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MELANCHOLY AS A SOURCE OF CREATIVITY: A PARADOX IN HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT

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ABSTRACT

of Heideggerian philosophy. It argues that melancholy, understood not merely as a psychological state but as a fundamental mode of human existence, serves as a crucial catalyst for authentic creative activity by forcing human existence to confront its finitude and the underlying "nothingness." This melancholic attunement, which resonates profoundly across diverse Asian spiritual and artistic traditions, compels thinking towards a search for genuine meaning and authentic being. The analysis draws upon concrete examples from art and music to illustrate how this interplay manifests, revealing melancholy as an essential precondition for artistic and intellectual innovation. Furthermore, the paper addresses how this capacity for authentic melancholy faces significant challenges in the contemporary cultural landscape, particularly amidst the dominance of technology and social media. By exploring these facets, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of melancholy's role in human experience and its enduring potential to inspire profound creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Melancholy, a complex and multifaceted emotion, has captivated human imagination for millennia. From ancient Greek philosophy to modern psychology, it's been variously understood as a disease, a character trait, or a profound existential condition. This enduring

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fascination stems from its paradoxical nature: it can be both a source of suffering and a catalyst for creativity.[1]

In ancient Greece, melancholic individuals were often associated with genius and creativity. Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, proposed that the four humors—blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile—influenced human temperament and behavior. Melancholic individuals were believed to have an excess of black bile, linking it to a contemplative and introspective nature. This association between melancholy and creativity persisted throughout the classical period, with figures like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle demonstrating its profound impact.[2]

However, in the Middle Ages, melancholy's perception shifted. It was often associated with spiritual sloth and acedia—a state of spiritual apathy and listlessness. Melancholic individuals were viewed as susceptible to demonic influence and encouraged to seek spiritual guidance and discipline. The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason and progress, sought to rationalize and medicalize melancholy. While thinkers like Immanuel Kant recognized its potential to inspire profound thought and aesthetic appreciation, others viewed it as a pathological condition to be treated. Romantic thinkers, on the other hand, embraced melancholy as a source of artistic inspiration. Poets, painters, and musicians often drew on their melancholic experiences to create powerful and evocative works.[3]

Heidegger, following Kierkegaard's tradition, offers a unique philosophical interpretation of melancholy. For him, melancholy isn't merely a psychological state but a fundamental mode of being. It's a condition arising from an awareness of human existence's

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1 Holm-Hadulla, Roussel, and Hofmann, "Depression and Creativity — The Case of the German Poet, Scientist and Statesman J. W. v. Goethe," 44.

2 Pretzsch, "Philosophy and Melancholy: Reflections on the Role of Melancholy in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's Philosophical Thought," 74.

3 Gowland, "The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy," 77–78.

limitations and ultimate finitude. By exploring melancholy through the lens of Heidegger's philosophy, this research seeks a deeper understanding of its role in human creativity and the human condition.[4]

Beyond this profound philosophical exploration, the paradox of melancholy and creativity deeply resonates within diverse Asian societies and cultures. While Heidegger didn't directly address this specific context, his ideas of melancholy as a fundamental mode of human existence offer a lens to understand how profound sadness and reflections on finitude, often present in Eastern spiritual and artistic traditions, can catalyze unique creative expressions. For instance, in many Eastern philosophies, the awareness of impermanence and limitation often serves as a starting point for pursuing enlightenment or creating deeply meaningful art. Melancholy, in this sense, isn't merely a Western pathology; it's a universal gateway to a deeper understanding of self and world, manifesting in various forms like poetry, meditation, or visual arts that reflect life's fragility and beauty amidst transience.

Beyond this profound philosophical exploration, the paradox of melancholy and creativity deeply resonates within diverse Asian societies and cultures. While Heidegger didn't directly address this specific context, his ideas of melancholy as a fundamental mode of human existence offer a potent lens to understand how profound sadness and reflections on finitude—often deeply embedded in Eastern spiritual and artistic traditions—can catalyze unique creative expressions. For instance, in many Eastern philosophies, the awareness of impermanence (*anitya* in Buddhism, *mu* in Zen) and limitation often serves as a starting point for pursuing enlightenment or creating deeply meaningful art. Consider the poignant beauty of haiku or the intricate symbolism in East Asian ink paintings, where the

[4] Pretzsch, "Philosophy and Melancholy: Reflections on the Role of Melancholy in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's Philosophical Thought," 75.

transient nature of existence often becomes the wellspring of profound aesthetic experience. Melancholy, in this sense, isn't merely a Western pathology; it's a universal gateway to a deeper understanding of self and world, manifesting in various forms like poetry, meditation, or visual arts that reflect life's fragility and beauty amidst transience.[5]

To delve deeper, this research explores the paradoxical nature of melancholy and creativity. How can a seemingly negative emotion serve as a catalyst for innovation and artistic expression? Additionally, considering contemporary culture's impact on melancholy is crucial. The rise of technology and social media has undoubtedly shaped our experiences of sadness and longing, raising questions about melancholic thought's evolving nature. By addressing these gaps, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of melancholy's role in human experience and its potential to inspire creativity.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER BACKGROUND

Martin Heidegger, born September 26, 1889, in Messkirch, a small town in southwest Germany, displayed an early inclination towards philosophical inquiry. Despite briefly considering a career in the priesthood, he pursued theological studies at the University of Freiburg. While his primary focus was theology, he independently developed an interest in philosophical questions, particularly the meaning of being. This interest was sparked by his encounter with Brentano's work on Aristotle and Braig's "On Being," both encountered during his secondary education. Furthermore, he became deeply engaged with Husserl's "Logical Investigations" during his initial theological semester.[6]

Heidegger's early academic development was significantly influenced by three major intellectual currents: Aristotelian Scholasticism, Husserlian phenomenology, and neo-

[5] Kalmanson, *Cross-Cultural Existentialism*, 75.
[6] GORNER, *HEIDEGGER'S BEING AND TIME An Introduction*, 1.

Kantian logic. This early intellectual synthesis is evident in his early writings, where he expressed a desire to systematically study medieval philosophy, integrating it with phenomenological insights.[7]

Heidegger's early career also reflected a strong religious inclination. He initially pursued theological studies and even briefly entered a Jesuit novitiate. This period is reflected in his early writings, which often engaged with religious and philosophical issues from a Catholic perspective. However, even then, Heidegger began developing his own independent philosophical voice, moving beyond traditional religious and philosophical frameworks.[8]

Heidegger's early writings, while influenced by religious and philosophical traditions, also foreshadowed his later philosophical developments. For instance, his early writings exhibit a nascent form of the 'phenomenological method' that would become central to his later work. This method emphasizes a careful, non-objectifying 'fathoming of sense'—a hermeneutical approach to understanding the meaning of being.

Heidegger's 1922 'vita' marks a significant departure from his earlier intellectual trajectory, outlined in his 1915 'Curriculum Vitae,' where he emphasized a systematic study of medieval logic and psychology. In the 1922 'vita,' Heidegger shifts his focus towards 'factic life'—the lived experience of human existence—as the central concern of his philosophical inquiry. This shift reflects a growing influence of phenomenology, particularly the hermeneutical approach championed by Dilthey and his school.[9]

Heidegger emphasizes 'interpretive exposition' (*Auslegung*) as the primary method for understanding human existence. This involves a careful, non-objectifying examination of

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7 Kisiel and Sheehan, *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, xxi.
8 Kisiel and Sheehan, xxiii.
9 Kisiel and Sheehan, xxiii.

the lived world, focusing on how individuals understand and engage with their surroundings. Recognizing that human existence is fundamentally situated within a specific historical and cultural context, Heidegger emphasizes the importance of the 'historical spirit' and the 'fullness of history' in shaping human experience.[10]

This shift signifies a move beyond the scholastic and neo-Kantian frameworks that influenced his earlier work. Heidegger seeks to develop a more original and authentic approach to philosophical inquiry—one that addresses human existence's fundamental questions in a more direct and meaningful way. This is evident in his growing interest in 'life philosophies' and his exploration of traditional philosophical approaches' limitations.[11]

Heidegger's philosophy inextricably intertwines with his personal life. He believed that authentic philosophizing stems from an individual's honest confrontation with their unique existence, including personal history and shaping circumstances. This 'existential self-appropriation' acknowledges the inescapable influence of factors like upbringing, religious background, and personal experiences on one's worldview.[12]

For Heidegger, his own past—growing up in a deeply religious environment, his time in seminary, and his eventual break with traditional religion—profoundly shaped his philosophical outlook. He rejected philosophy as an objective, detached pursuit, arguing instead that it must begin with a deep understanding of one's own 'facticity'—the concrete realities of one's existence.[13]

Heidegger emphasized the importance of 'understanding each other' not in terms of shared doctrines or systems, but through the shared human experience of grappling with

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10 Kisiel and Sheehan, xxiii.

11 Farwell and Philosophy Documentation Center, "Can Heidegger's Craftsman Be Authentic?," 77.

12 Kisiel and Sheehan, *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, xii.

13 Blattner, "The State of the Question in Early Heidegger Studies," 128.

one's own existence. He believed that a true philosophical community is formed not by agreement on abstract ideas, but by the individual's radical commitment to understanding their unique place in the world.[14]

HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF MELANCHOLY

Heidegger, influenced by Kierkegaard, viewed melancholy as a deeply personal, even divinely ordained, state. Kierkegaard, grappling with his paralyzing bouts of melancholy, revealed a profound understanding of this condition in his personal writings, particularly his diaries. He saw it not merely as a temporary bodily affliction, but as an inherent part of an individual's very being, especially pronounced in those of exceptional talent or those who stood out from the 'average person'. This 'congenital melancholy,' while a source of immense suffering, was perceived by Kierkegaard as a divine destiny—a 'thorn in the flesh' that bound him to a higher purpose.[15]

Heidegger's concept of melancholy is deeply intertwined with the notion of *fundamental attunement* in his philosophy. He argues that our understanding of life and its interpretation is fundamentally shaped by our pre-existing assumptions. This circularity—where our initial assumptions guide our inquiry and ultimately reinforce them—highlights the subjective nature of our understanding.[16]

Heidegger argues that particular fundamental attunement—such as the melancholic mood often accompanying philosophical inquiry—is deeply rooted in the historical trajectory of human existence. This history, however, cannot be fully predicted or controlled; it can only be distorted by mood. While an attunement's specific form and intensity may vary

[14] Kisiel and Sheehan, *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, xiii.

[15] Pretzsch, "Philosophy and Melancholy: Reflections on the Role of Melancholy in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's Philosophical Thought," 80.

[16] Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics — World, Finitude, Solitude (W. McNeill & N. Walker, Trans.)*, 181.

across different eras, philosophy maintains a unique proximity to these profound states of being. This isn't due to any inherent philosophical superiority, but because genuine philosophical inquiry, like artistic creation, demands a certain kind of 'creativity.' This creativity, however, isn't about producing novelties or asserting dominance. It requires a profound sense of responsibility and a willingness to shoulder the burdens accompanying authentic engagement with existence. This burden, often manifested as a melancholic mood, arises from philosophical inquiry's inherent gravity and the weight of the questions it seeks to address.[17]

Heidegger posits a profound connection between creative achievement and the melancholic mood. He argues that true freedom—the cornerstone of creative activity—is inextricably linked to a burden, a responsibility that weighs heavily upon the individual. This burden, a source of profound anxiety and introspection, manifests as a melancholic mood. Heidegger asserts that all creative acts, whether the creator is consciously aware of it or not, originate from a state of melancholic contemplation. This doesn't imply that everyone experiencing melancholy is inherently creative. Heidegger means that philosophy, as a fundamental and creative human activity, is inherently linked to a melancholic attunement. This melancholic mood influences philosophical inquiry's overall approach rather than dictating its specific content. It sets the stage, defining the boundaries and very essence of philosophical questioning.[18]

The very act of philosophical creation presupposes a will to self-revelation, a desire to emerge from the ground and present itself. However, this self-presentation always occurs within the ground's context—a fundamental and often unyielding reality. While God has ultimate control over the ground, the creature, despite its creative efforts, remains

[17] Heidegger, 182.
[18] Heidegger, 183.

fundamentally limited and bound by it. This inherent limitation—this constant struggle against the ground—gives rise to a profound sense of melancholy, a 'veil of sadness' that pervades all of life.[19]

Aristotle recognized this, observing that creators—such as poets, thinkers, and statesmen—are often 'melancholy spirits.' This melancholy stems from the inherent tension between the creative impulse and the limitations imposed by the ground of existence. Furthermore, the passage suggests that evil arises from the ground's inherent limitations and its desire to become the sole condition of existence. Since the ground is an integral part of being's essence, evil is, in principle, an inherent part of the human condition. This perspective highlights evil's inevitable presence within any system or framework that seeks to encompass being's totality.[20]

RELEVANCE MELANCHOLY AND CREATIVITY

Heidegger identifies fundamental attunements of melancholy as crucial for creative potential. This melancholic state disrupts our everyday complacency, forcing us to confront existence's limitations and indeterminacy. Melancholy reveals our being's precariousness, highlighting the 'nothingness' that underlies all existence. This confrontation with the abyss can be unsettling yet liberating, prompting us to question our assumptions and seek deeper meaning. Similarly, boredom, by exposing everyday life's hollowness, can awaken us to existence's unexplored possibilities. It can motivate us to break free from inauthenticity and embrace a more authentic way of being.[21]

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19 Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom. (J. Stambaugh, Trans.)*, 160.

20 Heidegger, 160.

21 Pretzsch, "Philosophy and Melancholy: Reflections on the Role of Melancholy in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's Philosophical Thought," 85.

Like Kierkegaard's exploration of despair, Heidegger views melancholic states not as purely negative but as opportunities for growth and transformation. They can catalyze creative action by confronting our limitations, breaking free from inauthenticity, and embracing freedom. By acknowledging our limitations and existence's precariousness, *Dasein* are forced to confront their mortality and life's fleeting nature. This awareness can be a powerful motivator, driving *Dasein* to make the most of limited time and create something meaningful. Furthermore, melancholy can disrupt our comfortable routines and force us to question assumptions about existence and the world. This can lead to a break from inauthenticity and a renewed commitment to living authentically. Feeling melancholy thrusts our 'thrownness' into freedom—inherent indeterminacy that can be both terrifying and liberating. It acknowledges that humans aren't predetermined beings but have the freedom to shape their own existence. This freedom, while daunting, also opens a vast space for creativity and self-determination.[22]

Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, with its emphasis on human existence's 'thrownness' and the constant interplay between Being and nothingness, echoes Kierkegaard's exploration of despair and the search for authentic existence. Kierkegaard, in The Sickness Unto Death, explores how painful melancholy and despair can lead to a deeper understanding of the self. He argues that by confronting these states and acknowledging their grounding in God, individuals can achieve self-determination, self-acceptance, and ultimately, an authentic Christian existence. Heidegger, offering a more secular perspective, shares a similar view. He suggests the melancholic mood allows Dasein to encounter the 'Being of Being'—existence's underlying ground. This encounter, while unsettling, can awaken *Dasein* to its authentic possibilities and liberate it from everyday distractions.[23]

[22] Pretzsch, 89.
[23] Pretzsch, 89.

Heidegger stated that the ability to 'cross the emotional abyss' of melancholy is crucial for creative transformation. This involves accepting limitations, embracing existential powerlessness, and finding meaning despite those limitations. Acknowledging and accepting human existence's inherent limitations—including our finitude and the ever-present possibility of failure—is essential. Recognizing that we don't control everything, and many life aspects are beyond our control, is another crucial step. Despite these limitations, finding meaning and purpose in our lives through creative expression and authentic engagement with the world is paramount. Heidegger, in a different way, highlights the paradoxical relationship between limitation and liberation. He suggests that confronting our limitations—including their melancholic awareness—can be a powerful catalyst for creative action, prompting us to break free from inauthenticity, embrace our freedom, and find meaning in the face of finitude.[24]

Heidegger emphasizes the profound connection between creativity and a melancholic awareness of our limitations. True creativity, whether in philosophy or art, requires a 'burden'—a deep sense of responsibility and a willingness to confront human existence's inherent limitations. This 'burden' often manifests as a melancholic mood: a profound awareness of our finitude and existence's fleeting nature. This melancholic awareness, while potentially paralyzing, can also be a powerful catalyst for creative expression. By confronting our limitations and our Being's inherent precariousness, we're forced to grapple with existential questions and seek deeper meaning. This search for meaning, often fueled by a sense of loss or incompleteness, can become the driving force behind artistic creation.[25]

[24] Pretzsch, 89.

[25] Dill, "Heidegger, Art, and the Overcoming of Metaphysics," 306.

Heidegger further emphasizes 'care's' importance in the creative process. This 'care' means self-care; it involves a deep engagement with the world and a concern for authentic existence. It requires a willingness to confront the 'burden' of creative responsibility and acknowledge the limitations inherent in the creative act. This care provides the necessary space for introspection and contemplation, allowing artists to delve into their inner worlds and connect with their deepest emotions, including melancholy. In solitude, artists can confront their limitations, grapple with existential anxieties, and cultivate the deep focus required for creative breakthroughs.[26]

Heidegger elaborates in *The Origin of the Work of Art* on creativity's nature by examining the act of artistic creation itself. He argues that the 'work' of art isn't merely an object but a manifestation of a creative process involving deep engagement with existence's 'ground.' This engagement, often characterized by solitude and a melancholic awareness of human existence's limitations, allows the artist to 'bring forth' something new and meaningful. This 'bringing forth' involves a confrontation with the 'nothingness' that underlies all existence. It requires a willingness to embrace the unknown, step beyond the familiar, and create something never before seen. This act of creation, therefore, isn't a matter of technical skill or aesthetic mastery; it's a profound engagement with human facticity—a struggle to find meaning and purpose.[27] As Heidegger[28] profoundly states:

> *The more purely the work is itself transported into the openness of beings—an openness opened by itself—the more simply does it transport us into this openness and thus at the same time transport us out of the realm of the ordinary. To submit to this displacement means: to transform our accustomed ties to world and to earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work. Only the restraint of this staying lets what is created be the work that it is. This letting the work be a work we call the preserving of the work.*

[26] Burke, "Being Toward Christ: Heidegger and Bonhoeffer on Art and Possibility," 7.
[27] Peters, "Affirming Solitude: Heidegger and Blanchot on Art," 17–18.
[28] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 64.

This quote underscores how the work of art, by revealing itself, transports us beyond the mundane, inviting us into a deeper truth. It is precisely this 'displacement'—a radical shift from the ordinary—that mirrors the melancholic attunement's power to unveil authentic possibilities and drive profound creative expression.

Art, in its primordial power, radically challenges the inauthentic understanding of the world that entraps Dasein. Like a sunbeam piercing a cloudy sky, the artwork compels us beyond daily routines, forcing us to question our habitual views on the disclosure of Being. Such encounters with art initiate a profound dialogue with Being itself—a reflection guiding us toward a collaborative contemplation of Being and our authentic existence. Art invites us to experience the wonder of Being, allowing us to grasp our unique and precarious place in the cosmic order, and to forge a meaningful existence despite being perpetually shadowed by suffering, uncertainty, and finitude. Through its disruptive nature, art shatters everyday complacency, forcing us to confront the limitations of our narrow perspectives and to open ourselves to new possibilities of meaning, deeper understanding, and more authentic ways of being-in-the-world. This echoes the "saying of world and earth" in poetry, the special language of Being in the disclosure of truth.[29]

To understand art's role in forming authenticity, we can look at concrete examples. Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* (1889) opens a world, revealing a hidden dimension of Being. Its swirling brushstrokes and vibrant colors convey a dynamic cosmic energy, portraying the universe as a ceaseless flux. Similarly, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) embodies the alienation and spiritual emptiness of the early 20th century, unveiling a world stripped of traditional meaning, yet still glimmering with faint hope. Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* (1901-1904) delves into the depths of loss, challenging the inauthentic

[29] Anam, *The Abyss And The Ascent: Nihilism And The Quest For Meaning In Nietzsche And Heidegger*, 52.

tendency to flee from sorrow. This music forces a visceral confrontation with life's fragility and death's inevitability, while also fostering a profound appreciation for fleeting beauty. These three works, each in its medium, compel us to confront the fundamental reality of existence, dismantle inauthentic foundations, and pave the way for a more authentic and profound understanding of Being.[30]

The act of creation itself can be seen as a response to this melancholic awareness. By creating, artists attempt to make sense of their existence, give form to their solitude, and find meaning in the face of mortality. The work of art, in this sense, becomes an expression of the artist's struggle with finitude—a testament to their attempt to find meaning and beauty despite mortality.[31]

The creative process involves a dynamic interplay between the artist and the artwork. The artist is 'possessed' by the creative impulse, driven by a deep, often unconscious, need to express something beyond their conscious awareness. This 'possession' can be a source of both inspiration and anxiety as the artist grapples with the unknown and the creative process's demands. Once created, the artwork may bring a sense of 'dispossession,' as the work takes on a life of its own. Having emerged from the artist's inner world, the artwork now stands as an independent entity, transcending the artist's initial intentions. This can be a melancholic experience: a recognition of the artist's limitations and human endeavor's fleeting nature. Despite this sense of 'dispossession,' the artist continues to be drawn back to the creative process. This ongoing cycle of engagement and detachment—of possession and dispossession—drives the artist to explore new

[30] Anam, 53–57.

[31] Despins, “Radical Shift Art and the Mysterious Ground of Being,” 52.

avenues of expression, push their creativity's boundaries, and strive for a deeper understanding of existence.[32]

Melancholy, as a fundamental attunement often associated with sadness and despair, can be a powerful source of creative inspiration. It can provide artists with a unique perspective on existence, a deeper understanding of suffering and joy, and a profound sense of urgency to create something meaningful in the face of finitude. The act of creation, fueled by melancholic introspection and nurtured by solitude, allows artists to give form to their anxieties, explore the depths of their being, and leave a lasting legacy that transcends their own mortality.[33]

Furthermore, understanding melancholy as a catalyst for creativity becomes increasingly vital in the contemporary cultural landscape. In an era dominated by technology and social media, the human experience of sadness and longing has undergone significant transformation. Rather than facilitating deep reflection, these platforms often promote superficial happiness and obscure the space for authentic existential struggle. Constant exposure to idealized images and an unrelenting information flow can diminish our capacity for melancholy to 'manifest' as a creative force. This condition threatens to dull our ability to confront 'nothingness' and limitation—which, according to Heidegger, are preconditions for genuine freedom and creative expression. Therefore, re-exploring melancholy's role within a Heideggerian framework isn't merely relevant for philosophical understanding, but also crucial for sustaining our capacity to produce original and deeply meaningful works amidst modern disruption's relentless currents.

[32] Peters, "Affirming Solitude: Heidegger and Blanchot on Art," 25.
[33] Dill, "Heidegger, Art, and the Overcoming of Metaphysics," 22.

In the contemporary cultural landscape, increasingly dominated by technology and social media, melancholy risks distortion from its potential as a creative catalyst. *Dasein* is propelled toward the surface of instant interactions, hindering the experience of deep melancholic moods. Constant distractions from notifications and social media feeds act as an evasion of the silence and introspection melancholy requires, preventing *Dasein* from experiencing the "stillness" that allows for the *Ruf des Seins*. Sadness and loneliness, the fundamental seeds of melancholy, are often commodified or simplified into "content," rather than essential existential experiences. From a Heideggerian perspective, this relates to the concept of Enframing, where technology views everything as readily available "stock-piles," including human inner experience. Melancholy, which should be an "unconcealment", is instead framed as data or a disturbance to be managed.[34]

This suppression of melancholy leads to a diminished capacity for authentic creativity. If melancholy, the impetus for thinking and profound creativity, is distorted, creative products tend to be superficial or repetitive, lacking radical engagement with "nothingness." Without confronting melancholy, human existence risks moving further from authenticity towards inauthenticity. Thus, maintaining the capacity for authentic melancholy becomes crucial in the modern context. This constitutes a philosophical act of resistance in a world dominated by Enframing, safeguarding the space for truth as unconcealment and the event of Being's unconcealment. Preserving melancholy means upholding the foundation for genuine freedom and profound creative expression.[35]

[34] Redmond, “The Loneliness Room,” 70–72.
[35] Siddiqi, “Being, Melancholy,” 58–60.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how melancholy, understood through a Heideggerian lens as a fundamental attunement rather than a mere psychological state, serves as an essential precondition for authentic creativity and profound thinking. We demonstrated that true freedom, critical for creative expression, is intrinsically linked to a melancholic awareness of human finitude and the confrontation with "nothingness." This attunement not only underpins philosophical inquiry but also resonates deeply across diverse Asian spiritual and artistic traditions, manifesting in various forms of artistic creation that seek to convey genuine meaning amidst existence's inherent limitations. Furthermore, this study highlighted the vital importance of preserving the capacity for authentic melancholy in the contemporary cultural landscape, particularly given the pervasive influence of technology and social media that often obscure genuine existential struggle. Ultimately, understanding melancholy is crucial not only for grasping its role in human existence but also for sustaining our ability to produce original and deeply meaningful works in the modern era.

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