

# Ontological Difference and Endogenesis

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For reference:

Triffett, Brendan (2006), 'Ontological Difference and Endogenesis', online article, The Difference Site, <http://www.dif-ferance.org>, date of access.

If we really attend to the impulse and thrust of Heidegger's thought, which finds a formula of sorts in the "ontological difference" (the difference between beings and Being), we see that this difference can only be thought if we contemplate the *sameness* of Being and beings, and indeed, of Being and thought. For if *ens* is standing actuality, a *factum* in which Being no longer has any active voice, an ex-istent subsisting *outside* the efficient cause that brought it about, then *ens* must be radically discontinuous with the event of Being, even if it is admitted that the latter *was* responsible for it coming into existence (a move which already distorts the meaning of Being by dividing it from beings). The only way that the wondrous presencing of Being can be preserved in thinking is *if that thinking refuses beings any existence apart from the presencing of Being in beings*. Beings cannot ground themselves; their structure is one of nothingness or nullity. It is only Being that occurs without need of support; its lively play is its own empowerment, origin and end. To speak of the ontological difference is to affirm that Being has this internal sufficiency, *and that beings do not*. The radical dependence of beings means that their existence can be nothing but the playing, voicing and lighting of Being through them.

This is a difficult thought, for it is tempting to imagine that beings contribute their own "material" principle so that Being might have somewhere to happen. But *radical* dependence cannot be like that. *Beings bring nothing to the happening of Being. They are only moments internal to Being, generated by Being for its own mediation*. Only Being itself could be a suitable medium for its happening. In the generation of beings, Being differs from itself but *within* itself, re-generating itself in another mode (*medium* for event) so that it might have another site thought which happens Being, in the mode of mediated *event*. Thus beings are *endogenously* generated, and their existence is just the medium-side of the happening of Being. We must recognise two moments of the eventuality of Being – the generation of media (beings) and the passing-through of Being – while maintaining their simultaneity. Being only happens in and through beings as it re-generates them as media. Inversely, the generation of medium only occurs as a moment of the indwelling and passing-through of Being. *The existence of beings is nothing more than the*

*receptive situating of the transpiration of Being, a situating that is continuous and “consubstantial” with Being as such.* If we fall from this monistic vision, then we suppose that the existence of beings somehow continues beyond and after the transpiration of Being in and through them. Actuality and beings are then thought of as persisting in their own right, as exogenous terms of Being, rather than as volatile effects that ride on Being like music borne on a carrier-wave. But beings do not exist in parallel to Being, not even as progeny that *were* generated. Nor do they adhere to Being, which suggests that they have some self-possessed integrity that they bring to Being. They inhere in Being, as words inhere in the act of speaking. And this requires that their generation is never complete, that there is no moment of their existence through which Being no longer passes – for Being only passes by regenerating. Regenerating as a making-suitable for what? For the further transpiration of Being – which is, again, regeneration. Being cannot transpire where there is no possibility of regeneration; it cannot give itself for thought and reception where a being has reached its end-state, or where one resists the growth of ekstasis (as thought, feeling or practice). If we think Being as generation, then we will appreciate that a *factum* cannot bear Being to thought, and that a fixed mind cannot receive Being as thought. But if the continually-born as such has no existence outside the life and grace that generates and regenerates it, then the only thinkable relation between Being and beings is that between (re)generation and the *endogenously* (re)generated.

To remember Being, and the difference between Being and beings – the truth that while Being needs no support from without, the existence of beings is as volatile as the presence of light in air (Aquinas) – is to think endo-generation and the monism that holds between Being and beings. Hence the ontological difference is also a sameness, and the former cannot be thought without the latter.

