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On Difference within the Same:
A Reading of Martin Heidegger's *Was Heisst
Denken?*

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April 2016

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted,
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On Difference within the Same: A Reading of Martin Heidegger's *Was Heisst Denken?*

In this thesis I offer an exegetical account of Martin Heidegger's 1951/1952 lecture course *Was Heisst Denken?*. My reading of the text is based on two essential tenets Heidegger puts forward in *Was Heisst Denken?*: that there cannot be a conceptual definition of thinking and that thinking begins by attending to the unfolding of language from the *Ereignis*. Thus the thesis aims to show how Heidegger's teaching of thinking takes place largely through attending to the unfolding of language, which seeks to interrupt the conceptual and representational thinking of metaphysics through challenging its instrumental use of language. Heidegger's development of a notion of thinking does thus largely take place through a critique of traditional forms of thinking by seeking to find an entry within metaphysics to that which calls forth thinking, which he names as the twofold of being. As Heidegger presents the lecture course as a concerted effort to learn thinking, the structure of the thesis follows the structure of the lecture course itself, in order to show how the momentum of Heidegger's text builds up through a consistent introduction of difference through language, in order to allow the reader to hear the difference at the heart of the *Ereignis* itself. To show this my reading is based on the German text rather than its English translation, in order to highlight how Heidegger works with the particularity of the German language in order to find and instil difference within the conceptual and representational thinking of metaphysics.

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Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Paul Davies and Dr. Mahon O'Brien for their support and guidance, which has been instrumental to the shaping and completion of this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Tanja Stähler and Dr. Kathleen Stock who in their roles of head of department have supported me throughout my time as a Dphil student. Special thanks to Dr. Michael Lewis whose unwavering support and encouragement have played a vital role in the completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends at the University of Sussex, for their companionship and feedback: Christos Hadjioannou, Dimitri Kladiskakis, Patrick Levy, Tim Carter, Alex Elliot, Phil Homburg and Jacob Berkson. And finally I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and encouragement, this thesis would not have been possible without them.

Abbreviations

Works by Martin Heidegger in German

GA 2	<i>Sein und Zeit</i>
GA 4	<i>Erläuterungen zu Hölderlin's Dichtung</i>
GA 5	<i>Holzwege</i>
GA 6.2	<i>Nietzsche. Band II.</i>
GA 7	<i>Vorträge und Aufsätze</i>
GA 8	<i>Was Heisst Denken?</i>
GA 9	<i>Wegmarken</i>
GA 11	<i>Identität und Differenz</i>
GA 12	<i>Unterwegs zur Sprache</i>
GA 14	<i>Zur Sache des Denkens</i>
GA 40	<i>Einführung in die Metaphysik</i>
GA 50	<i>1. Nietzsche's Metaphysik 2. Einleitung in die Philosophie: Denken und Dichten</i>
GA 52	<i>Hölderlins Hymne "Andenken"</i>
GA 53	<i>Hölderlin's Hymne "Der Ister"</i>
GA 66	<i>Besinnung</i>
GA 74	<i>Zum Wesen der Sprache und Zur Frage nach der Kunst</i>
GA 79	<i>Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge</i>

Works by Martin Heidegger in English

BT	<i>Being and Time</i>
BW	<i>Basic Writings</i>
OWL	<i>On the Way to Language</i>

OBT	<i>Off the Beaten Track</i>
PPW	<i>Philosophical and Political Writings</i>
WICT	<i>What is Called Thinking?</i>

Introduction

Introduction to the argument of the thesis

Heidegger develops his notion of thinking, which he calls in the Spiegel Interview (1966), ‘the other thinking’¹ because according to him what calls us into thinking is the difference at the heart of the twofold of being, this twofold however has been forgotten since the beginning of the completion of Greek thought with Plato. While those early thinkers still thought within the twofold of being, they never explicitly named or thought it, and subsequent thinkers and interpreters of their thought, proceeded from what was already unconcealed within their thought, without themselves thinking the difference to which these early thinkers responded. As Heidegger writes in ‘Der Spruch des Anaximander’:

from earliest times it has seemed as though presence and what is present are each something for themselves. Unintentionally, presence itself became something present. Represented in terms of something present it became that which is above everything else that is present and so the highest of beings that are present. As soon as presence is named, it is already represented as a present being. Fundamentally, presence as such is not distinguished from what is present. It is taken to be only the most universal and highest of present beings and hence as one of them. The essence of presence together with the difference between presence and what is present remains forgotten. *The oblivion of being is oblivion to the difference between being and the being.*²

The entire history of philosophy then is marked by this oblivion. This is what determines our present understanding of thinking and consequently all our comportment. We thus always already find ourselves within this oblivion of the difference between being and the being. Metaphysics has always thought being as presence, and as an entity, and hence as identical *with* entities: hence metaphysics has reduced the same — the true relation of belonging together enjoyed by being and beings

¹ PPW, p. 40.

² OBT, pp. 274 - 275.

— to the identical: it has elided the most fundamental difference. Yet, according to Heidegger this oblivion is also what allows us to eventually remember and think again the difference of being and beings. As Heidegger further writes:

the difference between being and the being, however, can be experienced as something forgotten only if it is unveiled along with the presencing of what is present; only if it has left a trace, which remains preserved in language, to which being comes. Thinking along these lines, we may surmise that the difference has shown up more in the earlier than in the later word of being - though never having been named as such. Illumination of the difference, therefore, cannot mean that the difference appears as the difference. On the contrary, it may be that the relation to what is present announces itself in presencing as such, in such a way, indeed, that presencing comes to speak *as this relation*.³

Crucially here, Heidegger names *language* that which contains the trace of this forgetting and hence also the possibility of retrieving the difference that speaks in it. Thus language contains within itself the possibility of opening a path *not* followed by the past two thousand years of metaphysical history. As the language we speak is the language of metaphysics Heidegger seeks to transform our relation to language, to teach us to hear language differently, to hear other possibilities resounding within words that have become used up to such an extent that their meaning seems obvious, or which even seem devoid of meaning: none more so than the word ‘being’ itself. To hear language in a non-metaphysical way, or to hear language differently, is to attempt the hazard path beyond metaphysical thinking. To do so, Heidegger returns to the very beginning of metaphysics, to Parmenides, who was perhaps the first thinker of the West.

In the lecture course we shall read here, Heidegger’s concern is not immediately with the nature of being but with the nature of thinking. For two thousand years, our thought has been dominated by a single interpretation, which Heidegger associates with Plato, or at least, Platonism. As Heidegger’s engagement with the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whom he posits as the ultimate metaphysical thinker in the history

³ OBT, p. 275.

of philosophy, shows, the dominant forms of thinking (logical, scientific, everyday) are not only marked by this interpretation, but frame every aspect of existence. His criticism of the uniform happiness of man, is echoed in ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’, published only two years later, in which Heidegger gives the omnipresent positing (*stellen*) – which according to him is the dominant manifestation and enactment of the technical interpretation of thinking, the name *Gestell*, often translated into English as *Enframing*. Heidegger’s critique of the uniformity of happiness, and the technical modes of thinking that support and disseminate it, similar to his critique of technological production in ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’, aims to show that in the *Gestell* what makes man “human”, or in Heidegger’s vocabulary “mortal”, his essential relation to being, is lost and replaced by the need for the constant presence and availability for production. What Heidegger particularly stresses in these accounts, is that this dominant mode of thinking, is everywhere, and orders everything, and thus becomes inescapable, as his declaration that the end of metaphysics will last longer than its entire history, expresses.

Heidegger’s response to what he considers to be the greatest threat, is to seek a thinking that is otherwise than metaphysics, that can resist it, or, at least open up another comportment. By returning to Plato’s ‘father’, Parmenides, in *Was Heisst Denken?* Heidegger attempts a return to the source of the Platonic-metaphysical interpretation of thinking precisely in order to open up the possibility of another thinking. Yet, Heidegger’s development of a thinking otherwise than metaphysics, takes place through the question ‘what is called thinking? / what calls for thinking?’ and does not supply the reader with an answer to the question of what this other thinking is. He refuses to offer a propositional, conceptual answer, as logic in its reflective ‘thinking *about* thinking’ might give, but rather a deepening of the question itself, an attempt to think by means of a continual re-asking of the question, repeating the same, but

repeating it ever differently. For in this process of repetition, what was previously unheard comes to language, and the one asking it becomes acquainted with a new manner of thinking precisely thereby. It is to teach us to question, to think in a questioning way, that the lecture course *Was Heisst Denken?* attempts to accomplish.

One of the main arguments of *Was Heisst Denken?* is that thinking and language, intricately belonging together, also influence each other. Concomitant with the development of rules of grammar, syntax and concepts is the development of thinking into logic. Thus when Heidegger proposes an other thinking, it also means that the language of this other thinking, must be otherwise than metaphysics. Yet Heidegger does not advocate simply to change rules of grammar, syntax and the creation of neologisms, but rather insists on a transformation of our relationship to language. And it is precisely the way in which Heidegger shows the need and possibility of another relation to language, namely through the employment of language, that is one of the main achievements of *Was Heisst Denken?*

The Structure of the Thesis

Although *Was Heisst Denken?* begins by asking about thinking, it is clear that being will not be far away. Indeed, it becomes clear that being and thinking comprise an indissoluble unity for Heidegger. One of the crucial elements of Heidegger's description of thinking in this text is that it does not think spontaneously, but only because it is *called* to do so by something else: specifically, being. When Heidegger argues that thinking is called, and therefore suggests that thinking must always be thought from and in relation to this calling, this shapes his understanding and treatment of the topic, and the way he addresses the nature of thinking and its relation to being is precisely by considering this notion of calling, or *heissen*, and this opens onto a consideration of the

notion of hearing or listening, precisely to such a call. This in turn leads him to a consideration of language as that which we listen to, and which we must learn to listen to differently, if what has been forgotten is to be retrieved. This is a gradual process and it is one which has to be undertaken gradually. This gradual process is what Heidegger attempts to lead his listeners through over the course of the lecture series. Hence our own text, in order to understand this process will follow the structure of *Was Heisst Denken?* as closely as possible.

This process, as already discussed above, is predominantly one of repetition: it never ultimately departs from the place where it begins, which is that of the question ‘What is called thinking?’. It is an ever deepening putting in question of thinking itself, and thinking in the very form of the question. Each time anew we are to learn to hear this question differently. It is this progressively eliciting the previously unheard and unthought that our thesis attempts to chart and bring to appearance. Overall, I have attempted to demonstrate that whenever Heidegger attempts to *think* in the lecture course, he does so in a way that is wholly internal to language. That thinking takes place only by attending to the essential unfolding of language from the *Ereignis*, in the attempt to let language speak and thus to hear something previously unheard within it. As a result of, or rather *in* this very act of thinking, the possibility of thinking differently emerges. Instead of merely drawing out the positive statements Heidegger makes about thinking and try to develop conceptual definitions based on them, this thesis seeks to show them as emplaced within the movement of the text and the unfolding of language.

This thesis argues and proceeds from this argument, that for Heidegger, the purpose of this lecture course is not simply to offer up a critique of the technical interpretation of thinking, as demonstrating, how, through language, one can think through the history of

philosophy towards its unthought: the difference of being. The thesis not only aims to provide an exegetical account of the claims made in the text, but also, and predominantly, seeks to highlight how this thinking of difference through language, takes place. Consequently, Heidegger's method to demonstrate how a thinking otherwise than metaphysics could become possible through a transformation of our relationship to language, is of particular interest. Heidegger's ongoing preoccupation with a topology of thinking and a topographic use of language suggest that what Heidegger essentially is trying to do, is to create a journey, an experience, of language for the reader, that might result in a transformation of language that opens up the possibility of another thinking. The thesis, then, takes seriously Heidegger's claim that he is teaching thinking and that thinking can be learned, and that this learning effectively takes the form of learning to listen to the call of being and responding to it thoughtfully. The method of repetition, discussed earlier, is one of the ways, in which Heidegger allows, or perhaps rather forces, the reader to remain with a word or a phrase until it has transgressed its initial metaphysical meaning and grammar.

Was Heisst Denken? has received surprisingly little attention within the Heidegger scholarship, despite being considered by Heidegger as one of his main works. Heidegger himself remarks in the Spiegel Interview that it is the least read of all his texts.⁴ There have certainly been a number of notable commentators on *Was Heisst Denken?*, including Stephen Mulhall, Jacques Derrida, Miguel De Beistegui and Robert Mugerauer, and yet to my knowledge no substantial and detailed treatment of *Was Heisst Denken?* in its entirety has been published in English. In its own way, this thesis seeks to contribute to this underrepresented aspect of Heidegger scholarship. It aims to

⁴ PPW, p. 42.

do so, predominantly, in offering a substantial account of the lecture course, regarding not only the arguments made within it, but takes as its main aim to show how language operates in *Was Heisst Denken* ? As stated above, Heidegger thinks through and with language, attending to its essential unfolding. This thinking with and through language is enacted in the German language, making use of idiomatic characteristics of the German language, especially in the play of pre-fixes and word roots, which highlights the movement of language that can guide thinking. The English translation by John Glenn Gray however, does not capture the movement of language, that is so central to Heidegger's thought, as chapter 4 of this thesis demonstrates in more detail. One the goals of this thesis, is to demonstrate to the non-German speaking reader, how Heidegger not only discusses another form of thinking that is non-conceptual and non-metaphysical, a thinking that attempts to allow itself to be guided by the essential unfolding of language, but how this thinking is already at work in the text itself.

As the stated aim of the thesis is to provide an account of how Heidegger's method of teaching his students and subsequent readers thinking, through repetition, language, and undergoing a questioning of thinking, the focus of the thesis is predominantly on *Was Heisst Denken*?. In order to be able to follow the progression of the lecture course closely and be attentive to the unfolding of language within it, certain sacrifices and omissions have been necessary. I will briefly address a few. For example, certain claims made by Heidegger are accepted without in depth critical analysis, as they have been considered crucial premises from which Heidegger's thinking departs and builds upon. This means, the thesis accepts Heidegger's analysis and account of the history of philosophy as metaphysics and the dominance of the technical interpretation of thinking, in order to be able to give an account of Heidegger's response to his own

posed problematic. While, for example, Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche has been contested by Nietzsche scholars and commentators on Heidegger's work, the thesis is interested in showing how Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche informs his thinking, and the place Nietzsche takes in the learning of thinking, rather than in the accuracy of this interpretation. Further, while other works by Heidegger are referenced and at times discussed in detail within the thesis, the thesis refrains from providing a comprehensive comparative account of several of Heidegger's notions, such as *Ereignis*, *Difference* and language as well as refraining from commenting in depth on the continuities and discontinuities of the early and later Heidegger. Further, the reason for such omissions, is that questions of Heidegger's accuracy, or rather faithfulness of the reading of the history of metaphysics, and the question of the relation between the early and later Heidegger have been treated extensively in Heidegger scholarship. Nevertheless, the work this thesis is attempting, would hopefully allow for a better understanding of Heidegger's work on thinking and the thinking of being, which is central to his entire oeuvre, and therefore contribute to subsequent commentaries on Heidegger.

A note on translation

The thesis is based upon the German text *Was Heisst Denken?* and all translations are mine unless indicated otherwise. Attending to the unfolding of language is crucial to understanding Heidegger's aim and arguments, as his arguments unfold precisely through a specific use of language. The connections he makes between certain terms are not always visible or audible in the published English translation. Hence I would suggest that the experience of reading the German text differs from the experience of reading the English translation by John Glenn Gray because the workings of language are often sacrificed for the sake of greater legibility. Consequently, I have also referred

throughout the thesis to the German text and only referred to the English text when my interpretation of it — or the interpretation of another commentator — appears to have been based predominantly upon it.

My own translation has sought to retain as much of the idiomatic employment of the German language as possible, as well as Heidegger's use of scriptural or graphic devices. However, some amendments have been made: for example, words which Heidegger has hyphenated in German have been hyphenated in English only when this hyphenation can achieve the same purpose.

Translating Heidegger's work is a difficult task because the specificity of the German idiom is often untranslatable into English, at least in a way that leads to an idiomatic use of English, and every translation must make sacrifices. However, while a readability of the English text is often privileged, it often must do so at the expense of the obscuring the specific working and unfolding of the language. Yet, as I have already indicated above, for Heidegger it is language that opens up the relation of difference which would eventually allow us to let ourselves be addressed by the calling, the difference which is indeed the calling itself or that which calls us to think in the most fundamental sense. Hence for the purpose of the elucidation of Heidegger's argument, since it is an argument or attempt to think that is made exclusively by means of language, and a certain relation *to* language and not by a mere instrumental use of it, that would serve a conceptual thought that remained prior to and independent of it, special care has been taken to attend as much as possible to the specificity of Heidegger's language and its movement.

One example of this, which recurs throughout the thesis, and indeed in certain English translations of Heidegger, is the non-idiomatic use of the word 'from' which occurs in such locutions as 'determining the essence of language *from* the eventuation

of appropriation [*Ereignis*]. The natural way in which to say this in English would be to say ‘on the basis of...’, but Heidegger is precisely attempting to free himself of this metaphysical way of speaking, which thinks in terms of a substantial ground, and that which it supports, a substance and its accidents. This is precisely to think being as an entity, to think it metaphysically, as an entity which is more in being, more enduring than those more contingent and transient entities which depend upon it for their existence.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 focuses on the nature and role of the question in *Was Heisst Denken?*. The title question is repeated throughout the text by Heidegger in the hope that each time it becomes more questioning. I shall show what the underlying notion of the question is, which is based on a distinction Heidegger makes between the questionable and the question-worthy. The question-worthy puts thinking in its entirety into question, in contrast to the questionable which merely seeks to close identified gaps of knowledge about thinking. The question-worthy is given by the promise of thinking, which also names language as the condition of all questioning. I will then discuss how and why listening must be the first and ultimate step of learning thinking, as listening is understood in this context no longer as the perception of sound, but instead in terms of an attending to and belonging to the address of being.

Chapter 2

This chapter seeks to explicate how Heidegger develops his notion of thinking as called by being and seeks to establish an essential and binding relation of man and thinking through the essential address of being. I shall further show how Heidegger begins to

think difference from the withdrawal of being and develops an account of language which unfolds from the *Ereignis*, and marks the difference between pure aletheic showing of the *Ereignis* and the development of language as a system of signs. I also show that the thinking of difference is at the heart of the distinction Heidegger makes between a thinking of the twofold of being and a technical interpretation of thinking.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche in *Was Heisst Denken?*, who allows Heidegger to develop an account of metaphysical thought from which he seeks to distinguish his own. We thus begin to learn what it means that metaphysics is complete, and how the 'other thinking' might distinguish itself from the metaphysical. Yet at the same time Heidegger tries to show how both the other thinking and metaphysical thinking speak always within the relation of man and being and respond to the address of being. This highlights how easily the forgetting of being takes place and the difficulty of allowing oneself to be taken in by the calling of being.

Chapter 4

The central aim of the chapter is to show how Heidegger works with and through language, by highlighting certain methods such as hyphenation and the use of prefixes in order to allow us to read and hear language differently, and thus to open up another way of thinking precisely *within* this language. It further gives an account of Heidegger's notion of language, in particular on how the unfolding of language is able to open up new paths of thinking and how the learning of thinking can take hold in the space between terms (which belong to a conception of language as a system of signs determined by signification) and words (which belong to the *Ereignis*).

Chapter 5

In this chapter we follow Heidegger's inquiry into the first question 'what is named with the word "thinking"?, which takes place as an elucidation and placement of the words that are opened up in the play-space of the spoken. In this inquiry Heidegger's shows how the nature of thinking is named within the word itself. We then see how Heidegger's inquiry into the word logic, shows how a technical interpretation of thinking transforms the relation of thinking to its matter. Here the necessity to free thinking from the its technical interpretation in order that it might allow itself to be addressed by being becomes clear.

Chapter 6

This chapter shows how Heidegger's revision and rethinking of Parmenides's saying *χρηὶ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἑὸν ἔμμεναι* seeks to free it from its metaphysical interpretation. Heidegger's revision seeks to free the saying from the logical standards of language and its grammar in order to open the saying up to the possibility of another thinking. This allows Heidegger to show how the difference of the twofold of being speaks in every thinking and how the subsequent metaphysical interpretations have displaced this difference into a thinking of identity.

Chapter 1: Beginning with the Question

Introductory remarks

In this chapter I focus on the question which functions in *Was Heisst Denken?* not in the traditional manner as a placeholder for an answer, but rather belongs to the very possibility of thinking. Thinking only becomes possible when it itself becomes question-worthy, that is, when thinking is thought from that which gives us to think, its matter, rather than as a concept which is subject to further clarification or revision. It is the question-worthy which directs us towards the matter of thinking, and keeps us going in this direction. To begin thinking then means to begin to attend to the matter of thinking, that which gives us to think. Attending to the matter of thinking is thought by Heidegger in terms of the correspondence with that which addresses itself to thinking, which is first made possible by attentive listening. In this chapter, we shall investigate what it means to say that thinking takes the form of questioning, and just why it is that for this very reason, the question 'what is thinking?' cannot be given a straightforward, immediate answer.

At the beginning: a question

We enter into that, which calls thinking, when we are thinking ourselves.
For such an attempt to succeed, we have to be ready to learn thinking.

As soon as we allow ourselves to enter into such learning, we have already admitted that we are not yet capable of thinking.⁵

I want to begin this thesis on *Was Heisst Denken?* with the question of where and how the lecture course itself truly begins, if we understand it to be the effort of learning thinking. In what follows I shall show that for Heidegger the lecture course truly begins

⁵ GA 8, p. 5.

with the becoming question-worthy of thinking, which depends upon a rethinking of the nature of the question itself.

As Heidegger already indicates in the opening passage, which implies that our current conception of thinking might not be true to the essence proper to thinking, as well as through the title of the lecture course which poses thinking as a question, thinking must first be put in question, before one can begin to make any statements about thinking and then, finally, learn how to think. I shall begin by looking at two interpretations of where and how the lecture course begins, one by Miguel De Beistegui and the other by Stephen Mulhall in order to mark out the space of my own understanding, which differs somewhat from these readings.

The opening paragraph of the lecture course, quoted above and to which I shall return in the second chapter in more detail, sets the scene by establishing thinking as something which must be learned and culminates in the assertion a few pages later, which proclaims that ‘most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are not yet thinking’, a phrase to which Heidegger returns repeatedly throughout the lecture course and which postulates, as Stephen Mulhall rightly remarks, ‘that thinking must begin (“before all else”, as Heidegger has it) with what is most thought-provoking, and hence with the assertion’.⁶ Miguel De Beistegui makes a similar observation, and also claims that the assertion constitutes the real opening of the lecture course. According to him, through the assertion the essential themes and the tone of the lecture course are set.⁷ Yet in contrast to these readings, we might suggest that the focus on the assertion becomes equivalent to a focus on the positive statements that can be made about thinking, without allowing thinking to first become a question for the reader. The

⁶ Stephen Mulhall, *Inheritance & Originality: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kierkegaard*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 286.

⁷ See Miguel De Beistegui, ‘Of the Gift That Comes to Thinking’, transl. Jeffrey B. Taylor, in *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 24, 1994, p. 99. See also Miguel de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp. 2-3.

attention that the assertion has received by commentators on *What Is Called Thinking?*, prompts Stephen Mulhall, to point out in *Inheritance and Originality*, that

we might not all at once notice that Heidegger's thought-provoking assertion is not in fact right at the start of his series of lectures, and so feel the need to ask whether, rather than leaping over Heidegger's supposedly preparatory but genuinely opening sentences in order to reach the official site for the commencement of thinking, we should instead turn back to them and attend to the possibility that we have already turned away from his first invitation to take a few practice leaps into thinking.⁸

Mulhall reads the first sentences of the opening section of *What Is Called Thinking?* as identifying the lecture course as dealing with a very specific subject matter which can only be arrived at through a leap from elsewhere, and this elsewhere is the title question "what is called thinking?"⁹ Mulhall further claims that the opening claim of the lecture course identifies its auditors or readers as people who feel that they do not know what it means to think, as otherwise they would not have been attracted by its title question.¹⁰ He concludes, that the auditors' presence at those opening lines declares their lack of any capacity to think as well as a readiness to learn thinking, having been 'diagnosed' by Heidegger as 'not having realized an essential part of their nature'.¹¹ According to Mulhall, the auditor's interest in the lecture course derives from a lack they already

⁸ Stephen Mulhall, 2001, p. 287. Due to the overall aim of Mulhall's book, the question of beginning is of particular importance, as for him Heidegger's work has always been one of 'the necessary situatedness of any philosophical originality', which he sees already explicitly at work in *Being and Time* in the relation of its second division to the first. Thus according to Mulhall, *Being and Time* "all but declares that to philosophize is a matter of endlessly beginning again, of opening a new beginning for thinking by reopening the possibilities bequeathed by (one's own and other's) past thinking.' This heavily influences Mulhall's reading of *What Is Called Thinking?* a text in which he finds these questions 'particularly sharply posed.' See Mulhall, 2001, p. 285.

⁹ Mulhall, 2001, p. 287.

¹⁰ Mulhall, 2001, p. 287.

¹¹ Mulhall, 2001, p. 288. Mulhall further writes '[w]e are not only not transparent to ourselves; we are divided against ourselves – capable of turning ourselves away from our own essential nature, eclipsing our own most authentic possibility.' Mulhall, in his analysis of *What Is Called Thinking?* is concerned with how the lecture course can help us to assume an authentic relation to our philosophical and linguistic inheritance, and thus reads the lecture course with regard to its ability to provide us with a way to achieve this. Given our concern to read the lecture course on its own terms, the risk inherent in this approach is that Mulhall's reader might not make the transition from the merely questionable to the question-worthy due to the focus on his own achievement of authenticity, by privileging his own agency towards this authenticity rather than letting himself be taken into the address of the question-worthy.

perceive in themselves, a temporary lack which they hope the lecture course will address and be able to close.

Hence Mulhall understands the question as functioning as an invitation to and selection of a specific kind of reader for the lecture course itself. Mulhall's argument is informed by an interpretation of the question and the opening lines as asking after the essence of thinking, understood in the sense of an activity whose nature is in question to those who feel drawn to the lecture course in the hope of finally learning and mastering it. Thus the question, as Mulhall presents it, invites the reader in with the promise that the lecture course will teach them something about thinking, so that they afterwards no longer have to ask the question, having attained a more authentic relation to themselves.

I would argue that while Heidegger is aware that this might be a possible attitude of those reading the lecture course, he seeks to challenge this common conception of the question by cautioning us against expecting a straightforward resolution of the question in the form of a direct, propositional answer, stating that

[t]he title of this lecture course is a question. It reads: 'what is called thinking?'. One expects of a lecture course that it answers the question. The progression of the lecture course would thereby bring about the disappearance of the question step by step. But the title of this lecture course remains. Because it is meant as it sounds. It gives a title to the entire lecture course. It remains a single question: what calls us to thinking? What is that which calls us into thinking?¹²

Heidegger thus insists that the question itself must remain as a question throughout the lecture course, and cannot and should not be sought to be replaced with an answer. The translation of the title question by John Glenn Gray then loses the most important question posed by the title and thereby also obscures the true nature of the question: to ask after that which gives us to think, which first calls us to thinking, which, as we shall see, is not something that originates from man.

¹² GA 8, p. 219.

Furthermore, as Heidegger will develop as the lecture course progresses, the question is not posed by man like other questions are. Thus, the question ‘what is called thinking?’ operates differently to other questions, which ask after an activity:

[t]he question ‘what is called thinking?’ is of a different kind. When we ask ‘what is cycling?’ then we are asking after something everyone knows. When someone does not already know what it means, then we can teach him. But this is not the case with thinking. It is only seemingly known, what this question properly asks. The question itself is still unasked. Therefore, the aim of the question ‘what is called thinking?’ is not to create an answer and through this answer settle the question quickly and conclusively. Rather, the purpose of this question is only that: to bring the question into its question-worthiness.¹³

The difference between cycling and thinking as Heidegger describes them here, is that cycling is something that ‘everyone knows’ and this knowledge can be transmitted and taught to others. Thinking, consequently, cannot be an object of knowledge, and therefore the question concerning thinking cannot be treated like a question concerning a gap in knowledge. As Heidegger writes:

[t]he question ‘what is called thinking’ can never be answered, by presenting a conceptual determination, a definition, of thinking, which we then continue to work on. We are not going to think *about* thinking. We remain outside of mere reflection [*Reflexion*], which turns thinking into its object.¹⁴

Thinking thus is also not treated as a concept, something we are going to think *about* or treat as an object, which would mean that it would be possible for us to assume a disinterested distance from it. Heidegger thus claims that it is the subject of the question, thinking, which fundamentally separates it from questions which ask after other activities, thus suggesting that thinking is an activity unlike any other.

As Heidegger will explicate in the course of the first lectures, what distinguishes thinking from all other activities is that thinking concerns us essentially, which is to say that it constitutes our very essence. This separates thinking fundamentally from all other

¹³ GA 8, p. 163.

¹⁴ GA 8, p. 23.

activities which can or can not be performed by human beings, but which leave their essential being untouched. Yet we can only come to learn what thinking is and what constitutes this distinction from all other activities once we ask the question ‘what is called thinking?’ properly, something, Heidegger claims, we have thus far failed to do. But what does it mean to ask the question properly? How must it be asked differently to the question ‘what is cycling?’? So far we have established that we cannot simply ask the question with the aim of receiving an answer which will rid us of the question itself. It will also not be enough simply to repeat the question after Heidegger, in order to initiate a line of investigation into the matter. Learning properly to ask the question will be the aim of the lecture course as much as finding a response to it, which, as Heidegger will show in the course of *Was Heisst Denken?* will take the form of an attentive listening to the way-making of language.

Heidegger does not promise us that we can learn anything from the lecture course that would allow us to part with the question itself. At the beginning of *Was Heisst Denken?* we encounter a question that not only gives a title to the investigations of the lecture course, a beginning in the formal sense (the very first words of the lecture course), but also forms its true beginning: the questioning and becoming question-worthy of thinking. The question ‘what is called thinking?’ does require more than a straightforward answer, it requires that we turn towards it in order to learn thinking. The nature of the lecture course is not one of simple progression, from a question to an answer, but rather returns again and again to the question in an attempt finally to think it, that is to realize that which it raises as question-worthy. And being able to think it means to dwell on the question, and not to depart from it. Thus the lecture course weaves itself through several themes raised by the question and returns to these themes again and again with new insights and perspectives. Like the assertion, the question is

repeated again and again, but this repetition is not a simple repetition of an identical phrase; rather it allows us to hear something new within the same question or statement each time it is repeated. As I shall develop in the course of the present work, this hearing of the difference in the same (*das Selbe*) is essential to Heidegger's notion of thinking. As the lecture course receives its structure and unity from the question, in what follows I will lay out the specific characteristics Heidegger ascribes to the question.

The questionable and the question-worthy

Heidegger's understanding of the question is based on a distinction that operates throughout *Was Heisst Denken?*, the difference between the 'merely questionable' (*das bloß Fragliche*), and the question-worthy (*das Fragwürdige*). The questionable can be posited by man and remains there always available for interrogation. It deals with that which can be questioned (*befragbar*), but does not concern us essentially, and therefore presents no necessity or urgency in itself. What belongs to the questionable is the unknown, the undetermined and the unexplained.¹⁵ Its main purpose is to identify that which is still not completely uncovered and known, and stands thus in the service of the acquisition of knowledge. As such, it cannot be in the service of thinking, as Heidegger writes in 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?':

[w]e, the people of today, are, through a peculiar dominance of the modern sciences, entangled in a strange fallacy which assumes that knowledge can be derived from the sciences, and thinking should be answerable to the jurisdiction of the sciences. But the sole thing which a thinker is each time able to say is impossible to prove or refute logically or empirically. It is also not a matter of belief. It can only be brought to vision through a thoughtful questioning [*fragend-denkend*]. What is brought to vision always appears as the *question-worthy*.¹⁶

¹⁵ GA 50, pp. 143-144.

¹⁶ GA 7, p. 117.

Thus while the sciences pose and seek to answer questions, they deal with the merely questionable, and the impetus for the questionable comes from identified gaps in knowledge. Yet, as Heidegger will repeatedly emphasize throughout the lecture course, thinking does not aim to gather knowledge about entities nor does it utilize scientific methodologies. What Heidegger argues is that when one rejects the acquisition of knowledge as the aim of thinking, it does not become merely a matter of faith or belief, but rather a thoughtful and questioning engagement with the matter of thinking, which will emerge as question-worthy, and thus also worthy of thought.¹⁷ Hence the question-worthy can not be a result of man's identifying a lack in himself and therefore posing the question, rather it is thinking itself which is question-worthy and therefore demands to be considered in its question-worthiness.

While the German word '*fragwürdig*' in its everyday use connotes the dubious and the unworthy,¹⁸ Heidegger emphasizes and interprets this compound word on the basis of the second word which it contains: *würdig*: worthy or dignified, emphasized here in the English translation through the insertion of a hyphen. To call something 'question-worthy' is to point us towards its inherent dignity and worthiness which we should respond to by addressing it through questioning. Thus Heidegger seeks to elevate the question from its mere functionality as the placeholder for an answer, so that it may attain and rest in its own dignity. But this questioning can not be that kind of 'officiousness of a willing' which only wants to gain knowledge. Rather it demands that its dignity be honoured, by letting this dignity dictate the manner of our response to the question. This is why the question-worthy gives rise to a particular kind of question:

¹⁷ I should also point out here, that this kind of questioning, which does not enter into the question-worthy but deals with the merely questionable, is not found only in the sciences, but also where one merely occupies oneself with philosophy and philosophical questions due to an interest in the discipline without properly asking the question. See GA 8, p. 7. See chapter 2 of this thesis for a brief explication of Heidegger's different uses of the word 'philosophy' in *Was Heisst Denken?*

¹⁸ Heidegger here uses the word '*Bedenklich*' (thought-provoking) as another word for '*Fragwürdig*' (question-worthy). Both share the same connotations in common speech, namely that of the dubious and suspicious which Heidegger aims to relieve them of. GA 50, p. 143.

[o]ne characteristic of the questioning which stems from the question-worthy, is that they [the questions] always return to themselves and therefore are not answerable in the usual way. Asking these questions encounters specific difficulties, which contemplation should not avoid, because they are perhaps the characteristics of the question-worthy's own dignity, assuming that thinking, whatever it may be, [...], belong[s] to the question-worthy.¹⁹

The question-worthy then allows no point of departure from itself, but instead always returns to itself. Thus the thoughtful and questioning engagement with the question-worthy asks that we remain with that which was raised as question-worthy, which by itself provides the impetus and direction for questioning, as Heidegger writes in 'Wissenschaft und Besinnung':

[i]n contradistinction to all that is merely questionable, as well as to everything that is 'without question', that which is worthy of questioning alone affords, from out of itself, the clear impetus and untrammelled pause [*freien Anhalt*] through which we are able to call toward us and call to come near that which addresses itself to our essence. Traveling in the direction that is a way toward that which is worthy of questioning is not adventure but homecoming.²⁰

It is worth remarking on William Lovitt's choice to translate '*freien Anhalt*'²¹ as 'untrammelled pause'. This choice was most likely informed by the verb *anhalten* which may mean 'to pause' or 'to stop', but its noun would be *das Anhalten* or *Anhaltung*. The German word *Anhalt*, however, means rather 'point of reference' or 'guiding principle' and would therefore present a point of orientation, something for thinking to hold on to. Read thus, this passage argues that the question-worthy not only provides an impetus for thinking, but also something from which and towards which it can orientate itself. Hence, it does not simply send us on an adventure, a departure and journey away from ourselves, but is a return home. Unlike the sciences, which aim to

¹⁹ GA 50, pp. 144-145.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Transl. by William Lovitt. New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977, pp. 179 – 180.

²¹ GA 7, p. 63.

make progress and accumulate knowledge, thinking does not aim towards anything beyond itself. As quoted above, the question which is asked from out of the question-worthy always returns to itself, rather than to an answer extraneous to itself. Hence Heidegger calls the pursuit of that which is question-worthy “homecoming” (*Heimkehr*) and more precisely, the homecoming to that which ‘addresses itself to our essence’ [*‘sich unserem Wesen zuspricht’*.]

It is crucial here to attend to the difference between the question which treats thinking as something merely questionable, that is as a question man poses in order to clarify the concept of thinking, and thinking as the question-worthy. As question-worthy, thinking always and essentially possesses the character of the question-worthy, irrespective of our own perception concerning our knowledge and mastery of it. Hence the direction of this questioning is derived from the matter in question itself, and consequently remains uncorrupted by foreign concerns and motivations. Hence, Heidegger claims that the question ‘what is called thinking?’ is of a unique kind (*einzigartig*), as ‘what matters more than anything with this question is first and only this: to bring the question into its question-worthiness.’²² The only possible response to the question, so Heidegger writes, must be ‘a speaking [*ein Sprechen*], which speaks from a correspondence [*Entsprechen*]. It follows the address [*Geheiss*] and holds what has been questioned [*das Gefragte*] in its question-worthiness [*Frag-Würdigkeit*].’²³ Thus the task of the thinker is to remain with the question and allow it to become more and more question-worthy (*fragwürdiger*), as it is only through this question-worthiness that we are thinking. More than simply aiming to clarify and revise the current definition of thinking, which would posit thinking as something merely questionable, Heidegger aims to elevate thinking to the question-worthy, which will ‘open up the

²² GA 8, pp. 162 - 163.

²³ GA 8, p. 174.

gates to the essential nature of all things and destinies.’²⁴ Or to rephrase this, Heidegger attempts to respond to the question-worthiness of thinking.

The question-worthy as the abode of thinking

As noted above, the question-worthy gives the question a distinct character, which demands of the questioner a specific comportment towards questioning: the question no longer designates a path towards an answer. Instead, as Heidegger writes:

[t]he word of an attempt to think [*Denkversuch*] is not a turn of phrase to sound modest. This designation makes the claim that here we take a path of questioning upon which the question-worthy is taken to be the only abode [*der einzige Aufenthaltsbereich*] of thinking.²⁵

The question-worthy indicates and delimits the site towards which questioning and thinking must direct themselves. From the very beginning and throughout *Was Heisst Denken?* Heidegger describes the lecture course in terms of a terrain filled with paths, which both keep to and stray from the main established tracks, path-marks, mountains, abysses, which we have to traverse, either step by step or through leaps:

We are attempting, on the path of this lecture, to learn thinking. The path reaches far. We are only venturing a few steps. They lead, if all goes well, into the foothills of thinking. But they lead to places, which we must traverse, in order to reach the site when only a leap will help. It alone takes us into the locality of thinking. Thus, already at the beginning of our way, we are taking a few practice leaps, without noticing this immediately and nor do we need to.²⁶

This description of the lecture course and thinking itself as a terrain filled with paths and locations we must traverse in order to reach the site of that which calls us into thinking, seeks to distinguish itself from the straightforward and linear progression of metaphysical or logical inquiry. There are no certain or known paths on which the

²⁴ GA 7, p. 64.

²⁵ GA 8, p. 189.

²⁶ GA 8, p. 15.

questioning and learning of thinking can seek refuge. The difficulty lies precisely in finding this path towards that which the question-worthy indicates as the site from which we are summoned to thought. The question-worthy, which provides the impetus and direction of the lecture course, determines its path and determines it as homecoming, and designates the specific manner of the path the lecture course takes. We must remain underway in the question and in order to get underway we must both embark on this path and open ourselves up to its direction and prospect:

First and only the going [*Gehen*], here the thoughtful-questioning [*das denkende Fragen*] is movement [*die Be-wegung*]. It is the letting-emerge of the path [*Weg*]. This character of the way of thought [*Denkweg*] belongs to the precursory character of thinking, which itself rests in an enigmatic solitude, the word meant here in a high and not sentimental sense.²⁷

Thinking and questioning is movement or way-making, as Heidegger's hyphenation of the German word *Be-wegung* indicates, highlighting the word's meaning of bringing underway, or making a way.²⁸ The question-worthy then indicates the realm within which thinking resides. The question-worthy points us towards and shows us that which addresses itself to us essentially and provides from itself the impetus and orientation for thinking, if thinking is that which turns towards what addresses itself to us essentially. Yet it is the path of questioning which brings us into the question-worthy. The path itself never departs from this question, it only attempts to become more questioning. Yet to reach into the question-worthy we must first learn to dwell within that which allows the question-worthy to emerge as question-worthy.

²⁷ GA 8, p. 174.

²⁸ Throughout the lecture course Heidegger will characterise metaphysical thought in terms of a standing still and bringing to a stand, to contrast it with the movement of thinking. I shall return to this below.

Before the question

If the task of the thinker is to maintain the question in its question-worthiness, then we might wonder about the relation of thinking to the question. Heidegger's work is often concerned with the question, with the retrieval of that which he deems question-worthy, which is usually that which has the appearance of the self-evident or that which has been forgotten: the most central example in Heidegger's work is the question of being. The prevalence of the question in Heidegger's work and the privileged status it seems to occupy in his thought, has been commented upon by Jacques Derrida, who, in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, worries about 'the apparently absolute and long unquestioned privilege of the *Fragen* – of, in the last instance, the essentially questioning form, the essence and dignity of thought or the path of thought.'²⁹ Derrida further writes: '[b]ut, it seems to me, he *almost* never stopped identifying what is highest and best in thought with the question, this "piety" of thought.'³⁰

These worries are raised in the context of what Derrida calls 'the question of the question' which asks if for Heidegger thinking is simply equivalent to questioning and whether or not there is something that comes before the question. As I shall show, for Heidegger thinking and questioning are not equivalent, nor is questioning the highest form of thinking. What then did Heidegger mean in 'Die Frage nach der Technik' by the statement 'questioning is the piety of thought,'³¹ to which Derrida refers in the above quoted passage? According to Derrida, Heidegger's use of the word 'piety' (*Frömmigkeit*) means 'yielding to the holding sway and the safekeeping of truth (*fügsam dem Walten und Verwahren der Wahrheit*).'³² When Heidegger himself returns to his statement that 'questioning is the piety of thought' in 'Das Wesen der Sprache',

²⁹ Jacques Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 9.

³⁰ Jacques Derrida, 1989, p. 9.

³¹ GA 7, p. 36.

³² Derrida, 1989, pp. 131n – 132n.

he writes that ‘piety’ (*Frömmigkeit*) is meant there in the old sense of the German word *fromm* (pious): ‘obedient [*fügsam*], here namely to that which thinking has to think’.³³

Questioning, then, is placed here in the service of thinking, as a way of staying close to that which gives us to think, which thinking must direct itself towards, its matter. Both the question-worthy, which determines the nature of questioning, and that which ‘thinking has to think’, which Heidegger names ‘the most thought-provoking’ (*das Bedenklichste*) in *Was Heisst Denken?*, determine the nature of thinking. The question-worthy is the same as (but not identical to) the most thought-provoking (*das Bedenklichste*) a term I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter. What comes before the question then, is that which gives itself to questioning as the most question-worthy, what gives itself to thinking as the most thought-provoking or thought-worthy.

Following his elucidation of the word “piety”, Heidegger argues that the ‘gesture proper to thinking, cannot be questioning, but rather the listening to the promise [*Zusage*] of that which all questioning first begins to question, by asking after its essence.’³⁴ Derrida, who refrains from translating *Zusage*, notes that it bears several meanings, such as ‘promise, agreement or consent, originary abandonment to what is given in the promise itself’³⁵ and offers the following interpretation of the term *Zusage* in Heidegger’s work:

This promise, this reply which is produced a priori in the form of acquiescence, this commitment of language towards language, this giving of language by language and to language is what Heidegger at this point regularly names *Zusage*. And it is in the name of this *Zusage* that he again puts in question, if one can still call it this, the ultimate authority, the supposed last instance of the questioning attitude.³⁶

³³ GA 12, p. 165.

³⁴ GA 12, p. 165.

³⁵ Derrida, 1989, p. 130n.

³⁶ Derrida, 1989, pp. 129n – 130n. Derrida emphasizes the bindingness of this commitment: ‘The question is thus not the last word in language. First, because it is not the first word. At any rate, before the word, there is this sometimes wordless word which we name the “yes”. A sort of pre-originary pledge [*gage*] which precedes any other engagement in language or action. But the fact that it precedes language does not mean that it is foreign to it. The gage engages in language and so always in a language. The question itself is thus pledged - which does not mean linked or constrained, reduced to silence, on the

Questioning always already takes place in language, and thus requires a prior commitment to or affirmation of language. Hence Derrida concludes that language is the condition of the question's possibility and argues that language is the element in which every question must move; it is prior to any question. He writes: '[t]he call of Being – every question already responds to it, the promise has already taken place wherever language comes. Language always, *before any question*, and in the very question, comes down to [*revient à*] the promise.'³⁷ Being and language then come before the question, the question is already a response to the call of being, it already moves within language. Heidegger further explicates:

[e]very questioning about the matter of thinking, every questioning after its essence, is already carried by the promise [*Zusage*] of that which comes into question. Therefore the hearing of the promise is the proper gesture of the thinking which has now become a necessity, and not questioning. But because listening-to is a listening-to the en-countering word [*entgegenende Wort*], listening unfolds towards the promise [*Zu-sage*] of that which is to-be-thought always into a questioning for an answer. The characterisation of thinking as listening sounds strange, and also lacks the clarity which is needed here. This alone characterises the peculiarity of listening: that it receives its determination and clarity from that which is intimated to it through the promise.³⁸

The question-worthy which gives that which is questioned its own dignity, ensures that questioning remains focused on that which wants to be thought; it is a pathway, an entry into that which gives us to think. The question-worthy directs our attention towards this originary promise, which always already takes place in language. By keeping us oriented in the direction of the *Zusage*, the question-worthy, by virtue of its very nature,

contrary - by the pledge of *Zusage*. It answers in advance, and whatever it does, to this pledge and of this pledge. It is engaged by it in a responsibility it has not chosen and which assigns it even its liberty. The pledge will have been given before any other event. It is nonetheless, in its very coming before, an event, but an event of which the memory [*memoire*] comes before any particular recollection [*souvenir*] and to which we are linked by a faith which defeats any narrative. No erasure is possible for such a pledge. No going back.' Derrida, 1989, p. 130n.

³⁷ Derrida, 1989, p. 94.

³⁸ GA 12, p. 169.

prepares us for this listening. In what follows I shall introduce the notion of listening, as Heidegger seeks to rethink it, along with the way in which Heidegger as a teacher, in this lecture course, might help us achieve this listening.

Listening

Crucially Heidegger seeks to rethink the notion of hearing, revising it beyond a mere perception of sounds, a physiological process:

[i]f our hearing would be first and only the perception and transfer of sounds, to which other processes can be added, then it would simply be that sound-characters enter into one ear and leave through the other. This might be the case if we were not gathering upon that which is granted to us [*das Zugespochene*]. The granted is itself the gathered and present presence. Hearing is properly this self-gathering, which collects itself toward the address [*Anspruch*] and grant [*Zuspruch*]. Listening is first of all the gathered hearkening [*das gesammelte Horchen*]. Within hearkening [*Horchsamen*] unfolds the hearing [*Gehör*]. We hear because we are all ears. But “ear” does not mean the acoustic sensory apparatus.³⁹

Heidegger suggests that proper hearing in the sense of hearkening is not a straightforward matter of the consequence of our possessing ears; rather we have ears because we can hear. Hearing means to attend to that which addresses and concerns man, but can, according to Heidegger, also entail the mishearing of what is essential. This is because there cannot be a uniform method of listening, as he argues, ‘[t]he answer comes each time only from that which the thoughtful questioning hears [*erhört*]. This is the voice of silence, which thinking thinks towards, but always only as hearkening, and all saying is hearkened and tuned by the voice.’⁴⁰ This silent voice is the call of being, the prior promise (*Zusage*) which cannot be perceived acoustically and yet which belongs to a listening that first of all makes the sensory perception of sound possible. Heidegger further writes:

³⁹ GA 7, p. 219. Heidegger no longer uses the word hearkening (*horchen*), which indicates an attentive form of listening, in *Was Heisst Denken?*, yet he retains its sense within the word ‘hearing’ or ‘listening’ (*Hören*). For a further explication of the relation of hearing and hearkening, see GA 55, p. 245.

⁴⁰ GA 66, p. 358.

[w]e can only be those listeners, insofar as we belong into the saying [*in die Sage gehören*]. This letting-arrive, the path to speaking, comes already from a letting-listen and letting-belong into the saying. This shelters the proper unfolding of the way to language.⁴¹

Listening is thus thought from a relation to language, even if it is not yet clear whether this is the audible speech of mortals or the silent voice of being. The terms Heidegger uses to describes the way man is taken into his relation with being, are all related to language, which itself is not determined ‘from the sensory expression of sound.’⁴² such as ‘the silent voice of being’, ‘the silent call of being’, the promise [*Zusage*], address [*Anspruch*], and our response [*Antwort*] understood as correspondence [*Entsprechung*]. ‘Yet’, Heidegger writes, ‘there is little that can be said about proper listening, which of course concerns every man.’⁴³ Hence Heidegger argues that the question: ‘what belongs to the proper accomplishment of thinking?’ is the most difficult to answer because of ‘what would remain undecided in the already decided, namely if that which belongs [*gehört*] to thinking, belongs to us [*uns angehört*], because we have already listened [*gehört*] to it. Such hearing is up to us and only us.’⁴⁴ This is a question, Heidegger suggests, which must remain undecided, as we have not yet begun to learn to listen to this prior promise, and can therefore not yet ascertain if we are indeed capable of it.

Heidegger is here already pointing towards the notion of belonging which is thought through hearing, which he develops more concisely in his essay ‘Der Satz der Identität’, first given as a lecture in 1957, in which he attempts to think the same (*das*

⁴¹ GA 12, p. 245. Heidegger continues with the following question: ‘But how does the saying unfold, so that it is capable of this letting-listen and letting-belong?’ I shall return to this question and the relation of listening and language in Chapter 4.

⁴² Heidegger writes: ‘As *λέγειν*, speaking does not determine itself from the sensory expression of sound. When therefore saying cannot be determined from sounding, then the corresponding hearing cannot first of all consist in a sound which strikes the ear, is intercepted there, so that sounds beset the aural sense and are then further transmitted.’ GA 7, p. 219. The gathering Heidegger speaks of in the above quoted passage is one of the translations of the Greek word *λόγος*, and thereby further links language and listening through this gathering.

⁴³ GA 7, p. 220.

⁴⁴ GA 8, p. 162.

Selbe) and belonging-together (*zusammen-gehören*) from hearing (*hören*), in order to think man's belonging to being: 'In man prevails a belonging-listening [*Gehören*] to being, a belonging-listening which listens to being, because it is appropriated to it.'⁴⁵ Thus hearing is thought from a relation to being in which man always already finds himself and can only correspond to by learning to listen to the silent voice of being. How and to what extent this is possible is one of the main themes of *Was heisst Denken?*, which Heidegger will seek to gradually qualify and try to lead his readers and listeners towards.

Learning to listen is thus not only the first step towards learning thinking, it is also the most difficult. Because of the necessity of first hearing the address of that which gives us to think. Thus he proposes that our first step towards learning thinking, is learning to listen.⁴⁶

'Wait, I will teach you [*dich lehren*], what obeying means [*was gehorchen heisst*]' A mother calls after her son, who does not want to go home. Does the mother promise her son a definition of obedience [*Gehorsam*]? No. But maybe she will give him a lesson? Also no, if she is a proper mother. She will rather impart to [*beibringen*] him obedience [*Gehorchen*]. Or even better and the other way around: she will bring her son into obedience [*in das Gehorchen bringen*]. This will succeed only and easier the more directly the mother brings the son to listen [*ins Hören bringt*]. Not only so that he merely condescends to listen, but so that he can no longer stop wanting to listen [*Hörenwollen*]. Why not? Because he has become hearing [*hörend geworden*] to that to which his essential unfolding belongs [*gehört*].⁴⁷

Heidegger's example here, of a specific mode of teaching, can be taken as an example of what Heidegger understands to be his task as a teacher. Not to provide a definition of the topic, not to give lessons on the topic, but rather to bring his students into the matter, by letting them become attentive to it. Heidegger here plays on the connection between the words *Gehorsam* and *Gehorchen* both meaning obedience, *Gehorchen* as the

⁴⁵ GA 11, pp. 38 – 39.

⁴⁶ GA 8, p. 28.

⁴⁷ GA 8, pp. 51 – 52.

nominalization of the verb *gehörchen*, from the word *hören*, hearkening or hearing, and thus a *Hören*, which allows man to become *hörend*, that is both listening and obedient (obedience through listening), because it has always already entered into a belonging (*Gehören*). Thus proper listening is in a sense always already inscribed within man, through his belonging-together with being, which I indicated above but to which I will return in greater detail in the next chapter. And proper listening is thus the hearing of the silent voice of being, which is prior to the sensory perception of sound. And because listening is here thought in relation to a belonging and obedience to that which it hears and listens to, it cannot be an object of will, and neither can there be a predetermined formula of how to accomplish this hearing.

Learning as correspondence

Listening must determine itself from man's belonging to being, which is not subject to man's own doing or willing. Heidegger develops the notion of correspondence which must determine all learning and thinking:

[h]ence we are attempting here to learn thinking. We are going this way together, and do not reprimand each other. To learn means: to bring all doing and letting into correspondence with that which addresses us essentially. Depending on the manner of this essential address and the realm from which this address comes, the corresponding and the manner of learning is different.⁴⁸

Learning means to correspond to what addresses itself to us essentially, and this essential address differs depending on the matter which one aims to learn. Thus the manner in which we learn must be different each time. There is no uniform way of learning, and in this case, we must let our learning be determined by what essentially addresses us in the matter of thinking. Listening, like questioning and thinking, receives

⁴⁸ GA 8, p. 17. Here '*Lassen*' or 'letting' involves a distinctive acting that does not involve making, production, violence, or mastery, and that is therefore distinguished from action that requires bringing about in a way that makes, causes, or effects.

its essential determination from what is always prior to it, the address of being, which exceeds the sphere of human action and willing. But then, what can Heidegger as teacher really teach us? Perhaps Heidegger can not teach us anything in the traditional sense of imparting knowledge. Heidegger himself writes the following on the role of the teacher:

[t]eaching is even more difficult than learning. We know that; but we rarely think about it. And why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than learning. His conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we properly learn nothing from him, if by 'learning' we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they have: he has to learn to let them learn. The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices. The teacher is far less assured of his ground than those who learn are of theirs. If the relation between the teacher and the one taught is genuine, therefore, there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official.⁴⁹

Letting learn is more difficult, because what is at stake here is precisely not the transmission and dissemination of knowledge, not even of methodology, but rather a reawakening and letting oneself be addressed by the call of being. Further, as Heidegger shall argue as the lecture course progresses, it is also not the case that we can perceive the address of being once and then move on.⁵⁰ Rather, we have to allow ourselves to be taken in by the address of being each time anew. The task of the teacher, then, as Heidegger understands it, is to first of all awaken us to thinking as given to us in the question-worthy and thought-worthy, the silent promise of being, without however prescribing a specific methodology through which this could be accomplished.

⁴⁹ WICT, p. 15. Translation by J. Glenn Gray. See also GA 8, pp. 17 – 18.

⁵⁰ As I shall discuss below, this is where Heidegger locates the beginning of metaphysics, the departure from the address of being, in order to build upon the insights garnered from its originary reception in Ancient Greece.

Yet Heidegger believes that he can teach us something because he has already accomplished the most difficult part: the realization that the truth of being cannot be thought metaphysically or conceptually. This already takes us to Heidegger's belief that metaphysical concepts are inadequate in grasping that which arises as question-worthy and thought-provoking. Because language is given to us, in this prior promise, the first task would be learn to attune our ears to the address of being, so that we may correspond to it properly, and what that might mean will be developed by Heidegger as the lecture course progresses. Due to the inadequacy of the metaphysical concepts to which our thinking is accustomed, Heidegger at numerous moments in the lecture course, insists that learning thinking is first and foremost an *unlearning*:

To learn means: to bring our doing and letting [*Tun und Lassen*] into the correspondence [*Entsprechung*] of that which each time addresses us as essential. To be capable of this bringing into correspondence, we must embark on the way. When we are learning thinking, it is important that we do not allow the most pressing questions that we encounter on the way we take to prematurely deceive us, because they seek that which cannot be found through invention. We, the people of today, can only learn when we unlearn at the same time; in the case at hand, we can only learn thinking, when we fundamentally unlearn its previous essence. But that requires that we come to know it at the same time.⁵¹

Learning to listen means stepping outside of metaphysical thinking, which approaches its subject matter, as Heidegger will proceed to argue, always uniformly.⁵² This will involve us recognizing that our current conception of thinking is metaphysical, that is, that we have hitherto adopted a specific metaphysical comportment towards entities and being. This however, might prove the most difficult task, not least because, as Heidegger will show, metaphysics pervades every aspect of our being, and because we

⁵¹ GA 8, p. 10.

⁵² GA 8, p. 28.

always already find ourselves within it, it is difficult to recognize, because it belongs to that which has become familiar, obvious and self-evident to us.⁵³

Heidegger's teaching method in *Was Heisst Denken?* consists, among other things, in raising questions and allowing them to unfold within the familiar and metaphysical way of thinking, only then to question and challenge this first interpretation and response in order to show what this metaphysical thought leaves unthought and what it leaves unquestioned. We shall see this in the way he exposes the working of metaphysical thought through concepts, propositions, and similar devices. He exposes their limits and what they leave unthought and shows how an attentiveness to language can not only challenge the metaphysical conception and use of language, but, most importantly, can provide another possibility for thinking itself. I shall refrain here from making more general comments upon Heidegger's method here, but rather point them out as we follow Heidegger's attempt to teach his readers the learning of thinking.

Concluding remarks

The role of the question then is to turn away from the need for and focus upon any positive statements about thinking and turn towards the question itself, the persistence of which is provided by the question-worthy. The question-worthy directs us to what is promised to us in the address of being, that which thinking must think, the most thought-provoking. Learning thinking through the maintaining of that which is question-worthy and thought-provoking means to learn to dwell within the site they indicate, which implies that we first begin to listen to that which calls us into thinking.

⁵³ In the following chapters I shall explicate in further detail what Heidegger perceives as problematic concerning the all-pervading dominance of metaphysics and why it becomes a necessity to step out of the familiar.

What this might entail and to what extent that might be possible are the abiding questions of the lecture course and the next chapter shall take up these questions.

Chapter 2: What Calls for Thinking?

Introductory remarks

In the previous chapter I argued that for Heidegger learning thinking must begin with the becoming question-worthy of thinking. The question-worthy has its origin in something prior to the question and shares its provenance with that from which thinking receives its determination. We provisionally indicated this with the Heideggerian terms “most thought-provoking” and “the address of being”. In what follows I shall clarify what Heidegger means by these terms, and how they characterise a specific non-metaphysical relation of thinking, man and being. As we shall see, thinking is given to man in the *Ereignis*, the reciprocal co-appropriation of being and man, and thus *Ereignis* remains the matter of thinking.

What is called thinking?

The first response Heidegger provides to the question ‘what is called thinking?’ is that it is something that must be learned. The very first sentences of the lecture course appear to challenge the notion that man is always already thinking, and even question man’s very ability to think. These lines thereby establish the aim and tone of the lecture course:

[w]e enter into that which calls thinking, when we ourselves are thinking.
For such an attempt to succeed, we have to be ready to learn thinking.

As soon as we allow ourselves to enter into such learning, we have
already admitted that we are not yet capable of thinking [*das Denken noch
nicht vermögen*].

But man is called the one who can think – and rightly so.⁵⁴

Thus, from the very beginning, Heidegger declares that what he will call thinking in the lecture course is not what the reader might hitherto have understood thinking to be. The

⁵⁴ GA 8, p. 5.

crucial phrase here is '[w]e enter into that which calls thinking, when we ourselves are thinking' (*in das, was Denken heißt, gelangen wir, wenn wir selber denken*), which speaks of reaching and entering a 'site' which calls for thinking. In Gray's translation, however, the first sentence reads '[w]e come to know what it means to think when we ourselves try to think.'⁵⁵ While Heidegger elsewhere argues for exactly that – that we need to learn thinking in order to come to know (*kennen lernen*) what it means to think, it presents the goal of the lecture course as acquiring knowledge about something that we are not yet capable of doing. This would set out a very different path from the one Heidegger sketches in the first lecture, as for him thinking ceases to be an object of knowledge, and the purpose of the lecture course is not to acquire knowledge about thinking.⁵⁶ The difference is crucial, because from the very first sentence Heidegger points to another meaning of *heissen*, in the sense of 'calling forth' rather than 'naming' (in the sense of what the word 'thinking' *names* or 'means'), so that the first sentence can now say that thinking is something called, or rather, that we are called into thinking, and called by something towards which we must be underway, if we want to learn thinking. As this first sentence is also the first response to the question, it gives the reader an indication of how to read the question: namely that it asks after that which calls forth thinking.⁵⁷

By locating the source of thinking outside of man (a site to which we must seek entry, but have not yet reached because we are not yet thinking), Heidegger seemingly displaces it from a quality always already inherent in man to something outside of him.

Traditionally — that is, according to metaphysics — thought has been considered the

⁵⁵ WICT, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Above I pointed to the distinction Heidegger makes between the question-worthy and the merely questionable, and how the first passage in *Was Heisst Denken?* provides a way of reading the title question. Here, the original German allows for the question-worthy to emerge, while Gray's translation still moves within the questionable, that is, as identifying a gap in knowledge.

⁵⁷ Heidegger will explicate the question and the various senses of *heissen* in the second part of the lecture course. But it is important to note that all the themes of the lecture course are already raised at its beginning.

one defining quality that distinguishes man from all other living beings, as he is the ‘rational living being’ (*das vernünftige Lebewesen*): man is always already thinking because he is the *zōon logon echon*, *animal rationale*, or rational animal: ‘as rational living being, man must be able [*können*] to think if only he wants to [*will*].’⁵⁸ Yet, Heidegger’s clarification that rationality or reason ‘unfolds in thinking’⁵⁹ already indicates that it is precisely the nature or essence of thinking that will be revised, but not the fact that man’s essence lies in thinking.

Thus, thinking becomes something which must be learned, and nonetheless something we are intrinsically able to do. And that just because we are rational does not mean that we are capable of thinking. While we might be quite rightly calling ourselves the being that thinks, that we *are* thinking is not necessarily given. If the question thus sets us out on a path towards that which calls thinking forth, the response to the question would therefore have to take the form of an attempt to think. The success of this attempt to think (*Denkversuch*) would depend on our willingness to learn thinking. Learning, as discussed earlier, means to bring ourselves into correspondence (*Entsprechung*) with that which addresses (*Zuspruch*) us essentially. We learn thinking by attending to that which calls us into thinking.⁶⁰ As established in the previous chapter, this ‘attending’ takes the form of a listening. The aim of the lecture course, then, is to help us learn how to listen and correspond in thought to that which addresses itself to us, that which calls us into thinking.

⁵⁸ GA 8, p. 5.

⁵⁹ GA 8, p. 5.

⁶⁰ GA 8, pp. 5 – 6.

Inclination

The notion of thinking Heidegger begins to develop here, is thus presented as an ability (*Vermögen*) that can be learned. Heidegger explicates in the following paragraph how we are to understand his use of the word *Vermögen*:

[m]an can think, insofar as he has the possibility [*Möglichkeit*] to do so. On its own this possibility [*Mögliche*] does not guarantee we are capable [*vermögen*] of it. Because we are only capable of that which we incline [*mögen*] towards. Yet we only truly incline towards that which by itself likes [*mag*] us and likes us in our essence, by addressing [*zuspricht*] itself to our essence as that which holds us in our essence [*im Wesen hält*].⁶¹

Heidegger proposes to think possibility (*Möglichkeit*) in terms of *mögen* which has here been translated as ‘to incline’. A more straightforward translation might be ‘to like’. To be able to do something (*vermögen*) thus means to truly incline toward some thing or person. Yet we are only able to truly incline towards that which addresses itself to us essentially. In ‘Brief über den Humanismus’ Heidegger provides a more detailed account of his understanding of possibility, inclination and capability (*Möglichkeit*, *Mögen* and *Vermögen*) which should not be thought in metaphysical terms.⁶² Liking (*Mögen*) is thought as ‘taking care’ of (*annehmen*) and ‘loving’ (*lieben*) a person or thing, which bestows upon it its essential unfolding (*Wesen*). Thought thus, inclining (*mögen*) is the proper essential unfolding of enabling (*vermögen*), as enabling something to prevail in its provenance (*in seiner Herkunft* ‘*wesen*’). That which is liked, and embraced thus, is enabled by this liking, and becomes possible (*das Mögliche*). What addresses us in our essence is being and being bestows our essential unfolding upon us. Heidegger calls being ‘the quiet force of the possible’ (*die stille Kraft des Möglichen*) and emphatically distinguishes his account of the possible from a

⁶¹ GA 8, p. 5. Heidegger here plays with variations of the German word-root *mögen*, which further links the words ‘possibility’, ‘ability’, and ‘liking’ phonetically. This is a recurring strategy in *Was Heisst Denken?* and will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. The German word ‘*zusprechen*’ also has the meaning of ‘encouraging’, which Heidegger evokes here.

⁶² GA 9, pp. 316 – 317.

metaphysical understanding of possibility in opposition to actuality: ‘I do not mean the *possibilie* of a merely represented *possibilitas*, nor potential as the essence of an *actus* of *existentia*’.⁶³ Instead ‘being itself’ preserves (*wahren*) in the way of enabling-inclining man’s essence and his relation to being and thereby to thinking.⁶⁴

The inclination to thinking is the reciprocation of that which ‘holds us in our essential being.’⁶⁵ Heidegger here introduces us to a relation which has no subject or object in the metaphysical sense, and exceeds all metaphysical relations. This relation is the interplay of inclination and holding: being inclines toward us by holding us in our essential being, while we incline toward being by holding it in memory (*Gedächtnis*). *Holding* is here explicitly linked to a sheltering, a watching over, a preserving; and thinking becomes that which is attentive to the relation by manifesting it, although it does not produce the relation itself. ‘Memory is the gathering of thinking [*Das Gedächtnis ist die Versammlung des Denkens*],’ a gathering

of that which holds us, insofar as we are thinking of it [*bei uns bedacht ist*], because it [*Es*] is that which remains that which is to-be-thought [*das zu-Bedenkende*]. What is to-be-thought is bestowed with remembrance [*Andenken*], bestowed because we incline towards it. Only when we incline [*mögen*] towards that which is in itself to-be-thought, are we capable [*vermögen*] of thinking.⁶⁶

Being inclines towards us and bestows our essence upon us and maintains us in our essence. We incline towards being because it addresses us in our essence and we shelter it in memory. The relation between being and man and thinking is not produced by man and is not brought forth from possibility to actuality. Rather man already finds himself within this relation thanks to that which addresses him, and it is his task to preserve this

⁶³ BW, p. 220.

⁶⁴ Heidegger also refers to the belonging together of thinking and love in Hölderlin’s poem ‘Sokrates und Alcibiades’ which according to Heidegger’s reading says that ‘inclination rests in thinking’ (*Das Mögen ruht im Denken*). See GA 8, p. 22.

⁶⁵ BW, p. 220.

⁶⁶ GA 8, p. 5.

relation. Thus we begin to see how our correspondence to that which addresses us is understood by Heidegger: thinking, as correspondence, seeks to preserve in memory and shelter that which is intrinsically to-be-thought.

The essential address of the most thought-provoking

Why does Heidegger begin to develop his notion of thinking in terms of inclination and sheltering? Aware of the misunderstandings such a connection might provoke ('a fatal thinking, which threatens to become sentimental'⁶⁷), Heidegger discusses two other possible calls to thinking. The first is a practical cause which thinking aims to serve. We turn to thinking in order to solve problems or questions we have been faced with, which results from a practical need. We might notice this in the abundance of academic conferences, which due to their sheer number, Heidegger suggests, might even lead us to assume that what is lacking is action and not reflection. Another call to thinking might take the form of a lively interest in philosophy, which by itself, so Heidegger maintains, is no guarantee of thinking. He argues that to judge something as interesting also consigns the same thing to indifference and eventually to the boring. To show an interest in philosophy is not the same as being willing (and able) to think.⁶⁸ While Heidegger does not deny the possible merits of a serious and thoughtful occupation with philosophy, he maintains that to occupy oneself with philosophy often means that people assume they are thinking because they are 'philosophising'.⁶⁹

Throughout *Was Heisst Denken?* Heidegger works with two distinct notions of philosophy and metaphysics. On the one hand, philosophy and metaphysics name the work of the philosophers who have thought, since the pre-Socratics, within the relation to being, even if, as Heidegger suggests, they have not thought the truth of being. At

⁶⁷ GA 8, p. 22.

⁶⁸ GA 8, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁹ GA 8, p. 7.

other times, Heidegger uses ‘philosophy’ and ‘metaphysics’ in the sense of academic or school philosophy (*Schulphilosophie*), which aims at the univocity of language and concepts, and takes place within the ‘technical interpretation of thinking’ and is therefore determined by the organisation and techniques of the academy. For Heidegger, Greek philosophy reached its end with the beginning of its schools, hence his remark that Socrates ‘was the purest thinker of the West’ because unlike every thinker who came after him, ‘his thinking never entered into literature’.⁷⁰ Later on in *Was Heisst Denken?* Heidegger will place literature firmly within the economy of the marketplace of technological production.⁷¹ Thus philosophy itself is always already contaminated by the possibility of the technical interpretation of thinking. Heidegger himself has to conduct his thinking at times within this framework, as he frequently admits, yet this, as we shall see, does not mean that this thinking has not and cannot respond to the call of being. Philosophy, understood as an object of study, can be taken up as an interest, but this interest can be lost and therefore does not have the same essential binding quality that Heidegger wants to ascribe to the call to thinking. Thus there are many things which might prompt us to think, but, for Heidegger, they are not what calls us to think first of all or essentially.

For Heidegger, proper thinking must attend to that which first of all and essentially gives us to think: the gift of thinking itself. He emphasizes that what is thought-provoking addresses us more urgently than that which is simply something we can divert our interest towards at our own whim. It addresses us more urgently by addressing us in our essence, inclining us towards it and encouraging us to shelter it in our memory. Heidegger names this ‘the thought-provoking’ (*das Bedenkliche*):

[t]hat which belongs to the essence of the friend, for example, our language names ‘friendly’ [*das Freundliche*]. Correspondingly we are now naming

⁷⁰ GA 8, p. 20.

⁷¹ GA 8, p. 139.

that which is in itself to-be-thought [*das zu-Bedenkende*] thought-provoking [*das Bedenkliche*]. Everything thought-provoking *gives* us to think. But it gives this gift [*Gabe*] only insofar as the thought-provoking *is* intrinsically to-be-thought. We name from now on that which always, because always already and before all else, remains to be thought: the most thought-provoking. What is the most thought-provoking? How does it reveal itself in our thought-provoking time?⁷²

The most-thought-provoking is that which ‘always, because always already and before all else, remains to be thought’, and is thus always already given to thought, it is the gift of thought itself. Heidegger clarifies that the most thought-provoking is not something that man first posits, determines and represents.⁷³ This reveals to us the difference between ‘other calls to thinking’ and the most thought-provoking: the former are subject to ‘present concerns’ be they of a practical or a theoretical nature and thus are subject to and contingent upon epochal and historical shifts. The thought-provoking gives us to think, while the *most* thought-provoking gives us to think ‘always, because always already and before all else’ (*stets, weil einsther und allem voraus*). As giving us to think always already, constantly and before all else, the most thought-provoking ‘is that which, from itself conserves the greatest wealth of that which is worthy of thought [*des Denkwürdigen*]’.⁷⁴ Heidegger thus emphasises that the address which allows us to incline towards thinking can never be first posited by man, or chosen by him. Rather man always already finds himself within this address, because it always already and first of all gives him to think. And as the most thought-provoking its address is unceasing and always urgent.

⁷² GA 8, p. 6. Heidegger’s terms ‘*das Bedenkliche*’ and ‘*das Bedenklichste*’ are difficult to translate, as Heidegger plays on the different connotations of the words in different instances. Gray has translated them as ‘thought-provoking’ and ‘most thought provoking’ respectively and this translation has the benefit of highlighting the call, ‘vocation’, or demand that the *Bedenklichste* issues. De Beistegui’s translation of *bedenklich* as ‘gives to think’ highlights that thinking is the gift bestowed upon us. He also translates ‘*bedenklich*’ as ‘thinkable’ in order to argue that there is something that can indeed be thought. De Beistegui (1994), p. 103. I will make use of all three translations throughout the thesis depending on which of the German word’s connotations appears most relevant to the issue under discussion.

⁷³ GA 8, p. 8

⁷⁴ GA 8, p. 38.

The assertion: the 'not yet'

Heidegger has now established the most thought-provoking as that which always already calls us into thinking. But Heidegger also claims that we are not yet thinking, that we still have to learn it. We are not yet thinking, because we have not yet learned to incline towards its address. According to Heidegger then, we are not yet thinking. He claims that 'in this not-yet lies a peculiar reference to what is coming, of which we do not know if it will arrive. This not-yet is of a unique kind, which refuses to be identified with anything else'.⁷⁵ Thus, Heidegger writes that 'what is most thought-provoking is that we are not yet thinking'.⁷⁶ But whence this *not yet*? With all the wealth of the gift which always, always already and before all else, gives us to think, why are we *not yet* thinking, why do we still have to learn it?

We are presented here with a curious temporality of thinking which Heidegger captures in the following assertion: 'The most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time, is that we are not yet thinking' [*Das Bedenklichste in unserer bedenklichen Zeit ist, dass wir noch nicht denken*].⁷⁷ Heidegger immediately acknowledges the difficulty we might have in proving what this assertion says, because what the assertion says is strange and might sound presumptuous. Thus Heidegger suggests that we elucidate the assertion, in the hope that the demand for proof will become obsolete, once we have shed some light on the matter.⁷⁸ Heidegger suggests that the resistance which the assertion will likely provoke is not entirely undesirable, as this resistance might provide us with the distance necessary for a leap into thinking.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ GA 8, p. 38.

⁷⁶ GA 8, p. 38.

⁷⁷ GA 8, p. 7. The assertion has been translated by Glenn Gray as 'Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking' (WICT, p. 6). Miguel de Beistegui offers a different translation in 'Of the Gift that Comes to Thinking': 'What would most give to think, in our time which gives to think, is that we are not yet thinking'. Beistegui, 'Of the Gift That Comes to Thinking'. Trans. Jeffrey B. Taylor. In *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 24 (1994), p. 98.

⁷⁸ GA 8, p. 7.

⁷⁹ GA 8, p. 9.

According to Heidegger, the assertion according to which, ‘most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are not yet thinking’, says ‘we are *not yet* face to face with and in the realm of that which desires to be thought intrinsically in its essential sense.’⁸⁰ Heidegger warns us against assuming that the *not yet* is a result of human negligence, that it is man who has not yet turned towards that which gives him to think. To understand what is thought-provoking as the consequence of a delay or neglect on man’s part would be to think of it as a current condition or temporary lack which could be resolved by taking appropriate measures. That we are not yet thinking would then simply be a problem which man could solve but has for some reason failed to do so until now. It might also suggest that so far man has not been thinking, yet Heidegger does not claim here that there have not been great thinkers in the history of philosophy and the history of man. He argues that ‘in our history man has always thought in one way or another; he has even thought that which is most profound and entrusted it to memory’.⁸¹

Hence Heidegger urges us to think and recognize ‘that which gives us to think’ as that which is essential to us and our time: it is the ‘thought-provoking as such’ (*das Bedenkliche schlechthin*). What most gives us to think thus belongs to our time which *itself* gives us to think. Naming that which gives us to think an essential characteristic of our time, which marks our time *as* our time, does not license us in viewing the *not yet* as something accidental and contingent to our time. Rather it is in the nature of the very giving of the gift, which whilst giving its gift, never gives itself. The giving is always and continuously giving the gift of thought, which can never be exhausted. Its reception is a constant task. The temporality of thinking is that of the *not yet* and it is also that which gives us most to think, that which keeps calling forth thinking. On the one hand,

⁸⁰ GA 8, p. 8.

⁸¹ GA 8, pp. 8 – 9.

the most thought-provoking as that which ‘always already and before all else remains to be thought’ points us to the *non-historical* in the sense that what is to be thought remains to be thought *always* and *first of all*, and thus cannot be reduced to or identified with a particular epoch in man’s history; but on the other hand, thinking and man are always already historical.⁸² In ‘Of the Gift that comes to thinking’, Miguel de Beistegui writes that

the task in which thinking would find its propriety or its essence, would be bound to the ‘not yet’, to the absence of thinking, to the impossibility of its presence. The gift *of* and *for* thinking would be that of a thinking yet to come, of a time never identical to itself. This is no invitation, however, simply to wait for this thinking to come: the not yet of thinking would be precisely bound to the urgency of an epoch. Finally, our entire epoch would offer nothing more to thinking than its impossibility, it would exhaust itself, as epoch, in the gift of this absence.⁸³

Thus with the realization that we are not yet thinking that which demands to be thought before all else, the task of learning thinking becomes a matter of urgency, and as De Beistegui suggests, it is perhaps the *only* task of our epoch, even if the accomplishment of thinking might not be possible for us. Thus, perhaps, what remains to be thought, in the face of the impossibility of thinking that which most gives us to think, is perhaps this not yet, which, as De Beistegui claims, is the only thing that is still offered to thinking:

[t]hinking in its entirety would be given in its ‘not yet’. What would need to be thought about thinking, in other words the thinkable (*das Bedenkliche*) of thinking, what would allow thinking and what would invite [us] to thinking as to its unique and pressing task, is the not yet of thinking, thinking’s absence. The ‘not yet’ of thinking: this is what gives the most’ to think (*das Bedenklichste*).⁸⁴

⁸² I shall work with the four notions of historicity that Dreyfus identifies in his Foreword to Michel Haar’s book *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*: ‘1. the historical essence of man that changes from epoch to epoch in the West. 2. the transhistorical essence of Western man that remains the same through the various epochs in the history of being. 3. the nonhistorical essence of all human beings, that is, of the mortals. 4. The extrahistorical - the capacities that mortals share with other living creatures.’ Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*. Trans. William McNeill. Foreword by Hubert. L. Dreyfus. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993b, p.xvii.

⁸³ De Beistegui 1994, p. 98.

⁸⁴ De Beistegui 1994, pp. 103- 104.

Might then the essence of thinking lie precisely in this *not yet*, as De Beistegui suggests? How are we to understand ‘the gift of this absence’? As Heidegger makes clear, it is not from man himself or a historical event that thinking receives its *not yet*. Instead ‘that we are not yet thinking is because what is to-be-thought [*das zu-Denkende*] itself turns away from man, turned away long ago’.⁸⁵ What essentially gives us to think maintains itself always already as a turning away [*Abwendung*].⁸⁶ But that which gives the propriety of thinking [*was uns eigentlich zu denken gibt*] ‘has not turned away at some historically specifiable time but rather has always already been withholding itself.’⁸⁷

Hence man always has been and remains in relation to what is to-be-thought (*auf das zu-Denkende bezogen*). However, Heidegger maintains that man is not able (*vermag ... nicht*) to think authentically (*eigentlich*) as long as that which is to-be-thought withdraws itself.⁸⁸ What most gives us to think withholds itself but at the same time ‘remains and unfolds its own, incomparable nearness’.⁸⁹ Man always finds himself in relation to that which must be thought, but is unable to think that which most gives him to think, that which has always already withdrawn from him. The ‘not yet’ is thus not simply a gap between our present status as learners of thinking and a possible future state in which we would be thinkers. Rather, this ‘not yet’ belongs to that which most gives us to think, it *is* this giving itself, which withholds and withdraws itself. The ‘not yet’ then belongs to thinking as it is given in the withdrawal, as Haar notes in *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*: ‘[b]eing always conceals itself from thought, and perhaps this characterizes its essential trait (*Zug*): that it is drawn, roused, transformed

⁸⁵ GA 8, p. 8.

⁸⁶ GA 8, p. 8.

⁸⁷ GA 8, p. 8.

⁸⁸ GA 8, p. 9.

⁸⁹ GA 8, p. 19.

by this movement of withdrawal (*Entzug*)'.⁹⁰ Thinking must respond to the withdrawal of being, but precisely because being always withdraws, it remains that which *cannot* be thought. That said, De Beistegui suggests that the 'not yet' should be understood not as a lack but as an excess, an excess that can never be appropriated by us, an excess as a gift (*Gabe*) that needs to be preserved by thinking *as* this 'not yet' which first of all gives us to think:

[i]t will be a question of the excess whereby thinking defies language and naming and overflows grammar and discourse understood as an economy of signs. It will be a question, in a sense, of the unthinkable and the unnameable, of the im-possible whence thinking and speech, perhaps, might surge forth.⁹¹

De Beistegui points us here to the gift at the heart of *Ereignis*, of the withdrawal which escapes and exceeds naming. Yet at the same time, this excess, the unthinkable and unnameable, calls forth thinking and language. Earlier on, we read Heidegger's account of the relation between being and man, thought from out of inclination and enabling in which he speaks of an address of being (*Anspruch*), to which man has to respond (*Entsprechen*), thus indicating that the relation of man and being always already takes place within the essence of language, as he confirms in 'Was ist das – die Philosophie?' (1955): 'thinking as correspondence stands in the service of language [*das Denken als Entsprechen steht im Dienst der Sprache*]'.⁹² Could the 'not yet' indicate an inadequacy of our language when it comes to thinking the most thought-provoking? In order to answer this question we must further inquire into the withdrawal, which gives the 'not yet' to thinking.

⁹⁰ Haar, 1993, p. 75

⁹¹ De Beistegui 1994, p. 99.

⁹² GA 11, p. 25.

Withdrawal — Ereignis

How, Heidegger asks, can we know about that which has always already withdrawn itself (*sich von einsther entzieht*)? He proceeds by elucidating the nature of the withdrawal:

[w]hat withdraws, refuses arrival [*versagt die Ankunft*]. Alone, this withdrawal [*Entzug*] is not nothing. Withdrawal is *Ereignis*. What withdraws can even concern and address [*in den Anspruch nehmen*] man more essentially than all that is present and encounters and affects him.⁹³

Even though what withdraws refuses arrival, so Heidegger argues, it still concerns us, it even concerns us more than what is present to us, which is to say, entities. Heidegger points out that the actual's ability to affect us [*Betroffenheit*] is often believed to be that which determines [*ausmacht*] the actuality of the actual [*die Wirklichkeit des Wirklichen*], yet this belief might block man from recognizing that which essentially concerns him, even as it withdraws from him.⁹⁴ Perhaps, Heidegger suggests, the withdrawal could be that which 'is most present in all our present, and so infinitely exceeds the actuality of everything actual'.⁹⁵

Heidegger thus affirms that the withdrawal is claiming us more essentially than that which appears to claim us in its immediacy and presence. The withdrawal claims us more than what is present to us [*das Anwesende*] because as withdrawing it draws us along in its wake. Heidegger writes that we might not even notice that we are being drawn along in the draught of the withdrawal, and yet we are nevertheless in the 'enigmatic and changeable nearness of its appeal'.⁹⁶ Man is not only addressed by the withdrawal and always finds himself in the nearness of the withdrawal (*Entzug*), he is drawn along by it, and thus drawn (*gezogen*), he is pointing (*Zeigen*) into the self-

⁹³ GA 8, p. 10.

⁹⁴ GA 8, pp. 10 – 11.

⁹⁵ GA 8, p. 11.

⁹⁶ GA 8, p. 19

withdrawing (*Sichentziehende*). Since that which withdraws has always already withdrawn itself, man does not point to that which withdraws but to the very movement of the withdrawal, the draught (*Zug*) that draws (*zieht*) him along. Heidegger emphasizes that this pointing is neither additional nor contingent but rather an ‘essential and constant pointing’ to the withdrawal. For Heidegger man *is* only insofar as he is pointing to the withdrawal itself.

As man’s essence lies in pointing, and that which points to something is called a sign (*Zeichen*), Heidegger now claims that ‘man is a sign’. And yet, he continues, because the sign that man is only points to the movement of withdrawal — rather than to any present determinate entity — it is a ‘sign that remains without interpretation [*Das Zeichen bleibt ohne Deutung*]’.⁹⁷ The withdrawal, always already happening, but without a historically assignable date and place, without ever arriving, is nonetheless present in its address, an address which determines our very being. Earlier, we noted that Heidegger begins the lecture course by questioning the metaphysical determination of man: the rational animal. In the above passage, Heidegger determines man’s essence from his relation to being and from his capacity to show being (as a sign pointing to the withdrawal).⁹⁸

Heidegger names the withdrawal, if one can still speak of names here, *Ereignis*.⁹⁹

As his description of the withdrawal reveals, it cannot be thought of as an entity, as it

⁹⁷ GA 8, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Michel Haar, in reference to this passage, worries that Heidegger is guilty of ‘an exclusive valorization of the “phantic” capacity of man, his power to show’ and is concerned about the possible absence of ‘physical man.’ Haar, 1993, p. 77. Later in *Was Heisst Denken*, Heidegger thinks the ‘hand’ of man from his capacity to show, and similarly speech organs from man’s capacity to say. As Haar points out, in Heidegger’s thought, perception is subordinated to correspondence (*Entsprechung*), see pp. 78–79.

⁹⁹ I will refrain from attempting to translate this term here, as no English word could hope to capture all the various connotations Heidegger assigns to this word. *Ereignis*, in its every day German usage, means ‘event’, and Heidegger retains this meaning, although not in the traditional sense of ‘event’ as it does not have an assignable time or place. He also includes in the word the various senses given to it by its root ‘*eigen*’ which in English would be ‘appropriating’ or ‘to make one’s own’. Heidegger further links it to ‘*eräugnen*’ to glance. “Eventuation of appropriation” might be the closest available translation, but perhaps does not make great strides concerning readability.

does not have a time or place, but instead gives time and space through its withdrawal.¹⁰⁰ Thus it cannot be thought as something standing over against man, as an object that man can encounter, and neither does it encompass man, as Heidegger writes in 'Zeit und Sein': '[t]he *Ereignis* is not, neither does it give Ereignis [*Das Ereignis ist weder, noch gibt es das Ereignis*].'¹⁰¹ Instead, '[w]hat determines both, time and being, in their own, that is, in their belonging together, we shall call: *Ereignis*.'¹⁰² In his book, *Language After Heidegger*, Krzysztof Ziarek writes that *Ereignis* is 'a complex spatiotemporal expanse of relatedness in motion'.¹⁰³ The *Ereignis* occurs as the giving of space and time, of the instituting of all relations, particularly that of man and being. This relation however, should not be thought of in terms of the relation between two entities, already fully constituted in their respective essences, which may subsequently be connected. In the passages on the withdrawal, Heidegger presents man as always already in relation to being, and man *is* always already and first and foremost this relation, just as being is nothing without the appeal that it addresses *to* man. *Ereignis* then is the belonging-together of man and being, their reciprocal appropriation. The 'not yet' then belongs to thinking as it is given in the withdrawal. Thinking must respond to the withdrawal of being, but precisely because being always withdraws, it remains that which cannot be thought, at least according to the categories of metaphysical thought and language, which are tailored specifically for entities that are present and given.

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger gives it the name '*Zeit-raum*' which Françoise Dastur, with reference to 'Time and Being' explains thus: 'the clearing opened by giving at a distance - the reciprocal *Reichen* (giving to one another) of the future, the having-been and the present - on whose basis alone what we term space becomes comprehensible.' Therefore it becomes a question of 'thinking the spacing of time itself'. Dastur, *Telling Time: Sketch of a Phenomenological Chrono-logy*. Trans. Edward Bullard. London & New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 2000., p. 12 – 13.

¹⁰¹ GA14, p. 29. See also Stambaugh, p. 24. Stambaugh translates this as 'Appropriation neither *is*, nor *is* Appropriation *there*.' While Stambaugh's translation is more readable, I not only choose to keep the giving that is named here, but also would suggest that it seems futile to further clarify that something that *is* not, is also not *there*, and thus Stambaugh's translation might not fully capture Heidegger's intention.

¹⁰² *On Time and Being*, p. 19.

¹⁰³ Krzysztof Ziarek. 2013. *Language After Heidegger*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press., p. 24.

At this point in the lecture course, Heidegger establishes man as always already in the nearness of the withdrawal, drawn along by it, and thereby bestowed with his essential being. The assertion, which claims that ‘the most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time, is that we are not yet thinking’ thus says that we are not yet turned towards that which most gives to think, and that although we are always in the nearness of that which gives to think, we have not yet learned how to respond to this gift.

A sign without meaning: Heidegger’s rethinking of language

Thus, according to Heidegger, man is a sign pointing toward the withdrawal, he is a sign of the withdrawal itself. Yet, the sign remains without interpretation. What does Heidegger mean by this? What is this absence of interpretation that seems to lie at the heart of man as sign? Here we must begin to consider the way in which, on the basis of this notion of man as a sign, Heidegger begins to rethink the entire nature of language itself, so as to adapt it to the unfamiliar dynamics of *Ereignis*. In *Zum Wesen der Sprache und Zur Frage nach der Kunst* (GA 74) Heidegger writes

Thought in terms of the *Ereignis*, showing [*Zeigen*] is not just the jointure of unconcealment and concealment, but this eventuates [*ereignet sich*] only in the inceptual manner of the self-showing showing [*sichzeigendes Zeigen*], so that the showing is the clearing-overcoming sheltering of the inception into the departure [*Abschied*], as the inception, whose sheltering appropriates the relatedness of the abode of the truth of being in beings themselves as the appropriated.

In contrast, the merely metaphysical delineation of the essence of signs is determined by already given sign-things. The sign is a sign *for...* and designates. The essence of showing remains undetermined, or it is only grasped as placing-in-front [*Vor-stellen*], pre-sign [*Vor-zeichen*], imparting [*Bei-bringen*] for representation [*Vorstellen*] and grasping [*Auffassen*]. The concealing trait remains disregarded and therefore the unconcealing trait also does not receive a sufficient determination.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ GA 74, p. 79. In this text Heidegger also argues that *Sein und Zeit* failed to think showing from the *Ereignis*. GA 74, p. 84.

Thus for Heidegger, the sign must first show itself and nothing beyond itself, to be proper to the concealing-unconcealing of the *Ereignis*. It is only in the metaphysical interpretation of the sign that the sign must point to something other than itself, in order to be a sign. Hence Heidegger seeks to divest the sign here of any signification and hence the sign must remain without interpretation. He further writes in the same text that the ‘the originary word is event-like showing [*ereignishaftes Zeigen*]. But this word cannot be thought from terms [*Wörtern*], which are initially understood as sounds and writing, whereby they serve as signals.’¹⁰⁵ Thus Heidegger introduces a difference between a conception of language in terms of a system of signs originating from a need of man to express himself and communicate, and a thinking of language as originating from *Ereignis*: in the case of the latter, because of this origin in *Ereignis*, the sign is deprived of its function as a signifier, and is thought rather in terms of its aletheic ability, its capacity for manifestation and indeed its capacity to speak of the very event of manifestation in its combination of giving *and* withdrawal, unconcealment and concealment.

According to Ziarek, Heidegger’s rethinking of the sign forms part of a rethinking of difference itself. He claims that:

[a]t the center of this radical reformulation of the sign is the critical reassessment of the ontological difference: when understood in terms of signification and designation (*Bedeuten* and *Bezeichnen*), the sign is predetermined in terms of beings and relations among them. Rethought from the event, the sign exhibits the pull that being exercises over language: “The event-like sign as the draw of being – not of beings” – “Das ereignishafte Zeichen als Zug des Seyns – nicht des Seienden”.¹⁰⁶

Ziarek argues that when Heidegger ‘decides to call the ontological difference into question and even put it aside, he turns to the Germanic term *Unterschied*, intimating

¹⁰⁵ GA 74, p. 85. See also GA 74, p. 87: ‘the sign, thought from its origin, is preserved in the essential unfolding of the word.’

¹⁰⁶ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 111.

the possibility of two distinct ways of thinking the initial unfolding into difference.¹⁰⁷ Difference is here no longer thought in terms of the identity or non-identity of two different entities, but is thought from the withdrawal as *Ereignis*, which, as we have already stated, first gives time and space, thus making a thinking of difference possible in the first place. Ziarek further explicates Heidegger's distinction between *Differenz* and *Unterschied*:

while *Differenz* refers to differential relations and thinking in terms of identity and difference, *Unter-Schied* focuses on the scission and parting. He discovers that this parting, especially the clearing brought out by being's withdrawal, as well as the relation of this characteristic departure to beings, must be thought as other than difference and identity. For this purpose, Heidegger introduces the idiom of nearness (*Nähe*) and its reciprocal folding with remoteness (*Ferne*). Nearness happens as being's withdrawing draw, as its continuing pull on beings once being has always already retreated from them, and the implosion of this withdrawal continues to hold open the clearing. This retreat is available only as a hint, where the hint indicates the always singular giving to be that occurs through the withdrawal's clearing. This hint is singular in the sense of occurring only one time (*einmalig*).¹⁰⁸

This then is the 'enigmatic and changeable nearness of [the withdrawal's] appeal' that Heidegger speaks of. As withdrawal, being de-parts, and opens up the clearing in which entities emerge into their presence. Man always remains within the nearness of the withdrawal because he is drawn along by it, and yet encounters it only as a hint. According to Ziarek, this hint is the singularity (*Einmaligkeit*) of the *Ereignis* which man cannot yet grasp in thought, because thought takes place in language, and our relation to language is marked by signification, a system of signs, which is conditioned by the possibility of repetition.

When Heidegger later clarifies '[w]e are showing something that is not yet transposed [*übersetzt*] into the language of our speaking [*Sprache unseres*

¹⁰⁷ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 117.

¹⁰⁸ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 119.

Sprechens]',¹⁰⁹ it becomes clear that he is speaking of a difference in language: the language of *Ereignis* and the language of our speech. As we might already be able to surmise from the above passage, the difference between the languages lies in the difference between an aletheic and a signifying power.¹¹⁰ Thus the relation between man and being takes place within language, while at the same time, the language man speaks is inadequate to name the withdrawal which exceeds all naming and thinking.

Ziarek argues that:

the event issues (into) words in such a way that, although its occurrence is not prior to language, it is neither captured nor signified in it. Heidegger approaches language initially not through signs (*Zeichen*) or through meaning and reference (*Bedeutung*) but from showing (*Zeigen*), which manifests from the freeing spatiotemporalizing realm of the clearing, constituting the way in which language moves – has always already moved – into signs. This unfolding of language, though requiring human participation and decision, is not animated by human beings but rather is spurred on by the nihilizing momentum of being, by what Heidegger calls ‘the silent [or quiet, *stille*] force of the possible’ (...). The event, Heidegger explains, has the momentum of *ostendere*: of manifesting and showing, and doing so not mutely but as the inceptual word, as the breaking open of language.¹¹¹

Language itself, then, is the parting movement from the showing of the *Ereignis* to language conceived of as a system of signs. Yet our everyday use of language is based upon this system of signs and signification and thus cannot yet speak of the withdrawal of being.

At this moment, in the context of the problem of transposing the language of *Ereignis* into the language of signification, Heidegger refers us to the words of the poet Friedrich Hölderlin: ‘We are a sign, without interpretation/ Painless are we and almost have/ Lost our language in a foreign land.’¹¹² In the lecture entitled, like the course we are currently reading, ‘Was Heisst Denken?’ delivered in 1952, Heidegger opens up the

¹⁰⁹ GA 8, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ See GA 74, p. 85.

¹¹¹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 5.

¹¹² GA 8, p. 20. ‘Ein Zeichen sind wir, deutungslos/ Schmerzlos sind wir und haben fast/ Die Sprache in der Fremde verloren.’

following questions and a possible interpretation of these lines, which are absent from the lecture course itself:

But does the fact that we are not yet thinking reside in the fact that we are a sign without interpretation and without pain, or are we a sign without interpretation and without pain insofar as we are not yet thinking? If the latter is the case, then it would be thinking which first of all gave mortals pain, and the sign, as which mortals are, would receive an interpretation. Such thinking would bring us into a dialogue with the poetry of a poet whose saying seeks like no other its echo in thought.¹¹³

What might we make of the statement, ‘it would be thinking which first of all gave mortals pain’? In *Hölderlin's Hymne “Der Ister”*, Heidegger discusses the same lines from Hölderlin’s ‘Mnemosyne’ and clarifies what he means by pain:

[p]ain however is the proper knowledge of being-differentiated [*Unterschiedenseins*], within which the belonging-to-each-other of man and gods first has the separation [*Geschiedenheit*] of distance and therefore the possibility of nearness and therefore the fortune of appearance. Pain belongs to being able to point [*Zeigen-können*], it belongs to the poet as the knowledge of his own being.¹¹⁴

According to Heidegger then, the poet Hölderlin already knows about the withdrawal, of the separation at the heart of man’s essence. And hence he can speak of it, and can lament the current condition of man as painless, that is, as having forgotten the difference at the heart of the withdrawal of being and the clearing presencing of beings. Hence we are in ‘foreign lands’, foreign because they are no longer proper to the

¹¹³ GA 7, p. 137 ‘Was Heisst Denken?’. Concerning Heidegger’s use of the word ‘mortal’, in ‘Das Ding’ he writes: ‘Death conceals as the shrine of the nothing the essential unfolding of being within itself. Death is as the shrine of the thinking the shelter of being. We now name the mortals the mortals – not because their earthly lives ended, but because they are capable of death as death. The mortals are who they are, as mortals, essentially unfolding within the shelter of being. They are the unfolding relation [*Verhältnis*] of being as being’. GA 7, p. 180.

¹¹⁴ GA 53, p. 190. Heidegger further expands on his notion of the sign as follows: ‘The sign is a pointing [*ein Zeigen*], which stands in an essential relation to “interpretation [*Deuten*]”, to pain and to language. Sign does not mean here a “mere pointing towards”, but rather a sign which stands only in the beginning of its being a sign’. GA 53, p. 191. See also Fynsk: ‘Pain tears asunder, [Heidegger] says; it separates (the verb he uses here is *reißen*); but at the same time it draws together (*zieht auf sich*) what is rent, in the manner of an initial tracing out or sketch: *Vorriß* or *Aufriss* (US 24, P 204). ... Heidegger is drawing upon the etymology of the Greek word for pain, *algos*. It is related, as he suggests elsewhere, to the word *alego*, which comes from *lego* “to speak”, and means, Heidegger says, “intimate gathering” [See Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, transl Wilde, p. 71]. So the “pain” that hardens into stone in the threshold names the essence of language as a tracing out and gathering of the difference between world and thing.’ Fynsk, 1996, p. 24.

unfolding of being as difference. While Heidegger does not explicitly say so, we can surmise here that this foreign land is metaphysics, which in Heidegger's thought is marked by the forgetting of being and, as we shall see, a forgetting of difference thought as *Unter-Schied*. We have lost our language in the sense of a language thought from the *Ereignis* by delivering it over into the service of metaphysics and technology. But, even if that were the case, it would still be possible to retrieve this language, as Christopher Fynsk argues:

[t]o recover it, the imprint of our essence must discover itself; we must grasp the historical character of the essence of *Technik* and recognize in language's other words, to emerge in our *character* as signs and then undertake the transformation that will allow us to translate into and hold in our saying the name for what withdraws. The condition of such a movement is experiencing the fact of withdrawal in the fact that we are not yet thinking – to experience, in other words, the extreme form of *Seinsvergessenheit* [the forgetting of being] that leaves us 'without pain'.¹¹⁵

Perhaps this, the thought of the possibility of a retrieval prompts Heidegger to write in 'Brief über den Humanismus': '[b]ut if man is to find his way once again into the nearness of being he must first learn to exist in the nameless [*im Namenlosen*]'.¹¹⁶ This means to learn to listen and be addressed by the withdrawal without trying to grasp it conceptually, by trying to summon it through naming it.

An encounter with poetry

But what are we to make of this sudden encounter with the words of a poet? Especially as these poetic words bear a striking similarity to those of Heidegger's thoughtful saying, and appear to allow for an all too easy equation of the meaning of one with the other. But at the very instant Heidegger points us to Hölderlin's words he also states that we are not yet able to understand and assess the grounds and limits of our attempt

¹¹⁵ Christopher Fynsk, *Language & Relation ... that there is language*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 102

¹¹⁶ BW, p. 223.

to engage with poetry. For how, asks Heidegger, are we meant to be able to think the relation (*Verhältnis*) of thinking and poetry if we do not yet know what thinking is?

Thus Heidegger issues the following caution:

[w]hat is said poetically [*dichtend Gesagte*] and what is said thoughtfully [*denkend Gesagte*] are never identical [*das Gleiche*]; but they are at times the same [*das Selbe*], namely then when the cleft between poetry and thinking parts purely and decisively. This can occur when poetry is lofty and thinking profound.¹¹⁷

While Heidegger does further elaborate on this caution, he repeats it in ‘. . . dichterisch wohnet der Mensch . . .’ a talk given in October 1951 and consequently published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, and provides the following clarification:

Poetry and thinking encounter each other in the same only then and only as long as they remain decidedly in their essential difference. The same [*das Selbe*] is never congruent with the identical [*Gleichen*], also not with the empty monotony of the merely identical [*Identischen*]. The identical always misplaces itself upon the undifferentiated [*das Unterschiedslose*], so that it would become congruent with it. The same is the belonging-together of the different from out of the gathering through difference [*Das Selbe ist dagegen das Zusammengehören des Verschiedenen aus der Versammlung durch den Unterschied*]. It is only possible to say the same when difference is thought. In the discharge [*Austrag*] of the differentiated [*des Unterschiedenen*] the gathered essence of the same comes to light. The same banishes every effort to equalize the different into the identical [*das Verschiedene immer nur in das gleiche auszugleichen*]. The same gathers the differentiated into an originary unity. The identical however disperses into the bland uniformity [*Einheit*] of the merely uniform one [*einförmig Einen*]. Hölderlin knew in his own way of these relations [*Verhältnissen*].¹¹⁸

To think the same we must thus think difference, and retain this difference within the same. Thus thinking and poetry belong together in an originary unity, which nevertheless does not abolish their difference. What might this originary unity be? In

¹¹⁷ GA 8, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ GA 7, pp. 196- 197. I have followed Ziarek’s translation of ‘*Austrag*’ as ‘discharge’ here. In *Language After Heidegger*, he writes the following: ‘*Austrag* can mean settlement, decision, discharge, or resolution, yet the emphasis in Heidegger falls on the process of carrying or drawing out this decision which leads me to opt for translating the term as “discharge”. For what matters is how thought and difference are discharged in the process of this transformation, whereby the discharged thinking comes out of, yet also pulls away from metaphysics.’ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 121.

Was Heisst Denken? Heidegger introduces the abyssal sameness of poetry and thinking through a brief discussion of *μῦθος* and *λόγος* in order to illuminate what he means by the claim ‘what is said poetically and what is said thoughtfully are never identical [*das Gleiche*], at times, however, they are the same [*das Selbe*]’.

Heidegger’s insistence that we have to *think* the relation of poetry and thinking already sets the encounter with poetry outside of a philosophical treatment of poetry, outside of aesthetics.¹¹⁹ Instead, Heidegger begins his clarification of the reference to Hölderlin’s poetic words by establishing a relation to Greek myth. The title Hölderlin gave to the draft of the hymn from which Heidegger quotes here is ‘Mnemosyne’. According to Greek mythology, Mnemosyne is a Titaness, the daughter of heaven and earth. For Heidegger this allusion to Greek myth reveals poetry (*Dichten*) as *μῦθος*, the originary and founding (*stiftendes*) saying of ancient Greece:

μῦθος means: the saying word [*das sagende Wort*]. Saying is for the Greeks: to make manifest, to let appear, namely the shining and that which unfolds essentially in shining, in its epiphany. *Μῦθος* is the essential unfolding in its saying [*das Wesende in seiner Sage*]: the shining in the unconcealment of its address [*der Unverborgenheit seines Anspruchs*]. The *μῦθος* is the address which concerns all human beings from the beginning and fundamentally, and which allows us to think of the shining, the essential. *Λόγος* says the same.¹²⁰

Heidegger argues that contrary to the dominant theory of the historiological treatment of philosophy (*Philosophiehistorie*), *λόγος* and *μῦθος* are not set in opposition by philosophy itself, but rather *μῦθος* and *λόγος* are only set apart once neither of them is allowed any longer to retain its original essence. He ascribes this moment as already having taken place in the philosophy of Plato. Heidegger argues that in Parmenides’ work, *μῦθος* and *λόγος* have the same meaning. Thus the appeal of poetry rests in the

¹¹⁹ For Heidegger’s understanding of aesthetics and its connection to metaphysics, see De Beistegui, ‘Overcoming Aesthetics’ in Miguel De Beistegui, *The New Heidegger*. London & New York: Continuum, 2005, pp. 129 – 137.

¹²⁰ GA 8, p. 12; WICT, p. 10

originary belonging together of *μῦθος* and *λόγος*. *Mῦθος* like *λόγος*, manifests and lets appear that which shows itself.

Hence Heidegger further explicates that poetry as *μῦθος* ‘rests in its own truth: beauty.’¹²¹ Here beauty is not the object of subjective or aesthetic judgments but rather a manifestation [*Offenbarmachung*] of the inapparent [*das Unscheinbare*]:

[b]eauty is a destiny [*Geschick*] of the essence of truth, whereby truth says: the unconcealment of the self-concealing. Beauty is not what pleases, but what falls under the destiny of truth, which takes place [*sich ereignet*] when the eternal inapparent [*Unscheinbare*] and therefore invisible [*Unsichtbare*] reaches into the appearing shining [*erscheinendste Scheinen*].¹²²

The destiny of truth, which takes place as the unconcealment of what has been concealed, is, according to Heidegger, beauty. Heidegger seeks to wrest the conception of beauty from the realm of aesthetic judgement and rethink it as the essential unfolding of truth.¹²³ The inapparent which is brought to shine through the unconcealment of truth achieved by the artwork, must, as Dastur argues,

also be understood as a non-signifier, after the multiplicity of meanings of the German *unscheinbar* [...] [which] refers [...] to an ‘invisible which is there’ always happening *with* the visible whose secret counterpart it is. This therefore implies that with beings, being also and *at the same time* comes into presence in an inapparent manner, as moreover the participle *ἔδν* (being) tells us. For, as Heidegger always insisted, *ἀλήθεια* (truth) must in no way be thought of as a pre-existing *state* of openness, an immobile opening, but, on the contrary, as a robbery (*Raub*) through which a being is torn out of hiddenness, or as the occurrence (*Geschehnis*) of a clearing.¹²⁴

Poetry then is a form of unconcealment, which simply allows the unconcealed to remain within its own shining, and thus it does not impose anything extraneous upon it. Poetry

¹²¹ GA 8, p. 21.

¹²² GA 8, p. 21.

¹²³ Heidegger develops this essencing of truth as the work of art, as the wresting from the concealing as earth into the unconcealing as world in greater detail in his essay ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. In it poetry is assigned a privileged position among the arts: ‘the essence of art is poetry. The essence of poetry, in turn, is the founding of truth. We understand founding here in a triple sense: founding as grounding, and founding as beginning. Founding, however, is actual only in preserving’. BW, p. 199.

¹²⁴ Dastur, 2000, p. 33.

thus maintains itself in that which addresses itself to it. According to Heidegger, this is already indicated in the title Hölderlin gives to his hymn: ‘Mnemosyne’.

Mnemosyne is the mother of the nine muses, amongst whom we find play, music, dance and poetry. Hence, they belong in the womb of Mnemosyne, a word which Heidegger translates with *Gedächtnis*: memory. For Heidegger it is clear that here, ‘the word memory means something else than merely the psychologically demonstrable ability to retain a mental representation, an idea, of something which is past’.¹²⁵ Instead Heidegger proposes to think memory (*Gedächtnis*) as:

the gathering of thinking upon that which everywhere wants to be thought before all else. Memory is the gathering of remembrance [*Andenken*]. It shelters and conceals within it that must always be thought first with everything which unfolds and grants itself as present and past: memory, the mother of the muses: remembrance of that which is to be thought is the source of poetry. Poetry is therefore the water which at times flows backwards towards its source, towards thinking and remembrance. [...] All poetry originates from the commemoration [*An-dacht*] of remembrance [*Andenken*].¹²⁶

The remembrance of that which is to be thought is the source [*Quelle*] of poetry. Poetry reaches back to thinking and commemorative thinking and thus reveals its original sameness with thinking. Thinking and poetry direct themselves back toward their provenance and both are gathering around the thought-provoking: that which wants to be thought everywhere and before all else. Heidegger here establishes a direct and definitive sameness of poetry and thinking, while at the same time retaining a difference between them. While poetry is not thinking, it, like thinking, responds to the gift of being by preserving it in memory. Turned towards the *Ereignis* of withdrawal, the preserving thinking and saying of Mnemosyne speak at the advent of language. The withdrawal of being which is *not yet* transposed into the language of our speech is sheltered in language in the saying of *μῦθος* and *λόγος*.

¹²⁵ GA 8, p. 13

¹²⁶ GA 8, p. 13.

Having established the relevance of poetry for thinking, Heidegger returns us to Hölderlin's poetic words, heard at the determination of man's relation to being as withdrawal. This time Hölderlin's words are set explicitly under the heading of *Mnemosyne*, and Heidegger asks:

Who we? We, the men of today; the men of a today [*die Menschen eines Heute*], which has long since endured and will endure even longer, in a length for which no computation of time in history [*Historie*] can provide measure. In the same hymn, 'Mnemosyne', it is said: 'long is/ the time' – namely the time in which we are a sign without interpretation [*ein deutungsloses Zeichen*]. Does it not give enough to think, that we are a sign, especially one without interpretation? Perhaps what the poet says in these and the following words belongs to that through which the most thought-provoking shows itself, to the most thought-provoking, which the assertion about our thought-provoking time tries to think.¹²⁷

The 'today' to which we belong has been unfolding for a long time and will unfold for a long time yet, a time which cannot be measured and cannot become an object for the historical sciences. It belongs to the destinal unfolding of the first commencement (*des ersten Anfangs*) which, according to Heidegger, will last even longer than its own history up to now. As Michel Haar writes:

[b]eing is the commencement itself which does not cease happening. As the inaugural, being can neither pass away nor become a mere moment of History. If one day it recommences in a completely different way, it is because it is more originary than the series of epochs to which it has given birth. The discovery of this limit where the History of Being flows back, as it were, into itself, where it folds back upon the radical simplicity of the belonging-together of man and being – this is what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*: the 'event of appropriation'.¹²⁸

Ereignis, 'the belonging together of man and being' is the 'limit' which reveals to us being as inaugural, outside of history, outside of language. *Ereignis*, 'takes place' as the spacing of time, the giving of language and thinking. For Haar this raises the question of a trans-historical essence of man, of the moment in which man enters into history.

¹²⁷ GA 8, p. 13; WICT, p. 11.

¹²⁸ Haar, 1993b, p. 3.

For us here, it points to that which cannot be thought properly [*eigentlich gedacht*] but which keeps calling for thinking, always already giving us to think.

But can poetry bring the *Ereignis* to word? Why are we confronted here with the words of poetry, and not just any poetry, but that of Hölderlin? And has Hölderlin responded to the call of thinking? Can his poetry help us on the way to thinking? ‘Perhaps’, Heidegger responds, and reminds us that these words of the poet might elucidate the assertion that what is ‘most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are not yet thinking’, and perhaps in turn the assertion could shed light on the poet’s words. But this also raises the question of the limits and grounds of such a reference to poetry, a question which Heidegger insists must remain unanswered until we ourselves are thinking.¹²⁹

Scientific and technological thinking

If we are, as Heidegger claims, *not yet* thinking then the question arises as to what it is that we currently call thinking, that which we are certain of doing and having done and even ascribe as a fundamental constituent of our essence. Heidegger addresses this question by asking the question ‘what is called thinking?’ in the sense of ‘what does the prevailing theory of thought, namely logic, understand by thinking?’ Heidegger ascribes the status of logic as the most dominant form of philosophy to its compatibility with modern psychology and sociology. This all encompassing dominion (*Vorherrschaft*) is, according to Heidegger, no longer within the command of man instead:

[t]hese disciplines stand in the destiny of a power, which comes from afar and for which perhaps the Greek words *ποίησις* (poesy) [*Poesie*] and *τέχνη* (technology) [*Technik*] remain the proper names, assuming that they name for us, the thinkers, that which gives us to think.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ GA 8, p. 14.

¹³⁰ GA 8, p. 23. This passage brings to mind Heidegger’s ‘Question Concerning Technology’ (1953) and in particular the line taken from Hölderlin: ‘But where danger is, grows/ The saving power also’. BW, p.

Philosophy as logic, as well as the sciences, have their common provenance (*Herkunft*) in a destining power which reaches far back, and which gives rise not only to logic itself but also to its dominance, in the sense that it pervades every area of human existence. To this destining power Heidegger here gives the name, *τέχνη*. Although he does not further explicate the Greek word in *Was Heisst Denken?*, he does so in various other texts, such as in ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’ (1953), in which he writes that ‘[t]he *τέχνη* is a form of *ἀληθεύειν*. It unconceals that which does not bring itself forth, and which is not yet present, and can therefore appear and turn out in one way or another’.¹³¹ Thus, in its earliest determination, *τέχνη* is not yet understood as production or manufacturing, but is rather thought as a bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*) into unconcealment. Heidegger further argues that modern technology is also a bringing-forth into unconcealment, albeit one that no longer allows this bringing-forth to reside in its truth as *ἀληθεύειν*, which Heidegger characterises as the ongoing strife between unconcealment and concealment. Instead, modern technology orders everything into a bringing-forth which brings everything to a stand as ‘standing resource’ (*Bestand*).¹³² From this brief sketch of Heidegger’s understanding of modern technology, we can already see here that the crucial distinction between the unconcealment of the showing of the *Ereignis* in poetry and thinking and that of technology is that the bringing-forth of modern technology no longer attends to the *Ereignis*, but rather forces beings into unconcealment and maintains them therein.

333. In the essay, he links both technology and art back to *τέχνη*, which once was called ‘the revealing that brings forth truth into the splendour of radiant appearance’. BW, p. 339.

¹³¹ GA 7, p. 14.

¹³² GA 7, p. 17.

Heidegger thus begins his inquiry into logic by tracing it back to the essence of technology.¹³³ Crucially, for Heidegger, the essence of technology is neither human nor technological, but has its origin in the *Ereignis*:

[b]ecause the essence of technology is nothing human. The essence of technology is first and foremost nothing technological. The essence of technology has its site in that which, always and before all else gives us to think. [...] The essence of technology pervades our Dasein in a manner which we can still barely imagine.¹³⁴

The task is not simply to discourse about technology but instead, so Heidegger proposes, to think its essence (*ihrem Wesen nachzudenken*). But why can only thinking think the *essence* of technology? As I have just indicated, Heidegger's answer will refer to the difference of relation between thinking and its matter and science and its object.

On handiwork

In order to explicate what differentiates thinking and scientific thinking, which belongs to the essence of technology, Heidegger uses the example of a cabinetmaker, whose production of furniture is guided by the material he uses. Heidegger writes:

[h]is learning is not mere practice, to gain facility in the use of tools. Nor does he merely gather knowledge about the customary forms of the things he is to build. If he is to become a true cabinetmaker, he makes himself answer and respond above all to the different kinds of wood and to the shapes slumbering within wood – to wood as it enters into man's dwelling with all the hidden riches of its nature. In fact, this relatedness to wood is what maintains the whole craft. Without that relatedness, the craft will never be anything but empty busywork, any occupation with it will be determined exclusively by business concerns. Every handicraft, all human dealings are

¹³³ GA 8, p. 27.

¹³⁴ GA 8, p. 25 Compare here 'Die Frage nach der Technik': '[b]ecause the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology, and, on the other, fundamentally different from it.' This realm, Heidegger clarifies, is art, yet what is crucial here is how we can access this realm and its truth. It is through questioning that we can finally begin to recognize the pervasiveness of technology which orders everything and lets us forget about the revealing of truth we can find in art. See BW, p. 140.

constantly in that danger. The writing of poetry is no more exempt from it than is thinking.¹³⁵

Thus what characterises handiwork (*Handwerk*) is its relation (*Bezug*) to its matter (*Sache*), and Heidegger claims the same is true for thinking, in which he recognizes a kinship with handiwork. Heidegger here thinks handiwork from the hand. Yet he argues that the hand is not, as is commonly thought, a ‘bodily organ for grasping’ (*ein leibliches Greiforgan*); instead Heidegger argues that only a being which is capable of thinking ‘can have the hand and in handling [*Handhabung*] accomplish the works of the hand’.¹³⁶ He argues

[b]ut the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine. The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes, and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. The hand is all this, and this is the true handicraft. Everything is rooted here that is commonly known as handicraft, and commonly we go no further. But the hand’s gestures run everywhere through language, in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think, not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes. Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Therefore, thinking itself is man’s simplest, and for that reason hardest, handiwork, if it would be accomplished at its proper time.¹³⁷

The work of the hand then always takes place in the realm already opened by thinking. As thinking beings our hands do more than grasp objects: they relate to the world, and to others. The hand can reach and shelter because thinking reaches and shelters. Further on, Heidegger writes that, ‘[t]hinking guides and carries every gesture [*Gebärde*] of the

¹³⁵ GA 8, p. 17; WICT, pp. 14 – 15. Translation by Gray. It is this discussion of the cabinetmaker’s apprenticeship that prompts Heidegger’s more extensive remarks on the role of the teacher discussed in the previous chapter.

¹³⁶ GA 8, p. 18. Heidegger here also makes a distinction between the ‘grasping organs’ of animals and the human hand, which he argues is different in essence. Heidegger’s thinking of the essential difference between the human being and other living beings recurs at various points throughout the lecture course, yet I shall only point to it here without developing it any further.

¹³⁷ GA 8, pp. 18 – 19; WICT, pp 16 – 17. Translation by Gray.

hand. Carrying says literally: to sign [*gebärden*].¹³⁸ The very gesturing of the hands is an extension of the signing of man. In ‘Spirit’s Living Hand’, William McNeill writes:

if the hand – the singular hand – is that which originally prints, shows, signs, designates, and draws us into a particular direction of thinking, then this hand is not the embodied hand as merely at hand (*vorhanden*). It is not the hand as inscribed. Yet it is neither to be understood as the hand in general, abstracted from all embodiment. The singularity of the hand, the singularity of its draw, is not that of an individuated hand, nor that of a unitary essence of the hand. The gathering of the hand is neither regulated nor prescriptive, for this hand has already withdrawn in being gathered and drawn toward that which it would attempt to regulate.¹³⁹

Thus, the hand for Heidegger would, like thinking, be a gathering of that which concerns us, a gathering which would preserve what essentially addresses us in this concern. This perhaps prompts Heidegger to argue that, like thinking and language, ‘man does not have hands, rather the hand holds the essence of man within it, because the word as the essential realm of the hand is the ground of the essence of man.’¹⁴⁰ The hand and the word alike make manifest through their showing and signing, and as such they are signs which simply indicate and preserve that which they show. As Heidegger argues in *Parmenides*: ‘the essential belonging together of hand and word as the distinguishing trait of the essence of man reveals itself herein, that the hand discloses what is concealed insofar as it indicates and in indicating marks out [*zeigt und zeigend zeichnet*].’¹⁴¹ De Beistegui writes in *Displacements* that handling (*Handeln*) constitutes our ‘primary relation to the world’ and ‘the hands of *Dasein* are the instrument of this specific kind of *ἀληθεύειν*, which Aristotle designated as *τέχνη*.’¹⁴² Thus, while the hand

¹³⁸ GA 8, p. 26.

¹³⁹ William McNeill, ‘Spirit’s Living Hand’, in David Wood (ed.), *Of Derrida, Heidegger, and Spirit*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993, p. 114.

¹⁴⁰ *Parmenides*. Transl. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 118-119/ 80. Gesamtausgabe Vol. 54. Frankfurt am Main: Klosterman, 1982.

¹⁴¹ *Parmenides*, p. 124-25/ 84.

¹⁴² De Beistegui, 2003, pp. 22 – 23. De Beistegui argues that our relation to the world is to the hand and ‘handling’: ‘Thus, my primary relation to the world is one of *Handeln*, of action in the sense of handling, and the things which I encounter within the world are, for the most part and primarily, things to be handled, *manipulata*, πράγματα, *Zeuge* or *Zuhandene*: Such beings are not ‘objects for knowing the world

might be linked to a specific kind of production, its origin lies in the capacity of man to reveal through showing.

The uniformity of scientific thinking

What distinguishes thinking from the sciences is the mode of relation (*Bezug*) to its matter. The sciences (*die Wissenschaften*) direct (*gerichtet*) themselves toward an object (*Gegenstand*), about which they seek knowledge (*Wissen*). Truth in science is to be either wrong (*unrichtig*) or right (*richtig*) about its object.¹⁴³ As the acquisition of knowledge is not the aim of thinking, it always knows less than the sciences, as its matter (*Sache*) is not an object of knowledge (*Wissensgegenstand*) precisely due to the different relation which it maintains with its subject matter. The German word for science, *Wissenschaft* says ‘that which pertains to knowledge’, which includes the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) as well as the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Science examines its object from many sides and perspectives, but Heidegger maintains that it remains one-sided in the respect that it cannot examine its own domain. He gives the example of historiology (*Geschichtswissenschaft*) which can examine any age in history, but not question the notion of history itself. Its own method of research prevents it from accessing its own essence and the provenance of this essence (*Wesensherkunft*). According to Heidegger science cannot examine or discover the essence of its own domain: history, art, poetry, language, nature, man or god. Essence (*das Wesen*) is the matter of thinking. The many-sidedness of science can

‘theoretically’; they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, and so forth’. Thus, man is first and foremost *manipulans* and *faber*, and the hands of *Dasein* are the instrument of this specific kind of *ἀληθεύειν*, which Aristotle designated as *τέχνη* and which Heidegger translates back into the vocabulary of onto-phenomenology as *Sich-Auskennen*, as finding one’s way in the realm of practical concern (*Besorgen*), of manipulation (*Hantieren*), of production (*Herstellen*). In each case, the hands of *Dasein* disclose a world, reveal something about the concrete situation of *Dasein*; they are co-extensive with the practical operation of truth in which *Dasein* is involved.

¹⁴³ In ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’, Heidegger discusses how the correct (*das Richtige*) differs from the true (*das Wahre*) and how ‘Only this truth [*das Wahre*] brings us in to a free relation [*Verhältnis*] to that which concerns us from out of its essential unfolding’. GA 7, p. 9.

make us blind to its unique one-sidedness. According to Heidegger this is the case because its one-sidedness extends itself into a universality, which has the appearance of the harmless and the natural. Crucially this allows us to forget the difference between the manifold examination of a particular object and the thoughtful inquiry into the essence of the realm from which it essences. He writes:

[w]here however man no longer sees the one-sided as pertaining only to the one, he also loses the other side from his view. The difference between both sides, and that which lies in-between, is also buried. Everything is levelled onto one level. One forms an opinion about everything always in the identical manner of opining.¹⁴⁴

Heidegger calls this one-sidedness of the sciences '*einseitiges Meinen*' - one-sided opining. Opining, according to Heidegger, is a necessary daily mode of orienting our doings and non-doings (*Tun und Lassen*) and the sciences also reside in it; and thus it maintains its validity.¹⁴⁵ Heidegger distinguishes opining from thinking, and claims that 'science does not think'.¹⁴⁶ Thinking means to think the essence of a matter (*dem Wesen einer Sache nachdenken*), which for Heidegger means to think the twofoldness of being (*die Zwiefalt des Sein*). The sciences, by virtue of their nature, cannot think difference and therefore do not think.

Heidegger recognizes a danger here which, nevertheless, is not meant to question the place and validity of the sciences and their method. Rather, Heidegger's concern lies with what he calls 'one-track-thinking' (*eingleisiges Denken*) which increasingly attempts to become congruent with one-sided opining. Thinking as one-track-thinking becomes concerned with the disambiguation of concepts and designations, which aim not only to correspond to the precision of technological

¹⁴⁴ GA 8, p. 36.

¹⁴⁵ GA 8, p. 36.

¹⁴⁶ GA 8, p. 9.

processes but also have the same provenance of essence (*Wesensherkunft*).¹⁴⁷ As a consequence, ‘the object of the sciences and the matter of thinking are treated in the same uniformity’ (*Die Gegenstände der Wissenschaften und die Sache des Denkens werden in der selben Gleichförmigkeit verhandelt*).¹⁴⁸ Thinking, whose task is to think the twofold of being, abandons its originary task by placing itself in the service of the sciences. Thinking as logic no longer aims to think and say the relation of man and being, but aims to serve the acquisition of knowledge. Hence Heidegger is insistent that we need to recognize the abyss that separates thinking and the sciences as ‘unbridgeable’ and therefore we can only get from the sciences to thinking through a leap.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps then, we might begin to understand the necessity of thinking, and we might understand what is concealed and forgotten in the one-track opining of the sciences, and free thinking from the demands of the technological interpretation of thinking.

Among the dangers of placing thinking in the service of the sciences and technology is the concomitant transformation of language instigated by one-track thinking. Providing examples of abbreviation such as ‘UB’ for the German word *Universitätsbibliothek* (university library), Heidegger claims that they are neither accidental nor harmless. There is a new order emerging in the dissemination of this kind of language, which we cannot yet fully understand and assess. Perhaps, Heidegger wonders, it is even an order ‘into which we are drawn and to which we are delivered over by that which withdraws’.¹⁵⁰ This, Heidegger reminds us, is what is thought-provoking, which according to the assertion shows itself in the *not yet* of thinking.¹⁵¹ The most thought-provoking shelters both: the essence of technology and that which

¹⁴⁷ GA 8, p. 37.

¹⁴⁸ GA 8, p. 36

¹⁴⁹ GA 8, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ GA 8, p. 37.

¹⁵¹ GA 8, p. 37.

gives us to think the *not yet*. This might also reveal to us why the withdrawal claims us more essentially than anything else and thus might allow us to recognize the urgency and the necessity of hearing the address of the most thought-provoking.¹⁵²

A leap

Hence Heidegger suggests that the only way we can free ourselves from a technical interpretation of thinking¹⁵³ in order to begin the thinking of the *Ereignis*, is through a leap. Heidegger illustrates the leap through a rethinking of the meaning of *Vorstellen*, representation, as it appears to be the currently dominant conception of thinking.¹⁵⁴

He begins by pondering the nature of representation (*Vorstellung*) and correctness (*Richtigkeit*).¹⁵⁵ He writes: '[w]e call representation correct, when it directs itself towards an object. For a long time now, the correctness of representation is equated with truth, that means, the essence of truth is determined from the correctness of representation'.¹⁵⁶ Thus when we say 'the tree blooms' our representation must direct (*richten*) itself to the blooming tree in order to be correct (*richtig*). This is why when the direction (*Richtung*) is wrong, the representation is incorrect (*unrichtig*) concerning its object.¹⁵⁷ Heidegger here points to how truth thought from representation is thought in terms of the correctness of the direction in which the representation points.

Heidegger refrains at this point from developing the essence of representation in more detail, and only remarks that the philosophical discord on the essence of representation has led to an abandonment of philosophical speculation in favour of the scientific examination of representation, most notably in psychology. According to

¹⁵² GA 8, p. 28.

¹⁵³ GA 9, p. 314.

¹⁵⁴ GA 8, pp. 41 – 42.

¹⁵⁵ GA 8, p. 41.

¹⁵⁶ GA 8, p. 40.

¹⁵⁷ GA 8, p. 41.

Heidegger, here, in the face of the philosophical discord we are only left with the option of leaving all philosophical speculation behind.

We stand outside of the sciences. Instead we are standing, for example, in front of a blooming tree – and the tree stands in front of us. The tree and ourselves present themselves to one another [*stellen uns einander vor*], through the tree standing there and we opposite to it. In the relation to each other [*Beziehung zueinander*] – posited before one another [*voreinander gestellt*], we and the tree are.¹⁵⁸

Vor-stellen (representation), now becomes *zueinander-voreinander-stellen* (placing in front of and towards each other) a *gegenüber stehen*.¹⁵⁹ Heidegger aims to subvert the direct subject-object relation of representation, in which the tree is represented to and by representation (*der Vorstellung vor- und zu-gestellt*). His rethinking of the nature of representation attempts to get away from the positing (*stellen*) of metaphysics which is only capable of a one-sided relation to its object. He further hints at the other meaning of the German word ‘*vorstellen*’, ‘to introduce’, which denotes a more mutual encounter and therefore relation:

Let us pause here for a moment [*Augenblick*], just like when we draw a breath before and after a leap. Because we *were* leaping just now, out of the familiar realm of the sciences and even, as shall be shown, philosophy. And where did we leap to? Perhaps into an abyss? No! Rather onto a ground; onto *a* ground? No! Rather onto *the* ground, upon which we live and die, if we do not deceive ourselves. A *strange* matter, or *even* an uncanny matter, that we have to first leap onto the ground upon which we authentically stand. When something as strange as this leap becomes necessary, then something must have occurred which gives us to think.¹⁶⁰

After the preliminary exercises in leaping which, according to Heidegger, characterised the first lectures of *Was Heisst Denken?*, we now have, it seems, finally managed to leap. We leapt out of our habitual realm dominated by scientific understanding and even philosophy. We leapt onto *the* ground on which we are already standing, the ground we

¹⁵⁸ GA 8, p. 44.

¹⁵⁹ GA 8, pp. 44 – 45.

¹⁶⁰ GA 8, p. 44.

are living and dying upon. Why is it that we first had to jump onto the ground which seems to ground our very living and dying? Heidegger concedes that one might admit that this is obvious: we are standing on the earth and so is the tree; however, Heidegger argues that it is not that obvious at all:

[l]et us not proceed too hastily with this admission, let us not take the obvious too lightly. Because unawares we abandon everything as soon as the sciences like physics, physiology, psychology and scientific philosophy explain to us, with all their efforts at evidence and proof, that we do not actually perceive a tree, but in reality an emptiness, interspersed here and there with electrical charges swirling around with great speed.¹⁶¹

This is the difficulty in trying to remain on the ground, to not simply consign this to experience [*Erlebnis*] as a ‘pre-scientific relation to the tree’.¹⁶² We, so Heidegger claims, too easily sacrifice (*preisgeben*) that which we encounter as reality and actuality. We too easily let the sciences take away the ground upon which we live and die. So easily in fact, that the moment we are finally standing in front of the tree there immediately arises the danger that this ground will be taken away from us again, as Heidegger warns us against falling back into scientific modes of thinking:

But what becomes of the blooming tree amongst scientifically recordable brain waves? What becomes of the meadow? What becomes of man? Not the brain, but the man, who might die tomorrow and who previously approached us?¹⁶³

The extent of the consequences of the loss of ground are barely noticed, once we let the above named sciences decide and tell us what counts as reality and what does not. Heidegger asks, from where

do the sciences, which remain blind towards the provenance of their own essence, take the authority to make such judgements? From where do the sciences take the right to determine the locality of man and establish themselves as the measure of such determinations?¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ GA 8, p. 46.

¹⁶² GA 8, p. 46.

¹⁶³ GA 8, p. 45.

¹⁶⁴ GA 8, p. 46.

The question which Heidegger points to here and which he will take up again later in the lecture course, is how it has come to pass that our reality and comportment towards the world is determined by the sciences rather than our relation to being. To let a blooming tree represent itself to us (*sich uns vorstellt*) means to finally let the tree stand where it stands. Ultimately, because we have not yet let it stand there. Neither in philosophy nor in the sciences. Instead, the leap has finally brought us into the element of thinking. But this leap does not simply abandon the site from which it leaps, as Haar writes with reference to Heidegger's 'Der Satz vom Grund':

[o]ur access to this element [of thinking] is an act (which can only be sudden, without transition), a movement by which thinking *distances itself* from familiar entities without abandoning them, so as to bring itself before the enigma: that entities are. The leap is always a departure, but is not an abandonment. On the contrary, the domain from which the leap distances us can be seen differently, from above, and only through this leap can it thus be seen. The leap of thinking does not leave that from which it departs behind it, but appropriates it in a more original manner.¹⁶⁵

Haar clarifies why the leap must retain that which it departs from: 'the leap only remains a leap as remembrance (*als andenkender*). The second act that defines the essence of thought is Memory (*Gedächtnis*), the remembrance of the History of Being, of being as History.'¹⁶⁶ According to Haar there are three acts which characterise thinking, and we have encountered them in this chapter:

Three kinds of act, closely blended and correlative, constitute 'preservation'." First, the *leap* (*Sprung*), that initial act through which thought at a single stroke joins the domain of being, where, nonetheless, it always already finds itself. Second, *commemoration* (*Andenken*) or the *step back* (*Schritt zurück*) whereby thought appropriates metaphysics in its unthought and sees beyond it. Finally, there is the act whereby thought inscribes its *saying* within language, which to a large extent always remains the language of metaphysics.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Haar, 1993b, p. 95.

¹⁶⁶ Haar, 1993b, p. 97.

¹⁶⁷ Haar, 1993b, p. 94.

Thus we can enter into this relation only through a leap which must leave behind everything that we have become accustomed to, since the history of metaphysics is marked by the forgetting of being and, as Heidegger repeatedly points out, metaphysics cannot think the twofoldness of being because of its privileging of presence. Thus the leap takes place as remembrance (*Andenken*) because this relation, the *Ereignis*, has always already occurred.

Concluding remarks

Thinking the truth of being, as Heidegger sketches it in the opening pages of *Was Heisst Denken?* entails first and foremost entering into a relation with being, or rather, perhaps, as we are always already drawn (*gezogen*) by the withdrawal of being, returning to this relation and recognizing it as the matter of thinking. The withdrawal draws man along and thereby holds him close to its appeal. *Ereignis* is the name of the relation of being and man; their reciprocal co-appropriation has always already happened and happens incessantly. This is why Heidegger insists that this relation is nothing that we must first establish or posit but that we should simply allow it to unfold, by sheltering it in thinking, in memory, by allowing thinking to bring this relation to language. As Heidegger writes at the beginning of his 'Brief über den Humanismus':

[t]hinking accomplishes the relation of being to the essential unfolding of man. It does not create or effect this relation. Thinking only brings forth this relation, which is given over to it by being, to being. This bringing forth by thinking consists in the coming-to-language of being. Language is the house of being. In its house man dwells. The thinker and poet are the guardians of this dwelling. Their keeping watch is the accomplishment of the revealing of being, insofar as they bring it to language through their saying and preserve it in language.¹⁶⁸

The relation of man and being is marked by difference, as the withdrawal of being is thought by Heidegger as de-parture (*Ab-Schied*) and in this departure it brings forth

¹⁶⁸ GA 9, p. 313.

beings in their presence.¹⁶⁹ Thinking must retain this difference, but retain it in the same, by gathering its thinking upon the same in remembrance and memory. In contrast, the sciences, which no longer retain this relation to the withdrawal, through a forgetting of being, no longer think difference, but collapse it into the identity of the identical, which Heidegger terms the *Ausgleich der Unterschiede*, the equalisation of difference. In the next chapter, we shall see how Heidegger traces this collapsing of difference into the identical in the thought of Nietzsche, who for Heidegger, is the thinker who brings metaphysics to its completion.

¹⁶⁹ See also GA 74, p. 90: ‘*Being as departure* – the essential trait of the inceptual unfolding of being. *Departure* – away from beings, which means from their presumption of priority, and yet not disengagement but *departure*; - *Departure* – the uncalculable remaining, which is only experienced in the pain of separation.’

Chapter 3. Nietzsche and the completion of metaphysics

Introductory Remarks

This chapter focuses on Heidegger's discussion of Nietzsche. Heidegger turns to Nietzsche in order to find through him the essence of metaphysical thought. He chooses Nietzsche because he is the thinker who has brought metaphysics to its completion, by gathering all its possibilities within his thought. The question Heidegger is concerned with, is to what extent Nietzsche's work can be a resource for the thinker underway in thinking, as Heidegger believes that all metaphysical thinking moves within the address of the withdrawal of being, even if it no longer thinks the difference at the heart of the withdrawal. In this chapter I shall discuss how Heidegger frames his engagement with Nietzsche and the metaphysical tradition in general and what he understands to be Nietzsche's single thought.

Our time that calls for thinking

In the previous chapter we followed Heidegger's elucidation of his assertion that what is 'most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are not yet thinking' which he offered as an initial response to the question 'what is called thinking?', that is, 'what calls forth thinking?' The assertion spoke of our time which calls for thinking while at the same time stating that we are not yet thinking, but are always already 'underway in thinking towards the unfolding of the essence of thinking.'¹⁷⁰ The inception of thought, its provenance, takes place as *Ereignis*: the giving of time-space, the giving of all relations, the relation between man and being, the giving of thought and the advent of language. The gift of thinking occurs through the withdrawal of being which always already draws man along. Man as drawn along, is the sign pointing to the

¹⁷⁰ GA 8, pp. 49 – 50.

withdrawal, so that he may preserve and shelter it in memory, in thought. The withdrawal of being clears the space for beings to come into presence. Thinking attends to this 'event of presencing'¹⁷¹, turns toward it in thought. Thinking is the accomplishment of the relation of man and being. To think is to attend to the *Ereignis*, to the gift of thought, the withdrawal of being. What then, does Heidegger speak of, when he tells us that most thought provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are not yet thinking? What is it about our time that calls forth thinking? According to De Beistegui,

[t]he call for thought resonates from within our time, yet it is not exhausted in this time, in the way in which, to a certain extent, this call is taken up in the metaphysical configuration of our history. For our time, this time that continues to unfold, and in thus unfolding, unfolds its own destiny and essence, unfolds *from* that very call, even if this call is such as to remain implicit in that history, even if it is never brought forth as such. Our time, this time that envelops us and traverses us, is a time born of an origin that it cannot think, the very origin that calls for thinking. Thus, even though philosophy and thought are to be absolutely distinguished, insofar as their relation to time is incommensurable, they share a common origin, they are born of the same event.¹⁷²

As we saw in the previous chapter Heidegger distinguishes between philosophy and thinking, on the grounds that philosophy does not and can not think the truth of being, as Heidegger conceives of it. Philosophy as metaphysics thinks the presence of beings, beings in their presence, in their actuality. Thus it also thinks being on the basis of beings and therefore cannot think the difference of being and beings. Philosophy as metaphysics, so to speak, turns away from the event of presencing. Yet philosophy, like thinking, is born from this event of presencing, even though it cannot think it as such. Having turned away from this event of presencing, concerned with what has come to presence, entities in their presence, philosophy gradually begins to forget this inceptual

¹⁷¹ De Beistegui, 2003, p. 6.

¹⁷² De Beistegui, 2003, p. 5.

event, which forgetting Heidegger calls the ‘oblivion of being’ (*Seinsvergessenheit*).

Concerning the question of the origin of thought, De Beistegui writes:

[t]his, then, is where metaphysical thought begins: at the point where the twofold event of being and time arrives, at the point where it has become something actual: a thing, a being, a state of affairs. Metaphysical thought does not begin at the source, with the very event of being and time, but at the end, with the very sphere of actuality onto which this twofold event opens. But the source itself remains in excess of the world it clears, and in which it withdraws. It continues to signal that which, in the actuality of things, remains in excess of them. Such will have been Heidegger’s only concern: to reawaken thought to the very origin of the world, to the very event whereby ‘there is’.¹⁷³

The necessity of this reawakening, the urgency of the project of *Was Heisst Denken?* centres on this: to reawaken thought to the twofoldness of being (*Zwiefalt des Seins*), which has been forgotten in the unfolding of philosophy as metaphysics. The urgency derives precisely from this realization: that metaphysics has forgotten the event whereby ‘there is’, what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*, and that this forgetting presents a danger for the essential unfolding of man, who according to Heidegger *is* the very relation to the withdrawal of being.

The wasteland

Heidegger returns to the assertion and now aims to elucidate it concerning its tone (*Ton*) and its propositional character (*Aussagecharakter*). He argues that one can only interpret the manner (*Weise*) in which the assertion speaks once one has been able to think what the assertion actually says (*eigentlich sagt*). In the most favourable scenario this will only be possible at the very end of the lecture course or long after. But most probably even this most favourable scenario will not take place. Bearing this in mind, Heidegger proceeds to elucidate what it means to attend to the manner of the assertion.

¹⁷³ De Beistegui, 2003, p. 7.

The manner of its saying (*Weise des Sagens*) here means the tone, not only in terms of melody and sound, but the tone to which its saying (*Gesagtes*) is attuned (*gestimmt ist*). The questions regarding its tone and propositional character belong together, for reasons we shall come to see.

Heidegger's elucidation of the tone of the assertion aims to separate it from the 'concert of voices' predicting the destruction and annihilation of the world. Heidegger argues that the assertion might be perceived (due to inattentive listening) as 'clinging to what is worthless [*nichtswürdigen*] and what facilitates all nothingness [*alles Nichtige fördernden*], to all nihilistic phenomena [*nihilistischen Erscheinungen*].'¹⁷⁴ The word 'das Bedenkliche' (the thought-provoking) in everyday German usage often denotes that which is worrisome and dubious. Heidegger's assertion that our time is thought-provoking can thus, in the ears of the inattentive listener, be heard as a pessimistic judgement on our time. Amongst these pessimistic judgements,¹⁷⁵ but distinguished from them, we encounter Friedrich Nietzsche's remark: 'The wasteland grows, woe to him, who hides wastelands within [*Die Wüste wächst, weh dem, der Wüsten birgt.*]'¹⁷⁶ Heidegger remarks that it is a simple but true word, because it is a thoughtful word (*gedachtes Wort*). It responds to the gift of thinking that wants to be entrusted to memory, it responds to the forgetting of of being.

Devastation (*Verwüstung*), Heidegger continues, is more than mere destruction. Destruction only destroys that which has grown and that which has been built; devastation however, prevents any future growth and building. Devastation is uncanny because it is everywhere and as it conceals itself it can be concomitant with the highest

¹⁷⁴ GA 8, p. 30

¹⁷⁵ Heidegger lists examples of such pessimistic judgements, such as 'the decline of the west' and 'the loss of the middle' – these judgements and the publications they appear in are, according to him, only interested in demise and decay and the lowest forms of human comportment. They belong to literature. GA 8, p. 30.

¹⁷⁶ GA 8, p. 31.

standards of life and the uniform happiness of all men. Heidegger claims that ‘devastation is the highly powered expulsion of Mnemosyne’.¹⁷⁷ Heidegger’s assertion, like Nietzsche’s true word, is said in relation to being (*im Bezug zum Sein*), it stands in the draught of the withdrawal and is thus underway to thinking. As such, both sayings bring us onto the way towards thinking, and are not purely negative judgements on our time. Heidegger urges us to listen properly to the assertion so we can hear that,

[t]he assertion says neither that we are no longer thinking, nor does it say simply that we are not thinking at all. The carefully and thoughtfully said ‘not yet’ points out that we, since long ago, presumably, are already underway towards thinking, not only underway towards thinking as habitual comportment, but rather underway *in* thinking, on the path of thinking.¹⁷⁸

Heidegger claims that the assertion could actually be a ray of light in dark times, and the ‘thought-provoking’ need not to be understood as worrisome or disturbing. Heidegger tries to challenge the belief that what is ‘beautiful and gracious is often reserved for feeling and experience [*Erlebnis*] and kept apart from the draught of thought.’¹⁷⁹ If we overcome this,

[t]he most thought-provoking could be something lofty, perhaps even the loftiest which is given to man, if man remains that being which *is* insofar as it is thinking, which means that it is being addressed by thought, because its essence rests in memory.¹⁸⁰

The tone of the assertion is neither pessimistic nor desolate. But, Heidegger, adds, it is also not optimistic, in the sense of wanting to appease us. He urges us to refrain from judging it as either optimistic or pessimistic or even as indifferent. These judgements emerge out of a specific relation (*Beziehung*) of man to history. As the assertion also emerges out of a relation (*Beziehung*) to history and the situation of man, we have to ask about this relation. This brings Heidegger to the elucidation of the assertion concerning

¹⁷⁷ GA 8, p. 31.

¹⁷⁸ GA 8, pp. 31-32.

¹⁷⁹ GA 8, p. 32.

¹⁸⁰ GA 8, p. 32.

its propositional character. Returning to the judgements of our time, Heidegger raises the question of the correctness of such representations.

This is why, earlier on our way, we encountered the true and thoughtful word of Nietzsche: ‘the wasteland grows: woe to him, who hides wastelands within!’ (*Die Wüste wächst: weh dem, der Wüsten birgt!*). Heidegger argues that Nietzsche’s word is a ‘true word’ (*wahres Wort*) because it is spoken from a higher site, and exceeds the range of vision of other contemporary judgments of our time.¹⁸¹ What separates Nietzsche’s true word from other evaluations of our time is according to Heidegger the manner of its speaking. Its saying is never a mere statement of the present age, or an expression of Nietzsche’s inner experience (*Erlebnis*).¹⁸² As a true and thoughtful saying it responds to what most gives to think (*das Bedenklichste*). Responding and corresponding to the call of being, Nietzsche’s true word addresses the essential unfolding of the provenance of thought, as it determines our epoch. Both Heidegger’s assertion and Nietzsche’s true word are said in relation to being (*im Bezug zum Sein*). Heidegger writes:

[t]he wasteland, the growing of the wasteland, a strangely contradictory expression [*Wendung*: literally a turning, a turn of phrase]. And the sheltering of wastelands would then belong to the not-yet-thinking, and this means, within the longstanding dominant kind of thinking, within the dominance of representational thought. The sentence of what most gives us to think in our time would then speak back into Nietzsche’s word. The sentence would fit with the word of Nietzsche into the course of a destiny [*Bahn eines Geschickes*], with which, so it appears, our earth as a whole is sent [*beschiedt*], including its furthest corners.¹⁸³

Nietzsche’s true word speaks of our time while attending to the provenance of its essential destinal unfolding. It speaks of the forgetting of being that is concealed in representational thinking. To attend to Nietzsche’s thought can thus illuminate our way to thinking, which, as indicated earlier must engage with the history of metaphysics, but

¹⁸¹ GA 8, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸² GA 8, pp. 50-51.

¹⁸³ GA 8, p. 69.

it also shows us that philosophy as metaphysics thinks in relation to the essential provenance of thought, albeit leaving it unthought.

Nietzsche's path of thinking

Heidegger points out that we might be 'inter vias', between different paths, and as we cannot yet ascertain which would be the *one* path to thinking, we need to be attentive to the various path marks [*Wegstellen*] we encounter on our way. Heidegger claims that, like the assertion, Nietzsche's word is a 'path-word' (*Weg-Wort*) which Heidegger defines thus: 'the saying of this word does not merely illuminate a path of the journey and its environment. The saying itself creates and carves out its way.'¹⁸⁴ According to Heidegger it describes and reveals Nietzsche's path of thinking (*Denkweg*), which is characterized by 'the overman' (*der Übermensch*).¹⁸⁵ Like all thinkers Nietzsche has not chosen his path but has been sent upon it (*geschickt*). This path comes from afar and yet still refers to its provenance (*Herkunft*). Heidegger understands Nietzsche as responding both to the address of being and to his own historical situatedness. Heidegger here invites us to think with Nietzsche in order to discover to what extent Nietzsche's path-word can illuminate and guide us on our way.

In order to remain on our way towards thinking, Heidegger turns our attention to the question we arrived at in the last chapter: 'what is representation?' The question arose as to how it came to pass that thinking was shaped by representation, and it was indicated that representation has the same provenance as the thinking of *Ereignis*: the relation of being and man. As the essence of thinking and its essential provenance are still inaccessible to us, according to Heidegger, the essential possibilities of thinking which have been opened up in its provenance, and amongst which we find

¹⁸⁴ GA 8, p. 51.

¹⁸⁵ GA 8, p. 86.

representation, are still unknown to us.¹⁸⁶ Perhaps, Heidegger suggests, the authentic essence of thinking could show itself precisely where it has withdrawn itself.¹⁸⁷ Thus, Heidegger proposes,

through a dialogue with the essence of current thinking, the essential unfolding of re-presentation must first of all be brought to its own language. And when we correspond to this language, we will come to know thinking not only concerning the essence of its destiny but we might also learn thinking itself.¹⁸⁸

According to Heidegger, it is in Nietzsche's thought that we encounter the essence of contemporary thinking. Nietzsche is the thinker nearest to us (*Nietzsche ist uns der nächste Denker*) and he is also the closest chronologically and therefore the most appealing figure of this thinking.¹⁸⁹ Nietzsche is also the most exciting thinker for this dialogue, because

[i]n his thinking, what is [*das Seiende*], more precisely what will be, comes into language. Because this 'modern time' [*Neuzeit*] has in no way [*keineswegs*] come to an end. It has rather just entered into the beginning of its assumed long-lasting completion [*langwierigen Vollendung*]. And Nietzsche's thought? It belongs to what most gives us to think that it has not yet been found. It belongs to what most gives us to think that we are not in the least prepared to truly lose what has been found, instead of just trying to pass over it and bypass it.¹⁹⁰

Thus, for Heidegger, Nietzsche is the thinker who brings to language and thinking how in our time the address of being has been received. Heidegger suggests here that we find ourselves in the same destiny as Nietzsche, and are thereby close to him, and yet, at the same time, if we want to think the truth of being we must free ourselves from this thought. The problematic that emerges here is that of finding Nietzsche, and of engaging in a dialogue with the metaphysical teachings of Nietzsche, for which, as

¹⁸⁶ GA 8, p. 49.

¹⁸⁷ GA 8, p. 50.

¹⁸⁸ GA 8, p. 59.

¹⁸⁹ GA 8, p. 59.

¹⁹⁰ GA 8, p. 57.

Heidegger claims, ‘today’s thinking lacks nearly everything.’¹⁹¹ Heidegger provides at least two reasons as to why this is still problematic. First, there is the proximity of Nietzsche’s thought to us; as Heidegger argues, ‘the closer a thinker is to us chronologically, almost a contemporary, the further stretches the path to his thought.’¹⁹² This means that what Nietzsche truly brings to thought is difficult for us to find, because we recognize the familiar in Nietzsche’s thought, but are unprepared to think what is truly unique and thought-provoking in his thinking, which as Heidegger implies here, will be the unfamiliar, the strange and disconcerting in his thought. Second, and perhaps most importantly, it is the ambiguity we find in Nietzsche’s thought, which for Heidegger, however, is what is most proper to thought:

[t]his ambiguity is not an objection against the rigour of what has been thought within this ambiguity. Because everything that has truly been thought within the essential unfolding of thinking, remains for essential reasons manifold in meaning. This manifold of meaning is never only the remainder of a not yet achieved formal-logical univocity, which should have been desired. Rather, the manifold is the element within which thinking must move in order to be rigorous thinking.¹⁹³

Hence Heidegger takes great pains to point to the difficulty of truly ‘finding’ Nietzsche, because the transmission of thinking is at stake here, he further cautions that it might not be possible to resolve this difficulty within the space of the lecture course. Why Nietzsche, then? Because, according to Heidegger,

in Nietzsche’s thought what now is comes to language, but to a language in which the two thousand year old tradition of Western metaphysics speaks, to a language which we all speak, which Europe speaks, only repeatedly translated, only ground down and flattened, only used up and without sustaining ground.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ GA 8, p. 73.

¹⁹² GA 8, p. 75.

¹⁹³ GA 8, p. 75.

¹⁹⁴ GA 8, p. 81. This ‘what is’ which is brought to the language of metaphysics by Nietzsche, is already so determined by metaphysics, as Heidegger writes in *Nietzsche II*, that our entire comportment towards entities is completely conditioned by metaphysics. See GA 6.2, p. 309. This of course also means that our comportment towards entities is historical, and thus subject to epochal shifts.

What is at stake in finding Nietzsche is thus to discover how the address of being has been heard and transmitted by the tradition of Western metaphysics. We learned above that the task of man is to bring to language the word of *Ereignis*; here, Heidegger proposes to think with Nietzsche how the relation of being thought metaphysically has been brought to the language of metaphysics, a language which is still our own, and which therefore is our starting point for the thinking of being. As discussed in the previous chapter, language is given to man in the *Ereignis*, he has not himself created it. Philosophy, having turned away from the *Ereignis*, has, in the course of history, changed its relation to language, a change concomitant with the forgetting of being. Thus learning thinking, a task which characterises the path of the lecture course, includes a transformation of our relation to language. Since, as Heidegger insists, this is not something which we can will, we first must learn to listen to the thought of other thinkers in order to hear how they have brought their thinking, which also proceeds from their relation to being, to language.

The unthought in thought

For Heidegger's discussion of Nietzsche, it is important that the history of metaphysics and the philosophers within this history are not considered historiologically (*geschichtswissenschaftlich*), that is, as a mere object for the scientific and scholarly study of the historical sciences. Instead Heidegger makes a distinction between history (*Geschichte*) and historiology (*Historie, Geschichtswissenschaft*). History, as Heidegger conceives of it, must not be relegated to the past, which might make for an object of study but no longer concerns us essentially and intimately. According to Heidegger, '[h]istory is the advent of what does not cease to be. Namely, what has already unfolded

its essence, and nothing but that, is what comes to us.’¹⁹⁵ As a consequence, Heidegger warns us not to reduce the thought of the philosophers to a matter of the past

[o]ne still believes, that the tradition is really a matter of the past and now merely an object for the historical consciousness. One still believes, that the tradition is that which we have properly behind us, yet it approaches us, because we are delivered over to it and are in the hold of its destiny.¹⁹⁶

Even though every philosopher within the history of philosophy speaks from a different epoch and historical situatedness, being still speaks in their thought, still addresses us more than anything actual. To merely consider them as historical figures means also to misunderstand the draw of being in which we are always already placed. As De Beistegui points out:

[i]n so doing, we fail to understand history in terms of its essence or its provenance: in terms of destiny (*Geschick*). Destiny, for Heidegger, is a sending (*Schickung*) of being. What characterizes this sending, though, is that it implicates a certain reserve, an opacity: in sending itself, it also holds itself back. This is what, following the Greek, Heidegger calls the *epoche* of truth. The various ways in which truth holds itself back determine the various ‘epochs’ of truth. In manifesting itself, truth also conceals itself. In each case, this sending gathers itself (*Ge-*) into a unified domain. This unity is that of an epoch. It is therefore still being, or truth, that is destined in the *Ge-stell* [‘enframing’, the essence of technology], even if, in this sending and this revealing, the *essence* of truth remains entirely concealed.¹⁹⁷

To be able to hear what these thinkers have to say (Heidegger includes several thinkers here – such as Plato, Aristotle, and Heraclitus) – to be able to recognize their language, the language of the thinkers, we need to be able to hear what still addresses us in their speech.¹⁹⁸ What might such a hearing entail? According to Heidegger it entails that

¹⁹⁵ GA 8, p. 70.

¹⁹⁶ GA 8, p. 82.

¹⁹⁷ De Beistegui, 2005, p. 15.

¹⁹⁸ While earlier Heidegger claimed that one of the reasons Nietzsche is still close to us is that we still speak the same language, the inclusion of thinkers from ancient Greece allows us to conclude, that this claim to the ‘same language’ is not based on the fact that it is German (after all, Heidegger here addresses in German a German audience) or that our vocabulary and grammar might be similar due to the chronological proximity, but rather that our relation to language and our understanding of being, from out of which Nietzsche speaks, is still shared by the people Heidegger addresses in *Was Heisst Denken?* and us today. The task here is to no longer regard the previous philosophers as historical figures but rather to recognize them as always already speaking from a relation to being, as Heidegger writes: ‘[t]his self-

we allow the thought of each thinker to address us as something unique [*Einziges*], never-returning [*Niewiederkehrende*], inexhaustible [*Unerschöpfliches*], and in a way which allows what is left unthought [*das Ungedachte*] in his thought to alienate us. The unthought of thinking is not a lack which clings to the thought. The *unthought* is in each case the *unthought*. The more originary [*ursprünglicher*] a thinking is, the richer is its unthought. The unthought is the highest gift that thinking can bestow.¹⁹⁹

The thought of each thinker must address us as ‘unique, never-returning, inexhaustible,’ if we allow it to be historical in the sense that it speaks from the fundamental attunement (*Grundstimmung*) of its epoch, to which we cannot return. Each thinker’s name for being speaks from out of their time, but at the same time reveals to us as unthought that which exceeds this specific naming of being, an excess which cannot ever be appropriated. In *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being*, Robert Bernasconi refers us to *Identität und Differenz* in which Heidegger lists several such ‘names for being’ – ‘*Physis, Logos, Hen, Idea, Energia, Substantiality, Subjectivity, the Will, the Will to Power, the Will to Will*’. Bernasconi further argues:

[d]rawn from the realm of philosophy, they are the words around which a philosopher’s thinking appears to gather itself, even though Heidegger is at the same time prepared to concede that each thinker finds it hard to maintain himself in the word and seems at times almost to shy away from it. These words are heard by the thinker at the end of philosophy as words for Being precisely insofar as they still address us – even though ambiguously. [...] And with the emergence of the words for Being, the history of philosophy announces itself as the history of Being.²⁰⁰

deception about history we have just named hinders our listening to the language of the thinkers. We mishear because we take language to be merely an expression of the philosopher’s opinions. But the language of the thinkers says that which is. To hear them is not easy in any case. For such a hearing presupposes an appreciation, which we are rarely capable of.’ GA 8, p. 82.

¹⁹⁹ GA 8, p. 82. The *unthought* as the *unthought* must be understood here as the same as the *not yet* that characterizes thinking according to Heidegger. Both are in the draw to the withdrawal, and thereby shelter that which cannot be thought in their thinking as that which, as *not yet* thought, remains unthought and yet preserved in thought.

²⁰⁰ Robert Bernasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being*. New York: Humanity Books, 1985, p. 11. The thinker at the end of philosophy, so Bernasconi argues, realizes that he can no longer name being and therefore discovers that the task of the philosopher was to name being, a task which is no longer possible for the thinker. For Heidegger, each epoch is characterised by a historically specific revealing of being, which in Nietzsche’s case would be the will to power.

These names for being represent the understanding of being that prevailed in each epoch, which guided the comportment to beings and at the same time preserves the withdrawal of being, shelters it in the unthought of their thought. Hence Heidegger writes that Nietzsche brought to word something that cannot be lost (*etwas Unverlierbares*), something to which thinking must return again and again, the more thoughtful it becomes.²⁰¹ Heidegger appears to suggest here, that by attending to the unthought of each thinker, we learn about the withdrawal of being which keeps itself always already turned away from us. As Haar points out, Heidegger believes that '[w]hat addresses us as *Ereignis* is itself nonhistorical (*ungeschichtlich*), or better, beyond destiny.'²⁰² Yet what unfolds from *Ereignis* enters into history, but occurs as sending, as destinal unfolding (*Geschick*), as Haar writes:

[t]he definition of History as *Geschick*, destiny in the sense of *Schickung*, destination, the sending of being, is simply the recognition of the omnipotence of this inaugural past. History is not only what is already there, but it is what is already accomplished in the destiny of the Commencement.²⁰³

Haar's reading points us to what Heidegger earlier described as the difference of language when it comes to the *Ereignis*: 'We are showing something that is not yet transposed [*übersetzt*] into the language of our speaking [*Sprache unseres Sprechens*]' and what De Bestegui described as the 'excess of the not yet'. The withdrawal itself cannot be thought, not by metaphysics but also not at all, it remains *essentially* unthinkable because it escapes our language, even if it gives the gift of thought and even if our thinking must take place in its draw (*Zug*). Hence we have to find Nietzsche, and thereby find what remained unthought in his thought, but at the same time we must free

²⁰¹ GA 8, p. 56.

²⁰² Michel Haar, *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*. Trans. Reginald Lilly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993a, p. 3. Quoted from *Die Technik und die Kehre*, p. 43-44.

²⁰³ Haar, 1993a, pp. 69-70.

ourselves from his thought, from what determines his comportment towards beings so that we may attend to the unthought, to the withdrawal of being, which is proper to thinking, and which remains concealed within his thought.

Finding and losing Nietzsche

Heidegger understands Nietzsche to be aware of the problematic that emerges here: to find Nietzsche, or rather, to find in Nietzsche's thought that which still addresses us and at the same time be able to free ourselves from his thought so that we may continue on our own path of thinking. He quotes Nietzsche's letter to Georg Brandes which he wrote in 1889: 'after you discovered me, it was no trick to find me: the difficulty now is to lose me.'²⁰⁴ According to Heidegger, 'this sentence voices a destinal relation [*geschickhaftes Verhältnis*]' and thus addresses everyone, now and in the future: the task will be to lose Nietzsche, that is to free ourselves from his thought, which presents the completion and culmination of metaphysics. Yet, just because we have discovered him, that is, are aware of his writings, does not mean that we have found him, and it might indeed be the most difficult of the above described difficulties, and perhaps this is because we assume that we have already discovered him, and thus need no longer to search for him. Nietzsche himself appears to have foreseen this, as he lets Zarathustra say 'they all speak of me, but no one thinks of me'. For Heidegger the problematic lies in the fact that we ourselves are *not yet* thinking. Only when we are thinking can we think *of* Nietzsche. ('*An-denken gibt es nur, wo ein Denken ist*').²⁰⁵ Here, we are reminded of the title of Nietzsche's work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, or, to be more specific, its subtitle, *A Book for All and None*, in which, so Heidegger argues

Nietzsche, the thinker, points to this concealed destiny of thinking, by giving his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* a subtitle which says: *A Book for*

²⁰⁴ GA 8, p. 56.

²⁰⁵ GA 8, p. 57.

All and None. ‘For All’, that means, not for everyone as anyone; “For All” that means for every human being as human being, for each respectively, insofar he becomes to himself essentially thought-worthy. ‘And None’ – that means: for none of all the everywhere present human beings, who merely intoxicate themselves with fragments and sentences from this book, and blindly tumble around in its language, instead of getting underway on the path of his thought and thereby first of all becoming question-worthy to themselves.’²⁰⁶

Unfortunately, for Heidegger, Nietzsche’s book became a book for everyone in a more trivial sense, and no thinker had shown himself prepared to think the fundamental thoughts of this book. Heidegger’s dialogue with Nietzsche in *Was Heisst Denken?* focuses on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in which we also find Nietzsche’s true word on the wasteland. In order to find a point from which to engage with Nietzsche, Heidegger concentrates upon what he believes to constitute the single thought of the book:

[t]his work of Nietzsche thinks the single thought of this thinker: the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same [*die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*]. Every thinker thinks only one single thought [*einen einzigen Gedanken*].²⁰⁷

This, according to Heidegger, is one of the differences between the sciences and thinking. The scientist is required to constantly have new ideas and make new discoveries, because this is what the nature of science demands in order to progress. The thinker, if he wants to respond to the address of being and think the relation of man and being,

only needs one single thought. And the difficulty for the thinker is, to hold on to this one thought as the single one that is to-be-thought, to think this one as the same [*das Selbe*] and to say the propriety of this same. We can only speak the propriety of the same, when we always say the same of the same, namely, so that we ourselves are taken into the address of the same. For thinking the limitlessness [*Grenzenlose*] of the same is the strictest limit [*die schärfste Grenze*].²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ GA 8, pp. 53-54.

²⁰⁷ GA 8, p. 53.

²⁰⁸ GA 8, p. 53.

This single thought, which the thinker must think and try to maintain himself within, this same, which for Heidegger is the thought of the *Ereignis*, the relation of being and man, is the most difficult task for the thinker. As Heidegger conceives of Nietzsche as the last metaphysical thinker, the single thought of Nietzsche must be metaphysical, or rather metaphysics pushed to the limits of metaphysics. Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche must then correspond to his understanding of metaphysics itself: that is the thinking of being without thinking its difference from beings.

Completion of metaphysics

However, there must be something else in Nietzsche's work that makes an engagement with it particularly pertinent for a discussion of the essence of thinking, and perhaps this is the fact that it can operate as a potential passage from representation to the propriety of thought. What in particular has Heidegger discovered in Nietzsche, or rather, what does he seek or hope to find in Nietzsche's work? Heidegger argues that for Nietzsche it has become clear that something in the history of western man is coming to an end, namely that which has so far eluded completion:

Nietzsche understands the necessity to bring this incompleteness to completion. However, this completion does not merely consist in adding a piece which has been missing until now; it does not complete through supplementation, it completes by allowing the whole to be attained as whole and thus transforms the existing from the whole.²⁰⁹

According to Heidegger, all the motifs of Western thought are gathered in Nietzsche's thought, albeit transformed. Their gathering however is destinal (*geschicklich*) and hence cannot be calculated or represented historiologically (*historisch*). For Heidegger, Nietzsche's thought brings metaphysics to its completion in regard to its destinal unfolding, and so metaphysics reaches its culmination there. This gathering and

²⁰⁹ GA 8, p. 60.

completion of metaphysics, should provide a point of departure for thinking, as it highlights the essence of metaphysical thought and thereby allows thinking to situate itself with respect to it and to discover what metaphysics, by virtue of its very essence, always leaves unthought. Heidegger discusses this completion as transformation in relation to Nietzsche's thought on the essence of man, to which I shall return in more detail below.

Heidegger argues that Nietzsche himself probably knew that he was a preliminary passage (*vorläufiger Übergang*), simultaneously pointing ahead and backwards and remaining always and everywhere ambiguous (*zweideutig*).²¹⁰ To be a passage, his thought must come to stand on the site from which the passage leads toward the other side. To consider Nietzsche's thought as a passage, it has to remain firmly on the side which we are trying to cross over from: metaphysics.²¹¹ It is in this respect, that is, Heidegger's understanding (or positing) of Nietzsche as passage, that his reading of Nietzsche's work remains difficult and subject to revision. Nietzsche must, at least for Heidegger, be the metaphysical thinker par excellence, if only so that he can point us towards the limits of metaphysics, and thus perhaps also constitute the point of a departure from it.

Several difficulties present themselves to us here: most importantly, what must be the manner of our encounter with Nietzsche such that he can truly be this passage for us? Heidegger answers provisionally that only a dialogue (*Zwiesprache*) can correspond to Nietzsche's thought as passage, a dialogue whose path must prepare its own passage, the manner of which we cannot yet know.²¹² Another difficulty is to lose Nietzsche, to free

²¹⁰ GA 8, p. 54.

²¹¹ GA 8, p. 55.

²¹² Heidegger further writes on the manner in which such a dialogue must take place: '[o]ne thing is necessary for a dialogue with the thinkers: clarity concerning the manner and the way [*Art und Weise*], in which we encounter the thinkers. There are basically two possibilities: approaching [*Entgegengehen*] and

ourselves from him, in order to be able to finally pass over, to be able to leave him behind. This, Heidegger clarifies,

can only occur if we from and by ourselves free ourselves toward the remembrance [*Andenken*] of this thought [*dieses Gedachte*] into the free space of its own essential content [*das Freie seines eigenen Wesengehaltes*], and thereby let it remain at the site to which it belongs.²¹³

Thus the task is to understand that each thinker thinks from a relation to being, but speaks from his own historical situatedness. While we must find that which still addresses us in his thought, the unthought withdrawal of being which is ahistorical, we must also attend to this historicity that speaks in it.

The last man

We must now turn to Nietzsche's thought of the essence of man, and in order to understand how Nietzsche has gathered and transformed metaphysics we must bear in mind that, for Heidegger,

[e]very philosophical, which means thoughtful, doctrine of the essence of man [*Wesen des Menschen*] is *in itself already* a doctrine of the being of beings. Every doctrine of being is *in itself already* a doctrine of the essence of man. But neither doctrine can be reached through a mere inversion [*bloße Umdrehung*] of the other. Why this is so and wherein this relation of man's essence to the being of beings rests [*dieses Verhältnis zwischen dem Menschenwesen und dem Sein des Seienden beruht*]; this question is however the only question, before which all previous thinking *must* be brought, a question which still remains foreign to Nietzsche. No way of thinking, including the metaphysical, proceeds from the essence of man [*Menschenwesen*] to being or the other way round, from being back to man. Rather every way of thinking *moves* always already *within* the whole relation of being and man's essence, [*innerhalb des ganzen Verhältnisses von Sein und Menschenwesen*] otherwise it is not thinking.²¹⁴

opposing [*Dagegenangehen*]. If we want to go towards the thought of a thinker, then we have to enlarge what is great about him. Then we enter into the unthought of his thought.' GA 8, p. 83.

²¹³ GA 8, p. 55.

²¹⁴ GA 8, p. 85.

Heidegger here insists that man cannot be thought of as a being separate from being, as a separate or self-sufficient entity that could be an object for study. Man must always be thought in relation to being, must be thought from *Ereignis*, in terms of the whole relation and that which the relation relates. Hence Heidegger affirms that ‘this is why the relation [*Verhältnis*] named here between the human essence and the being of entities in no way tolerates any dialectical manoeuvre that would play off one term against the other.’²¹⁵ This thought forms the basis for Heidegger’s discussion of Nietzsche’s thinking on the essence of man.

Heidegger attributes the following question to Nietzsche: ‘is man as man in his current essence [*bisherigen Wesen*] prepared to take over the domination [*Herrschaft*] of the earth as a whole?’²¹⁶ Nietzsche asks this question as he recognizes the historical moment in which man is preparing to assume this domination. It is the moment in which the unfolding of the essence of technology gives rise to new powers and new means of power, which would force upon man new and unfamiliar decisions.²¹⁷ And, should the answer be ‘no’, and according to Heidegger, Nietzsche thinks that this is the case, what would need to happen in order for man to be prepared for this task?

Nietzsche sees the necessity for a passage (*Notwendigkeit eines Überganges*), which emerges from a recognition of ‘the danger that current man [*bisherige Mensch*], will set himself up [*einrichtet*] increasingly unrelentingly on the surfaces of his current essence [*bisherigen Wesens*]’ and establish them as ‘the only valid area of habitation.’²¹⁸ It is Nietzsche who, according to Heidegger, is the first to really recognize and think the historical and metaphysical scope of this moment. Who is this current man, who might also remain as what Nietzsche calls ‘the last man’? Heidegger understands Nietzsche as

²¹⁵ GA 8, p. 85.

²¹⁶ GA 8, p. 61.

²¹⁷ GA 8, p. 70.

²¹⁸ GA 8, p. 60.

not meaning to say that with the last man the essence of man as such ends. Rather the last man is no longer able to look beyond himself and thus rise to his essential task, and he is not able to do so because he has not entered into his own full essence.²¹⁹

Nietzsche calls the last man ‘*das noch nicht festgestellte Thier*’ - the not yet determined animal, which, according to Heidegger, expresses precisely what Western thought has so far thought of man: ‘[m]an is the animal rationale, the rational animal. Through his reason [*Vernunft*] man elevates himself above the animal, but so that he now constantly has to look down upon the animal, bring it beneath himself, has to handle it.’²²⁰ In the metaphysical conception of man, man is an animal, but unlike other animals, he is endowed with reason, and thereby finds himself in an elevated position in regards to the animal, as reason is considered not only the distinguishing feature but also the superior one. Yet, man cannot shake the animalistic part of his nature, and as reason is further presented as in conflict with this animalistic nature, man finds himself constantly struggling to reconcile his reason with his animality. As Heidegger further writes:

[w]hen we call the animalistic [*das Tierische*] the sensuous [*das Sinnliche*] we understand reason as that which is non-sensuous and super-sensuous [*das Übersinnliche*], then man, the rational animal, appears as the sensuous-super-sensuous being [*sinnlich-übersinnliche Wesen*]. When we call the sensuous, following the tradition, the physical, then reason, the super-sensuous, reveals itself to be that which goes beyond the sensuous, beyond the physical; beyond is in Greek *μετά*; *μετά τὰ φυσικά* beyond the physical, the sensuous; the super-sensuous beyond the physical is the metaphysical. Man is, insofar as he is represented as the *animale rationale*, the physical in the transcendence of the physical; said briefly: in the essence of man as the *animale rationale* the beyond, from the physical to the non- and super-physical, gathers itself: man is therefore the meta-physical itself.²²¹

Heidegger argues that because for Nietzsche neither the sensible nor the supra-sensible has been sufficiently thought and represented, man is named the not yet determined

²¹⁹ GA 8, p. 61.

²²⁰ GA 8, p. 61.

²²¹ GA 8, pp. 61 – 62. See also GA 9, pp. 324 – 345.

animal. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche thinks that the man lags behind his historical situation because his essence has not been completely unfolded and determined.²²² This indeterminate determination of man, that we have seen Heidegger sketch above, began with the Greek *ζῶον λόγον ἔχον*, which conceived of man as ‘the emerging presence, which is able to let what is present appear’.²²³ Subsequently the history of philosophy began to think man as the ‘peculiar constellation of animality and rationality.’ This constellation does not allow man to be coherent in his essence and thereby free. Hence Nietzsche’s path of thinking is to bring man across to the completion of his hitherto undetermined essence. In a sense, for Heidegger, Nietzsche does not want to subvert but to make up for this omission.

The superman

Thus man must be taken beyond himself, and a passage, a bridge, must be found for man so he can go beyond himself to that being ‘as which current man can be the “overcomer” [Überwinder] of his current and last essence.’²²⁴ According to Heidegger, Nietzsche chooses the figure of Zarathustra as the man who crosses over beyond himself, the first ‘determining’ man (*fest-stellenden Menschen*). Nietzsche calls the one who goes beyond current man the “superman” (*den Übermenschen*). For Heidegger, the last man is brought into his essence in order to be able to respond to the age of planetary technology, to fit into it and to govern it:

[e]xisting man, by being thus determined and secured in his essential nature, is to be rendered capable of becoming the future master of the earth, of wielding to high purpose the powers that will fall to future man in the nature of the technological transformation of the earth and of human activity.²²⁵

²²² GA 8, p. 72.

²²³ GA 8, p. 73.

²²⁴ GA 8, p. 62.

²²⁵ GA 8, p. 63, WICT, p. 59. Translation by Glenn Gray.

Heidegger judges Nietzsche's choice to name this man the superman (*Übermensch*), as rather unfortunate, because it gives rise to misconceptions of who this man might be. While we might find such a man amongst us now, we cannot find him in those figures which are 'impelled to be the main functionaries of a dominant and misguided will to power elevated into positions of power'. Neither do we find him as a 'magician who will lead humanity to a paradisiacal happiness on earth'.²²⁶ We also cannot find him through historical analysis but rather through Nietzsche's thought, as 'the essence of the figure of the superman is addressed to the metaphysical thinking of Nietzsche' and it is addressed to him because his thinking fits itself (*sich fügen*) into the destiny of Western thought. Heidegger here seems to suggest that the superman is the destinal figure of Western metaphysics and that Nietzsche is the thinker who recognizes this and thinks it. The superman is he who 'first leads the essence of the last man into his own truth and assumes it'.²²⁷ The superman must therefore differ qualitatively from previous humanity. As Heidegger writes: 'The superman is poorer, simpler, more delicate and harder, quieter and sacrificial and slower in his decisions and spare in his speech.'²²⁸ The superman is a transformation and thus also a rejection of the current man. Returning to Nietzsche's true word, 'the wasteland grows, woe to him, who hides wastelands within', Heidegger asks - who is addressed by this 'woe'? He determines that it must be the superman, because he who crosses over must also go under, and so the path of the superman must begin with his descent.²²⁹

²²⁶ GA 8, p. 63.

²²⁷ GA 8, p. 63

²²⁸ GA 8, p. 73.

²²⁹ GA 8, p. 63.

The revenge of the last man

Because Nietzsche's true word belongs to what the assertion names as the most thought-provoking, and because Nietzsche's true word thinks the superman, Heidegger regards it as necessary to explicate the essence of the superman. Heidegger proposes to do so in regard to three issues: first, the crossing over (*das Übergehen*), second, that from which the passage crosses over (*Von wo weg der Übergang geht*) and third, whereto this passage leads (*Wohin der Übergang geschieht*). Man is the passage over from animal to superman. Zarathustra is not the superman himself, but rather the first one who crosses over to him.²³⁰ To understand the passage itself, we thus have to understand the 'where from' and 'where to'. In order to do so, we must return to the last man and the determination of the essence of man as the rational animal, and inquire into the nature of this 'rationality' which, contrasted with animality, presents the fundamental discord of man. According to Heidegger,

[r]eason is the perception [*Vernehmen*] of what is, which always means also what can be and ought to be. To perceive implies, in ascending order: to welcome and take in [*das Aufnehmen*]; to accept and take in the encounter [*das Entgegennehmen*]; to take up face to face [*das Vor-nehmen*]; to undertake and see through [*das Durchnehmen*] and this means to talk through [*Durch-sprechen*]. The Latin for talking through is *reor*, the Greek *ῥέω* (as in rhetoric) is the ability to take up something and see it through; *rerī* is *ratio*; *animal rationale* is the animal which lives by perceiving what is, in the manner described.²³¹

Heidegger thus explicates his understanding of rationality through its manner of apprehension (*Vernehmen*), following its trajectory through to talking-through (*Durchsprechen*), to arrive at the manner of its 'multifarious setting or placing, which is everywhere and foremost a re-presentation'.²³² Man, according to metaphysics, can thus be understood as the animal capable of representing and speaking. According to

²³⁰ GA 8, p. 64.

²³¹ GA 8, p. 65; WICT, p. 61. Translation by Glenn Gray, German in brackets mine.

²³² GA 8, p. 65.

Nietzsche, it is in the last man that we find the man whose current essence solidifies and thus remains furthest removed from the possibility of going beyond himself.²³³ This is due to the way that reason, now understood as the forming of representational concepts and ideas, governs everything man approaches, and thus determines his very manner of being. As Heidegger writes:

[i]deas then limit themselves to whatever happens to be provided at the moment – the kind of provisions that are supplied for the enterprise and pleasure of the human manner of forming ideas, and are pleased to be generally comprehensible and palatable. Whatever exists, appears only to the extent to which it is so provided, and it is only thereby admitted into this tacit planning of ideas, as an object or a state of things. The last man, the final and definitive type of man so far – fixes himself, and generally all that is, by a specific way of representing ideas.²³⁴

Heidegger thus characterizes representation as bringing everything everywhere to a stand on a global level and thereby the last man is also brought and has brought himself to a stand, to the extent that he has no longer a way to go beyond himself. Everything that appears to man, presents itself to him, is brought to a stand (*zum Stand*) and turned into an object (*Gegenstand*) or state (*Zustand*). As bringing to a stand, representation brings all movement to a standstill. The withdrawal of being, truth thought as the unceasing play of unconcealment and concealment, the movement and bringing underway of language, and of thought, are thus contrasted with the standing still of metaphysical thought as representation. Man has brought everything to a stand, to the extent that he himself has brought himself to a stand and thereby can no longer respond to the call of being. So that we might hear what Nietzsche lets Zarathustra himself say about the last man, Heidegger quotes Zarathustra's speech to the people about the most despicable: the last man:

²³³ GA 8, p. 65.

²³⁴ GA 8, pp. 65 – 66; WICT, p. 62. Translation by Gray.

Woe! The time comes, in which man will no longer bring forth a star. Woe! The time comes, of the most despicable man who can no longer despise himself.

See! I show to you the last man. ‘What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is star?’ – asks the last man and blinks.

The Earth thus became smaller, and on it the last man prances around, he who makes everything smaller. His race is ineradicable as is the flea beetle; the last man lives the longest. ‘We have invented happiness’ say the last men and blink.²³⁵

The passage above points to how the multifarious setting up by man reveals itself as reducing the world and as a means of man’s making himself at home in it. The endurance of the last man lies in his essential nature as representing, which gives rise to what Nietzsche calls ‘blinking’ in German ‘*blinzeln*’.²³⁶ Heidegger understands blinking to mean

to play upon and posit a seeming and a semblance, to agree upon such semblance as something valid and in fact with mutual and tacit consent, not to inquire further into the thus posited. Blinking: the agreed and eventually no longer in need of explicit agreement positing of the objectified and fixed surfaces and foreground facets of all things as alone valid and valuable, with which man operates and degrades everything.²³⁷

According to Heidegger, ‘blinking’ rests in a special kind of representation, it is a consequence of it. “‘We have invented happiness,’ say the last men and blink’: the invention of happiness promotes the uniformity of happiness, aiming ‘to bring all mankind into the uniform condition of uniform happiness’.²³⁸ This effort of bringing mankind into the uniform condition of uniform happiness, is according to Heidegger, aided by, among others things, sociology, psychology and psychotherapy, whose aim is to guarantee the welfare of all men.²³⁹ Heidegger here understands Zarathustra’s lament

²³⁵ GA 8, p. 67.

²³⁶ GA 8, p. 87.

²³⁷ GA 8, p. 79.

²³⁸ GA 8, p. 88.

²³⁹ GA 8, p. 88. In ‘Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens’, Heidegger argues that the sciences, among them psychology and sociology, have come from philosophy and have disengaged from it. In their autonomy and self-reliance, they operate in fields previously disclosed by philosophy, but are themselves unable to disclose their own fields. Thus they are closed off from the ‘event of presencing’

as saying that this representation allows man to encounter everything only by blinking, according to ‘an uncanny destiny [*unheimlichen Geschickes*] which prevents man from seeing beyond his manner of representation.’²⁴⁰ Heidegger insists that man cannot simply remain in this absence of a need for decision making, which arises out of this tacit agreement regarding what is valid and valuable. He cannot rest content with this false security. It conceals his own fundamental discord, and does not allow it to reach him in his essential being as pain and suffering.²⁴¹ The concealment of this fundamental discord is aided by the above mentioned means to achieve the uniform happiness of mankind.

What is this kind of thinking which posits everything to such an extent that it degrades everything and does not allow man to enter into his essence? According to Heidegger, Nietzsche’s answer is *revenge*: ‘The spirit of revenge: my friends, that was so far man’s best reflection [*Nachdenken*]; where there was suffering there ought always to be punishment.’²⁴² The spirit of revenge characterizes the last man, and it is in the freedom from revenge that Nietzsche imagines the essence of the overman.²⁴³ The bridge, the passage from the last man to the overman, is for Nietzsche the deliverance from revenge (*Erlösung von der Rache*). Zarathustra says: ‘[t]hat man would be delivered from revenge: this is for me the bridge to the greatest hope and a rainbow after long spells of bad weather.’²⁴⁴ While Heidegger notes that Nietzsche’s wording of the deliverance from revenge might resemble those of moral education and psychology, he

and can only perpetuate what has already been determined as man’s essence and the established surfaces and areas of habitation of his being. See GA14, pp. 71 – 72.

²⁴⁰ GA 8, p. 88.

²⁴¹ GA 8, p. 89. When Heidegger here speaks of the rift (*Riss*) and pain (*Schmerz*) he refers us back to the poetic words of Hölderlin: ‘painless are we...’ I shall return to this passage in Chapter 4.

²⁴² GA 8, p. 89. *Nachdenken*: *nach* in German, means ‘after’, and thus *nachdenken* is a thinking after something, directed backwards, and thus already means a thinking which is directed towards that which has passed and is always passing.

²⁴³ GA 8, p. 91.

²⁴⁴ GA 8, pp. 91-2.

reminds us that Nietzsche thinks something different: man's relation to being. Thus

Heidegger writes:

[p]sychology itself is incapable of saving the essence of man, even as psychotherapy; morality as mere doctrine and requirement is also incapable, if man does not enter into an other fundamental relation to being [*anderes Grundverhältnis zum Sein*], if man does not by himself, if indeed it is up to him, embark upon keeping his own essence open to the essential relations to being [*wesenhaften Bezüge zum Sein*], inasmuch as it addresses him alone or lets man remain speechless, because he is painless. But already when we bear and maintain [*durch- und austragen*] 'speechless and painless are we', are we in our essence already open for the address of being [*im Wesen schon offen für den Anspruch des Seins*]. But even this openness to being, which thinking can prepare, is unable by itself to save man. For this salvation the authentic openness of the relation to being [*eigentliche Offenheit des Bezugs zum Sein*] is a necessary but not a sufficient condition.²⁴⁵

It is not a sufficient condition because the openness of the rift always also allows for the possibility of metaphysics to enter. The danger here is that metaphysics attempts to close this rift,²⁴⁶ while a thinking which holds on to its own propriety must be careful not to cover this rift up. Does Nietzsche's greatest hope then allow us to hope or does his greatest hope not rather shelter the devastation? We can only know this once we ourselves dare to cross the bridge with Nietzsche.²⁴⁷ According to Heidegger the 'crossing of this bridge is the actual and this means here always the singular step in the whole thinking within which Nietzsche's metaphysics unfolds.'²⁴⁸ Heidegger however characterizes this crossing as a digression from our path to thinking. Let us nevertheless follow Heidegger's crossing of the bridge with Nietzsche.

Deliverance from revenge

How are we to understand Nietzsche's thinking of a deliverance from revenge?

Heidegger argues that Nietzsche thinks nothing else but the being of beings when he

²⁴⁵ GA 8, p. 93.

²⁴⁶ GA 8, p. 94.

²⁴⁷ GA 8, p. 100.

²⁴⁸ GA 8, p. 110.

thinks the spirit of revenge and the deliverance from revenge. And if the spirit of revenge determines the essence of thinking which Heidegger established earlier as representation, then we must understand both as metaphysical. Heidegger asserts the metaphysical understanding and determination of the being of beings to be will (*Wollen*), a determination he also ascribes to Nietzsche.²⁴⁹ He refers to Schelling's list of the predicates of will as 'groundlessness, eternity, independence of time, self-affirmation'²⁵⁰. Willing is thus understood in relation to time and as an affirmation of the self *independent* of time and its temporality. In 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?' Heidegger further outlines the consequences of this interpretation of being as will for the essence of man, as man must make his comportment to all entities correspond to being as will.²⁵¹ Hence even man's reflection and his revenge are thought from the will. If metaphysics focuses on beings in their presence and actuality, and conceives of being as will, then the will can will only that which is present and actual. Revenge then, must be sought for that which the will can no longer will. Heidegger quotes Nietzsche: 'this, yes this is *revenge* itself: the will's aversion to time and its "it was".'²⁵² This allows Heidegger to read Nietzsche's notion of the vengefulness of man as a vengefulness with respect to the passing of time: time and its 'it was'. 'It was' renders willing impotent, for will can no longer will what has passed.²⁵³ Heidegger writes:

[i]nsofar as the will suffers from the passing of time, and as this suffering is however precisely itself, namely the will, the will remains in its willing handed over to this passing. The will thus wills passing itself. It wills thereby the passing of its suffering and thus the passing of itself. The will's aversion to every 'it was' appears thus as the will to passing, which wills that all be worthy of passing. The aversion that arises in the will is thus the will against everything which passes, i.e. that which arises and which out of

²⁴⁹ In 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?' Heidegger provides a brief account of how, from Leibniz onward (through Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling), the being of beings is understood and brought to language as 'will'. He further argues that no scholarly research will be able to explain how this came to pass, but rather that it must be thought in its question-worthiness. See GA 14, pp. 112 – 113.

²⁵⁰ GA 8, p. 95.

²⁵¹ GA 14, p. 113.

²⁵² GA 8, p., 98.

²⁵³ GA 8, pp. 96 – 97.

this arising comes to a stand and remains. The will is thus a representation, which essentially pursues [*nachstellen*] everything which goes and stands and comes, to degrade it in its standing and finally to undermine it. This aversion of the will itself is for Nietzsche the essence of revenge.²⁵⁴

The will's aversion is thus directed against time and its 'it was'. What understanding of time provides the basis for Nietzsche's thought here? Heidegger traces the concept of time through the history of metaphysics and shows that, 'revenge is the will's aversion [*des Willens Widerwille*] to time and this means: against passing and its past.'²⁵⁵ This characterization of the temporal as passing (*des Zeitlichen als des Vergänglichen*) shapes the common representation of time throughout the whole of metaphysics.²⁵⁶ Here the passing (*Vergehen*) of time is not simply one aspect of time, alongside the present and future. Rather, it is this passing itself that defines time, it is 'the proper offering [*eigentliche Mitgift*], which time offers and bequeaths: it is the pastness [*das Vergangene*], the "it was". Time only offers what it has. And it only has what it is itself.'²⁵⁷ Heidegger then understands Nietzsche's concept of time as characterized by passing (*Vergehen*). But, Heidegger asks, whence comes this understanding of time as passing? Heidegger stresses the urgency of this question:

[i]t is time, it is about time, to finally think of the essence of time and its provenance, so that we arrive at the site where it is revealed that in all metaphysics something essential, namely its own ground, remains unthought. This is the reason we must say that we are not yet authentically

²⁵⁴ GA 8, p. 97.

²⁵⁵ GA 8, p. 100. In 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?' Heidegger further argues that 'the strongest aversion of the will to time does not merely consist in the denigration of the earthly. The strongest revenge, according to Nietzsche, resides in the reflection which establishes the supratemporal ideals as absolute, and provides therefore the measure for everything temporal which must now degrade itself to non-being.' GA 14, p. 115. The problem that Heidegger is pointing out here is that if the question is, as Nietzsche conceived of it, whether man in his current essence is prepared to take over the governance of the earth as a whole, then how could he be capable of it, if he degrades everything earthly? This, then, might be the accomplishment of the delivery from revenge: to save the earthly from man's revenge. Yet this delivery from revenge cannot mean the absolving of the will, since the will is the being of beings, as Heidegger further argues: 'the delivery releases the will's aversion from its "no" and frees it for a "yes". What does this yes affirm? That which the spirit of revenge's will is averse to and denies: time, passing.' GA 14, p. 116.

²⁵⁶ GA 8, p. 100.

²⁵⁷ GA 8, p. 100.

thinking, as long as we are thinking only metaphysically.²⁵⁸

Metaphysics, so Heidegger begins, can only ask about time in the manner proper to it. According to him, it is through Aristotle's question about beings (τί τὸ ὄν), that the inquiry into time begins in metaphysics and begins with an inquiry into beings. It therefore asks about time's being, positing it as something that *is*, and can thus be inquired about concerning its being. It belongs to the manner in which the question is posited that the character of time is determined from the very outset. Heidegger argues further that metaphysics has at the same time also already decided what it understands as 'being' (*seienend*): being *present* (*anwesend*). A being receives its status as a being from presence: the more present it is or becomes the more it is considered to remain or to last as a being.²⁵⁹

Time, and its temporal modes of past, present and future are thus thought in terms of presence, of the *now*. Past and future are no-longer-now and not-yet-now respectively: not nothing, but rather a being that lacks presence.²⁶⁰ The essence of time is thus represented on the basis of being, that is, on the basis of a specific interpretation of being as presence. As such it is not thought from the *Ereignis*, the withdrawal of being. This forgetting of being allows for a thinking of time which also obliterates difference, as Heidegger writes in 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?':

The three words 'Today,' 'One day,' and 'Formerly' are capitalized and placed in quotation marks. They designate the fundamental features of time. The way Zarathustra expresses them points toward the matter Zarathustra himself must henceforth tell himself in the very ground of his essence. And what is that? That 'One day' and 'Formerly,' future and past, are like 'Today.' And also that today is like what is past and what is to come. All three phases of time merge in a single identity [*zum Gleichen als das Gleiche*], as the same in one single present, a perpetual 'now.' Metaphysics calls the constant now 'eternity.' Nietzsche too thinks the three phases of time in terms of eternity as the constant now. Yet for him the constancy

²⁵⁸ GA 8, p. 103.

²⁵⁹ GA 8, p. 104.

²⁶⁰ GA 8, p. 105.

consists not in stasis but in a recurrence of the identical [*des Gleichen*].²⁶¹

Heidegger thus feels the need to pose the question: ‘how does it stand with being and time? Should they and their relation not finally become worthy of questioning?’²⁶² It is here that Heidegger thinks the unthought of metaphysics will show itself, and the question ‘time and being’, which Heidegger will have asked from the beginning, itself refers to this unthought. What is crucial here is that Heidegger insists that being and time must be thought from their relation and not as two separate entities whose relation must be established afterwards. Here, Heidegger goes no further than to point us to the question, and leaves it without further inquiry.

The will to will

Where then does Nietzsche seek deliverance from revenge? According to Heidegger, this is the core of Nietzsche’s metaphysics: the characterization of revenge as the ‘will’s aversion’ is thought in relation [*Bezug*] to the being of beings.²⁶³ Revenge, so Heidegger’s suggests, ‘characterizes the manner and mode of how current man generally relates [*verhält*] to beings. Nietzsche thinks the essence of revenge from out of this relation [*Verhältnis*].’²⁶⁴ He returns to Schelling’s predicates of willing, to which belong eternity and independence from time. He concludes:

[a]ccordingly only the will which as will is independent from time and eternal is primordial being [*Ursein*]. This does not merely mean the superficial designation that the will appears constantly independent of time. Eternal will does not merely mean: a will, which lasts eternally, but rather says: the will is only primordial being if it is as *will* eternal. It is so, if it as will eternally wills the eternity of willing. The eternal will, understood in this sense, no longer depends in its willing and willed upon

²⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Vols I and II*. Trans. D. F. Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1991, p. 218. See also GA 7, p. 108.

²⁶² GA 8, p. 106.

²⁶³ GA 8, p. 98.

²⁶⁴ GA 8, p. 101.

the temporal. It is independent of time. It can therefore no longer collide with time.²⁶⁵

The deliverance from revenge is thus not the deliverance from willing itself, but rather from that which prompts the aversion of the will. But it is impossible to get rid of time and its passing. The problem with time and its ‘it was’, its passing, is that it is out of will’s reach. Nietzsche must thus reposition this passing and pastness within the will’s power. As Heidegger writes:

the will becomes free from its aversion to the ‘it was’ if it wills the eternal return of this ‘it was’ The will is delivered from its aversion, when it wills the eternal recurrence of the identical [*des Gleichen*]. So the will wills the eternity of the willed. The will wills the eternity of itself.²⁶⁶

Heidegger calls the eternal recurrence of the identical the ‘highest triumph of the metaphysics of the will,’²⁶⁷. In this metaphysics, being assumes its ultimate form of ‘the will to will’. Through the eternal recurrence of the identical, the will never encounters anything beyond its reach; nothing it cannot will anymore. What kind of passage does Nietzsche offer us, if his delivery from revenge takes the form of the eternal willing of the identical? Where have we followed Nietzsche? Heidegger suggests that,

[t]he deliverance from revenge is the bridge that the one who passes over crosses. Where does the one who passes over go to? He goes towards that which no longer allows space for revenge as the will’s aversion to the temporal as merely passing. The one who passes over goes towards the will, which wants the eternal recurrence of the identical, towards the will, which as this will is the primordial being of all beings.

The overman goes beyond the current man, because he enters into a relation to being, which is the will of the eternal recurrence of the identical eternal will itself and nothing beyond it. The overman goes towards the eternal recurrence of the identical, because his essence derives from it. [...] Who is Zarathustra? He is the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the

²⁶⁵ GA 8, p. 102.

²⁶⁶ GA 8, p. 107. I have here chosen to go against the common translation of ‘*die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*’ by translating ‘*des Gleichen*’ as ‘the identical’ rather than “the same” in order to maintain the distinction Heidegger makes between the identical (*das Gleiche*) and the same (*das Selbe*) also in the English translation.

²⁶⁷ GA 8, p. 108.

identical.²⁶⁸

Zarathustra teaches both: the doctrine of the overman and the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the identical. He teaches both at the same time because they belong together, as they are both thought together as what belong together: the being of beings and its relation to the essence of man.²⁶⁹ While in *Was Heisst Denken?* Heidegger's reading of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* comes to an end here, in 'Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?' Heidegger concludes that Zarathustra's teachings do *not* in fact provide man with a delivery from revenge. He asks:

[i]s through this thinking [Zarathustra's teaching of the delivery from revenge], the current mode of reflection [*Nachdenken*], the spirit of revenge overcome? Or does this representation, which brings all becoming under the care of the eternal recurrence of the identical, perhaps conceal another aversion of the will to mere passing and thereby a highly refined spirit of revenge [*ein höchst vergeistigter Geist der Rache*]?²⁷⁰

For Heidegger, in this text and in *Was Heisst Denken?*, Nietzsche remains caught in metaphysics, and cannot overcome that which he seeks to overcome. Yet Heidegger does not seek to object to Nietzsche's thought; rather, as he indicated earlier, we must part ways with Nietzsche here, if we want to learn thinking. This is one of the fundamental differences between Nietzsche's solution to the threat that faces the essence of man and Heidegger's. For Nietzsche, man must be able to will eternally, and thus to free the will from the passing of time, by delivering everything over again and again to the potency of the will, which wills always the identical. In contrast, for Heidegger, the unceasing event of presencing is the temporality most proper to man, and thinking is always not yet, always in excess and inappropriable for man. And it is precisely towards that temporality and that 'not yet' that man must direct himself and

²⁶⁸ GA 8, p. 109.

²⁶⁹ GA 8, p. 109.

²⁷⁰ GA 7, p. 119.

his thinking. Instead of delivering everything over to man in constant presence and availability, Heidegger seeks to reawaken man to the thinking of *Ereignis*. Thus thinking cannot rest and build upon that which has already been revealed in the history of philosophy, but must instead attend to the unconcealing and concealing movement of *Ereignis*. Metaphysical, philosophical thinking has not responded and corresponded to the propriety of that which gives us to think, because it has not attended to the difference that is always preserved within it.

Concluding remarks

Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche's thought thus tries to reveal how even at the completion of metaphysics the address of being speaks in the unthought. Heidegger seeks to present Nietzsche as the metaphysical thinker par excellence as all the possibilities of metaphysics are gathered in his thinking. In the thought of Nietzsche, we find the essence of man thought in terms of a representational thought which seeks to bring everything into the uniformity of the identical and a thought of the eternal recurrence of the identical. Thus Nietzsche's greatest hope entails the crossing of a bridge that leads us away from our path of thinking.

Chapter 4: Difference in Language

Introductory remarks

As already discussed, in Heidegger's view, metaphysics does not think the twofold (*Zwiefalt*) of being, as it thinks being in terms of beings. Being, so Heidegger maintains, *is not*, that is, it is not an entity and should thus not be thought of as an entity. Thus a propositional statement like "X *is* Y" cannot capture the truth of being, as being *is not*. Hence Heidegger sees the need for a transformation of our relation to language if we want to begin to think the twofold of being. And as Heidegger is here teaching thinking, or rather letting us learn thinking, then this lecture course must in some ways instigate this transformation in the reader or at least provide him with a sketch of where and how such a transformation might begin to take place. But how can thinking take place through language, or perhaps more precisely, how does Heidegger's thinking take place through language, so that an opening might occur in which the address of being might be heard? It cannot do so through a performative use of language, as Ziarek warns, or the invention of new words, but 'entails instead the dis-placement of signs into the fold of words (*Worte*) in order to disclose their distinctive way-making.'²⁷¹ This displacement of the sign takes place through Heidegger's use of prefixes and the hyphenation of words, the highlighting of roots, and word constellations.²⁷² They form part of a larger effort to reveal the essential unfolding of language, as for example seemingly tautological sayings such as "*die Welt weltet*" (the world worlds) or "*Die Sprache spricht*" (language speaks), the removal of a proper subject, such as in the

²⁷¹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 7.

²⁷² I shall focus here entirely on *Was Heisst Denken?* in order to show how Heidegger "teaches thinking" through language, but these strategies can be found throughout Heidegger's work. While it is often his later work that is judged as obscure or poetic due to the foregrounding of the workings of language, they were not absent from his earlier work. I would like to refer here also to Jan Aler's account of Heidegger's language in *Sein und Zeit*, in which he shows us that Heidegger already employs these strategies of hyphenation, use of prefixes, providing everyday words with more unfamiliar yet recognizable meanings, which Aler calls the "renewal" of the old". Through hyphenation, for example, Aler argues, a 'word gains signification, it no longer appears as a completely contingent label for the concept, but, to a certain degree, shows a natural relation to the concept.' Aler, 1996, p. 16.

formulation “*es gibt*” (“it gives”, or literally “there is”);²⁷³ these phrasings draw attention to the difference between what is stateable and what is sayable, yet without completely defying conventional grammatical form²⁷⁴. Thus Heidegger works from an existing relation to language and its grammatical and logical structures towards a rupture within this existing form, so that we may depart from it, or find within it, an opening towards the language of the *Ereignis*. In what follows I will show how language operates within *Was Heisst Denken?* and discuss Heidegger’s notion of language, in particular regarding the difference of words and terms, hyphenation and prefixes in order to highlight how Heidegger seeks to introduce difference through language.

The fourfold of the question

When Heidegger resumes the lecture course in the summer semester of 1952, he does so with a return to the title question. He shows that the question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ unfolds into four questions, and while they have already been at work throughout the lecture course, it is only now at the beginning of the second part, that Heidegger explicitly names and explicates these four senses of the question, and thereby highlights the fourfold nature of the question.

At first sight the question appears to give itself as decidedly unambiguous (*entschieden eindeutig*), as is reflected in the English translation. Heidegger argues that already a little reflection (*Besinnung*) shows that the question is in fact polysemous (*mehrdeutig*), and that this polysemy renders any direct and unprepared attempts to

²⁷³ On Heidegger’s “*Es gibt*” Fynsk writes : ‘*Es gibt*, then names the manner in which language essences [*west*] as it gives a relation to what is – which is also to say that it names the mode of being of the relation between the word and the think the world holds in being by granting the is, for the word itself is the relation. We must not say of the word, “it is”, declares Heidegger; we must say, *Es gibt*, hearing in this location, *Es, das Wort, gibt* – for the word is what gives: it gives to be.’ Fynsk, 1996, p. 61.

²⁷⁴ I shall comment upon the seeming tautological phrasings and the absence of a subject in chapter 6.

answer the question futile. Therefore, Heidegger suggests, we must try to explicate this polysemy.²⁷⁵ He lists four ways (*Weisen*) of asking the question:

What is called thinking? says once and firstly: what does the word ‘thinking’ mean? What is named with the name ‘thinking’?

What is called thinking? says on the other hand and secondly: how is that which is named, thinking, grasped and delineated by the traditional doctrine of thinking? What has for the last two and half thousand years been considered the essential characteristic of thinking? Why is the traditional doctrine of thinking placed under that curious title of logic?

What is called thinking? says further and thirdly: what would it entail, for us to be capable of a thinking proper to our essence? What is required of us, for the proper accomplishment of thinking each time?

What is called thinking? says finally and fourthly: what is it that calls us, commands us, as it were, to think? What is that which summons us to thinking?²⁷⁶

Having unfolded the question, we should be able to approach each way of asking each question separately, which might allow us to get closer to an answer, if such an approach is indeed desirable — at the very least we shall learn more properly how to question, and that means to think. Yet, Heidegger reminds us, that these four ways of asking the question belong together. And it is in this belonging together, their union (*Einigkeit, Einheit*) rather than their polysemy that Heidegger locates the unsettling quality of the question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’. Thus we must ask after that which unites them and how it unites them, and if one of the four senses has antecedence or priority over the others. Heidegger begins this inquiry into the manner of their jointure (*Gefüge*), with the claim that it is the fourth sense of the question which tells us how the question ‘what is called thinking?’ wishes to be asked.²⁷⁷

As the fourth sense of the question asks why we are thinking at all, and what has first summoned us to thinking, it suggests that thinking is a response to something which first of all commands us into thinking. Hence Heidegger argues that it is the

²⁷⁵ GA 8, p. 117.

²⁷⁶ GA 8, p. 117.

²⁷⁷ GA 8, p. 118.

fourth question that provides the guiding and binding measure for the other questions. It inquires after that which directs us (*Weisen/ Weisung*) towards thinking so that we first of all incline toward and become capable of (*vermögen*) thinking and are as thinkers; it inquires after what first of all and essentially commands us to think, welcomes and shelters us in thinking. The fourth question elevates the topic of thinking to a level at which it becomes something that concerns and addresses us essentially.

Hence the fourth question is distinguished from a common interpretation of the question, which treats thinking like a topic of investigation, which can be objectively and disinterestedly analysed as one of many processes man can accomplish. Heidegger however is after a conception of thinking which lies at the very heart of man's essence. Thus 'thinking' is displaced from its current determination as a distinguishing quality man possesses to that which first of all makes him who he is. Because the fourth question concerns us in our very essence, it makes the question concerning thinking question-worthy (*fragwürdig*) in the first place. Thus the fourth question is the one question that joins the four questions together, as well as providing the direction for these questions and their measure: we are asking these questions not merely because we are interested in thinking as one of many activities man can accomplish at his own discretion, but because thinking is something which determines us essentially (*wesentlich stimmt und bestimmt*).²⁷⁸ Thus it is not only the so-called 'object' of our inquiry which changes but also the nature of this inquiry.

Yet for Heidegger it is important that we attend to the question as the unity of the fourfold, that is, to attend to its 'unsettling quality', which is not meant here in a derogatory way. Its fourfold character rests in the polysemy of the German word *heissen* which Heidegger develops in detail and at length. This is in accordance with

²⁷⁸ GA 8, p. 119.

Heidegger's belief that it is not sufficient to merely tell the reader about something; rather, one must allow or enable the reader to hear the different meanings of a word and how they allow the different senses of the question to arise and, most importantly, allow the reader to listen to the essential unfolding of language.²⁷⁹ The important point Heidegger will try to make through the unfolding of the word *heissen*, is that while we might begin with a univocal meaning of the question and the words that make up this question, the very essence of language opens up a plurality, a manifold of sense.

According to Heidegger it is crucial that we dwell in this polysemy, which entails that we do not privilege one meaning above the others and subsequently discard these others and the questions they give rise to. Instead, to learn to dwell in the polysemy of the word means attending to the question '*was heisst Denken?*' as fourfold, as the gathering of the four questions into their own unity. In what follows I shall trace Heidegger's unfolding of the question through an elucidation of the German word *heissen* and the different interpretations of the question it gives rise to.

The polysemy of heissen

So how does the question 'what is called thinking?' allow itself to be heard in these manifold ways? In the English translation the first and second ways of asking the question ('what is called thinking?') are immediately obvious, while the third and fourth ('what call does thinking make upon us?' and 'what calls us into thinking?') might not be immediately heard. Hence we must work in order to learn to hear them. As the fourth question implicates *us* in the question, Heidegger adds the word 'us' (*uns*) to the question, as a provisional and momentary aid, so that it now says in German '*was heisst uns denken?*'; yet, according to Heidegger, the question remains ambiguous: it could be

²⁷⁹ What this might mean and entail shall be discussed in the course of this chapter.

understood to mean: what does the name thinking mean *to us*? (*‘was bedeutet für uns der Name Denken?’*); or what is that which directs us into thinking and commands us to think? (*‘was ist Jenes, das uns in das Denken verweist und dazu anweist?’*), and Heidegger suggests that it is the latter which is the proper meaning of the question.²⁸⁰ Thus we can translate *‘was heisst uns denken?’* into English as ‘what calls us into thinking?’.

In German the move from the one sense to the other is accomplished by reading the provisional aid supplied by the word ‘us’ either in the dative case or the accusative case. In order to render the fourth sense of the question, we must hear the ‘us’ in the accusative case, to allow us to hear the ‘what’ (*‘was’*) as the subject of the question, rather than ‘thinking’. Both cases are at work in the original German version of the question *‘was heisst Denken?’* as its grammatical structure allows for this ambiguity, something that cannot be rendered in the English translation. The move from the dative case to the accusative case also accomplishes the move from an understanding of thinking as an object of disinterested inquiry to an understanding of thinking as man’s essential determination. The forceful nature of this move from the familiar to the unfamiliar is acknowledged by Heidegger, who argues that this trick is achieved by playing with the verb *‘heissen’* which we have so far translated with the English verb ‘to call’.²⁸¹

Heidegger begins to unfold the manifold meanings of the German word *‘heissen’*, beginning with its most common meaning ‘to be named and to name’ (*benannt sein und nennen*). This meaning occurs in sentences such as ‘how should the child be named’: in German *‘wie soll das Kind heissen?’*. This everyday usage of the word gives rise to the

²⁸⁰ GA 8, p. 118.

²⁸¹ GA 8, p. 120.

first interpretation of the question listed above: ‘What is named with the name ‘thinking’?’²⁸²

Moving into more unfamiliar territory, Heidegger asks after the meaning of *heissen* which allows us to ask after that which calls us to thought. Heidegger draws attention to the German phrase ‘*jemanden heissen aus dem Weg zu gehen*’: in English ‘to call upon someone to make way’, which allows us to hear *heissen* in the sense of ‘request, demand, order, direct’ (*auffordern, verlangen, anweisen, verweisen*).²⁸³ Heidegger argues that the German word, heard in this sense, can have a less commanding tone, and might rather mean ‘*das verlangende Auslangen nach etwas hin, wohin wir, indem wir heissen, das Geheissene gelangen zu lassen*’²⁸⁴, which we might translate here as ‘the desiring reaching towards something, with which we, by summoning, allow the summoned to arrive.’²⁸⁵ *Heissen* can thus also mean to ‘bring onto the way’ (*auf den Weg bringen*), as we find in the New Testament, ‘*Und da Jesus viel Volks um sich sah, hieß er hinüber, jenseits des Meeres fahren*’, ‘and as Jesus saw many people around him, he called upon them to travel across, beyond the sea’.²⁸⁶ Heidegger is referring to Martin Luther’s translation of the Latin, and hence directs us to the Latin word *iubere* which means ‘to wish that something might happen’, and the older Greek version which uses the word *κελεύειν* meaning ‘to bring onto the way’ (*auf den Weg bringen*).²⁸⁷ While those meanings are not as common in everyday use as the first one, they are nevertheless known to the German speaker. Thus Heidegger suggests,

²⁸² GA 8, p. 120.

²⁸³ GA 8, p. 120.

²⁸⁴ GA 8, p. 120.

²⁸⁵ Yet the sentence retains an untranslatable quality through the connections Heidegger makes with the word *-langen* by changing its prefixes. This is a recurring strategy in Heidegger’s work and I shall return to it below. See also Fynsk 1996, pp. 68ff on how in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* the word *langen* is thought in relation to way-making, which echoes the passage in *Was Heisst Denken?* Fynsk makes a further connection between *Be-lang* and *Geheiss*, linking them to *Eignis* and *Brauch*. Fynsk 1996, pp. 68-69.

²⁸⁶ GA 8, pp. 120 – 121.

²⁸⁷ GA 8, p. 121.

it is simply that these meanings are not as habitual to us as the others are; hence they do not come to mind when we first hear the question ‘what is called thinking?’

Further more familiar uses of the word *heissen*, are ‘that means...’ or ‘that should say...’ (*das will heissen*), and ‘that entails...’, which Heidegger elucidates with the example of a man lost in the mountains because he does not know what it means to navigate a mountain range (*Der Mann hat keine Ahnung was es heisst sich im Hochgebirge zu bewegen*).²⁸⁸ *Heissen* also means ‘*befehlen*’ which one might translate as ‘to command’ but Heidegger insists that the word ‘*befehlen*’ means rather ‘to commend, to entrust, sheltering’ (*anbefehlen, anvertrauen, Bergen*), thus again designating the unfamiliar meaning as the more authentic one.²⁸⁹ With these various senses of the German word *heissen* in mind, we can now begin to hear the question in its four senses.

Heidegger suggests that we now return to the first and most habitual meaning of *heissen*: *nennen* (to name). So we return to the first question, ‘what is named with the name thinking?’ but inquire further into the meaning of ‘to name’. To name something, according to Heidegger, means to furnish a thing with a name.²⁹⁰ Yet what does this say about the relation of the thing and its name? According to Heidegger, the common understanding has it that a name is assigned to an object (*Gegenstand*), and in turn becomes an object itself, and as we can represent to ourselves the relation of these two objects, the relation itself also becomes an object (*etwas Gegenständliches*). Thus we can represent and analyse all three parts of the matter, yet, Heidegger suggests, what is really at stake in naming still eludes us.²⁹¹ ‘To name something’, Heidegger writes,

that means: to summon by its name. Even more originary, naming: to summon to word [*ins Wort rufen*]. What has been thus summoned now

²⁸⁸ GA 8, p. 128.

²⁸⁹ GA 8, p. 122.

²⁹⁰ GA 8, p. 123.

²⁹¹ GA 8, p. 124.

stands in the summons of the word. The summoned [*Gerufene*] appears as what is present, as such it is sheltered in the summoning word [*im rufenden Wort geborgen*], commanded [*befohlen*], called [*geheissen*]. What is thus called [*Geheissene*] is summoned into presence, itself calling. It is named, it has this name. In naming we summon what is present to arrive [*das Anwesende ankommen heissen*]. Where at? That remains to be thought. In any case, naming and being named is only the common meaning of ‘*heissen*’, because the essence of naming itself is based on the authentic sense of calling [*heissen*], calling forth [*kommen-Heissen*], summoning [*Rufen*], commending [*Anbefehlen*].²⁹²

Heidegger concludes that *nennen* is originally a form of *heissen*, as every name is a kind of calling or summoning (*Geheiss*): ‘in every calling prevails an address and thereby the possibility of naming.’²⁹³

The first question ‘what is named with the name thinking?’ can now be understood in two different ways. The first, working with a definition of naming as developed at the very beginning of Heidegger’s elucidation of *heissen* asks after thinking as a name in the sense of a concept given to it by man, whose definition might be subject to further revision and clarification. The question in its second sense, working with the new senses of the word ‘naming’, now asks after that which is called forth and sheltered by the word *Denken*. What is called forth by this word *Denken* takes place in what Heidegger calls ‘the play-space of the spoken’ (*der Spielraum des Gesprochenen*) and I will focus on his inquiry into this sense of the question in chapter 5. What is important to note here, is that the very word itself gives rise to both an active and a passive relation to language: from using words in order to express our thoughts

²⁹² GA 8, p. 124. See also ‘Die Sprache’: The originary summoning [*Rufen*], which calls the intimacy [*Innigkeit*] of world and thing to come [*kommen heisst*], is the proper calling [*das eigentliche Heissen*]. This calling is the essencing of speaking [*das Wesen des Sprechens*] [...]. It speaks, by calling the called [*das Geheissene*], thing-world and world-thing, to come into the between of difference [*Unter-Schied*]. [...]. The difference is the call [*Geheiss*], out of which every calling [*Heissen*] is first summoned [*gerufen*], so that each calling belongs [*gehöre*] to the call. The call of difference has always already gathered every calling unto itself. The gathered summoning, which gathers in its summoning, is the sounding [*Lauten*] as pealing [*Geläut*].’ GA 12, pp. 25 – 26. Heidegger uses the word *Unter-Schied*, difference, here in order to name the gathering middle, which gathers everything unto itself and ‘lets the thinging of things rest in the worlding of the world.’ GA 12, p. 26.

²⁹³ GA 8, p. 129.

about an entity to being attentive to the word as calling forth and guiding our thinking about an entity.

The question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ uses both the familiar and the unfamiliar senses of *heissen* – and Heidegger insists that the proper hearing of the question must entail hearing all of the different senses of *heissen*. We are thus called by the question ‘what is called thinking?’, we are called as thinkers into thinking. For Heidegger, this means that what calls us in this way, demands to be thought in its essence, seeks shelter in our thinking. This, he reminds us, we called ‘the thought-provoking’ (‘*das Bedenkliche*’), and what always already wants to be thought ‘the most thought-provoking’ (‘*das Bedenklichste*’). He writes:

[t]he question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ asks after that which in this special sense wants to be thought, so that it not only gives us something to think, not even just itself to think, rather that it first gives us thinking, entrusts us with thinking as our essential determination [*Wesensbestimmung*] and thus first of all appropriates us to thinking [*dem Denken vereignet*].²⁹⁴

Earlier I discussed the fact that one of the aims of the lecture course is to bring the question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ into its question-worthiness. Here Heidegger sketches one possible way in which the question can become more question-worthy to us. It is not simply that we recognize the ambiguity of the grammatical structure provided by the polysemy of the German word *heissen*, but rather that through this recognition of the richness of the words which make up the question we can become more attentive to the essential unfolding of language.

The ‘unsettling quality’ of the question derives from the essence of language. While an everyday approach to language might want to privilege the univocity of a word in order to guarantee the meaning of what is said, or in this case, questioned, the word by virtue of its polysemy always challenges this univocity. In this particular case

²⁹⁴ GA 8, p. 125.

the word *heissen* directs us from one path of thought (the inquiry into the meaning of the word) to the thinking of that which always first of all calls us into thinking, as its various meanings, such as naming, welcoming, summoning, commending, sheltering and way-making, allow us to contemplate the different relations we have to thinking. The unsettling quality of the question shows that even if we think that we can approach the topic of thinking disinterestedly, we are always already involved in the question, through the essential unfolding of language. Hence both the fourfold and its unity are located in the essential unfolding of language. And as we shall see, Heidegger must insist that we embrace this polysemy, because it allows us to ask the question meaningfully, since as a result of this polysemy, the first three questions already contain within them the fourth question.

From everyday speech to the essential unfolding of language

But this going back and forth between the familiar and unfamiliar senses of the word *heissen* is not capriciousness or mere play (*Willkür oder Spielerei*). The difference between merely playing with language and attending to how the essence of language ‘plays’ with us, is crucial for Heidegger, whose work has garnered the reputation of being obscure and difficult due to its language, if not simply charlatan or ludic. Yet as Heidegger insists here, this is not his own invention or whim, rather it is the essence of language itself which guides his thinking:

[i]f one can speak of games here, then it is not us playing with words [*Wörtern*], rather the essence of language plays with us, not only in the case before us, not only today, but for a long time and always already. Because language plays with our speaking, so that language allows our speaking to move away into the superficial [*vordergründigen*] meanings of words [*Worte*]. It is as if for man it is a laborious effort to dwell properly in language [*die Sprache eigentlich bewohnen*]. It is as if this dwelling is

especially susceptible to the danger of the ordinary and common [*des Gewöhnlichen*].²⁹⁵

Language plays with us in the sense that it allows for two different relations to language: to circulate among the merely superficial meanings of words, and to dwell properly within language. Heidegger claims that this proper dwelling in language is difficult to achieve as it is always in danger of falling back into the habitual.

He associates the everyday relation to language with moving for the most part within the most immediately accessible and common meanings of words. This dwelling in the immediate and familiar is approximately where we find ourselves in everyday speech, and, according to Heidegger, were we interested here in the customary level of communication we would not have been prompted to inquire further. In everyday speech, Heidegger argues, words are thrown out and used up, which, however, gives us a very specific advantage: ‘with the help of this used-up language we can talk about everything. There is no need to dwell on every single word.’²⁹⁶ Thus, for the most part, instead of authentically dwelling in language, man moves within the superficial and common, which soon becomes the measure and standard for the usage of language.

According to Heidegger, while in common perception, language is considered to be the medium or means of expression for poetry and thinking, thinking never uses language as a field and means of expression, rather it is ‘the essential saying.’²⁹⁷ When Heidegger now reminds us that we should listen carefully and pay more attention to the proper saying of language (*was die Sprache eigentlich sagt*), it might be worth noting here that in the German the move from the familiar (*gewohnten*) to the unfamiliar (*ungewohnten*) senses of words, from the familiar (*gewöhnlichen*) to proper dwelling (*eigentliches bewohnen*), is played out by changing the prefixes of the German root

²⁹⁵ GA 8, p. 122.

²⁹⁶ GA 8, p. 132.

²⁹⁷ GA 8, p. 133.

form of the word '*wohnen*', commonly translated into English as 'to dwell' or 'to live'. Heidegger often chooses words which lend themselves to saying a manifold of different things via a change of prefixes and variations of their root. What some might call a 'sleight of hand' or mere wordplay, belongs, according to Heidegger, always already within the essential unfolding of language. Because, when we are able to listen more carefully and attentively we become able 'to enter authentically into the matter of the issue, which each time comes to language in thinking and questioning.'²⁹⁸

We are thus brought to a crucial distinction Heidegger makes between using language (*die Sprache benützen*) and speaking language (*die Sprache sprechen*). To use a language is to merely utilize it as a means of communicating and expressing ideas, opinions, feelings and so on. We use language in everyday communication and specific discourses, be they, for example, of a scientific or legal nature. This however, is not in itself problematic. Heidegger concedes that there are instances in which language simply must become a mere means for a specific purpose. Fynsk argues that Heidegger seeks an account of language which 'inverts the traditional approach' and requires us to abandon

three basic notions [about language]: that language would be a means of expression of thought and feelings; that language would be a form of human activity by which humankind makes itself, or makes a world for itself; and that it would be a representation of what is (whether real or imagined).²⁹⁹

This inversion can only be achieved, Fynsk continues, 'when thought reveals itself as answering to the essence of language.'³⁰⁰ Thus if we want to learn thinking and bring ourselves into the correspondence of what addresses us essentially, we must depart from this mere utilization of language.

²⁹⁸ GA 8, p. 123.

²⁹⁹ Fynsk, 1996, p. 17.

³⁰⁰ Fynsk, 1996, p. 18.

Heidegger then introduces a further distinction between ‘*eine Sprache sprechen*’, to speak *a* language, and ‘*die Sprache sprechen*’, to speak language. The definite article points to the distinction between the speaking of *a* particular language, such as German, and the speaking of language *as* language as well as the distinction between considering the vocabulary and word definitions of a particular language and being attentive to the essence and essencing (*Wesen*) of language. What makes common speech common is precisely that its relation (*Verhältnis*) to language is characterized by utilization (*Benutzung*). Analogously, thinking does not use words (*Wörter benutzen*) but says words (*Worte sagen*). And it is because of this special relation to language which thinking enjoys, that we must pay attention to the saying of the word (*das Sagen des Wortes*) on our way to thinking.³⁰¹ This distinction between the relation to language on the part of ordinary everyday speech and the relation which characterizes thinking is further developed through an important distinction Heidegger makes between two different kinds of words: *Worte* and *Wörter* which I shall henceforth translate as ‘words’ and ‘terms’ respectively.

The secret of language: Worte and Wörter

According to Heidegger, terms (*Wörter*) belong to a conception of language as a system of signs. We use them in everyday speech and we find them alphabetically listed in dictionaries, with their definitions and pronunciations. We understand them as a compound of sound and meaning, the sound being perceptible to the senses (*Sinne*), while their non-sensuous component (*das Nichtsinnliche*), their sense (*Sinn*), is that which gives the word its meaning (*Bedeutung*).³⁰² We can furnish them with meaning, and, according to Heidegger, terms (*Wörter*) are like buckets into which we can pour

³⁰¹ GA 8, p. 133.

³⁰² GA 8, p. 133.

sense as well as drawing sense from them. Heidegger gives them the name: sense-vessels (*Sinnbehälter*). Thus when we are asked to pay attention to the word, we might initially (*zunächst*) be tempted to search for it in dictionaries and historiological accounts. Yet Heidegger argues that ‘paying attention to the word’ means something fundamentally different than occupying oneself with *Wörter* as sense-vessels.

Having described terms (*Wörter*) as buckets into which sense can be poured and drawn out, he now compares words (*Worte*) to wells, which saying (*Sagen*) can dig, which are in each case new to find and easy to lose, but always springing forth. Without constant recourse to the well, Heidegger argues, the buckets become empty and stagnant. That is, without attending to the word, terms become merely carriers of signification. Despite the distinction between words (*Worte*) and terms (*Wörter*), speech opens up a realm in which we can find both. By listening attentively to the terms (*Wörter*) we encounter in everyday speech we might learn to hear the words (*Worte*) that are speaking in them, as Heidegger writes,

[i]nitially [*zunächst*] when we are listening to speech [*Gesprochenem*] we are never given mere sense-vessels. Listening, we abide in the play-space of the spoken [*Spielraum des Gesprochenem*], wherein the tuning voice [*Stimme*] silently sounds. In this realm, whose essence we have barely glimpsed and much less thought, words [*Worte*] which are speaking in this speech and yet do not themselves appear, are opening up.³⁰³

Heidegger’s unfolding of the polysemy of *heissen* is an example of how thinking can begin within this realm of speech and within the tension between words and terms. While, in the case of *heissen*, we at first found ourselves within the familiar realm of the word as a term, we were subsequently led into the realm of the words which are opened up in this speech. Thus, the breadth of the range of meaning belongs to the very essence

³⁰³ GA 8, p. 134.

of a word. This in turn is based on what Heidegger calls ‘the secret of language’, as language

allows both: on the one hand to be reduced to a mere uniformly and universally utilizable system of signs, which is established as binding and dominant; and on the other hand that language says in one great instant [*Augenblick*], one singular and unique time, something singular and unique [*ein einziges Mal Einziges sagt*], which remains inexhaustible, because it is always inceptual [*anfänglich*] and therefore unattainable for any kind of levelling.³⁰⁴

It is important here that the German word *einzig*, which I have translated with the English words ‘singular’ and ‘unique’, is not meant to be understood in opposition to *universal*, as Heidegger is not thinking here of the singular in distinction from the universal, but rather of the ‘non-repeatability of the inceptuality of *Ereignis*’.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, as Ziarek points out, ‘[t]his nonrepeatable, inceptive singularity (*Einmaligkeit*) institutes signification and repetition and yet singularizes the event and its word beyond the possibility of repetition brought about by signs.’³⁰⁶ While the singular inceptual saying of the event is the radical opposite of language understood as a system of signs, it nevertheless makes the latter possible in the first instance, as it is the *Ereignis* which institutes all possible relations and movements of language. Thus in Heidegger’s account, language originates in the *Ereignis*: a language radically other and unknown to us, which then divides itself or breaks up (*scheidet sich*) into language as a system of signs. Ziarek’s analysis of the distinction between *Worte* and *Wörter*, allows him to conclude that

[w]ords (*Worte*), by contrast, describe a different dimension of language, one that constitutes its origivative momentum, that is, the clearing (*Lichtung*) as the manner in which language opens and traverses its ways (its *Bewegung*). This momentum is the leap, the origin (*Ur-sprung*), of language, which, by giving being to beings, makes room for signification and signs. The issuing of words marks not only the origin of language but

³⁰⁴ GA 8, p. 195.

³⁰⁵ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 77.

³⁰⁶ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 77.

also the opening up of world, that is, of the question of being (*Seynsfrage*). In practise, this understanding of language enacts the expansion of philosophy beyond argumentation and its correlative, the statement, into a poetic practise of thinking that relies crucially on language's continual movement from words to signs.³⁰⁷

Language, as Heidegger conceives of it, comprises both: an ideal system of signs, which regulates meaning and has as its ideal a uniform use of language in which words possess clearly defined univocal meanings, and the language of the event, which is singular and inceptual, which is the first coming to word of the *Ereignis*. Heidegger emphasizes that both sides lie so far apart and are such strangers to each other that one could barely call them extreme opposites. They are like two extreme poles between which human speech (be it poetic, everyday, or scientific) sways, never reaching either one. Everyday speech, while part of this 'expansive notion of language' is entangled in mediocrity, brought about by the need for expedient communication and the carelessness of the speaker. This however does not mean that we are using language as a strict and unambiguous system of signs; our everyday relation to language always encompasses both — we are simply not attending to the full possibilities of language. As Ziarek also points out, Heidegger believes that within the sign-vessels, this everyday engagement with language, lies sheltered the inceptual originating movement of language, the relational response to being, in which 'the *Ereignis* comes to word' (*Das Ereignis wortet*).³⁰⁸

Thinking, is according to Heidegger, the 'inceptual, essential and thereby at the same time the last speaking which language speaks through man' (*das anfängliche, wesenhafte und darum zugleich letzte Sprechen, das die Sprache durch den Menschen spricht*). Heidegger here thinks language from the *Ereignis*, rather than from man's use of it. The last part of the above quotation — language speaks *through* man — challenges the common idea that language is a man-made tool, that it is at man's free

³⁰⁷ Ziarek, 2013a, pp. 4 - 5.

³⁰⁸ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 5. Quotation from GA 74, p. 99.

disposal. To think language as originating from man means to think of it as serving a specific purpose, such as communication, expression of feelings, and so on. To think language from the *Ereignis*, allows Heidegger to think the essential unfolding of language without submitting to an anthropocentric conception of it. It is crucial to note here, however, that it is not the words or terms that have changed, but rather our relation to them. The distinction Heidegger makes between words and terms is one of a difference in our relation to language and not language itself.

The human sounding into word

As we have established, for Heidegger the everyday metaphysical relation to language is mainly characterized by a utilization of language for specific purposes. In contrast, thinking must take on a different relation to language, it must attend to language's essential unfolding from the *Ereignis*, which however marks the departure (*Scheidung*) from 'nonrepeatable, inceptive singularity [*Einmaligkeit*]', bound for the 'uniformly and universally utilizable system of signs'. Thus, both everyday metaphysical language and the language of thinking respond to the calling, but find themselves within different stages and in different relations to the movement of language from *Ereignis* to the system of signs.

Earlier, in Chapter 2, I drew attention to a passage in *Was Heisst Denken?* in which Heidegger establishes man's relatedness to being, and speaks of man's correspondence to the *Ereignis*, in terms of the gap between the language of *Ereignis* and the language of man: '[w]e are showing something that is not yet transposed [*übersetzt*] into the language of our speaking [*Sprache unseres Sprechens*].'³⁰⁹ Thus for Heidegger all human speech takes place as correspondence to the calling (*Geheiss*), as

³⁰⁹ GA 8, p. 20.

Fysnk remarks:

[m]ortals speak, he says, because they have heard, because they already belong or answer to the command of difference (the *Geheiss*). They speak, he says, because they listen, and when they speak they draw from language's command what they bring into the sounding word. In this sense, their speaking is always a response that corresponds, an *Entsprechen*.³¹⁰

The calling (*Geheiss*), which gathers all the various meanings of *heissen*, always calls us and it is to this call that we respond when we bring to sound the silent language of *Ereignis*. The silent call of *Ereignis* calls upon, summons and commands man into correspondence which leads him to put into words what addresses him in the *Ereignis*.

As Heidegger explains in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*:

[l]anguage speaks, it speaks, by saying, concerned that our speaking, through listening to the unspoken, corresponds to its saying. Silence [*Schweigen*], which one often designates as the origin of speaking, is also a corresponding. Silence corresponds to the silent pealing of stillness [*lautlosen Geläut der Stille*] of the appropriating-showing saying [*der ereignend-zeigenden Sage*]. The saying which rests in the *Ereignis* is as showing the ownmost manner of appropriation [*des Er-eignens*]. The *Ereignis* is as saying. Therefore, language speaks according to the manner in which *Ereignis* as such unconceals [*entbirgt*] or withdraws [*entzieht*]. Still, a thinking which thinks the *Ereignis* can only assume this, and yet already experiences this in the essence of modern technology, which is named with the still strange name *Ge-stell*.³¹¹

Heidegger develops this appropriation of man to language by the *Ereignis* in detail in his reading of Trakl's poem 'Ein Winterabend'³¹² in 'Die Sprache', in which he writes that '[l]anguage speaks as the peal of stillness [*das Geläut der Stille*]'. The peal of stillness, as he further explains

³¹⁰ Fysnk, 1996, p. 27. See also GA 12, p. 30: 'Man speaks, insofar he corresponds to language. This correspondence is listening. It listens, insofar as it belongs to the peal of stillness.'

³¹¹ GA 12, p. 251. See GA 11, p. 47, on the way in which Heidegger envisions how we might glimpse (*erblicken*) the *Ereignis* in the *Ge-stell*.

³¹² Ein Winterabend: 'Wenn der Schnee ans Fenster fällt/ Lang die Abendglocke lautet, /Vielen ist der Tisch bereitet/ Und das Haus ist wohlbestellt. // Mancher auf der Wanderschaft/ Kommt ans Tor auf dunklen Pfaden. /Golden blüht der Baum der Gnaden //Aus der Erde kühlem Saft. // Wanderer tritt still herein;/ Schmerz versteinerte die Schwelle. /Da erglänzt in reiner Helle/ Auf dem Tische Brot und Wein.' GA 12, pp. 14 – 15.

is nothing human [*nicht Menschliches*]. Yet the human [*das Menschliche*] is in its essence linguistic [*sprachlich*]. The now designated word ‘*sprachlich*’ says here: appropriated from the speaking of language [*vom Sprechen der Sprache ereignet*]. The appropriated, the human essence, is brought into its own propriety through language, so that it remains appropriated over [*übereignet*] to the essential unfolding of language, the peal of stillness. Such appropriation eventuates [*solches Ereignen ereignet sich*] insofar as the *essence* of language [*das Wesen der Sprache*], the peal of stillness, needs [*braucht*] the speaking of mortals, in order to sound as the peal of stillness for the hearing of mortals. Only insofar as human beings belong [*gehören*] within the peal of stillness are mortals capable [*vermögen*] of their *own* manner of sounding speaking.³¹³

The reciprocal co-appropriation of man and being in *Ereignis* is here given a linguistic dimension: the silent language of *Ereignis* needs man, and man, always already belonging to it, receives his essential being from language.³¹⁴ The ‘stilling’ of the peal of stillness gathers everything into its own intimacy, as Heidegger continues: ‘[t]he discharge [*Austrag*] of world and thing in the manner of stilling is the *Ereignis* of difference [*Unter-Schied*].’ As we have seen above, Heidegger’s terminology of discharge (*Austrag*), rift (*Riss*), rift-design (*Aufriss*), (pain) *Schmerz* and (difference) *Unter-Schied* designates a mode of gathering and opening through which man and world, the things in the world and everything that concerns man, are brought together in a relatedness which Heidegger attempts to develop outside of a metaphysical subject-object relation. This is how language speaks, it calls and gathers difference into the fold of intimacy. In the 1950 essay ‘Die Sprache’ Heidegger explicates how the human response to the silent address of the *Ereignis*, which appropriates man through the calling of difference:

³¹³ GA 12, pp. 27 – 28.

³¹⁴ See also GA 11, pp. 46 – 47: ‘The Er-eignis is the swaying realm [*schwingende Bereich*] through which man and being reach each other in their essence, win their essencing by losing every determination, which metaphysics has provided them with. To think *Ereignis* as *Er-eignis*, means to build on the structure of this swaying realm. The building tools for this floating structure are received by thinking from language. Because language is the most tender, but also the most fragile, all relating-holding sway within this floating structure of the *Ereignis*. Insofar as our essential unfolding is appropriated to language, we are dwelling in the *Ereignis*.’

The manner, after which the mortals themselves speak, having been summoned from difference into difference, is correspondence [*das Entsprechen*]. Mortal speech must first of all listen to the calling, which calls as the stillness of difference world and things into the rift [*Riss*] of its onefold [*Einfalt*]. Every word of human speech speaks from such listening [*Gehör*] and as this listening.

Mortals speak insofar as they listen. They attend to the summoning call of the stillness of difference, even if they do not know it. The listening draws from the calling of difference that which it brings into the sounding word [*lautende Wort*]. The listening-drawing speaking is correspondence.

By drawing its spoken from the calling of difference, human speech has in its own way already followed the summons. Correspondence as listening drawing is at the same time granting countering [*aner kennendes Entgegenen*]. Mortals speak by corresponding, drawing-countering, to language in a twofold manner. The mortal word speaks insofar as it corresponds [*ent-spricht*] to a manifold sense.³¹⁵

Thus in every human speaking difference already speaks, every correspondence of man to the Ereignis is a listening to the calling of difference. Everyday, metaphysical and scientific speech merely cover up the difference which always already speaks in language, in order to achieve an univocity to serve their respective purposes. Language is thus always a language of difference and this difference is given by the calling itself.

Listening to the unfolding of language

As thinking takes place in language, it is crucial that we learn to listen to its saying. By that Heidegger means that we must move beyond what we first encounter in speech, that is, words or rather terms, used up and exhausted in their signifying quality, in order to hear language at work, its essential unfolding. More concretely, we hear words speak in the spoken (*Gesprochenem*), rather than mere terms. This demands that we transform our relation to language. Thus, welcoming that which might alienate us, Heidegger consistently attempts to draw the auditor out of the realm in which he already feels at home, the common and most easily accessible meaning. Heidegger's strategy of alienating us from common metaphysical assumptions, takes concrete form in no longer

³¹⁵ GA 12, p. 29.

allowing us to glide over the words straight through to their conceptual meanings, but instead urging us to attend to the word *as* word so that we might relate to it beyond its common everyday functionality.

Hence we must train our ears to not remain with what at first presents itself to them, because what we encounter initially (*zunächst*), Heidegger writes,

is never what is near, but always only the common [*das Gewöhnliche*]. The common belongs to an uncanny [*unheimlich*] power, which slowly makes us unaccustomed [*entwöhnt*] to dwelling [*Wohnen*] in the essential, often so decisively that it never lets us return to this dwelling.³¹⁶

This notion, that the initial or immediate is often the common and rarely the essential, informs much of Heidegger's work and is a recurring theme in *Was Heisst Denken?*. Throughout the lecture course the auditor is asked to listen again and again, and each time Heidegger points to a further, often more essential meaning.³¹⁷ As Ziarek writes

[h]earing in Heidegger refers [...] to a listening-belonging that opens up as the very relation that *is* language. Hearing takes place as the movement of language that is already underway, without ever coming to be limited to the self or to presence. The fold of listening and belonging on which language pivots – this is how '*die Sprache spricht*' – is marked precisely by how the word (*Wort*) resonates within the term Heidegger uses for word-signs (*Wörterzeichen*).³¹⁸

While earlier I stressed the importance that Heidegger gives to hearing [*hören*] as the way in which we can perceive the address of that which essentially concerns us, here this hearing takes on a more concrete form: listening to language and its essential unfolding.

Learning thinking takes place in the tension between terms (*Wörter*) and words (*Worte*) and the task is to find the opening up of words in terms. Earlier we saw that

³¹⁶ GA 8, p. 134.

³¹⁷ This is by no means a new strategy in Heidegger's work: already in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger claims that '[t]he ultimate business of philosophy is to preserve the force of the most elemental words in which Dasein expresses itself, and to keep the common understanding from levelling them off to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as the source of pseudo-problems.' BT, p. 262.

³¹⁸ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 178.

Heidegger characterizes learning as correspondence (*Entsprechung*) to that which addresses us (*zusprechen, Zuspruch*). And in order to correspond to that which addresses us we must learn to listen (*hören*). What Heidegger will try to accomplish throughout *Was Heisst Denken?* is to tune our ears so that we learn to listen to language.

As discussed earlier, Heidegger develops the idea of listening (*hören*) from belonging (*gehören*): our belonging to language derives from our ability to listen to language, but the manner in which Heidegger does so suggests that it is through language itself that this relation arises and that it is not he himself who enforces such a connection. Language itself, as it were, suggests the manner of our engagement with it. Language itself opens up the relation of hearing, belonging and obedience, and it does so through the root *hören*, which allows us to hear this connection.

Above I discussed how according to Heidegger man is drawn by the withdrawal of being, and how this *Ereignis* marks man as showing into the withdrawal, manifesting his relation of being through his essential unfolding as a sign (*Zeichen*). This originary belonging to the advent of language must thus be attended to through an attentive listening to language, and it must mark the difference between the language which has issued from the event and the language of signification in which man moves in his everyday being. Thinking, that is the thinking of that which essentially addresses us, *Ereignis*, which marks the relation of being and man, is enacted through language.

On hyphenation and prefixes

In what follows I would like to show with some examples from *Was Heisst Denken?* how Heidegger makes use of hyphenation and prefixes in order to mark the path of thinking. I will begin here with Heidegger's use of the hyphen; like the prefixes he employs, Heidegger never explicitly comments upon this scriptural use in *Was Heisst*

Denken? Instead, these marks operate tacitly throughout the text, providing a specific tonality and rhythm to what is being said. As Ziarek points out,

[t]he hyphen does not simply change the words or alter their valence, but literally holds them in their happening *as* words, in the transition between *Worte* and *Wörter*. Scripted into *Er-eignis*, *Ent-menschung*, *Da-sein*, *Ver-hältnis*, *An-fang*, *Ab-grund*, *Ab-schied*, and so on, the hyphen opens the word-signs as ‘relations’ or instances of the between – engaged, bestirred, happening, and open toward the future. If nothing else, the hyphen radically temporalizes language terms, springing open in the word-momentum that has delivered the event to signs.³¹⁹

Heidegger thus tries to trace and highlight the movement of language, from the singularity of its givenness in the *Ereignis* to the system of signs, through the use of the hyphen, interrupting and drawing attention to it. For example, Heidegger hyphenates *Handwerk* (handiwork or craft) to turn it into *Hand-Werk* (now literally hand-work), drawing attention to the hand, to show that this is the work of the hand, to wrest it from its connotations of commercial activity. It is of particular importance that we hear the hand at work when Heidegger links the work of the hand to that of thinking, claiming that thinking is handicraft (*ein Hand-Werk*).³²⁰ To give another example, the hyphenation of the word *fragwürdig* (questionworthy) into *frag-würdig* (question-worthy), highlighting its two components: questioning and dignity or worth, to allow the word to take on a new meaning, or rather retrieve its original meaning, in place of its everyday meaning as dubious and suspect.

Yet it is not only about retrieving or redefining the meaning of a sign, the hyphenation interrupts and displaces and forces us to pause on the word, it reveals how signification operates – the sign no longer disappears behind its signifying power, but opens up a space in which thinking can begin to take hold. As Ziarek writes, the ‘hyphen holds signs – their conventional functions and signifying power – open to the

³¹⁹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 180. *Ent-menschung*, *Ver-hältnis*, *An-fang*, *Ab-grund*, *Ab-schied*, are in English, respectively, de-humanization, relation or comportment, inception, abyss and departure.

³²⁰ GA 8, p. 18.

silent inscription of the word ‘of’ being.’³²¹ This silent inscription is the movement of language from its issuing from the event to a system of signs. The hyphen then can draw attention to the word and question its everyday meaning or bring it to the fore for the first time.

Heidegger further uses hyphenation to highlight the prefixes of words such as *An-dacht*, a word which usually has a religious connotation and means devotion, reverence, prayer, but now draws our attention to its relation to *denken* (thinking), since ‘*dacht*’ is a past-tense form of *denken*. *An-dacht* now comes to designate a thinking *of* and *toward*. We encounter the prefix *an-* again in words like *Anspruch* (address), *Anfang* (inception) and *Andenken* (remembrance).

When Heidegger writes on the necessity to think about representation, his use of the hyphen highlights the *vor-* (before, in front of) of *Vorstellen*, turning it into a literal presenting or positing before one’s self:

[j]ust because current thinking has recognized itself as a kind of representation [*Vorstellens*] in no way guarantees that in current thinking the essencing of representation [*Vorstellens*] has been sufficiently thought, or even thought at all. Therefore through a dialogue with the essence of current thinking, the *essential unfolding* of re-presentation [*Vor-stellens*] must first of all be brought to its own language.³²²

The language of representation as Heidegger presents it, unfolds and circles around the root *-stellen*, which denotes a positing, a setting or fixing in place. In a passage in which Heidegger discusses how this framework of *Vorstellen* determines the whole comportment of the ‘not yet determined animal’ (*das noch nicht fest-gestellte Thier*) we can see how Heidegger carefully chooses certain words that lend themselves to various meanings through prefixes and hyphenations, in order to designate a specific comportment (here a metaphysical one) lending the passage a specific rhythm. I shall

³²¹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 180.

³²² GA 8, p. 59.

quote this passage here both in German and English in order to show how the German text works through a linguistic enactment rather than a use of concepts, something that is not retained in the English translation:

[d]as in der Vernunft waltende Vernehmen *stellt* Ziele her-zu, *stellt* Regeln auf, *stellt* Mittel bei und *stellt* auf die Weisen des Tuns ein. Das Vernehmen der Vernunft entfaltet sich als dieses vielfaltige *Stellen*, das überall und zuerst ein *Vor-stellen* ist. [...] Das *Vorstellen* hält sich da nur noch an das jeweils gerade Zu- und Bei-*Gestellte* und zwar als ein solches, dessen Zustellung im Betreiben und Belieben des menschlichen *Vorstellens* geregelt und auf die allgemeine Verständlichkeit und Bekömmlichkeit verabredet wird. Zum Erscheinen gelangt alles, was ist, nur insoweit, als es durch dieses sich stillschweigend verabredende *Vor-stellen* als ein Gegenstand oder als ein Zustand *zugestellt* und damit erst zugelassen wird.³²³

The perception that prevails within reason produces and adduces purposes, establishes rules, provides means and ways, and attunes reason to the modes of action. Reason's perception unfolds as this manifold providing, which is first of all and always a confrontation, a face-to-face presentation. [...] Ideas then limit themselves to whatever happens to be provided at the moment, the kind of provisions that are supplied at the enterprise and pleasure of the human manner of forming ideas, and are pleased to be generally comprehensible and palatable. Whatever exists, appears only to the extent to which it is so provided, and only thereby admitted under this tacit planning of ideas, as an object or a state of things.³²⁴

The published translation of *Was Heisst Denken?* does not retain the connections which lend a coherence to Heidegger's critique of representation and show how Heidegger lets his thinking take place in and through language. Ultimately, all these forms of *-stellen* will be gathered into the *Ge-stell*, often translated into English as 'enframing', the name Heidegger gives to the essence of modern technology in 'Die Frage nach der Technik'.³²⁵ These passages which play with the root of a word through a variety of prefixes are prominent in the German text, and reveal connections between concepts

³²³ GA 8, p. 65.

³²⁴ WICT, pp. 61 – 62.

³²⁵ GA 7, p. 21. Heidegger gives the following explanation of what he means by *Ge-stell*: '*Ge-stell* means [*heisst*] the gathering of that positing [*Stellens*] which posits [*stellt*] man, which means challenges him to unconceal the actual in the manner of ordering standing reserve [*Bestellens*]. *Ge-stell* means [*heisst*] the manner of unconcealment which prevails in the essence of modern technology but is itself nothing technological.' GA 7, p. 21. Heidegger does not use *Gestell* in *Was Heisst Denken?*

and ideas which prevail throughout the text. When Heidegger characterizes Nietzsche's thinking of revenge against the passing of time as *nachstellen* it is immediately recognizable as belonging to a specific metaphysical comportment.

Heidegger deploys the meaning and movement of each prefix with remarkable consistency, and thereby allows a specific kind of movement and network of relations to operate throughout *Was Heisst Denken?*. The prefix *ge-* for example almost always indicates a gathering: *Gedicht* as the gathering of the poetry (*Dichtung*) of a poet³²⁶, *Gedächtnis* (memory) as the gathering of thought; *Ge-spräch* (dialogue) as the gathering of speaking.³²⁷ Another example is the prefix *ent-*, which De Beistegui describes as the 'privative prefix "Ent-", as what abolishes or cancels distance and remoteness, as what brings things close or nearby.'³²⁸ As Aler points out, in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger's highlighting of the prefix *ent-* in the German word *Entfernung*, a word which customarily means distance, allows him to use the word in 'in the most literal sense conceivable — namely, as making distance disappear.'³²⁹

Thus when Heidegger writes that in order to learn thinking we must correspond (*Entsprechen*) to that which addresses (*Zusprechen*) us, the prefix *ent-* designates the task of entering into the nearness of the address. His occasional hyphenation of these

³²⁶ See for example Derrida in 'Heidegger's Hand': 'There is, *on the one hand*, the distinction between *Gedicht* and *Dichtung*. *Gedicht* (an untranslatable word, once more) is, in its place, what gathers together all the *Dichtungen* (the poems) of a poet. This gathering is not that of a complete corpus, of the complete works, but a unique source that is not present in any part of any poem.' Jacques Derrida, 'Heidegger's Hand (Geschlecht II)'. In *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2003., p. 58.

³²⁷ The *Ge-spräch* between thinker and poet, or between two thinkers, is always presented in terms of a coming together of two kinds of speaking (*sprechen*). Heidegger uses a hyphen here to draw out the root *sprechen*, so the word in literal terms would say 'the gathering of speech'. Hence Derrida suggests that we translate *Ge-spräch* with the word 'collocation' and argues: 'Between thinker and poet, *Gespräch* does not signify conversation, as it is sometimes translated, nor dialogue, nor exchange, nor discussion, and still less communication. The speech of the two who speak, the language which speaks between them divides and gathers according to a law, a mode, a regime, a genre which can receive their name only from the very thing which is said here by the language or speech of this *Gespräch*. Language speaks in speech.' (Derrida, 1989, p. 83)

³²⁸ De Beistegui, *The New Heidegger*, p. 66.

³²⁹ Aler, 1993, p. 17. We might here also think of the 'incomparable nearness' of the *Entzug*, the withdrawal of being at the beginning of *Was Heisst Denken*, GA 8, p. 19.

terms *Ent-sprechen* and *Zu-sprechen* indicate that this nearness takes place in the region of language. According to Ziarek, Heidegger uses hyphens and prefixes to highlight the workings of language, its essential unfolding, in order to be able to let the essence of language speak, rather than providing a conceptual definition of language:

[t]his is evident with regard to the very term for language (*Sprache*), which is not grasped in its concept or rendered transparent through description but instead comes to be experienced through the movement and the force of the constellations Heidegger draws among words with the root of *sprechen*: (*ansprechen, zusprechen, entsprechen, versprechen*) and *sagen* (*ansagen, ersagen, entsagen, zusagen, versagen*). The philosophical significance of this approach to ‘redefining’ language can be summarized as follows: ‘what’ language is, how it happens, is described by Heidegger first not as an idea or a concept but as the relatedness opened up in its design (*Aufriss*) by the constellation enacted by a set of prefixes. The concept thus arises from the movement of language itself, here specifically the German prefixes, and the poetic dimensionality enacted by these prefixes is never adequately defined by the *concept* of language.³³⁰

The movement of language is enacted through the word-constellations, hyphens, and prefixes, to indicate responsiveness and relationality. Heidegger uses the root *denken* and its past tense –*dacht* in order to develop several notions and ways of thinking: *das zu-Denkende* (that which is to-be-thought), *das Bedenklichste* (the thought-provoking or what most gives us to think), *andenken* (to think of or toward), *nachdenken* (to trace ‘back’ in thought, or in Nietzsche’s terminology, a revengeful thinking of passing), *An-dacht* (commemoration), *Andenken* (remembrance), *Gedanke* (thought), *Gedachtes* (thought – the gathering of thinking), *Gedächtnis* (memory – again denoting a gathering of thought, of all that is given us to think). Heidegger reminds the reader again that the task of thinking is not to ‘grasp the word [*Denken*] through an encountered meaning of

³³⁰ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 7. See also Jeffrey Powell on Heidegger’s use of the term *Aufriss*: ‘We could say, then, that rift design indicates, points to, all those ways and paths of the essence of language as way-ings (*Be-wägungen*) in and of language. *Aufriß* would consist of the totality of the way-ings of language as brought into relation and, as brought into relation by *Aufriß*, brought into unity and cohesion. “The rift design is the totality of traits in the kind of drawing [*Zeichnung*] that permeates what is opened up and set free in language”. Powell, ‘The Way to Heidegger’s “Way to Language”’. In *Heidegger and Language*. Ed. Jeffrey Powell. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013, p. 195.

it, in order to develop it into a concept, upon which then to build a doctrine about thinking.’³³¹

Hence what thinking is must reveal itself through the essential unfolding of language, through the words themselves in their relatedness. Heidegger uses the prefixes in order to show how these words comport themselves towards each other, as the prefixes indicate the responsiveness of the word itself, as for example when Heidegger writes ‘*Gedächtnis denkt an das Gedachte*’³³², ‘memory thinks of what has been thought’. Heidegger is interested in what ‘comes to language’ in thinking and the word *Denken*, that is how thinking through the word *denken* and its variations can say something about thinking, through the movement and relations these variations engender. The specific use of prefixes allows Heidegger to present these different and related notions of thinking as approaching each other, folding in and out of each other, and thereby sketching out the terrain in which thinking takes place. In thinking, language is not used in order to advance concepts and formulate arguments and propositions, rather language opens up possibilities in and for thinking.

Topography

As discussed earlier, thinking, and the effort of learning as well as teaching thinking, is presented by Heidegger in terms of ways, paths, pathmarks, way-words, getting underway, mountains and localities. These topological descriptions are enacted through scriptural marks, and make up what Ziarek calls a ‘topographic sense of language’. According to him, this topographic sense of language is essentially determined by language and its essential unfolding, and it is the task of the thinker to trace these paths:

[e]ven the framing of Heidegger’s inquiry into language is essentially topographical: thinking needs to open the way *to* language, that is, to

³³¹ GA 8, p. 137.

³³² GA 8, p. 13.

traverse the history of the metaphysical forgetting of this path to language, specifically in order to render itself on the way, that is, literally underway (*unterwegs*), to language. The event itself is, strictly speaking, a topological event, an *Einfalt*, folding and assigning (*aneignen*) human language to respond to what is being imparted (*zugeeignet*) within the event.³³³

Here Ziarek points out how Heidegger's twisting free of metaphysical thought takes place not merely through a critique of it, but rather how his specific use of language opens up the possibility of thinking otherwise than metaphysics, by trying to enter into a non-metaphysical relation to language. The way of thinking receives its directive from the movement or rather the way-making of language, as Heidegger writes in 'Das Wesen der Sprache':

Way-making [*Be-wägung*] means [*heisst*], thought thus, no longer: to set something forth upon an already existing path, but rather to first of all bring forth the way itself and thereby 'be' the way. The *Ereignis* appropriates [*ereignet*] man into the use [*Brauch*] for itself. So the showing [*Zeigen*] as the owning-appropriation [*Eignen ereignend*] is the *Ereig-nis*, the way-making of saying [*der Sage*] to language [*zur Sprache*].³³⁴

What Heidegger emphasizes here is how the responsiveness of man is already inscribed in the event itself. If thinking is from and of the event then thinking must begin with the correspondence to that which essentially gives to thought, the most thought-provoking. It is the *Ereignis* which 'appropriates man over into the releasement of the free listening',³³⁵ it is first this path opened up by listening which allows us to contemplate the proper path to language. Man is always already inscribed in this way-making of language, is 'appropriated into use' through his fundamental role in bringing the silent language of *Ereignis* into sound. It is in this inceptual inscription and appropriation that Heidegger develops the necessity for man to finally dwell properly in language again. As Heidegger writes in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*: '[w]ay-making brings language (the essence of language) as language (the saying) to language (to the sounding word).'

³³³ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 70.

³³⁴ GA 12, p. 249.

³³⁵ GA 12, p. 250 ('*uns Menschen der Gelassenheit zum freien Hören übereignet*').

(‘*Die Be-wegung bringt die Sprache (das Sprachwesen) als die Sprache (die Sage) zur Sprache (zum verlautenden Wort).*’)³³⁶ This is man’s correspondence to the *Ereignis*, a correspondence enabled through listening, that man brings to speech, that is, he brings to sound the language of *Ereignis*.

Poetry

Throughout *Was Heisst Denken?* we encounter poetry: here and there interspersed in the text Heidegger asks us to listen to the poetic words of Friedrich Hölderlin (‘Mnemosyne’, ‘Sokrates und Alcibiades’, ‘Der Ister’, ‘Die Titanen’), Georg Trakl (‘Das Gewitter’ and ‘Psalm’), Eduard Mörike (‘Denk Es, O Seele’) and Matthias Claudius (‘Abendlied’), and even Parmenides’ fragment is described at one point as an educational poem (*Lehrgedicht*). At times the encounter with poetry is clearly marked and attributed, while at other times the status of the poetic word is juxtaposed with philosophical or thoughtful speech in order to put what is characteristic about its status as poetic saying into question (as is the case with Matthias Claudius’ ‘Abendlied’ to which I will return in the next chapter). We encounter those poetic words always with the promise that they aid our effort to learn thinking and always with the caution that we cannot yet fully grasp the relation of poetry and thinking, because we are not yet thinking.

In *Unterwegs zur Sprache* we find a more explicit account of how this encounter with poetry might be understood, namely in the form of a countering. As Fynsk writes:

[Heidegger] thinks that our only access to the speaking of language that is the source of thought as well as of poetry (thought for each in a singular manner) is through the difference between poetry and thought. [...] a kind of *countering*, since thought and poetry, as Heidegger says elsewhere in the volume, stand over against one another: *einander gegenüber* (US 176/ OW 82). The crucial point is that language gives itself *as* language, that is, as

³³⁶ GA 12, p. 150.

speaking, only by way of a kind of contrast, or countering, that is, in and through the *difference* between modes of speaking.³³⁷

Yet Heidegger does not believe that this countering is already possible in *Was Heisst Denken?* as he claims after almost every encounter with poetry that the relation of thinking and poetry must remain in the dark, because we are not yet far enough along the path towards thinking to properly understand such an encounter.

The same (*das Selbe*) which unites poetry and thinking is that both answer to the calling and hence their relation to language, as Heidegger claims that thinking and poetry never use language as a field and means of expression, but rather ‘thinking and poetry are in themselves the inceptual [*anfängliche*], essential [*wesenhafte*] and therefore at the same time last speaking [*letzte Sprechen*] which language speaks through man.’³³⁸ It is its relation to language that brings poetry near to thinking, and at the same time separates it from literature. But as poetry is traditionally considered to belong to literature, we treat it like literature.³³⁹ So we arrive at the distinction Heidegger makes here between poetry and literature. Literature is:

what has been literally written down and copied for the purpose of being available to the public. In this way literature becomes the object of diverse interests, which themselves, in turn, incite and are incited by literary criticism and advertising.³⁴⁰

While it is possible to create poetry within the business of literary production, we cannot find the essential site of poetry within literature. Hence Heidegger writes that ‘occidental poetry and European literature are two abyssally different essential forces [*Wesensmächte*] of our history’ and that we have not yet adequately grasped the scope and consequences of the literary. Here Heidegger places literature within the

³³⁷ Fynsk, 1996, p. 20.

³³⁸ GA 8, pp. 132 – 133.

³³⁹ GA 8, p. 139.

³⁴⁰ GA 8, p. 139.

technological enframing due to its concern for continuous production for the sake of its own preservation.³⁴¹ From this distinction between literature and poetry, Heidegger also distinguishes his own engagement with poetry from that of historical literary criticism [*Literaturhistorie*] which belongs to the business of literary production and takes place within a metaphysically determined framework, which considers the work of poetry as an object for historical research (*historische Forschung*) and precisely thereby, for Heidegger, it remains closed off to its historical truth (*geschichtliche Wahrheit*).³⁴² The difference between literature and poetry is thus their relation to language: while the language of literary production aims to produce for production's sake, that is to keep the business of literary production going, the language of poetry is a founding naming, which first opens up that which later becomes available to public discourse.

There is of course much that could be said about the role of poetry in Heidegger's thought. I will however refrain here from attempting to provide a comprehensive account of the relation between poetry and thought in Heidegger's work, and restrict myself to a few remarks on why Heidegger might place such importance upon the encounter with poetry on the way to thinking.

Renunciation at the heart of the poetic experience

In his book *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being*, Robert Bernasconi tracks the experience of Heidegger's reading of poetry, specifically that of Friedrich Hölderlin and Georg Trakl, and suggests that Heidegger learned a different relation to language from these poets. As already mentioned, Bernasconi understands Heidegger to have come to the realization that in our time the thinker can no longer

³⁴¹ As Heidegger writes in 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes': 'But language is not only and not initially a phonetic or written expression of something to be communicated. It not only brings forth the manifest and concealed as intended into terms [*Wörtern*] and sentences, rather language brings beings as a being first of all into the open.' GA 5, p. 61.

³⁴² See for example GA 52, pp. 2 – 5.

name being, and this realization reveals to him that the task of the philosopher *is* to name being. Unable to perform his task the thinker is faced with the absence of the word. Bernasconi argues that Heidegger recognized in the poetry of Hölderlin a similar realization and predicament: if the task of the poet is, as Hölderlin conceived of it, to name the holy and the gods that have fled, then the poet can no longer perform his task.³⁴³ Thus for the poet Hölderlin the poetic task itself becomes a question for his poetry, just as for the thinker the task of thinking becomes a question within his thinking. Heidegger focuses on such an experience of the loss of the word in Georg Trakl's poem 'Das Wort' which he discusses in 'Das Wesen der Sprache'. The last lines of the poem provide the focus point for his reading: 'So I renounced and sadly see:/ Where the word breaks off no thing may be' ('*So lernt ich traurig den Verzicht:/ Kein Ding sei wo das Wort gebricht*').³⁴⁴ According to Bernasconi, the thinker's dialogue with the poem teaches him about the possibility of a different relation to language:

Heidegger learns how the thinker, like the poet, can still speak and write after the word breaks off. For though the poet is without the word he sought, he still writes the poem that tells us of this, and he does it by adopting the language of remembrance and of renunciation: remembering his previous relation to language and the quest upon it, and renouncing it.³⁴⁵

Yet Bernasconi is keen to point out that Heidegger did not learn anything *about* language, from poetry, thereby marking the difference between a philosophical account of language and a poetic experience of it. What Heidegger did learn is a relation to

³⁴³ In 'Wozu Dichter' Heidegger describes Hölderlin's experience of 'the absence of God' in terms of the absence of that 'gathering which joins [*fügt*] world-history and man's dwelling in it'. This 'destitute time' becomes more and more destitute, to the point that the absence of the god is no longer noticed. GA 5, p. 269. Hölderlin conceives of the poets as those who sing of the gods and name the holy. In the absence of the gods, '[t]o the essential nature of the poet, who is truly a poet in this time of the world, belongs that which comes from the destitution of the time, the essence of poetry and poetic practice and therefore also the task of the poet become a poetic question.' GA 5, p. 272. Heidegger's interpretation is based upon his reading of Hölderlin's poems 'Mnemosyne', 'Brod und Wein,' and 'Titanenhymne (IV)'.

³⁴⁴ GA 12, p. 153. English translation :*On The Way To Language*. Transl. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982, p. 142.

³⁴⁵ Bernasconi, 1985, p. 58. According to Bernasconi, the poet begins with what 'seems corresponds to an instrumentalist view of language. With the word, the poet grasps something that is known by him independently and prior to language. Language enables the poet to represent (*darstellen*) what is already known to presentifying thinking (*Vorstellen*).' Bernasconi, 1985, p. 51.

language marked by ‘renunciation’ which he argues ‘is not something negative. It is a way of retaining the treasure in commemorative thinking (*Andenken*).’³⁴⁶ So how are we meant to understand this language marked by renunciation? Heidegger draws out the etymological connection between renunciation and saying:

[w]hat is renunciation [*Was heisst Verzicht*]? The word ‘renunciation’ belongs to the verb ‘to forgive [*verzeihen*]’; an old saying goes: ‘to forgive oneself of a thing’, which means to give up something, to renounce it. Forgive [*Zeihen*] is the same word as the Latin word *dicere*, the Greek word *δείχναι*, showing, in old High German *sagan*: our saying [*sagen*]. The renunciation is a renunciation of the word [*ein Entsagen*]. In his renunciation the poet refuses [*absagen*] his previous relation to the word. Only that? No, in the refusal [*Absage*] something is already promised [*zugesagt*] to him: a calling [*ein Geheiss*].³⁴⁷

In the renunciation therefore lies already the promise, the promise of language (*Zusage*), its calling (*Geheiss*) which calls us to language. The word which refused itself, the word as term or signification, drawn from a system of signs, does not mean the absence of language itself. The refusal of the word brings to the fore language itself, and allows the poet an insight into the essential unfolding of language itself. Thus, even when the word, intended to name something, refuses itself, language is still promised to the poet, as Bernasconi points out: the poet can still recount his experience.³⁴⁸ As Fynsk remarks: ‘At this moment, language furtively comes to the word: simultaneously giving and withholding itself. This “word” is what Heidegger will later call “the word by which words come to name.”’³⁴⁹ From poetry then, one might learn how to relate to language

³⁴⁶ Bernasconi, 1985, p. 53. The treasure Bernasconi refers to here, is the treasure which the poet could not shelter in his poetry, as Trakl says ‘And straight it vanished from my hand,/ The treasure never graced my land...’ OWL, p. 140. (‘*Worauf es meiner hand entrann/ Und nie mein land den schatz gewann ...*’), GA 12, p. 152. Of which Heidegger says: ‘The treasure, which the land of the poet never wins, is the word for the essence of language. The beholding of the prevailing and residing of the word, its essence, wants to come into its own word. But the word for the essencing of the word is not granted.’ GA 12, p. 223.

³⁴⁷ GA 12, p. 158.

³⁴⁸ We are reminded here of the passage in ‘Brief über den Humanismus’ which I quoted in chapter 2, in which Heidegger claims that man must learn again to exist in the nameless. The thinker must learn to abide in the nameless so that he from this namelessness learns about the essential unfolding of language.

³⁴⁹ Fynsk, 1996. p. 43.

non-conceptually. This non-conceptual relation to language is at the heart of the distinction Heidegger makes between the speaking of language and the saying of the poet and the thinker. Heidegger clarifies what he means by the word *sagen* and what it calls for, in a passage from ‘Der Weg zur Sprache’:

[b]ut what is meant by saying [*was heisst sagen*]? To experience this, we are compelled and guided by what our language itself calls us to think [*uns zu denken heisst*] with this word. ‘*Sagen*’ means: showing [*zeigen*], letting-appear [*erscheinen-lassen*], letting-see [*sehen-lassen*] and letting-listen [*hören-lassen*].³⁵⁰

Saying then is a showing (*zeigen*), letting-appear (*erscheinen-lassen*), letting-see (*sehen-lassen*) and letting-listen (*hören-lassen*). This ‘letting’ of which Ziarek notes that it ‘involves [...] a distinctive acting or actuating that does not involve making, production, violence, or mastery, and that is therefore distinguished from action that requires bringing about in a way that makes, causes, or effects’, thus requires the poet and the thinker to let language speak through them, that is, to allow the essential unfolding of language to take place.³⁵¹ Emphasizing the manner in which language takes place through poetry, by adding the word ‘letting’ in the above mentioned sense, clearly distinguishes poetic language from metaphysical language, and therefore also from everyday speech, as the latter are both based upon a utilization of language for an end or purpose. Heidegger further writes that, ‘[t]he essential unfolding of language is the saying as the showing [*die Sage als die Zeige*]. Its showing grounds itself not in random signs [*Zeichen*], but rather all signs originate in a showing, of whose region and purposes [*Absichten*] they can be a sign’.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ GA 12, p. 241.

³⁵¹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 202. See also Heidegger in ‘Das Wesen der Sprache’: ‘Poetry and thinking are ways of saying. The nearness however, which brings poetry and thinking together into neighbourhood, we name the saying [*die Sage*]. In it we suspect the essence and essential unfolding of language. Saying means showing [*zeigen*]: letting-appear, clearing-concealing giving-free as giving-forth [*lichtend-verbergend frei-geben als dar-reichen*] what we name world.’ GA 12, p. 188.

³⁵² GA 12, p. 242.

We are again reminded of our first encounter with the poetic word in *Was Heisst Denken?*, in which Heidegger spoke of man as the sign showing the withdrawal of being: ‘We are showing what has not, not yet been translated into the language of our speaking. It remains without interpretation. We are a sign without interpretation [*Wir sind ein deutungsloses Zeichen*].’ Immediately after, we read Hölderlin’s poetic words: ‘We are a sign, without interpretation/ Painless are we and almost have/ Lost our language in a foreign land.’ (*‘Ein Zeichen sind wir, deutungslos/ Schmerzlos sind wir und haben fast/ Die Sprache in der Fremde verloren’*).³⁵³ Here Heidegger points to the difference between the language of the *Ereignis* and the language of man, and how nevertheless man himself is always already within this relation and within the realm of language. Its address or promise (*Zuspruch*) constitutes man’s being and he is therefore tasked with bringing the language of the event into speech. This task is the translation of the inceptual saying of the event into a language of signification. Ziarek notes: ‘[h]uman language constitutes a response to this originaive saying of or from the event, providing the “translation” of this saying into signs.’³⁵⁴ As Heidegger writes in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*:

The showing saying brings-on-the-way language to the speaking of man. The saying needs the sounding into the word. But man is only able to speak insofar he, belonging [*gehörend*] to the saying, listens to it [*hört*], in order to repeat [*nachsagend*, literally to say-after], to be able to say a word.³⁵⁵

The difference between the showing-saying of the poet and thinker, and the sounding speaking (*verlautbares Sprechen*) of everyday human speech, is that poetic saying is purer and closer to the *Ereignis*, as Heidegger writes in ‘Die Sprache’:

³⁵³ Fynsk writes: ‘he thinks that our only access to the speaking of language that is the source of thought as well as of poetry (thought for each in a singular manner) is through the difference between poetry and thought [...] [which is] a kind of *countering*, since thought and poetry, as Heidegger says elsewhere in the volume, stand over against one another: *einander gegenüber* (US 176/ OWL 82). The crucial point is that language gives itself *as* language, that is, as speaking, only by way of a kind of contrast, or countering, that is in and through the *difference* between modes of speaking.’ Fynsk, 1996, p. 20.

³⁵⁴ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 7.

³⁵⁵ GA 12, p. 254.

Human speaking is naming summoning [*nennendes rufen*], beckoning-calling [*kommendes heissen*] of thing and world from the one-fold of difference. The purely called [*Geheissene*] of human speaking is the spoken of the poem [*Gedicht*]. Proper poetry [*Eigentliche Dichtung*] is never merely a higher manner (*Melos*) of everyday language. Rather it is the other way around, everyday talking [*alltägliches Reden*] is a forgotten and therefore exploited and used up poem, from which barely a summoning sounds.³⁵⁶

This is what Haar, in reference to Heidegger names the ‘the disclosive essence of language’³⁵⁷ and Heidegger names the ‘primordial language’ (*Ursprache*) of poetry in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*.³⁵⁸ Heidegger further elaborates that ‘poetry as the founding naming of being and essential unfolding of all things’ first brings everything into the open from which everything can be discussed and communicated in everyday speech. Poetry makes language possible in that it first of all names beings and brings beings as beings into the open, and consequently makes them available for everyday discourse. The poet’s saying is a showing, which as we noted earlier is a ‘letting-appear [*erscheinen-lassen*], letting-see [*sehen-lassen*] and letting-listen [*hören-lassen*]’, and the poet achieves this saying as showing, by repeating [*nach-sagen*] the word of *Ereignis*.

How then does the thinker relate this poetic experience and this new relation to his own task, the naming of being, a task which, Bernasconi argues, Heidegger realizes the thinker can now no longer perform?³⁵⁹ The inability of our language to name being, that is to provide it with a concept that would allow us to grasp and define being, must

³⁵⁶ GA 12, p. 28.

³⁵⁷ See Haar, 1993a, p. 113. ‘Because it makes this original power of naming manifest - a power not of the poet but of language in its essence - all great poetry brings to language what remains in *abeyance* in ordinary language where it is reduced to its function as an instrument of communication: the disclosive essence of language. Poetry says its genuine essence as well as the essence of language as an original poem, a silent poem of the appearing of being. The power of naming exercised and celebrated in the poem is prior even to the conflictual appearance of Earth and world inasmuch as this appearance depends on the power of naming.’

³⁵⁸ ‘The grounding of human Dasein is the dialogue [*Gespräch*] as the proper taking place of language. Primordial language [*Ursprache*] however, is poetry as the founding of being.’ GA 4, p. 43.

³⁵⁹ Bernasconi further claims that, ‘[t]he idea that Being is founded on the word of the poet is fundamental to all of Heidegger’s thinking after this time, and the philosopher comes to be thought of in a similar light. Henceforth Being is always thought of in respect of its coming to language’. Bernasconi, 1985, p. 38.

become a resource for the thinker. As Ziarek argues

for a singular word to name being would be to grasp being conceptually and proleptically rather than grasp its singular un-veiling each time: the poietically singular way in which being is given to word always only one time, [...] its idiomatic *Einmaligkeit*. [...] In question is not how a word captures being or fails to do so but, conversely, how being can come, singular and singularly, to word, thanks to and yet in spite of the repetition governing signs and signification.³⁶⁰

This is then the new task of the thinker, to say being, and in this saying preserve the inceptual force of the language of the event, that is to preserve the opening of words (*Worte*) in terms (*Wörter*). That is, to be attentive to the essential unfolding of language in saying, as opposed to its utilization in everyday speech.

Concluding remarks

I have highlighted here several strategies Heidegger employs to draw attention to the unfolding of language and the difference of language as it pervades all human speaking. The difference between words (*Worte*) in terms (*Wörter*) which opens up new paths for thinking, will inform and guide Heidegger's inquiry into the first question which I will discuss in the next chapter.

³⁶⁰ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 39.

Chapter 5: The play-space of the spoken

Introductory remarks

After highlighting the extent to which his thinking follows the way-making and essential unfolding of language, Heidegger returns to the question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ which, as he has previously explicated, unfolds into four questions, by virtue of the polysemy of the German word *heissen* and the grammatical ambiguity it gives rise to. As a reminder, the four questions are ‘1. What is named with the word *Denken?*; 2. What does the current teaching of thought, logic, understand by thinking?; 3. What belongs to the proper accomplishment of thinking?; 4. What is that, which commands us into thinking?’.³⁶¹ These four questions are united by the fourth question which provides the direction for the other questions and their unity. Even when Heidegger singles out a question for the purpose of a more specific inquiry into the subject matter it raises, he does so within the framework the fourth question provides. This raises the question why Heidegger now proposes to inquire into the first and second question, rather than the fourth. The fourth question, for Heidegger, asks after that which first of all gives us to think, that which Heidegger earlier designated as ‘the most thought-provoking’:

[t]he most thought-provoking gives to think in the originary sense, in that it entrusts thinking to us [*anheimgibt*]. This gift [*Gabe*], which the most thought-provoking gives to us [*vergibt*], is the proper dowry [*Mitgift*] which is concealed in our essence.

When we ask ‘what calls us into thinking’, then we are asking about that which gives us the gift of this dowry, and we are also asking about us, because our essence reposes in being bestowed [*begabt*] with this dowry. Only insofar as we *are* gifted with that which most gives to think, bestowed with that which first of all wants to be thought, are we able [*vermögen*] to think.³⁶²

³⁶¹ GA 8, p. 127. I chose here to leave the German word *Denken* untranslated in the first question, as it now concerns itself with the German word *Denken* and all that it names. Heidegger’s response to the first question is as such no longer transposable into English, as the word *thinking* would not evoke all the same words as *Denken*.

³⁶² GA 8, pp. 130 – 131.

Consistent with his belief that entering into the nearness of that which first gives to think, that which has so far been forgotten and unthought, cannot simply be willed by man, Heidegger now proposes that we turn to the two terms which designate thinking in the German language, *Denken* and *Logik*. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Heidegger believes that in those terms, we can find words which respond to the calling [*Geheiss*], as it is sheltered and preserved within them. Thus metaphysical language always already bears within itself the possibility to bring us into a nearness of the silent language of *Ereignis*. His inquiry into the first two questions thus seeks to uncover how the calling might already speak in the terms we use to designate thinking.

Before Heidegger enters into his inquiry into the two questions, he seeks to clarify some of the parameters within which this inquiry takes place. He distinguishes between the inception of thought (*Geheiss*) and the beginning of thought (the human response to the calling (*Geheiss*)), and argues that we have to begin our inquiry by seeking the inception of thought within its beginning. This raises the question of a historical approach to the questions, yet Heidegger argues that his inquiry seeks the historical-destinal sending of what is given to thought in language, rather than merely relying on a historiological account of the terms. Then, he turns to a final objection that might be raised against his method of inquiry: of seeking within a particular language binding answers to the universal human activity thinking. Heidegger then proceeds to inquire into the site from which the words *Denken* and *Logik* speak.

Inception and Beginning

Heidegger begins his approach to the two questions with a distinction between the inception of thought and its beginning, which introduces the tension between the always ahistorical *Ereignis* and the historically specific human response to it. As discussed above, the gift of thinking is the very inception of thought. Inception (*Anfang*) is

distinguished by Heidegger from beginning (*Beginn*): '[w]hat is inceptual [*anfänglich*] in its matter and in its essence, does not have to be at the beginning, perhaps it even can not. Inception [*Anfang*] and beginning [*Beginn*] are not identical [*das Gleiche*].'³⁶³ The inception of thought is the address of being to which thinking must correspond. As argued in an earlier chapter, the withdrawal of being, which draws us along, to which Heidegger gave the name *Ereignis*, bestows us with this inceptual gift of thought. The withdrawal is that which has not yet been thought, because it has always already held itself in abeyance, it might even be that which, as had been suggested, cannot be thought, and thus constitutes the impossibility of thought. This is what Heidegger has called the unthought in every thinker's thought, as while each thinker might have responded to the address of being, it is not necessarily the case that every thinker has explicitly thought this address. Hence the distinction between inception and beginning is crucial to Heidegger's inquiry because as he has consistently argued, the history of Western thought begins with the forgetting of being, and yet this forgetting has been preserved in this thought.³⁶⁴ As Heidegger explains:

The beginning of Western thought is not identical to its inception. It is the veiling of the inception and even inevitably so. When this is the case, then the forgetting appears in a different light. The inception conceals itself in the beginning.

But all this, as we can only make preliminarily remarks about the essence of memory and its relation to preservation [*Verwahrnis*] of the most thought-provoking, about preservation and forgetting, about beginning and inception, sounds strange to us, because we have not yet entered into the nearness of the matter and state of affairs from which the said speaks [*das Gesagte spricht*].³⁶⁵

³⁶³ GA 8, p. 128.

³⁶⁴ GA 8, p. 155. See also *Parmenides*: 'We are calling the thought [*Gedachte*] in the thinker's thinking inception. This says now: being is the inception [*das Sein ist der Anfang*]. At the same time, not every thinker, who must think being, thinks this inception. Not every thinker, and also not every thinker at the beginning of Western thought, is an inceptive thinker, that is, a thinker who thinks the inception itself [*eigens*].' Heidegger clarifies that he does not understand inception as not a kind of entity or object, something the thinker can occupy himself with or study from out of his own accord, rather the inception is the essential address [*Anspruch*] which addresses the thinker and takes him into its address. *Parmenides*, pp. 10 – 11.

³⁶⁵ GA 8, p. 156.

The distinction between the inception of thinking and the beginning of thinking, can be characterised in terms of address (*Anspruch*) and correspondence (*Entsprechung*), that is, it takes place between the appeal of the silent language of *Ereignis* and the coming to word, the sounding into the spoken which marks man's correspondence to the *Ereignis*. Heidegger's claim that the inception of thought is sheltered in its beginning, also reveals the roles remembrance (*Andenken*), memory (*Gedächtnis*) and preservation (*Verwahrnis*) play in Heidegger's elucidation of thinking. Heidegger's suggestion then, to first turn to the first and then to the second question, must thus be understood as seeking the inception of thought within its beginning, by tracing the historical development of how the reception of thinking has been brought to language.

A historical approach

Both questions are thus approached through the framework of how the inceptual address has been understood and brought to language, and consequently understood on the basis of this bringing to language. Heidegger is inquiring into the history of the words for thinking, the German terms *Denken* and *Logik*, the latter Heidegger will trace back to the Greek *λόγος*. Yet Heidegger is not after a historiological inquiry into the word. As we have seen above, Heidegger understands historiology (*Historie*, *Geschichtswissenschaft*) to belong to the sciences, from which he has emphatically distanced thinking ('science does not think'). And yet Heidegger here appears to suggest that we turn to and draw on historical insights in order to illuminate our way of thinking. This raises the question, if philosophy, which is traditionally conceived of as an 'extra-historical cognition, which since Descartes, demands an unconditional certainty for its propositions,'³⁶⁶ could ever be based on scientific discoveries which operate on a paradigm shift? Further, scientific discoveries are based on presumptions

³⁶⁶ GA 8, p. 136.

which can never be grounded scientifically but rather shown philosophically. Thus it appears as if philosophy can not use scientific discoveries as grounds for philosophical inquiries. But this is not quite what Heidegger suggests here. Rather that through a distinction he establishes between *Sprachgeschichte*, the history of language, and the *historische Erforschung der Sprachen*, the historiological study of languages, Heidegger suggests that the results of the sciences of language (*Sprachwissenschaften*) do not necessarily have to build the foundations of our thinking but could provide us with hints. And he further points out that whatever can be derived from the findings of the historical science of language, those findings are based on something that has first been given historically (*geschichtlich gegeben*) to the sciences in a pre-scientific manner.³⁶⁷ That is, he alerts us to the important distinction between history (*Geschichte*) and the science of history (*Historie* – also translated here as historiology), and the fact that history occurs prior to its scientific study. This means for us that the object of the historical sciences has its origin in history and is thus still available to us in its historical character albeit concealed.

While Heidegger is here trying to tease out the differences between a scientific-historiological approach to the history of a word and a historical one, in order to delineate the manner of scope of thinking's engagement with the sciences, he nevertheless emphasizes the relation thinking has and must preserve to science. While he fears that when philosophy aligns itself with the sciences, it may be described as a 'super-science which wants to surpass all sciences in its scientificity [*Überwissenschaft, die alle Wissenschaften an Wissenschaftlichkeit übertreffen möchte*].'³⁶⁸ Heidegger distinguishes between what he calls the 'lesser relation' (*Bezug*) of thinking to the

³⁶⁷ GA 8, p. 142.

³⁶⁸ GA 8, p. 139 – p. 140.

sciences, which is a an attention to the sciences because of their inability to think,³⁶⁹ and an essential relation which

is determined by a fundamental trait of the modern age ... which can be briefly characterized thus: that, which is, appears today mainly in *the* objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*), which is established and kept in dominance through the scientific objectification (*wissenschaftliche Vergegen-ständlichung*) of all areas and domains.³⁷⁰

The essential relation of thinking to the sciences is thus according to Heidegger found in the manner of representation which is based on scientific objectification. This, Heidegger continues, is due to an essential fact (*Wesenstatsache*), which Heidegger describes in the following claims:

1. Modern sciences ground themselves in the essence of technology [*Technik*].
2. The essence of technology is itself nothing technological [*Technisches*].
3. The essence of technology is not a mere human machination, which could be contained by a human superiority and sovereignty given an appropriate moral constitution.³⁷¹

We are, Heidegger claims, not aware of this dominion of technology which governs and determines the way that which is appears to us, that is, appears to us as objectified, an objectification that is accomplished by the sciences. We are not aware of it, because we are in it, are part of it and determined by it. It is because of this, that we cannot see the relation between thinking and the sciences. Heidegger goes further to suggest that even thinking itself, is not aware of its own essential provenance (*Wesensherkunft*) as it has been concealed in its beginning, which is marked by a forgetting. This, so Heidegger, is exactly why the question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ is a ‘world-historical’ question, and by ‘world-history’ Heidegger means ‘the destiny (*Geschick*) that the world *is* and man as

³⁶⁹ GA 8, p. 140.

³⁷⁰ GA 8, p. 140.

³⁷¹ GA 8, p. 140. Also see GA 8, p. 25.

its inhabitant'. As world-historical the question 'what is called thinking?' asks 'how does that, which is authentically [*was eigentlich ist*], concern man in this world age?'³⁷²

Thinking has an essential relation to the sciences through the essential character of the dominance of objectification. The sciences are grounded in the essence of technology, which, as it is itself nothing technological must have its provenance elsewhere. Thus Heidegger suggests that they both have the same provenance and that our question concerning thinking not only sheds light on the matter of thinking but also the sciences, which dominate our current mode and framework of thinking and approach to the world and that which is. Thus thinking asks after the manner in which everything that is addresses us and determines our response to it.

Denken: A German word

Before beginning this elucidation and placing of the word *Denken*, Heidegger raises a particular worry: the inquiry takes place in the German language, and inquires into the relations the German word *Denken* opens up and traverses. Thus the inquiry appears to seek for an answer to the universally human activity of thinking within the particular language of the Germans, and further appears to claim that it would be able to tell us something about thinking, thus that it can make some universally applicable statement about thinking. To this Heidegger responds, that he does not claim universal validity

[y]et what results, is that something question-worthy remains. The universally-human logical thinking is no less affected by this question-worthiness, given, that we are serious when we say, that we no longer fail to hear that the logical, that which belongs and obeys [*Gehörige*] to *λόγος*, is also only a word of the singular and particular language of the Greeks and not only concerning its sound figure.³⁷³

³⁷² GA 8, 141.

³⁷³ GA 8, p. 138.

Heidegger here argues that the objection to the specificity of the German language would also have to extend to that of the Greek language, which has influenced and determined Western thought to this day (specifically the word *λόγος*). Yet, what Heidegger highlights here, is that they are each time a response to the calling (*Geheiss*) and have, in this respect, a certain claim to say something about this calling. And while the the call of being might address everyone the sounding into speech will always have to occur in a particular language as well as a particular historical site.³⁷⁴ This, as we shall see forms one of the main questions of the lecture course and Heidegger will spend considerable time with the Greek coming to word of the *Ereignis*. According to Françoise Dastur, Heidegger's preoccupation with the Greek language is due to his belief that

[t]he superiority of the Greek language comes merely from the fact that the Greeks *dwelt* in their language, which means that, by means of the Greek's words, they were put in relation with the 'things themselves' instead of remaining prisoners in the realm of arbitrary signs. They did not possess a language superior to all the other ones, but they had a different relation to their language, a relation of dwelling and not a mere instrumental one.³⁷⁵

Thus again, it is about the kind of relation to language that the speaker exhibits, rather than the terms he or she employs. In accordance with Heidegger's account of language as discussed above, Heidegger's interest here is not so much a historiological one, but rather how each time the address of being has come to words. As we discussed in the previous chapter, while in the age of the *Gestell* the German language is predominantly

³⁷⁴ The claims for the validity of the insights that can be glimpsed from the German coming to word of *Ereignis*, are similar to those Heidegger makes for the engagement with the thinkers of the history of philosophy, as discussed in chapter three. Every response and correspondence to the *Ereignis* always takes place within a specific historical and geographical site, yet we might still learn something from this specific coming to word.

³⁷⁵ Françoise Dastur. 2013. 'Heidegger and the Question of the "Essence" of Language.' In *Heidegger and Language*. Ed. Jeffrey Powell. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. p. 233. She further argues that this specific relation to language belongs to the reason that the Greeks invented philosophy: 'This is the reason why they invented philosophy: because dwelling in their language did not mean for them to be in a complete familiarity with it and be able to dominate it totally, but on the contrary to be opened to its strangeness and be forced to appropriate it,' Dastur, 2013, p. 233.

used for communication, through the sheltering of words (*Worte*) in terms (*Wörter*), there is a possibility for an opening into a different relation to language. And the task that Heidegger set for himself as a teacher of learning thinking is precisely to find and reveal such openings into a different relation to language, thereby opening up a possibility for a transformation of our own relation to language.

Erläuterung and Erörterung

Heidegger begins with the first question, ‘what is named with the name thinking?’, but asks it in its second sense, asks after that which is called forth and sheltered by the word *Denken*. Heidegger’s inquiry into the word *Denken* takes place here through what he calls ‘*der Spielraum des Gesprochenen*’, which we translated here as ‘the play-space of the spoken’. We already encountered this term in the previous chapter, as that which marks the space in which we may find words (*Worte*) within terms (*Wörter*), as Heidegger argued that in our everyday relation to language, we never encounter in speech mere *terms* (*Wörter*). While the words are hidden from us, we can, through careful and attentive listening find them in speech. Heidegger now proposes to attend to the words that are opened up through *Denken*, that is, to the ‘play-space of the spoken’, in which the words *Denken* (thinking), *Gedachtes* (what has been thought), *Gedanke* (thought) speak.³⁷⁶

Heidegger describes his inquiry into the word *Denken*, as an elucidation [*Erläuterung*] and placing [*Erörterung*].³⁷⁷ *Elucidation (Erläuterung)*³⁷⁸ has been used and described by Heidegger as a clarification, often in the context of the reading of

³⁷⁶ GA 8, p. 135.

³⁷⁷ GA 8, p. 135. For an account of the the relation of reciprocity between “placing” (*Erörterung*) and elucidation (*Erläuterung*) that Derrida raises in the *Geschlecht* series, in reference to Heidegger’s reading of Trakl, see David Farrell Krell, *Marginalia to Geschlecht III*, Derrida on Heidegger on Trakl, *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2007, pp. 175–199.

³⁷⁸ Krell gives an interesting insight into the root *lauten* which we find in *Erläuterung*, see Krell, 2007, pp. 181 – 182.

individual poems of a poet (*Dichtungen*) in order to approach the site from which the poems of this poet speak (*Gedicht*). *Erläuterung*, as elucidation and clarification of the terms and words we encounter through *denken* then opens the space from which we can enter into the site from which they speak. *Erörterung*, whose root *ort*, in English place or site, is an inquiry into the site of language, its locality, as Ziarek writes:

[t]his may be the sense of Heidegger's term *Er-örterung* taken as a thinking that, as an alternative to explicative and grasping thought, instead 'localises' being, that is, attends to the way it opens up always in terms of a region or a locality proper to its singular and one-time event.³⁷⁹

Instead of simply trying to grasp and delineate these words conceptually, Heidegger aims to direct our inquiry into these words to the site from which they speak, so Heidegger proposes here, can be accessed through the play-space of the spoken, which seems to function as a gathering not unlike the *Gedicht*. Here we might find the essential unfolding of language, as he points out in his essay 'Die Sprache': 'language speaks and we find its speaking in the spoken [*im Gesprochenen*]'.³⁸⁰ He further writes: '[t]o think language from the site [*die Sprache erörtern*] means, to bring not so much it, but rather us, to the site of its essencing: gathering [*Versammlung*] into the *Ereignis*'³⁸¹ Thinking the words from the site from which they speak, thus also always recognizes them in their historical unfolding, as a historically specific response to the *Ereignis*.

³⁷⁹ Ziarek. 2013a, p. 71.

³⁸⁰ GA 12, p. 13.

³⁸¹ GA 12, p. 10. See also Ziarek: "With time, Heidegger begins to emphasize the fact that the event happens as sited or emplaced, which means that it opens (onto) a locality that is spatiotemporal and historical (*geschichtlich*) in the specific sense of being a history-in-the-making. As Francoise Dastur explains, the verb *schicken* has not only the temporal dimension of sending or destining but also the spatial sense of making room (*einräumen*) indicating that historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) involves spatio-temporalization. In this evolving context, the appointed task of thinking consists in inflecting the question of being in terms of the clearing and the way-making movement of language, where both come to foreground the unfolding spatial-temporal-historical locality (*Ortschaft*) of the event. This may be the sense of Heidegger's term *Er-örterung* taken as a thinking that, as an alternative to explicative and grasping thought, instead "localizes" being, that is, attends to the way it opens up always in terms of a region or a locality proper to its singular and one-time event." Ziarek lists the spatiotemporal and topological occurrences he refers to: *Ereignis*, clearing (*Lichtung*), the play of time-space (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*), fourfold (*Geviert*), placehood or locality (*Ortschaft*). Ziarek, 2013a, p. 71.

Hence it is a matter of bringing ourselves into the manner of their speaking, rather than trying to enforce them into univocal signification.³⁸² These two modes of inquiry, elucidation and placing, taken together try to be attentive to the unfolding of language from the site of its unfolding: the play-space of the spoken. As attentive to the unfolding of language, they also always keep open the question of language and of thinking.³⁸³

The play-space of the spoken

Heidegger now returns to the question he posed earlier: ‘what is named with the words [Worten] ‘Denken’, ‘Gedachtes’, ‘Gedanke’?’ and asks

Is thinking a thanking? What does thanking mean here? Or does thanks repose in thinking? What does thinking mean here? Is memory merely a container for the thought of thinking, or does thinking itself repose in memory? How does thanks relate to memory?

*Ist das Denken ein Danken? Was meint hier Danken? Oder beruht der Dank im Denken? Was meint hier Denken? Ist das Gedächtnis nur ein Behälter für das Gedachte des Denkens, oder beruht das Denken selber im Gedächtnis? Wie verhält sich der Dank zum Gedächtnis?*³⁸⁴

I have also quoted the German here, in order to highlight what De Beistegui calls ‘a differentiated and untranslatable chain of phonemes.’³⁸⁵ In this sense it is difficult to render Heidegger’s attending to the word completely into English, as the movement of the language through the (un)folding of the words and correlations is impossible to replicate in the English translation. Yet it is important to attempt to render the connections Heidegger makes between those words, as inquiring into the play-space of the spoken leaves the relations (*Bezüge*) between these words open and yet shows them in their relation to each other.

³⁸² This notion will become important in the next chapter, when Heidegger seeks to enter into a dialogue with Parmenides’ sayings, specifically concerning the matter of the translation of both sayings.

³⁸³ GA 12, p. 34.

³⁸⁴ GA 8, p. 143.

³⁸⁵ De Beistegui, 1994, p. 108.

Having put the precise nature of their relationality in question, Heidegger now turns his inquiry to their history. Heidegger receives a hint from history of language that the word *Gedanc*, is both the most originary and most decisive word. The meaning of *Gedanc* however no longer bears the same meaning as that of the more common modern version *Gedanke*. *Gedanke*, usually means idea, or representation, an opinion, notion. The impoverishment of the word *Gedanke* in contrast to *Gedanc*, is according to Heidegger, partly caused by ‘school philosophy’ (*Schulphilosophie*), which promotes the univocal conceptual definitions of words. In contrast, the ‘inceptual word’ *Gedanc* means ‘the gathered, all gathering commemoration’ (*das gesammelte, alles versammelnde Gedenken*).³⁸⁶ The Old High German word ‘*der Gedanc*’ further says

[t]he *Gedanc*, the depth of the heart [*der Herzensgrund*] is the gathering [*Versammlung*] of all that which concerns us [*uns angeht*], which reaches us [*uns anlangt*], which matters to us [*woran uns liegt*], insofar we are as human beings. That which concerns us [*anliegt*] in the essentially determining sense and is usually named with the word concern [*das Anliegende, Anliegen*].³⁸⁷

Heidegger here plays with the word *anliegen* in its variations and plays on its different meanings. The noun *Anliegen* can mean a concern, a matter, request, usually something that lies close to one’s heart and needs attending to. Further the noun *Anlieger* means neighbour as well as a docking station, as for example for a boat, and thus usually denotes that something lies close to or is adjacent to someone’s property (*Eigentum*).

Heidegger further explicates:

[w]hen we speak of subject and object, we always already think a lying-before and lying-under [*Vor-und Zugrunde-liegen*], a lying-opposite-to [*Gegenüber-liegen*], a lying-adjacent-to [*An-liegen*] in its widest meaning. Possibly that which concerns us and which matters to us, insofar as we are realizing our being-human, need not [*braucht nicht*] be constantly and explicitly represented [*vorgestellt*] by us. Yet at the same time is is always

³⁸⁶ GA 8, p. 143.

³⁸⁷ GA 8, p. 149.

already gathered *towards* us [auf *uns* zu *versammelt*]. We are in a way, but not exclusively or exhaustively this gathering itself.³⁸⁸

Gedanc then, is the gathering of all that concerns us because it surrounds us, lies close to us transgresses all ideas of inside and outside thought in the traditional sense. According to Heidegger *Gedanc* is thus close to

disposition [*Gemüt*], the heart, the depth of the heart [*der Herzensgrund*], the innermost of man, which reaches out the farthest and reaches into the outermost and so decisively, that it, considered properly, no longer allows for the concept of inside and outside to emerge.³⁸⁹

Understood thus, Heidegger continues, *Gedanc* means as much as *Gemüt*, *der muot*, *das Herz* (disposition or soul, the heart). As such it gathers all that concerns us into an intimacy which knows nothing of the distinction between subject and object, which later shapes metaphysical thought.

Heidegger proceeds by elucidating the word *Gemüt*. In its modern conception it means ‘the emotional part of human consciousness’ but Heidegger its true meaning is ‘the essential unfolding of the whole human essence’ (*das Wesende des ganzen Menschenwesens*). In Latin this is called *animus* in distinction to *anima*. Within this difference *anima* means living being, to which man belongs. This, so Heidegger, leads to the representation of man as a living being, now grouped along with plant and animal yet distinguished from them. Echoing his earlier discussion of the problem of the subordination of the sensuous to the supra-sensuous, Heidegger again criticises this representation of man as a living being, which regards this biological fact as essential yet subordinate to the character of reason. Man’s determination is not thought from his essential unfolding as man (*Wesen des Menschen*) but from his being a living being.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ GA 8, p. 150. Heidegger will return to this notion in his discussion of logic as *λόγος*, as well as in his explication of Parmenides which I will discuss in chapter 6.

³⁸⁹ GA 8, p. 149.

³⁹⁰ GA 8, p. 152.

To think man from his human essence (*Menschenwesen*), Heidegger suggests, we must begin with the fact that ‘the human being is that being which is by showing into that which is, and in this showing what is appears as such’ (*der Mensch jenes Wesen ist, das west, indem es in das zeigt, was ist, in welchem Zeigen das Seiende als solches erscheint.*)³⁹¹ Evoking again the essential determination of man from his showing, Heidegger argues that man is because he shows being, and therefore can only be by being always already in a relation to being.³⁹² He continues that this essential trait of man has always been thought and given importance to by philosophy, with the crucial difference, that previously it has been thought as the distinguishing quality man possesses from other living beings, while it should according to Heidegger, be considered the decisive approach (*maßgebenden Ansatz*).³⁹³

The Latin *animus*, so Heidegger, can be translated as soul (*Seele*), which means ‘the essential unfolding of the spirit, the spirit of the spirit, the spark of the soul [*Seelenfünkeln*] of Master Eckehart.’ He says this meaning of soul is addressed (*angesprochen*) in a poem by Mörike ‘Think it, oh soul’ (‘Denk es, o Seele’), and by Trakl in a higher sense, as in the poem ‘Gewitter’: ‘Oh pain, you flaming vision/ Of the great soul!’³⁹⁴ The meaning of *animus* is also named in the inceptual word *Gedächtnis* and *Gedanc*. Now, Heidegger claims, we are entering the realm in which the essence of *Gedächtnis* shows itself reveals itself concerning its matter (*Sache*). Heidegger cautions us against believing that what is to be thought concerning the essence of memory is already named in this inceptual word. Rather, we are collecting hints from this inceptual word, so that it may shows us what appears since the beginning of Western thought and

³⁹¹ GA 8, p. 153.

³⁹² GA 8, p. 153.

³⁹³ GA 8, p. 153.

³⁹⁴ GA 8, p. 153.

never since has fully disappeared.³⁹⁵ Memory (*Gedächtnis*), like thanks (*Dank*), ‘reposes and essences’ (*beruht und west*) in *Gedanc*. The inceptual meaning of memory, is not the ability to retain memories, but rather

names the whole disposition [*Gemüt*] in the sense of the constant intimate gathering [*Versammlung*] of that which addresses all the senses essentially. Memory [*Gedächtnis*] originarily says as much as meditation [*An-dacht*]: the unceasing gathered abiding with ... what is past, but in the same manner with what is present and what which may come. The past, the present and the yet-to-come appear in the unity of an each-time appropriate presencing [*An-wesens*].³⁹⁶

This notion of memory is distinguished from what has in Latin been named ‘*memoria tenere*’, which, so Heidegger, means the holding on to [*Festhalten*] the present, past and future, but struggles to hold on to the past [*das Vergange*] because it has evaded [*entgangen*] it and no longer presents anything tangible [*Haltbares*]. Thus we arrive at the word ‘*Wiedergedächtnis*’ which now specifically names this attempt at the retrieval of the past, through the added ‘*wieder*’ in English: again.

Thus Heidegger claims that in the inceptual word ‘*der Gedanc*’ we can find the original essence of memory understood as a gathering of that which always inclines toward that which has come to presence through the soul [*Gemüt*]. And it is here, he continues that we begin to understand the relation to thanking, because

[i]n thanking the soul commemorates [*gedenkt das Gemüt*] that what it has and is. Commemorating and thereby thinking as memory, the soul thinks towards that which it belongs to. It thinks itself as obediently listening [*hörig*] ... from the listening-meditation [*der hörenden Andacht*]. The originary thanks is thanking. (*Sichverdanken*).³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ GA 8, p. 154.

³⁹⁶ GA 8, 143 – 144. Note here also the hyphenated prefixes of *An-dacht* & *An-wesens*.

Heidegger further writes: ‘Insofern das Gedächtnis als die Sammlung des Gemüts, als die An-dacht, nicht ab-läßt von dem, worauf es gesammelt ist, waltet im Gedächtnis nicht nur der Zug des wesenhaften Andenkens an etwas, sondern in einem damit der Zug des nicht ab- und nicht loslassenden Behaltens. Aus dem Gedächtnis und innerhalb seiner schüttet dann die Seele den Schatz der Bilder aus, d.h. der Anblicke, von denen sie selbst erblickt ist.’ (144)

³⁹⁷ GA 8, 145. After this quotation we find a remark by Heidegger in the margins of the text: ‘always think of the dependency of thinking to the calling. Belonging into *Ereignis*.’

‘We owe [*verdanken*] our thinking’, Heidegger writes, but here he uses the word *verdanken* in its old Alemannic meaning ‘to bring a matter to where it belongs and leave it there. This leave-taking [*Verabschiedung*] is called thanking [*Verdankung*]’.³⁹⁸ The above reference to owing thanks returns us to the gift, that which most gives to think and first gives thinking to us, our essential determination. When we thank, then we thank for something that was given to us, which means we do not have it by or from ourselves. It has been given to us, it is a gift. And, Heidegger continues, ‘the highest and properly lasting gift given to us, remains our essence [*Wesen*], with which we are endowed so that we are through this gift, first of all, who we are.’³⁹⁹ Thus we owe thanks for this gift, and owe it unceasingly and always.

According to Heidegger, ‘the highest thanking is probably thinking’⁴⁰⁰ because the gift cannot be repaid with another gift, it does not take part in the economy of the gift. Because this gift bestowed us with our very essence, it is impossible to repay the gift. Instead, by thinking that which most gives to think we give thanks proper to our ownmost essence.⁴⁰¹ Thinking here takes place as remembrance and commemoration [*andenkende Gedenken*] which, according to Heidegger is the originary thanking. Thinking thanking in the sense of commemoration, remembrance and memory, as developed earlier, becomes a preserving a sheltering of the gift, of that what most gives to think.

Memory [*Gedächtnis*], understood as the ‘gathering of remembrance’ does not longer signify the human activity of recalling or retaining memories. Instead, Heidegger argues, ‘all remembrance of what is to be commemorated already dwells in that

³⁹⁸ GA 8, p. 151.

³⁹⁹ GA 8, p. 146.

⁴⁰⁰ GA 8, p. 146.

⁴⁰¹ GA 8, p. 146.

gathering which always already shelters and conceals what remains to be thought.⁴⁰²

Heidegger adds, that ‘this sheltering and concealing has its essence in preserving [*Be-wahren*] and safe-guarding [*Ver-wahren*]’:

Memory in the sense of human remembrance dwells in that, which safeguards all that which gives to think. We call it preservation [*Verwahrnis*]. It conceals and shelters that which gives to think. The preservation alone *gives* that which gives to think, that which most gives to think, gives it free as gift [*als Gabe frei*].⁴⁰³ (154-5)

That which preserves can preserve that which gives to think from forgetting, yet Heidegger argues, that this does not have to be the case, it may also allow the forgetting of what most gives to think. From the beginning of thought, that which gives most to think has been withdrawn into forgetting. We think of forgetting as a lack, a degradation of that which it allows to be forgotten, yet this, so Heidegger cautions, is only our current, common understanding of forgetting⁴⁰⁴. Returning to his distinction between beginning and inception, he now claims that the beginning of Western thought is also the ‘veiling of its inception’ and hence the ‘inception is concealed and sheltered in the beginning.’⁴⁰⁵

Heidegger’s elucidation and placing of the words that are opened up by the word thinking, have provided us with an approximation of the essential correlations that speak in the word *Denken*. Yet, he also maintains that they reveal to us something about the matter of thinking that we cannot yet fully understand, because we have not yet fully entered into the site from which they speak. They might however lead us to ask, if the essence of thinking determines itself from what these words name, or if these words receive their characterizations from the matter of thinking.⁴⁰⁶ This question, so Heidegger insists, must remain unanswered. What we can take away from his inquiry is

⁴⁰² GA 8, p. 154.

⁴⁰³ GA 8, p. 154 – 155.

⁴⁰⁴ GA 8, p. 155.

⁴⁰⁵ GA 8, p. 156.

⁴⁰⁶ GA 8, p. 145.

that what speaks in these words is infinitely richer than we can find in our current usage of them. Yet Heidegger reminds us that these words nevertheless remain unspoken for us. He argues that it is not possible for us to simply re-instate them in their originary meaning into our current vocabulary, as language is not a tool. He writes: [l]anguage is not this or that, namely something other than itself. Language is language. The peculiarity of a sentence of this kind lies in that it does not say anything and at the same time binds thinking to its matter in the most decisive manner.⁴⁰⁷ Thus when we say and hear the word *Denken*, we are not thinking that which has now revealed itself to us. He writes:

[w]hat this word ‘Denken’ means, is not determined from the spoken and unspoken of its language. What the word ‘*Denken*’ summons, determines itself from another calling. Thus we have to ask again ‘what is called thinking?’ but in the sense: what do we understand since the beginning by the word ‘thinking’?⁴⁰⁸

Hence Heidegger proposes that we now turn to the second question, in order to ask what speaks to us in the word *Denken*, and more particularly in our designation for thinking, logic. The word *Denken*, then speaks of an ‘essential correlation’ (*Wesenszusammenhang*) which are named with the words *Gedanc*, *Gemüt*, *Andenken*, *Dank*, *Gedächtnis*. Heidegger’s inquiry into what the words reveal about thinking, has also shown how their originary meaning has been narrowed down in the course of time through the metaphysical establishment of distinctions and oppositions of that which concerns (*Anliegen*) us. While *Gedanc* and *Gemüt* seems to gather all manner of concerns into their own intimacy, metaphysical revisions to those meanings are determined by distinctions of the external/internal, subject/object, sensuous/ supra-sensuous and so forth. in the next section, when we discuss Heidegger’s inquiry into the

⁴⁰⁷ GA 8, p. 157.

⁴⁰⁸ GA 8, p. 152.

word *Logik* we shall see how these distinctions give rise to rules for thinking and its grammatical forms.

From Logik to λόγος

Heidegger now turns to the second question, which asks after that which we have understood by the name thinking since the beginning of Western thought. Again, he reminds us that the fourth manner of asking the question provides the direction and measure for our inquiry into the second question. Heidegger takes his first clue from the fact that the teachings of thought stand under the title ‘logic’ (*Logik*), and proceeds to ask why it is, that we named the doctrine of thinking logic.⁴⁰⁹

Heidegger begins his elucidation of *logic* with returning to its Greek etymology and philosophical origin. According to Heidegger, the German word *Logik* is an

abbreviation of a complete title which in Greek is called ἐπιστήμη λογική, the understanding which concerns λόγος [*das Verstehen, das den λόγος betrifft*]. Λόγος is the noun for the verb λέγειν. Logic understands λέγειν in the sense of λέγειν τι κατά τινος: ‘to say something about something’ [*über etwas her etwas sagen*]. That, about which saying takes place, is in such a case that, which lies beneath [*darunter liegt*]. That which lies beneath is called in Greek ὑποκείμενον, in Latin *subiectum*. That, about which λέγειν says something is the subject of the saying; [*das darüber Gesagte*] is the predicate. The λόγος as λέγειν τι κατά τινος is the propositional saying of something about something. The about-which is somehow present for every saying [*liegt ... vor*]. It concerns it [*Es liegt ihm an*]. It belongs to the concernful [*Anliegenden*] in the widest sense.⁴¹⁰

Thus logic is the propositional saying of something about something, which requires that the three elements, subject, predicate and the propositional saying are compatible with each other. Heidegger provides the example of ‘the triangle laughs’ which could be said if one understood saying as a mere sequence of words (*Wörterfolge*), but cannot be said properly: ‘the words may speak but they contradict each other (*widersprechen*

⁴⁰⁹ GA 8, p. 157.

⁴¹⁰ GA 8, p. 158.

sich).’ This is the law of non-contradiction: ‘a proposition must, in order to be possible, in advance avoid contradiction’. Yet, Heidegger points out, this rule for thought only holds any validity because of the understanding of thinking as *λόγος* as explicated in the above quotation.⁴¹¹ As Heidegger proceeds to sketch the development of logic as the guiding and regulating word for thinking, he notes how universally binding it has become, and how every matter has to conform to it, or result in a transformation of *λόγος*. One such transformation is the *διαλέγεσθαι*. Now, so Heidegger continues, the ‘proposition is never unambiguous’. He gives the example ‘God is the absolute’ which can be heard in two different ways, depending on which part of the proposition is stressed: god or the absolute.⁴¹² Still, he claims, ‘dialectic is in its essence logic’, as are ‘the a-logical, the no-longer-logical or as the meta-logical, the supra-logical.’⁴¹³ The pervasiveness of logic reaches even those sentences that seek to escape or subvert it, and are, as their names testify, judged in relation to the logical. Then how can a thinking of being twist itself free of the dominion of logic?

According to Heidegger, it is only when the external demands placed upon current thinking (*das bisherige Denken*), become obsolete, that thinking can free itself from this dominion of logic, as it then no longer has to serve an extraneous purpose and therefore does not have to adhere to the demands such a purpose might place upon it. This is why Heidegger seeks to divest thinking of any serviceability to other demands, he writes:

1. Thinking does not lead to knowledge like the sciences.
2. Thinking does not produce any useful worldly wisdom.
3. Thinking does not solve any world mysteries.
4. Thinking does not provide immediate powers for action.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ GA 8, p. 159.

⁴¹² GA 8, p. 160.

⁴¹³ GA 8, p. 160.

⁴¹⁴ GA 8, p. 163.

Proper thinking then, does not serve any purpose beyond itself, and cannot be made servant to any practical demands placed on it. This makes thinking, ‘the most precursory [*das Vorläufigste*] of all precursory actions [*alles vorläufigen Tuns*]’ of man in the epoch, in which the modern European era first begins to unfold globally and complete itself.’⁴¹⁵

The question ‘*was heisst Denken?*’ is an attempt, to reach the unavoidable path, which leads to the most precursory [*das Vorläufigste*]. The question even precedes thinking itself, which is the most precursory.⁴¹⁶

Thinking responds to the call of what most gives to think and thus does not make a statement about a specific state of affairs. And should thus not be held accountable or serviceable to the possible extraneous purposes I quoted above.

This raises the questions for Heidegger, if one can determine a saying from its grammatical structure. Considering the simple sentence ‘The moon has risen’ Heidegger wonders how one can determine the status of such a statement:

Propositional stating [*Aussagen*] does not mean here first and foremost an uttered expression, but rather the representation of something as something. In such representation and assessment prevails a constellation of the stated with that about which the statement has been made. This together is named

⁴¹⁵ GA 8, p. 164.

⁴¹⁶ GA 8, p. 164. The word ‘*vorläufig*’ has here been translated as ‘precursory’, following William McNeill’s translation in ‘Uncanny Belonging: On the Enigma of Solitude in Heidegger’s Work’. There, McNeill, links Heidegger’s use of the word in *Was Heisst Denken?* to that of *Sein und Zeit*. We encounter the word ‘*vorlaufen*’ when Heidegger discusses man’s relation to death where it has been translated by Robinson & Macquarrie as ‘anticipation’ (See for example *Being and Time*, p. 307 and *Sein und Zeit*, p. 262 (§53)). According to McNeill ‘[r]unning ahead, *Vorlaufen*, as authentic being toward death, Heidegger emphasized in *Being and Time*, is indeed nothing other than the thoughtful, explicit retrieval and appropriation of the very movedness of Dasein’s being: “Being toward death is running ahead into a potentiality for being of that being whose way of being is running ahead itself.” McNeill suggests in this essay that ‘it is in terms of this very precursiveness that Heidegger continues to understand the movement of authentic thinking or authentic thoughtfulness in *What is Called Thinking?*’ He attributes this precursory character of thinking to its relation to the withdrawal of being: because being has always already withdrawn and thinking is an event of being, then it can never reach being, never surpass it. (William McNeill, *Uncanny Belonging: On the Enigma of Solitude in Heidegger’s Work The Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Heidegger Circle*, 2013., p. 151). He adds in a footnote: ‘[i]t is such being drawn into the event of withdrawal that constitutes our belonging to the arrival and departure of thought, indeed, our belonging to the Ereignis of language’ (ibid., pp. 151 – 152). Referring to another passage from *Was Heisst Denken?* McNeill continues: ‘And “solitude” names the happening of this enigmatic belonging.’ The passage to which he refers here occurs in the sixth lecture of part two of *Was Heisst Denken?*, in which Heidegger writes that the precursory character of thinking belongs to ‘an enigmatic solitude, taking this word in a high, unsentimental sense.’ See GA 8, p. 174.

in the ‘as’ and ‘about’. The constellation as assembling is a sentence. Every statement is a sentence. But not every sentence is a statement. ‘*Was heisst Denken?*’ is not a statement, but a sentence, namely an interrogative clause.⁴¹⁷

Heidegger repeats ‘The moon has risen’ to inform us that it has been taken from the first verse of Matthias Claudius’ ‘Abendlied’. What is the status of this sentence? Does the fact that we now know that it belongs to a poem change anything about its status? Heidegger here refers us back to the problem of how the grammatical structure of our speaking and what we consider possible and true sentences has been informed and altered by the distinction between logical and poetic sentences. Heidegger insists that we cannot yet ascertain if this presents a problem or a possibility for thinking, as it works with a metaphysical conception of language and has to learn to twist itself free of it, so it can reach another, thoughtful, relation to language.

Concluding remarks

When Heidegger asked the question in its first manner, we were directed towards the essential realm of *Gedächtnis*, *Andacht* und *Dank*. When we inquired into the second question we were led to propositions as the essential trait of thinking. This disparity (*Verschiedenheit*), Heidegger argues, is not due to the difference [*Unterschied*] of the linguistic naming [*sprachliche Benennung*], what is concealed in the Greek name *λόγος* is merely called *denken* in German. Thus we arrive at a decisive question: why has thinking been characterized by what the Greek called *λέγειν* and *λόγος* and not the words ‘*Gedanc*’, ‘*Gedächtnis*’ and ‘*Dank*’? This question is crucial because it has determined not only Greek thinking, but consequently all Western and particularly European thought, and still determines our thinking today. And it determines our thinking today in the form of logistics, ‘the planetary organisational form of all

⁴¹⁷ GA 8, p. 166

representation.⁴¹⁸ If the reason or cause for this cannot be traced back to a linguistic difference, then, perhaps we must ask after the call [*Geheiss*] which has directed thinking to *λόγος*. This question, would then no longer be a question for the historical sciences, but a historical one [*eine geschichtliche*], according to Heidegger ‘perhaps even *the* historical question, albeit historical in the sense of the destinal [*Geschickhaften*].’⁴¹⁹ Because all thinking is a response to the calling, and has therefore the same provenance, Heidegger is led to conclude that the ‘essential determination of thinking’ is the same for Plato and Leibniz (but not identical), because ‘both belong together within in fundamental essential basic trait [*tragenden Wesensgrundzug*], which appears in different ways.’⁴²⁰ Hence the remaining task for this lecture course, is the attempt to let ourselves be sent (*schicken*) into the calling, which directs our thinking towards *λόγος*.⁴²¹ The way there, cannot be through a historical inquiry but only by taking the path of the question. We are thus again seeking to find the calling, but Heidegger reminds us that

thinking has been sent upon its way only because that, which gives to think, addresses it as that which is to-be thought [das zu-Denkende]. In such address [*Zuspruch*] the calling [*das Heissende*] comes to the fore as such, but not into its full shining and not under the identical name.⁴²²

Yet while the above quotation suggests that we now turn to the fourth question, Heidegger proposes to first turn to the thinking of an early thinker, to find out to what extent this early thinking might respond to the calling, even if it does not name it as such. Here Heidegger hopes to find an account of *λόγος* which has not yet been shaped by metaphysical thought, and might thus bring us into the nearness of the *Geheiss*.

⁴¹⁸ GA 8, p. 167.

⁴¹⁹ GA 8, p. 168.

⁴²⁰ GA 8, p. 168.

⁴²¹ GA 8, p. 171.

⁴²² GA 8, p. 171.

Chapter 6: Parmenides and the twofold of being

Introductory remarks

If thinking has been dominated by logic for the last two thousand years, then the question arises, '[w]hy does Greek thought, and thereafter Western and particularly European thought, and therefore still for us today, receive its essential determination from that which is named in Greek *λέγειν* and *λόγος*?'⁴²³ This question takes the form of a decisive historical question, in the sense that it asks about the call or command (*Geheiss*) which referred thinking into the direction of *λέγειν* and *λόγος*, that is, its destiny (*Geschick*). A direction which dominates Western thought from its beginning and to this very day. As the beginning of Western thought is usually ascribed to the early Greek thinkers, Heidegger here turns to the pre-Socratic thinker Parmenides, in order to learn if and how his thinking responds to the call that calls into thinking.

Heidegger focuses mainly on Parmenides' saying *χρή τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὸν ἔμμεναι*. A German translation of the saying renders it thus: '*Nötig ist zu sagen und zu denken, dass das Seiende ist*' which Gray has translated as 'One should both say and think that Being is'.⁴²⁴ In order to reach the site from which the saying speaks, Heidegger proposes to 'circle in' on the saying in order to facilitate the leap into its saying.

Through his elucidation and translation of the saying Heidegger hopes to show how the way we translate a thinker's saying and continue to think from this translation, which is always also an interpretation, has a crucial effect on the way that we think and the way we understand thinking. Thus Heidegger here both shows how the history of philosophy has been shaped by an early interpretation of thinking and at the same time hopes that a revised translation might open up another thinking, which must henceforth

⁴²³ GA 8, p. 167.

⁴²⁴ GA 8, p. 175; WICT, p. 171.

always be opened up again by the calling itself, rather than proceed from established translations. This chapter follows Heidegger's elucidation of the saying through which he shows to what extent all thinking since its Greek beginning takes place from out of the difference of the twofold of being, even if this difference itself is not thought as such.

The secret of all thought

Heidegger begins by inquiring into the content of the saying and suggests that at first the saying might simply say that what one can say and think of being is that it *is*, which appears to be not only obvious but also tautological. Thus perhaps the saying says nothing proper (*eigentlich nichts*). But even if this should be the intended authorial meaning, is it truly empty? Rather, Heidegger points out, the sentence says two things: that a being is, which means, 'it is not not'. It also says that the essential trait of a being is that 'it is': being. Thus is says both the actuality and the essence of a being.⁴²⁵ Yet Heidegger is not convinced that this is the proper meaning of the saying. He gives the example of a tree, and lists all the things one could say about the tree, for example, that it is an apple tree or that it is growing tall, and 'the tree is, it is not not'. Heidegger is keen to point out that to say that the tree is, might in fact be the most difficult thing to say about a tree, as it is easier to perceive the tall growth than that the tree is. Because where exactly, among beings, among the 'ontic' characteristics that are immediately present to us, would we find this 'is' of the tree? From this Heidegger concludes that whether or not we explicitly say it, this 'is' always facilitates our relation to everything that is.⁴²⁶ Further it would be impossible to make a statement like 'the tree is tall' without this 'is'. Thus Heidegger writes

⁴²⁵ GA 8, p. 176.

⁴²⁶ GA 8, p. 178.

[e]very human comportment to something, every human dwelling in the midst of this and that realm of beings, would rush unstoppably into emptiness, if this 'is' did not *speak*. Human beings would not even be able to rush *away* into emptiness, because that would presuppose that they had already been there.⁴²⁷

We use this word 'is' constantly in everyday speech without giving it much thought. Yet Heidegger sees a grave danger in the ease and carelessness with which we treat this 'is' and claims that '[i]n every appearance and in the apparent indifference of this 'is' rests the only possibility for mortals to enter into truth. The sentence 'a being is' [...] contains the fulfilled secret of all thought.'⁴²⁸ The word 'is' is not just an auxiliary word, through which we can make statements about an entity, rather it is the word which makes all saying first of all possible. If the secret of all thought can be found in this simple phrase 'a being is' than we must inquire further into the meaning of Parmenides' saying.

Translating the saying

Having established that the saying states more than the obvious, although we should bear in mind here that the obvious and self-evident are far from trivial for Heidegger as they point us to that which makes it first of all possible to consider something as obvious, and thus points us to that which can open us up to the most profound, 'the secret of all thought'; Heidegger now turns to the issue of the translation of the saying. This is necessary because our first interpretation of it derives from a specific translation of the saying, which is already an interpretation of it. While every translation is by virtue of its very nature always also an interpretation, Heidegger suggests that it is necessary to revisit the original ancient Greek text in order to hear what is said in the saying.

⁴²⁷ GA 8, p. 178.

⁴²⁸ GA 8, p. 178.

First he turns to the context of the saying, which reveals that — just as the saying will ultimately speak to us about a call addressed to thinking from elsewhere — in the dramatic context of the poem in which it is said, the saying itself was not straightforwardly spoken by Parmenides, but was addressed to him by another, as the following sentence indicates: ‘τά σ’ ἐνὸν φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα’ which he translates as ‘this, namely that *χρὴ τὸ λέγειν* and others, I call on you to take to heart.’⁴²⁹ So who is this ‘I’ that speaks here? While we cannot determine with certainty who addresses Parmenides here, Heidegger surmises that

in any case it must be a calling being [*heissendes Wesen*], in any case a calling [*Geheiss*], which speaks to this thinking [*zum Denkenden*], to speak to him of paths. It directs him onto three paths: onto one which thinking has to go before all others, onto one which it has to pay attention to and onto one which remains impassable for thinking.⁴³⁰

Thinking must attend to all paths, even those which remain impassable, non-paths, because they all lead to the question-worthy and thereby open up and delineate the realm in which thinking must move. The context in which Parmenides’ saying speaks, therefore reveals that the saying itself responds to a calling, possibly even the calling to which the entire Western tradition of thought has responded. And as Parmenides stands at the very beginning of this tradition, we can assume that his response to the calling is of an originary nature, in the sense that his response has not been influenced by the subsequent developments of thinking as a subject matter for philosophical discourse, and in particular its determination as logic. Hence, Heidegger hopes to discover an originary saying of the relation of thinking to the call of being.

While Parmenides might precede and so escape the subsequent development of thought into logic, this does not mean that his thought might not be its origin. Heidegger therefore acknowledges that our interpretation of the saying will take place within a

⁴²⁹ GA 8, p. 179.

⁴³⁰ GA 8, p. 179.

specifically circumscribed framework, namely that of the question ‘what is called thinking’, with a particular focus on the meaning of *λόγος* in order to inquire into the origin of the law and essence of logic.⁴³¹ This is a difficulty which presents itself to every interpretation, and even must present itself because thoughtless objectivity is not only impossible but also never the proper way to enter into a conversation with a thinker. Heidegger reminds us that every attempt to translate the saying is an interpretation, and that every interpretation is a conversation with the saying. A translation based entirely on the direct translation of one term into another in another language, is not objective, simply because it refers to an established equivocation of meaning, based on our current definitions of these terms.⁴³² We find ourselves thus again within the difference of terms (*Wörter*) and words (*Worte*): according to Heidegger translations often translate terms from one language to another, which is not to say that they do not attend to the manifold of meanings and connotations a term possesses, but they do not think the site from which the word speaks and the play-space of the spoken it opens up.

Heidegger thus directs us to the distinction of a literal, verbatim translation of the saying and a thoughtful one. He claims, that in order for this conversation to be fruitful and profound we have to free ourselves from a too rigid adherence to what is immediately made accessible through speech, that is, the most common meaning of words (*Wörter*). Heidegger thus proposes that the speakers respectively and in turns allow themselves to enter the site from which they speak. That means to account for the specific position from which Heidegger is approaching the saying and acknowledging

⁴³¹ GA 8, p. 180.

⁴³² In ‘Der Spruch des Anaximander’ Heidegger comments upon the difference of the translations by Nietzsche and Diels: ‘The translations by Nietzsche and Diels are of a different provenance concerning their motivation and intention. Yet they barely differ. The translation by Diels is in some parts more verbatim. But for as long as a translation is only verbatim, it does not necessarily have to be true to the word [*wortgetreu*]. It is only true to the word, when its terms [*Wörter*] are words [*Worte*], speaking from the language of the matter.’ GA 5, p. 322.

the particular historical situation from which Parmenides saying speaks. This accords with Heidegger's overall notion of thinking's engagement with its matter: the thinker must allow himself to be taken into what addresses him in the encounter with his matter and enter into a correspondence with it, which he contrasts with what he takes to be the metaphysical approach, which has always already established and fixed the relation to its matter through a pre-decided methodology and relation to language. What unites both thinkers in the conversation is the calling, which opens up the realm in which both thinkers think, and thus leads Heidegger to claim that his discussion of the Parmenides' saying takes place within the abiding realm of thinking.⁴³³

Beginning his translation of the saying, Heidegger argues that we have to pay attention to two things: the content of the saying and the manner in which we transpose it from the Greek into the German language. The first difficulty is that the sentence seems to say 'a being is' [*ein Seiendes ist*] which has become a familiar phrase and does not appear to give us much ground for thought. Further due to its obvious and tautological nature, there appears not much else that could be said about it or added to it. So Heidegger argues it is no surprise we no longer recognize the unheard of this sentence and it does not shake us to the core.⁴³⁴ Yet perhaps one day someone will recognize that this sentence has remained as question-worthy as it was when it was first said. Still, today, so Heidegger writes, the obviousness of the statement is a result of our current focus on the question regarding the *why* of beings, rather than the wonder that they are, and this focus on their actuality results in being's coming to mean as much as actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] which becomes a self-evident assumption in our questioning.⁴³⁵ The task of Heidegger's interpretation and translation is therefore also to find again

⁴³³ GA 8, p., 180 & 182.

⁴³⁴ GA 8, p. 184. Heidegger here utilizes the ambiguity of the German word *unerhört*, which means not only "unheard" but also has the second meaning of "outrageous", thus provoking thought or a response.

⁴³⁵ GA 8, p. 185.

what is question-worthy and thought-provoking in Parmenides's saying, something that has arguably been obscured by the conventional translation.

Parataxis

As mentioned above Parmenides' saying is commonly translated as 'One should both say and think that Being is.' Heidegger begins his revision of the translation by inserting three colons into the saying which he hopes will highlight the structure of the sentence and the order of the words.⁴³⁶ He further separates the saying into four lines, which he argues should bring us closer to the Greek text, and allow for a different translation:

Χρῆ:
τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ':
ἐὸν:
ἔμμεναι.

He now translates the saying as 'needful: the saying so thinking also: beings: being. [Nötig: das Sagen so Denken auch: Seiendes: sein].'⁴³⁷ This new way of writing the saying in its original Greek might not provide any insights regarding its content but should, so Heidegger hopes, present an opportunity for wonder. This wonder might dispense with the apparent obviousness of the statement and instead refer us to its question-worthiness.⁴³⁸ This new manner of writing the saying should reveal to us how the words are ordered towards each other (*zueinander zugeordnet*). Heidegger points out that order and set up (*Ordnung und Aufstellung*) is in Greek *τάξις*. Now, in the rearrangement that Heidegger has made of Parmenides' saying, the words follow each other without being connected, they are simply set up next to each other, and the 'next

⁴³⁶ GA 8, p. 186.

⁴³⁷ GA 8, p. 186.

⁴³⁸ GA 8, p. 186.

to' or 'besides each other' (*neben*) is in Greek *παρά*.⁴³⁹ The saying is now paratactical in both its German and English rendering.

Heidegger argues that the translator's choice to add connective words in order to make the sentence syntactic, is because syntax is often considered the basic doctrine of sentence and language structures, and if the syntax is missing it is considered an aberration or a primitive form of language as for example that of children.⁴⁴⁰ The fact that the translator felt the need to make the saying of this thinker syntactical, belongs, according to Heidegger, to the categorization of Parmenides as a 'Pre-Socratic thinker', which he argues is not a 'mere chronological designation' but rather a devaluation. This, Heidegger continues, is because 'Plato is considered the greatest thinker of not only the Greeks, but the West'⁴⁴¹ but not because his thinking has ever been judged the greatest according to the task of thinking. A judgement Heidegger deems impossible. Instead, Plato is the greatest thinker because his thought, and what has been interpreted as his thought, has had the greatest influence on the history of Western thought.⁴⁴² Heidegger questions if it makes sense to judge a thinker according to these criteria, because every thinker was influenced by the thinkers that have come before him, and yet, Heidegger asks, who would call Kant an 'pre-Hegelian'?⁴⁴³ Thus to approach Parmenides as a pre-Socratic thinker always risks reducing him to a primitive form or the origin of a Platonic way of thinking, and thus closes off the ambiguity which gives his sayings their power and promise. At the same time, Heidegger warns that the answer lies not in a reversal, that is to try to philosophize 'pre-socratically' and consider every thinking which came after a deterioration.⁴⁴⁴ Heidegger does not claim that either is superior in their use of

⁴³⁹ GA 8, p. 186.

⁴⁴⁰ GA 8, p. 187.

⁴⁴¹ GA 8, p. 187.

⁴⁴² GA 8, p. 187.

⁴⁴³ GA 8, p. 188.

⁴⁴⁴ GA 8, p. 188.

language and therefore in their thinking, but rather that each thinking has its own language, which corresponds to it, and thereby highlights the uniqueness and particularity of this thinking. Yet Heidegger wonders if perhaps a more originary speaking does not occur in the paratactically structured sentence:

[b]ecause the saying speaks where there are no words [*Wörter*], in the space between them, which the colons indicate. The language of Parmenides is the language of a thinking, is this thinking itself. This is why it speaks differently as the even earlier poetry of Homer.⁴⁴⁵

More originary, perhaps, because not yet bound by the laws of logic and grammar, and thereby freer to say and think that which addresses itself to this thinking, in the absence of established styles and methodologies. Now that he has removed the need to adhere to a specific (modern) syntax, Heidegger is free to consider the saying word by word, without however regarding it as a mere chain of words. He has thus begun to open up the possibility that the saying of Parmenides might conceal within it another possible way of thinking to the Platonic-metaphysical tradition which issued from it. Instead these colons allow for the space in-between the words to appear, in a play between absence and presence, and thus allowing the saying in its paratactic form to speak even when there are no words, where something goes unsaid, or remains in abeyance, a potential as yet unrealised. As Richard Taft notes

[p]aratactic saying, on the other hand, by speaking even when there are no words, serves to disclose the play of presence and absence which is characteristic of *aletheia* and which is granted as *Ereignis* occurs. Paratactic saying is the language of thinking because it allows the unsaid to disclose itself as such.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ GA 8, p. 190

⁴⁴⁶ Richard Taft, 1988. 'Devaluation and destruction: on the end of metaphysics and the revaluation of all values'. *Postmodernism and continental philosophy* edited by Silverman, Hugh, J., and Welton, Donn. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 129. Stephen Mulhall makes a somewhat similar point: 'each of Parmenides' words does turn out to support and be supported by its neighbours. Just as the separate words in the second, third, and fourth phrases ('letting-lie-before-us', 'taking-to-heart' and 'the present of what is present') are interwoven with their fellow words, so the three phrases are internally related to one another and with the phrase that precedes them ('useful'); all four hang together by pointing us towards other links in the lexical chain set up by ideas of the hand, of memory and of

If we now compare the new rendering of the saying ‘needful: the saying so thinking also: beings: being’ (*Nötig: das Sagen so Denken auch: Seiendes: sein*) to the previous rendering: ‘One should both say and think that Being is’ (*‘Nötig ist zu sagen und zu denken, dass das Seiende ist’*), we notice that while previously thinking and saying have been put in a *specific* relation to being, this relation remains now without determination. It now no longer says that it is needful to say and think that being is, but only brings the words needful, saying, thinking, beings, being together, putting them in relation to each other. As Heidegger will develop in the rest of the lecture course, what is significant about the saying, is precisely the relation it allows to unfold between these words and therefore allows for a different and more originary relation of thinking and being to emerge.

χρῆ

Having freed the saying from its connective tissue Heidegger now turns to the words themselves, beginning with *χρῆ*, which has so far been translated as ‘one should’ by Gray (translating from the German ‘*nötig*’) and later as the syntax was removed as ‘needful’. Heidegger argues that *χρῆ*, which comes from the verb *χράω*, *χρησθαι* and derives from *ἡ χεῖρ* (the hand), and has via *χράω*, *χράομαι* the meaning: ‘I handle and keep in hand, I use [*ich gebrauche*], I need [*ich brauche*].’⁴⁴⁷ Here ‘use’ (*brauchen*) takes on the meaning not of a mere utilization (*Benützung*) or exploitation (*Ausnützung*), but instead of a proper handling (*Handhabung*), in which the hand responds to the entity it handles. Understood thus, proper use (*eigentliches Brauchen*) is neither utilization nor

thanking. What results from a paratactic approach is thus the kind of re-membering that recounts an existing neighbourliness in language.’ Mulhall, 2001, pp. 316-317.

⁴⁴⁷ GA 8, p. 190.

need. Use as understood here implies a responsiveness to the entity encountered, as Heidegger writes

[i]n use lies self-measuring correspondence [*Entsprechen*]. Proper use [*das eigentliche Brauchen*] does not devalue the used [*das Gebrauchte*], instead use has its purpose in letting the used remain in its essence. But this letting does not signify a lack of concern or care or even neglect. The opposite: proper use brings the used first into its essence and keeps it therein. Thought thus, use is itself the summons [*Anspruch*] which demands that something be admitted to its own essence unceasingly. Use means: admission into essence, it is essential preserving [*Wahren*].⁴⁴⁸

Proper use thus attends to its matter and corresponds to it by bringing it into its essence and letting it remain there. Use, thought in Greek from the hand brings to mind Heidegger's earlier discussion of handiwork (*Handwerk*) which was distinguished from machinated production in terms of its attendance to and corresponding to the essence of its matter. Heidegger prioritizes attentiveness to the essential unfolding of the encountered matter over a uniform applicable-to-all methodology which has always already identified and categorized its object. It is the manner in which use, handiwork and thinking relate themselves to their matter, by allowing it to enter into its own essence and letting it unfold in its essence, thereby entering into a reciprocal relation, as each receives its determination from their respective matter.

Heidegger now turns to examine the word $\chi\rho\eta$ regarding its placement in the saying. Since we find $\chi\rho\eta$ here at the beginning of the saying, it operates on several levels, regarding the content of the saying, its tone and the interpretative method. Heidegger argues, that because $\chi\rho\eta$ appears at the beginning of a thoughtful saying we can safely assume that the word is meant here in the highest sense. The highest sense according to Heidegger is '*es brauchet*', which one might translate as 'useful'. As Heidegger points out, German, sentences beginning with '*es*' ('it') are called impersonal

⁴⁴⁸ GA 8, p. 190.

or subject-free sentences. Parmenides' saying is a sentence without a subject. Heidegger concludes that the translation of $\chi\rho\eta$ as 'useful' (*es brauchet*) belongs into the nearness of 'it gives' in German '*Es gibt*'. And, he asks, is not the high sense of use (*Brauchen*) which says 'to enter into its essence and shelter it there, a form of giving?'⁴⁴⁹ Heidegger points out that this often named phrasing was earlier used to designate that which is to be thought most of all: the most thought-provoking: *it gives us to think*⁴⁵⁰

Heidegger's choice to translate $\chi\rho\eta$ with the phrase '*es brauchet*' (useful) designates the absence of the subject, and, often functions in Heidegger's work in order to indicate what Ziarek calls the the fold between the sayable and the stateable, the possibility of a non-propositional saying (*Sagen ohne Aussagen*).⁴⁵¹ Thus, within the course of the first steps towards a new revised translation and thereby interpretation of the Parmenides saying, Heidegger removes the possibility of regarding the saying in terms of a propositional statement, by removing not only the syntax and thereby connecting and ordering tissue from the saying, which was added by previous conventional translations, but also, by removing the subject. Thereby thwarting any attempt to make sense of the saying from a metaphysical or logical vantage point and instead opening it up to its poetic and linguistic resonances, and thereby beginning to make it possible to hear in exactly the same sentence a quite different form of thinking. Thus while a syntactic rendering of the saying would require an 'is' and thus the

⁴⁴⁹ GA 8, p. 192. Heidegger refers the reader here to a sections from 'Brief über den Humanismus' in which he writes 'For the "it" that here "gives" is Being itself. The "gives" names the essence of Being that is giving, granting its truth. The self-giving into the open, along with the open region itself, is Being itself. At the same time "it gives" is used preliminarily to avoid the locution "Being is"; for "is" is commonly said of some thing that is. We call such a thing a being. But Being "is" precisely not "a being." If "is" is spoken without closer interpretation of Being, then Being is all too easily represented as a "being" after the fashion of the familiar sorts of beings that act as causes and are actualized as effects. And yet Parmenides, in the early age of thinking, says, *esti gar einai*, "for there is Being." The primal mystery for all thinking is concealed in this phrase. Perhaps "is" can be said only of Being in an appropriate way, so that no individual being ever properly "is." But because thinking should be directed only toward saying Being in its truth, instead of explaining it in terms of beings, whether and how Being is must remain an open question for the careful attention of thinking.' BW, p. 238.

⁴⁵⁰ GA 8, p. 192.

⁴⁵¹ Ziarek, 2013a, p. 52.

translation of $\chi\rho\eta$ as ‘it is useful’, the paratactic rendering allows for the translation as ‘useful’ (*es brauchet*). The gesture of transforming the sentence into a paratactic form is thus the first stage in the process of moving beyond metaphysical logic and towards another interpretation of thinking.

Essential belonging

While Heidegger privileges the higher sense of use for the saying, he does not advocate the rejection of the other meanings of the word which also sound in the saying, such as utilization and exploitation. Yet, with every sounding we must ask if not an even deeper and more profound ‘useful’ comes to word.⁴⁵² It is at this moment in the discussion that Heidegger introduces the poetry of Hölderlin in order to shed light on the soundings (*Klänge*) of the higher senses of $\chi\rho\eta$. At the same time Heidegger re-issues the caveat that what Hölderlin says is not identical to this $\chi\rho\eta$, and one cannot simply interpret Parmenides’ thinking through verses of Hölderlin’s poetry.⁴⁵³ Thus perhaps, rather than illuminating Parmenides’ use of the Greek word $\chi\rho\eta$, Heidegger seeks to illuminate how Hölderlin’s own ‘*es brauchet*’ speaks.

Heidegger begins by quoting the last stanza of the hymn ‘Der Ister’: ‘It is useful [*Es brauchet*] for the rock to have shafts/ And for the earth, furrows, / It would be without welcome, without stay.’⁴⁵⁴ On a cursory glance it might seem that the ‘*Es brauchet*’ refers to a need. But as Heidegger points out, the rock as rock does not need the shafts, like the earth does not need the furrows. But it is from the essence of hospitality [*Wirtlichkeit*] and dwelling [*Wohnen*], that the water springs forth and the fruits of the fields belong to them. Hence the ‘useful’ names an essential belonging of rock and shafts, of earth and furrows. This essential belonging however is itself

⁴⁵² GA 8, p. 193.

⁴⁵³ GA 8, p. 193.

⁴⁵⁴ GA 8, p. 193, translation by Gray: WICT, p. 192.

determined from the essence of hospitality and abidance.⁴⁵⁵ The next passage from Hölderlin Heidegger draws our attention to is from the hymn ‘Die Titanen’: ‘For under the firm measure/ The crude, too, is useful [*braucht es*]/ That the pure may know itself.’⁴⁵⁶ Again Heidegger emphasizes that it is not the case that the pure needs the crude. Yet, the pure becomes apparent as the pure and can only be as pure if it remains in an essential nearness to the crude. While this does not affirm the crude, it rightly persists, according to its essence as usefulness [*wesensgerecht als das so Gebrauchte*].⁴⁵⁷

Heidegger argues that this relation between the crude and the pure, like the one between the earth and furrows, which the ‘useful’ names, remains difficult to think. It is a relation marked by difference and nearness, which finds its origin in something that always takes place prior to the them, but gathers them into a unity. He writes: ‘The ‘useful’ names here an admission into the essence from which the mortals’ dwelling on this earth is granted and guaranteed, and thereby sheltered.’⁴⁵⁸ The poetic helps us to tune our ears to what the words say, allows us to look at words differently, no longer as mere sign-vessels, whose sole purpose is to communicate their most common meaning and exhaust themselves therein. Instead it allows the various meanings of the word to come forth, to let the word itself come forth as word. This is why Heidegger finds it necessary to introduce the poet at this point in his interpretation of a thinker, and what’s more a thinker who stands at the other end of the metaphysical tradition he is attempting ultimately to twist free from.

But, more importantly, the poet’s use of the phrase ‘*es brauchet*’ reveals to us the kind of relation this ‘useful’ gives rise to.

⁴⁵⁵ GA 8, p. 196 – 197.

⁴⁵⁶ GA 8, p. 197, translation by Gray: WICT, p. 194.

⁴⁵⁷ GA 8, p. 197.

⁴⁵⁸ GA 8, p. 196 – 197.

Use [*Brauchen*] admits the used into the propriety of its essence and preserves it therein. This admission and preserving designates the use named here, but does not exhaust its essence in any way. Use thought thus is no longer and is never the subject of human action and production. Meanwhile mortal doing and letting belongs into the realm of the call of *χρῆ*. Use commands the used to its own essence. In this use conceals itself a command, a call. With *χρῆ* in the saying by Parmenides a calling [*Geheiss*] is named, even if it is not explicitly thought or even discussed. Every inceptual and authentic naming says the unspoken and especially so that it remains unspoken.⁴⁵⁹

The ‘useful’ as the beginning of Parmenides’ saying thus indicates that the other words in the saying are thought in their relatedness, and this relatedness bestows and shelters their essence. Thus, we no longer ask what the purpose of the saying or thinking of being serves, that is, why it is needful to both say and think that being is. Instead we are asking after what calls forth saying and thinking and being and gathers them into a belonging-together.

Λέγειν and νοεῖν

Heidegger now moves on to the middle part of the saying *τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τε* which in the common German translation says ‘*das Sagen so das Denken auch*’ which has been translated as ‘to say and think both’. Heidegger again challenges their translation, and provides two reasons. First, while today in every day speech ‘thinking’ and ‘saying’ are clearly defined terms, they might not have been in Ancient Greece, and indeed he wishes to open up a moment at the beginning of the history of metaphysics at which the nature of thought is as yet undecided or at least has not yet attained the level of unquestionable self-evidence it has reached today, after two thousand years of logic.

Even though Plato and Aristotle use both words — *λέγειν* and *νοεῖν* — to designate thinking, this takes place already at what Heidegger considers to be the

⁴⁵⁹ GA 8, p. 199.

completion (*Vollendung*) of Greek thought.⁴⁶⁰ Yet we are asking after the calling which called forth *νοεῖν* and *λέγειν*, prior to the beginning of their development into what subsequently became known as logic.⁴⁶¹ As Parmenides names both, *νοεῖν* and *λέγειν*, Heidegger infers that ‘both in their belonging-together [*Zusammengehörigkeit*] make up that from whence the essence [*Wesen*] of thinking first begins to appear in one of its fundamental traits.’⁴⁶² Heidegger thus argues that we must think both *νοεῖν* and *λέγειν* from their relation to each other, and bear this in mind when we translate them as belonging-together into a jointure (*Gefüge*) which then later develops into what we now understand by the term logic.

We thus also have to consider their sequence in the saying, which brings Heidegger to the second reason which makes a revision of the translation necessary. The saying names ‘saying’ before ‘thinking’, which raises the question if it would not make more sense to think something before saying it? Is thought not generally considered to precede language? Especially since Heidegger understands *λέγειν* to refer to ‘saying’ here in distinction to ‘discourse’ (*Rede*), based on a warning issued in fragment VII, in which the thinker is warned against falling onto the path of the familiar opining of mortals, against remaining in the familiar and mistaking the familiar as the true. In this instance, the familiar is likened to *γλῶσσα*, translated as ‘tongue’ (*Zunge*) and equated to discourse (*Rede*) but distinguished from *λόγος* (in the fragment *λόγῳ* translated as ‘pondering’ [*Überlegen*]).⁴⁶³ Thus *λέγειν* here does not refer to thoughtless

⁴⁶⁰ GA 8, p. 199.

⁴⁶¹ GA 8, p. 200.

⁴⁶² GA 8, p., 200.

⁴⁶³ The warning of fragment VII

‘μηδὲ σ’ ἔθος πολύπερον οδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω,
νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχῆσαν ἀκουήν
καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ ...

„Und nicht zwinge Gewöhnung dich, vielgeläufige, auf diesen Weg, (nämlich)
weiden zu lassen blickloses Auge und lärmiges Gehör
und Zunge, unterscheide vielmehr im Überlegen ...»

speaking, which would explain it preceeding *voeĩn* as thinking. Thus Heidegger inquires into what Parmenides means by the word *λέγειν*, so far translated as ‘saying’.

Λέγειν as letting-lie-before

Thus, according to Heidegger the Greek word *λέγειν* means to say (*sagen*), to report (*berichten*), to tell (*erzählen*). But what does saying (*sagen*) mean? While it might be the traditionally correct translation for *λέγειν*, *sagen* here does not mean *speaking* (*sprechen*) in the sense of using the speech organs. From this Heidegger argues that *λέγειν* is therefore not necessarily related (*bezogen*) to language and its occurrences.⁴⁶⁴ Instead, Heidegger claims that the Greek word *λέγειν* is the same word as the Latin word *legere* and the German word *legen* (laying).⁴⁶⁵ The German word-root *legen* is used in the words *darlegen* (to state), *überlegen* (to contemplate), *vorlegen* (to present), which all denote a linguistic act. This brings Heidegger to the conclusion that the Greeks understand ‘sagen’ from *vorlegen*, *darlegen*, *überlegen*. Heidegger argues that it is not an ‘etymological gimmick’ that *λέγειν* might say ‘saying’ but that saying is essentially a laying (*Legen*). Rather we are allowing our thinking to be guided by the unfolding of words, which we are now attempting to listen to.

Now the question arises: what does laying (*Legen*) mean? Only if we ask this question, Heidegger claims, do we truly enter into an elucidation of the essence of *λέγειν* as laying. Heidegger writes:

[w]hen we lay something down and before [*hin – und vorlegen*], then we are bringing it to lie [*Liegen*]. It is then something that lies before [*ein Vorliegendes*]. Further, something can lie before us without us first of all laying it down. Before us lies: the sea, the mountains. Lying is in Greek *κεῖσθαι*. That which lies before [*das Vorliegende*] is the *ὑποκείμενον*, in Latin, *subiectum*. What lies before us are the sea or a village or a house or anything similar. Only a tiny part of what lies before us has first been placed there by man, and even this tiny part only through the help of that which

⁴⁶⁴ GA 8, p. 201.

⁴⁶⁵ GA 8, p. 202. See also GA 7, p. 214.

was already lying before us. The building blocks of the house stem from the grown rock.⁴⁶⁶

Here *legen* and *liegen* refer to that which we encounter, what is present to us: *das Vorliegende*. Notably Heidegger here names first the sea and the mountains as examples of that which lies before us, thus indicating that lying-before is not necessarily or only a product of human action, although man is able to produce a part of what lies-before albeit only by transforming that which always already lies before us. What is crucial here, Heidegger notes, and ‘what every thinker has to see anew each time, otherwise he would not be a thinker: is that everything which lies before us [*alles Vorliegende*] is ambiguous [*zweideutig*].’⁴⁶⁷ And according to Heidegger, it is in Parmenides’ saying that ‘this ambiguity comes for the first time and decisively to light.’⁴⁶⁸

We came across that which lies-before (*Anliegen, Vorliegen*) already in chapter 5. In his inquiry into the play space of the spoken, we learned that the *Gedanc* gathers all that concerns us (*Anliegen, Vorliegen*) into its own intimacy. The previous inquiry into logic revealed a different relation to that which lies before (*Vorliegen, Anliegen*), as it was marked by a standing-over against that which it encounters as laying-before, thus determining a notion of thinking as saying something about something. This allowed for the formulation and establishment of rules concerning this ‘saying about’ and thinking as logic was placed in the service of the sciences and technology. Thus what lies-before has always in one way or another determined and shaped thinking. Here Heidegger seeks to show how this letting-lie before is already thought by Parmenides as one of the determining characteristics of thinking. Thus Heidegger concludes that the essence of saying [*das Wesen des Sagens*] is not determined through the sound character of words but rather from its relation to the lying-before and letting-lie-before, an essence

⁴⁶⁶ GA 8, p. 203. See also GA 8, p. 158 and chapter 5. See also GA 7, p. 217.

⁴⁶⁷ GA 8, p. 204.

⁴⁶⁸ GA 8, p. 204.

concealed to the Greeks. Heidegger continues, ‘their saying moves within this essence.’⁴⁶⁹

Thus according to Heidegger, λέγειν means both saying (*sagen*) and laying (*legen*). What is left now to consider is the nature of their relation to each other, and Heidegger asks ‘has precisely this, which saying is in its essence and is called λέγειν, been brought to appearance as laying? In which essential figure has language come to light, when its saying is taken over as laying and accomplished therein?’⁴⁷⁰ Heidegger claims that the most important thing concerning laying is that it belongs to that which is always already lying-before us, and does so before all human doing and letting, action.

As Heidegger writes:

For the Greeks saying is a laying. In saying language unfolds [*Im Sagen west die Sprache*]. When for the Greeks the essence of saying determines itself from laying, then they must have a special concern for laying [*Legen*] and lying [*Liegen*] and lying-before [*Vorliegen*, literal translation: to be present to], and decidedly so that for the Greeks that which *is*, and not only the saying about (what is), is opened up and determined from laying and lying. The sea and mountains, city and island, temple and sky lie before [*liegen vor*, are present to them] and appear from their presence [*Vorliegen*].⁴⁷¹

Heidegger further argues, that the proper response to that which already lies before man, is to let it lie before him. It would be this letting-lie-before that would then open up the space in which all other forms of laying and lying which man (does) take place. Thus this lying would ‘become visible as a kind of relation [*Bezug*] which fundamentally pervades the sojourn of man on this earth.’⁴⁷² Yet, as Heidegger has argued, that which pervades every part of human existence is often that which is itself not visible to man, even if it determines his essential unfolding. Further the provenance of this relation

⁴⁶⁹ GA 8, p. 204.

⁴⁷⁰ GA 8, p. 208.

⁴⁷¹ GA 8, p. 208 – 209.

⁴⁷² GA 8, p. 209.

would remain hidden to us, and therefore belongs to the most familiar and at the same time most uncanny aspect of human existence.

And λέγειν as saying? Saying is a matter of language. What does language say? Its said [*Gesagtes*], that, which it speaks and keeps silent [*schweigt*], remains always and everywhere that, what is, can be, was and is arriving; and all this is most immediate and richest there, where the words ‘is’ and ‘being’ do not themselves come to sound. Because that, which comes to language each time in the proper sense, is essentially richer than that, which enter into the audible and visible coming to sound [*Verlautbarung*] and thereby again falls silent [*verstummt*] in the writing of scripture [*Geschriebenen der Schrift*]. At the same time, all saying remains, in a concealed manner, in relation to that which remains nameable through an ‘it is’.⁴⁷³

Saying as laying can thus be understood as standing in relation to all that which is, but merely brings it to language, into saying, which is however not the merely spoken or written down. Thus it does not seek to add or transform or fix into place that which lays-before but rather lets it lie-before. In this sense, saying is aletheic rather than conceptual.

voeĩv as taking-into-care

Heidegger now turns to *voeĩv*, as its translation into ‘thinking’ [*denken*], is judged to be thoughtless [*Gedankenlos*]. Heidegger begins by suggesting ‘to apprehend’ [*vernehmen*] as a more careful translation, albeit not a comprehensive one. ‘To apprehend’ could be understood in the sense of ‘perception’ and thereby point to ‘receptivity’ in order to distinguish it from the notion of a spontaneous apprehension of what is offered to our perception. Yet Heidegger wants to move away from the notion of a mere passive acceptance, and highlight the ‘trait of the taking-up of something’ [*der Zug des Vornehmens von etwas*]. Heidegger writes:

⁴⁷³ GA 8, p. 209. See also GA 7, pp. 219 – 220, on how this rethinking of λέγειν as saying also makes the specific sense of listening Heidegger employs in *Was Heisst Denken?* possible.

Within *voeĩv* prevails a perception [*Vernehmen*] of that which is, however, not a mere taking-in [*Hinnenehmen*] of something. The *voeĩv* perceives [*vernimmt*] beforehand by taking into care [*in die Acht nimmt*]. Care [*Acht*] is the vigilance [*Wacht*], which takes that which lies before it into preservation [*Wahr*], but is itself in need of safekeeping [*Verwahrung*], which is accomplished by *λέγειν* as gathering [*Versammeln*].⁴⁷⁴

Heidegger thus suggests to translate *voeĩv* as taking-into-care [*in-die-Acht-nehmen*] in order to capture the specific kind of taking in and safeguarding that he understands *voeĩv* to mean in Parmenides' saying.

The jointure of λέγειν and voeĩv

The revised translations of *λέγειν* and *voeĩv*, illuminate why *λέγειν* precedes *voeĩv* in the saying. Rather than asking us to first say and then think that a being is, it now asks us to let-lie-before and take-into-care, and that there is first something that lies before us that we can then take into our care. Heidegger further argues, that '*λέγειν* also goes beyond *voeĩv* insofar as it gathers that which *voeĩv* takes into care, and subsequently preserves in this gathering; because *λέγειν* also means *legere*, which means gathering [*lesen*].'⁴⁷⁵ Thus *λέγειν* and *voeĩv* are not simply listed next to each other, rather they join (*fügen*) into each other and unfold towards each other. As *λέγειν* unfolds towards *voeĩv*, the letting-lie-before cannot just be passive leaving something to itself, rather through *voeĩv*, the letting-lie-before is already thought as a taking-into-care. Thus in the same manner, the taking-into-care is also a letting-lie-before, in the sense that it takes-into-care by gathering that which is lying-before into its care. According to Heidegger we are now beginning to see how carefully constructed Parmenides saying truly is.⁴⁷⁶ The relation of *λέγειν* and *voeĩv* is indicated through the $\tau\epsilon - \tau\epsilon$ which according to

⁴⁷⁴ GA 8, p. 210.

⁴⁷⁵ GA 8, p. 211. The German word *lesen* has two meanings, one is reading and the other one is gathering in the most common sense of harvesting a crop. See also GA 7, p. 215 for a more detailed account of how *lesen* can be understood as gathering.

⁴⁷⁶ GA 8, p. 212.

Heidegger has a ‘reflexive meaning’ and says that the relation of *λέγειν* and *νοεῖν* is a ‘jointure [*Gefüge*] of that which by and from itself turns towards the other, which means that it is related [*verwandt* – also, kindred].’⁴⁷⁷

The revised translation of *λέγειν* and *νοεῖν*, thus shows us that the saying does not presuppose what thinking means, but rather refers to the fundamental traits of that which will subsequently be determined as thinking. Heidegger further claims that the jointure of *λέγειν* and *νοεῖν* allows them to accomplish what ‘afterwards but only for a short amount of time will be named *ἀληθεύειν*: the unconcealing and maintaining in unconcealment of the unconcealed.’⁴⁷⁸ Heidegger emphasizes that it is precisely their relation as jointure that *νοεῖν* and *λέγειν* that makes up their essential traits of thinking. Neither taken by itself sufficiently reveals or constitutes the essence of thinking. Further, they cannot be thought without the address that joins them together, as already indicated by the *χρῆ* that precedes them. Thus, only when we consider the manner of their relation and that which joins them together in their relatedness are we entering into the essence of thinking.

According to Heidegger, it is only when each is considered in isolation from the other and separated from the calling that joins them, that the development of *λέγειν* into logic and *νοεῖν* into reason, *ratio* begins to take place:

[t]hinking becomes the *λέγειν* of *λόγος* in the propositional sense. At the same time thinking becomes *νοεῖν* in the sense of perception through reason. Both determinations of thinking coupling up and determine from this coupling what subsequently is understood as thinking in the Western-European tradition.

The coupling of proposition and reason comes to the fore in what the Romans name *ratio*. Thinking appears as the rational. *Ratio* comes from the verb *reor*: to take something for something: *νοεῖν*; this means at the same time to present something as something: *λέγειν*. *Ratio* becomes reason. Logic deals with reason.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ GA 8, p. 212.

⁴⁷⁸ GA 8, p. 213.

⁴⁷⁹ GA 8, p. 213 – 214.

As both are thought without that which essentially determines and joins them, they develop into the conception of thinking which henceforth determines Western philosophy. Their essential provenance remains hidden. However, Heidegger argues that he is not claiming that the philosophy that came after this Greek beginning is erroneous, rather, that it has distanced itself from that which first of all gives to think, that from which thinking receives its essential determination. Thus Heidegger warns us not to make the mistake to assume that those two translations represent fixed definitions about thinking, but rather it remains essential to keep thinking them from that which first calls them into their respective essences. Thought from the calling, Heidegger writes, '[t]hinking is accordingly not a grasping [*Greifen*], nor a seizing [*Zugriff*] upon that which lies before [*das Vorliegende*], nor an attack [*Angriff*] against it. [...] Thinking is not a conceptualizing [*Begreifen*].'⁴⁸⁰ Heidegger goes on to claim that the entire thinking of the Greeks thought *non-conceptually*. This non-conceptual thinking was however not without rigour or clarity, as both are bestowed upon thinking when it thinks the propriety of its matter, which means to remain upon the path of the question-worthy.⁴⁸¹

Hence for Heidegger, the need for concepts arises only when thinking no longer attends to its matter, and thereby seeks its rigour elsewhere, for example through systems and concepts. What keeps thinking close to its matter, is the question-worthy. Yet it is important to truly abide within the question-worthy and not to simply repeat the question itself. It when the question-worthy becomes the merely questionable, that Heidegger locates the origin of the need for a system in which 'the systematic and system-building representation through concepts comes into dominance'⁴⁸² It is the forgetting of the calling, which preserves the system, as according to Heidegger even

⁴⁸⁰ GA 8, p. 215.

⁴⁸¹ GA 8, p. 215.

⁴⁸² GA 8, p. 216.

those thinkers who appear to think against the system, like Nietzsche, are still caught up in its dominion. And because we still thinking within it, it comes to pass that even when we encounter that which is question-worthy in Greek thought we are prevented from being addressed by it and maintained in its calling. Thus Heidegger urges us to return to the saying, which we have so far translated as ‘useful: the letting-lie-before and (the) taking-into-care also [*Es brauchet: das Vorliegenlassen so (das) In-die-Acht-nehmen auch...*]⁴⁸³ and ask after that which joins the jointure of both λέγειν and νοεῖν: the ἐὸν ἔμμεναι named at the end of Parmenides’ saying.

ἐὸν ἔμμεναι

As our analysis of *χρῆ* already revealed, the relation between λέγειν and νοεῖν and ἐὸν: ἔμμεναι is not of an arbitrary but instead of an essential nature: it is the ἐὸν: ἔμμεναι which calls both λέγειν and νοεῖν and directs them into their jointure. Heidegger begins with the usual translation of ἐὸν: ‘*Seiendes*’: a being. He tells us that subsequently the letter ε disappears and the word becomes ὄν. The letter ε however, points us to the root and thereby the word family of the word: ἐ, ἐς, ἔστιν. He further suggests that we should not translate ἐὸν with ‘*das Seiende*’, ‘the being’, because the article is missing in Parmenides’ saying. The absence of the definite article adds, according to Heidegger, a strangeness to the saying.⁴⁸⁴ Having proposed the translation ‘beings’ for ἐὸν, the question now arises what a being is. Heidegger claims that to try and determine what *Seiendes* means by asking after its common use, would only bring confusion, as the answers would point to mountains, a ship, god and a people’s assembly: everything that *is*, in one form or another.⁴⁸⁵ This, Heidegger suggests, would not explain Parmenides’

⁴⁸³ GA 8, p. 217.

⁴⁸⁴ GA 8, p. 217.

⁴⁸⁵ GA 8, p. 220.

saying, because the letting-lie-before and taking-into-care of $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ is already taking place everywhere and all the time.

Further, as Heidegger reminds the reader, the saying does not end with $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$, the last word is $\epsilon\tilde{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$. The infinitive $\epsilon\tilde{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$ is, like $\epsilon\tilde{\sigma}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$, an older form of $\epsilon\tilde{\imath}\nu\alpha\iota$ and means ‘to be’ [*sein*]. According to Heidegger, the problem with the words ‘being’ and ‘to be’ [‘*Seiendes*’ und ‘*sein*’] is that ‘they say nothing tangible or graspable [*nichts Greifbares*].’⁴⁸⁶ Thus they either disappear in the everyday use of language or, once highlighted, become strange things which disturb straightforward discourse. Could those words, $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ $\epsilon\tilde{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$, Heidegger asks, name that which determines everything?⁴⁸⁷

Again, Heidegger suggests that we need to look at what those words mean in ancient Greek, so that we can respond to those questions. Yet, what we can already gather is that they are both different forms of the same word and so ‘they seem to name the same matter [*Sie nennen, so scheint es, die selbe Sache*].’⁴⁸⁸ Hence we can already glimpse that they belong together without yet being able to think them in a way proper to their matter. Heidegger claims that it is crucial to attend properly to the manner of their belonging-together if we want to be able to hear at all what Parmenides’ saying says.⁴⁸⁹ Hence, Heidegger will begin his elucidation of these words through their relation to each other.

The participle $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$

Heidegger argues that Parmenides’ saying already gives us a hint to help us understand the kind of belonging-together of $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ and $\epsilon\tilde{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$, and that in other instances Parmenides uses for $\epsilon\tilde{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$ and $\epsilon\tilde{\imath}\nu\alpha\iota$ the word $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$. While this might seem strange,

⁴⁸⁶ GA 8, p. 221.

⁴⁸⁷ GA 8, p. 222.

⁴⁸⁸ GA 8, p. 233.

⁴⁸⁹ GA 8, p. 222.

Heidegger insists that in accordance with its matter this use of language is justified. Thus he proposes to replace *ἔμμεναι* with *ἔδν* so that the saying now runs *χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἔδν ἔδν*. But Heidegger argues that *ἔδν ἔδν* does not say the identical thing twice:

[f]or this to be possible, this same word *ἔδν* must mean two different things [*zweierlei bedeuten*]. But is not every word polysemous? Without doubt. Alone the word *ἔδν* is not polysemous accidentally and in an undetermined sense. Rather it has two meanings [*zweideutig*] and this in a determined and special sense.⁴⁹⁰

Heidegger argues that it is a grammatical twofold of meaning, as the word-form *Seiendes* (a being) is a participle. Participles takes part in two meanings which refer to each other.⁴⁹¹ He exemplifies this point with the word ‘blossoming’ [*Blühendes*]:

[t]he word ‘blossoming’ [*Blühendes*] can mean something that blossoms [*blüht*], the rosebush or the apple tree. In that meaning the word names that which is in bloom. ‘Blossoming’ names that which blossoms, and this means each for itself as that, to which blossoming is proper. The word ‘blossoming’ insofar as it designates for example the rose, speaks here almost like a proper name for the named in its linguistic form it has the character of a substantive, a noun. ‘Blossoming’ understood thus, is used in its nominal meaning.

Blossoming can also mean, in bloom, in distinction [*Unterschied*] to wilting. Not that, which is blossoming right now or wilts, it means, rather blossoming, wilting. ‘Blossoming’ means now: blossoming and is here used in the verbal meaning.⁴⁹²

Thus the participle takes part in both the nominal and verbal meaning. But for Heidegger, if not for traditional grammar, participles are not participles because they can take part in two meanings, but rather because they refer to that which is in itself twofold [*in sich zwiefältig*].⁴⁹³ Hence Heidegger argues that what determines the twofold participation of meaning that belongs to the participle is not merely a grammatical form, but has its origin in the twofold to which the participle stands in

⁴⁹⁰ GA 8, p. 223.

⁴⁹¹ GA 8, p. 224.

⁴⁹² GA 8, p. 224.

⁴⁹³ GA 8, p. 224.

relation. He writes:

[t]he participle *ῥόν*, being [*Seiendes*] is not also a participle next to countless others, rather *ῥόν*, *ens*, being [*Seiendes*] is the participle which gathers all other possible participles. The twofold meaning [*das Zweideutige*] of the participles rests in the twofold [*Zwiefältigen*] of that which they name tacitly. This twofold rests in turn in a special twofold [*Zwiefalt*], which conceals itself in the word *ῥόν*, being, [*Seiendes*].

The participle in which all others are rooted and grown together (*concrecere*), and from which they are each grown, without explicitly addressing it, is that through which a unique and therefore special twofold speaks. According to it beings unfold in being and being unfolds as the being of a being. This twofold has no comparable other kind next to it.⁴⁹⁴

Thus Heidegger argues that the grammatical designation *participium* originates from and refers back to the twofold of being. He extends the argument to claim that distinctions like verb and noun, (*Hauptwort und Zeitwort, Substantivum und Verbum*) do not originate in grammar or even logic but rather derive from a distinction which first comes to the fore in Plato's *Sophist*.⁴⁹⁵ Heidegger thus argues that grammar did not evolve in order to regulate language for the purpose of human communication, but is rather the result of a certain philosophical understanding of the twofold of being, specifically the Platonic understanding, which however is always already at risk of collapsing the difference of the twofold into the identical and thus initiating a fateful turn in the history of metaphysics:

[t]he Latin name *Participium* is a translation of the Greek name '*μετοχή*', and to take part in something is called *μετέχειν*. This word is a foundational word [*Grundwort*] in Plato's thought. It names the taking part of the respective being in that through which it, for example a table, as this being shows its face and appearance, in Greek *εἶδος* or *ιδέα*. In such appearance it unfolds, it *is*. After Plato the idea constitutes the being of a being. Plato characterises the relation of each being to its idea as *μέθεξις*, participation [*Teilhabe*]. In this participation of one, namely a being, to another, namely being, is already *presupposed*, that there is a twofold of beings and being at all. The *μέθεξις*, the participation of beings at being, rests in that, which is named grammatically, *μετοχήν*, the participle *ῥόν*, *όν*.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ GA 8, p. 225.

⁴⁹⁵ GA 8, p. 226.

⁴⁹⁶ GA 8, p. 226.

Thus the thinking of a participation of being in beings, even the thinking of being in terms of beings (that is the forgetting of the difference of being) is only possible because of the twofold of being, or more precisely because of a certain interpretation of this twofold that the twofold itself makes possible. Hence Heidegger shows here how all thinking from its Greek beginning onwards had to perceive this difference of being and beings even if it forgets it and collapses the distinction into the identical, by allowing being to be considered identical to an entity, as it progresses.

In ‘Der Spruch des Anaximander’ Heidegger argues that in the thought of Plato and Aristotle we encounter the words *ὄν* and *ὄντα* already as conceptual terms, which later give rise to the words ‘ontic’ and ‘ontological’. Yet Heidegger claims that *ὄν* and *ὄντα* are only the narrow versions of the words *ἐόν* and *ἐόντα*:

[t]hus *ὄν* says ‘being’ in the sense of *to be* a being; but *ὄν* also names a *being* which is. In the twofold [*Zwiefalt*] of the participial signification of *ὄν* there lies concealed the difference [*Unterschied*] between ‘being [*seiend*]’ and ‘a being [*Seiendem*].’ Thus represented, what is here set forth looks at first sight like a grammatical splitting of hairs. In truth, however, it is the enigma of being. The participle *ὄν* is the word for that which, in metaphysics, appears as the transcendental and the transcendent transcendence.⁴⁹⁷

Thus when the words *ἐόν* and *ἐόντα* become *ὄν* and *ὄντα*, something is already lost: while they still operate as participles, they no longer name the twofold of being; it now speaks silently within them and conceals the difference of which it speaks. It is this which might prompt Heidegger to claim that ‘the destiny of the West depends upon the translation [*Übersetzung*] of the word *ἐόν*, given that the transposition [*Übersetzung*] within the transposition [*Übersetzung*] rests in the truth of what comes to language in *ἐόν*.’⁴⁹⁸ Hence Heidegger says about this later unfolding of history and the notion of the participle:

⁴⁹⁷ OBT, p. 259. Translation amended. See GA 5, p. 344.

⁴⁹⁸ GA 5, p. 345.

[s]poken from the later grammar and therefore from the outside, the saying of Parmenides says: take-into-care the *ἐὸν* as participle and attend to the *ἔμμεναι* in *ἐὸν*, the being of beings. The twofold of beings and being however, is *not* itself thought or questioned *as* this twofold in its essential unfolding and concerning its provenance.⁴⁹⁹

Philosophy unfolds from the twofold

According to Heidegger this twofold only comes into view insofar as it allows for this taking-into-care (*νοεῖν*), so that the question remains ‘what is the being in its being?’. The style of the entirety of Western-European philosophy is determined by this twofold ‘being – being’ (*Seiendes – seiend*), this near tautology, which seems simply to repeat the same thing twice. To this history belongs Aristotle’s *τί τὸ ὄν* (*was ist das Seiende in seinem Sein?*) which Heidegger names the fundamental question of all philosophy: or rather the guiding question (*Leitfrage*): ‘what is an entity?’, which sets philosophy on the path of thinking being exclusively from the point of view of the entity. The guiding question, what is a being?, the physical in the broadest sense, thus asks and goes beyond (Greek: *μετά*) beings themselves; and this is how the title metaphysics comes into being. As Heidegger writes:

[t]he thematic area of Western metaphysics is designated by the *μέθεξις*, the participation of beings in being, and particularly in the sense, that it becomes a question how the participating being is to be determined from being. The area of metaphysics grounds itself in that which is named through *μετοχή*, through the singular participle *ἐὸν* in one word: the twofold of beings and being.⁵⁰⁰

Thus the twofold of being grounds metaphysics, but metaphysics already begins with a departure from this twofold, via the move from the word *ἐὸν* to the word *ὄν*, in which the twofold of being is no longer heard. Thus the inquiry into the meaning of the being of beings proceeds from *the* being, and therefore allows for a thinking of the difference

⁴⁹⁹ GA 8, p. 227.

⁵⁰⁰ GA 8, p. 227.

of the twofold in terms of identity, which ultimately allows the collapsing of difference into the identical.

According to Heidegger one of the crucial and most influential moments in the history of the thinking of being occurs when Plato assigns different places for being and beings, distributing the twofold into two different sites that stand henceforth in need of a relation in order to join them:

He says, between beings and being stands the *χωρισμός*; *ἡ χώρα* means the place [*der Ort*]. Plato wants to say, beings and being are in different places [*an verschiedenen Orten*]. Beings and being are differently placed [*verschieden geortet*]. When Plato then thinks the *χωρισμός*, the different placement of beings and being, then he asks after a completely different place for being, compared to that of beings.

To be able to pose the question of the *χωρισμός*, of the *differentiation* [*Verschiedenheit*] of the placement of beings and being, the *difference* [*Unterschied*], the twofold of both must already be given in a manner, in which the twofold itself and as such is not thought explicitly.⁵⁰¹

Heidegger asserts that the possibility of asking after the different places for being and beings is opened up by the twofold of being, its difference (*Unterschied*), which must always already be given even if it has not been thought itself. Thus the twofold of being is always already presupposed, as it is what allows the thought of immanence and transcendence, the topographical difference between beings and being.

The twofold of being is thus the ground for all thinking, but has so far not yet been thought itself, largely due to the immense influence that Plato's participatory interpretation of the twofold of being has had on the history of philosophy. The question is, if Heidegger considers this twofold thinkable at all. As Heidegger has pointed out, Plato's distinction compared with that of his followers (people who studied and developed, even canonised his thought), is that Plato himself thought through the relation, and responded to the difference at the heart of being's addressing itself to

⁵⁰¹ GA 8, pp. 231 – 232. Italics mine.

thinking. But it is only through the twofold, which always speaks in language and is concealed and preserved within it, that the thinking of the being from beings is made possible. Thus Heidegger claims: ‘[f]or there to develop a Western-European metaphysics, and for there to develop a thinking as meta-physical as the destiny and history of mortals, there must before all else a calling [*Geheiss*] call into the λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ’ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι.’⁵⁰²

Through Heidegger’s highlighting of the participial nature of the word ἐὸν we can now hear this twofold, and hear it in its twofold meaning, which in turn allows us to hear and translate Parmenides’s saying as: ‘Useful: the letting-lie-before and (the) taking-into-care also: beings being [*Es brauchet das Vorliegenlassen so (das) In-die-Acht-nehmen auch: Seiendes seiend*].’⁵⁰³

The presencing of presence

Heidegger points us to the question-worthiness that is named with the word ‘beings’ [*Seienden*], and argues that we need to delve further into questioning and attend to the “‘being” of beings [*das “seiend” des Seienden*].’⁵⁰⁴ But even this revision of the translation is merely provisional and does not fully capture the originary meaning of the saying. This, as Heidegger claims, is due to the fact that we are still merely substituting the Greek words with German or Latin words, rather than allowing the Greek words themselves to speak to us. What is required, he continues, is that we ‘place our hearing into the realm of the saying of the Greek language.’⁵⁰⁵ Thus instead of proceeding from the Latin and German translations of ἐὸν ἔμμεναι (*esse, ens, Sein, Seiendes*) Heidegger

⁵⁰² GA 8, p. 228.

⁵⁰³ GA 8, p. 232.

⁵⁰⁴ GA 8, p. 229.

⁵⁰⁵ GA 8, p. 232.

now prepares to bring into view that which the Greek words say within Greek thinking.

According to Heidegger

ἔόν names that which, speaks in every word of language, not only in every word but more so in every word sequence or jointure, and therefore particularly in that which creates the jointures of language, which themselves do not come into sounding. *Eón* speaks through language [*durchspricht die Sprache*] and maintains it in the possibility of saying.⁵⁰⁶

The word *ἔόν*, then, makes all speaking possible, speaks and pervades language, and might therefore be what Heidegger called earlier ‘the secret of all thought’. Heidegger now suggests that the word *ἔόν* names the present (*das Anwesende*) and *ἔμμεναι*, *εἶναι* means presencing (*anwesen*). According to Heidegger we have now arrived at something more concrete than what the word ‘being’ without further determination names, as the word ‘presencing’ (*anwesen*) speaks clearly of that which is present (*Anwesendes*), which is something that is present to us (*Gegenwärtiges*): ‘[p]resencing [*Anwesen*] and presence [*Anwesenheit*] means: what is present [*Gegenwart*]. And this means: whiling towards [*Entgegen-weilen*].’⁵⁰⁷

According to Heidegger the prevailing (*walten*) of the *ἔόν ἔμμεναι* in the sense of the presencing of presence, makes possible all thinking and questioning as well as all technology, such as the ‘running of aeroplane motors’ and ‘electrical atomic energy’, as Heidegger argues

[i]f the being of beings would not prevail [*walten*] in the sense of the presencing of what is present [*Anwesens von Anwesenden*], then beings could not appear as that which stands-against [*Gegenständige*], as the objectivity of objects, in order to become representable as standing-against, and producible [*herstellbar*] for the kind of positing [*Stellen*] and producing [*Bestellen*] of nature, which further undertakes a stocktaking of the power that can be divested from it. This taking-up [*Vornehmen*] of nature concerning its power resources comes from the hidden essence of modern

⁵⁰⁶ GA 8, pp. 236 – 237.

⁵⁰⁷ GA 8, p. 237. Gray translates *ἔμμεναι* / *εἶναι* as ‘to be present’ WICT, p. 233. However that translation retains the ‘to be’ which Heidegger precisely tries to avoid in this new translation.

technology.⁵⁰⁸

The twofold of *εὖν* makes everything first of all possible, by allowing difference to emerge and thus allows man to make sense of presence, by letting him encounter presence within what is present. Thus a lot depends upon the proper hearing of what *εὖν* says, as it would not only allow us to hear Parmenides' saying but also might even help us enter into a relation to the essence of technology which prevails everywhere. Further Heidegger claims that the question of the possibility of mastering technology might therefore also prove to be irrelevant, because if the essence of technology stems from the being of beings, which man can always only serve but never master, then consequently he would not be able master technology either.⁵⁰⁹ Hence Heidegger claims that

the first service that man can render is to think the being of beings, that is to first of all take-it-into-care. To prepare for this is the attempt to attend questioningly to that which the word *εὖν* says. The word says: presencing of presence. Its saying *speaks* already in language, before thinking can attend to it and name it with its own name. The saying of thinking brings this unspoken itself to the word What it brings is thus not invented but found, found in the presencing of presence which has already come to language.⁵¹⁰

According to Heidegger in the beginning of Greek thought, the Greeks dwelt within the prevailing of *εὖν* as the presencing of presence. It is because of this early dwelling in the twofold that thinking can be reawakened to the present concerning its presencing. However, Heidegger cautions us against concluding that the Greeks explicitly thought and named this presencing of presence. There is also a danger here that we might want to return to the desire to grasp the presencing of presence conceptually here, and use the words 'being' and 'beings' to designate the presencing of presence.

Heidegger now suggests that we try to elicit the essential traits of the presencing

⁵⁰⁸ GA 8, p. 238.

⁵⁰⁹ GA 8, p. 238.

⁵¹⁰ GA 8, p. 239.

of presence, which he names as enduring (*Währen*), rising (*Aufgehen*) and whiling (*Weilen*). According to Heidegger then, the presencing of presence (*das Anwesen des Anwesenden*) presences (*west an*) as enduring (*Währen*), rising (*Aufgehen*) and whiling (*Weilen*). Enduring however, is according to Heidegger not ‘mere lasting [*bloßes Dauern*]’ rather ‘it is presencing [*an-wesen*] in strife with absencing [*ab-wesen*].’⁵¹¹ What presences thus arises from absence into presence. This rising is according to Heidegger ‘a rising [*Aufgehen*] from out of unconcealment [*Unverborgenheit*].’⁵¹² This rising from out of unconcealment belongs to presence, and does not take place independently from it. But this unconcealment itself remains concealed within the unconcealed presence (*unverborgenen Anwesenden*).⁵¹³ We might think back here to the examples Heidegger gave of what lies-before (*Vorliegendes*) and how we notice only that which is, but not its presencing: the mountain range as lying-before rests already in presence: this is what Heidegger calls the whiling of presence.⁵¹⁴ This whiling, as resting in presence, is according to Heidegger the gathering: ‘*Die Ruhe im Anwesen des Anwesenden ist Versammlung.*’⁵¹⁵ Slowly here the relation and belonging together of *λέγειν τε νοεῖν τε* and *εἶναι ἐμμεναι* shows itself. Yet, even while their belonging together belonged to early Greek thinking, Heidegger repeats that the Greeks did not think this belonging together itself:

[e]verywhere where the thinking of the Greeks takes-into-care the presencing of presence [*das Anwesen des Anwesenden*] the named traits of presencing [*des Anwesens*] enter into word: the unconcealment, the rising from it, the entering into it, the hereto and the away..., the whiling, the gathering, the seeming, the resting, the concealed abruptness of the possible absencing [*Abwesens*]. From these traits of the presencing [*des Anwesens*] did the Greek thinkers think the present [*das Anwesende*]. But they never thought those traits themselves. Because the presencing [*das Anwesen*]

⁵¹¹ GA 8, p. 240.

⁵¹² GA 8, p. 240.

⁵¹³ GA 8, p. 240.

⁵¹⁴ GA 8, p. 241.

⁵¹⁵ GA 8, p. 241.

never became question-worthy to them as the presencing of presence [*das Anwesen des Anwesenden*]. Why not? Because in the named traits the presencing addressed and spoke towards [*zu- und entgegensprach*], that means, answered, those questions which only they alone asked and possibly even had to ask.⁵¹⁶

Heidegger claims that as Western thought, in the form of metaphysics, progresses, these traits became less and less question-worthy. Slowly they became replaced with new traits such as the objectivity of the object and the actuality of the actual.⁵¹⁷ While they still speak of the essential trait of presencing, they allowed for a focus on what had already appeared as present, and thus no longer required a questioning of presencing itself. With the forgetting of the question concerning presencing, the twofold of being enters further into oblivion. The focus on what is present and the forgetting of presence have become so entrenched in metaphysical and everyday thinking, that to return the presencing of presence to the question-worthy, even to discover it again as question-worthy, would require lengthy preparation, and perhaps of the kind that Heidegger has just offered us.

Thinking and being are the same

According to Heidegger, Parmenides often uses only the word *voeĩn* instead of *λέγειν τε* *voeĩn τε*, and instead of *εὖν εἶναι* he says either only *εἶναι* or even only *εὖν*.⁵¹⁸ Hence Heidegger suggests that we can here tentatively translate *voeĩn* with ‘thinking’ and *εἶναι* with ‘being’, as long as we keep in mind that they stand in relation to each other. This allows Heidegger to consider another of Parmenides’ sayings: *τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ voeĩn ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι*, which we might translate here as ‘thinking and being are the same’.⁵¹⁹

As we have already established that *voeĩn* means taking-into-care and *εἶναι* says

⁵¹⁶ GA 8, p. 241.

⁵¹⁷ GA 8, p. 242.

⁵¹⁸ GA 8, p. 243.

⁵¹⁹ GA 8, p. 244.

$\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$, the presencing of presence, we are left with the question of what Parmenides means by $\tau\acute{o}$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$, the same (*das Selbe*). Heidegger is clear that Parmenides does not mean that the two terms referred to, being and thinking, $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ and $\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ are interchangeable, which means that they are not identical (*das Gleiche*), because they are precisely different (*verschieden*). Hence Heidegger suggests that $\tau\acute{o}$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$ must mean here belonging-together. Hence, Heidegger argues:

[b]oth belong together, namely so, that the first named $\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ has its essence in remaining referred into the presencing of presence. $\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$, the presencing of presence, preserves therefore $\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ within itself as belonging to it [*ihm Gehörige*]. From $\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$, from the presencing of presence, the twofold of both speaks. From it speaks the calling [*Geheiss*], which calls the essence of thinking, invites it into its essence and preserves it within.⁵²⁰

Yet, as Heidegger reminds us, Parmenides does not speak of the calling itself, rather he speaks of the presencing of presence which summons $\nu\omicron\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ into $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$. What exactly the manner of this belonging together is, however, Heidegger claims we cannot yet think. We cannot yet think ‘why and how $\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$ calls us into thinking.’⁵²¹ All we can say at this point, Heidegger writes, is that it is not presence itself or being itself, nor their synthesis, but rather ‘their twofold from out of the concealment of their onefold [that] shelters the calling’ [*ihre Zwiefalt aus dem Verbergen ihrer Einfalt birgt das Geheiss*].⁵²² Thus, ultimately, the belonging-together of thinking and the twofold of being remains to be thought, it remains within the *not yet* of thinking.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have seen Heidegger deconstruct the traditional interpretation of Parmenides' saying and open up the space for another engagement with it. This allows him to open up the possibility of another form of thinking beyond the metaphysical.

⁵²⁰ GA 8, p. 245.

⁵²¹ GA 8, p. 246.

⁵²² GA 8, p. 246.

This other thinking seeks to maintain itself within the difference of the twofold of being rather than displace it within the metaphysical thinking of identity, which allows for the formation of concepts and systems, which requires that thinking allows itself to be always and incessantly taken into the address of the calling.

What then, finally, of thinking?

At the end of Heidegger's elucidation of Parmenides' saying, we return to the question, but we have arguably made considerable progress towards the asking of the question:

[w]hat calls for thinking/ what is called thinking, we can only question if we attend to the called, the λέγειν τε νοεῖν τε ἐὸν ἔμμεναι and thereby questioning remain of the lookout for that which calls [*dem Heissenden*], after the ἐὸν ἔμμεναι, after the presencing of presence [*dem Anwesen des Anwesenden*], after the twofold of that, which the one word, the participle of all participles, the word ἐὸν names: the present presencing [*Anwesendes anwesend*].⁵²³

Thus at the end we are returned to the question and Heidegger ends the lecture course with a brief recapitulation of the insights given to us by the various inquiries we have made into the question. Our first asking of the question brought us to the original meanings of the German word '*Denken*': the older German form of this word, *Gedanc*, means memory (*Gedächtnis*), remembrance (*Andenken*), thanks (*Dank*). We further learned that

the essence of thinking determines itself from that which gives to think, which is the presencing of presence [*Anwesen des Anwesenden*], from the being of beings [*Sein des Seienden*]. Thinking is thinking only when it thinks of and towards ἐὸν, that which this word properly and therefore names in an unspoken manner. This is the twofold of beings and being [*Seiendem und Sein*]. It is that which properly [*eigentlich*] gives to think. That which gives itself in this manner is the gift of the most question-worthy.

Is thinking able to receive this gift, and this means to take-it-into-care, to entrust it to λέγειν, to a saying of the originary speaking of

⁵²³ GA 8, p. 244.

language?⁵²⁴

These are the last lines of the lecture course. They speak of that which first of all gives to think and that which gives thinking its propriety: the twofold of beings and being. They end with a question. They put into question whether thinking is able to receive this gift and entrust it to the originary speaking of language. Thus Heidegger begins and ends the lecture course with the putting into question of thinking, with the becoming question-worthy of thinking. Hence he does not allow us to depart from the question. Does not allow us to rest with that which has so far come to view, this means that whatever we have gained from the lectures should not be put into the form of a summary or sentence, some message that we can take away from the course, including these very last lines themselves. Thinking then unfolds as this becoming question-worthy and does not attempt to go beyond itself to a propositional answer that captures being in the form of a concept, but rather seeks to maintain and shelter it in its showing-saying.

⁵²⁴ GA 8, p. 247.

Conclusion

Early on we said that Heidegger presents the learning of thinking as one of the aims of the lecture course, and that this aim was to be taken seriously. Can we now, upon completion say that we have learned thinking? We would have to say that we are finally listening. That we have heard the calling and have let ourselves be taken into the address of being. For that we would have to know what belongs to the accomplishment of thinking proper. Perhaps such an assertion would have to rely on a conception of thinking which would have to be rigid enough to be held up for comparison and evaluation. But this, then, would no longer be thinking proper, but would already tip over into a technical interpretation of thinking. In the lecture course itself, the third form of the question ‘what is called thinking?’, ‘what belongs to the proper accomplishment of thinking each time’, is the only question that has not received its own dedicated inquiry, yet as should have become clear in the course of the thesis the entirety of *Was Heisst Denken?* is devoted to this single question which is also always the same as the fourth and crucial question: what calls us into thinking? – to be properly accomplished, thinking must always be a correspondence to the calling. The ‘each time’ already shows us that the response to this question cannot be formulated in such a way as to achieve a standardized methodology for thinking. Rather it is crucial that each time man must seek to be addressed by the calling and respond to it each time singularly.

This thesis has aimed to show how Heidegger’s lecture course aims to introduce difference within the uniformity of metaphysical and technological thought, by allowing the unfolding of language to guide our engagement with the philosophical tradition and open up new paths of thought within it. The lecture course has taken a path towards that which calls us into thinking through the history of metaphysical thought, from

Nietzsche, who speaks at the end of metaphysics, and Parmenides who speaks at its very beginning. The path towards that which calls us into thinking, thus leads us through the history of thought so that the unthought within it might point us towards that which always addresses this thought, even if this thought does not explicitly think it.

As in all thinking, including its unthought, language speaks and through its speaking allows for the re-emerging of difference in thought, this thesis has sought to pay special attention to Heidegger's language in *Was Heisst Denken?*, by highlighting its movement both in terms of content and in the choices regarding how to translate certain passages of Heidegger's text. Heidegger's refusal to allow his thinking to lend itself to conceptual definitions and summaries has thereby been honoured as much as possible and his attempt to open up another, non-metaphysical thinking within language transported as much as can be hoped, into English.

As in the introduction, I have commented upon what the thesis is trying to achieve, and that its aim bears some exclusions, such as a comparative analysis of some of Heidegger's notions, such as *Ereignis*, throughout his work. Yet I believe that the contribution to this thesis, lies also in the value of attempting to think with Heidegger these notions from within language, rather than allowing them to re-enter a conceptual form, that would compare definitions from different texts. At the same time, this opens up the opportunity, which however, would have to be reserved for a separate inquiry, into how the insights gained into these accounts, such as of *Ereignis* and thinking, in regards to the difference in methodology employed by Heidegger to develop them. Further, this thesis has tried to show, that for Heidegger the emphasis lies less on these terms themselves, but rather on the movement of language itself, which for example

received further in depth treatment by Heidegger in the collection of essays in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. While the archaeology of words, has played an important part in *Was Heisst Denken?* they merely aim to illustrate how language, or words themselves, can guide thinking, outside of the formation and delineation of concepts.

The insights on the relation of language and thinking, central to the argument of the lecture course and this thesis, also reveal the important difference between a metaphysical thinking and the other thinking. Both, as the thesis has argued, proceed from the *Ereignis*, the inception of thought, as both respond to the call of being, as Heidegger explicitly states that all thinkers think within the relation of being and man. However, it is a difference in attitude or comportment, that determines whether thinking is metaphysical or otherwise. The danger of always falling back into the dominant and usual interpretation of thinking and its use-relation of language, remains precisely because their inception is the same, and they partake both in the language that unfolds from the *Ereignis*. This is why, for Heidegger, exposing the limits of metaphysics, and thus metaphysics itself, is crucial, as understanding and recognizing metaphysics as metaphysics, allows us to hear the difference, that paves the way for the possibility of another thinking.

Especially as this thinking has been described at times as non-metaphysical or otherwise than metaphysics, that, has been thought in difference to metaphysics I would like to briefly address here the relation of thinking to metaphysics, as it appears in *Was Heisst Denken?*. While in the 1930s Heidegger at times spoke of an overcoming (*Überwindung*) of metaphysics, and later modified that to a *Verwindung*, a twisting free, in *Was Heisst Denken?* metaphysics can no longer be overcome, if one were to understand this overcoming in terms of chronological sequence. In *Was Heisst Denken?*

the other thinking already always is concealed and contained within metaphysics, as we can find in its language, its unthought. The reason, Heidegger begins his account of thinking, through a questioning of thinking, is precisely because our access to it, can take place through a thoughtful engagement with the history of philosophy. In my interpretation, thinking takes place alongside, within and through metaphysics, it remains that which makes all metaphysical thinking possible and yet remains impossible to think by metaphysics, and as becomes clear in the course of the lectures, the word thinking comes to mean something entirely different than its ordinary language use, or its academic philosophical one. As such it carves out a space for itself, that is neither chronologically before or after metaphysics, and hence the not yet always remains as future task: always yet to come. This opens the question if it can offer a real alternative to current dominant discourses, and if we can just use some of the tools, aspects or this other thinking or if it remains as a remainder and possibility outside of metaphysics.

Heidegger himself, apart from his judgement of the state of thinking in his own time and its future, offers very little in terms of what thinking can or could do, staying true to his claim that thinking should serve no other purposes outside of remembrance and thanking. Yet, there is in the lecture course an instance in which thinking as remembrance engages directly with the recent past. During the summer semester, Heidegger announces the opening of an exhibition with the following words

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today the exhibition "prisoners of war speak" has been opened here in Freiburg. I am asking you to go, in order to hear this silent voice and never lose it from your inner ear. Thinking is remembrance. But remembrance is other to the fleeting making present of what has passed. Remembrance thinks what concerns us. We are not yet in the proper space, to think about freedom or even talk about

*it, for as long as we are also closing our eyes in the face of the annihilation of freedom.*⁵²⁵

In line with the suggestion of this thesis, that one should along with Heidegger, attempt to refrain from turning the language of thinking into concepts, I would also like here to be cautious in speculating, to what extent Heidegger's thought could offer a fruitful and ethical engagement with historical events. This inquiry must be reserved for another project. Nevertheless, I believe that within Heidegger's work on thinking and language, we can find some resources for a continuation of philosophical work, that engages critically with the tradition and offers some new pathways for thinking.

⁵²⁵ GA 8, p. 161.

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