possibility of law were the *a priori* of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility, maddening its sense, order and reason?”³⁶ In the analytic of ultimates that Schürmann undertakes in *Broken Hegemonies*, strategies and counter-strategies mark the modes in which the differend between the traits of natality and mortality—which are disparate conditions simultaneously, and thus tragically, at work in being—comes to be variously disposed throughout western philosophy. As two disparate appropriating and expropriating pulls, strategic nomotheses and counter-strategic transgressions fracture “the normative bond into a legislative-transgressive double bind” (BH 25). It is this *ineluctable simultaneity* at the core of the double bind between figures of life (strategies) and figures of death (counter-strategies)—a simultaneity Schürmann traces back³⁷ through the history of hegemonic fantasies—that comes into view as pathetically normative and topologically retrievable in the monstrous time of peremption.

By speaking from out of that time, that is, “from the place of the innermost rupture (*der innigste Riß*)” (BH 540; DHB 623; trans. mod.; see also GA65 510), the Heidegger of the *Beiträge* is drawn, by the everyday trait of natality, to *ground* the most centripetal, univocal, and unifocal instance of authority while being, at the same time, eccentrically drawn, by the most anarchic undertow, by the everyday trait of mortality, to *unground* any such archic instance.

It is then to show Heidegger’s “double allegiance” (see, e.g., BH 17; DHB 27) to both ultimates of natality and mortality that Schürmann traces and discusses four pairs of subsumptive strategies and dispersive counter-strategies “monstrously” at work in the *Beiträge* (BH 517). First, there is the tension between, on one side, a populist political project, in which certain leaders (the founders, the creators) are called on to decide the direction and destiny of the West, and, on the other, the emergence of what Schürmann calls “the anarchic self” (BH 534). The latter is not a self-conscious subject acting autonomously to determine itself and those who would (or would be obliged to) follow it; it is, rather, a self that is received as a gift of being, needed and used (*gebraucht*), heteronomously, by being itself—in Schürmann’s words, it is a “*gift of time*” (BH 517; DHB 595), which “is nothing but the peremption [*dessaisie*] itself, whereby Da-sein will be deterritorialized”

³³ This quote does not appear in Schürmann’s *Le principe d’anarchie*.

³⁴ On the notions of “strategy” and “counter-strategy” so understood, see also Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold*, pp. 78–80; and Kieran Aarons and Francesco Guercio, “The Willing Animal to Which Nature Must Conform,” afterword to Reiner Schürmann, *Modern Philosophy of the Will*, ed. Kieran Aarons and Francesco Guercio (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2022), p. 157. Foucault, for his part, by reminding his readers not to “refer the various enunciative modalities to the unity of the subject,” and by also reminding them that “it is neither by recourse to a transcendental subject nor by recourse to a psychological subjectivity that the regulation of its enunciations should be defined,” had already exhorted them to “mark out the dispersion of the points of choice, and define prior to any option, to any thematic preference, a field of strategic possibilities” (Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 60–1, 40; see also 71–8).

³⁵ Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold*, p. 79.

³⁶ Jacques Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” trans. Avital Ronell, *Glyph 7* (1980), p. 204; Schürmann trans. mod.; cited in Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold*, p. 77.

³⁷ For a genealogical locus showing the importance of the Nietzschean “tracing back” (*zurückführen*) in Schürmann’s own topological retrieval of broken hegemonies, see Reiner Schürmann, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, ed. Francesco Guercio (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2020), p. 24.

(BH 534; DHB 616; trans. mod.).³⁸ Although Heidegger’s undeniably centripetal “libidinal investment in order” (BH 546) is indicated by his repeated call for founders and creators, a simultaneous anti-humanist, centrifugal, topological understanding of *Dasein*—as the “site” of an abyssal decision conditioning any volitional subjective individual or collective decision—is always already laboring from underneath any political and populist evocation of principial foundation. Regarding such decisions, Schürmann had already written, in *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, that “the step back from the conditioned to the condition is clear. Just as thrownness precedes every project, so an essential, disjunctive, historical-destinal, economic, aletheiological, non-human, systemic decision precedes all human or voluntary decisions, all comportment” (HBA 247).

The second strategic/counter-strategic πόλεμος concerns Heidegger’s discussion of “the last god,” a god that, in Heidegger’s words, “stands outside of that calculating determination which is meant by titles such as ‘mono-theism,’ ‘pan-theism,’ and ‘a-theism’” (GA65 411; see also BH 518). On the one hand, and despite his demarcations, Heidegger seems to lapse into a sort of Husserlian essentialism, gathering the disparate experiences of the divine in Greek and biblical antiquity under the heading of *das Gottwesen*, literally “the God-essence” (BH 518; DHB 597). On the other hand, Heidegger’s undermining of essentialism, his deconstructions of divinity as *causa sui* and of the maker god of metaphysics, points elsewhere. If it is true that “only a [*ein*] god can save us now,” as Heidegger declares in his notorious interview with *Der Spiegel*, then this god that has “his unique unicity” (GA65 411) would be, according to Schürmann, none (no-one) other than Proteus.³⁹ Being a shapeshifter, at the same time one *and* multiple, or, perhaps more fittingly, *neither* one nor multiple, Proteus would escape from the hyperbolic ensnarement of both representation and maximization while still ushering in a “new paganism, perhaps” (BH 565), one in which “a new way of being becomes possible” (PS 8; emphasis added). Proteus, “the old man of the sea,” (ἄλιος γέρων) as Homer called him,⁴⁰ would also escape the earthy radicality of a people *rooted in land*. The line on, in, and about which Heidegger “situates” himself, the “*offene Stelle*” (BH 540; DHB 623; see also GA65 510), the blank place *from out of* which he speaks, would be the Protean line “at the edge of the principial territory” (PS 10). Here, the withering away of arch-hubristic referents reveals itself in all its monstrosity. In Schürmann’s reading, the simultaneity of a strategy deploying an essentialist, entitative, *simple* god and a counter-strategy laboring to undermine the latter from below reminds us that a “Protean anarchy” (PS 9) is the one in which *situation* and *transgression* are monstrously inseparable and the *Da* is ever unfixed: always possible, always to come.

The third strategic couple, regarding the status of the *Volk* in the *Beiträge*, relates to the first (see BH 519–20). It is well known that, between 1933 and 1934, Heidegger aligned himself with National Socialism as a means of gathering and grounding a people in correspondence with a

³⁸ For Schürmann’s use of the Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts of “deterritorialization” and “nomadism,” see esp. BH 555–6, 593, 580–81; DHB 640–1, 669, 682.

³⁹ Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us: *Der Spiegel*’s Interview with Martin Heidegger,” p. 38; “Spiegel-Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger,” in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges 1910–1976*, ed. Hermann Heidegger, vol. 16 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000), p. 671; emphasis added; henceforth GA16, followed by page number. For an alternate English translation, see Martin Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us Now: An Interview with Martin Heidegger,” trans. David Schendler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 6:1 [1977], pp. 20–1.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.384, 401. If Jacob Taubes was perhaps not mistaken when he assertorically established the equivalence between paganism and *Völkertum* (“Heidentum ist Völkertum”), then it would be necessary to analyze what a Protean-anarchic “new paganism”—i.e. a destitution of paganism, or a paganism that rendered any rootedness in a *pagus*, in *Völkertum*, ‘inoperative’—would be (see Jacob Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie* [Bern: A. Francke, 1947], p. 16). Schürmann’s question seems to be, then: “how does one sever the roots paganism pushes into the land as the essence of the people?” The relationship between paganism and Christianity in Schürmann, as well as his shifting attitudes toward (his own) faith, still need to be investigated to their full extent. For a step in that direction, see Moore, “On the Manifold Meaning of Letting-Be in Reiner Schürmann,” pp. 114–30.

gathering and grounding of being. He did so, however—and despite himself—in a subjectivist and essentialist fashion. Germany, through the song of the poet (read: Hölderlin), through the thoughts of the philosopher (read: Heidegger), and through the decisive legislation of the politician (read: Hitler), was supposed to particularize a universal idea or ideal that was *likewise* particularized in the Ancient Greek polis with, for example, Homer, Plato, and Solon. If, however, the ground (*Grund*) of being—which, in Heidegger’s archaic words, is “the soil in which to strike root and to stand”⁴¹—is ineluctably *fissured* (*zerklüftet*, to use a key term of the *Beiträge* [see, e.g., GA65 400, 415, 416]); if that *Grund* is an abyss (*Abgrund*) and thus any unshakable ground is in fact a *fundamentum* “*concussum*”; and if that *Grund* shatters all projects and expropriates unto silence and death—then all rootedness is bestowed as uprooted and all linguistic, geographic, populo-political establishment loses its hold. There is, in short, nothing left to hold onto or to be rooted in *originarily*. Or, to express it paradoxically, the only thing to hold onto is *the* nothing itself. In Heidegger’s words, as cited by Schürmann in *Broken Hegemonies*: “Holding firmly onto the abyss belongs to the essence of *Da-sein*” (GA65 460; cited in BH 551; DHB 636).⁴²

The fourth strategy, of which any serious student of Heidegger should be suspicious, tries to answer the question, “When?” When, precisely, will the people be as they are meant to be? When will *Da-sein*—conceived no longer as a transcendental structure but as a contingent, ontic possibility—be as it is meant to be? Heidegger gives two answers. In the *Beiträge*, it will be when the knowing few *will* it to be (GA65 61–2; cited in BH 521). Later in his career, like some latter-day prophet, Heidegger even ventures to count the years and mark the realization of *Dasein*’s ontic possibility, thereby showing himself susceptible to the primal apocalyptic question of “When?” and to the desire to be the one who has its answer (GA16 675).⁴³ In either case, the danger looms that Heidegger has made the ontological dependent on the ontic, the historical on the historiographic, the play of time and space (*Zeitspielraum*) on a point *in* time and on a place *on* the earth; the condition, in short, on the conditioned, all of which is but the thetic performance of maximization.⁴⁴ And yet, here too, there is a counter-strategy, by which the possibility of *Dasein* is not subject to measurable, calculable, spatio-temporal coordinates but is thought of as an always immanent, and always imminent or *to-come*, fractured site and fissured moment. In the abyssality of the *Da*, the differend between immanence and imminence bursts its historiographically calculable *advent* and turns its anarchic passibility into an historically possible *event*.

Heidegger’s discourse, and *we ourselves*—if we “cannot pass beyond the limit[,] are still living on philosophical ground [*terre*] and . . . cannot just go and live somewhere else”⁴⁵—stand “[a]t the monstrous limit of universal mathematization,” where “space-time turns into the singular ‘place of an instant’ . . . where the event occurs” (BH 549; DHB 634; see also GA65 371–88). Such a turning moves from time (isomorphic because measurable) to the abyss of incommensurable times. This abyss is what is revealed by peremption and the precarious dwelling it assigns to us. By being

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], p. 200; trans. mod.; “Wozu Dichter?,” in *Holzwege*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 5 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), p. 270.

⁴² Schürmann writes, “To establish oneself expressly on the fissured ground is what Heidegger now understands by ‘*Da-sein*’” (BH 560). The diverse implications of understanding this “establishment” on, or “dwelling” in, a fissured ground experienced as “bearing” (*ausstehen*—Heidegger) or as “descending and howling” (*absteigen und heulen*—Rilke), are magisterially discussed in Furio Jesi, “Heidegger e Rilke: ‘Zwiesprache’ e ‘Andenken,’” in *Esoterismo e linguaggio mitologico: Studi su Rainer Maria Rilke* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2020), pp. 187–201. Incidentally, this thinking of, on, and in an age that “hangs in the abyss” could be read as a gloss on the oxymoronic title of Schürmann’s earlier book, *Le principe d’anarchie* (Martin Heidegger, “Why Poets?,” p. 200; “Wozu Dichter?,” p. 270).

⁴³ Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us,” p. 41; see also Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie*, p. 32; see also 30.

⁴⁴ Schürmann describes *maximization* as the hyperbolic work of natality aimed at establishing supreme referents by denying the manifoldness of singulars (see, e.g., BH 279; DHB 333).

⁴⁵ Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, p. 3; *La fiction du politique*, p. 16.

abyssally grounded (*ab-gründig*) in its every “place of an instant,” *Dasein*’s eventual origin is thus unmeasurable, uncontainable, and underneath historical time (*unterzeitlich*) (see BH 544, 547, 577). Needless to say, this has serious implications for life as it shuts any thetic attempt—whether it be ontological, existential, or political—at grounding an attainable origin or at attaining any originary ground.

What sort of implications? “*How*,” in other words, “*is one to live*, under the sign of Proteus?” asks Schürmann (BH 514). Stressing that Heidegger’s situation (*Erörterung*) on the line (*de linea*) both differs from *and* belongs together with Ernst Jünger’s movement across the line (*trans lineam*), Schürmann continues: “How does one let the positions, which for our peace of mind focus on some particular focal sense of being, collapse” (BH 514).⁴⁶ Or, stated differently, how does one establish oneself on a fissured ground? In the 1987 conference paper with which we began, Schürmann answers: “Call all archic remnants by their name, which is ‘hubris,’ and through discursive intervention rob them of their fictitious constancy” (PS 10). Or, as he puts it in a different paper from a few years later, written shortly before his untimely death: “say yes to peremption,” which means nothing short of “rehabilitating the singular under common names, affirming the *παθεῖν* that singularizes us ‘to death,’ understanding all figures of *ἀρχή* as figures turned against themselves with passibility and in this [sense as] anarchic” (PS 20). The possibility of *Dasein* is, in sum, its passibility, which for its part “means something more militant than ‘going with the flow,’ and something more painful than gentleness and passivity”—a different sort of releasement (*Gelassenheit*), we might add, than the one intended by the later Heidegger (PS 8).⁴⁷ In this sense, the monstrous line (*linea monstruosa*) that Schürmann draws on, and from, the *Beiträge* lies between activity and passivity in that middled-voiced, “blank place,” where one is disposed neither to govern (*ἄρχειν*) nor to be governed (*ἄρχεσθαι*).⁴⁸ Perhaps it is only here that a “Protean anarchy” finally breaks through.

5. Conclusion: An Admonishment

We have seen that the centrifugal thrust of Heidegger’s discourse leads to a place in which one may “save the phenomena,” that is, let them be as they show themselves without imposing comforting yet ultimately violent, disfiguring universals upon them. But the centripetal thrust of Heidegger’s discourse, its monstrous move to recenter thought in a particular people or in particular people, serves to *admonish* those who would think and act with Heidegger at “the end of metaphysics.” That is to say, it warns (*monet*) them of the danger of Heidegger even as it urges them (*ad-*) to read Heidegger as emblematic of our present place and moment and as the prime locus from which to learn to respond to that place and moment. Schürmann’s is a diagnostic reading of Heidegger as a monstrous site that is pulled by both centripetal and centrifugal forces, that imagines it can re-root itself in the very soil that its own critique of metaphysics had scattered to the winds, and that would seek to found a new Germanic homeland even after it had painfully demonstrated that the only home we will ever have is *nomadic*—a home in homelessness on whatever “narrow strip of terrain upon which it is given to us

⁴⁶ Schürmann writes: “The point is that one cannot describe the line of closure as separating danger from possible salvation without having transgressed it already” (HBA 366n. 13; see also HBA 217). See also Martin Heidegger, “On the Question of Being,” trans. William McNeill, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], pp. 291–322; “Zur Seinsfrage” in *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 9 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976], p. 424).

⁴⁷ See also Reiner Schürmann, “On the Philosophers’ Release from Civil Service: An Interview with Reiner Schürmann,” *Kairos* 2:1 (1988), pp. 133–45.

⁴⁸ In Herodotus’ *Histories*, Othanes says, “I desire neither to rule nor to be ruled” (“οὔτε γὰρ ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄρχεσθαι ἐθέλω”) (Herodotus, *The Persian Wars: Books 3–4*, vol. 2 of *The Persian Wars*, trans. A.D. Godley [Cambridge, Massachusetts 1921], bk. 3, chap. 83; cited in Reiner Schürmann, “The Ontological Difference and Political Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 40:1 [1979], p. 99).

to advance” (BH 580–1). This reading gives a lesson for today, when many would either dismiss Heidegger outright or pick and choose from his corpus whatever might serve their independent ends. The first group consists of those who would, for example, relegate Heidegger’s writings to the propaganda shelves of libraries or would, at least, prefer to see these writings removed from philosophy syllabi and confined to those of comparative literature or intellectual history, as well as those who hesitate before this “dangerous mind” and would rather withhold hermeneutic generosity for fear of contamination.⁴⁹ To these critics, Schürmann would reply that they deprive themselves of the possibility of understanding not only how one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century could have gone so far astray as to end up espousing anti-Jewish myths about world history and proclaiming, in 1935, the “inner truth and greatness of National Socialism,”⁵⁰ but also how eccentric counter-strategies at work in this philosopher’s own texts, including and especially those of the 1930s, undermine his, and indeed any, aspirations for centralized, monofocal authority in all its varieties. To the second group of readers—whether it be those who prioritize the formal analyses of the early Heidegger, those on the right who increasingly celebrate the middle Heidegger’s chauvinism, or those who would merely hearken unto the gentle voice of Being with the later Heidegger—Schürmann would reply that they deprive themselves of insight into Heidegger’s monstrous site as one to which not just Heidegger, but anyone who stands in his wake (which increasingly means everyone the world over), is riveted.

Schürmann did not need to wait for the publication of the *Black Notebooks* to unequivocally acknowledge Heidegger’s “radical” Nazism and general penchant for nationalism: “Heidegger *never contested* ‘the truth’ and ‘the inner greatness’ of the movement, on which he had wagered.” When it came to Nazism, Schürmann writes, “*there was never any Heideggerian dissent*” (*il n’y a jamais eu de dissidence heideggerienne*) (BH 526; DHB 606; emphasis added). And yet, rather than flee from Heidegger’s monstrous “investment in the most effectively focalizing focal sense” (BH 524; see also BH 546), Schürmann was to take it so seriously and so *pathetically* that he was to make the understanding of that monstrosity his ultimate and most urgent hermeneutical task. In this paper, we have endeavored to trace how Schürmann executed this task and to suggest some possibilities for a thoughtful anarchic practice that he opened up in his struggle with—and against—Heidegger. Thinking with and against Heidegger, in the wake of Heidegger, should, however, involve the recognition that Heidegger was, as Schürmann reminds us, always already thinking against himself.

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 2–7; Rudolf Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language,” trans. Arthur Pap, in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J. Ayer (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), pp. 60–81; Ronald Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), pp. 66–120.

⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 213; trans. mod.; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, ed. Petra Jaeger, vol. 40 of *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), p. 208.