

ON SPATIALITY AND THE PROBLEM OF THE BODY IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

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ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates and criticizes Martin Heidegger's account of space and spatiality as offered in his Being and Time, predominantly in sections 22-24 of Chapter III. Heidegger's basic argument is that everyday space is structured by Dasein's concerns. After exploring this theme, it will be argued that Heidegger's account of spatiality is vague and unsatisfactory because whilst emphasizing the essential interdependency and interwovenness of Dasein and the world, Heidegger fails to give a plausible account of the materiality of Dasein's spatiality. His whole notion of spatiality is built at the expense of the loss of Dasein's physical embodiment. It will be suggested that Heidegger's motive in ignoring the bodily nature of Dasein stems from his worry of introducing the notion of (Cartesian) subjectivity into his account which would contradict his philosophical project. However, the absence of the materiality of Dasein's existence eventually prompts Heidegger to present non-spatial concepts - such as familiarity and attention - as spatial categories, which constitutes not only the provocation but also the limitation of his account on spatiality.

Keywords: Heidegger, Dasein, spatiality, Ent-fernung / de-severance, ready-to-hand, present-at-hand, corporeality, Leiben / bodying forth

(Heidegger'in Varlık ve Zaman'ında Uzamsallık ve Beden Sorunu)

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Martin Heidegger'in Varlık ve Zaman isimli eserinin 3. Bölümünün 22-24'üncü kısımlarında ele aldığı uzay ve uzamsallık izahatını değerlendirip ve eleştirmektedir. Heidegger'in temel argümanı gündelik uzamın Dasein'in kaygıları tarafından yapılandırıldığını savunmaktadır. Bu mesele açıklığa kavuşturulduktan sonra Heidegger'in uzamsallık izahatının belirsiz ve yetersiz olduğu savunulacaktır - çünkü Dasein ve dünya arasındaki temel karşılıklı bağımlılık ve iç içe geçmelik durumunu vurgularken, Heidegger'in Dasein'in maddesel uzamsallığına dair tatmin edici bir açıklama getiremediği görülmektedir. Öyle ki, Heidegger, uzamsallık kavramını Dasein'in fiziksel bedenini görmezden gelme pahasına yapılandırmaktadır. Heidegger'in Dasein'in bedensel doğasını görmezden gelen tavrının, (Kartezyen) öznellik kavramına yer açarak kendi felsefi projesiyle çelişmek istememesinden kaynaklanabileceği öne sürülecektir. Ancak, Dasein'in maddesel yokluğu, eninde sonunda Heidegger'i temelde uzamsal olmayan kavramları - aşinalık ve dikkat gibi - uzamsal olarak ele almaya yönlendirmektedir. Bu durum ise, Heidegger'in uzamsallık izahatının kısırtıcılığının yanı sıra yetersizliğine de dikkat çekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Heidegger, Dasein, uzamsallık, Ent-fernung / ayırımın kapanması, el-altında-bulunan, önümüzde-hazır-olan, bedensellik, Leiben / beden in uzamsallaşması

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Introduction

Martin Heidegger's treatment of spatiality is an underexplored topic which often tends to assimilate into his lengthy discussion of temporality - Heidegger himself eventually bases Dasein's spatiality upon its temporality in the section of 70 in *Being and Time*. However, this strong emphasis on temporality does not lead to the neglect of spatiality altogether; rather, as some scholars such as Jeff Malpas, Alejandro A. Vallega and Andrew J. Mitchell¹ have recently indicated in their works, the issue of space nevertheless plays a crucial role in Heidegger's overall thinking and particularly in his conception of Dasein. However, Heidegger's account on spatiality in *Being and Time* (22-24) is still unclear; that is why in this paper, in addition to those sections, there will also be references to his elaborations on the spatiality and the body of Dasein in his *Zollikon Seminars* where he edits and clarifies his seemingly incomplete account in *BT*, three decades ago.

Heidegger's account on the spatiality of Dasein starts from an outright rejection of the Cartesian dualism. In parts previous to 22, he criticizes Descartes's notion of the "subject" which is regarded as a detached consciousness isolated from the "worldliness of the world"; rather than acknowledging the mutual engagement, involvement and familiarity, Descartes presumes a clear cut distinction between the *res cogitans* (thinking beings) and the *res extensa* (bodies, material objects that expand across space) which are irreducible to one another. However, even if Cartesian dualism has been losing its appeal in philosophy in modern times - at least in its initial and crude formulation -, Heidegger is still distinctly cautious and critical of its remnant, the modern scientific attitude, which treats beings in the world as mere physical objects to be scrutinized under the detached scientific gaze.

On the other hand, Heidegger is also distant from the humanistic and the phenomenological accounts which treat subjectivity as a celebration of individualism. There is a notable moment when Jean-Paul Sartre hastily categorizes Heidegger as an atheist existentialist who believes that existence precedes essence and that all inquiries must start from the "subjective"².

¹ For an elaborate account on later Heidegger's conception of the relationship between space, body and art, see Andrew J. Mitchell's *Heidegger Among the Sculptors: Body, Space and the Art of Dwelling*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010. However, for brevity's sake, this paper does not cover Heidegger's thought on art's relevance to spatiality.

² Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism and Humanism", *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings*, (ed.) Stephen Priest, Routledge, London & New York, 2001, p. 27.

Heidegger responds to Sartre's enthusiastic announcement by rejecting the claim and stating that all modes of humanisms (Christian, Marxist or existentialist) rely on the metaphysics which do not ask the fundamental question of ontology regarding the meaning of being³ – which explains his lack of interest in those lines of thought. Moreover, in *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger emphasizes the distinctness of his undertaking by dissociating himself from the French phenomenologists who mistakenly translate his Dasein as "être-la" which means "being here" rather than "being there". The "Da" is supposed to signify not a specifically fixed place but to the contrary, the anonymous humanness of the human being as the "openness" where beings can present themselves for the human being - and where the human being can present himself⁴.

An inquiry into the account of Heidegger's account of spatiality and Dasein must bear those issues in mind. An examination of those themes must be made against the background of Heidegger's rejection of materialistic and subjectivistic attitudes towards the human being both of which he associates with the Cartesian hangover. The first half of this paper explores Heidegger's notion of spatiality and the spatiality of Dasein, and second half examines the body of Dasein and questions whether Heidegger gives an adequate account on its embodiment. It will be argued that his account is incomplete and vague because in his attempt to explain the spatiality of Dasein, Heidegger either makes his account too abstract (which inevitably undermines his project) or forces spatiality into non-spatial categories such as "attention", "familiarity" and "temporality".

The Spatiality of Dasein

This section probes into Heidegger's claim that "Dasein is spatial". The key concepts for understanding Dasein's spatiality are "de-severance" (*Ent-fernung*), "directionality" (*Ausrichtung*) and "region" (*Gegend*). However, before explaining these concepts, it is necessary to briefly mention Heidegger's notion of space. Heidegger's conception of existential spatiality is different from physical space which can be physically measured and

³ Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", *Basic Writings*, (ed.) David Farrell Krell, London, Routledge, 1978, pp. 225-226.

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols – Conversations - Letters*, (ed.) Medard Boss, (trans.) Franz Mayr and Richard Askay, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2001, p. 120. Heidegger's separation from French phenomenologists also reveals itself in the context of the difference between the "corps" and the "leib" which will be discussed below in reference to Dasein's body.

“objectively” investigated by the sciences in a detached manner, which he calls as the “present-at-hand”. By stating that “*Space is not in the subject, nor is the world in space*”⁵, Heidegger suggests that space and spatiality are disclosed by Dasein; that is, spatiality originates neither in Dasein nor in the world but in the relationship between them which is always already established based on the theme of circumspective concern, depending on the objects’ serviceability to Dasein’s current activities. Dasein’s daily concern paves the way to public spatiality, which is its anonymous everyday spatiality.

In section 22, titled “The Spatiality of the Ready-to-hand Within-the-world”, Heidegger draws attention to the relation between “closeness” and “handiness”. Even though the notion of the “ready-to-hand” implies what is close to Dasein, this closeness is not to be associated with metric measurements but rather is determined by the “circumspection” of concern which regards the extents of the accessibility of equipment to Dasein⁶. This marks the difference whether, in the example of a workshop, the hammer is “in its place” or merely “lies around”. Unless the hammer is in its “assigned” place, it is “lying around” – as if in a dysfunctional or obsolete state. Heidegger points out that this difference between “being in one’s place” and “lying around” cannot merely be explained in terms of random spatial differences between here and there. Rather, the significance of this distinction can only be understood in terms of the equipment’s relation to Dasein’s circumspective concern and the latter’s absorbed coping with the world through the existential mode of the “ready-to-hand”.

In section 23, titled “The Spatiality of Being-in-the-world”, Heidegger uses the term (*Entfernheit*) “de-severance”, and explains it as follows: “De-severing amounts to making the farness vanish – that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close. Dasein is essentially de-severant: it lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is”⁷. De-severance must be understood neither in objective nor subjective terms as it does not refer to quantitative measurements or subjective arbitrariness.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, (trans.) John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishing, 1962, p. 146.

⁶ Heidegger writes: “A three-dimensional multiplicity of possible positions which gets filled up with Things present-at-hand is never proximally given. This dimensionality of space is still veiled in the spatiality of the ready-to-hand. The ‘above’ is what is ‘on the ceiling’; the ‘below’ is what is ‘on the floor’; the ‘behind’ is what is ‘at the door’; all ‘wheres’ are discovered circumspectively interpreted as we go our ways in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurement of space” (*ibid.*, p. 135).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

Alejandro A. Vallega remarks that Heidegger uses the term with a hyphen (*Ent-fernung*) and notes that whereas *Entfernung* generally means “separating” or “taking apart”, the prefix “*ent*” in German conveys the meaning of “letting free”. This indicates that rather than overcoming measurable distances, “*Ent-fernung*’ refers to the letting free of spatiality that occurs in *dasein*’s being in the open with beings”⁸.

This bringing close should not merely be interpreted as physical distance because Heidegger also states that “certain ways in which entities are discovered in a purely cognitive manner also have the character of bringing them close. *In Dasein there lies an essential tendency towards closeness*”⁹. As an example, Heidegger mentions about radios and points out how the radio exemplifies the type of closeness and readiness-to-hand sought by *Dasein* in the entities it deals with in the world through its concern and familiarity. Radio is a tool to bring the world to us; by removing the remoteness of distant places, it makes distances disappear. Richard Polt comments that had he lived so long to experience fax machines, cellular phones and the Internet, Heidegger would probably shudder¹⁰.

Whilst formulating his argument on everyday spatiality being grounded in *Dasein*’s concern and *Dasein* interacting with public spatiality in a ready-to-hand fashion instead of present-at-hand, Heidegger gives examples which illustrate that remoteness does not even signify physical distance. We do not generally consider distances in terms of kilometers but refer to a certain distance as “a half an hour walk”, or regard a path that is physically longer but easier to walk as more “available” or more ready-to-hand than a path that is shorter but difficult to walk – if it goes up a hill, for instance¹¹.

In matters of closeness, what matters is the extent of concern. To give an example, Heidegger explains that while a man is walking on the street, the street is undeniably close, right under his feet. But when he sees a friend of his at the end of the street, the friend matters to him much more than the street, so even though the former is physically more distant from the man compared to the latter, existentially the friend is closer to him than the street

⁸ Alejandro A. Vallega, *Heidegger and the Issue of Space: Thinking on Exilic Grounds*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003, p. 139.

⁹ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 140.

¹⁰ Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*, London and New London and New York, Routledge Press, 1999, p. 60.

¹¹ Heidegger, *ibid.*, p. 140-141.

because his concern is oriented towards the friend, not the street¹². The street becomes “transparent” to the man; it is so familiar that he does not think about it. As Hubert Dreyfus notes, what is ready-to-hand gets transparent in use¹³. But for instance, while cheerfully walking toward the friend, if all of a sudden, an earthquake takes place and the street under his feet – the tool he had thus far taken for granted – cracks wide open, then his concern would orient “away” from the friend, “towards” the street, which would be “closer” to him in that case.

In order to understand Heidegger’s account, it is crucial to note that the world does not correspond to nature nor is it limited to the boundaries of planet Earth. There is no world without Dasein, and no Dasein without the world. Likewise, we can assume that where is Dasein, there is the world. For example, when an astronaut is walking on the moon, we can familiarize the moon as an extension of the world, as if the world has extended to the moon. We cannot say that moon has incorporated into planet Earth, but as long as Dasein’s concern stretches onto the surface of moon, the world appears to have appropriated the moon; in Dasein’s regard, even the moon can be “worldly”.

“De-severance” is directed by “directionality” which refers to Dasein’s comportment in space and guides its circumspective concern. It is out of directionality that directions such as “right” and “left” arise, and Dasein accords its body to those directions only afterwards¹⁴ - hence, directionality precedes and guides the bodily orientation of Dasein. It is directionality and de-severance which enable Dasein to engage with things in a ready-to-hand manner. Another crucial concept Heidegger employs is “making room”, which he explains as follows: “When we let entities within-the-world be encountered in the way which is constitutive for Being-in-the-world, we ‘give them space’. This ‘giving space’, which we also call ‘*making room*’ for them consists in freeing the ready-to-hand for its spatiality”¹⁵.

Jeff Malpas notes that even though the term “space” can generally fit well with Heidegger’s use of the German term “*Raum*”, the latter can mean both “having space to move in” (like having room) and also “to make empty”,

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 141-142.

¹³ Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1991, p. 64.

¹⁴ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 143.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

“to evacuate” or “to clear out” – *raumen*¹⁶. This clarification on the ambiguity of the term “space” can help us understand Heidegger’s meaning better. As for the term “place”, “*Platz*” refers to some specific location in context of equipmentality. And as for “region”, even though there is not a specific English word to correspond to the German term “*Gegend*”¹⁷, it refers to that which makes placing any equipment possible by enabling anything to belong anywhere¹⁸. In this case, “region” is the precondition for placing anything by granting meaning to any equipmental totality.

As noted above, bringing close does not imply bringing the object closer to Dasein’s body but rather carrying it within the range of Dasein’s concern and enabling it to get inscribed within the referential network of Dasein’s dealings with the world. However, it is basically this negation of Dasein’s body which makes Heidegger’s account of spatiality vague and implausible. According to him, closeness is not associated with orientation towards Dasein’s body:

“Dasein understands its “here” (Hier) in terms of its environmental “yonder”. The “here” does not mean the “where” of something present-at-hand, but rather the “whereat” (Wobei) of a de-severant Being-alongside, together with this de-severance. Dasein, in accordance with its spatiality, is proximally never here but yonder; from this “yonder” it comes back to its “here”; and it comes back to its “here” only in the way in which it interprets its concerned Being-towards in terms of what is ready-to-hand yonder”¹⁹.

So, Dasein’s “here” is only intelligible in terms of its relation and significance to Dasein’s range of concern, which is determined by the “yonder”, the ground of referential network. Yet what must be noted here is Dasein’s lack of center; as if its body is semi-diffused within space, the spatiality of Dasein gains its meaning within the network in which Dasein operates at that moment. From this we can deduce that Dasein is not a physical body but pure concern. If so, the issue of transparency applies not only to the ready-to-hand equipment or tool, but also to Dasein itself. Dreyfus

¹⁶ Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World*, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2006, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.30.

¹⁸ Heidegger writes: “This ‘whither’, which makes it possible for equipment to belong somewhere, and which we circumspectively keep in view ahead of us in our concerned dealings, we call the ‘region’” (*BT*, p. 136).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

points this issue out by stating that “not only is the equipment transparent; so is the user”²⁰. In order to operate at all, Dasein gets itself transparent as well, through work or everyday interaction. Even though Heidegger does not privilege Dasein over the world as the “subject”, the former nevertheless implicitly attributes the latter a certain special status for being the unique entity that can ground the disclosure of Being.

In addition to these worries, David R. Cerbone draws attention to a contradiction in Heidegger’s account by noting that even though Heidegger rejects the interpretation of distances in physical terms, his proposition still – if implicitly – relies on our engaged, bodily activity²¹. Cerbone suggests that even if Dasein sets the standards of measurement initially in the authentic experience of engaging with the world, those standards inevitably become “objectified” norms over the long course of time, based on repetition and anonymous negotiation. For instance, what is physically close to one person is close to everyone else in the exact same way, to the same extent; and that is how things – roads, sidewalks, aisles in shopping malls etc. – are structured. Whilst theorizing on the “closest”, Heidegger refers to “an average extent” according to which we reach for or look at things, primarily on everyday familiarity²².

If our engagement with entities is always primordially in the fashion of the ready-to-hand before present-at hand, then any “objective” measurement which we now consider as present-at-hand was once ready-to-hand; it is just that our relationship with that entity gradually assimilated into the mode of the present-at-hand. In this case, Heidegger’s undertaking basically seems like an inquiry into the origins of the present-at-hand whose original roots can be found in the ready-to-hand. But if so, then Heidegger’s project hints at a genealogy of the arrangement of space rather than being an ambitious rejection of the quantitative arrangement of space based on the so-called objective measurements in the present-at-hand fashion.

Perhaps we could still argue that Heidegger does not entirely reject the present-at-hand but mainly criticizes it being the dominant or the only way for humans to relate to entities and the world. Yet still, the continuity between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand could have been exposed and acknowledged rather than suppressed or denied. It is quite plausible to

²⁰ Dreyfus, *ibid.*, p. 66.

²¹ David R. Cerbone, “Heidegger on Space and Spatiality”, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*, (ed.) Mark A. Wrathall, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 138.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

think that what is now a present-at-hand category was presumably once a ready-to-hand category; especially when we think of units of measurement – even across cultures - before the metric system such as “foot”, “horsepower” or “kulaç” (in Turkish, referring to widely opening one’s arms), it becomes evident that Dasein has been primordially using its body parts or making references to nature and animals for measuring and relating to the world.

Cerbone also questions the role “attention” – the cognitive engagement - plays in bringing entities close to Dasein regardless of the physical distance. As indicated above, Heidegger conveys that what is closest to me is that which grabs my attention; that which I am coping with, regardless of the quantity of the metric distance in between. However, attention is a very personal matter in contrast with equipmentality which always has a public structure. Cerbone asks “if I’m reaching for a beloved coffee cup given to me by the absent friend, thereupon thinking of the friend as I reach, which is closer to me – the cup or my friend?”²³ Cerbone thereby suggests that these may actually be two *different* kinds of proximities; and yet if we accept that, we could still be haunted by the residual Cartesian dualism. In addition, my memory of my friend individualizes me, and this individualizing aspect of attention calls into question the anonymous arrangement of spatiality and regions. Heidegger tends to assimilate attention into a spatial category but that is a rather implausible proposition because “the proximity of attention is not publicly accessible”²⁴. Treating attention as a spatial category would imply a notion of proximity independent of the corporeal body. Cerbone ends his criticism by concluding that Heidegger’s distaste of the category of the present-at-hand prompts him to dismiss corporeality altogether and makes his overall account on the spatiality of Dasein unintentionally abstract²⁵. As a matter of fact, Heidegger’s neglect of the body is rather common criticism posed at him by many other critics. That is why, we must now turn to his account of the body – or the lack thereof.

The Problematic of the “Bodily Nature”

Dasein’s transparency begs the question because the two dimensions of Dasein’s spatiality, de-severance and directionality both necessitate some sort of center. As Dreyfus notes, the very concept of directionality pre-

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

requires the existence of a physical body, yet the acknowledgment of Dasein's physical body is an issue Heidegger deliberately ignores. However, any orientation to right or left makes sense only so far as Dasein has a physical body, which is the main problem in Heidegger's argument. There cannot be orientation without embodiment. In order to orient itself towards the accessibility of equipment, Dasein would have to attend to one direction at a time; right or left, up or down but that is because Dasein has only one body to attend to the whole world; it cannot go both directions at once. That is why, without a sound account of the body, even regions do not make much sense²⁶.

Even though in certain contexts Heidegger acknowledges the relevance of body to directionality, he never explicitly resolves this issue. He states that directions such as right and left depend on the accordance of Dasein's spatialization in its "bodily nature". And right after that claim, he eventually spells out the fuzzy statement, in parenthesis, as if confessing in a whisper: "(This 'bodily nature' hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.)"²⁷.

From a critical point of view, the troublesome "bodily nature; hiding problematics of its own" goes far beyond Dasein's physicality. It seems that what constitutes Heidegger's basic worry is the concept of materiality itself. It can even be argued that it is probably that very problematic of materiality which tempts him to theorize on the notion of the present-at-hand in the first place and implicitly rule it out as an unworldly or unfamiliar derivation of the ready-to-hand. Stephen Mulhall also comments on this issue as he discusses Heidegger's attempts to overcome the traditional subject-versus-object dualism and notes that Heidegger cannot overcome the problem posed by the materiality of objects²⁸.

Mulhall draws attention to the priority of the role of materiality in determining the grounding of the relationship between Dasein and the world; hence the constitution of Dasein's circumspective "concern". The body of the object is the point of reference illustrating the shift from the ready-to-hand to the present-at-hand. This shift also signifies the change in the public spatiality of the object as perceived by Dasein. The hammer gets too materialized if it feels heavier compared to the ideal hammer – in which case its identity or hammerhood and even its "place" are called into question.

²⁶ Dreyfus, *ibid.*, p. 137.

²⁷ Heidegger, *BT.*, p. 143.

²⁸ Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, New York, Routledge Press, 1996, p. 58.

Because of its over-materialization, the hammer loses its identity together with its place within the circumspective web of Dasein, and thus, of the world. Heidegger writes:

“In the ‘physical’ assertion that ‘the hammer is heavy’ we *overlook* not only the tool-character of the entity we encounter, but also something that belongs to any ready-to-hand equipment: its place. Its place becomes a matter of indifference. This does not mean that what is present-at-hand loses its ‘location’ altogether. But its place becomes a spatio-temporal position, a world-point, which is in no way distinguished from any other”²⁹.

From the quote we can infer that for Heidegger, any object losing its transparent role in the use of Dasein’s everyday interaction with the world gains a bodily significance and hence poses a problem for Heidegger - if an object gets too much “materialized” or “bodily”, he regards that state just as alien and unworldly as pure abstraction (just a “spatio-temporal point” in vast space). Because in that case, the attention is derived away from the object’s function or its umbilical cord-like relation with Dasein’s everyday activity into the object itself. The object gets “objectified” to the extent of threatening Heidegger’s ambition to suppress the object-subject dichotomy - because the acknowledgement of objecthood may yield to the eventual recognition of subjecthood as well, which would be counter to Heidegger’s holistic argument.

According to Lilian Alweiss, Heidegger’s constant avoidance of Dasein’s embodiment stems from his worry about re-introducing the subject-object dualism. Thus, Heidegger does not intend to suggest anything that could imply a moment of dispersal in this “fundamental unity”³⁰. As a matter of fact, what makes Heidegger’s account of spatiality so challenging to understand is that the notion of space itself implies an eventual separation between Dasein and the world, which eventually runs against his main philosophical project to overcome the old traditional dualism. That is why, his notion of Dasein’s spatiality does not accommodate Dasein’s body because evoking the bodily nature of Dasein would risk intimating a separation between Dasein and the world by introducing the notion of a subject with a centered consciousness. As an alternative, Heidegger seems to rely on

²⁹ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 413.

³⁰ Lilian Alweiss, *The World Unclaimed: A Challenge to Heidegger’s Critique of Husserl*, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2003, p. 115.

“familiarity” instead of “spatiality”. This idea is explored by Alweiss who speculates on the quote taken from Heidegger below:

“The expression ‘*bin*’ is connected with ‘*bei*’, and so ‘*ich bin*’ (‘I am’) means in its turn ‘I reside’ or ‘dwell alongside’ the world... ‘Being’ (*Sein*), as the infinitive of ‘*ich bin*’ (that is to say, when it is understood as an *existentiale*) signifies ‘to reside alongside’... ‘to be familiar with’”³¹.

Quoting Heidegger’s key passage, Alweiss suggests that familiarity with the world is essentially pre-spatial - or actually, does not even hint at anything spatial at all³². Spatiality emerges through awareness, which is why Heidegger claims that the picture on the wall is closer to me than my eye glasses³³. I am aware of the picture, but not of my glasses, as they become withdrawn and transparent through my use of them. So, it becomes clear that Heidegger’s notion of spatiality is grounded on familiarity which stems from awareness. This criticism is reminiscent of Cerbone’s point which regards Heidegger treating “attention” as a spatial category. Heidegger tends to force non-spatial concepts such as attention and familiarity into spatial categories³⁴.

Heidegger’s negation of the body is also paradoxically ambiguous in his construction of terms such as *ready-to-hand*, *unready-to-hand* or *present-at-hand*. Even though it is through the hand that Dasein can manipulate the world, it is not the physical hands of Dasein that Heidegger refers to. Dasein has hands only because it has language - and of course, for Dasein to have language has nothing to do with it having a tongue. Franck Didier comments that only a being who speaks can have hands; apes have prehensile bodily organs but they are not hands³⁵. An ape also has two prehensile organs, and

³¹ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 80.

³² Alweiss, *ibid.*, p. 81.

³³ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 141.

³⁴ In addition to familiarity and attention, temporality is also a vital component of Dasein’s spatiality. It is crucial to note that the term “Dasein” refers to being “*ec-static*”. Kevin Aho writes: “I ‘stand outside’ of myself because I am always already interwoven into things in terms of a tacit, practical familiarity” (Kevin A. Aho, *Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 2009, p. 30). Dasein is temporal in the sense that it is always a “not yet”; it always finds itself thrown into a specific socio-historical context and at the same time it always projects itself into the future of contingent finitude. In this respect, Dasein is always a “no-thing” (Aho, *ibid.*, p. 15). Dasein temporally stretches out between situatedness (*befindlichkeit*) and projection (*Entwurf*). However, a thorough exploration of Dasein’s temporality is beyond the scope of this paper.

³⁵ Taken from Alweiss, *ibid.*, p. 105.

if we like, we can put right and left gloves on each of them - signifying directionality - but the ape still cannot properly have “hands” as it cannot “speak”. Alweiss claims that Dasein has hands and can thereby distinguish between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand; hands are not tools and can never be ready-to-hand or present-at-hand but they actually make this very distinction possible in their power to manipulate and deal with the world³⁶. If we remember, it is the hand that decides whether “the hammer is too heavy” or not. However, as we see, differently from apes, it is not because of the physicality of hands as organs, but their relation to language that Dasein can qualify to have hands at all. Heidegger seems to justify the physicality of hands based on language, articulation and eventually, on “theory”.

Heidegger does not give any reasons for “not treating the problematic of the bodily nature of Dasein, which is hiding whole a problematic of its own”. However, ignoring the corporeality of Dasein as if corporeality is something that can just be “bracketed out” suggests that the subject versus object dichotomy still prevails. And in order to overcome this dualism, the solution he comes up with suggests making everything abstract and leaving nothing concrete. A striking observation regarding Heidegger’s negation of the body is made by Emmanuel Levinas who remarks that Heidegger’s Dasein is never hungry. Noting the lack of corporeality in his account, Levinas goes so far as to suggest that since having a body is the precondition of ethics – because only a creature that has bodily needs such as hunger can make the ethical choice of offering its food to the Other -, Heidegger’s philosophy cannot accommodate ethics³⁷.

Without rejecting the criticisms posed at Heidegger’s neglect of the body, Kevin Aho argues that such accusations do not significantly undermine Heidegger’s main project – which is an inquiry into the being who can ask the fundamental question of ontology regarding what being is³⁸. Aho emphasizes Heidegger’s description of Dasein as essentially an openness upon whose horizon meanings form for the human being. Heidegger refers to Dasein’s spatiality as basically an openness rather than an entity in a container:

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, (trans.) Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969, p. 134. Even though a detailed discussion of ethics in Heidegger is beyond the scope of this paper, Levinas’s criticism of Heidegger’s neglect of the body is nevertheless relevant to my argument.

³⁸ Aho, *ibid.*, p. 3.

“Yet even if we deny that Dasein has any such insideness in a spatial in a spatial receptacle, this does not in principle exclude it from having any spatiality at all, but merely keeps open the way for seeing the kind of spatiality which is constitutive of Dasein”³⁹.

In *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger clarifies this idea by drawing attention to the two different notions of the body: the corporeal body (*Körper*) and the body (*Leib*). He remarks that since the French have only one word to refer to the body (*le corps*), French phenomenologists often make mistakes while dealing with the body in their accounts⁴⁰. Heidegger's statement, “Dasein is bodily”, signifies the body's capacity for “bodying forth” (*Leiben*), which signifies stretching out and going beyond its physical boundaries. It points at flexibility, unstability, and hence capability of constant change as the body has no rigid corporeal limits. For instance, if I am pointing at the moon, my body exceeds the tip of my finger; my body stretches out and beyond my skin. Heidegger writes: “The corporeal thing stops with the skin... The difference between the limits of the corporeal thing and the body, then, consists in the fact that the *bodily limit* is extended beyond the *corporeal limit*”⁴¹.

As an example of body's stretching out without definitive boundaries, Heidegger talks about back pain which the sufferer can feel expanding, but cannot precisely mark where the pain starts or ends on the surface. Heidegger also remarks that this may be challenging for a physician to understand but not for the layperson who can better intuit such a concept of space based on his lived experience⁴². As a final point, it is necessary to recall Heidegger's notion of “making room” and re-emphasize its relationship between Dasein's spatiality and its body:

“The *Da-sein* of the human being is spatial in itself in the sense of *making room* (in space) (*Einräumen von Raum*) and in the sense of *the spatialization of Da-sein in its bodily nature*. *Da-sein* is not spatial because it is embodied. But its bodiliness is possible only because *Da-sein* is spatial in the sense of making room”⁴³.

So, Dasein does not owe its spatiality to its body but it is the other way around: Dasein has a body owing to its spatiality, by way of making room

³⁹ Heidegger, *BT*, p. 134.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 89.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *ZS*, p. 86.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

– which, as noted above, could also mean “evacuation”, “emptying” or “clearing out”. It is Dasein’s spatiality which grants Dasein its body. But if so, can we think of Dasein as a “pre-body”, then? Or a “no-body”? This is genuinely the most provocative aspect of Heidegger’s account. Nowadays, we are almost accustomed to not referring to the human being as a spirit or consciousness. But not associating it with a body seems to be the real challenge for us moderns, who are thoroughly influenced by the materialism endorsed by the scientific way of thinking.

Conclusion

Perhaps Aho’s proposition according to which the phenomenological inquiry concerning the body or everyday life as being only posterior to Dasein’s question of the fundamental ontology⁴⁴ can help us understand Heidegger’s intention. However, this defense does not help Heidegger’s account on spatiality. The essential openness of Dasein is crucial; however, while Heidegger’s neglect of the body may not undermine his overall project on pursuing the question of the fundamental ontology, it nevertheless creates serious problems on his account on spatiality in terms of assimilating non-spatial concepts (such as attention, familiarity and temporality) into spatial categories - of proximity and closeness.

Heidegger’s overall account of spatiality as suggested in *Being and Time*, particularly in sections 22 to 24 implies that Dasein has its world at the expense of its corporeal body. The unitary structure of Being-in-the-world has to come at the cost of ripping Dasein off its embodiment and primordial spatiality. Heidegger’s holistic account of Being-in-the-world has to ignore the concreteness of Dasein, of the “there-being” - which was supposed to correspond to fleshy “human beings”. In his attempt to overcome the “worldless” Dasein intimated by traditional ontology, Heidegger ends up introducing a vague, “bodiless” Dasein.

Yet, paradoxically, the neglect of the body eventually hints at the denial of the materiality of the world as well which can, not just merely pose a threat, but undermine Heidegger’s whole argument. For this reason, no matter how powerfully thought-provoking, it is implausible of any account of spatiality to be valid without giving a satisfactory notion of the body - because that way, Heidegger himself seems to fall into the trap of treating the world as nature. It is as if similar to the scientists whom Heidegger accuses of

⁴⁴ Aho, *ibid.*, p. 4.

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stripping the world of its wordliness, he himself, if not as the scientist but as the philosopher, strips the world off Dasein's flesh in an almost idealist, purist fashion analogous to the naturalistic idyll of scientists.

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