

Heidegger and Nietzsche: On the Need for Criticism and its Critique

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ABSTRACT:

In the digital age, when interpretation of textual significance is oriented no less by a text's modes of preservation, reception, and proliferation than it is by the workings of authorial intention, what determines the criteria for its criticism? The following essay addresses these matters with respect to recent discussion in the digital humanities on textuality and interpretive methodology, and to Martin Heidegger's philosophical confrontation with the work of Friedrich Nietzsche – Heidegger's primary interlocutor in elaborating the question concerning the artwork's origin and originality as understood in the technological epoch. Such an approach situates these apparently disparate discourses within the optic of their mutual consideration of technology's influence on the determination of criteria for a work's aesthetic judgment, and on the critic's role in the interpretive process of transmitting its truth. Registering a diffusion of its sources and channels of communicative power, both of these discourses are engaged in questioning the measure of critique's authority – invested in inquiry into the reproducibility of its judgment, and into what first constitutes truthful appropriation of interpretive tradition. A weighing of such questions involves both discourses in attempts to formally posit and algorithmically or world-historically extrapolate ahistorical vantage points from which to evaluate what is entailed in an original relation to the possible future of interpretive tradition. Orienting these interpretive strategies is an analytical notion of the phenomenology of critical activity, conceived as a function of self-determining intention. With regard to this notion especially, the developing terms of the Heidegger-Nietzsche confrontation reflect those of trending debate in digital humanities scholarship on the 'subject' of critical authority. A discussion of these affinities and their logical consequences results in a critique of authorial intentionality that understands textual significance as an expression of the respective needs of those for whom a text's meaning is at stake – needs which are often first articulated and identified in the course of interpretation. For as authorship, critique itself testifies to an always antecedent discussion to which it responds whatever its original intentions, expressing its belonging to an interpretive tradition in relation to which the criteria of criticism, and of the question concerning its necessity and authority are derived – a tradition whose proper understanding in this way remains at issue.

Word is circulating of a crisis of interpretive authority in the digital humanities. Representing conflicting methodologies and conceptions of textuality, two prominent critical traditions of literary scholarship have been at odds for some time over how the digitisation of a text's channels of proliferation, modes of reception, and forms of legitimation affects the determination of the criteria of its interpretation.¹ One of the two – aligned with traditional humanities computing, and invested in a more conservative notion of the author/text relation – employs digital technology to authenticate, analyse, preserve, and broaden access to source documents, which are viewed as codifications of an author's original intent. The other – associated with the more experimental sub-branches of humanities computing – integrates its use of technology into its conception of authorship and textuality, viewing a text's critical reception as a self-justifying extension of the original, producing a hybrid document, wrought by the union of author/reader intention, that delegates authority to its interpreter over the text's ultimate significance. The latter tradition thus prioritises the question of how interpretation authorises reader recodifications of textual meaning – enabling the interpreter to algorithmically modify the criteria for a text's understanding in restructuring the source code of the original 'text itself'.

And yet, underlying the two critical traditions' disagreement is a shared epistemological commitment that identifies the meaning of a text as the function of conscious intention. Both traditions understand intentionality as prescribing the range of interpretive possibilities, circumscribing the domain of critical authority – conceiving of textual truth as deriving from a relation of correspondence to an 'original intention' whose origins are themselves of no consequence to interpretation, except insofar as they testify to some other link in an unending chain of intentional relations, more or less removed. For either approach to textual understanding, there is, as it were, no archaeology to such 'originality' except that authorised by and originating in the assertion of authorial power – a claim rendered untenable upon closer examination of the very literary-theoretical heritage to which the more experimental of the two traditions appeals to distinguish its analytical premises and procedure. Reconsidering the insights of this heritage – which runs back from Jacques Derrida and Hans-Georg Gadamer, through their readings of Martin Heidegger's critique of Friedrich Nietzsche – not only clarifies commonalities and points of contention between the two traditions.² It also sheds light on the shortcomings of Heidegger's efforts in the late 1930s to address the problems on which they dispute by re-conceptualising the historical scope of the interpretive process – shortcomings reiterated by any

¹ Cf. Susan Hockey, Jerome McGann, and Allen Renear, 'Panel: What is text? A debate on the philosophical and epistemological nature of text in the light of humanities computing research', The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, <<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/ach-allc.99/proceedings/hockey-renear2.html>> [accessed July 12, 2015].

² For considerations on the epistemological stakes of the Heidegger-Nietzsche confrontation, cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), p. 262, and Jacques Derrida, '«Le coup de don»', in *Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), pp. 89-96.

attempt to historicise its unfolding from a formally posited or world-historically extrapolated a-historical vantage point (in the idea of a text's meaning as asserted by its 'original author', its 'final interpreter', or the dialectic of their intentions). In what follows, I give account of these matters as they relate to recent developments in literary humanities computing, and of how the terms of Heidegger's critical engagement with Nietzsche reflect those of trending debates in the field. For both their confrontation and this account result in a critique of intentional meaning that conceives the determination of the need for criticism as a question whose significance is as unpredictably broad as are historically unique the interpretive traditions for which a text's understanding remains at issue. In the end, one is left with a notion of critique emerging dynamically from the ongoing discussion in which interpretation is always already engaged, and to which it responds – the expression of a forever antecedent critical conversation in the course of which the respective object of interpretive intention is first disclosed.

Conflicts of Interpretive Interest: Forms of Algorithmic Criticism

Overviewing the current landscape of the 'digital humanities', Patrik Svensson registers various modes of engagement with information technology to explain a scholarly trend associating with this broader denomination a set of theoretical premises distinct from those characteristic of traditional 'humanities computing' – the interdisciplinary core from which the digital humanities emerged.³ In Svensson's account, the basic epistemological values of humanities computing – 'including [...] a focus on technology as tool [...] are challenged or diluted through [this] expanded notion of the field', according to which technology may also be viewed as 'an object of study, an exploratory laboratory, an expressive medium and[or] an activist venue'.⁴ This alleged challenge to the core values of humanities computing has been particularly divisive for the discipline of literary criticism, where it has polarised a debate over questions of textuality and interpretive methodology – with one side primarily using tools to decipher and preserve 'what matters' about a given text,⁵ and the other using them also to build digital portals for constructing 'hybrid texts' on the basis of user decision to codify new meanings, in the interest of studying how technology transforms the interpretive process, and the

³ Cf. Patrik Svensson, 'Humanities Computing as Digital Humanities', *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 3.3 (2009), <<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/3/000065/000065.html>> [accessed 11 July 2015] (para. 34 of 62).

⁴ Cf. Patrik Svensson, 'Envisioning the Digital Humanities', *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 6.1 (2012), <<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/6/1/000112/000112.html>> [accessed 11 July 2015] (para. 14 of 164), and also: 'Landscape of the Digital Humanities', *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 4.1 (2010), <<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/4/1/000080/000080.html>> [accessed 11 July 2015] (para. 9 of 179).

⁵ Cf. John Unsworth, 'What is Humanities Computing and What is Not?', *Jahrbuch für Computerphilologie*, 4 (2002), ed. by Georg Braungart, Peter Gendolla, and Fotis Jannidis, <<http://computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg02/unsworth.html>> [accessed 12 July 2015] (III.1 Examples).

ways in which ‘*the originary textual field* [...] licenses its readers to reimagine its implications and textual possibilities’ [emphasis in original].⁶ An exemplary case of the divisions that these applications of technology generate between the two critical traditions is found in the 1999 ACH-ALLC conference panel discussion between Allen Renear and Jerome McGann. Renear defended a notion of texts as being real, in the sense of having ‘properties independent of our interests in them or our theories about them’, and as being structured according to determinate hierarchies – to which McGann responded by questioning the ‘view of text as [...] a vehicle for transmitting information’ whose interpretation has no bearing on the significance of its real properties, opposing to the hierarchical conception of a text’s semantic structure a ‘recursive’ one, capable of registering the interplay of the overlapping hierarchised schemes characteristic of poetical texts.⁷

While the practical implications of such differences in theoretical premise have received much scholarly attention, what unifies these two theories of textual interpretation has not, and such exposition reopens the question concerning the critic’s role in determining the need to which criticism responds.⁸ These commonalities can be gleaned from Geoffrey Rockwell’s commentary on the Renear/McGann debate when he describes the terms of their discussion, and the purposes text analysis portals are designed to serve. In Rockwell’s account, ‘McGann’s challenge to Renear’ primarily concerns ‘how we represent texts, how we use them, and our theories of textuality’ – and several interdependent corollaries structuring the portal’s functionality follow in accordance with the epistemology of representation that orients the thinking of both theorists alike.⁹ One corollary of particular consequence for McGann’s notion of what constitutes truthful representation prioritises the unity of the ‘hybrid text’ constructed by portal user decision over that of the original document – with the former resulting ‘from the intentions of both [author and user] in a way that can be recapitulated by others’.¹⁰ However, for both theories of textual interpretation, arriving at a decision as to what warrants being the object of intention and representation remains a function of how the individual interpreter acts on her/his ‘intuition’ as to what matters about the text, whose fields of potential signification are merely augmented by means of an analysis portal’s exploratory ‘playspace’.¹¹

To justify his account of the interpretive process, Rockwell, like McGann, appeals to Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose theoretical work allegedly ‘incorporate[s] play in method’ in similar fashion

⁶ Cf. Geoffrey Rockwell, ‘What is Text Analysis, Really?’, *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 18.2 (2003), 209-219 (p. 8 of preprint), and also: Jerome McGann, ‘IVANHOE: An Interface for Interpretation’, in *The Literary Encyclopedia* <<http://www.litencyc.com/theliterarymagazine/ivanhoeinterface.php>> [accessed 12 July 2015].

⁷ Cf. Hockey, McGann, and Renear, ‘Panel: What is text?’, (1. Position statement from Renear) and (2. Position statement from McGann).

⁸ For a sense of these (inter-)disciplinary implications, cf. the ‘Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0’, (2009), <http://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2015].

⁹ Rockwell, (p. 2 of preprint).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, (p. 8 of preprint).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

– an assertion obscuring the fact that ‘play’ is not, for Gadamer, a methodological precept, but an ontological characteristic of interpretation, describing something happening regardless of one’s notion of how the interpretive game should unfold, ‘over and above’ the individual’s intuitions and intentions; her/his ‘wanting and doing’.¹² Selectively borrowing, Rockwell follows Gadamer in affirming the truth of a text transformed by its reception, whilst maintaining the interpreter’s authority to determine for her/himself what counts as the significant analytical criteria of a text – a position which renders its aesthetic coherence a function of the representational features admitted to and organized within the portal space. In excluding from the portal’s design the influence one’s belonging to an interpretive tradition has on the determination of what warrants critical attention, Rockwell’s approach exhibits what is characteristically true of ‘algorithmic criticism’: an ‘insistently subjective manner of engagement’, and an attending instrumental conception of language, employed as representational means of communication.¹³ Such an approach takes no account of Gadamer’s claim that the ‘play of language’ is ‘without substrate’.¹⁴ Nor does it register the open dimensions of the playing field as characterised in the epigraph by Rainer Maria Rilke introducing Gadamer’s magnum opus, *Wahrheit und Methode* – an epigraph which transforms the speaker/interpreter into the wager of an always antecedent game that language plays with us.¹⁵ For such reasons, Gadamer’s notion of hermeneutics is incompatible with one equating the interpreter’s relation to language with that obtaining between her/him and the analytical tools s/he uses to manipulate the text. For ‘language is not an instrument at all’, and the purposes to which it lends itself are no more the function of the speaker’s decision than are the features of a text that speak to her/him as being hermeneutically significant.¹⁶

Although Rockwell’s and McGann’s text analysis portals incorporate turn-based features to regulate the individual user’s ‘freedom of critical address’, this gesture is compromised by a fundamental commitment to a notion of textual truth as mediated by the conscious intentions of the author/interpreter.¹⁷ While McGann does acknowledge that one ‘cannot measure the poetic outcome

¹² Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 2: Wahrheit und Methode: Ergänzungen, Register* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), p. 438. For his appropriation of Gadamer, cf. Rockwell, (p. 12 of preprint).

¹³ Stephen Ramsay, ‘Algorithmic Criticism’, *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. by Susan Schreibman and Ray Siemens (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405148641/9781405148641.xml&chunk.id=ss1-6-7&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-6-7&brand=9781405148641_brand> [accessed 13 July 2015].

¹⁴ Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 109.

¹⁵ In rough translation: ‘So long as you catch what you’ve thrown yourself, all is | sleight and easy gain —; | first when you suddenly become catcher of the ball, | that an eternal fellow player | threw to you, to your center, in faithfully | mastered swing, in one of those arcs | of God’s great bridge-building: | only then is the ability to catch a capability, —| not yours, but a world’s.’ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

¹⁶ Gadamer, ‘Mensch und Sprache’, in *Kleine Schriften I: Philosophie, Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), p. 95.

¹⁷ Cf. McGann, ‘Radiant Textuality’, The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, <<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/radiant.html>> [accessed 13 July 2015] (Radiant Scholarship and Criticism).

in terms of [such] intentions', they are still understood as imposing an 'originary' formal constraint on the range of potential interpretation.¹⁸ In the last instance, one 'cannot have meaning without an intention for meaning.'¹⁹ The significance of the textual re-codifications performed by a portal user remains relative to that authorised by the codification of an original 'instructional line', on which interpretation builds, probing the malleability of its recursive structure.²⁰ For it is, in McGann's view, 'universally the case: that a literary work codes a set of instructions for how it should be read.'²¹ On these grounds, criticism is to be executed algorithmically, in conformity with the 'algorithmic structure of poetical textuality', which is composed through 'a step by step procedure to bring about some intended result'.²² The same principles orient McGann's account of the phenomenology of criticism, which begins with the epistemological premise that '[i]n order to know anything [...] we have to propose the useful fiction that $a=a$. From this conscious intellectual move we can proceed to execute the primary critical act: we can draw a distinction, from which further sets of distinctions can be generated.'²³ This claim regarding the propositional character of the index for first-order distinctions is consistent with McGann's decision to characterise his understanding of criticism with primary reference to a proposition made by Spencer Brown: that 'all laws of form extrude themselves from the assertion that "A distinction is drawn"'.²⁴

Whether such distinctions are made relative to a textual field whose totality is defined by the original document space, or by the hybrid space disclosed through interpretation, their significance remains dependent on the internal consistency of the forms of correspondence that they generate – forms whose possible configurations are determined on the basis of a theory of signification according to which signs represent ideas, the contents of a consciousness intending to communicate.²⁵ On this theory of the idea/sign relation, all semantic structures are, at least in principle, quantifiable and open to analysis; even ranges of metaphoric meaning may be accounted for by implementing iteration variables into the process of interpretive (re-)codification, each resulting in reproducible and computationally tractable 'precise outcomes'.²⁶ With respect to these matters, the two critical traditions under discussion can agree. When Rockwell models his interpretive methodology on Condillac's ideological analysis of written signification, he too subscribes to the notion that 'we think

¹⁸ McGann, 'IVANHOE'.

¹⁹ Ibid. – contra Derrida's deconstructivist interpretation of a now famous fragment of Nietzsche's: cf. '«J'ai oublié mon parapluie»', in *Éperons*, pp. 103-113.

²⁰ McGann, 'Texts in N-Dimensions and Interpretation in a New Key [Discourse and Interpretation in N-Dimensions]', *TEXT Technology*, 12.2 (2003), 1-18 (p. 9).

²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²² Ibid., pp. 10 and 8.

²³ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁵ On the 'formal restrictions' of this correspondence effect, cf. Derrida, 'Différance', in *Margins of Philosophy* (The Harvester Press Limited: Brighton, 1982), pp. 1-27 (p. 26). See also: 'Signature, Event, Context', pp. 5-6.

²⁶ Cf. McGann, 'Texts in N-Dimensions', p. 10.

by way of representations’; that ‘representation is the language in which we communicate’.²⁷ Conforming to this notion is a view of the domain of textual meaning as one governed and negotiated by the organisation of its representational features according to the intentions of those involved in interpretation. To this extent, both orientations toward the issue of textual truth are directed by an analytical procedure whose possible applications remain regulated by what Jacques Derrida calls ‘the norms of an absolute intentional meaning’.²⁸ As was the case with Gadamer, reference to Derrida is warranted here – and not only to reiterate the contradictions of selectively borrowing from his work to challenge traditional applications of computational text analysis, but to leave unchallenged the epistemological premises enabling proper tool functionality.²⁹ It is warranted because much of Derrida’s critique of intentionality, which responds to Heidegger’s work and his readings of Friedrich Nietzsche, turns on this issue of intention in its relation to what constitutes truthful interpretation, and to the question concerning what determines the need for criticism – an issue to which the following section turns.

Of Truth Unintended: Critiquing Critique as the Will to Reflection

In redrafting his 1935/36 essay, ‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes’ – a text, and a question of lasting consequence for both Gadamer and Derrida – Heidegger reconsiders the structure of *Dasein*’s historicity; more specifically, the determining factors for the way in which its sense of history is appropriated.³⁰ Since the days of his early phenomenological project, then still happily called a ‘joyful science’, Heidegger argued that the meaning of history – the ‘sense of *Dasein*’s being’ – follows not with respect to the ontic details of its chronological past, but to the ontological significance of its futural orientation.³¹ According to the formal suppositions of the transcendental analytic as presented in *Sein und Zeit*, acknowledging what must come (*Tod*, death) makes sense of what could not be otherwise (*Geworfenheit*, the ‘factual thrownness’ of one’s always already being-there) – an

²⁷ For Rockwell’s model and relevant criticism of Condillac, cf. Rockwell, p. 1 and Derrida, ‘Signature, Event, Context’, p. 6. For epistemologically comparable claims on the part of the humanities computing tradition, cf. Unsworth, ‘What is Humanities Computing’ (II. Humanities computing as a way of reasoning, V. Humanities computing as shaped by the need for human communication), and also: Randall Davis, R. H. Shrobe, and P. Szolovits, ‘What is a Knowledge Representation?’ *AI Magazine* 14.1 (1993), pp. 17-33.

²⁸ Derrida, ‘Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht IV*)’, in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. by John Sallis, trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 217.

²⁹ Cf. McGann, ‘Texts in N-Dimensions’, pp. 7-10 and 13, and also Derrida on Austin’s critique of linguisticism and the authority of code protocols, in: ‘Signature, Event, Context’, p. 19.

³⁰ For the influence Heidegger’s essay had on the trajectory of his own intellectual projects, cf. Gadamer, ‘Reflections on my Philosophical Journey’, in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. by Lewis Edwin Hahn, trans. by Richard E. Palmer (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1997), p. 47. For a discussion of its subject matter in the context of the Nietzsche confrontation, cf. Derrida, ‘«Histoire d’une erreur»’, in *Éperons*, pp. 59-66.

³¹ Cf. Rita Casale, ‘Die hermeneutische Phänomenologie als »Fröhliche Wissenschaft«’, in *Heideggers Nietzsche: Geschichte einer Obsession* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2010), pp. 127-155.

inevitability which *Dasein* makes its own in wanting to determine for itself *how* what was will be. However, precisely this notion of autonomously appropriating the apriority of *Dasein*'s transcendence is called into question with successive drafts of Heidegger's essay on the artwork's origin, notably written at the same time of his first Nietzsche lectures on 'Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst'. Recent scholarship registers this development in Heidegger's thought as a methodological 'turn' (*Kehre*) that displaces primary authority over the criteria for an artwork's understanding from the author-creator (*Dasein*) to the interpretive heritage (*Sein*) to which the world-historical event of created-work emerges as a response.³² In reorienting the hermeneutics of aesthetic identity, such a turn necessitates a critique of the 'originary' sense of the artwork's origin, in a way which challenges the either/or that aligns the formal coherence of its meaning with the aim of interpreter intention, or with the inscription of an original author-creator's intentions in the 'work itself'.

However, closer examination of this critique's criteria in the context of Heidegger's contemporaneous philosophical project reveals their merely iterating on a higher order the same formulations he condemns. These criteria, carefully emended decades later or left unpublished, refer the will of author-creator intention back to the supreme will of being's history, whose epochal culmination in Occidental nihilism determines the metric on which the validity of aesthetic judgment is ultimately gauged – a history into whose inner necessity Heidegger claims insight to justify the world-historical need for his criticism of Nietzsche, the 'last metaphysician of the Occident.'³³ A look at the developing terms of the Heidegger-Nietzsche confrontation attests to a lengthy process of rethinking these claims, along with the critic's role in determining the criteria of critique; one that acknowledges – without sublimating or reifying – the influence of interpretive tradition on the unfolding identity of the subject of critical discussion.

In *Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemäßer Betrachtung* (1938/39), the one lecture series excluded from the canonical two-volume collection of his work on Nietzsche, Heidegger asserts his intention to engage his era in critical reflection on its belonging to the world-historical unfolding of the metaphysical tradition, so as to 'inaugurate the possibilities of its future', and to 'enforce a decision on metaphysics as such'.³⁴ Heidegger's appeal to the need for such reflection responds to Nietzsche's appeal to reflect on the uses and abuses of history for 'life', which is said to achieve its highest, most vital possible expression when determining the criteria for its own flourishing in the practice of 'critical history' (*GA 46*: pp. 7, 183). According to Heidegger's reading, the rationale for

³² Cf. Tracy Colony, 'Time and the Work of Art: Reconsidering Heidegger's *Auseinandersetzung* with Nietzsche', in *Heidegger Studies*: vol. 19 (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2003), pp. 81-94 (pp. 92-94).

³³ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 7th edn, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2008), I, p. 431.

³⁴ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978-), XLVI: *Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemäßer Betrachtung*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Friedrich (2003), pp. 295-296 and 218. Henceforth, references to the *Gesamtausgabe* are abbreviated (*GA XX*: p. XXX) in the body text.

this self-justifying notion of life follows on the basis of a claim to absolute knowledge of truth's higher essence, and of the nature of one's living relation to beings (*GA 46*: pp. 144, 339) – both defined in terms of 'justice', rendering it a characterisation not just of 'life itself', but of 'beings in their totality' (*GA 46*: p. 335). This alleged claim, cited as evidence of Nietzsche's 'naïve belief' in a representationalist conception of 'truth as *adaequatio*' (*GA 46*: p. 196), allows Heidegger to identify the just practice of critical history as that mode of life which most adequately represents its essential capacity for determining the conditions of its own 'sur-vival' (*GA 46*: pp. 181-182, 336). Exhibiting peculiar ingeniousness and decisive knowing (*GA 46*: pp. 337, 183), this mode is therefore one of which 'great individuals (or the highest exemplars, as Nietzsche also calls them)' – 'the pinnacle and the aim of an historical people' – are alone capable (*GA 46*: p. 281). For the greatness of a people's history can only be recognised by the great (*GA 46*: p. 333); by 'overmen', who, from their great heights, achieve 'comprehensive insight' into the genuine needs of their community, meting out in critical reflection on its relation to history the measure for the higher ascension of a cultural life-world (*GA 46*: pp. 283, 336).

Introducing the need for a higher-order form of critical reflection, Heidegger poses a series of questions about how the genuine needs of 'life' would be measured: genuine according to what genealogy of its sur-vival? In what do the heights of life's higher ascension then consist? On the authority of whose genius are they determined? Who then decides which genius defines their measure? Can such decisions be made without also deciding what sort of life would require them to flourish? (*GA 46*: p. 213). And yet, such reservations betray underlying commitment to the notion that a force of genius of some kind is at work in setting the criteria for making these judgments; the dispute with Nietzsche as described in *Besinnung* (*GA 66*) – the unpublished companion monograph to the lecture series – instead turns upon the supposed source and aim of its inspiration. In lieu of Nietzsche's 'will to power', made synonymous with 'life' and its need to incorporate all things in the service of its perpetual self-overcoming, Heidegger asserts the need for a form of the 'will to reflection' capable of substantiating the spiritual abyss opened by the culmination of the metaphysical tradition in Occidental nihilism – a fate whose inner necessity is disclosed only to those willing to accept their role in determining its future history (*GA 66*: p. 153). Heidegger's critical project is thus identified with the destiny of an eschatological myth on the ultimate trajectory of Western thought (*GA 66*: p. 50). The criteria of critique are to be gauged henceforth against this 'highest measure' manifest in the epochal unfolding of 'the deepest world-historical essence of philosophy', whose depths are perceived only by the few and seldom 'children of the future' destined for the critic's role (*GA 66*: pp. 65, 60-61). For such figures of greatness are alone in the position to grasp and realise the conditions for the onset of

an era's passing – only they truly measure up to carrying out this grand mission; only likenesses of such grandeur are raised into the clearing of their essence: 'Gleiches wird nur durch Gleiches in die Lichtung seines Wesens gehoben', (*GA 66*: pp. 60, 64).

Heidegger dedicates much subsequent self-criticism to this reiteration of the claims attributed to Nietzsche – claims conceiving the activity of criticism as quintessentially volitional and intentional, its phenomenology rooted in the will's supposed power to determine for itself the ultimate significance of that toward which it strives.³⁵ The truth discerned by such power of judgment is asserted on the basis of higher knowledge of the objectivity of its object, and of the appropriate method and metric for its determination and assessment – an assertion which grounds the drawing of all further distinctions; one from which 'all laws of form extrude'.³⁶ On such grounds, critique's authority is made self-justifying – a testament to the will to establish in advance, 'for better and for worse', the criteria for its own legitimation.³⁷ Virtually all of these theses, however, are modified or withdrawn in the ensuing decades of Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche. For example, in his final Nietzsche lecture series (1951/52) – in the context of interpreting Parmenides's sixth fragment, which concerns the determination of being's essence in its relation to the need for thought and speech – Heidegger instead argues for a notion of critique whose criteria are determined in accordance with the needs of the discussion in response to which its activity first unfolds.³⁸ Unlike its conception in *Besinnung*, this is a kind of critical discussion whose interlocutors relinquish claim to self-conscious knowledge of the terms of their engagement; whose terms of eventual understanding take precedence, and whose dynamics and direction are determined less and less by the *will* of either participant, the more the conversation hones in on the respective issues at stake (*WhD*: p. 110).³⁹

One finds then – in literary humanities computing, its more experimental extensions in the digital humanities, and the early phases of Heidegger's Nietzsche confrontation – a notion of critique more or less knowingly invested in an epistemology of representation of ontological consequence for the question concerning what constitutes truthful appropriation of one's historical tradition. The former of the three examples and the latter two exhibit what Nietzsche, in another critical idiom, would

³⁵ Cf. Bret W. Davis, 'The Turn through an Embrace of the Will', in *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), pp. 60-99. For indications of his later self-criticism, cf. (*GA 16*: p. 632) and: Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 3rd edn (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Seminare, 2004), p. 365. References henceforth are to this edition, and abbreviated (*W*: p. XXX) in the body text.

³⁶ Cf. McGann, 'Texts in N-Dimensions', p. 6.

³⁷ On the potential consequences of this evaluative orientation, cf. Derrida, *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1987), pp. 161-184 (p. 162).

³⁸ Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?*, 5th edn (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1997), pp. 121-122. References henceforth are to this edition, and abbreviated (*WhD*: p. XXX) in the body text. See pp. 111, 136 and 175 for the fragment (χρηὶ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὸν ἔμμεναι) and for Heidegger's paratactic translation, which in English would provisionally read: 'needful: saying as well as thinking: being: existing'.

³⁹ For Gadamer's appropriation of these revisions, cf. *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 387.

call ‘antiquarian’ and ‘monumentalist’ tendencies, respectively.⁴⁰ Articulating these shared epistemological commitments within such a framework is a mutually illuminating venture – particularly with respect to inquiries into the sources and channels of the critic’s authority over what warrants critical attention; into her/his aesthetic judgment in its relation to what determines its domains of jurisdiction. On the one hand, more could be done, as evidenced by the above discussion of turn-based text analysis portals, to address the role of interpretive tradition in determining the significance of the kinds of questions that a text elicits from its reader – a lesson whose learning Heidegger remarks upon in reflecting on what motivated him to constantly reformulate the questions posed by Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysics, and whose importance Gadamer confirms when suggesting that one’s own questioning was, in the end, more something suffered than done (*W*: p. ix).⁴¹ On the other, since there is little doubt, from a philological perspective, about Heidegger’s ‘misconstruction’ of Nietzsche, criticism of their confrontation may stand to benefit from the kind of freedom of critical address provided by access to large-scale digital resources and technical infrastructure, which brings out features of the textual topology that might otherwise remain obscure.⁴² Some of the most interesting philosophical discussions appear to begin from the middle of nowhere, before arriving someplace no interlocutor could anticipate. Judging from the current discussion of these two forms of discourse, it would seem, in any case, that leaving open the question concerning the need for criticism and its critique can reveal unseen matters of mutual interest, whose significance has yet to be determined.

⁴⁰ Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Einzelbänden*, ed. by Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari, 2nd edn, 15 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), I, p. 258.

⁴¹ Cf. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 372.

⁴² Cf. Derrida, ‘Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences’, in *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 356.