Re-Orienting Thinking: Philosophy in the Midst of the World

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> Philosophy has no presuppositions. The end and the beginning are reciprocal. – John William Miller.[1]

My first encounter with the work of Joseph Fell was his ground-breaking book, *Heidegger and Sartre*.[2] What made this book so important was that it was the first work, certainly in English, that directly addressed the topological elements in Heidegger's thinking, and that explicitly set out a reading of Heidegger in which *place* was given a central role.[3] In the late

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[1] *The Midworld of Symbols and Functioning Objects* (New York: Norton, 1982), 7. An echo of this comment can be heard in the concluding sentence of Fell's *Heidegger and Sartre*: 'In the end, it is a matter of recognizing and honouring ones prior commitments, commonplace though they be', *Heidegger and Sartre: An Essay on Being and Place* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 425. *Heidegger and Sartre* is referred to hereafter as "HS."

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] The other book that was important and, I suspect, formative in my own earliest encounters with Heidegger in the nineteen-seventies (perhaps somewhat idiosyncratically), was Vincent Vycinas' *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhopf, 1961). Vycinas's book was subtitled, "An Introduction," but the way it introduced Heidegger was by means of his later thinking, and although Vycinas does not explicitly focus on the ideas of place and topology in Heidegger, the nature of his approach is highly conducive to a topological reading. For a brief summary of the literature around the issue of Heidegger and place see my *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 318n8. To the list of works that appears there, I would now add: Theodore Schatzki, *Martin Heidegger: Theorist of Space* (Stuttgart, Steiner Verlag, 2007); Martin Nitsche, *Die Ortschaft des Seins: Martin Heideggers phänomenologishe Topologie* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2013); and my own *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012). Ed Casey's work also deserves acknowledgement in this context, especially his *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*

1980s or early 1990s, when I first encountered Fell's work,[4] I had already been reading Heidegger in conjunction with Davidson and Gadamer. What seemed to me absolutely central to the work of all three was the idea of our placed being in the world as that which makes knowledge and understanding possible—and, even more strongly, of being itself as tied essentially to place. In Fell's work, I found a reading of Heidegger that mirrored the direction of my own—and, like mine, Fell's reading also gave precedence to the later thinking over the earlier. This also marked out Fell's approach to Heidegger from most others: rather than seeing the later Heidegger as having abandoned philosophy for poetry and mysticism, Fell took the later thinking as articulating a unitary philosophical vision that responded to a set of fundamental ontological issues in a radically new way.

In this essay, I want to give recognition to the pioneering role of Fell's work in relation to Heideggerian topology—and so to take the opportunity to thank Fell publicly for the work he has done in that regard. In addition, however, I want to connect Fell's work with

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Berkeley: UC California Press, 1997). Peter Sloterdijk takes up the issue of spatiality in Heidegger in his *Sphären I – Blasen, Mikrosphärologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998) (in English as *Bubbles. Spheres Volume I: Microspherology*, trans. Wieland Hoban [Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2011], see also Sloterdijk, "Nearness and Da-sein: The Spatiality of Being and Time," *Theory, Culture and Society* 29 [2012]: 36-42). Sloterdijk's reading of Heidegger not only appears, however, to be rather superficial, but it is also seems intended as little more than a stepping stone to Sloterdijk's own lengthy spatial and topological ruminations (it thus functions to provide a straw man against which Sloterdijk can position his own project). Sloterdijk exemplifies a common tendency in much recent and contemporary work on space and place: presenting itself as a new approach to space and place, it actually does little more than to mobilise a set of spatial and topological tropes and ideas without ever interrogating their spatial and topological content or addressing the spatial and topological notions that they presuppose.

[4] I can no longer recall when I first discovered Fell's work, but I do recall discussing it with Bert Dreyfus on my first visit to Berkeley in 1993 (especially Fell's 'The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the early Heidegger', in Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, eds., *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1992], 65-80). I had then just published my first book, *Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), in which a mode of topology was already adumbrated if not fully worked out.

my own, and more specifically, to connect it with the broader project in which I have been engaged for some years now: that of philosophical topology or topography. This is a project that encompasses Heidegger's thought, but it also aims to go beyond it, and in making the connection with Fell's work, may aim is also to explore, if here only briefly, some of what I take to be the implications of a philosophical orientation, or re-orientation, that takes place as its central focus.

It is not just Fell's reading of Heidegger that is relevant here, but also Fell's connection to the work of John William Miller. I am no expert on Miller's work, and there are others much better placed than I to explore the connection between Fell's thinking and Miller's, but it seems to me that there are important aspects of Miller's work that converge with aspects of Heidegger's thinking, and so with some of the topological themes that appear in Fell's work as well as my own. Moreover, both Miller and Heidegger also seem to me to point toward a different way of entering into philosophy, or, as it might also be put, a different—or other—*beginning* to philosophy that implies a different mode of philosophical engagement than that which dominates in contemporary thinking. In keeping with my own idea of philosophical topology, this "other" beginning (which actually turns out to be philosophy's original and only beginning) is philosophy's beginning *in place*, which also means a beginning in the midst of the world, a beginning in the "between space" in which the very possibility of encounter or appearance first arises. Fell's own work seems itself to move in the direction of this other beginning, and so also in the direction of an "other" mode of thinking; in the direction of a re-oriented thinking; in the direction of a thinking turned to place and to its own being in place. It is this re-oriented mode of thinking that is my primary focus here.

1.

The language of the "other" beginning is taken from Heidegger, and the idea of that other beginning as a beginning "in place" involves an avowedly provocative way of understanding what might be at issue there. The other beginning (*der andere Anfang*) appears in Heidegger's work in the 1930s, especially in the *Contributions*[5] (although it is also present in

[5] Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewick and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); *Beiträge zur*

several other works from the period including the notorious *Considerations* from Heidegger's *Notebooks*[6]). As to exactly what the other beginning may be Heidegger leaves indeterminate, and indeed the other beginning is not, as Heidegger presents matters, a beginning that yet to be realized. It is a beginning towards which thinking is underway, and thus a beginning that is also *an end*—not merely in sense of a terminus, but rather as that which gives thinking its proper shape and unity.[7] For Heidegger, the "other" beginning always stands in a relation to the "first" beginning (*der erste Anfang*), and the first beginning, understood historically, is that which is found in Greek thought—in the understanding of being as primordial emergence, *physis,* and as unconcealment, *aletheia.* The shift from the first to the other beginning is what Heidegger later calls "the turning" (*die Kehre*), and as the "turning" is also a "re-turning" or "turning back," so the shift from the first to the other beginning is also a return to the first beginning.

The movement from the first to the other beginning is a movement that is itself predicated upon the essential relatedness of the two beginnings, even as it is also impelled by the difference that obtains between them. That difference arises out of the loss, the forgetting, the dissimulation that is already at work in the movement out from the first beginning—thinking is prone to losing itself almost from the very start. It is thus that the history of thinking, of philosophy, *of being*, becomes a history of forgetting and dissimulation. That forgetting and dissimulation takes on a special character in our own time, in the era of technological modernity, since ours is a time in which place itself seems almost to have disappeared in the face of an all-encompassing system of technologically mediated

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Philosophie (Vom Ereignis), ed. Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 65 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989).

[6] *Überlegungen II-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1941)*, ed. Peter Trawny, *Gesamtausgabe* vols. 94-96 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014) and also *Anmerkungen I-V (Schwarze Hefte 1942-1948)*, ed. Peter Trawny, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 97 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2015).

[7] See my discussion of the "beginning" and "end" of philosophy in *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place*, pp. 33-35. There is a clear sense of the teleological at work here, but different sense from that which is normally taken for granted. Though the argument is too long to put here, it is a sense of *telos* as *topos*—or, perhaps more accurately, of the structure of the teleological as itself topological (the character of orientation is an instructive example here).

connection, management, and surveillance—of perpetual movement, transformation, and flow.[8]

Although Heidegger tends, especially in the 1930s to inscribe this "history of forgetting" within "a history of being" that is itself enfolded within a "world-historical" perspective encompassing peoples and nations (including the Germans and Greeks, but also the Jews[9]), the history at issue can also be understood, and is almost certainly *better* understood, in much less grandiose terms. It is a history that has two forms. The first is the

[8] The apparently problematic status of place in the contemporary world is something I have addressed in a number of writings, including *Heidegger's Topology*, but also, for instance, "The Place of Mobility: Individualization, Relationality, and Contemporary Technology," in Rowan Wilken and Gerard Goggin, eds., *Mobile Technology and Place* (London: Routledge, 2012), 26-38, and "Putting Space in Place: Relational Geography and Philosophical Topography," *Planning and Environment D: Space and Society*, 30 (2012), 226-42.

[9] The anti-Semitism that is so evident in the *Black Notebooks* volumes from the 1940s, and the romantic nationalism and Germano-centrism with which it is closely connected (see the various discussions of this in Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas [eds], *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931-1941* [Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2015]), is itself tied to Heidegger's obsession with a narrative of the history of being that is also a narrative of the West, and especially of the Germans. Yet such a narrative has no essential connection to the sort of topological account that either I or Fell have advanced. Indeed, the topology that we both find in Heidegger's work ought to be seen as itself antagonistic to the anti-Semitic and nationalist sentiments that Heidegger seems to espouse, and probably also antagonistic to his world-historical account of being. On this basis, there is a deep inconsistency that runs through Heidegger's work, at least in the work of the 1930s and 1940s, and that arises as a consequence of the inadequacy of his own thinking in the face of the topology that thinking also points towards. In his Preface to *Heidegger and Sartre* (see p. xiv), Fell comments that "I take seriously Heidegger's notion of the value of 'violence' in interpretation and translation interpretation, and I have often turned this dangerous technique back upon Heidegger himself…." Such a strategy is one that I would acknowledge as an essential part of my own reading of Heidegger as well as of other figures. It follows from a concern with the problems at issue rather than textual exegesis or historical interpretation alone. It means that the reading that results has to be seen as a critical one, and certainly not tied to the affirmation of every element in Heidegger's texts.

history of forgetting that is part of any and every attempt at thinking—is part of the "story" that all thinking instantiates. Thinking is always threatened by, and so is prone to, a forgetting or even hiding of its own place—and so of its own beginning and end. The forgetting at issue here is exactly analogous to the "forgetting" that occurs in any and every action: in acting we focus on what is before us and not on the oriented locatedness that makes such acting possible (indeed, when we try to focus on that oriented locatedness, we often lose the capacity effectively to act). The second is the history of forgetting that is evident, not in the sort of Spengler-esque world-history of nations and peoples to which Heidegger seems prone in the 1930s, but in those "genealogies" of modernity that are present in the work of a range of thinkers from Foucault to Weber. Such a genealogical analysis is also present in Heidegger, sometimes alongside the world-historical, and it allows the identification of certain broad shifts that seem to be characteristic of the development of European thought and society, broadly conceived, up to the present.

These shifts should be familiar to anyone who has any reasonable sense of the history of Western philosophy from the Greeks to the present day, and they include a shift, though not always consistent or uniform, towards the primacy of natural science (and so a generalized prioritization of natural scientific over other forms of explanation), an increased concern with epistemology (and so a focus on knowledge as well as on the separation of knowledge from the world), and an increasing tendency to give priority to the quantitative over the qualitative in almost every domain—in social and political terms these shifts come together in contemporary forms of globalisation, corporatisation, bureaucratisation, monetarisation, and even militarisation. As they relate to a history of forgetting, these shifts are all exemplary of the tendency, within the history of thought as such, to think less and less about the broader context in which thinking is already embedded, and instead to take as at issue only that which appears from within the structure of our existing knowledge and practices (that is "positioned" within an existing system)—in other words, the place of thinking, and so the beginning and end of thinking, is taken for granted or ignored, and the real questions are taken to concern particular modes of practices of thinking, what arises within them, and the assumed objects of those modes or practices.

The history of forgetting that underpins the contrast between Heidegger's two beginnings is, in topological terms, a history of the forgetting of the place of thinking. It is instantiated in the "history" that belongs to any instance of thinking, no matter its historical context, and in the history of thinking, at least in European terms, from the historical origins of thinking to thinking in its modern form or forms. The two beginnings thus mark out the

historical movement of thought from the Greeks to an as yet unknown future, and they also direct attention to the character of thinking as always *between* two beginnings– between that from which thinking comes and that to which thinking turns back in order to find itself again—even though that other beginning (and so also the first beginning with it) may be refused or ignored. In *Being and Time*, the ordinary and ever-present tendency towards forgetfulness was what Heidegger called "falling," and was characteristic of everydayness.[10] The task for *Dasein* was to recover itself through a recovery of its own futurity and so also its own historicality. From this perspective, the two beginnings can be seen as already implicit in the structure that *Being and Time* delineates–in the relation between historicality (our first beginning) and futurity (our "other" beginning), which includes our being-towards-death. Falling, like the forgetfulness that underpins the relation between the two beginnings, is itself what underpins the relation between historicality and futurity, just as forgetting underpins the relation between the first and other beginning. Understood in broader historical terms, the two beginnings can thus be seen as a version of the relation between historicality and futurity writ large.

The relation between the two beginnings is an issue to which Fell also directs attention. The first beginning, he says, is "the 'other beginning' disowned or disguised"—it is disguised by the very fact of the forgetting that bridges the connection between the first and other beginning. The other beginning could therefore not consist simply in a reversion to the first beginning, since, as Fell points out, the other beginning is a remembering of "what is forgotten in the first beginning," and nor could the other beginning be an entirely original or novel beginning in itself (it must be 'other' to that which is 'first'), "since what is forgotten in the first beginning is what 'remains' and 'rules'," in spite of that forgetting.[11] It is thus there must indeed be two beginnings. Moreover, no matter how provocative such a reading may appear, Fell's way of reading the two beginnings is one that prefigures my own, since it too approaches the idea of the two beginnings *topologically*, taking the other beginning as indeed a matter of a return to—or remembering of—place:

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[10] See *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), esp. §38, H175-180.

[11] HS, 266.

> … for Heidegger, Being is appearing in place.… Our history has been sentenced to a dissimulation or displacement of this place and hence of the nature of Being itself.… The proper future of ontology is not an advance to something essentially new but a remembering of the event of the place in which things have always appeared and can appear.[12]

Fell's analysis of the two beginnings explicitly draws together Heidegger's introduction of the two beginnings in the writings of the 1930s with ideas from the later thinking, thereby connecting the two beginnings directly, not only with Heidegger's analysis of technology, but also with his account of the happening of world and place that occurs in the Fourfold. The movement towards the other beginning thus involves, in the terms of Heidegger's thinking, a "step back into where we already are."[13] This step back is the counter to the turn away from the "where" that occurs in the first beginning, and reaches its extremity in technological modernity. The "where" at issue here "is the Place displaced, the Fourfold's 'time-play-space',"[14] and the step back, which is also a return towards, is a step back to that place, to the Fourfold.

2.

Part of what is significant about Fell's approach, both here and elsewhere in his reading of Heidegger, is the way he attends so carefully and closely to the topological character of Heidegger's own language—and this is, in fact, part of what marks out Fell's approach as so distinctive within contemporary work on Heidegger—whether in the 1970s or 1980s or now. There is a widespread tendency not only to ignore the topological character of Heidegger's language, but when it is brought to notice, actively to downplay it or even to deny that the language in question is indeed to be understood topologically.

This is particularly evident in Thomas Sheehan's work.[15] Even though Sheehan places the idea of the clearing (*die Lichtung*)—a notion that seems overtly topological in character—

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[12] *Ibid*., 266

[13] *Ibid*., 238, quoted from Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 25; *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 33.

[14] *Ibid.*, 258.

[15] Most recently in his *Making Sense of Heidegger* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

at the centre of his account of Heidegger, Sheehan's "new paradigm in Heidegger Studies" is one that seems resolutely opposed to any topological reading. As he also gives primacy to Heidegger's early over his late thinking, Sheehan's account privileges the notion of meaning ("making sense") over any other, and so it takes the clearing as an event *of meaning* and *not* as an opening of place—any topological connotations seem implicitly to be disregarded as metaphorical. Although he would surely contest the point, Sheehan's "new paradigm" seems little removed from paradigm that already dominates contemporary Heidegger studies, especially in English, and that effectively reduces being to meaning.[16] Moreover, Sheehan is also not unusual in his neglect of the topological, although he does stand out somewhat in his explicit refusal of a topological reading of *Dasein*.[17] For the most part, the topological character of Heidegger's thinking is simply overlooked or ignored as readers interpret Heidegger's language, almost from the very first, in more familiar and conventional terms.

What makes the neglect of the topological in Heidegger all the more problematic is that it occurs against Heidegger's own refusal of metaphorical interpretations of his

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[16] See Richard Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 100n1.

[17] Repeating Gertrude Stein's famous remark about Oakland, Sheehan claims that, so far as *Dasein* is concerned, "there is no 'there' there"; see "A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research," *Continental Philosophy Review* 34 (2001): 193 (see also *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 136-38). In *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault, and the Project of a Spatial History* (London: Continuum, 2001), p.16, Stuart Elden also expresses concern over any translation of *Dasein* as "being there" or "there being," but he raises this translational issue at the same time as he nevertheless affirms a topological reading of Heidegger's thinking in general. On the issue of how *Dasein* is to be understood in English, see my discussion in *Heidegger's Topology*, pp.47-51, and on the relation between *Dasein* and place more generally, see Fell's discussion at HS 38-48. I entirely concur with Fell's succinct comment: "Dasein is place, and place is orientation" (HS 48). The line Sheehan takes from Gertrude Stein figures in my own discussion of the "sense of place" in "New Media, Cultural Heritage, and the Sense of Place: Mapping the Conceptual Ground," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 15 (2008): 200-01.

language,[18] and his persistent call that we attend to what language itself says (to attend, we might say, with a nod to Miller, to the "actuality" of language).[19] This is most obviously so in regard to Heidegger's famous assertion that language is "the house of being." [20] This is not, he says, to be construed as mere linguistic "adornment," nor does it involve any "transfer of the image 'house' onto being." [21] One cannot say, however, that the implication is that one must attend to the literal meaning of Heidegger's speaking, since the rejection of the metaphorical here seems actually to involve a rejection of the very contrast between metaphor and literality. Connecting "house" to "dwelling" (*Wohnen*), Heidegger says that the

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[18] Heidegger's refusal of metaphor is not, however, a refusal or denial of the importance of the *image*. Indeed the importance Heidegger accords to the image, and the relation between language and the image, is evident in several places in his work–see especially Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 82; and "...Poetically Man Dwells…," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 225-26. The fact that Heidegger's rejection of the metaphorical is not a rejection of the image is somewhat obscured, in English, by the fact that the German *bildlich* (literally, "of images or the image") is typically translated as "figurative," and the "figurative" then associated with the "metaphorical." See my discussion of this in "Poetry, Language, Place," in Günter Figal et al,. eds., *Pathways to Heidegger's Later Thinking* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming, 2015). This point is an important one as it allows for a re-thought conception of metaphor that may well be acceptable within a Heideggerian frame, and it requires that one exercise some care in comparing Heidegger's view of metaphor with that of other writers—including, for instance, Miller.

[19] At issue here too is Heidegger's insistence, in spite of his refusal of metaphor, on the essential equivocity of language—what I have elsewhere called its "iridescence" (see *Heidegger's Topology*, 37 and 249-50)—which is also tied to the equivocity of being. The equivocity at issue here is a unified multiplicity whose character as a unity is itself complex (see also *Heidegger's Topology*, 56-63, and 121-24).The understanding of unity that appears here is central to much of Fell's discussion in *Heidegger and Sartre*.

[20] Heidegger, Martin, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 239.

[21] "Letter on 'Humanism,'" 272.

time is yet to come when we might "more readily be able to think what 'house' and 'dwelling' are"[22]—there is thus no clear "literal" understanding to which we already have access and to which we can make appeal, and what is at issue in Heidegger's talk of "house," as well as of the "house of being," remains in question. Yet if we cannot properly appeal to any notion of literality in our approach to Heidegger's language, neither can we disregard the overt significance of the terms Heidegger uses without running the risk of serious misunderstanding.

When Heidegger uses the phrase "house of being," he both draws upon our already existing familiarity with home and house as dwellings-places, as places of shelter and sustenance (even if our actual houses and homes are sometimes inadequate in this respect), and also puts that familiarity in doubt, renders it uncertain. *What is it to house, what is it to be a home?* Yet this rendering-uncertain only occurs if we allow language already to place us in relation to our concrete experience of house and home—if we allow language to let us into the space in which such questioning can arise.

Heidegger's insistence on taking seriously the language that he uses, and on attending to what is immediately given in that language, is reiterated at many other places in his writing, and is an explicit feature of his work at least from the time of his engagement with Hölderlin in the 1930s.[23] Connected with this is the fact that, by the post-war period (although the trend is evident much earlier), Heidegger's writing has also lost almost all of the vestiges of any technical philosophical vocabulary—including that of phenomenology. This is part of what is at issue in the idea that the later Heidegger resorts to poetry, although it is more accurate to say that he abandons philosophical technicality, looking instead to find a way of thinking that remains with language, and so also with the concrete experience of language, as it occurs together with the happening of place and of world. Inasmuch as Heidegger does move to a mode of poetic speaking, it because he also moves to a mode of speaking that is grounded in place, and in the attentiveness to place.[24]

Yet the neglect of the topological, and the broader tendency to resort to metaphorical and other forms of reading that allow such neglect, is characteristic of philosophy and

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[22] *Ibid*., 272.

[23] See my "Poetry, Language, Place."

[24] On the topology that belongs to poetry, see my "Place and Singularity," in Jeff Malpas, ed., *The Intelligence of Place: Topographies and Poetics* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2015).

philosophical thinking more generally. Philosophy is deeply imbued with topological ideas and images, and yet their topological character is, for the most part, systematically ignored or disregarded. Indeed, the topological character of our own speaking, especially our thinking about thought, is almost always passed over or, if it is noticed, seen as an irrelevant artifact of etymology (Heidegger's own attentiveness to issues of etymology, even if sometimes all too idiosyncratic, is itself tied to his concern with the experience given in language). It is as if we do not wish to acknowledge what is before our very eyes: that our thinking is itself placed; cannot occur apart from place; is itself a form *of placing* and *being-placed*. In his *The Fate of Place*, Edward Casey masterfully explores the way place has been increasingly overtaken by space within the history of western thought.[25] What is yet to be written, however, is the genealogy of philosophy that would uncover philosophy's own topological underpinnings, as well as its neglect and refusal of them—that would uncover the topology that has always been present at the very centre of philosophy as at the center of thinking.

3.

Fell's analysis of Heideggerian topology is not undertaken simply in relation to Heidegger alone, but also addresses the work of Jean-Paul Sartre. I have to confess to a certain antipathy towards Sartre on my own part—while I can acknowledge his significance in twentieth-century phenomenology, he has always seemed to me a much less interesting figure than Heidegger, less radical in his thinking, and more inclined towards the subjectivism from which Heidegger was so concerned to escape.[26] My own qualms notwithstanding, the fact that *Heidegger and Sartre* does indeed have a joint focus is not just a quirk of Fell's own particular philosophical sympathies. Instead, it derives from a concern to work through

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[25] See Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*.

[26] My antipathy is probably also underpinned by the strong affinity I have for the work of Albert Camus—and by that commitment, one might say, my loyalties so far as Sartre are concerned are already determined. Camus is significant here for quite independent reasons, however, since his own work also exhibits a strong orientation towards issues of place, especially as tied to the idea of human finitude. Nowhere is this clearer, it seems to me, than in the shorter writings originally published in the volumes *Nuptials* and *Summer*—see Camus, *Lyrical* and *Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Thody, trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy (New York: Vintage 1970).

certain issues within the understanding of ontology and phenomenology, and, among other things, to understand the role of Hegel in relation to Heidegger as well as Sartre (Fell writes that one of the "provocations" of the approach he takes in *Heidegger and Sartre* is "a very broad definition of the phenomenological movement designed, in part, to point to a positive relation between Hegel and Heidegger"[27]). Hegel turns out to be especially important here, and important too for a broader understanding of the idea of philosophical topology. The reason is largely to be found in Hegel's emphasis on relationality—what has often been referred to as the doctrine of "internal relations."[28]

The connection to Hegel also brings us closer to Miller, whom I have neglected in the discussion so far. It is sometimes forgotten, especially by those outside the immediate circle in which it holds sway, just how indebted American pragmatism is to the tradition of Hegelian idealism as well as to German idealism more broadly (although it is a connection strongly re-affirmed in Robert Brandom's work[29]). Miller was himself influenced by Emerson as well as by C. I. Lewis and Josiah Royce (the latter being a key figure in the dissemination of idealist thinking in North America while Lewis's influence itself leads through Quine and on to Donald Davidson[30]). Notwithstanding that he was also exposed to

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[27] HS xiii.

[28] Along with the questions of identity and difference, relation is a topic that runs throughout *Heidegger and Sartre*, remaining central even when it is not directly thematized. The doctrine of internal relations is itself explicitly, if briefly, discussed in HS 34-35, in the course of which Fell notes that "Hegel points the way to Heidegger's phenomenology insofar as he works out a through-going doctrine of real internal relations'" (*ibid.*, 34).

[29] *Making it Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994). Brandon dedicated *Making it Explicit* to Wilfrid Sellars and Richard Rorty, and has been very ready to acknowledge the significance of Davidson's influence in his work. On the broader history of American pragmatism, if from a largely Rortyan perspective, see Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002).

[30] Davidson is an especially interesting figure having assimilated, like Miller, a range of different influences including those emanating from Quine, and therefore Lewis, but also G. H. Mead and Alfred North Whitehead (working closely with the latter as an undergraduate at Harvard). The result is also a highly original and radical position (it should be noted that

realist strains of thinking (which are also evident in his thought), the idealist influence seems to be crucial, and it is evident in his own "relational" mode of ontology (though its relationality is not strongly thematized by Miller himself) that refuses to look to any single, separate entity or principle as its underlying ground. The primacy Miller accords the "act" and "actuality"—and so also of the "Midworld"—is the primacy of that which is the locus or "matrix" out of which elements emerge (and is itself constituted in that very emergence), rather than of any sort of self-subsisting *subjectum*.[31]

Any topology has at its core a form of relationalism. One reason for this is that place does not itself appear as a substantive notion, but a relational one. To be in place is to find oneself implicated within an encompassing locality that is itself implicated in and with other such localities. Places are themselves not identified with any one thing, but with congeries of things and events—they are themselves formed in and through the relations between things, events, and other localities, just as those things, events, and localities find their own

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Davidson himself resisted the assimilation of his work to the pragmatist tradition, as usually understood, and his retention, rightly in my view, of truth as key notion is one indicator of this (it also marks an important point of convergence with Heidegger – see, for instance, my *Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning*, and 'The Two-fold Character of Truth: Heidegger, Davidson, Tugendhat', in Babette Babich and Dimitri Ginev [eds.], *The Multidimensionality of Hermeneutic Phenomenology* [Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), pp. pp.243-266). Yet in spite of his refusal of the pragmatist label, the contemporary figure with whom Davidson acknowledged the greatest degree of philosophical connection and sympathy was Richard Rorty (although Rorty's pragmatism is itself somewhat idiosyncratic). There is a story that could also be told that would weave Davidson into the topological picture that I have here sketched in relation to Heidegger, Miller, and Fell (in Davidson's case, the German influence is more directly Kantian than it is Hegelian). For a somewhat summary and programmatic account of the topological elements in post-Kantian thinking generally, see my "Self, Other, Thing: Triangulation and Topography in Post-Kantian Philosophy," *Philosophy Today*, 59 (2015): 103–26

[31] The assumption of a *subjectum* (the Latin translation of the Greek *hypokeimenon*, meaning "that which underlies") or "substrate" is what Heidegger takes to lie at the basis of subjectivism—idealism being one instance of such subjectivism (inasmuch as it looks to mind or idea as the substrate), but materialism being another (inasmuch as it looks to matter).

formation in and through place. Moreover, any genuine relationalism is also implicitly topological. Relations do not ramify endlessly, but take shape within certain localities, without certain bounds. The notion of "boundary" is itself the idea of that which allows for the establishing and unfolding of relations, and this is part of what is captured in Heidegger's repeated characterization of the boundary as productive rather than merely restricting: "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."[32] The idea of a relationality without bounds—an idea widespread within the contemporary thinking of globalization—is only possible on the assumption of an infinite spatial extension as that in which such relationality inheres, in other words, on the assumption of a purely spatial, as opposed to a topological, ontology. Such an ontology, which is partly what Heidegger attacks in *Being and Time*, is rendered problematic by the fact that space is itself grounded in the same *place*, the same *topos*, that the assertion of the primacy of an unbounded relationality seeks to deny.[33] Even the relationality of an extended space emerges only in and through the boundedness of place.

Contemporary readings of Hegel reinforce the significance of relationality (although most often through the analysis, specifically, of the logic of recognition than by reference to the doctrine of internal relations as such), and this is especially so in those accounts that take up Hegel in a way that emphasizes the continuity with Kant, and that thereby also reads Hegel hermeneutically.[34] The way both Kant and hermeneutics enter into the discussion here is important, because it suggests a slightly different trajectory of thinking from that which appears, at first blush anyway, in Fell's account. Indeed, it is also indicative of a difference between Fell's account and my own: my emphasis tends to be on Kant more so than Hegel at the same time as the tendency in my own thinking has been towards hermeneutics more so than towards phenomenology (this is partly, in fact, what also tends me towards Camus rather than Sartre).

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[32] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry Language Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 154; see also Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982), 82.

[33] See "Putting Space in Place: Relational Geography and Philosophical Topography."

[34] See especially Paul Redding, *Hegel's Hermeneutics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

One might say, however, that the apparent differences here are not great—differences in emphasis more than in substance. So far as the choice between Kant and Hegel is concerned, it partly manifests in my own preference for explicitly retaining the notion of the transcendental (in spite of Heidegger's own abandonment of the notion) which I take to stand in a direct relation to the topological, but even here one might argue that what I take the transcendental to be is nevertheless also something at work in Fell, and so the difference need not be construed as a significant or substantive one.[35] Similarly, when it comes to the question of hermeneutics or phenomenology, the difference does indeed seem not to be a major one—all the more so given that Fell himself acknowledges his own very broad construal of the phenomenological movement (partly intended to allow the inclusion of Hegel within it).[36] Nevertheless, this is an issue on which there is a little more that ought to be said, not so much because of the difference between Fell and myself, but because of the significance of the relation between topology and hermeneutics.

Although close, hermeneutics and phenomenology nevertheless each stand in a slightly different relation to topology. The difference at issue here is perhaps most succinctly put by saying that whereas phenomenology *leads in the direction of place* (as Heidegger's work itself partly shows),[37] hermeneutics *already begins with place* (something that

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[35] At least if one interprets the topological character of the transcendental to also entail the transcendental character of the topological. For more on my reading of the connection between the topological and the transcendental (which entails what is likely to be seen as a unconventional notion of the transcendental, even if it is also one that I would argue is consistent with Kant's), see, among other works, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012), 46-48, and 73-95. It is notable that the term "transcendental" does not appear in the index to Fell's *Heidegger and Sartre*, and when Fell does use the term it seems to be viewed as a problematic notion (so Fell writes of "how one cannot really begin anew or construct an ontology on the basis of either a transcendental or a natural ground"; HS 25). I would suggest that the implicit construal of the notion that appears in Fell is rather different from the topological conception of the transcendental that I deploy.

[36] HS xiii.

[37] On the relation between phenomenology and topology see my comments in *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place*, 44-56, and also "On Human Being as Placed Being," *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology* 25.3 (2014): 8-9.

Heidegger's work also demonstrates). The primary focus of hermeneutics is on the *situatedness* of understanding (which implies an essential connection to *finitude* as well as to *facticity*), and so on the primacy of situation, which is also the primacy of place. Hermeneutics is an essential thinking of the "between" (a notion we encountered at the start of this essay and to which I shall shortly return)[38] out of which understanding, along with any every "appearing," arises, and which is identical with the bounded relationality that itself belongs to place. In its focus on the situation, and on the situation as also an event of encounter in which something appears that makes a demand upon us (hence hermeneutics attends first to that which is to be understood—to the "thing"[39]), so hermeneutics already stands aside from the usual oppositions of subject and object, and outside also of any "subjectivism" of whatever kind.[40]

If I were to point to one of the ways I have tried to take further the ideas that Fell's work pioneers, then it would be in the attempt, not simply to develop further the topology present in Fell's account, but also to try more clearly to demonstrate the inter-relation of the topological and the hermeneutical. Yet this is perhaps only a matter of drawing out what I would argue is implicit in Fell's work, rather than a point of contestation with it. Indeed, it

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[38] Also a notion that is directly invoked in the supposed connection of hermeneutics with Hermes—the one who mediates between gods and mortals.

[39] It is important to note here that the relational approach that characterizes hermeneutics is not such that it requires a simple prioritization of relation *over* thing. When understood topologically, the emphasis on relationality necessarily draws together the ideas of both relation *and* thing. Nowhere is this clearer than in Heidegger for whom the thing is precisely that which *gathers* (see especially "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], 161-84).

[40] Including both the specific form of "subjectivism" that prioritizes the human subject and the broader "subjectivism" (of which the former is an instance) that looks (as noted above) to some form of underlying *subjectum* or substrate. For more on the topological character of hermeneutics see: "Self, Other, Thing: Triangulation and Topography in Post-Kantian Philosophy'; also my 'Place and Situation" in Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander, eds., *Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 354-366, and "The Beginning of Understanding: Event, Place, Truth," in Jeff Malpas and Santiago Zabala, eds., *Consequences of Hermeneutics* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 261-80.

might be said that the core of the difference between my work and Fell's is that he assumes an already hermeneuticized account of phenomenology (one adumbrated in Miller through his engagement with Royce as well as Pierce), whereas my approach is one that begins within hermeneutics, and only then takes up phenomenology.

Not only is place a more directly thematized issue within hermeneutics, but so too, I would argue, is the idea of relationality itself. One might thus argue that one of the ways hermeneutics enters into Fell's account is actually through the way he explicitly draws upon relational conceptions, and since this is done, in part, through Hegel, so one might well argue that Hegel is the means by which a hermeneutical mode of thinking enters into Fell's account, and that Hegel also represents an important source of hermeneutical influence within philosophy more widely (albeit one that derives from a thinker not usually regarded as standing within the core hermeneutical tradition).[41] It is partly on the basis of its relational character that I think it is possible to view Miller as himself a topologically oriented thinker and on this account *hermeneutically* oriented as well.

Moreover, so far as the topological character of his thinking is concerned, it is notable that Miller also looks to something like another beginning for philosophy, a beginning that requires we overcome the alienating and subjectivizing tendencies that otherwise seem so prevalent. The idea of such another beginning is suggested by Miller's own turn towards the Midworld, which is itself a turn back to the body, to act and actuality, and to the thing, or what Miller calls the "functioning object."[42] The Midworld, as its name suggests, is not a world beyond or behind, but a world "between" (here the hermeneutical re-appears). Yet this "between-ness" is not the between-ness that arises out of the separation of already existing entities. Instead it is the between-ness, and so also the unity, out of which such separation and differentiation itself comes. This notion of the between is itself an essentially topological one. The between is constituted as a place—as a bounded openness and opening. It is out of place

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[41] Hegel's relation to hermeneutics is certainly not straightforward (although see, once again, Redding's discussion in *Hegel's Hermeneutics*), but it is significant—as the role accorded to Hegel within Gadamer's thinking (and especially the way Gadamer contrasts Hegel with Schleiermacher in his critique of 'romantic hermeneutics') would alone suggest (see *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall [New York: Crossroad, 2nd rev. edn., 1992], esp. 164-69.)

[42] See especially, Miller, *The Midworld*, chapt. 1.

that subject and object both arise,[43] and the same is also true of the Midworld. Place too is constituted in relation to act and activity—it is our own character as embodied agents that is the basis for our engaged being in place, and it is through the dynamic character of place that its very relationality plays out.[44] Relation is, to use a Millerian turn of phrase, a verb and not a noun, and one might say something similar of place itself. In this respect, the language of the event that is so central to later Heidegger is not indicative of a prioritization of the purely temporal, but is itself topological. There is not place *and* event, but only the event *as* place, the place *as* event.[45]

It might be argued that inasmuch as all thinkers are revisionists, arguing for their own philosophical vision of things, so every thinker also looks to another beginning for philosophy—a beginning in their own re-visioned view of the world. Yet what we find in both Heidegger and Miller, as well as in Fell, and I would argue is present in my own work also, is not a new or different view of things (though it does stand apart from the philosophically conventional), but quite the contrary: it is a re-seeing of what is already before our eyes; a recollection of that with which we are already familiar; a return to the place in which we already are.[46] This is why the "other" beginning is indeed not a "new" beginning; why it is a return to the original place in which thinking has its origin and its ground. Moreover, the place at issue here is not some esoteric "beyond," but rather lies in the place that is most immediately present to us—the place in which we act and are acted upon,

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[43] That place is neither subjective nor objective, but instead encompasses and is the ground for both, is a key claim in *Place and Experience*, see for instance pp.34-43.

[44] See *Place and Experience*, esp. chapts 4, 5, and 7, in which the experience of place is grounded in the structure of agency and embodiment, while agency and embodiment, in their own turn, cannot be understood independently of the topological, or as I put it here, topographical structure in which they are embedded.

[45] This is a point I have developed in many different places, including Heidegger's Topology, but see also 'Self, Other, Thing: Triangulation and Topography in Post-Kantian Philosophy', and 'Poetry, Language, Place'. The issue is also touched on, though from a different direction, in "Where are we when we think?": Hannah Arendt and the Place of Thinking', *Philosophy Today*, forthcoming, 2015.

[46] This idea of returning to what is not only originary, but also ordinary is addressed elsewhere in this volume in the essays by Peter S. Fosl and Mark Moorman.

the place of our very experience of things, the place in which meaning first arises, the place of our own being and of being itself. For Miller this is the place of the "common man," 'the man on Elm Street,"[47] but the place to which Fell's, Miller's, and my own thinking aspires to re-turn is no less rich or profound for being common, and no less poetic for being so apparently prosaic. If we ever seem to leave this place, it is because of thinking's own tendency to forgetfulness, and especially the forgetfulness that arises through philosophy's own entrapment in its dream-like fantasies. As Miller writes at the very end of *The Midworld*, perhaps alluding to Descartes's dreams: "I want the actual to shine and I want to feel the wonder of a yardstick, a poem, a word, a person. The here-and-now appears to me quite dreamlike unless it can declare the world. I am glad that the dream is dispelled for me."[48]

4.

Heidegger's original account of the two beginnings to thinking, and the need to find our way towards the other beginning as the means also of returning to the first, arises in a time of historical and political crisis in the 1930s—a time of crisis for Germany and for Europe, as well as for the wider world, and a time of personal crisis for Heidegger himself. In his writing from the 1930s and 1940s, Heidegger sometimes seems to conflate these crises, as if the crisis of thinking and the crisis that erupted into the Second World War were somehow intrinsically connected (it is this that partly underlies his entanglement with Nazism). Yet the core of Heidegger's thinking of the two beginnings, and the need for an "other" beginning, though it is tied to a crisis of modernity, is not based in the historical and political circumstances of the 1930s and 1940s alone nor in the personal situation in which Heidegger found himself (and this is so in spite of the fact that these may constitute the autobiographical trigger for that thinking); it is not tied to the position of Germany in that period, nor does it

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[47] The 'man on Elm Street', anonymous though he appears here, is not to be confused with he the anonymous *das Man* who figures in *Being and Time* (and who is nevertheless also to be found on that same *public* street)—see *Being and Time*, §27, H126-130—nor is he (or she) to be identified with some figure such as "the average American." One might say that it is not the *average* nor the *anonymous* human being who is intended here at all, but rather ourselves as we find ourselves out in the everyday world, whether on Elm or any other street, and as we set about our daily lives.

[48] *The Midworld*, 191-92.

depend on the idea of some future German destiny. Indeed, the way in which the figure of the other beginning, or something close to it, can be located elsewhere than in Heidegger's work alone—in Miller's work, but also in Fell's own development of Heidegger—confirms this very point.

The thinking of the other beginning directs us back to the character of thinking as forgetting, and so to the constant need for remembrance. Such remembrance is a task that always lies before us so long as we are concerned *to think*—which means, so long as we remain concerned with our own human being, and so with our being as given over to the world, given over to place, given over to being. The remembrance at issue here is a remembrance of the place in which thinking itself begins and so a remembrance of, and a turning back to, the proper place of thinking. That remembrance involves a recognition of what thinking is, of its grounds, and also of it limits. Moreover, this need for remembrance takes on a special character in the face of the philosophical tendency, originating in the very first beginning of philosophy, to turn away from the original and originary place of thinking, and instead to immerse itself a set of fanciful worlds of its own imagining.

This tendency towards forgetfulness and disorientation is indeed reflected in and reinforced by the tendency of our contemporary globalized, consumerized, corporatized world to position everything within the same homogenized technical network of connection and flow—to reduce everything to the single currency of the quantifiable, the commodifiable, and the countable. Yet although this may make the task of remembrance harder, it also makes it all the more urgent. The focus on the quantifiable does not obliterate the qualitative; the emphasis on commodification does not render irrelevant that which cannot be commodified; the obsession with the countable leaves untouched that which is not countable. Disconnection and discontinuity remain even in the face of the drive toward connection and flow (as the everyday experience of contemporary electronic communication and information technology, with its disjunctions and breakdowns, ably demonstrates).The possibility of an "other" beginning for thinking and for philosophy, is thus not merely a matter of significance for philosophy alone. The task of finding our way to the other beginning—the task of re-orienting thinking—is also the task of finding our way back into the world and back into a mode of being in the world that is neither self-destructive nor self-delusional. It is this task, however, that both Miller and Fell, no less than Heidegger, set before us.

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I would like to thank Mark Moorman for the original invitation to participate in this volume and for the forbearance he and his editorial colleagues have shown in giving me the extra time needed to prepare this chapter. My apologies to all those who know Miller's work for not doing it better justice, but I hope that some of the richness of his thinking is evident in spite of the brevity of its treatment.