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## Toward a Critique of *Walten*: Heidegger, Derrida, and Henological Difference

Adam Knowles

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Thus Plotinus (what is his status in the history of metaphysics and in the “Platonic” era, if one follows Heidegger’s reading?), who speaks of presence, that is, also of *morphē*, as the trace of nonpresence, as the amorphous (*to gar ikhnos tou amorphous morphē*). A trace which is neither absence nor presence, nor, in whatever modality, a secondary modality.

—JACQUES DERRIDA, “*Ousia and Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*”

### Introduction: Heidegger, Derrida, and *Walten*

In his reading of Heidegger in his 2003 seminar, published as *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida is particularly troubled by one particular aspect of Heidegger: Heidegger’s “superabundant use” of the language of *Walten*.<sup>1</sup> “As you see,” Derrida writes of Heidegger’s use of *Walten*, “late in my life of reading Heidegger, I have just discovered a word that seems to oblige me to put everything in a new perspective. And that is what happens and ought to be meditated on endlessly.”<sup>2</sup> Derrida discovered the forceful, even violent language of *Walten* in texts by Heidegger that span the period

from 1929 to 1957,<sup>3</sup> including its rather prominent usage in the primary text under analysis in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, volume II: Heidegger's 1929–30 seminar published as *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.<sup>4</sup> In the seminar, Heidegger introduces the language of *Walten* as a translation of the Greek *phusis*, which according to Heidegger bears within it an ambiguity of two meanings: “φύσις, that which prevails, means not only *that which itself prevails*, but that which prevails in its prevailing or the prevailing of whatever prevails [*das Waltende in seinem Walten oder das Walten des Waltenden*].”<sup>5</sup> While *phusis* cannot be reduced to any single one of these options, what will be of interest here is the forcefulness of the prevailing of what prevails—a centering, a gathering, a pulling together, in a continual *agon* that always pulls against a pulling apart.

And what is to be made of this ambiguous forcefulness given that, for Heidegger, “philosophy is meditation upon the prevailing of beings [*Walten des Seienden*], upon φύσις, in order to speak out φύσις in the λόγος”<sup>6</sup> What is this *phusis*? What is this *logos*? And what is the force that binds them? What, moreover, is to be made of Derrida's endless rethinking of Heidegger through the pervasive language of *Walten*? In what follows, I will argue that potential answers to these questions are in part already latent in Derrida's earlier work and are best approached through an analysis of Reiner Schürmann's concept of henological difference<sup>7</sup>—an originary process of difference within the One that is, in Plato's phrase from *Republic* 509B, “beyond being [*epekeina tēs ousias*].”<sup>8</sup> The task of this essay will therefore not be to say what Heidegger's *Walten* “is” but, instead, to draw a perhaps contentious historical comparison with Plotinus in order to develop more fully the role played by the forceful concept of *Walten* in Heidegger's thought.

## I. Reiner Schürmann's Henological Difference

Schürmann develops the notion of henological difference as an explicit response to Derrida's repeated provocative hints about Plotinus's exclusion from the Heideggerian history of metaphysics.<sup>9</sup> In developing the concept of henological difference through a recovery of Plotinus's agonistic thinking of the One, Schürmann argues for a “differential theory of the singular,” positing otherness as an “originary process in the One.”<sup>10</sup> The One in Plotinus is prior to all difference, for difference exists only “in second nature

[*en deuthera phusei*].”<sup>11</sup> But despite being prior to all difference, a “dissension belabors the One from within” since the One is a holding together of “essentially opposed forces.”<sup>12</sup> The One holds together as a forceful centering and as a centering is simultaneously both a force that puts beings in a constellation and *less than a being*.<sup>13</sup> It is less than a being, but it is not nothing. It is precisely the contested ontological status of the One that drives Schürmann to decisively break with the common ontotheologization of Plotinus by contesting the all-too-pervasive assumption that, as the purported father of the Christian tradition of negative theology, Plotinus likewise represents an ontotheological concept of the One in the manner of those who followed in his wake and explicitly referred to him.<sup>14</sup> It is this common assumption that allows Heidegger to more or less fully obliterate Plotinus and the entire Neoplatonic tradition from his history of metaphysics.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the common ontotheological interpretations that present Plotinus as the father of a negative theology in which the One is that which exists in the highest degree,<sup>16</sup> the three hypostases in Plotinus—*psychē*, *nous*, *hen*—do not represent a scale ascending from the lowest to the highest degree of being in the classical ontotheological sense. Even though Plotinus’s entire philosophical enterprise is formulated as an ascent to the One, this ascent is only in part an ascent from a lowest to a highest being, for, as Schürmann writes, “Plotinus’s onto-theology is his penultimate word,” and “onto-theology differs from henology as the second hypostasis, *nous*, does from the first, *hen*.”<sup>17</sup> Our task in this section will be to allow a reading of Plotinus to emerge that rescues him from the history of ontotheology, for, in Schürmann’s words, “the architecture bequeathed by Plotinus was quickly furnished and inhabited by squatters: the Christian theologians.”<sup>18</sup> Without using the term *ontotheology* in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger describes this squatters’ settlement as follows: “What is essential is that the object of *First Philosophy* (metaphysics) is now a *specific*, albeit *suprasensuous being*. . . . It is instead a matter of the *principle fact* that the suprasensuous, the metaphysical is *one* domain of *beings* among others. Metaphysics thereby enters the *same level* as other knowledge of *beings* in sciences or in practico-technical knowledge, with the sole difference that this being is a higher one. It lies *over* . . . , beyond, *trans* . . . , which is the Latin translation of *μετά*.”<sup>19</sup> Plotinus’s ontotheology comes to a halt between the first and second hypostases, for the One is not only beyond being but even beyond any notion of a beyond. Schürmann situates his concept of henological difference precisely in this opening between the

first and second hypostases, beyond the beyond, for “the difference does not separate beingness and being, but the One from beingness and conjoined beings.”<sup>20</sup> If, according to Heidegger, the ontotheological ascent searches for “the first cause, the *causa prima* that corresponds to the reason-giving path back to the *ultima ratio*,”<sup>21</sup> treating it as yet another present-at-hand being, then the Plotinian ascent reaches instead a mystery, for “only one question haunts Plotinus: ‘How did the One not remain in itself?’ (En. V, 1, 6, 6).”<sup>22</sup>

Despite the mysterious nature of the One, which departed from itself in an act of inexplicable audacity (*tolma*), it is not an ineffability about which one ought to be silent in the manner of a Wittgensteinian injunction. Instead, the initiated thinker speaks *about* the One in the sense of speaking around (*um, peri*) it in “an endless process of approach,” an approach that forever approaches without getting any nearer.<sup>23</sup> In this endless approach, one has always already said—as is always the case in the apophatic aporia—both *too much* and *too little* about the One. As Schürmann introduces this aporetic mystery: “There is an unfathomable *mystery, that there is a coming-to-presence*, that there is a manifestation. But just as mysterious is the becoming-other in it. . . . That there is this world remains as unthinkable—as ‘trans-noetic’—as the seed of otherness which already, from within, ruins its safekeeping.”<sup>24</sup> As an unfathomable mystery, the One in Plotinus is “beyond intellect [*epekeina nou*]” and “beyond knowledge [*epekeina gnōseōs*]” and “is, therefore, truly ineffable: for whatever you say about it, you will always be speaking of a ‘something.’”<sup>25</sup> But even this ineffability is a continuous injunction to speak, even if doing so treats the One as a “something.” The One, which can only provisionally be designated as “something,” is prior to any possibility of designation, prior to the division implicit in the difference between designator and designated. Even if we are engaged in a silent monologue, we differ from ourselves to the extent that we can take ourselves as the object of a monologue with ourselves. As Plotinus describes this splitting: “But the thinker must not itself remain simple, especially in so far as it thinks itself: for it will duplicate itself, even if it gives an understanding which is silent.”<sup>26</sup> Were the One perchance to speak about itself, thus delimiting part of itself from itself as an object of its speech, it would, according to Plotinus, “be telling a lie.”<sup>27</sup> At most, the One could be imagined uttering something along the lines of “‘am am’ or ‘I I.’”<sup>28</sup>

Yet, while the One does not speak, even in this strange tautological saying, it can be spoken about in a speech that undermines its own performance. As Werner Beierwaltes masterfully demonstrates, metaphor,

delimiting negation, and the use of paradox constitute the three most important methods of nonsaying used by Plotinus,<sup>29</sup> yet one must also add the operation of tautology to this list. And what is essential about this performative employment of hyperbole, repetition, tautology, and analogy is that it should be regarded not as representing the *failure* of Plotinian thinking and saying of the One but, instead, as the very *fecundity* and *productivity* of its ways of saying nonsaying. In the performance of the tautology, this fecundity blooms in the desimplifying of simplicity. As Schürmann writes: “Tautology in the precise, literal sense is not the double discourse of identity: it is the simple discourse of the same. To grasp the one, we must desimplify simplicity”<sup>30</sup>—or, to combine Derrida’s insights with our reading of Schürmann’s Plotinus: in desimplified simplicity, a difference *waltet* between the elements of the same. This thinking takes place in the terror of the suspension of identity and difference and the terror even of the suspension of the principle of noncontradiction.<sup>31</sup>

In desimplified simplicity, philosophy turns to tautological saying as an operation of difference. *Das Walten waltet, das Ding dingt, das Wesen west, die Welt weltet, die Sprache spricht*—these and many other tautological formulations are familiar to any reader of Heidegger. “Philosophy is philosophizing,” Heidegger writes: “Yet however much we seem merely to be repeating the same thing, this says something essential. It points the *direction* in which we have to search, indeed the direction in which metaphysics withdraws from us.”<sup>32</sup> This withdrawal of metaphysics is anxiety-ridden, uncanny, even terrible, taking our very mode of expression with it, leaving us at least initially with an “incoherent babbling [*wahlloses Reden*]” in its wake.<sup>33</sup> As Schürmann describes this loss of language: “To think the One, which everywhere is the issue of our elementary experience, we must unlearn the fascination for everything that can be represented.”<sup>34</sup> There may indeed be a certain silence—or perhaps a forceful *silencing*—peculiar to this terror as simplicity is desimplified, but this terrible silence is not the silence of quietness. “If we must speak of simplicity,” Schürmann writes, alluding to Heidegger’s repeated language of the simple (*das Einfache*),<sup>35</sup> “this simplicity will necessarily be agonistic.”<sup>36</sup>

## II. The Force of *Walten*

As Schürmann recognizes, this simplifying operation of silence is repeated in a significant fashion as a fundamental gesture of Heidegger’s entire

philosophical approach, thus revealing the extent of Heidegger's debt to aspects of the apophatic tradition. After all, performative negation, analogy, repetition, hyperbole, and tautology are familiar to any reader of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*. But placing Heidegger squarely within a particular history of the apophatic tradition that received its decisive formulation in Plotinus does not intend to trace any direct lineage of influence from Plotinus to Heidegger but, instead, to merely draw attention to a significant convergence of themes that bear great importance for the understanding of *Walten* as we return to Derrida's reading of Heidegger. *Walten*, I believe, is best understood as the agon—indeed, the *polemos*<sup>37</sup>—of the same within itself as carried out through a giving over or offering up of difference, a difference that is nonetheless a difference within the same. This agon is a centering, a constellation, indeed even a gathering of beings—but a gathering that is at all times driven asunder against itself. This forceful back-and-forth (*auseinander-zueinander*)<sup>38</sup> of the between is crucial not only for Heidegger's understanding of the ontological difference but also for his entire *differentiated* language of difference (*die Unterscheidung des Unterschieds*).<sup>39</sup> At stake, therefore, is the entire series of related and equally violent cognates of *scheiden* (scission, slitting, cutting open, rendering asunder) such as *der Unter-Schied*, *der Abschied*, and *die Ent-Scheidung*, all of which begin to appear with great frequency in Heidegger's work from the 1930s onward.<sup>40</sup> As Derrida describes the convergence and intertwining of *Walten* with Heidegger's variegated language of difference: "At stake here is the difference of the differents, the difference in the same and even as the same, and of the far from obvious difference between Being and beings, between beings and beings as such."<sup>41</sup> However, one must avoid any hasty attempts at identification here. *Walten* is not the ontological difference, and it is not the henological difference; nor indeed is it some other term for differentiated difference such as *der Unter-Schied*, and not merely for the simple reason that *Walten* "is" not anything. More important, the force of *Walten* is instead the enabling of the "is," the opening of the between as the opening of a clearing in a continual event of opening. To the extent that *Walten* is anything, it is the irreducible play of *auseinander-zueinander* that opens up within the between in which beings come to essence.

In Heidegger's enigmatic use of the term, *Walten*—to reign, to hold power over, to hold sway, to prevail—defies any single translation, but in common usage it refers most frequently to forms of political power, especially in the cognates *verwalten*, *obwalten*, and *Gewalt*.<sup>42</sup> Yet, in its more



metaphorical uses, *Walten* can also designate gentler forms of force such as the pall of silence in a room, the weightiness of a mood, the enchanting power of a lover, or even the omnipotence of a god.<sup>43</sup> In the context of his rereading of Heidegger, however, Derrida warns against translations that leave *Walten* “abandoned to its neutrality, even its non-violence . . . dissociating what there might be of force and imposed violence (*Gewalt*, precisely), authority, power, reigning, and sovereign potency in *Walten* or *Gewalt*.”<sup>44</sup> By recognizing this aspect of force and imposed violence as an ontological necessity within Heidegger’s thought—a trait prevalent at least since Heidegger’s valorization of the role of communication and struggle in *Being and Time*<sup>45</sup>—Derrida begins to significantly reformulate his earlier critiques of Heidegger’s “nostalgia,” “hope,” and longing for “a lost native country of thought.”<sup>46</sup> What troubles Derrida in his earlier readings of Heidegger is what he sees as Heidegger’s “desire for rigorous non-contamination,”<sup>47</sup> expressed through Heidegger’s privileging of the same within his thinking of difference.<sup>48</sup> In these earlier readings, Derrida regards Heidegger as in effect betraying his own thought by revealing a longing for the metaphysics of presence continuously revealed in—to name but one prominent example that is not without great political significance—Heidegger’s portrayal of his own peasantry belonging in a Black Forest community that he would have us believe is present to itself as itself.<sup>49</sup> Through his discovery of *Walten*, Derrida begins to rethink precisely this aspect of Heidegger, and in *The Beast and the Sovereign* he attributes to Heidegger a “difference within the same” and “an internal splitting of the same,”<sup>50</sup> both of which are decisively linked to *Walten*.

## Conclusion

What this shift—subtle but profoundly significant—points to is the recognition of a certain playfulness (why, after all, do we take Heidegger to always be so serious?<sup>51</sup>) in Heidegger, an irreducible indeterminacy in his terms that is, in many respects, Nietzschean in its love for hiding itself and in its love for the terrible and abysmal. In this play, Heidegger posits terms and withdraws them; at one moment he privileges difference, and at another moment, simplicity, the same, or something like a *gewaltloses Walten*;<sup>52</sup> at one moment he valorizes silence, yet he always does so within a “manic saying.”<sup>53</sup> Within this play, the task of the reader is not, as Heidegger warns

against in his reading of Nietzsche, to “dispose of the indeterminateness in a simple way”<sup>54</sup> but, instead, to situate one’s reading within the terror of indecision and indeterminateness by recognizing the essential intertwining of contraries as the very sway of being.

Heidegger slips into exalting what he denounces, according to Schürmann, but this slippage is not accidental.<sup>55</sup> Philosophy is the fortitude of a questioning that holds sway within this slippage. A philosophy that is equal to the task of thinking *Walten*, therefore, will not be without its own aspect of violence; it cannot merely be the quietude of a letting-be. As the force that centers contraries around an unspeakable midpoint, and as the suspension of the principle of noncontradiction,<sup>56</sup> a philosophical reckoning with *Walten* brings with it a palpable degree of terror, the terror of a complete lack of certainty—a certainty rooted in a certain conception of truth. While that full reckoning has only been hinted at here, what has perhaps been opened is the possibility to reread Heidegger but also to reread Heidegger against himself and his own portrayal of the tradition. *Walten* will remain an open question, but there is a significant difference between a question that is opened *in its* openness and *to its* openness and a question that remains open as if by accident, as if we simply have not said enough because of the limits of the genre of the essay. If *Walten* is the openness of the opening, prevailing in its prevailing, then any attempt to fix it with a determinacy that is not in turn performatively undermined, as it always is in the classical apophatic operation, must be endlessly resisted. What is said about *Walten* must be unsaid in its very saying.

## NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. II, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 280.

2. *Ibid.*, 279.

3. For Heidegger’s use of *Walten*, see Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Harper: New York, 1971), 175ff.; Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 61ff.; Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 15ff. Derrida notes correctly that the language of *Walten* does not appear in *Being and Time* (*Beast and the Sovereign*, 43).

4. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit*, vols. 29–30 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 40ff.; Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of*

*Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 28ff.; hereafter cited with the original German pagination in parentheses.

5. Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 30 (46).

6. *Ibid.*, 28 (42).

7. Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). Schürmann first introduced the argument in Reiner Schürmann, "Neoplatonic Henology as an Overcoming of Metaphysics," *Research in Phenomenology* 13, no. 1 (1983): 25–41. For a reading of these two texts, see John Sallis, *Platonic Legacies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), chap. 4: "Platonism at the Limit of Metaphysics."

8. For the history of the phrase *epekeina tēs ousias*, see the important article Hans Joachim Krämer, "Epekeina tēs ousias," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 51, no. 1 (1969): 1–30. A detailed discussion including extensive references to Plotinus's use of variations of *epekeina* (*jenseits*) can be found in Jens Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen: Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1992), 55–65. For a reading of Plato's use of the phrase in the *Republic*, see John Sallis, *Being and Logos* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 401ff.

9. See Jacques Derrida, "*Ousia and Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 66 n. 41. See also Derrida's repeated references to Plotinus in Jacques Derrida, "Sauf le nom (Post-scriptum)," in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and trans. David Wood (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 70, 84–85; and Jacques Derrida, "Form 'Is'—Its Ellipsis," in *Margins of Philosophy*, 172 n. 16.

10. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 177, 180; translation modified. Schürmann's translator has chosen not to capitalize the "One." I have altered this aspect of the translation for the sake of consistency.

11. Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), V, 3, 12, 50 (cited by book, chapter, section, and line).

12. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 16, 95.

13. *Ibid.*, 143. In Plotinus's vivid description: "Just as a circle, therefore, which touches the centre all round in a circle, would be agreed to have its power from the centre . . . it is like this that we must apprehend that Intellect-Being, coming to be from that Good and as if poured out and spread out and hanging out from it, is, by its own intelligent nature, evidence of something like Intellect in the One which is not Intellect; for it is one" (*Enneads* VI, 8, 18, 8–22). See also Beierwaltes's discussion of Plotinus's circle metaphor in Werner Beierwaltes, *Denken des Einen* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 51ff.; as well as in Werner Beierwaltes, "Die Metaphysik des Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 15, no. 3 (1961): 338ff.

14. The entire story of the apophatic tradition from the later Neoplatonists from Proclus to Porphyry through the Christian tradition and beyond to iterations in medieval mysticism and modernist literature cannot be told here, but an

extremely useful summary can be found in the detailed two-volume collection William Franke, ed., *On What Cannot Be Said: Apophatic Discourses in Philosophy, Religion, Literature, and the Arts* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007).

15. For one of Heidegger's sparse references to Plotinus, see the addendum entitled "On the Destruction of Plotinus" in Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 202.

16. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 164: "The consequence is that Plotinus does not fall—at least not without catching himself—into the thetic monism of which historians of ideas make him the champion." For a strong representative of the ontotheological reading, see Halfwassen, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen*. Halfwassen attempts to portray an unbroken tradition of negative and apophatic theology going back beyond even Plato via Plotinus through the representatives of the Christian tradition such as Pseudo-Dionysius.

17. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 144.

18. *Ibid.*, 139.

19. Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 43 (66).

20. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 145.

21. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 60.

22. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 140.

23. Werner Beierwaltes, *Selbsterkenntnis und Erfahrung der Einheit: Plotins "Enneade" V 3: Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 151.

24. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 168.

25. Plotinus, *Enneads* V, 3, 13, 1–2.

26. *Ibid.*, V, 3, 10, 44–47.

27. *Ibid.*, V, 3, 10, 36–37.

28. *Ibid.*, V, 3, 10, 38.

29. Beierwaltes, *Selbsterkenntnis*, 150ff.; cf. Derrida's discussion of paradoxical hyperbole in the apophatic tradition in "Sauf le nom," 63ff.

30. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 72.

31. Beierwaltes, *Selbsterkenntnis*, 151ff.; this is also a major theme of Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980). "We shall see that we must not only put in question this venerable principle of metaphysics, which is based on a quite specific conception of being, but also cause it to shatter in its very foundation" (Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 61 [91]).

32. Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 4 (6).

33. Martin Heidegger, "Was ist Metaphysik?" in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 112; translation mine.

34. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 156.

35. See, e.g.: "For thinking there remains only the most simple saying and the most austere image in the purest silence [*Dem Denken bleibt nur das einfachste*

*Sagen des schlichtesten Bildes in reinster Verschweigung]*" (Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie [vom Ereignis]*, vol. 65 of *Gesamtausgabe* [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989], 72; translation mine).

36. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 77.

37. On the role of *polemos* in Heidegger's thinking, see Gregory Fried, *Heidegger's "Polemos": From Being to Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

38. Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen, Germany: G. Neske, 1959), 57.

39. Klaus Kremer also recognizes the potential radicality of Plotinus, specifically in his understanding of the ontological difference; he writes: "However, if one transposes the ontological difference defended by Heidegger onto the Plotinian difference between the One and Being/beings, then Plotinus approaches us with a thinking that thinks the difference between the groundless ground and everything grounded by this ground at least as radically as Heidegger, if not even more so" ("Zur ontologischen Differenz: Plotin und Heidegger," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 43, no. 4 [1989]: 694; translation mine).

Dealing with the question of differentiated difference in full is beyond the scope of this essay, but one would have to examine the decisive hints Martin Heidegger gives in later works about the ontological difference as a "fateful reattachment [*verhängnisvolle Rückbindung*]" to the tradition ("Vom Wesen des Grundes," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, 134); see also Martin Heidegger's remark in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969): "The main difficulty lies therein that it is necessary from out of the event of appropriation [*Ereignis*] to grant thinking a reprieve from the ontological difference" (40–41).

40. This language is pervasive in many texts but is prominent in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and is taken to an even further extreme in Martin Heidegger, *Das Ereignis*, vol. 71 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2009).

41. Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, 253.

42. Not surprisingly, in the seminar Derrida makes occasional reference to Walter Benjamin, "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," in *Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge*, vol. II, 1 of *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 179–203; and his own reading of Benjamin's text in Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" *Cardozo Law Review* 11 (1990): 920–1045. See, for example, his pun on "Walter" at *Beast and the Sovereign*, 44.

43. For a perspective on the history and etymology of *Walten*, see the entry in *Das deutsche Wörterbuch von Jakob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, available at [www.dwb.uni-trier.de/](http://www.dwb.uni-trier.de/). The *Wörterbuch* notes that the verb *walten* had lapsed into disuse in most dialects of German before being recovered in nineteenth-century poetic language, when it was used copiously by authors such as Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin.

44. Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, 279.

45. "Only in communication and struggle does the power of destiny become free" (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson [New York: Harper, 1962], 436).

46. Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*, 27.
47. Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 10.
48. "Heidegger runs the risk, despite so many necessary precautions, when he gives priority, as he always does, to gathering and to the same (*Versammlung*, *Fuge*, *legen*, and so forth) over the disjunction implied by my address to the other, over the interruption commanded by respect which commands it in turn, over a difference whose uniqueness, disseminated in the innumerable charred fragments of the absolute mixed in with the cinders, will never be assured in the One" (Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [New York: Routledge, 1994], 34).
49. Perhaps Heidegger's starkest formulation of his own belonging within this space can be found in Martin Heidegger, "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?" in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. and trans. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), 27–30. In this mythical work of *Selbstdarstellung*, the silent gesture of a peasant friend persuades Heidegger not to take a professorial post in Berlin but, instead, to remain among the peasants in the Black Forest. This silent gesture, which supposedly expresses a speech so fully present to itself as itself that even the word would be a violent imposition upon it, could be subject to the same critique that Derrida levels against Rousseau's valorization of the silent savage who speaks only in gestures, in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), esp. the subchapter "Articulations."
50. Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, 252, 254.
51. Ronell has perhaps been most successful in bringing out Heidegger's strange and even terrible humor, in Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology—Schizophrenia—Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).
52. Krzysztof Ziarek, "Das Gewalt-lose Walten: Heidegger on Violence, Power, and Gentleness" (paper presented at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Heidegger Circle, Marquette University, Milwaukee, May 7, 2011).
53. John Sallis, "The Manic Saying of Being," in *Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie": Ein internationales Kolloquium vom 20.–22. Mai 2004 an der Universität Lausanne (Schweiz)*, ed. Emmanuel Mejia and Ingeborg Schüßler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2009), 75–84.
54. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper, 1979), 122.
55. Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, 516.
56. Though it extends beyond the scope of this work, it is worth mentioning that the suspension of the principle of noncontradiction is likewise a major theme for Freud. Moreover, as Derrida recognizes, it is not without significance that Heidegger often describes *Walten* as a *Getriebenheit*, a "driveness," also rendered as "restlessness" (Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 5 [8]). On a reading of *Walten* as a Freudian drive, see esp. Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, 93–118.