Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MPhil (K.U. Leuven, 2012)
MA (K.U. Leuven, 2011)
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“Destruction Loops: Expressionistic Phenomenology and the Ontological Possibility of Self-Destruction”

Department of Sociology

Wednesday, April 21, 2021
1:00 P.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Steve Garlick, Department of Sociology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Nina Belmonte, Department of Philosophy, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. David Koukal, Department of Philosophy, University of Detroit Mercy

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Bradley Buckham, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

*Destruction Loops* uses the guiding phenomenon of self-destruction to begin to develop an ontology that would not be ontosoteriological—that is, it would not cast being itself in a saving role for human being. Beginning with Martin Heidegger’s thought (both early and late), but also relinquishing his ontosoteriology, *Destruction Loops* seeks to explain how people can self-destruct *because of* their insight into the character of being, time, reality, and the world. A pre-theoretical understanding *that* one is self-destructing is often not sufficient for an affective resolve to *stop* oneself from self-destructing. It is not, because one’s pre-theoretical insight into the character of being can be existentially discouraging and result in an affective demeanor of resignation. In this sense, the correlation with being itself does not save, but rather exacerbates the existential conditions for self-destruction. The human being, understood not as *Sorge* (care) or as mortal but as desire for a loved one, is fundamentally non-correlated with being itself because it wants more for this other than being can give. An exposure to this insight is painful—and also difficult: for it then leaves the self alone with a task to build for this other *against* the conditions of being itself. All the while, being can turn the self against itself, by turning the origin of its selfhood (its relationship with a special other) against this endeavor. Instead of building, one can then fall into a destruction loop, where the meaning of the past overcomplicates the need for building the conditions of meaning and love in life.

In the following pages, expressionistic phenomenology—a phenomenology that seeks to express the formal inadequacy of being itself—is expressed through the pseudonymous, intellectual memoir called *Generation Loss*, written by Dylan Errington in the wake of the disappearance of his ex-girlfriend, Christina “Chris” Weston. Dylan’s book iterates, and formally reflects, the need for building and creating works that express desire’s dissatisfaction with being itself.