

## **On Heidegger's Theory of Space: A Critique of Dreyfus**

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### **Abstract**

In a recent paper on Heidegger, Frederick Olafson attacks Hubert Dreyfus for prioritizing our “social” existence (under the notion of *das Man*) over the individual. In a reply, Taylor Carman, defending Dreyfus, criticizes Olafson for his “subjectivist” notion of Dasein. This paper pursues the implication of this disagreement in the context of Heidegger’s theory of space. Dreyfus’ discussion of Heideggerian spatiality nicely displays the tension between the “public” vs. “individual” domains of being, and consistent with his overall approach, Dreyfus claims that public space should be prioritized. Dreyfus concludes, however, that Heidegger is confused and prioritizes individual space. This paper argues that the categories of “public” and “individual” are inappropriate for analyzing Heidegger’s sense of the shared and personal characters of space. Heidegger’s “indexical” theory of space in fact saves both of these domains without raising the question of priority and without presupposing a “subjectivist” Dasein. On this reading, Olafson’s “individualized” account of *presence* does not commit him to subjectivism. The confusion Dreyfus attributes to Heidegger is cleared up by an indexical account of spatiality in Heidegger’s text.

## On Heidegger's Theory of Space: A Critique of Dreyfus

### 1. Introduction

In a recent exchange Frederick Olafson and Taylor Carman have presented two distinct interpretations of early Heidegger.<sup>1</sup> As a member of the "Dreyfus School" of Heideggerian scholarship, Carman casts the disagreement in terms of whether Heidegger prioritizes the "public" mode of social existence--explained under the notion of *das Man*--or the "individual" mode of existence. As Carman puts it,

Whereas, according to Dreyfus, *das Man* is 'the source of significance and intelligibility', so that Dasein's everyday understanding is in effect defined by its participation in shared social practices, Olafson denies that social norms figure in Heidegger's account of practical competence at all and insists instead that, far from amounting to a constitutive element in our understanding of being, '*das Man* is at bottom a deformation of *Mitsein*'. (Carman 204)

Olafson is criticized for his "over-individualized, indeed subjectivist conception of Dasein" (Carman 205).

The alleged tension between the "public" and "individual" domains of existence is nicely displayed in Dreyfus' discussion of Heidegger's theory of space in Chapter 7 of *Being-in-the-World*. Consistent with the overall approach of the book, Dreyfus wants to prioritize "public space" over "individual space," although, he claims, Heidegger does the opposite.

By analyzing Dreyfus' discussion of Heidegger's theory of space, I hope to show that the categories of "public" and "individual" are inappropriate for capturing Heidegger's sense of what belongs to the shared and personal domains of existence. It is possible to save both of these domains without raising the question of priority and without presupposing an "over-individualized" or "subjectivist" Dasein. I will argue that the way Dasein is in the world maintains "equiprimordially" the space shared with others *and* the personal sense of spatiality. On this reading, Olafson's "individualist" account need not commit him to a "subjective" conception of Dasein.

### 2. Heidegger's Theory of Space

Heidegger's theory of space has received little attention, even though it is one of the central components of Being-in-the-world. This is largely due to early Heidegger's own perception of the secondary status of space in comparison to time. Following Heidegger, commentators have generally accepted the lesser significance of space, and as a result, there is a shortage of discussion on this rich topic. Dreyfus' account is a welcome exception to the scarcity of the literature. He argues however that Heidegger's discussion of spatiality is "fundamentally confused," and he proposes an alternative which would make Heidegger's theory more consistent. What in fact does Heidegger have to say about space?

Heidegger's theory of space offers an alternative to the three traditional theories--the absolute theory, the relational theory, and the Kantian theory. Heidegger rejects the

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<sup>1</sup> See Frederick Olafson, "Heidegger *a la* Wittgenstein or 'Coping' with Professor Dreyfus," *Inquiry* 37 (1994) pp. 45-64, and Taylor Carman, "On Being Social: A Reply to Olafson," *Inquiry* 37 (1994) pp. 203-223).

absolute theory outright, but his position has affinities to both the other theories. It may be useful therefore to begin by briefly situating Heideggerian spatiality with respect to these traditional views.

The “Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence” (1715-1716) captures some of the debates concerning whether space is absolute (Newton/Clarke) or relational (Leibniz).<sup>2</sup> The absolute theory holds that space has a homogeneous structure of its own and exists independently of things. Absolute space serves as the ultimate framework for the positions and motions of objects and the relative space within it. A metaphor commonly used to describe this view of space is a “container” or “arena”; objects and events occur “in” space, but space itself is independent of them.

In contrast, a relationist would deny that space exists independently of objects. Space is no more than relations between objects or a property of objects.<sup>3</sup> There is no need to posit an absolute entity (space) above and beyond the various configurations of the bits of matter. In other words, there is no space if there are no objects. Despite their differences, however, both the absolute and relational theories assume that space has some kind of objective, physical reality.

In contrast to both these theories, Kant claims that space is “subjective”; it is an *a priori* feature of our intuition and not a feature of physical reality independent of the mind.<sup>4</sup> Space is the way in which we represent the things given to us in outer sense, i.e., it is the *condition* under which we can have coherent experiences of things outside us.<sup>5</sup> Kant asserts that it is “solely from the human standpoint that we can speak of space, of extended things, etc...If we depart from the subjective condition under which alone we can have outer intuition,...the representation of space stands for nothing whatsoever” (Kant, *CPR* A26, B42).

Heidegger thinks that all of these theories are grounded in the metaphysical dichotomy of subject and object. The traditional debates focus on whether the fundamental nature of space is objective or subjective, but both positions nevertheless share this dichotomy. Heidegger rejects this underlying assumption and seeks the condition for the dichotomy itself, a condition under which we can have conceptions of *both* objective and subjective space. That condition then constitutes a fourth position in the debate.

Following Kant, Heidegger recognizes the human character of space and its role as a condition of experiences. But unlike Kant, who defines space as an *a priori* feature of our *mind*, Heidegger attributes it to our active being and our practical involvements in the world. Heidegger goes on to investigate our ordinary spatial activities *without* imposing

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<sup>2</sup> See H.G. Alexander, ed. *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence* (New York: Manchester University Press and Barnes and Noble, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> In Leibniz’s words, space is “something merely relative” and it is an “order of coexistences” (Alexander 25).

<sup>4</sup> Kant tries to establish that space is a form of intuition and not a feature of things as they are in themselves, through his “incongruent counterparts” arguments. For these arguments, see Immanuel Kant, *Philosophy of Material Nature* (J. Ellington, ed., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant states, “Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us” (A26, B42). Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (N. Kemp Smith, trans. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965).

the subject-object framework and the associated language on the analysis. He analyzes the spatial aspects of our *prereflective activities* such as walking and reaching for things.<sup>6</sup> The sort of space that we are familiar with in this way, Heidegger argues, is what must ultimately be presupposed in our grasp of space, both subjective and objective. These latter conceptions of space are abstractions from the more primordial spatiality of action.

Heidegger distinguishes three different types of space: 1) world-space, 2) regions (*Gegend*), and 3) Dasein's spatiality which are divided into de-severance (*Ent-fernung*) and directionality (*Ausrichtung*).<sup>7</sup>

1) What Heidegger calls "world-space" is our common sense conception of space, generally understood as a "container" for objects. For instance, Heidegger states: "the bench is in the lecture-room, the lecture-room is in the university, the university is in the city, and so on, until we can say the bench is 'in world space'" (*BT* 79, 54). This idea reflects the assumptions of the absolute theory. The entities "in" world-space are thought to be independent of the space which contains them. However, Heidegger claims that this objectified space--world-space--is not what space fundamentally is; world-space is, in Heidegger's terminology, space conceived as *vorhanden* (present-at-hand). As such, it is founded on a more basic space-of-action.

2) The sort of space we deal with in our daily activity is "functional" or *zuhanden* (ready-to-hand), and Heidegger's term for it is "region." The places where we work and live--the office, the park, the kitchen, etc.--all have different regions which organize our activities and determine the locations of available "equipment." Regions differ from space viewed as a "container" in that regions are the "referential" system of *our* context of activities. This is to say that regions are essentially indexical. The indexical "here" does not identify a point A in a neutral, container-like space, but rather, our spatial activities determine a "here" with respect to the things we deal with and the way we move. Regions are inherently organized by activities which emanate from a center of action. Said another way, the perspective presupposed in world-space is a standpoint of an infinite observer, whereas the perspective in a region is a finite perspective of an acting agent. Heidegger wants to claim that referential functionality is an inherent feature of space itself, and not just a "human" characteristic *added* to a container-like space.

3) In our activity, how do *we* specifically stand with respect to functional space? We are not "in" space as things are, but we do exist in some spatially salient manner. What Heidegger is trying to capture is the difference between the nominal expression "we exist in space" and the adverbial expression, "we exist spatially." He wants to describe spatiality as a *mode of our existence*, rather than conceiving space as an independent entity.

Heidegger identifies two features of Dasein's spatiality--de-severance and directionality.<sup>8</sup> De-severance describes the way we determine ourselves by making things

<sup>6</sup> Heidegger's theory of space is a theory of "lived" space or "phenomenological" space. The example of "lived" space would be the sort of spatiality involved in one's use of the body. For a detailed analysis of phenomenological space, see Elisabeth Stroecker's *Investigations in Philosophy of Space* (A. Mickunas, trans. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987), pp. 13-170.

<sup>7</sup> A brief discussion of world-space occurs in *BT* 79, 54. The discussion of spatiality is in Division One, III, sections 22-24 (*BT* 134-148, 101-113). The page numbers in *Being and Time* (Robinson and Macquarrie, trans. New York: Harper, 1962) will appear in italics, and the German pagination follows unitalicized.

available to ourselves. In Heidegger's language, in making things available we "take in space" by "making the farness vanish" and by "bringing things close" (*BT* 139, 105). As I reach for the phone, it appears "available" and "close" in my reaching it. This process is also inherently "directional." The phone is always located in a certain direction from me, and its location dictates the direction toward which I should be facing, etc. Every de-severing is in this way aimed toward something or in a certain direction which is determined by our concern and by specific regions.

The point should be stressed, however, that Heidegger is not talking about a psychological feeling or "subjective" attitude in which we "take" something to be "close," even though it is located at an "objectively" measurable distance. Such a subjectivistic account presupposes objective space: It presupposes that two things, the thing and the self, are first given "in" some space, and the self judges the thing to be "near" from its subjective standpoint. Heidegger's point rather is that the entities revealed through de-severance just have the *being* of availableness and closeness. They do not exist first at an intersection of coordinates in the infinite continuum and then encounter us accidentally. Rather, from the beginning "Dasein is essentially de-severance--that is, it *is* spatial" (*BT* 143, 108).

De-severance, directionality, and regionality are three ways of describing the spatiality of a unified Being-in-the-world. These spatial modes of being are *equiprimordial*, that is, they are equally fundamental features of our existence as Being-in-the-world.<sup>9</sup> Regions "refer" to our activities since they are established by our ways of being and our activities. Our activities, in turn, are defined in terms of regions. Only *through* the region can our de-severance and directionality be established, since our objects of concern always appear in a certain context and place, in a certain direction. We always orient ourselves and organize our activities within regions which therefore must *already* be given to us.<sup>10</sup>

World-space, on the other hand, is *founded* on the spatiality of Being-in-the-world. It is through the nearness or farness of things as revealed in specific regions that we first become familiar with that which we (later) represent to ourselves as "space." It is because we act, going to places and reaching for things to use, that we can understand farness and

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<sup>8</sup> In Heidegger's earlier work *History of the Concept of Time* (T. Kiesel, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), de-severance (translated as "remotion") and directionality ("orientation") are discussed also as features of the "aroundness of the world" (*HCT* 225-227). Two years later in *Being and Time*, they belong to Dasein. But since Being-in-the-world is a unity, this shift should be considered a shift in emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> This equiprimordial unity is more explicitly stated in *HCT*; remotion (de-severance), region, and orientation (directionality) are the "three interconnected phenomena" which define the structure of the aroundness of the world as well as the spatiality of Dasein (*HCT* section 25). For more discussion on the equiprimordiality of regions and de-severance and also on the equiprimordiality of spatiality and temporality, see Arisaka, "Spatiality, Temporality, and the Problem of Foundation in *Being and Time*" (J. Caputo and L. Langsdorf, eds. *Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*, volume 21, New York: State University of New York Press, forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger expresses this interdependence in several ways: "If Dasein is, it already has, as directing and de-severing, its own discovered region" (*BT* 143, 108) or "every bringing-close has already taken in advance a direction towards a region out of which what is de-severed brings itself close" (*BT* 143, 108).

nearness, and on that basis develop a representation of world-space at all.<sup>11</sup> Note that the space-of-action describes the spatiality of the representer/actor *without* presupposing objective space. Heidegger must so describe it because he intends to show that regions and Dasein's spatiality are the condition for objective space.

In fact, it is because Heidegger must describe the space-of-action *without* presupposing objective space and the derived concept of a system of spatial coordinates that his discussion of space is so difficult and awkward. He must invent his own terminology for describing spatial relations, since he cannot use our usual linguistic expressions which presuppose objective space. For example, how can one talk about the "distance between you and me" without presupposing some sort of metric, i.e., without presupposing an objective access to the relation? Heidegger must redescribe our spatial notions such as "distance," "location," etc., from a standpoint within the spatial relation of self (Dasein) to the things dealt with.

In sum, Heidegger's theory rejects the absolute theory's claim that space is an independent entity. His theory, however, retains some elements from the relational theory. Though Heidegger would not reduce space to physical entities and their relations, there is a sense in which he treats space as coextensive with our daily actions, or what Heidegger calls the "care structure." De-severance, directionality and regionality just *are* the various ways in which Dasein exists as care, together with temporality. Spatiality describes Dasein's relational dealings with entities within the world, and there is no space "beyond" this spatiality of Being-in-the-world. Neither Dasein nor entities exist independently of each other "in" some empty space, but rather, Dasein and entities are *essentially* spatial.

The Kantian influence is also evident in Heidegger's claim that space is not objective but essentially contains references to the self. Kant had argued that the notions of "left" and "right" cannot be discerned unless we presuppose a self who is oriented with respect to the feeling of the body. Orientation is also an essential feature of the spatiality of Being-in-the-world; however, for Heidegger, orientation is not a matter of "feeling" but depends on practical actions.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Heidegger's theory adds a genuinely new dimension to the traditional theories, since it does not characterize space as either subjective or objective, and it includes our *actions* as its essential element.

One might object that the Heideggerian theory seems to be no more than a complicated way of talking about the subjective or inner experience of space. In other words, why isn't Heidegger's theory simply disguised psychology? It is impossible to respond fully to this objection here, for it implicitly challenges the framework of his whole theory. Rather than offering a general defense of Heidegger, let me indicate briefly the style of response characteristic of his thought.

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<sup>11</sup> Theoretical space, or "physical space" of the absolute theory, is also founded on the spatiality of Being-in-the-world. Physical space which consists of the "pure multiplicity of three dimensions" becomes the focus of our attention when our daily activities are "disturbed" for some reason. As a result, we notice the space as simply there, abstracted from contextualization, and this is how physical space is revealed to us. In Heidegger's words, "The homogeneous space of Nature shows itself only when the entities we encounter are discovered in such a way that the worldly character of the ready-to-hand gets specifically *deprived of its worldhood*" (BT 147, 112). See also Dreyfus' discussion in *Being-in-the-world*, pp. 137-140.

<sup>12</sup> For Heidegger's implicit critique of Kant's "incongruent counterparts" argument, see BT 143-144, 109.

First, he would argue that his analysis of space is not psychological, since it does not presuppose “inner states” of a “mind” that would exist independently of and prior to action and space. Instead, he begins from a very different position according to which categories like “mind” are derivative of a prior framework based on a theory of action. His account is not behaviorist, but has in common with behaviorism the rejection of the “ghost in the machine.”

Second, a psychological account may address various inner experiences of space, but cannot explain the nature of space itself, its “ontological” constitution. Heidegger believes that that ambitious goal can be achieved only by explaining the condition for our spatial experience. This cannot be the inner experience itself, but must rather be something grounding it. Action, for Heidegger, plays that role. This is why Heidegger believes himself to be offering a new theory of space, and not merely a psychology of spatial experience. Only once the space of action has been explained on its own terms can the assumptions be introduced that would support a psychological account of spatial experience.

### 3. A Critique of Dreyfus’ Interpretation

At the outset of the discussion of spatiality in his book *Being-in-the-world*, Dreyfus states that Heidegger’s discussion of spatiality is “fundamentally confused” (Dreyfus 129).<sup>13</sup> Heidegger, he claims, “has not clearly distinguished *public* space in which entities show up for human beings, from the centered spatiality of each *individual* human being” (Dreyfus 129). In this section I raise questions about three aspects of Dreyfus’ account: 1) Dreyfus interprets “regions” and “de-severance” to correspond roughly with “public” and “individual” respectively, but this does not capture Heidegger’s region/de-severance distinction. 2) Dreyfus attributes a transcendental role to de-severance that is absent in Heidegger. 3) Dreyfus claims that public space should have priority over individual space rather than the other way around, but for Heidegger neither has priority over the other.

Dreyfus’ term for “region” is “public space.” For a particular “equipment” to have its place, it must be placed within a context which determine that place. The region is such a “whole which determines what counts as the parts” (Dreyfus 129). For instance, “the workshop as a *region* makes possible places for the saw, the lathe, the work bench, etc.” (Dreyfus 129). These places are “public and thus independent of the location of particular people,” although they are also “laid out in terms of Dasein’s concerns” (Dreyfus 130).

Dreyfus interprets de-severance--which he translates as “dis-stance”--as a “function of existential concern” (Dreyfus 130). He argues that Heidegger fails to distinguish such dis-stance from ordinary distance. *Ontological dis-stance*, as existential concern, is “the general opening up of space as the field of presence (dis-stance) that is the condition for things being near and far” (Dreyfus 132). The role of dis-stance is to open up a shared, “public” world. This is quite different from the *ontic distance* between a particular Dasein and a particular object, understood in terms of “Dasein’s pragmatic bringing things near by taking them up and using them” (Dreyfus 132). According to Dreyfus this “pragmatic bringing near” is not an aspect of public space, since it can only be

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<sup>13</sup> For Dreyfus’ discussion see Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991) Chapter 7.

“near to *me*” (Dreyfus 132). Heidegger has failed to notice that “distance” is an aspect of an *individual* Dasein, whereas “dis-stance” is a general *condition* for things being near or far.

Heidegger is further confused, according to Dreyfus, because in *Being and Time* he gives priority to the spatiality of the individual Dasein, whereas, to be consistent, he should have stuck to the “priority of the presence of equipment in public, workshop space” (Dreyfus 132). Arguing against Heidegger, Dreyfus states that “if each Dasein had its own dis-stance and this dis-stance were *both* the ontological opening up of presence *and* the changing accessibility of things from a center, there could be no public space”; in that case, “we would have a number of *monads* each with its own centered experience of presence, and public space would be a *construct*” (Dreyfus 135). To avoid this subject-centered account of spatiality, Dreyfus claims that

Heidegger should have stressed that my centered space depends on and is located in a public field of presence, that my here does not mean a private, subjective perspective but is located vis-a-vis public equipment in a public world. Thus, my pragmatic perspective is not private. (Dreyfus 135-6)

Dreyfus’ account is guided by his overall approach which prioritizes public existence over the individual. On those terms it would seem that the spatiality of *das Man* is the condition for the individual Dasein’s spatiality.

As I noted above, I have three criticisms of Dreyfus’ reading. 1) Dreyfus’ public/individual distinction has little to do with Heidegger’s region/de-severance distinction. What Dreyfus calls our “shared, public space” more aptly describes world-space than regions. World-space too is “public” in the sense that it is shared by everyone. And to some extent it too is “laid out in terms of Dasein’s concerns” because it depicts a space which contains entities we deal with in everyday life. What is lacking in world-space and therefore in Dreyfus’ account as well is the radically perspectival or “indexical” feature of regions, which constantly refers to Dasein’s orientation. Note that such orientation is not private or subjective. Regions are public because they are based on “*one’s*” oriented activity, as a particular orientation, that can be taken up by *any* Dasein. Regions offer a frame of *possible* perspectives which give presence a particular orientation; given a region of an L-shaped hallway leading to a living room, anyone would follow a certain direction of movement dictated by the orientation of that region. The region determines the *way in which* presence is disclosed to us in an oriented way--the walls to the left and right, and the living room opening up ahead as one walks through the hallway. So regions are “public” in this limited sense of referring to the actions of anyone “plugged into” that region. Dreyfus’ claim that regions are “independent of the locations of people” or that they are “shared” does not capture this specifically indexical sense of publicness.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, from what perspective can one “see” the independence of the “public” domain from the “location of particular people”? We are implicitly referred to an infinite observer which has world-space or absolute space as its object, but this objectivistic perspective is not available in Heidegger’s framework and thus it is not applicable to the

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the different senses of “publicness,” see Frederick Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 44-45. For his discussion of the indexicality of the world, see pp. 36-42.

discussion of regions. Dreyfus's account of regions lacks the inherent perspectivalness of *zuhanden* space which results from Dasein's finitude as Heidegger understands it.

This objectivist presupposition implicit in Dreyfus' interpretation of regions also carries over to his discussion of de-severance (dis-stance). In contrast to "shared, public space" (regions), Dasein as dis-stance has its own "individual" space, radiating from it as it brings things "close." In this discussion he treats the spatiality of individual Dasein as "private" or "subjective" space. Dreyfus claims that Heidegger's idea of Dasein's spatiality implies the "Cartesian/Husserlian traditional move of giving priority to *my* world of closeness and farness over *the* world with its public regions and places" (Dreyfus 132). However, the individuality of de-severance does not imply "private space" at all; that individuality is rather derived from the structure of the perspectival givenness of regions. In an office, workers orient themselves and move according to the locations of desks, computers, pathway, copier, etc. Each worker has her own sphere of de-severance, but this is not because she has her own self-centered, private space; rather, the region dictates personal de-severance through the perspectival givenness of equipment and presence.<sup>15</sup> De-severance is a particular, actual perspective derived from the region (the frame of possible perspectives). Thus there is no worry that we would be like "monads," each with its own centered space, since any region would reveal different perspectives to people in different locations.<sup>16</sup>

In sum, for Heidegger *both* "publicness" and "individualness" ("mineness") can be features of either regions *or* de-severance, so the public/individual distinction does not correspond to the region/de-severance distinction. Regions can be "individual": I organize my desk area in a left-handed way, since I am left-handed. When I work at my computer, this particular region refers to my individual, left-handed actions. De-severance can be "public" in that it refers to the referentiality of "one's" personal space-of-action. Given the region of my left-handed work area, anyone would have to reach for the mouse, the pen, the dictionary, etc., on the left-hand side of the computer (then move them to the right side if one is right-handed). True, nearness and farness describe entities' relations to a Dasein, but this need not imply that these notions are subjective or private. Anticipating the sort of objection Dreyfus raises, Heidegger writes:

When one is oriented beforehand towards 'Nature' and 'Objectively' measured distances of Things, one is inclined to pass off such estimates and interpretations of de-severance as 'subjective'. Yet this 'subjectivity'...has nothing to do with

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<sup>15</sup> In his discussion of the "here," Dreyfus does note that since "the equipment 'yonder' is public, the 'here' is public, too," and that in this respect "Heidegger can do justice to the fact that each Dasein has its own here without his account falling prey to the Cartesian/Husserlian claim that each Dasein has or is a private perspective on the world" (Dreyfus 134). Dreyfus might have applied this insight to his own analysis of de-severance as well.

<sup>16</sup> As Heidegger comments on the idea of windowless monads in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (A. Hofstadter, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988):

As a monad, the Dasein needs no window in order first of all to look out toward something outside itself, not because, as Leibniz thinks, all beings are already accessible within its capsule...but because the monad, the Dasein, in its own being (transcendence) is already outside, among other beings, and this implies always with its own self. The Dasein is not at all in a capsule. Due to the original transcendence, a window would be superfluous for the Dasein. (*BPP* 301)

‘subjective’ arbitrariness or subjectivistic ‘ways of taking’ an entity which ‘in itself’ is otherwise. (*BT 141*, 106).

Dreyfus says Heidegger “should have stressed” that “my pragmatic perspective is not private” but that it depends on being located in a public world. But in fact, Heidegger had a non-private or non-subjectivistic conception from the beginning and was never committed to a “private space” view.

2) Dreyfus’ discussion of dis-stance does not clarify the different ways in which space is a dimension of Dasein’s *existence*. In his account of dis-stance as the “opening up of a space in which things can be near or far,” what Dreyfus explains is some sort of a transcendental *condition* (a la Kant) which is not itself *spatial*. The only justification for calling this condition “spatial” seems to be that it gives rise to the notions of “nearness” and “farness,” but it says nothing about the *nature* of spatial existence itself. I would argue that Heidegger’s analysis of de-severance is not transcendental since de-severance is merely *one* of several spatial modes of Being-in-the-world. What de-severance describes rather is the indexicality of spatial existence which determines Dasein’s existential “here” in terms of the “there” of the world (derived from the region/de-severance correlation). The textual evidence that it describes a condition for the possibility of us having a shared, public world is rather weak.<sup>17</sup> Dreyfus thinks Heidegger fails to distinguish “ontological dis-stance” from “ontic distance,” but in fact neither of these categories properly address Heideggerian de-severance.

3) Dreyfus’ interpretation of dis-stance as having a transcendental, founding role leads him to a further problem. Heidegger’s “confusion” supposedly results from prioritizing the spatiality of individual Dasein, whereas Dreyfus thinks Heidegger should have prioritized public space. Occasional remarks in *Being and Time* seem to suggest that de-severance is the condition for regions, but it is more consistent with the tenor of the general theory of Being-in-the-world to treat de-severance and region as correlates (much in the way Dasein and the world are correlates). On this reading, they are equiprimordial and neither can be considered the foundation for the other.<sup>18</sup> The question of priority is only applicable if we grant Dreyfus’ interpretation of “individual/public” spaces. But as we have seen, in this formulation one cannot explain the equiprimordiality of regions and de-severance.

#### 4. Summary

<sup>17</sup> The following remarks by Heidegger may suggest a founding relation: “To encounter the ready-to-hand in its environmental space remains ontically possible only because Dasein itself is ‘spatial’ with regard to its Being-in-the-world” (*BT 138*, 104), and “only because Dasein is spatial in the way of de-severance and directionality can what is ready-to-hand within-the-world be encountered in its spatiality” (*BT 145*, 110). Dreyfus interprets this passage as evidence for a founding relation. He asserts that “the spatiality of Dasein’s encountering the available depends on Dasein’s concerned being-in-the-world” (Dreyfus 130). But compare the passage in note 10. Heidegger’s remarks need not suggest a founding relation but can be viewed as expressing a necessary interdependence between Dasein’s spatiality and regions.

<sup>18</sup> I wish to thank Steven Crowell for raising a question regarding a possible priority of de-severance over regions, given Heidegger’s *methodological* aim of “fundamental ontology” which prioritizes Dasein. This aim may explain the shift in emphasis from de-severance and directionality belonging to the “aroundness of the world” in *HCT* to Dasein in *BT*. But as I argue elsewhere, it is precisely this priority of Dasein which begins to break down as we examine more closely both the region/de-severance and spatiality/temporality relations. Heidegger himself later abandons the project of fundamental ontology.

The key to understanding Heidegger's theory of space is his attempt to redescribe spatial experience without presupposing objective space, or in his own terms, world-space. This is to describe lived space grasped within the *finite perspective* or an active being. There is no ontologically significant "space" outside of the configuration of Dasein's movements in oriented regions.

Dreyfus' interpretation of regions and de-severance misses the inherently referential orientation of the spatiality of Being-in-the-world. Instead, he presupposes an essentially non-oriented world-space in which individual Dasein have centered personal spaces. This presupposition generates the confusions he attributes to Heidegger, such as the apparent inability to derive "public space" from "individual spaces." For Heidegger, the individuality of a perspective within a region gives particularity to each Dasein's de-severance, but this has little to do with Dasein having "private" spaces. The particular configuration of one's personally oriented space is for that individual in that particular place alone, but this is dictated by a given region and cannot be in the mind.

This reading shows that Olafson's notion of presence (*Anwesen*) is neither traditionalist nor subjectivist as Carman suggests. By presence Olafson means the fact that things we deal with *are there for us* in some salient manner in a way they cannot be for a non-Dasein such as a chair. Put another way, presence amounts to the fact that an entity, for instance my kitchen table, is there for me in a certain perspectival givenness and is available to me in a unique configuration of the region of the kitchen as I encounter it. This mode of disclosure requires both the region and my particular spatial participation; this is why the table cannot be "present" to a sink across from it. But certainly this presence of the table to me is not subjective, for anyone in my position would encounter it in the same perspectival givenness. Different people in the kitchen would have different disclosures of the table from different angles, and perhaps each in their own way, but that is not to say that each of us has a subjective experience of the presence of the table. The uniquely perspectival givenness which makes up the personal character of experience has to do with regional configuration and Dasein's particular spatial participation, not some "inner perspective" on the matter. Olafson is right to point out that this sort of fundamental disclosure of entities, always revealed as correlates of our actions and in a particular perspective, is lacking in Dreyfus' common-sense expression "coping." The position outlined here, by contrast, allows for a radically personal perspective of the world without presupposing a "subjective" domain of experience.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> I wish to thank Steven Crowell, Andrew Feenberg, Piet Hut, Pierre Keller, Frederick Olafson, and Mariana Ortega for their comments.