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Heidegger's "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge": Curiosity, *Thaumazein*, Terror, and Withdrawal

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is Heidegger's lecture "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge" (summer semester 1939), first published in 2020 in GA 80.2 and still largely unexplored in Heidegger scholarship. In this text, Heidegger problematizes the scientific disposition as a lack of mindfulness (*Besinnungslosigkeit*). This lack of mindfulness is, in turn, characterized as a disturbance and forgetting of the original disposition that, in Plato and Aristotle, is named in Greek *thaumazein*. In the advanced form of occidental knowledge, shaped by *techne*, the remembrance of wonder at beings (*Erstaunen*) is no longer possible. Instead, the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) becomes accessible only through another disposition: terror (*Entsetzen*). The paper argues that these distinctions between basic dispositions (*curiositas*, *thaumazein*, and terror) can be understood only by focusing on Heidegger's concept of withdrawal (*Entzug*). In Heidegger's words, one must take it seriously that Being withdraws from beings. On this basis, curiosity blocks the experience of withdrawal, *thaumazein* names the beginning of philosophy but cannot be repeated today, and it is terror that discloses the abandonment of Being. To place this claim in context, the paper offers a short sketch of Heidegger's critique of *curiositas*, based on his Augustinian reception in the Natorp report ("Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation") and in Being and Time (§ 36). It then draws on his account of *thaumazein* in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) and finally briefly turns to *Contributions to Philosophy*, where Heidegger develops the disposition of the other beginning in three stages: shock (*Erschrecken*), restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), and diffidence (*Scheu*).

Keywords: Heidegger; basic disposition; wonder; *thaumazein*; curiosity; terror; withdrawal; abandonment of Being



Academic Editor: Richard Polt

Received: 20 May 2026

Revised: 2 July 2026

Accepted: 9 July 2026

Published: 13 July 2026

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I will focus on Heidegger's lecture "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge" [1], which I read mainly as a junction at which three central motifs of his thinking converge: his critique of the lack of mindfulness, his interpretation of *thaumazein*, and the basic disposition of terror¹. Since the lecture was first published only in 2020, it has not yet, to my knowledge, been the subject of systematic philosophical interpretation. The present paper offers one of the first interpretations of its significance.

This triad of basic dispositions, I argue, can be adequately understood only if it is situated within the broader context of Heidegger's thought. I will articulate this context through the relation between curiosity, wonder, and terror. More specifically, I argue that these distinctions can be understood by focusing on Heidegger's concept of withdrawal (*Entzug*). In Heidegger's words, one must "take it seriously that Being withdraws from

beings" ([2], p. 163; [3], German original: p. 189). On this basis, the central thesis of the paper is that curiosity blocks the experience of withdrawal, *thaumazein* names the beginning of philosophy but cannot be repeated today, and terror (*Entsetzen*) discloses the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*). It should be noted that the concept of withdrawal does not appear explicitly in the lecture itself; it is introduced here as an interpretive key drawn from Heidegger's broader corpus, especially from the direct connection between *Entsetzen* and withdrawal established in *Contributions to Philosophy* ([4], pp. 378–380; [5], pp. 481–483). This connection makes it possible to interpret wonder (*Erstaunen*) in light of withdrawal through its relation to *Entsetzen*, and curiosity in turn through its relation to wonder.

To show this, the first part of the paper briefly introduces Heidegger's lecture "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge." The second part offers a short sketch of Heidegger's critique of *curiositas* and its connection to withdrawal. The third part draws on Heidegger's account of *thaumazein* in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) [2]. Finally, the paper turns to *Contributions to Philosophy* [4] in order to clarify the relation between terror (*Entsetzen*) and the three dispositions of the other beginning: shock (*Erschrecken*), restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), and diffidence (*Scheu*).

2. "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge"

The text was first published in 2020 in volume 80.2 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, which contains Heidegger's unpublished lectures. The manuscript record notes that it belongs to the *Freiburger Kränzchen* of 9 June 1939, a series of regular meetings of professors from different disciplines held in the private homes of its members [1] (p. 1368).

The lecture begins with the question of the lack of mindfulness of the sciences [1] (pp. 779–780), through which Heidegger refers back to the earlier lecture "The Grounding of the Modern World Picture by Metaphysics" (*Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik*) [6], as the editorial notes to GA 80.2 indicate [1] (p. 1368). This lecture, originally delivered exactly one year earlier, on 9 June 1938, addresses in the fourth note to the second elaboration precisely the question of reflection on the sciences, which, according to Heidegger, can be carried out only through an engagement with the first beginning of Western thought [6] (p. 758). Heidegger later revised "The Grounding of the Modern World Picture by Metaphysics" and included it in *Holzwege* under the title "The Age of the World Picture" (*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*) [7]; however, this fourth note was not included in the text published in 1950.

The question of mindfulness (*Besinnung*), and thus in this context of the sciences' lack of mindfulness, is developed above all against the background of Heidegger's attempt to make visible the presuppositions that would make possible the otherwise closed-off reflection of the technical sciences [8]. In "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge," Heidegger seeks to counter the danger of the lack of mindfulness by defining mindfulness as a "becoming clear" about a basic disposition [1] (p. 783). In a more general sense, Heidegger's concept of mindfulness (*Besinnung*) should not be understood as mere reflection, contemplation, or thinking things over as von Herrmann emphasizes [9] (p. 38). Rather, as Heidegger's determination of philosophy in *Contributions to Philosophy* suggests, *Besinnung* belongs to being-historical thinking and concerns the truth of Being [5] (p. 45). This being-historical sense of mindfulness also explains its connection with the basic disposition, since, as we read in *Mindfulness (Besinnung)* from 1938/39 [10] (p. 49), Heidegger understands mindfulness as making the human being receptive (*Anstimmung*) to the basic disposition.

This danger of lack of mindfulness is determined at the beginning of the lecture through an either/or, that is, through a dominant position into which the scientific attitude, or the attitude toward science, retreats. Heidegger distinguishes and rejects three forms

of this either/or. Science is understood either as a useful instrument of knowledge for political and volkish purposes, or this position is rejected in favor of the free objectivity of knowledge. The third option consists of seeking a compromise between the two [1] (p. 780). Yet even here, Heidegger argues, no genuine mindfulness of science takes place.

What, then, does Heidegger mean by mindfulness in the context of this lecture? He first defines it as a becoming clear about the basic stance (*Grundstellung*) toward beings as a whole and in the midst of beings. What matters above all is that a decision is already at stake here concerning how the knower stands toward beings and what he takes Being to be. Heidegger calls this standing in the midst of beings a state (*Zustand*), thereby making clear that the basic stance is not a mere view, concept, or idea. This also shows why “free objectivity,” or purposeless science, misses this more originary level. The human being does not stand above beings, but is placed (*gesetzt*), exposed (*ausgesetzt*), and transposed (*versetzt*) into beings; this disclosive transposedness (*erschließende Versetztheit*) is determined as disposition (*Stimmung*). Thus dispositions such as awe, reverence, joy, terror, and releasement are not mere feelings or moods, but constitute the relation of the human being to beings as such [1] (p. 781). This is also why, in the context of this lecture, the German term *Grundstimmung* should be translated as “basic disposition” rather than simply as “basic mood” or “basic attunement”: whereas “attunement” can suggest primarily the process of being attuned, “disposition” better preserves the structural sense of stance (*Stellung*) and transposedness (*Versetzung*).

The lecture unfolds the topic of the basic dispositions through a movement between three dispositions: lack of disposition (*Stimmungslosigkeit*), wonder (*Erstaunen*), and terror (*Entsetzen*). What matters for the following analysis is that every basic stance (*Grundstellung*), including the scientific stance, is grounded in such a basic disposition, even when this stance is “adopted unnoticed” [1] (p. 781). Heidegger indicates this concealed character of basic disposition, for example, in the “Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’” (*Nachwort zu ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’*) when he describes the basic disposition of anxiety as a “soundless voice” (*lautlose Stimme*) [11] (p. 306).

When Heidegger subsequently defines mindfulness as becoming clear about the basic disposition, he means above all the disclosure of transposedness. He develops this point in the lecture through the differentiation between science and the attitude of knowing [1] (p. 782). Lack of mindfulness here means a disturbance and forgetting of the basic disposition. But what exactly is forgotten? Heidegger’s answer is that science does not determine knowledge; rather, the respectively disposed attitude of knowing grants science its space and measure. This disturbance and forgetting of a disposed attitude of knowing is then understood by Heidegger as lack of disposition, that is, as a concealed and prevailing basic disposition [1] (p. 782). In it, the human being forgets his original relation to beings as a whole. Heidegger returns to this relation between knowledge and science at the end of the lecture. There he argues that the sciences renounce any co-decision concerning the ground and the manner of knowledge through which the human being relates to beings and to himself [1] (p. 787). Science as knowledge does not mean the mere accumulation of factual knowledge and is not a mere source of information, but becomes possible only where the basic disposition is originary [1] (p. 787).

Thus the declared lack of mindfulness of the sciences is then specified in relation to the original basic disposition in two steps. First, it is a disturbing and forgetting of the basic disposition; second, as a consequence of this forgetting, it is a lack of disposition that itself remains concealed [1] (p. 782). Both determinations point toward the initial basic disposition of Western thought, that is, toward the disposition of the Greeks. Thus, in “Science and Reflection” (*Wissenschaft und Besinnung*) from 1953, Heidegger writes that, since the essence of modern science is grounded in the thinking of the Greeks, every

mindfulness of what now “is” must take place through a dialogue with Greek thinking [12] (pp. 40–41).

Yet it is not only that the basic disposition of modern humanity is disturbed and forgotten, so that indeterminacy can appear as a disappearance of Being [1] (p. 785); rather, this lack of disposition remains concealed even to itself. This concealment, however, is not accidental. In “Overcoming Metaphysics” (*Überwindung der Metaphysik*), Heidegger connects it with technology, insofar as technological thinking remains unable to see what is “question-worthy” [13] (pp. 85–86). In the present lecture, as will become clear below, this connection is specified through the relation between *techne* and *historia* as basic forms of Western knowledge.

In order to escape this lack of disposition, Heidegger attempts in this lecture to make us receptive once again to a basic disposition and thereby to overcome this forgetting and disturbance. Basic disposition thus assumes a central role. Yet it must be distinguished from psychology and anthropology. In these disciplines, the human being is already treated as something familiar and, in this sense, as something already decided. If mindfulness is a becoming clear about basic disposition, however, then it must begin prior to this transposition of the human being into a familiar object. The usual must become unusual, an aspect of wonder that will also concern us later in the analysis of wonder in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45). Since the human being is not an object to be explained, Heidegger understands the human being here as an as-yet-undecided essence.

Consequently, it would first be necessary to uncover this lack of disposition in its concealment, in order then to show how it disturbs the original basic disposition. In the lecture itself, however, Heidegger turns to the basic disposition of Western thinking in its beginning, as articulated by Plato and Aristotle: *thaumazein* [1] (p. 783). This wonder is interpreted in terms of the history of Being. *Thaumazein* is the transposition into and before unconcealment. What is wondrous is not a particular being, but that beings are what they are and that unconcealment occurs. In the basic disposition of wonder, Being is honored in its highest and simplest question-worthiness (*Fragwürdigkeit*) [1] (p. 785). This already suggests, although not explicitly, the metaphysical structure of ontotheology.

A basic disposition understood in this way, whether as the pure initial one of *thaumazein* or as the lack of disposition (*Ungestimmtheit*) of the modern sciences, is not something that the human being has, but rather that which carries him. Heidegger also calls this the event (*Ereignis*) [1] (p. 785), as that which offers the human being the domain (*Spielraum*) in which the human being decides his own essence.

Here Heidegger speaks of two possibilities: either the human being remains fixed within the basic forms of Western knowledge, *techne* and *historia*, in which his essence is always already decided, or he becomes capable of origin once again and undergoes a transformation. This transformation of essence (*Wesenswandel*), in contrast to technology, which calculatively and unquestioningly makes the present into the same, and to history, which explanatorily brings the past into the present, is historical, more precisely being-historical, insofar as it remembers Being [1] (p. 786). This remembrance (*Erinnerung*) occurs only when the human being becomes open (*stimmbar*) to the basic disposition that makes the abandonment of Being in familiar and producible beings visible to him. Yet this basic disposition can no longer be the former disposition of wonder. Rather, it must take place through the more originary basic disposition of terror (*Entsetzen*) [1] (p. 786).

In what follows, I will attempt first to connect the “disturbed” basic disposition with curiosity and thereby interpret it, even though curiosity is not explicitly mentioned in the lecture².

With this interpretation, an obvious question arises: why should this lack of disposition not be interpreted, for example, through the profound boredom analyzed in *The*

Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik) (GA 29/30) [15]? Or, more pointedly, why should lack of disposition be connected with curiosity? The first, structural reason is that Heidegger himself treats the Greek basic disposition of the first beginning, *thaumazein*, in distinction from curiosity in the lecture *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) from the winter semester 1937/38 [2] (p. 156). Moreover, in the context of knowledge and science, it is more natural to deal with curiosity as a disposition of knowing.

The second, and more important, systematic reason is that theoretical curiosity is already criticized by Augustine, and that an essential element of this critique is the rejection of knowledge for its own sake, that is, purposeless knowledge, *nihil aliud quam scire* (*Confessiones* X, 35, 55) [16] (p. 540). Heidegger's early critique of curiosity, culminating in *Being and Time*, is based on Book X of Augustine's *Confessions*. This reference to purposeless knowledge can also be found in "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge," where Heidegger interprets not only purposive but also purposeless knowledge as a danger of the lack of mindfulness [1] (p. 780). The two are therefore connected because the lack of mindfulness criticizes precisely what is at stake in Augustine's and Heidegger's critique of curiosity: purposeless knowledge, knowledge for its own sake, or what Heidegger, in his interpretation of Book X of Augustine's *Confessions*, calls mere wanting to see (*das bloße Sehenwollen*), naked curiosity [17] (p. 224), and what he describes in *Being and Time* as knowing merely in order to have known [18] (p. 172)³.

3. Heidegger's Critique of Curiosity

In what follows, my first task will be to show how curiosity already contains aspects of the lack of mindfulness in the early Heidegger. To do so, curiosity must first be contextualized. Heidegger is already concerned with the theme of curiosity in *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (GA 63) [20], where curiosity is understood as a "how of caring," thereby indicating the Latin connection between *cura* and *curiositas*. Curiosity as care is understood as a kind of masking that constantly conceals itself from itself, and thus from its own care. What is thereby concealed is Dasein as care, in which mere seeing and mere questioning are grounded as modes of human existence [20] (pp. 103–104). This already points to the first important indication: curiosity is marked by concealment, and this points to a lack of mindfulness toward what is originary.

This negative determination of curiosity can be more precisely understood from the first part of the Natorp Report, "Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation" (*Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation*) [21]⁴. In this text, Heidegger determines factual life essentially as "being out toward something," as care (*curare*), whereby the toward which of care is the respective world [21] (p. 14). The world is first encountered within concerned engagement (*besorgender Umgang*), as significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*). Yet when circumspection (*Umsicht*) frees itself from this concerned engagement, what is encountered becomes, through theorization, mere things and objects⁵. The structure shifts from "in order to" (*Um zu*) to "as what" (*Als was*) [24] (p. 37). Heidegger characterizes this mere looking, now detached from concerned engagement, as curiosity, which can then organize itself as science [21] (pp. 16–17).

Alongside the determination of factual life as care, Heidegger's second important point is that life has a basic tendency to fall away from itself and to fall into the world [21] (p. 19), which brings us to the analysis of curiosity in *Being and Time*. There, Heidegger analyzes curiosity as a mode of Dasein's falling, alongside idle talk (*Gerede*), which co-constitutes everyday Dasein, and ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*), in which being with one another turns into being against one another in the world [18] (p. 175). Curiosity is characterized here by distraction (*Zerstreuung*), by knowing merely in order to have known, by not-staying (*Unverweilen*), in the sense of constantly chasing after what is new, and by

never dwelling anywhere (*Aufenthaltlosigkeit*), as being everywhere and nowhere, that is, by a constant uprootedness [18] (pp. 172–173; English translation: [25], pp. 159–162).

Although *Being and Time* does not explicitly establish a connection between science and curiosity, I have already noted such a connection in the Natorp Report, and it can also be found in *The Concept of Time (Der Begriff der Zeit)* from 1925 [24]. Heidegger first explains why Dasein, in curiosity, escapes (*Flucht*) from itself, since it understands itself from out of the world [24] (p. 38). He then turns to investigative looking. In this sense, research becomes a mode of being in the world. At this point, science is not yet criticized as such; rather, it is exposed to the danger of concealment through publicness and the dominance of the prevailing interpretation [24] (p. 38).

Only then does the actual danger arise: what has been disclosed is fixed in rigid concepts and universal validities, thereby producing a lack of need to question back into the original contexts of Being [24] (p. 39). This already points to the motif of a lack of mindfulness toward origin.

This connection between curiosity, science, and the loss of mindfulness is important here because it prepares the distinction between curiosity and *thaumazein*, through which Heidegger positions himself against Husserl's connection between *thaumazein* and curiosity. In his Vienna Lecture of 1935, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity" (*Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums und die Philosophie*), Husserl, when discussing the theoretical attitude, states that *thaumazein* is a modification of curiosity. At the same time, he emphasizes that this is not a habitual vice, but rather an interest in life or a "playful looking around" that has its original place in natural life [26] (pp. 331–332).

This reference to Husserl is important not only in the broader context of the two different approaches of the fathers of phenomenology, but also for the following reason. Curiosity has its place in natural life, and *thaumazein*, which then leads to *theoria*, is a modification of it [26] (p. 331). Heidegger, by contrast, states in *Being and Time* that curiosity has nothing to do with *thaumazein*. He grounds this in an essential characteristic of curiosity, namely its not-staying, which cannot be identified with the "admiring contemplation" of *thaumazein*. Curiosity seeks what is new; it is restless and agitated, and it stands opposed to the leisure (*Muße*) of reflective staying. In this way, one becomes distracted and unsettled, everywhere and nowhere. The difference between *thaumazein* and curiosity becomes even sharper when Heidegger understands *thaumazein* as wonder that enters into not understanding (*Nichtverstehen*), whereas curiosity, by contrast, is a form of knowing merely in order to have known [18] (p. 172; English translation: [25], p. 161).

In addition to this distinction between *thaumazein* and curiosity taken from *Being and Time*, I will attempt to explain the movement between curiosity and *thaumazein* through the aspect of withdrawal (*Entzug*). Withdrawal is important because it makes it possible to conceptually disclose the triad of curiosity, wonder, and terror. Since withdrawal enters Heidegger's thinking only with the turn from fundamental ontology to the history of Being, it should be noted that this is an interpretive move rather than an explicit Heideggerian claim.

First, some clarification of withdrawal is necessary. In *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45), Heidegger expresses the basic idea of withdrawal by saying that Beyng does not simply conceal itself, but withdraws and conceals itself [3] (p. 210; English translation: [2], p. 178). This is important because it shows that Beyng cannot be definitively brought into unconcealment. Klaus Held describes this aspect as the self-withdrawal of withdrawal [27] (p. 149).

The question of the concealment of withdrawal then leads to the question of unconcealment, which, in Heidegger, must be thought in the context of truth. This connection between concealment, unconcealment, and withdrawal can be drawn from "On the Essence of Truth" (*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*) [28], the text of the turn (*Kehre*)⁶ in which the transition

from fundamental ontology to the question of the history of Being first takes place. In the sixth section of this text, Heidegger uncovers a deeper concealment of beings as a whole, the genuine untruth, which is “older” than unconcealment (*aletheia*) [28] (p. 193). Unconcealment, in turn, grounds the possibility of truth as correspondence (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*) [28] (p. 181). Although withdrawal is not yet explicitly named here, it is already strongly present in thought through the connection between concealment and non-essence (*Unwesen*) [28] (p. 194). In the “Letter on Humanism” (*Brief über den Humanismus*), Heidegger explicitly emphasizes that this is not a change of standpoint, but a thinking within the basic experience of the forgetfulness of Being. In the 1949 marginal note, he then connects this experience with concealment and withdrawal [29] (p. 328). This clarification that no change of standpoint is involved supports the interpretive move made here.

Also important for this reading is the historical character of withdrawal. This historical character can be understood from the context of *The Principle of Reason* (*Der Satz vom Grund*) [30]. In this Freiburg lecture course from the winter semester 1955/56, Heidegger explicitly connects withdrawal with destiny and history. More specifically, the objectness of objects is grasped as a destiny (*Geschick*) of Being, while Being, in its essence as Being, precisely withdraws. This determines a new epoch of withdrawal and characterizes the innermost essence of the age that we call modernity [30] (pp. 99–100).

Equally relevant for this reading of theoretical curiosity is the connection Heidegger draws between withdrawal and science. In the lecture course *What Is Called Thinking?* (*Was heißt Denken?*) from the winter semester 1951/52, Heidegger states, in a deliberately provocative sense, that science does not think [31] (p. 9). What he means, of course, is that what is to be thought turns away from human beings. What withdraws can concern human beings more essentially than everything present that affects and encounters them [31] (pp. 10–11).

Now, how can such withdrawal already appear in the early Heidegger’s critique of curiosity? My thesis is that curiosity blocks withdrawal. It is true that Heidegger does not yet think what one falls away from, or what one forgets, as withdrawal during this period. Nevertheless, the structure is similar. First, Heidegger chooses as the motto for his lecture *Augustine and Neoplatonism* the sentence: “*Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam*” (“a curious kind of people, eager to know the life of others, but lazy to correct their own”) (*Confessiones* X, 3, 3) [17] (p. 158). What is criticized in such curiosity is the already mentioned escape, in curiosity, into the world.

The intended performance (*Vollzug*) of making facticity questionable must not, as Heidegger already emphasizes in the Natorp Report, be understood as an escape from the world (*Weltflucht*) in a morally negative sense. From my perspective, the reason for this already has the character of withdrawal. The escape from the world (*Weltflucht*) does not intend life in its existential character, but rather attempts to construct a new reassuring world [21] (p. 26). In his critique of falling into the world, Heidegger does not point toward a new, better, perhaps more truthful world. Already here, truth is not understood in this sense, but rather as something that cannot be transformed into a new available world and therefore, from the reading proposed here, already bears a structural relation to withdrawal.

Second, it has already been shown how curiosity originally develops out of concerned engagement, how the “in order to” is modified into the “as what,” and how significance is modified into mere looking. Yet what is specific to this modification of circumspection (*Umsicht*) is that curiosity does not remain with what is familiar. This is connected with the craving for what is new (*Neu-gier*) and with what can already be found in Augustine regarding the different functions of the senses, a distinction that Heidegger also takes up in his interpretation: the difference between *in carnem* and *per carnem* [17] (pp. 222–223). Drawing on 1 John 2:15–17, Augustine treats three forms of sinful belonging to the world:

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride (*superbia*). Whereas *concupiscentia carnis* concerns a disordering of *frui* and *uti*, *concupiscentia oculorum* does not intend only enjoyment, but also its opposite. Augustine speaks here, for example, of corpses that one wants to look at, although they bring no enjoyment (*Confessiones* X, 35, 55) [16] (p. 538). Since seeing is primary for curiosity, curiosity wants to make everything accessible in principle [17] (p. 224). It cannot remain with what is familiar.

This is the problem from the perspective of withdrawal, because withdrawal precisely cannot be made accessible; it withdraws, as has been shown, from every access. What seems primary here is the lack of endurance. In at least the three texts considered here, *Being and Time* [18] (p. 172; English translation: [25], p. 161), *The Concept of Time* [24] (p. 37), and *Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time* (GA 20) [32] (p. 382), Heidegger first emphasizes not-staying (*Unverweilen*). Distraction (*Zerstreuung*) and never dwelling anywhere (*Aufenthaltlosigkeit*) are then derived from this basic feature.

In the last of these texts, *Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger determines curiosity by its tendency to jump from one thing to another [32] (p. 382). Curiosity appresents; it is a movement away from what is nearest and familiar [32] (p. 382), and the same idea appears in *Being and Time*, where curiosity seeks what is distant [18] (p. 172; English translation: [25], p. 161)⁷. Through curiosity, Dasein becomes entangled (*verstrickt*) in the world, from which all possible perspectives are then “picked up” (*aufgerafft*) [24] (p. 38). Just as Dasein, in curiosity, escapes from itself, so too lack of disposition (*Stimmungslosigkeit*) in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge” is captivating, changeable, and fallen [1] (pp. 782, 785). As such, it also blocks mindfulness understood as the “becoming clear” of a basic disposition [1] (pp. 781, 783). From the perspective of withdrawal, this means that lack of disposition remains concealed because curiosity cannot stay with what withdraws.

4. *Thaumazein* as the Basic Disposition of the First Beginning

As already mentioned, *Being and Time* contrasts this not-staying with the leisure of contemplative staying, or with the admiring contemplation of beings, *thaumazein*, in which wonder enters into not understanding [18] (p. 172; English translation: [25], p. 161). With this aspect, I approach Heidegger’s concept of *thaumazein* as the Greek basic disposition of the first beginning. I argue that Heidegger’s interpretation comes closer to the Platonic than to the Aristotelian concept of *thaumazein*. The main difference lies in the different function of *thaumazein*: whereas in Plato wonder is essentially a matter of intensification, in Aristotle it tends toward its own overcoming⁸.

This thesis is also supported by Heidegger’s discussion of the double meaning of the Greek word *arche* in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge,” which he emphasizes in footnote 4. For Heidegger, *arche* means both origin and rule [1] (p. 784). The first meaning comes closer to the Aristotelian sense, in which not knowing is to be overcome, as can be seen in the *Metaphysics* (983a10–15)⁹ [36]. Heidegger uses the expression “from where” (*Von wo aus*) for this first meaning of *arche*. The second level of meaning concerns that which rules through, that which holds sway (*walten*), also “over everything that comes” (*Über alles Kommende hin*)¹⁰. The argument that Heidegger, with his understanding of basic disposition, has this more Platonic level of wonder in mind is further supported by his analysis of the *Phaedrus* in *Nietzsche I*, in the chapter “The Will to Power as Art” [37] (English translation: [38]). I will turn to this analysis after briefly sketching the concept of wonder in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45).

Before turning to this analysis, however, it is necessary to return briefly to the context of the lecture. In “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge,” Heidegger himself refers to the connection with *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) [1] (p. 784). He also returns to this connection in “On the Essence of Language” (*Zum Wesen der Sprache*, “Die Sage,”

probably 1942) [39], where he distinguishes between the first beginning (*Anfang*) as the basic disposition still prior to the beginning (*Beginn*) of philosophy as metaphysics, and the disposition at the beginning of philosophy as metaphysics. According to Heidegger's remark, this distinction had not yet been made in the two earlier texts and what is discussed there is in fact already the end of the first beginning's disposition [39] (p. 14). At the same time, Heidegger expresses an assumption that is also relevant for my reading of "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge": terror (*Entsetzen*) could be similar to the first beginning's disposition, but for us, who have been corrupted (*verkommen*) by metaphysics, it may no longer be thinkable. What belongs to this disposition remains somehow silent (*Verschwiegenheit*) [39] (p. 14).

In "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge," however, this assumption is not yet expressed. Instead, it is only described as "hidden" [1] (p. 784). Here, *thaumazein* is determined as unconcealment (*aletheia*), whereby what is wondrous occurs in the sense that "beings are, and what they are." Heidegger describes this basic disposition as the first resonating (*Anklang*) of the essence of Beyng [1] (p. 784). In this sense, wonder, as the holding sway (*walten*) of Beyng, transposes human beings into such unconcealment as the open, which first makes possible the space (*Spielraum*) in which beings can be encountered, including the encounter proper to knowledge. However, and this is the important movement that Heidegger indicates in this lecture, Beyng holds sway only insofar as the basic disposition attunes (*stimmt*). If, however, the basic disposition changes through falling and disturbance into indeterminacy, then Being disappears [1] (p. 785). Yet beings are still governed by Beyng, and the task of mindfulness then consists of remembering Beyng. This, however, can no longer take place through wonder, but only through the more originary terror (*Entsetzen*) [1] (p. 786). The question of why the basic disposition of wonder no longer attunes is not treated in the lecture itself. In order to explain this question, it is necessary to turn to *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) [2], and only then to address terror (*Entsetzen*).

In what follows, I do not claim to offer an exhaustive analysis of Heidegger's concept of wonder. I will focus instead on two questions: first, the relation between curiosity and wonder in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45) [2], and second, the question of why the initial basic disposition can no longer attune. To address these questions, the context of Heidegger's analysis of wonder must briefly be recalled.

This takes place, first, through the external differentiation of wonder from the phenomena of wondering (*Sichwundern*) [3] (pp. 157–158; English translation: [2], pp. 136–137), admiration (*Bewundern*) [3] (pp. 163–164; English translation: [2], pp. 142–143), and marveling (*Bestaunen*) [3] (p. 165; English translation: [2], p. 143). By translating *thaumazein* as wonder (*Erstaunen*), Heidegger attempts to distinguish wonder from other dispositions that may appear synonymous to us. Heidegger sees the main difference in the fact that all three phenomena focus on the unusual (*das Ungewöhnliche*) and are therefore a turning away from the usual (*das Gewöhnliche*) [3] (p. 166). Wonder, by contrast, makes what is most usual, that is, everything, into what is most unusual. What is most wondrous is therefore beings as beings, beings as a whole, that they are and what they are [3] (pp. 168–169). Heidegger then unfolds this main idea in thirteen theses on wonder. I will not offer a detailed analysis of these theses here¹¹.

Instead, I will focus on the thirteenth thesis [3] (pp. 171–172; English translation: [2], pp. 148–149), since it takes up the critique of curiosity developed above and at the same time deepens it. I have interpreted curiosity as blocking withdrawal through its constitutive aspect of not-staying (*Unverweilen*). In the thirteenth thesis on wonder, Heidegger addresses precisely this aspect by speaking of a sustaining (*Aushalten*) within the basic disposition, which he contrasts with "rash" curiosity (*hastige Neugier*). For Heidegger, the

pure acknowledgment of the unusualness of the usual does not mean that the “urge to explain” (*Sucht des Erklärenwollens*) becomes the measure of this experience. Curiosity is described here as intrusive (*zudringlich*), even overreaching, because it does not sustain the pressure of what reveals itself and does not withstand the unexplainable: “tolerating and sustaining of the unexplainable as such, despite being overwhelmed by the pressure of what reveals itself” [2] (pp. 148–149). Curiosity therefore cannot limit itself in seeing.

Here, too, curiosity appears as that which cannot stay with the unexplainable, that is, as that which cannot sustain withdrawal and therefore blocks withdrawal as the unexplainable. At the same time, it becomes clear that wonder is determined precisely by this sustaining of the unexplainable, by the fact that beings are, and that it therefore contains this moment of withdrawal. What, then, is the difference between wonder (*Erstaunen*) and terror (*Entsetzen*)? Before turning to this question on the basis of Heidegger’s analysis of the *Phaedrus*, the important question of the non-repeatability of *thaumazein* must first be discussed.

How, then, does Heidegger justify the fact that the basic disposition of wonder no longer attunes? The starting point should be the difference between wonder and terror (*Entsetzen*). Wonder thinks beings as *physis* and *aletheia*, whereas terror is thought as the basic disposition of the abandonment of Being, as can be seen in *Mindfulness* (*Besinnung*) from 1938/39 [10] (p. 236). The difference consists of the fact that one does not merely sustain unconcealment, but questions it, questions its ground into non-essence (*Unwesen*), to return here to “On the Essence of Truth.” This means, at the same time, seeing the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) and having the disposition of shock (*Erschrecken*) within it. That Heidegger is working here with the problem of truth is also shown by the fact that he sees one reason for the impossibility of the basic disposition of the first beginning in the transformation of truth into correctness (*Richtigkeit*) [3] (p. 184). This transformation, as already shown in the reading of “On the Essence of Truth,” is derived from *aletheia*. In *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45), the same connection is made in relation to basic disposition.

This brings us to the actual point: the beginning necessarily unfolds in such a way that it gives up its own originality (*Ursprünglichkeit*). The danger of its destruction lies within the basic disposition itself [3] (pp. 180–181; English translation: [2], pp. 155–156). Heidegger sees the transformation of *aletheia* into *homoiosis in techne*, understood as a way of knowing beings in their unconcealment as *physis*, that is, as beings in their essence.

Techne is determined as a consequence of the preservation of *physis*, as a continuation of sustaining, which ultimately leads to a falling away from the beginning [3] (pp. 179–180; English translation: [2], pp. 154–155). Heidegger gives as the reason for this that beings are grasped as what they show themselves to be, in their outward look, already in Plato as *eidos* and *idea*. Thus Heidegger interprets Plato’s *techne* as a proceeding against *physis*, but in such a way that beings come to appearance in their outward look [3] (p. 179; English translation: [2], p. 155). This is then also the ground on which the later craving to know and to calculate develops, that is, what could be called curiosity [3] (p. 180; English translation: [2], p. 155)¹².

But what does Heidegger mean when he says that, already in the sustaining of wonder, that beings are, and in the grasping (*Fassen*) of *physis* as it shows itself, in its outward look through *techne*, there lies the danger of its disturbance? Heidegger’s interpretation of beauty in the *Phaedrus* helps to answer this question. In *Nietzsche I*, in the chapter “The Will to Power as Art,” Heidegger interprets the *Phaedrus*, which he calls the most perfect of Plato’s dialogues, in such a way that what is essential is precisely what is least perceptible, most remote [37] (p. 227; English translation: [38], p. 195). Heidegger refers here to the Platonic essences, such as justice or temperance, which withdraw from immediate perception.

Only beauty has a special role. Heidegger interprets Plato's phrase *ekphanestaton einai kai erasimotaton* (250d) [41] hermeneutically as meaning that beauty is at once the most radiant (*Hervorscheinendeste*; *ekphanestaton*) and the most enchanting (*Entrückendste*; *erasimotaton*). In my reading, Heidegger's translation of Plato's phrase *ekphanestaton einai kai erasimotaton* (250d) points to a double movement. As *ekphanestaton*, beauty is that which shines forth most, that which radiates, shows itself, and unconceals. At the same time, as *erasimotaton*, it is that which most enraptures or carries away (*entrückt*), that which is most lovable and withdraws precisely through its desirability. Beauty captivates or "enchants" (*berückt*) here in the most immediate way and thereby transposes us into a view upon Being [37] (p. 227; English translation: [38], p. 196).

In this context, it is important to recall that the *Phaedrus* develops a second Platonic concept of wonder, *ekplexis*, precisely in connection with beauty. It can be seen that, already in Plato as interpreted by Heidegger, this double moment is present: beauty does not merely show itself, but at the same time enraptures and withdraws, at least according to the reading proposed here. It is therefore not the case that wonder lacks the moment of withdrawal, nor is it the case that it lacks sustaining, since *techne* precisely wants to grasp beings. Nevertheless, a difference can be identified here. In his notes "On the Overcoming of Aesthetics: On 'The Origin of the Work of Art'" (*Zur Überwindung der Aesthetik: Zu 'Ursprung des Kunstwerks'*), Heidegger's account of the "error" can be found. Plato does indeed grasp beauty as enrapturing and captivating (*Entrückend-Berückende*), but insofar as he grasps it as an idea and does not ground *aletheia*, the beautiful becomes merely captivating [42] (p. 6).

In the reading proposed here, the notion of "not grounding" is important, since, as can be seen from "On the Essence of Truth," this "not grounding" can lead into genuine untruth, insofar as the concealment of *aletheia* withholds unconcealment [28] (p. 193). In summary, it can therefore be interpreted as follows: because *aletheia* remains unquestioned [3] (p. 181; English translation: [2], p. 156), and because Being unfolds into self-evidence, the enrapturing and withdrawing moment in Being is forgotten. This forgetfulness of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*) is then closely connected with the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*), which calls forth a new basic disposition of remembrance of Being, namely terror (*Entsetzen*) [1] (p. 786).

In *Basic Questions of Philosophy* (GA 45), Heidegger connects this transition from the basic disposition of wonder to the basic disposition of shock, in a certain sense, through the motif of wonder in the *Phaedrus*. Wonder has a disturbing aspect in the *Phaedrus*: when encountering the divine face, Plato says that the lover "shivers" (*ephrixē*, 251a). In this sense, Heidegger also writes that wonder contains within itself a kind of shock (*Erschrecken*)¹³, while shock, in turn, contains within itself self-composure and calm steadfastness in the sense of a new wonder [3] (p. 197; English translation: [2], p. 169)¹⁴.

5. Terror (*Entsetzen*): Shock (*Erschrecken*), Restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), and Diffidence (*Scheu*)

As already indicated, in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* the abandonment of Being is connected with the basic disposition of shock (*Erschrecken*), whereas in "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge" Heidegger speaks of terror (*Entsetzen*). This question can be clarified in two steps. First, Heidegger's use of *Entsetzen* must be situated in relation to *Erschrecken*. Second, it must be shown that *Entsetzen* nevertheless has an advantage over *Erschrecken*: on the one hand, it has a broader semantic range, since it can be read in relation not only to shock, but also to restraint (*Verhaltenheit*) and diffidence (*Scheu*); on the other hand, it semantically indicates the structure of withdrawal.

The abandonment of Being is an important aspect both in *Contributions to Philosophy* and in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge,” and in both cases it is connected with the basic disposition of the other beginning. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, however, the abandonment of Being is often connected with shock (*Erschrecken*) [5] (p. 15), whereas in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge” it is connected only with terror (*Entsetzen*) [1] (p. 786). In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger often speaks of shock in relation to the basic disposition, and *Basic Questions of Philosophy* also determines shock as the basic disposition that attunes with withdrawal and the other beginning. Why, then, does Heidegger not use this terminology consistently, and why is the basic disposition in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge” determined through the expression *Entsetzen*? Or, more sharply: is this merely an equivalent term, or does it have a deeper dimension?

First, it must be emphasized that *Entsetzen* appears not only in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge.” It is also characterized as a basic disposition of the other beginning in the concluding section on “Beyng” (*Das Seyn*) in *Contributions to Philosophy* [5] (p. 484), and it is discussed in “Resonating” (*Der Anklang*) in the context of knowledge [5] (p. 158)¹⁵. If one looks at Heidegger’s corpus in the *Gesamtausgabe*, it becomes clear that Heidegger often thinks shock (*Erschrecken*) together with terror (*Entsetzen*). Thus, for example, in *Basic Concepts* (*Grundbegriffe*) from the summer semester of 1941, Heidegger writes, in the context of Hegel’s identification of Being and nothing, that the shock before annihilation and the terror before devastation confirm that the nothing is [45] (p. 73). Or, if the nothing terrifies human beings and this nothing were the same as Being, then it would be Being that manifests itself as terrifying (*Entsetzende*) and dreadful (*Schreckliche*) [45] (p. 74)¹⁶.

What is important here is that this semantic similarity between shock (*Erschrecken*) and terror (*Entsetzen*), not only in Heidegger but also in everyday German usage, does not mean that *Entsetzen* simply corresponds to the sudden and momentary character of shock. Rather, *Entsetzen* points to a broader context. Heidegger also indicates this in *Besinnung* from 1938/39, when he writes that *Ent-setzen* has nothing in common with the mere frightfulness of ordinary feeling [10] (p. 274).

However, *Entsetzen* has an even broader semantic range in German. Three levels can be distinguished: first, to fall into speechless (*fassungslos*), outraged astonishment (*empörtes Staunen*); second, to depose someone from office, that is, to remove someone from a position (*jemanden seines Amtes entsetzen*); third, in the military sense, to relieve someone or something from surrounding troops or from a siege (*etwas oder jemanden entsetzen*) [47]¹⁷.

That Heidegger does not think only of the first meaning when using this term can be shown by a decisive passage on *Entsetzen* in *Contributions to Philosophy* [5] (pp. 481–484). In connection with the unusualness of Beyng, which had already played an important role for wonder in its distinction from curiosity in *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger speaks of *ent-setzen* with a hyphen as the freeing of human beings from the siege (*Belagerung*) of beings, that is, in the military sense of the third meaning. This is connected with the important remark that Beyng itself must set us (*heraus-setzen*) out of beings. The remark points to a movement in the sense of a liberation, or of a stepping out of beings, which makes it possible for human beings to go beyond themselves (*hinausschaffen*) [5] (p. 482). Such a movement is close to what Heidegger in the “Preview” (*Vorblick*) of *Contributions to Philosophy* calls *Ver-rückung* (de-rangement): the human being, fixed within his previous determinability (*Bestimmbarkeit*), must first be set out or de-ranged, and this de-rangement comes over him rather than being produced by him [5] (pp. 25–26). At this point, the proximity to withdrawal becomes visible. For, as Heidegger emphasizes, this *Ent-setzung* occurs only out of Beyng itself. Since it is precisely supposed to be a stepping out from the siege of beings, it can occur only out of Beyng. If this is the case, however, then, according to Heidegger, this ap-proprietation (*Er-eignung*) must also withdraw¹⁸. The key sentence here

is Heidegger's formulation: "Ent-setzung und Entzug sind des Seyns als Ereignisses" [5] (p. 482; English translation: "Un-settling and withdrawing are integral to being as the event" [4] (p. 379)). That these two moments, setting out (*Ent-setzen* as *Heraus-setzen*) and withdrawal (*Entzug*), must be distinguished from the moment of shock is also shown by the text itself. Shortly afterward, Heidegger writes *Entsetzen* again without a hyphen in the context of the nothing as a basic disposition, thereby using it in the sense of the first meaning.

My thesis is that Heidegger's use of the expression *Entsetzen* can be read as implying a structural connection between shock, restraint, and diffidence. This thesis is supported by the fact that the moments of *Entsetzen* just distinguished in the concluding section on Being in *Contributions to Philosophy* can also be related to the discussion of the central basic disposition (*Grundstimmung*) of restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), and of the guiding dispositions (*Leitstimmungen*) that unfold from it, shock (*Erschrecken*) and diffidence (*Scheu*), in the "Preview" (*Vorblick*) [5] (pp. 14–16; English translation: [4], pp. 14–15). Restraint remains systematically central, while *Entsetzen* makes visible a specific structure of movement.

The guiding disposition of shock (*Erschrecken*) is understood as being taken aback (*Zurückfahren*) before the fact that beings are. In this sense, it is the disposition of the fact that Being has withdrawn. Shock primarily indicates the aspect of being set out. It is a being taken aback before beings, a stepping out of beings.

With restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), another aspect is then indicated, namely the aspect of the middle, which Heidegger also understands as a turning toward (*Zukehr*), but without eliminating the previous turning back¹⁹.

Restraint (*Verhaltenheit*) is also characterized as readiness for refusal (*Verweigerung*). This turning toward can be understood as the aspect of liberation, since it is not a helpless abandonment of the will, but seeks to preserve the relation to the self-concealing of Being. This leads to the final aspect, namely diffidence (*Scheu*). Diffidence is not to be equated with shyness; rather, it means something like letting Being as event be in its essence. In this sense, it corresponds to the aspect of what occurs out of Being itself. It is a remaining near to what is most distant²⁰.

6. Conclusions

The explanation of the threefold structure of terror (*Entsetzen*) leads back to the lecture "On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge." It culminates in the determination of the other beginning as terror over the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) [1] (p. 786). On the basis of the interpretation developed here, it is possible not only to understand this connection more clearly, but also to grasp more precisely the difference from the basic disposition of the first beginning, *thaumazein*, and at the same time to distinguish it from its disturbance in lack of disposition.

The terror (*Entsetzen*) of the abandonment of Being should therefore not be understood in a merely affective sense, as the disappearance of the theme of Being, metaphysics, from philosophy and knowledge. Rather, through the clarified connection with withdrawal, it must be understood in terms of the history of Being.

The terror of the abandonment of Being means three things. First, it means shock before the fact that beings are, and yet that Being itself withdraws from them. Second, it means restraint in the sense not only of turning back, but also of turning toward. Third, in this turning toward, it means preserving Being as diffidence, despite its withdrawal.

The basic disposition of the first beginning does indeed sustain unconcealment, but it does not question it, does not question its ground into non-essence (*Unwesen*). It already contains the character of withdrawal, as has been shown in Plato's enrapturing and captivating beauty (*Entrückend-Berückende*). Yet in the grasping (*Fassen*) of *physis* as it shows

itself, in its outward look through *techne*, there lies the danger of its disturbance. This disturbance, this forgetting of withdrawal, is characterized in “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge” as lack of disposition (*Stimmungslosigkeit*), which has been examined above through Heidegger’s critique of curiosity. Paradoxically, it is precisely “rash curiosity” (*hastige Neugier*), as that which blocks withdrawal, that makes the preservation of the essence of Being impossible. Curiosity wants to make everything accessible; above all, it is not-staying (*Unverweilen*).

With this reading, however, certain limits also become visible. Above all, withdrawal is an interpretive tool. Heidegger does think withdrawal in connection with terror (*Entsetzen*), but especially in the case of curiosity, the interpretation is retrospective. At the same time, the interpretation of withdrawal and of the triad developed here is only one possible reading of “On the Basic Disposition of Knowledge.” The text also leaves room for other interpretations. It could, for example, be connected with earlier concepts such as anxiety and profound boredom, or later ones such as letting be (*Gelassenheit*).

At the end, it is also necessary briefly to name the limits of Heidegger’s position. This concerns especially the claim, discussed above, that wonder can no longer be repeated. Klaus Held, for example, argues against this claim in “Grundbestimmung und Zeitkritik bei Heidegger.” If the basic disposition of the other beginning as terror (*Entsetzen*) is not to become paralyzing, then the continued possibility of a basic disposition of being-able-to-begin (*Anfangenkönnen*) must be presupposed. Held sees this possibility in connecting genuine wonder (*das eigentliche Staunen*) with diffidence (*Scheu*), thereby attuning wonder to withdrawal as withdrawal [52] (p. 49).

Building on Held’s criticism, a further question arises here from Heidegger’s own analysis. As I have shown, Heidegger’s reading of the *Phaedrus* shows that wonder already contains a moment of withdrawal: beauty shows itself and withdraws at the same time, as *ekphanestaton* and *erasimotaton*. Moreover, as Heidegger shows in *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, wonder itself contains a moment of shock. The structural connection between basic disposition and withdrawal therefore does not first appear in terror, but is already at work in wonder.

This raises the critical question of whether the movement from wonder to terror is philosophically necessary, or whether it follows primarily from Heidegger’s being-historical interpretation. If wonder already contains a relation to withdrawal, then the thesis of the non-repeatability of wonder must be critically questioned not only by following Held, but also on the basis of Heidegger’s own analysis of the *Phaedrus* and of the relation between wonder and shock in *Basic Questions of Philosophy*.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

- ¹ I translate *Entsetzen* as “terror” in keeping with the translations of related passages in *Being and Time* by Macquarrie/Robinson and Stambaugh. While *Entsetzen* in *Being and Time* still operates within a fundamental-ontological framework, the term is here used in its being-historical sense, as developed in the *Contributions to Philosophy* and related texts, where it designates the basic disposition of the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*). The English translations of *Contributions* render the term differently—Emad/Maly as “freeing dismay” and Rojcewicz/Vallega-Neu as “unsettlement”—and each captures a distinct

semantic dimension of the German term. The broader semantic range of *Entsetzen*, including its senses of displacement and freeing, will be discussed in the final part of the paper.

A related triad of curiosity, wonder, and terror is discussed by Stone, especially in connection with Heidegger's critique of curiosity. The present paper, however, develops this relation differently by reading the triad through the concept of withdrawal [14].

For a detailed discussion of Book X of Augustine's *Confessions* in the context of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology of factual life, see von Herrmann [19].

The so-called Natorp Report refers to Heidegger's 1922 text *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation* (*Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation*). Gadamer describes this text as "the true inspiration" through which, mediated by Paul Natorp, he was led to Heidegger's thinking in 1922 [22] (p. 78).

On curiosity as detached seeing, see Käufer [23] (p. 194).

Here I use the term "turn" in Heidegger's own sense, as indicated in the "Letter on Humanism" (*Brief über den Humanismus*) [29] (p. 328).

This places Heidegger's critique of curiosity within an older tradition of criticizing curiosity as a tension between what is near and what is distant, beginning with the anecdote of Thales falling into the well in Plato's *Theaetetus* (174a–174b) [33]. Hans Blumenberg, for example, interprets this anecdote in *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* as a conflict between "the distant" and "the nearby" [34] (p. 246).

This difference between the Platonic and Aristotelian function of wonder is worked out in detail by Matuschek [35] (pp. 8–23).

For Aristotle, wonder leads toward its own overcoming in knowledge: "The acquisition of this knowledge, however, must in a sense result in something which is the reverse of the outlook with which we first approached the inquiry" (*Metaphysics* 983a10–15) [36].

Heidegger himself does not explicitly distinguish the Platonic and Aristotelian functions of *thaumazein* in this way. In his discussion of Aristotle's passage on *thaumazein* in the *Metaphysics* (982b12), he translates *arche* as "dominating origin" (*beherrschender Ausgang*), thereby holding together both meanings [1] (p. 784). The distinction proposed here is therefore an interpretive accentuation.

For a detailed analysis of Heidegger's thirteen theses on wonder in *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, see Stone [14] (pp. 212–216).

For a broader discussion of Heidegger's account of curiosity and wonder, the closure of metaphysics, and the transition toward shock, restraint, and diffidence, see Rubenstein, *Strange Wonder: The Closure of Metaphysics and the Opening of Awe* [40] (pp. 25–60, especially pp. 56–59).

Although the English translation of *Basic Questions of Philosophy* renders *Erschrecken* as "terror," I use "shock" here in order to distinguish it from *Entsetzen*, which is translated in this paper as "terror" [2] (p. 171).

A similar connection between wonder and terror (*Entsetzen*) can also be found in the *Black Notebooks*, where Heidegger writes: "Not ist erst in der Grundstimmung des erstaunenden Ent-setzens zu erdenken" [43] (p. 245).

In the secondary literature, the relation between shock (*Erschrecken*), restraint (*Verhaltenheit*), diffidence (*Scheu*), and intimation (*Erahnung*) is often discussed in terms of Heidegger's distinction between basic dispositions (*Grundstimmungen*) and guiding dispositions (*Leitstimmungen*). Gander, for example, distinguishes shock, diffidence, and intimation as guiding dispositions (*Leitstimmungen*), while restraint is the basic disposition (*Grundstimmung*) as the middle between shock and diffidence, following Heidegger's own distinction [5] (pp. 107, 395). Gander also notes, however, that Heidegger does not maintain this distinction consistently [44] (p. 23).

Another example is Heidegger's use of the term in the context of the atomic bomb in the *Bremen Lectures* (GA 79) from 1949. There Heidegger writes: "Das Entsetzende ist Jenes, das alles, was ist, aus seinem vormaligen Wesen heraussetzt. Was ist dieses Entsetzende? Es zeigt und verbirgt sich in der Weise, wie alles anwest, daß nämlich trotz allem Überwinden der Entfernungen die Nähe dessen, was ist, ausbleibt" [46] (p. 4).

The different semantic levels of the term *Entsetzen* are also reflected in its English translations. Macquarrie and Robinson [48], as well as Stambaugh [25], render *Entsetzen* in their translations of *Being and Time* as "terror", whereas Emad/Maly [49] and Rojcewicz/Vallega-Neu [4], in their respective translations of *Contributions to Philosophy*, choose "freeing dismay" and "unsettlement".

This logic of withdrawal through basic disposition is also considered by Klaus Held in *Die Geburt der Philosophie bei den Griechen*. Held points to the passive experience (*pathos*) of wonder as an undergoing (*Er-leidnis*) in the de-self-evidencing of the world, that is, in the turn from the natural attitude to the philosophical attitude. The point is that, since de-self-evidencing (*Entselbstverständlichung*) occurs within the natural attitude, it cannot arise from the natural attitude itself. It must come from what withdraws and is therefore experienced as an undergoing. See Held [50] (p. 145).

Von Herrmann interprets *Verhaltenheit* in his commentary on *Contributions to Philosophy* as a thinking in transition, in which one pauses before the occurrence (*Widerfahren*) of the truth of Being that refuses itself (*die sich verweigernde Wahrheit*). See von Herrmann [51] (p. 109).

- ²⁰ Held offers a related interpretation of *Scheu* in the context of withdrawal. In “Phenomenology of the Crisis and Digitalisation,” he connects the basic disposition of *Scheu* with respect and with the experience of things as more than merely available in their immediate function. See Held [27] (p. 149).

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