

THE HEALING WORD

LANGUAGE, THINKING, AND BEING IN THE EARLIER AND LATER PHILOSOPHY OF MARTIN HEIDEGGER

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Thinking conducts historical existence, that is, the *humanitas* of *homo humanus*, into the realm of the upsurge of the healing.

Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*¹

"To explain a philosophy," Adriaan Peperzak says, "means not only unfolding it at the level of interconnected concepts but also showing how it emerges as one element from an individual history."² In our interpretation of the nature and importance of Martin Heidegger's development from his early to his later work, we will take both the historical and systematic levels into account. But in the delineation of "earlier" and "later" "periods" of Heidegger's philosophy it is necessary to be cautious. As Robert Bernasconi points out, there is a danger in referring to periods in Heidegger's development as, for example, William Richardson does in his distinction between a "Heidegger I" and a "Heidegger II" since, with a thinker as fecund as Martin Heidegger, such periods could be multiplied beyond usefulness.³ Besides, as John Sallis argues, it is not merely a matter of tracing a change in Heidegger from *Being and Time* to the later work, but of showing how the seeds of the later work "inconspicuously, perhaps even concealedly" are present in *Being and Time*.⁴ This should not, however, be construed to mean that the later work is some-

how more important than the earlier since, as Bernasconi says, "Heidegger II precedes Heidegger I only as a trace. . . ."⁵ The intention of this present essay is to track this trace of Heidegger's later work that is concealed inconspicuously in *Being and Time* through a reading which avoids Richardson's sharp categories. We will show that there is both a continuity and an important difference between *Being and Time* and the later work: the continuity shows that temporally Heidegger II follows Heidegger I; the difference shows that ontologically Heidegger II precedes Heidegger I.

The central aspects of Heidegger's work that will be focused on here to trace the contours of its continuity and difference will be the notions of language, thinking, and Being. In *Being and Time* language is understood methodologically within the framework of representation, and thinking is understood to be a hermeneutic matter of clarifying the forgotten meaning of Being through the existential analysis of Dasein. In *Being and Time* Heidegger still seems to think that philosophy, even at the end of metaphysics, can get somewhere. In his later work, however, language becomes the place where Being comes to show itself and live for a spell, a dwelling place opened up by a quasi-mystical, meditative thinking understood as *Gelassenheit*. Now in *Being and*

Time, if it was not thought that Being could be comprehended by thought and expressed in language, it was at least anticipated that the question of the meaning of Being could be formulated explicitly and transparently. By Heidegger's own admission *Being and Time* fails at this task. But this "failure" is a *felix culpa* that gives rise to an element of Heidegger's later work that is not present in *Being and Time*. This is the "moment" of renunciation and appropriation or what will be characterized in this present essay as a process of self-transformation or healing which is of central importance not only to Heidegger himself, but to his new understanding of language and thinking and their relation to the *questioning* of Being. We will begin with a consideration of these issues in Heidegger's later works that focus on the nature and meaning of language and thinking, and then attempt to show, from the perspective of renunciation and appropriation, how *Being and Time* was itself a movement along Heidegger's path toward the process of self-transformation that *is* described explicitly and transparently in the later works.

I. Speaking and Speaking About

In his article entitled "Language" Heidegger says that "to write about language is presumably even worse than to write about silence," for how could silence "speak" better than by simply remaining silent?⁶ Yet, in another place ("Words"), he makes it clear that attunement to the silence which surrounds and permeates language must not be interpreted as necessitating a lapse into quietude but must lead rather to a new kind of speaking, a "singing" which incorporates an openness to that silent absence which makes possible the coming to presence of "saying."⁷ Authentic speaking must preserve within itself the "mystery of language," not by presuming to take a position "above" and "outside" of language—and thus appearing

to master and use language as if it were a tool—but by entering into "the speaking of language" (US 12 / PLT 190). To speak merely about language, from a Heideggerian perspective, is not to speak about language at all. The nature of language as "saying" cannot be directly grasped in propositional form; it cannot be inscribed within the reductionistic, objectifying logic of identity and non-contradiction. In fact, as Heidegger asserts at the conclusion of his lecture "Time and Being," it is exactly the propositional form which "remains an obstacle" and must be "overcome" if saying is to be rendered adequately:

Our task is unceasingly to overcome the obstacles that tend to render such saying inadequate. The saying of Appropriation in the form of a lecture remains itself an obstacle of this kind. The lecture has spoken merely in propositional statements.⁸

But if an understanding of language as saying is not to be grasped in propositional statements, how is it to be approached? Heidegger suggests an alternative way: the way of the experience with language, the way of appropriation, renunciation, and healing.

It is not in representational thinking that language as "*the peal of stillness*" (US 30 / PLT 207) can be grasped. But exactly in this "failure" of calculative thought, one learns that a giving-over of one's whole self to the process of thinking is necessary, a giving-over which results, not in an appropriation of language as such, but in an appropriation of *ourselves*: "To discuss language," Heidegger says, "to place it, means to bring to its place of being not so much language as ourselves, our own gathering into the appropriation" (US 12 / PLT 190). We cannot learn what language is, no matter how radical our thinking, if we continue to think it is possible to

stand outside the process of language and grasp it with clear and distinct, safe and secure, objectivity. Because “mortals live in the speaking of language” (US 32 / PLT 210), to question language is at the same time to place in question the being of the questioner. Thus, as will be described in greater detail below, the question concerning language is inseparable from Heidegger’s orientation to the basic question of philosophy as this was established within the framework of his existential analytic of Dasein. The analysis of the question of Being in *Being and Time* showed that there can be no final answer to the question of Being. But this “indefinability,” as Heidegger comments, “does not eliminate the question of its meanings; it demands that we look that question in the face.”⁹ What is needed is not a purely objective grasp of the meaning of saying, but an openness to the experience *with* language disclosed as the “peal,” the appeal or call of the unspeakable at the heart of what is spoken. How are we to understand this call to experience *with* language?

Heidegger addresses this question at the outset of his three lectures gathered under the title “The Nature of Language” when he says that they

are intended to bring us face to face with a possibility of undergoing an experience with language. To undergo an experience with something . . . means that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us. When we talk of “undergoing” an experience, we mean specifically that the experience is not of our own making; to undergo here means that we endure it, suffer it, receive it as it strikes us and submit to it.

This means that we must “be properly concerned by the claim of language by entering

into and submitting to it.” Only through such submissive endurance can the healing power of the word operate:

If it is true that man finds the proper abode of his existence in language—whether he is aware of it or not—then an experience we undergo with language will touch the innermost nexus of our existence. We who speak language may thereupon become transformed by such experiences, from one day to the next or in the course of time. (US 159 / OWL 57)

What Heidegger is affirming here is that we do not possess language like a tool that can be picked up and used at will. Rather, we are beings of language, i.e., linguistic creatures disclosed “in and by” language.¹⁰

Aristotle defined man as an “*animal rationale*.” But, Heidegger argues, such an understanding of man is “still premature” because it does not take into account *that by which* such a definition is given; it does not think the Being of human beings fundamentally enough (BU 326 / LH 206). It is not Aristotelian rationality but *language* that distinguishes humans from other creatures. Dasein is the being for whom its being is an issue (SZ 16 / BT 32). Dasein comes into being precisely “within” the grammar generated by the verb “to be.” This capability necessarily presupposes some intimation of that by which the “is” is given (SZ 281 / BT 255; cf BU 334 ff / LH 214 ff.; SD 5-6 / TB 5-6), what Heidegger names “the mystery of language.” Thus, for Heidegger, language is not merely a system of signs subject to the control of human will. It is rather the most originary form of human dwelling, what makes the human specifically human: to be human is to speak, and to speak is to be in the world as always already having a world.

This “position” in regard to language can-

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not be grasped and represented in language without being essentially distorted. At best, it can be hinted at, glimpsed, indicated. But it is no simple task to make the transition from the view that language is a tool for representation, to the view that language is the most primordial form of human being-in-the-world. This transition ought not to be thought of as a getting from one place to another or as an achievement which at some time in the future could be over and done with, for, as Heidegger says — with perhaps a trace of exasperation — in his article “Language”: “we do not want to get anywhere. We would like only, for once, to get to just where we are already” (US 12 / PLT 190). In fact, the transition is exactly from the kind of thinking that thinks one has arrived or could ever arrive at the origin of language, to the realization that one must always be “on the way.”

This understanding of the transformation undergone with language is the focus of Heidegger’s analysis of Stephan George’s poem “The Word,” particularly the last two lines of the poem which read:

So I renounced and sadly see
Where word breaks off no thing may
be. (US 220 / OWL 140)

Heidegger suggests that the renunciation which the poet here experiences can be understood in a twofold manner. The first aspect of renunciation is the *recognition* that things can only appear insofar as words let them be: “It is only the word at our disposal which endows the thing with Being” (US 221 / OWL 141). The second aspect of renunciation—which can only come into play after the first aspect of the relation between words and things has been realized—is to *submit oneself* to the disturbing actuality of this renunciation: “The poet must renounce having words under his control as the portraying

names for what is (US 228 / OWL 147).¹¹ But this twofold process of renunciation is not merely a loss or a giving up. It has both a negative and a positive dimension: negatively, it is a loss of that false security where one believes that one can dominate and control language and be, so to speak, “the master of his or her fate” in the sense of Enlightenment humanism; but, positively, the poet discovers his or her true self in this renunciation in that he or she is initiated into “the higher rule of the word”—“the realm of the upsurge of the healing” [*den Bereich des Aufgangs des Heilen*].

This analysis is in keeping with the thesis presented by John D. Caputo in *The Mystical Element In Heidegger’s Thought*. The twofold dimension of poetic renunciation in Heidegger’s philosophy was no doubt a result of the influence of the Dominican mystic, Meister Eckhart, particularly concerning the latter’s notion of *Gelassenheit* understood as “releasement” or “letting-be.” Similar to what Heidegger does in his analysis of George’s notion of renunciation, in *Gelassenheit*, Caputo says, “Heidegger, like Eckhart, distinguishes a negative and a positive mode of releasement.” Caputo summarizes these two modes as follows:

The first moment of *Gelassenheit* faces beings, cutting itself off from them. It is a negative “being loosened from” which is described in active, ascetic tones. Thus it corresponds with the will not to will. The second moment of *Gelassenheit* is turned toward Being itself. It is a positive being free for, being open to, Being. . . .¹²

What is common to both Eckhart’s notion of *Gelassenheit* and George’s notion of renunciation is the requirement that, in the experience with language, one undergo a *fundamental re-orientation* of one’s being.

No mental gymnastics, no matter how erudite or subtle, can substitute for this lived process of self-appropriation. In the second section of this essay we will consider the relationship between *Being and Time* and Heidegger's later work in terms of this two-fold process of renunciation and appropriation. But for now let us look more closely at the existential dynamics of this process.

Prior to renunciation, one lives naively and unquestioningly in the felt-security of a "knowledge" of who one is—the level of Heidegger's *das Man*, Hegel's "sense certainty," and Husserl's "natural standpoint." In the *experience* of renunciation, therefore, one must undergo the painful loss of this felt-security in an experience of the dispossession of what is *believed* to be one's true self, since, initially, what is, in truth, a mere semblance, is believed to be real.¹³ But because the self which is denied in renunciation is really a simulacrum, renunciation thus, as Heidegger concludes, "is in truth nondenial of self" (US 233 / OWL 151). In this context, one can understand why those so-called men of wisdom who were cross-examined by Socrates and found to be, in fact, unwise and thus more ignorant than Socrates—who was most wise because he was aware of his ignorance—became angry with him. Unquestioning ignorance fears wisdom because that ignorance lacks the courage to undergo the *breakdown* of its felt-security which is propaedeutic to any therapeutic *break-through*—a fear which is somewhat justified by the fact that "the realm of the upsurge of healing" is no bed of roses. Just as there are positive and negative aspects of renunciation and *Gelassenheit*, so *das Heile*, as Heidegger points out, is intimately connected with *der Grimmige* ("the raging"), so that "with healing, evil appears all the more in the lighting of Being," not "in the mere baseness of human action but rather in the malice of rage" [*im Bosartigen des Grim-*

mes] (BU 359 / LH 237). Thus the call to healing self-transformation, the call to renunciation of the counterfeit security of a "self" established in the grasp of representational thinking, the call from a self which must be given up in favor of a venturesome openness to "the haleness [*dem Heilen*] of the whole pure draft" whose "precinct, as the very nature of language, is Being itself,"¹⁴ the call which involves the shattering experience of entering into the withdrawal of Being as the abyss (*Abgrund*) of language into which "we fall upward, to a height" (US 13 / PLT 191)—this call, to use the words of Nietzsche's subtitle to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is truly "For Everyone and No One." Indeed, Heidegger's explication of this pregnant phrase in regard to the reading of Nietzsche's work could aptly be directed to the reading of his own:

For everyone means for each man as man, insofar as his essential nature becomes at any given time an object worthy of his thought. *And No one* means for none of the idle curious who come drifting in from everywhere, who merely intoxicate themselves with isolated fragments and particular aphorisms from this work who won't proceed along the path of thought that here seeks its expression. . . .¹⁵

A therapeutic self-transformation, an actual living-through of the healing process brought about by openness to the mystery of the word, is the heart of what Heidegger understands as the "task" of thinking, for without this, thinking, as authentic dwelling, is impossible. If this is true, then it ought to follow that Heidegger himself underwent such an experience with language. In fact, his well-known *Kehre*—all too often depicted antiseptically *solely* in terms of the academic question of Being—must be understood, if it

is to be understood in keeping with Heidegger's own understanding of understanding, in the context of the therapeutic gesture of language. Let us look, then, at the relation between language and the question of Being in the context of *Being and Time* in order to see how Heidegger himself moved toward a healing self-transformation in the experience undergone *with* language as we have seen this described in his later work.

II. The Ontic, the Ontological, and the Dif-ference

Heidegger's attempt to formulate the question of Being "explicitly and transparently" in *Being and Time* (SZ 10 / BT 27), led to an experience of the inadequacy of metaphysical language to bring the unspeakable origin of this question fully into the presentation of a said. Thus, *Being and Time* can be understood as a movement toward the first, negative step of renunciation and healing described above, while Heidegger's later work can be viewed as the active submission to the understanding of language to which *Being and Time* led, in the positive sense of the second aspect of renunciation.

Strictly within the context of the thinking of *Being and Time*, however, one might legitimately ask whether the attempt to link philosophy and healing would not be to reduce philosophy to an ontic art, to a species of existential pragmatism which would compromise the purely *fundamental* nature of the questioning to which that text is oriented. Considered ontologically, would not such an association render philosophy subject to the regionality of an applied science and the intrinsic limitations of such subjectivistic enterprises, whereas philosophy's proper object, as *Being and Time* itself makes abundantly clear, ought to be the interrogation of the conditions for the possibility of science in general (SZ 14 / BT 30–31)? Would not this be a wholesale collapse of the

ontic and the ontological? It is certainly true that the Heidegger of *Being and Time* did not yet have the full perspective of language which would later incorporate the necessity of renunciation and self-transformation. On the contrary, he was acutely aware of maintaining the distinction between the ontic and the ontological, and of conducting his analytic of Dasein strictly in the dimension of the latter, precisely to avoid ontic contamination. Without such a radical separation Heidegger believed that the question of Being could not be made to appear "explicitly and transparently."

For Heidegger, from the beginning to the end, the basic question of phenomenology is the ontological question, the question concerning the meaning of the Being of beings and the conditions for the possibility of asking this question.¹⁶ Although it is true that this question does have an "ontic foundation," nevertheless this must be kept rigorously distinguished from the fundamental ontological character of the question toward which this foundation points. The existential analytic of Dasein's ontical everydayness in *Being and Time*, Heidegger says, is merely employed methodologically "to prepare the way for the problematic of fundamental ontology—the question of the meaning of Being in general" (SZ 243 / BT 227). Therefore, in *Being and Time* it was crucial, for instance, that *Zuhandenheit* not be reduced to *Vorhandenheit*¹⁷ and that the *existentiell* not be confused with the *existential*. *Existentiell* understanding, Heidegger tells us, is concerned with "the question of existence" which "never gets straightened out except through existing itself" (SZ 17 / BT 33). The question of the *ontological structure* of existence, however, is specifically not to be concerned with getting straightened out through the experience of existing, but rather with bringing to light the fundamental structures—the *existentials*—upon which this everyday existence is

“based”. Thus Heidegger repeatedly warns the reader of *Being and Time* to keep this distinction in mind. In the context of his analysis of “falling,” for example, Heidegger reminds us that his “interpretation is purely ontological in its aims, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein” (SZ 222 / BT 211). And again in his analysis of death he makes it clear that “it is not as if norms and rules for comporting oneself towards death were to be proposed for ‘edification’” (SZ 329 / ST 292). The analysis of death is undertaken in order to reveal Dasein’s character as “possibility” and “projection,” as existing “ahead-of-itself” in the “not-yet”—not that such a disclosure should be an end in itself, but so that through such an analysis the ontological structure of this “toward,” i.e., the manner in which it brings to light the character of Being in general, might be set forth.

But the fact that Heidegger must repeatedly warn against ontic contamination of the ontological analytic—reminiscent of Husserl’s repeated performance of the *epokhe*, and perhaps for a similar reason¹⁸—again suggests a kind of Heraclitean tension between the *existentiell* and the *existential*, a fundamental interpenetration that will not allow them to be separated clearly and distinctly, once and for all. Perhaps—given the linguistic perspective of Heidegger’s later work—the analysis of Dasein’s everydayness, for the purpose of raising anew the question of the meaning of Being as such, will inadvertently bring about an alteration of one’s *existentiell* commitment, even if—and perhaps *only* if—this is not the primary focus of one’s concern. Despite Heidegger’s insistence to the contrary in *Being and Time*, it is clear from his later work that ontological investigation cannot be carried out at arm’s length, as if the ontological focus of the investigator would act as a shield between the investigator and the subject matter being

investigated, guaranteeing a “pure” questioning without *existentiell* consequences for the investigator. This is what became clear to Heidegger in the course of *Being and Time* in regard to the nature of language, and is perhaps what led him to assert in that text at the conclusion of his analysis of language that, although “we possess a science of language . . . the Being of the entities which it has for its theme is obscure,” and “even the horizon for any investigative question about it is veiled” (SZ 221 / BT 209). Therein, however, lies an indication of the itinerary of Heidegger’s later work.

Whereas in *Being and Time* Heidegger carried out his investigation of language within the general context reflected in the statement “Dasein has language” (SZ 219 / BT 208), twenty-three years later this formulation would be superceded by the view presented above that “man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact *language* remains the master of man.”¹⁹ This is not to say that the analysis of language in *Being and Time* was completely overturned but, rather, that it is exactly this analysis which led Heidegger to an *experience* of the “origin” of the question of Being that could no longer be formulated in the ontological language of that text. Thus, if there is a change between Heidegger’s earlier and later work, there is also an important continuity. *Being and Time* intends to raise anew the forgotten origin, the “oblivion” of the question of Being. If the language of *Being and Time* fails to grasp this oblivion itself and to make it appear “transparently and explicitly,” there is yet embedded precisely in this “failure” a *felix culpa* which is the true “success” of the attempt. The oblivion of the understanding of Being is precisely what makes thinking possible, so that it is not the *result* of this oblivion which must be thought, but the oblivion itself. What was a *question* in *Being and Time* becomes a proc-

ess of *questioning* in the later work.

What Heidegger realized as a result of the existential analytic of *Being and Time* is that the origin of the meaning of Being could not be represented in the metaphysical language that operates in the space opened by the ontological distinction between Being and beings, but could only be approached by thinking that difference as such—a point which is explicitly made in various places of the later work, including the essay “Language” where “dif-ference” (*Austrag*), thought in terms of Trakl’s word “threshold,” is described as “the rift” which bids us to come to the transformation with language “out of the dif-ference into the dif-ference... by responding” (US 26–31 / PLT 204–09).²⁰ Here is the heart of Heidegger’s turning from *Being and Time* to *Time and Being*, a turning grounded precisely in a new understanding of language. “Here,” Heidegger says, “everything is reversed”:

the section in question [*Time and Being*] was held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning [Kehre] and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics. . . . This turning is not a change of standpoint from *Being and Time*, but in it the thinking that was sought first arrives at the location of that dimension out of which *Being and Time* is experienced, that is to say, experienced from the fundamental experience of the oblivion of Being. (W 328 / BW 208)

Yet while it is important to keep in mind the continuity between the ontological orientation of *Being and Time* and the task of thinking the dif-ference as such by which that orientation is given (the task of thinking undertaken in Heidegger’s later work), it is also important to realize the significance of the change that has taken place. For it is exactly

this change that will require the philosopher to submit to the matter to be thought rather than to manipulate it at arm’s length, unaffected by the outcome one way or another, and thus to be initiated into the process of the healing.

Although it is true that in the “Letter on Humanism” Heidegger dismisses the assessment that *Being and Time* ended in a “blind alley,” and says that his thinking “has even today not advanced beyond that publication,” it is also true that he does allow that “perhaps in the meantime it has in one respect come farther into its own matter” (BH 343 / LH 222). This “one respect” is the difference between a kind of philosophizing which deals with a subject matter at arm’s length without risking itself in the process, and one which does. But the fact that the orientation of Heidegger’s thinking does change—even if the “object” of that thought does not—indicates that there must have been a risk already involved in the writing of *Being and Time*, a risk to which Heidegger had already opened himself in desiring to raise anew the question of the meaning of Being in general, although he naturally could not have been in a position to thematize this venturing-forth until *after* the writing of *Being and Time*. What is revealed here is that it is precisely the nature of this risk that one would not know whether one had taken it or not; for to *know* one had taken the risk would be already to have to have circumscribed the real riskiness of the risk with the security, or, in this case, the false security, of a sophistic “knowledge.” This is the true radicality of *Gelassenheit*, where, as Caputo puts it, “every trace of willing has been extinguished,” and which is thus in its fullness “not even a will to not-will.”²¹

The risk of philosophy as a life of genuine response to the dif-ference can only take place, so to speak, behind the back of the philosopher as an apparent “failure” of the

philosopher to accomplish on his or her own exactly that which is given only in and by that “failure” in the experience of a saying that is irreducible to every said. The risk, and the possibility of change which this risk allows, cannot take place at the *purely* ontological level; or, perhaps better, it is a change at the ontological level which necessarily involves a thorough transformation at the ontic level as well, in much the same way that Socrates understands the contemplation of Justice as it is “writ large” in the ideal literary polis described in the *Republic* to be intimately connected to self-transformation as the achievement of Justice in the “polity” of the individual soul (IV, 434e). In the region or non-region of the difference one must look away in order to see toward. The “one respect” in which Heidegger’s thinking underwent a change “in and by” *Being and Time*, represents the difference between a type of philosophy where the contingency of *existentiell* commitments is kept separate from the fundamental *existential* structures underlying these, and a philosophy where all is risked by the one who philosophizes. Heidegger makes this distinction as follows:

as long as philosophy merely busies itself with continually obstructing the possibility of admittance into the matter for thinking, i.e., into the truth of Being, it stands safely beyond any danger of shattering against the hardness of that matter. Thus to “philosophize” about being shattered is separated by a chasm from a thinking that is shattered. (W 343 / BW 223)

There is a continuity between *Being and Time* and Heidegger’s later work insofar as the meaning of Being remains the guiding question. But, in the poetic gesture of the later writing, this question has given rise to a more fundamental kind of thinking and ques-

tioning. It is no longer a matter of trying to *grasp* the question of Being “explicitly and transparently”—a “goal” still close to Husserl’s yearning after *die Reinheit*—but of allowing oneself to be *gripped* by the experience of the difference which keeps explicitness and transparency always just out of reach—yet infinitely indicated—“beyond” the horizon of human thought in the pre-ontological appeal of language. It is no longer a thinking which operates within the framework of the ontological distinction, but a thinking which has been released into the difference by which that distinction is given.

In a passage from the “Letter on Humanism” where Heidegger is commenting on the nature of the thinking he proposes, he says that “the thinking that inquires into the truth of Being and so defines man’s essential abode from Being toward Being is neither ethics nor ontology . . . neither theoretical nor practical” but “comes to pass before this distinction.” It is thinking in the fullest, living sense.²² And the manner in which it comes to pass is as “saying” (*Sage*). This saying is dwelling, Heidegger says, in the manner of “being-in” as this is worked out in *Being and Time* where “being-in” as “being-with” partially constitutes the structure of care. Thinking is the “recollection of Being and nothing else,” yet this recollection is also a building, for “thinking builds upon the house of Being, the house in which the jointure of Being fatefully enjoins the essence of man to dwell in the truth of Being” (W 358 / BW 236). This “house of Being” and “home of human beings” is language (W 361 / BW 239). Thus, thinking, understood as the recollection of Being, in its most primordial or pre-ontological form, has the primary function, not of representing an object, but, as saying, of bringing about a healing transformation of the human. Heidegger characterizes this fundamental movement of thinking—to repeat the epigraph of this essay—as a journey

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where "Thinking conducts historical existence, that is, the *humanitas* of *homo humanus*, into the realm of the upsurge of the healing." Dasein, freed into its inherent possibilities by that meditative, poetic thinking which is basically a thanking, enters upon the path of creative self-transformation. Thinking may not be sufficient to this task on its own, but it is necessary if the sufficient condition is to be given, because

releasement toward things and open-

ness to the mystery never happen of themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking. . . . If releasement toward things and openness to the mystery awoken within us, then we should arrive at a path that will lead to a new ground and foundation. In that ground the creativity which produces lasting works could strike new roots.²³

ENDNOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" in *Wegmarken*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 9 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), p. 359 (hereafter BU); "Letter on Humanism," in Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 207 (hereafter LH). References to English translations follow the slash in all in-text citations.
2. Adriaan Peperzak, *System and History in Philosophy*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), p. 55.
3. Robert Bemasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1985), pp. 93-94.
4. John Sallis, "Into the Clearing," *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. T. Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), p. 107.
5. Bemasconi, *The Question of Language*.
6. Martin Heidegger, "Die Sprache" in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), p. 12 (hereafter US); "Language" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), p. 190 (hereafter PLT).
7. Martin Heidegger, "Das Wort," in US, p. 228; "Words" in *On The Way To Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper, 1971) p. 147 (hereafter OWL).
8. Martin Heidegger, "Zeit und Sein," in *Zur Sache Des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 25 (hereafter 'SD'); *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper, 1969), p. 24 (hereafter TB).
9. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 2 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), p. 6 (hereafter SZ). *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 23 (hereafter BT).
10. The important influence of Jacob Grimm on Heidegger's thinking regarding the connection between language and dwelling, especially in regard to Grimm's etymological interpretations of the German prepositions "in" and "bei," studies which Heidegger cites in *Being and Time* (Sect. 12, fn. 1), has been insightfully articulated by Walter J. Stohrer, S.J. in his article "Heidegger and Jacob Grimm: On Dwelling and the Genesis of Language," *Modern Schoolman* 62 (1984): 43-51.
11. Cf. Bemasconi, *The Question of Language*, pp. 58-59.
12. John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element In Heidegger's Thought* (Athens, Ohio: University of Ohio Press, 1978), p. 178.
13. In the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel describes the process of this self-transformation as "the way of despair" (*Weg der Verzweiflung*) which I have elaborated as a fundamental orientation common to the phenomenological philosophy of Hegel, Heidegger, and Gadamer. See my essay, "When Love of Knowing Becomes Actual Knowing: Heidegger and Gadamer on Hegel's Die Sache Selbst," *The Owl of Minerva* 17 (Spring 1986): 153-64.
14. Martin Heidegger, "Wozu Dichter?" in *Holzwege*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 5 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), p. 316; "What Are Poets For?" in PLT, p. 138.
15. Martin Heidegger, "Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" trans. Bernd Magnus, in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David B. Allison (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 64.
16. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme Der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 23 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 16.

17. This is basically what, in Sections 19, 20, and 21, Heidegger accuses Descartes of having done, and also Kant in Section 43.
18. Cf. Richard Cobb-Stevens, "Transcendental and Empirical Dimensions in Husserl's Phenomenology," in *Continental Philosophy in America*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), p. 31.
19. Martin Heidegger, "Bauen Wohnen Denken," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), p. 146; "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *PLT*, p. 146.
20. For a thorough discussion of Heidegger's notion of "difference," see John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), pp. 147–84.
21. Caputo, *Mystical Element*, p. 177.
22. John D. Caputo, "Heidegger's Original Ethics," *The New Scholasticism* 45 (1971): 133.
23. Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), p. 28; *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper, 1966), pp. 56–57.

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