



*Books and Publications by Martin Heidegger*

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1916  
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für Philosophie und Philosophische Kritik Bd. 161.  
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Was ist Metaphysik? 1929  
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Hölderlins Elegie: Heimkunft. An die Verwandten.  
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den "Humanismus". 1947

*Books by Werner Brock*

- Nietzsches Idee der Kultur. 1930  
An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy,  
Cambridge University Press, 1935

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by

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword	9
Introduction	13
Prefatory Note	16
A Brief Outline of the Career of M. Heidegger	20
An Account of "Being and Time"	25
1. The three main problems: Dasein, Time and Being. The project and the published version	25
2. Some aspects of the analysis of Dasein	40
3. Dasein and Temporality	67
4. Some reflections on the significance of the work	121
An Account of "The Four Essays"	132
1. A brief general characterisation of the four essays	132
2. On the Essence of Truth	142
3. The Essays on Friedrich Hölderlin	183
4. What is Metaphysics?	218

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Note	249
Remembrance of the Poet	251
<i>Translated by Douglas Scott</i>	
Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry	291
<i>Translated by Douglas Scott</i>	
On the Essence of Truth	317
<i>Translated by R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick</i>	
What is Metaphysics?	353
<i>Translated by R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick</i>	
Notes	394

Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr  
Nichts?  
— Das Nichts als das Andere zum Seienden ist der  
Schleier des Seins.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

This human origin of untruth merely confirms by contrast the essential nature of truth "as such" which holds sway "over" man and which metaphysics regard as something imperishable and eternal, something that can never be founded on the transitoriness and fragility of humankind. How then can the essence of truth possibly have a stable basis in human freedom?

Resistance to the proposition that the essence of truth is freedom is rooted in prejudices, the most obstinate of which contends that freedom is a property of man and that the nature of freedom neither needs nor allows of further questioning. As for man, we all know what *he* is.

#### 4. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF FREEDOM

The indication, however, of the essential connection between truth *as rightness*, and freedom, shatters these preconceived notions, provided of course that we are prepared to change our way of thinking. Consideration of the natural affinity between truth and freedom induces us to pursue the question as to the nature of man in one of its aspects—an aspect vouched for by our experience of a hidden ground in man's nature and being, so that we are transported in advance into the original living realm of truth. But at this point it also becomes evident that freedom is the basis of the inner possibility of rightness only because it receives its own essence from that thing of earlier origin: the uniquely

essential truth.

Freedom was initially defined as freedom for the revelation of something already overt. How are we to think of the essence of freedom so conceived? The Manifest (*das Offenbare*), to which a representative statement approximates in its rightness, is that which obviously "is" all the time and has some manifest form of behaviour. The freedom to reveal something overt lets whatever "is" at the moment *be* what it is. Freedom reveals itself as the "letting-be" of what-is. —

We usually talk of "letting be" when, for instance, we stand off from some undertaking we have planned. "We let it be" means: not touching it again, not having anything more to do with it. "Letting be" here has the negative sense of disregarding something, renouncing something, of indifference and even neglect.

The phrase we are now using, namely the "letting-be" of what-is, does not, however, refer to indifference and neglect, but to the very opposite of them. To let something be (*Seinlassen*) is in fact to have something to do with it (*sich einlassen auf*). This is not to be taken merely in the sense of pursuing, conserving, cultivating and planning some actuality casually met with or sought out. To let what-is *be* what it is means participating in something overt and its overtness, in which everything that "is" takes up its position and which entails such overtness. Western thought at its outset conceived this overtness as τὰ ἀληθέα, the Unconcealed. If we translate ἀλήθεια