

**Book review**

David Burke Griffiths

**"The Keywords of Martin Heidegger: A Philosophical-Lexical Analysis of *Sein und Zeit*"**

Edwin Mellen Press, 2006

Tim Cross\*

The Heidegger literature is vast, and while there are some lexicons, they tend not to span the inductive, critical, and expository territory addressed by David Griffiths. There remains only one lexicon in German, *Index zu Heideggers 'Sein und Zeit'* Zusammengestellt von Hildegard Feick, 4., neubearbeitete Auflage von Susanne Ziegler (Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tuebingen, 1991 1961), and unfortunately this volume is sometimes less than rigorous with citations. It is my conviction that the work of David Griffiths would be useful to several audiences, including those concerned with questions addressing the heritage of existentialism, trends in literary criticism, cultural studies, and hermeneutics.

A significant portion of the Heidegger audience read him and his secondary literature in translation. This volume works from the German text and its ancient Greek quotations with attempts at faithful translations. All the German citations are translated. It develops David Griffiths's earlier attention to keywords in *Buddhist Discursive Formations: Key-*

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*words, Emotions, Ethics* (Edwin Mellen Press 2004). His keyword analytic implies a dialog with Heidegger's own sustained attention to logos, and to date no one has attempted to perform this close reading of the various semantic and lexical shifts visible in *Sein und Zeit*. Griffiths's volume is an important advance because it opens the possibility of charting significant changes in the post-*Being and Time* uses of many of the keywords addressed in this study.

When a body of literature reaches the dimensions of that devoted to Heidegger, a concise outline of his central lexical elements becomes necessary. This keyword analysis is one such summary, and part of Griffiths's insight is the chance to see a more nuanced portrait of the various Heideggers. The ultra-conservative, anti-modernist Roman Catholic of Heidegger's early youth was a "free Christian" and Lutheran before 1920. Heidegger criticised the One (*das Man*) in *Sein und Zeit* in 1926 and yet he joined the Nazi party in 1933. More than biography, the primary value of this volume is as a re-reading of diverse developments such as deconstructionism, the construct of postmodernism, and certain dimensions of psychotherapy as footnotes to *Sein und Zeit*. (The biographical issue of the relationship between the life choices and scholarship of Heidegger is explored by Griffiths in a subsequent volume which Edwin Mellen Press published in 2009.)

Griffiths acknowledges that his selection of keywords is somewhat idiosyncratic. The criteria for inclusion has been determined by his interest in some of the life-long concerns of Heidegger: the question of Being, time and Being, truth and disclosure, the One/They, authentic-inauthentic here/there being, rootedness and ability to-be, en-framing and technology.

Griffiths demonstrates that the lexical foundations of these themes are crucial to the understanding of core ideas, assertions, and arguments of Heidegger. Ample evidence is also provided of the richness of wordplay throughout *Sein und Zeit*: Heidegger invented new terms, used traditional terms in archaic and untraditional ways, set up word pairs by verbalizing a noun, and created verbal chains within a word family. In addition, the keyword analysis of Griffiths rewards attention to logico-grammar. Two examples are Heidegger's use of the middle-voice in explicating "phenomenology" and "Dasein" as relates and is related.

The critical and expository cross-referenced lexicon of Griffiths is conscious of the temptations and limitations of keyword analysis, and identifies several points of concern with the manner in which Heidegger proceeded with his logico-philological method. An inductive, comparative, critical lexicon is required because Heidegger occasionally used keywords inconsistently, and sometimes moved from a key term to what it denotes as if they were identical, e.g. "*Phanomen*", p. 29. Griffiths points to a more worrying issue of the teleological tendencies of Heidegger: the history of thinking is approached by examining the central terms that major thinkers reflected upon and only partially understood; these keywords were essentially waiting for Heidegger's fuller analysis.

Griffiths has identified, translated, collated and interpreted the keywords but also raises important critical questions as he presents readers with textual, interpretative, and evaluative challenges. This volume is an important work that will open the field of Heidegger studies to a deeper and more nuanced reading of *Sein und Zeit* and other works.