

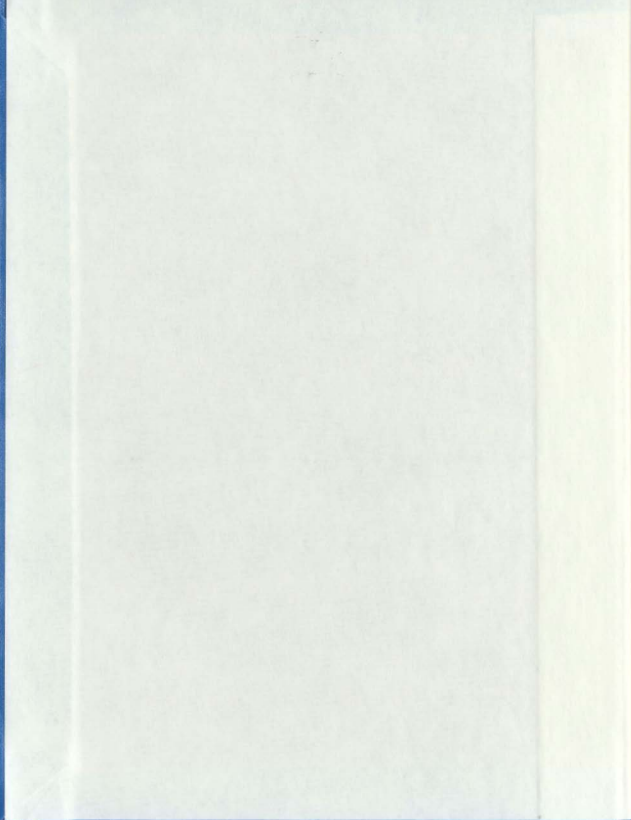
HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF "THINKING" AND
ITS RELATION TO CONCEPTS OF "THANKING"
AND "THE GIFT"

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF "THINKING"
AND ITS RELATION TO CONCEPTS OF
"THANKING" AND "THE GIFT"

by

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ABSTRACT

In his text What Is Called Thinking? Heidegger refers to thinking as “thanking” and states that thinking is a “gift” to humankind from Being. Despite Heidegger’s insistence that Being is not a being, the language he uses to describe Being appears to characterize Being as a being. Heidegger’s insistence that Being is not a being is related to his attempt to step outside of metaphysics, since metaphysics is unable to see the difference between beings and Being, and thereby focuses on beings when it searches for Being. It is not simply that Heidegger’s language appears to make Being into a being, but rather that it appears to make Being into God, which Heidegger thinks of as a being. Yet Heidegger’s conception of God as a being is limited to the metaphysical conception of God, and, as I will present in my thesis, there is a difference between the metaphysical conception of God, and the God of faith. Thus, it is only the narrowness of Heidegger’s conception of God which makes Being into a being. Therefore, if we step outside of the metaphysical understanding of God we see that Being can be thought of as analogous to God, without being thought of as a being. This is precisely what I shall argue in my thesis.

Along with discussing the analogy between God and Being I will consider whether Heidegger is successful in his attempt to step outside of metaphysics, thereby avoiding the representational and subjectivist thinking metaphysics entails. It is the language Heidegger uses in describing man’s relation to Being that suggest an analogy between God and Being. Yet this analogy presents the possibility that Heidegger is able to think Being through faith in much the same way that other thinkers within the metaphysical tradition think of God. Furthermore, Heidegger appears to be trapped by a language that is inherently metaphysical, yet he attempts to escape this language by resorting to a phenomenology based on faith and poetry. In this thesis I will explore Heidegger’s conception of thinking as he presents it in What Is Called Thinking?, and argue that the language Heidegger uses to describe Being make Being analogous to God. Following from this I will examine the implication of this analogy on Heidegger’s attempt to step outside of metaphysics.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Heidegger and Metaphysics	6
Section 1.0 Heidegger's account of the history of metaphysics, prior to Nietzsche	6
Section 1.1 Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's metaphysics	14
Section 1.2 Summary and Conclusion	24
Chapter 2 Heidegger's Concept of Thinking	29
Section 2.0 What calls for Thinking?	29
Section 2.1 What "Thinking" signifies	32
Section 2.2 Traditional conceptions of "Thinking"	42
Section 2.3 The phenomenological "leap of vision"	62
Chapter 3 "The Gift" and "Thanking"	76
Section 3.0 Being, beings and language	76
Section 3.1 The analysis of "the gift"	83
Section 3.2 Thinking as "thanking"	100
Section 3.3 Conclusion	111
Bibliography	116

Introduction

In the introduction to his work Being and Time Heidegger points to the manner in which we should think of Being. To think of Being, he maintains, is not to think in the manner that traditional Western metaphysics has conceived of it. Within this tradition, which has its roots in Greek metaphysics, thinking has been understood in terms of forming ideas. Ideas are formed when a subject represents an object to itself. An object is represented when it is made present to a subject through the subject's placing of the object in front of itself so that it can face it.¹ For an object to be representable it must be seen by a subject; when metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings it thinks of it in terms of what can be seen as a being. As a result of this, when metaphysics tries to think of Being it looks to beings instead, because it forgets the difference between Being and beings.

According to Heidegger this difference is forgotten because of the ambiguity of the word "Being": it is both a noun and a verb. Being refers to that which is present, and the process of coming into presence. When metaphysics inquires into Being the two meanings are united and beings are looked at as both the process of coming into presence and that which is present. Although Being is the process by which beings come into presence, Being is forgotten because in revealing beings Being itself remains hidden.²

¹Vycinas, Vincent. Earth and Gods. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1961. Pg. 95.

²

Kockelmans, Joseph J. On the Truth of Being. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1984. Pg. 51.

Since it does not acknowledge the difference between being and Being metaphysics thinks of Being as the totality of beings, or as the beingness (*ousia*) of beings, and thereby it looks at beings as beings. Metaphysical investigation into the totality of beings or the beingness of beings, takes place as an investigation into the universal traits of beings. In conjunction with this investigation into the universal traits of beings metaphysics looks to a highest being to explain the totality of beings. The highest being it looks to is God.³ According to Heidegger metaphysics interprets Being as the ground of beings which grounds itself. Being is seen as a self-caused cause, as *causa sui*. As *causa sui* Being is in fact seen by metaphysics as God.⁴ Therefore metaphysics views Being as God, the ground of all beings, or as the totality of beings. In both instances Being itself is not thought of and the metaphysical thinking of Being takes place as the thinking of beings.

The metaphysical investigation of the totality of beings, which is interpreted as Being, occurs through the representation of beings. Not only is metaphysics representational, but according to Heidegger it is subjectivist as well. The representation of an object is the result of a representing subject. Throughout history the representing subject evolves to become a subject that sees things as mere objects set up for and by itself, rather than seeing things in their truth as that which has been revealed by Being.

³
Ibid. Pg. 55.

⁴
Heidegger, Martin. Identity and Difference. Trans. And Intro. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1969. Pg. 60.

The subject is raised to a position of such prominence that everything, all objects, are thought of in reference to the subject. Heidegger sees the completion of this metaphysical thinking within Nietzsche's metaphysics of the will to power. Nietzsche's metaphysics brings together the representational and subjectivist aspects of metaphysics that are revealed in the metaphysical investigation of beings, which is presumed to be an investigation into the Being of beings.

Heidegger is adamant that the thinking constitutive of metaphysics is not the thinking that thinks Being. Starting from Being and Time he tells us that Being is not definable, it is not an entity which can be defined or represented as entities are within Western thought. Being is the Being of beings, but it itself is not a being.⁵ From this initial description of Being, or of what Being is not, Heidegger establishes the foundation for his opposition to the thinking of ontology and metaphysics. This foundation resides in Heidegger's claim that Being cannot be ensnared within traditional Western thought because this thought looks to beings when it thinks of Being, and thereby the Being it thinks is based on the beings that it finds within the world.

The thinking that Heidegger claims to be the thinking that thinks Being does not interpret Being as a being, it does not look to beings when it seeks Being. In fact, this thinking does not seek at all; as we shall see in Discourse on Thinking, thinking is rather a

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Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1962. Pg.7.

waiting.⁶ The thinking that Heidegger puts forward moves on a level that transcends what has ordinarily, and unquestioningly, been thought of as thinking. Furthermore, what Heidegger refers to as thinking is in fact essential to the relation between Being and man.

In his work, What Is Called Thinking?, Heidegger presents his notion of thinking as that which thinks Being in a manner that transcends the thinking of Being which is characteristic of Western metaphysics. However, Heidegger's descriptions of the relation that occurs between man and Being through thinking seem to betray his position in relation to metaphysics. In these works Heidegger equates "thinking" with "thanking" and speaks of the "gift" Being bestows upon man. Through these descriptions Being appears to be characterized as a being, a being which is given thanks and from which we receive a gift. Although in his explanation of thinking he must insure that he does not characterize thinking as that which makes Being into a being, the language he uses in describing the relation between man and Being via thinking seems to betray him and the thinking that he puts forward appears to be a thinking that does think Being as a being. In fact the being that Heidegger's language seems to make Being into is God. Within this thesis I will explore what Heidegger says of "thinking" in What Is Called Thinking?, paying particular attention to the language he uses to describe the relation of man to Being through thinking. Once I have carried out this exploration I will critically assess the possible repercussions his language has on his position in relation to metaphysics,

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Heidegger, Martin. Discourse on Thinking. Trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1966. Pg. 68.

specifically in terms of whether this language makes Being into a being.

I have divided my thesis into three chapters, the first of which will consist of an elucidation of Heidegger's view of metaphysics as he presents it in the essay "The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead". As background to this elucidation I will provide Heidegger's account of the history of representational thought as it manifests itself in metaphysics, up to its manifestation in Nietzsche's metaphysic. Examining Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysic will not only reveal Heidegger's views on metaphysics, but it will also reveal the direction Heidegger is taking in moving away from the subjectivist and representational manner of metaphysical thinking, to his own notion of thinking. Once Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics has been explored and a basis has been established for comparison between metaphysics and Heidegger's thinking, I will move, in Chapter 2, into an exploration of Heidegger's concept of thinking as presented in his text What Is Called Thinking? The final chapter will then be a critical discussion of Heidegger's notion of thinking in relation to his position toward metaphysics. It will focus on the question of whether Heidegger's notion of thinking makes use of theological terms which make Being into God.

Chapter 1 Heidegger and Metaphysics

Section 1.0 Heidegger's account of the history of metaphysics prior to Nietzsche

In order adequately to explain Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics, recourse to his essay "The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead" seems necessary, as it provides Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysic. Since Nietzsche's metaphysic is built upon the metaphysics of those who precede him, Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysic provides some insight into metaphysics in general. From this understanding of metaphysics, and in particular Nietzsche's metaphysic, a basis for understanding Heidegger's notion of thinking as a response to metaphysical thinking is established. However, prior to delving into Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphysic as found within the essay "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'", I will provide an account of Heidegger's interpretation of the history of the representational and subjectivist nature of metaphysical thought in general. Therefore, a fuller presentation of metaphysics in general, which goes beyond that provided in the essay, will be laid out as a background to understanding Nietzsche's metaphysic.

The metaphysical thinking that thinks Being is a thinking that is marked by a forgottenness of Being. Although the forgottenness of Being does occur because Being withdraws from man, metaphysics helps to keep Being in withdrawal by failing to acknowledge the ontological difference between Being and beings.⁷ By failing to

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Heidegger, Martin. "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'" From The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1977. Pg. 110.

recognize the difference between Being and beings, which leads to an interpretation of Being that is based on beings, metaphysics becomes representational in its thinking, and subjectivist. Metaphysics thinks of Being as the truth of “what is”, and it thinks of “what is” in terms of what is in the world. What is found in the world, as that which *is*, is the *hypokeimenon*, the subject that lies before and comes into presence. During the history of Western metaphysics the *hypokeimenon*, or *subjectum*, becomes the self-conscious ego that represents objects to itself.⁸ Through this emphasis on representation by the subject the truth of the object is altered. The truth of the object is no longer to be found in its unconcealment, which is what Heidegger defines as truth, but rather in the fact that it is represented by a subject.

As has already been noted, for Heidegger, representation refers to making something present by placing that something in front of oneself so as to face it. When we face something we see it, it appears before us in its presence. Representation corresponds with the fact that Being, and thus beings in their Being, have been understood since Greek ontology, as “presence”, and beings themselves have been understood as that which is present. This notion of presence is tied to the notion of sight because that which is present, and that which we can make present, is that which is seen. Seeing and making present are also brought together in the word “idea” which comes from the Greek word

⁸Ibid. Pg. 83.

"*eidos*" meaning "to see, face, meet, be face-to-face".⁹ Originally, in Greek thought, an idea which was seen or met was that which appeared from out of nonconcealment. In Plato's thought, the concept of "idea" changes slightly from what Heidegger interprets as its original focus on nonconcealment, to Plato's focus on the being which appears in the appearing. This change in the concept of "idea" occurs in order to accommodate the importance that Plato places on the fact that an idea is that which is seen in the seeing.

In his book Heidegger: From Phenomenology to Thought William Richardson explains Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas as it relates to the notion of non-concealment, or truth, and that of sight. Through Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas the concept of representation comes into view. The discernability of representation resides in the correspondence between Heidegger's definition of representation and Plato's emphasis on sight. Heidegger's definition of representation finds its beginning in the very fact that making present is connected with being seen, and it is in Plato's philosophy that vision is given immense importance. Although it finds its beginning in Plato's metaphysic, vision remains important for the representational thinking of metaphysics and in fact is given greater significance in Nietzsche's metaphysic of the will to power.

Although for Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics truth is thought of as non-concealment, within Plato's philosophy an alternate meaning of truth emerges: truth

9

Heidegger, Martin. What Is Called Thinking? Trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1968. Pg. 41.

becomes conformity between a viewing and what is viewed. This change in the meaning of truth occurs in correspondence with Plato's doctrine of Ideas. As seen from the definition of "idea" or "*eidos*" as provided by Heidegger, "idea" refers to a seeing. In Plato's philosophy we find that while a being is what is already present, an Idea allows a being to appear and be present as *what* it is, as its Idea. The Idea grants appearances of itself as the *whatness* or essence of the being, thus it is through the non-concealment of the Idea that beings can "come-to-presence" as what they are.¹⁰ Although the Idea itself is unconcealed it is rather the Supreme Idea, "the Good", that allows the Ideas themselves to be visible. According to Heidegger the *whatness*, or Idea, is for Plato the Being of beings. In Plato's philosophy, as Heidegger interprets it, a being's Idea is its see-ability, that which allows it to be seen as what it is. Therefore, the Idea is that which is unconcealed and that which allows for non-concealment. In Heidegger's conception of Plato's philosophy the being-seen, the appearance, which is a consequence of non-concealment, is viewed as the essence of non-concealment. Therefore, because the Idea is that which is unconcealed and made visible, the Idea becomes the unconcealed and the essence of non-concealment. In fact, for Plato non-concealment becomes the Idea, non-concealment becomes "something seen by a view".¹¹ In that it is something seen by a

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Richardson, William. Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1963. Pg. 306.

¹¹Ibid. Pg. 307.

view non-concealment essentially becomes “that-which-is-to-be-seen, a being (*eidos*).”¹² Furthermore, since for Plato Being and non-concealment are Idea, and since Idea is thought of as a being, Being comes to be thought of as a being.¹³ Although non-concealment is the Idea’s act of self-revelation, in order for the Idea to be seen there must be a seeing. Seeing the Idea then leads to the notion of a “correct” or “right” seeing by virtue of the fact that seeing the Idea is determined by the see-ableness of the Idea. Thereby a “correct” seeing is that which conforms to the Idea that is seen.¹⁴ From the importance of sight and the conformity of sight to the seen, the notion of truth as a correct viewing emerges; this correct viewing is constituted by the conformity of the viewing to the viewed.

Truth as conformity evolves to become truth as certitude. This evolution occurs during the Middle Ages when faith is conceived of as that which can guarantee truth. Eventually the guarantee itself is thought of as a characteristic of truth, thus the conception of truth as that which is guaranteed, or as certitude, emerges.¹⁵ This identification of truth with certainty takes its rise within the philosophy of Descartes, and from this notion of certainty the representational nature of thought is brought to the fore. However, in Plato we see the potential for representation in the importance that is placed

¹²Ibid. Pg. 308.

¹³Ibid. Pg. 308.

¹⁴Ibid. Pg. 307.

¹⁵Ibid. Pg. 320.

on viewing and being seen. The fact that what is represented is what is viewed and seen coincides with the visible-ness and see-ability of beings that is their whatness. Once we have secured the certainty of ourselves as the see-ers it is but a short step to thinking of that which is seen as being dependent on the seeing.

It is in Descartes' philosophy that the ego cogito becomes certain of itself as a thinking thing and as a thing that represents other things to itself. The ego cogito in fact becomes the ground of the certainty of all beings. For Descartes certainty is thought of in relation to a "bringing to a stand something that is firmly fixed and that remains".¹⁶ This formulation, with its emphasis on the object brought to a stand as that which is firmly fixed and remains, is reminiscent of the formulation of Being as "presence" and of beings as what is present, that is established within ancient ontology. As I have previously stated that which is present is what "already lies before" and is referred to as the *hypokeimenon* or *subjectum*.¹⁷ As that which "already lies before" the *subjectum* is also "that which of itself underlies all modalities of any phenomenon".¹⁸ The *subjectum* is then the ground of all phenomena and that which guarantees their certainty. Not only does it ground the certainty of all other phenomena, but it also grounds the certainty of itself. Therefore, if Descartes is to find the source of certainty he must seek out the *subjectum*.

¹⁶Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg. 82.

¹⁷*Ibid.* Pg. 83.

¹⁸Richardson. Pg. 322.

To begin with Descartes seeks out the *subjectum* as that which is certain of itself and discovers that that which is certain of itself is the ego cogito. Richardson identifies three implications of the self-certitude of the ego cogito: the first is that thinking and knowing come to be thought of as a process of proposing to the ego cogito what is known; following from this, what is knowable is thought of as what is opposed to man and proposed by him; lastly, that which is knowable is conceived of as a proposed object and proposing is conceived as objectivising. The definition of certitude that arises from the implications of the self-certitude of the ego cogito is that certitude is a conformity between the knowing and the known that is determined by the knower.. Furthermore, Descartes reveals that the ego cogito is able to ground all other certitudes simply because it is a condition for them: an object cannot be proposed to oneself unless one is aware of one's existence as the proposer of what is proposed. In other words, it is self-consciousness which is the basis of self-certitude and the certitude of all other beings. In self-consciousness occurs the proposing of the self to the self by the self.¹⁹

From the importance of the self's proposing, or presentative function, the Being of the self comes forward as this function of presentation. Furthermore, all beings that the self proposes and presents have their Being in their presentedness; their Being resides in their having been presented. Thus everything is either an object or that which objectifies. In objectification the being-as-object is related to the conscious ego and through this relation the ego comes to recognize itself as the ground of this relation; it

¹⁹Ibid. Pg. 323.

recognizes itself as the sub-ject. From this recognition all beings are considered as objects of a subject or “sub-jects” of a subject. This subject-reference of all beings is referred to by Heidegger as “subject-ness”. In subjectness the objectivity of objects and subjectivity of subjects, which is considered to be the Being of each, is constituted.²⁰ Thus subjectness is the manner in which Being presences as what is.²¹

Within Descartes’ philosophy beings become objects presented, or represented, by a self-conscious ego. The self-conscious ego then becomes the center of reference from which beings are experienced and by which meaning is bestowed upon beings. Beings in fact become objects for a subject, and the Being of beings becomes their objectiveness. Richardson explains that with the identification of beings as objects, Being itself, as the original process of nonconcealment, is lost. Richardson maintains that Heidegger believes that man replaces Being with the ascription of “value” to beings “in such a way that it is the “value” that becomes the goal of all intercourse with beings”; in time this intercourse is thought of as “culture” and in accordance the values come to be thought of as “cultural values”.²² Cultural values are conceived of as the goal of human creativity and that which serve man in the attainment of his self-certitude.²³ Richardson tells us that once values are placed in the service of man they can easily be reduced to the level of

²⁰Ibid. Pg. 325.

²¹Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’”. Pg. 68, Footnote 9.

²²Richardson. Pg. 327.

²³Ibid. Pg. 327.

objects, whereby they are presented by man. This brings us to Nietzsche's metaphysic of the will to power, which illustrates the progression from the object as represented by a subject, to the object represented by a subject as value.

Section 1.1 Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's Metaphysics

According to Heidegger, in Nietzsche's metaphysic, what is, which is beings in their totality interpreted as Being, is represented by the will to power.²⁴ The will to power is a metaphysical principle by which the Being of beings is represented as value. In order to explain the will to power I will proceed by examining Nietzsche's conception of value, because the will to power can best be understood from out of an understanding of Nietzsche's conception of value.

Nietzsche conceives of "value" as follows: "The point of view of 'value' is the point of view constituting the preservation-enhancement conditions with respect to complex forms of relative duration of life within becoming".²⁵ From this formulation of "value" it is evident that the essence of value resides in its being a point of view. Value is that which is in view for a seeing which aims at something. Moreover, as a point of view

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It is important to note that Nietzsche himself does not think of his philosophy as a metaphysic, but rather, as Heidegger says, views it as a countermovement to metaphysics. However, Heidegger maintains that as a countermovement which turns metaphysics upside down Nietzsche's philosophy remains inextricably entangled in metaphysics. (Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg. 61.)

²⁵

Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg. 71. From Nietzsche, The Will to Power. Aph. 715.

value is posited by a see-er and for a see-er. This seeing is based on that which has been seen, and that which has been seen has been set before the see-er by itself and posited as what is sighted. This positing, which is considered to be a representing, determines the point of view, and therefore it is the seeing itself, or the see-er, which determines value.²⁶ The importance of sight, which began with Plato, is witnessed in Nietzsche's philosophy and given an added dimension through its alignment with value. As previously explained, in Greek ontology the thinking of beings occurs by making beings present, and making beings present relies on sight. In Descartes' metaphysic being seen and making present is completely determined by the seeing and thus the see-er. However, in Nietzsche's metaphysic not only is being seen and making present determined by the see-er, but the beings that are seen and made present are determined in terms of value. As this making-present and being seen is constitutive of thinking, and since for Nietzsche making present and being seen entail value-positing, we can say that thinking occurs as value-positing.

As his definition of value states, value is determined in reference to the preservation-enhancement conditions of life. What is valued is then looked upon as what preserves life, to the extent that it stabilizes and secures life, and provides a level from which enhancement can occur. Preservation and enhancement are based on life as the highest value, and as a point of view value itself is a "view-to-life" and life in its essence

²⁶Ibid. Pgs. 71-72.

is a value-positing.²⁷ For Nietzsche “life” does not refer to mere biological existence, but rather is a metaphysical concept that is grounded in another of Nietzsche’s metaphysical concepts – “Becoming”. Becoming is to be understood as the universal dynamism of all beings, which constitutes beings as beings and thereby can be thought of as the Being of beings.²⁸ As Heidegger tells us, Becoming is “the fundamental characteristic of everything real, i.e., of everything that is, in the widest sense.”²⁹ The will to power is in fact a principle of Becoming, and it is in examining the will to power that we will come to understand Becoming, and through Becoming understand Nietzsche’s concept of life and its preservation and enhancement conditions.

According to Richardson, when Leibniz applied the term “subject” beyond the human ego to all dynamic beings that have an appetite, or will, for further dynamism, Being came to be thought of as the dynamism of dynamic beings, which in turn was conceived of as Will. Nietzsche follows this line of thought interpreting the Being of beings as Becoming and Becoming as this dynamism or universal Will. However, the universal Will is not to be equated with human willing; it is a metaphysical notion and not to be understood in relation to a psychological notion of “will”.³⁰ Nietzsche’s will to power, as Heidegger presents it, is this universal Will or dynamism that constitutes the

²⁷*Ibid.* Pg. 73.

²⁸Richardson. Pg. 364.

²⁹*Ibid.* Pg. 74.

³⁰Richardson. Pg. 365.

Being of beings.³¹ I will now turn to Heidegger's explanation of the will to power, which is in fact an explanation of the universal dynamism of beings understood in terms of Nietzsche's conception of the universal Will. As it is an explanation of the universal dynamism of beings, Heidegger's explanation begins by presenting this dynamism in terms of the act of willing.

For Nietzsche to will is to will-to-be-master, and willing in itself is not a striving or desiring, but a commanding.³² The essence of this commanding is that the one who commands is aware of his abilities as a commander. As Heidegger explains, "the master who commands has conscious disposal over the possibilities for effective action".³³ Furthermore, the one who commands is himself obedient to his abilities to command and the action that results therein; therefore the commander is obedient to himself. Thus Heidegger continues: "What is commanded in the command is the accomplishing of that disposal. In the command, the one who commands (not only the one who executes) is obedient to that disposing and to that being able to dispose, and in that way obeys himself."³⁴ The superiority of the commander is then revealed by way of the commander

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Although Richardson identifies the will to power as a principle of Becoming it appears that within Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy life, the will to power, and becoming are interconnected. Heidegger in fact states that for Nietzsche Becoming is the will to power and the will to power is the fundamental characteristic of life. (Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg. 74.)

³²Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg.77.

³³Ibid. Pg. 77.

³⁴Ibid. Pg. 77.

going beyond himself, "he ventures even his own self".³⁵ In this manner, commanding can be thought of as self-conquest, and in that the will is commanding, it too can be thought of as self-conquest. Starting from itself the will wills to overcome itself by willing: "For the will wills its will. Its will is what it has willed. The will wills itself. It mounts beyond itself and must at the same time in that way bring itself behind itself and beneath itself."³⁶ Thus to will is to will to become stronger, and for Nietzsche strength refers to power.

The essence of power is located in being master over an attained level of power, which allows for power-enhancement and the will's over-powering of itself. This over-powering, which employs an empowering, does not occur simply to reach more power, rather the over-powering functions for the will to acquire power over itself.³⁷ The will to power is then a will to will the overpowering of itself, in that this overpowering is power itself. The will overpowers itself by surpassing its levels of power; this means that in order to be surpassed levels of power must be preserved and secured. Yet on its own the preservation and security of levels of power is not sufficient; along with positing conditions for the preservation of power the will must also posit conditions for the enhancement of power:

The will must cast its gaze into a field of vision and first open it up so that, from out of this, possibilities may first of all become apparent

³⁵Ibid. Pg. 77.

³⁶Ibid. Pg. 77.

³⁷Ibid. Pg. 78.

that will point the way to an enhancement of power. The will must in this way posit a condition for a willing-out-beyond itself.³⁸

The conditions that are posited are values, and the will is that which posits these values.

In his reading of Nietzsche Heidegger has already established that value has the character of a point of view which determines the preservation-enhancement conditions of life within Becoming. The will to power, understood as the will overpowering itself in its willing of itself, is that which determines the essence of what is. The will to power determines the essence of what is because what is, is thought of in reference to the preservation-enhancement conditions. Correspondingly, what is can be seen in terms of value since the preservation-enhancement conditions are themselves viewed in relation to value. Therefore, the will to power is able to determine the essence of what is in terms of value because the will to power is that which posits value. Armed with this understanding of Nietzsche's definitions of "value" and the will to power we can now return to a discussion of Nietzsche's place within the metaphysical tradition.

In Nietzsche's metaphysic the *subjectum* is the will to power. The will to power is a self-willing that is inherently a self-knowing-itself through this self-willing. The *subjectum* comes to presence in the manner of a self-knowing-itself. This mode of presencing is a self-presenting wherein the *subjectum* presents itself to itself as the knowing ego. Whereas in Descartes the *subjectum* was transformed into the self-consciousness of an individual ego, in Nietzsche the *subjectum* is transformed into the

³⁸Ibid. Pg. 80.

self-knowing-itself of the will to power; the *subjectum* is then the Being of beings. Therefore, all that is is thought of in relation to the will to power as a self-knowing-itself, which is also a self-willing. As Heidegger explains: "In self-knowing-itself, all knowing and what is knowable for it gathers itself together."³⁹ Furthermore, in Nietzsche's metaphysics of the will to power, truth as correctness is not conformity between the representing ego and what is represented; but rather truth consists in the accommodation of the object to be presented to a standard imposed by the presenting subject. When the presentation is in accordance with the standard the presentation is considered to be correct or true.⁴⁰

According to Richardson, for Heidegger, Nietzsche's will to power is an elaboration and extension of Descartes' conception of the presentative subject that becomes certain of itself. Richardson explains that in the will to power this certification occurs when the will to power preserves and secures for itself a constant reserve of beings that it has gained, to which it can return in order to assure itself of its gains and from which it can move to attain more power.⁴¹ Heidegger explains this as follows:

The preservation of the level of power belonging to the will reached at any given time consists in the will's surrounding itself with an encircling sphere of that which it can reliably grasp at, each time, as something behind itself, in order on the basis of it to contend for its own security. That encircling sphere bounds off the constant reserve of what presences (*ousia*, in the everyday meaning

³⁹Ibid. Pg. 88.

⁴⁰Ibid. Pg. 89.

⁴¹Richardson. Pg. 369.

of this term for the Greeks) that is immediately at the disposal of the will.⁴²

This constant reserve not only stands at the disposal of the will to power, but is in fact set up by it as well. Nietzsche refers to the steadily constant as that which is “in being”; thus the steadily constant is the manner in which beings are in Being, Being as the will to power.⁴³ In that the steadily constant, or the constant reserve has become constant, it is verifiable. Furthermore, in order for an increase in power to occur an already achieved level of power must be certified. To certify a level of power means that the level of power is thought of as held-for-true, that is, it has definitively been attained.⁴⁴ Through this manner of certification, a constant, which has been represented by the will, is rendered submissive to and dominated by the will to power.⁴⁵

From this manner of certification and representation everything is now either the object as represented by a subject, or the subject that objectifies the object by representing it, setting it up before and delivering it to itself as the ego cogito. When the object is delivered up to the ego, the ego proves to be that which delivers up and sets before, and thereby it proves to be the *subjectum*. In this manner, the “subject is subject for itself” and the essence of consciousness becomes self-consciousness.⁴⁶ In the subject

⁴²Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’”. Pgs. 83-84.

⁴³Ibid. Pg. 84.

⁴⁴Ibid. Pg. 83.

⁴⁵Richardson. Pg. 371.

⁴⁶Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’”. Pg. 100.

becoming subject for itself everything that is seen as the object of the subject or the subject of the subject; following from this the Being of what is comes to reside in a "setting-itself-before-itself" which is a "setting-itself-up".⁴⁷ The inevitable conclusion from this setting-itself-up which man performs is that:

Man, within the subjectness belonging to whatever is, rises up into the subjectivity of his essence. Man enters into insurrection. The world changes into object. In this revolutionary objectifying of everything that is, the earth, that which first of all must be put at the disposal of representing and setting forth, moves into the midst of human positing and analyzing. The earth itself can show itself only as the object of assault, an assault that, in human willing, establishes itself as unconditional objectification. Nature appears everywhere -- because willed from out of the essence of Being -- as the object of technology.⁴⁸

As an object of technology, Nature is exploited relentlessly as a raw material for human utilization. Nature then becomes the constant reserve which man sets up to grasp to and ensure himself of his gains in order to progress toward further acquisitions. It is through this objectification of Nature that man's willing properly responds to the Being of beings as the will to power. Furthermore, in properly responding to the will to power man also becomes he who posits values and determines everything that is in terms of values. Thus Nature is not only objectified, but is viewed in terms of value.

Heidegger concludes that the natural outcome of the fact that everything now is seen and responded to as a value is that Being can be seen in a similar way. In fact Being can be seen as the highest value because "to be" has become "to have value".

⁴⁷*Ibid.* Pg. 100.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* Pg. 100.

Furthermore, when Being is seen as a value and “to be” becomes “to have value”, the metaphysical basis has been provided for the human activity that posits beings as value in relation to the preservation and enhancement of power. When this basis is established Being itself, manifesting itself in the mode of the will to power accomplishes itself as the will to power through man.⁴⁹

Through the will to power, as the Being of what is, everything that is is thought of in terms of value and therefore everything that is becomes an object that submits to and is dominated by the will to power. This value-positing and the values posited therein are not distanced from human beings; rather, the values of the will to power “directly determine human representing and in like manner inspire human activity.”⁵⁰ According to Heidegger, when the will to power is taken as the principle of all value-positing and is experienced and accepted as “the reality of the real, as the Being of everything that is” then man “passes over into another history that is higher”.⁵¹ In passing over into this history that is marked by the experience and acceptance of the will to power as the Being of beings modern humanity wills itself as the one who carries out the will of the will to power. Humanity wills its own being human as the will to power, and that being human is experienced as belonging in the reality determined by the will to power. This human willing corresponds to a form of man’s essence that moves beyond and surpasses man as

⁴⁹Ibid. Pgs. 102-103. See footnote 39.

⁵⁰Ibid. Pg. 95.

⁵¹Ibid. Pg. 95.

he has been until now.⁵²

The form of man's essence, when he moves beyond and surpasses man as he has been until now, is called "overman"; the essence of overman is a willing that wills in accordance with the will to power, since the overman *is* from out of the reality determined through the will to power. In that the essence of the overman is a willing that corresponds to the will to power the question is raised as to how man's essence as willing is to correspond adequately with the will to power and thereby be capable of making everything that is submissive to itself: "Unexpectedly, and above all in a way unforeseen, man finds himself, from out of the Being of what is, set before the task of taking over dominion of the earth."⁵³ Man's being is starting to appear as the will to power, yet man is not prepared for Being, he is not prepared to go beyond himself for the sake of Being and thereby activate the will to power within his own activity. However, this "man up to now" is surpassed when he accepts the will to power as the Being of what is by manifesting the will to power in his own willing. When the will to power is taken up into the willing of the overman the overman wills himself in the manner of the will to power.

Section 1.2 Summary and Conclusion

Metaphysical thinking, as Heidegger conceives of it, is representational. Representation only becomes clearly visible in the philosophy of Descartes; however, in

⁵²Ibid. Pgs. 95-96.

⁵³Ibid. Pg. 96-97.

Plato's philosophy vision, which plays a prominent role in representation, is emphasized. In Descartes' philosophy man is the subject who becomes certain of himself as the subject that grounds the certainty of all other beings, by representing these beings to himself. Man becomes the focal point around which everything that is rotates. In Nietzsche's philosophy this representation, and the accompanying subject-ism, escalates such that man not only represents everything to himself, but represents everything as value. That which has value for man is that which can aid him in the preservation and enhancement of life. Thus anything which man deems valuable is that which man can utilize and exploit for his own advancement.

As a result of this representational and subjectivist thinking that characterizes metaphysical thinking, Being is forgotten. The forgottenness of Being is what Heidegger refers to as "nihilism" and since this forgottenness of Being is prevalent throughout the history of metaphysical thought the history of metaphysics itself is the history of nihilism.⁵⁴ In Nietzsche's philosophy the forgottenness of Being is witnessed by the fact that Being is seen as a value and thereby *not* seen as it is in itself. As Heidegger says "*Nothing* is happening to Being" in the sense that Being is being forgotten.⁵⁵ Heidegger maintains that when the Being of beings becomes value, access to an experience of Being itself is destroyed. This access to Being has been in the process of being closed off since the beginning of Western thought, because Western thought has always conceived of

⁵⁴Ibid. Pg. 109.

⁵⁵Ibid. Pg. 104.

Being as the Being of beings, and thereby has looked to beings instead of Being itself. Heidegger refers to the value-positing of the will to power, which posits everything as value, as a radical killing that reduces what is to a value and conceals Being itself by making it into a value. As Heidegger explains:

The value-thinking of the metaphysics of the will to power is murderous in a most extreme sense, because it absolutely does not let Being itself take its rise, i.e., come into the vitality of its essence. Thinking in terms of values precludes in advance that Being itself will attain to a coming to presence in its truth.⁵⁶

For Heidegger the essence of nihilism resides in history, wherein the appearing and truth of what is in its entirety appears as beings, because Being itself is left unthought . Metaphysics, as the history of the truth of what is, is essentially nihilism, in that this history is the history of the forgottenness of Being.⁵⁷ However, the history of the truth of what is, is not solely the history of the forgottenness of Being because the forgottenness of Being in fact comes forth as a destiny from Being itself. Nihilism is a history “that runs its course with Being itself”.⁵⁸ It is from Being itself that it is unthought because Being withdraws itself. Metaphysics is then the history of the self-withholding of Being and thus the history of the forgottenness of Being emerging from the destining of Being itself.

Throughout the history of metaphysics it is clear that metaphysics does not think

⁵⁶Ibid. Pg. 108.

⁵⁷Ibid. Pg. 109.

⁵⁸Ibid. Pg. 110.

Being because metaphysics remains on the level of beings. In that it does remain on the level of beings metaphysics engages in a thinking of beings that is representational and dominated by subject-ism. As Heidegger has told us in his essay "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead.'" although metaphysics has forgotten Being, Being itself has determined this forgetting through its self-withholding. This forgottenness of Being and Being's self-withholding constitute the relation between man and Being that occurs within metaphysics. In essence this relation is not a relation at all since man does not come in contact with Being.

However, through the thinking that Heidegger presents, man and Being do come into contact. The manner of thinking Heidegger puts forward recognizes the representational and subjectivist manner of metaphysical thinking and abstains from both. Thinking for Heidegger is the means by which man accomplishes his relation to Being. Through Heidegger's thinking the difference between beings and Being is acknowledged and beings come to be seen in their truth as beings that are unconcealed by Being, rather than as objects represented by a subject. Thinking, for Heidegger, moves outside of the subject-object dichotomy that metaphysical thinking uses to dominate all beings and instead completes the relation between Being and man; this relation allows for Being to "take its rise" as Heidegger says and be revealed as the process of non-concealment. I shall now turn to Heidegger's notion of thinking as he presents it in What Is Called Thinking?, paying particular attention to the language he uses in describing the relation of Being to man through thinking. I will focus on this particular text of Heidegger's since

it not only elucidates Heidegger's notion of thinking, but also considers the origin of the notion of "thinking" within Western metaphysics, pinpointing where metaphysics fell away from its origin. In providing this history of what has come to be known as thinking within metaphysics, Heidegger brings to light the fundamental differences between metaphysical thinking and his thinking, and points the way toward his conception of thinking.

Chapter 2: Heidegger's Concept of Thinking

Section 2.0 What Calls for Thinking?

In this chapter I will present Heidegger's conception of "thinking" as he explains it in What Is Called Thinking?. From the examination of Heidegger's interpretation of metaphysics, in particular Nietzsche's metaphysic, we have seen that Heidegger views metaphysical thinking as a subjectivist and representational thinking. Heidegger's understanding of the metaphysics of Plato, Descartes and Nietzsche reveals his belief that metaphysical thinking does not think of Being in a manner which recognizes Being as Being. In his text What Is Called Thinking? Heidegger presents his notion of a thinking which does think Being as Being. Part I of What is Called Thinking? is an examination of Heidegger's statement that the most thought-provoking thing today is that we are still not thinking. In that section, Heidegger considers why we are still not thinking; through this examination he makes the distinction between "thinking" and the representational thinking which characterizes contemporary man, particularly the thinking found within metaphysics. Part II of What Is Called Thinking? begins with an analysis of the question "what is called thinking?" and carries out this analysis by distinguishing and examining four ways in which the question can be posed. I will focus primarily on the second half of Heidegger's text in order to uncover what Heidegger's notion of "thinking" means and to examine the relation of man to Being that occurs through thinking.

A brief reflection on the ambiguity of the question "what is called thinking?" begins the second half of the text. This reflection leads to Heidegger's suggestion that this

ambiguity, which must be clarified, hides possible ways of tackling the question. There are four ways of posing the question which enable different means of dealing with it. The first concerns what the words “thinking” and “thought” signify, and that to which the name “thinking” is given. Secondly, the question can be posed in terms of how thinking has been traditionally defined and conceived.⁵⁹ Although the first and second questions appear similar, the first question leads Heidegger into an exploration of the etymology of the words “thinking” and “thought” by returning to their origin in Old English, while the second question leads Heidegger into a historical return to the Greek origin of metaphysical thinking. Heidegger tells us that both questions refer to the emergence of “thinking” from different sources of its essential nature.⁶⁰ Thus the essential nature of thinking consists in what the Old English and ancient Greek tell us of “thinking”. In returning to its origin in Old English Heidegger will listen to what the language of Old English reveals of the original meaning of “thinking”. However, in returning to the ancient Greek origin of “thinking” Heidegger will focus on listening to the call of Being which called thinking into its metaphysical conception as logic. The third manner of posing the question focuses on determining what the requirements are for thinking “with essential rightness”.⁶¹ Lastly the question can be directed toward asking about that which calls us to think. According to Heidegger these four ways of asking the question are

⁵⁹Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg.113.

⁶⁰Ibid. Pg. 163.

⁶¹Ibid. Pg.114.

interrelated and united by the fourth question, since the manner in which the question is asked in the fourth way is the manner in which the question “would want to be asked first in the decisive way”.⁶²

The fourth manner of posing the question, which is “what calls for thinking?” reveals that the question “what is called thinking?” is directed at humankind, that we are being called upon to think. This insight hinges on the fact that the verb “to call” is altered or redirected from the original question to the fourth manner of asking it. While the verb “to call” is usually associated with name signification, in the fourth form of the question “to call” is used to refer to calling in the sense of calling out to someone.⁶³ Heidegger does not conceive of this manner of calling as a mere calling out in command toward someone; rather “the call” is focused on an “anticipatory reaching out for something that is reached by our call, through our calling.”⁶⁴ Thus for Heidegger “the call” is not imposing but inviting. Heidegger claims that “in the widest sense” the verb “to call” refers to setting in motion and getting something underway in a gentle manner; this is the meaning of “to call” that has its origin in the Greek language. By gathering together the original meanings of “the call” and “to call” Heidegger maintains that the word “call” means: “instruct, demand, allow to reach, get on the way, convey, provide with a way”.⁶⁵

⁶²Ibid. Pg. 114.

⁶³Ibid. Pg. 116.

⁶⁴Ibid. Pg. 117.

⁶⁵Ibid. Pg. 117.

Heidegger states that we can interpret “to call” in the habitual manner as “to command”, yet in doing so we must be mindful that “to command” originally means to commend, entrust, give to safe-keeping and keep safely.⁶⁶ From this elucidation of “to command” Heidegger concludes that “to call” means: “to call into arrival and presence; to address commendingly”.⁶⁷ By applying this meaning of “to call” to the question “what calls for thinking?” the question becomes: “What is it that enjoins our nature to think, and thus lets our nature reach thought, arrive in thinking, there to keep it safe?”⁶⁸ The call to think is then a call to bring thinking into presence. As Heidegger has stated, it is in this manner that the question “what is called thinking?” should be asked, since this manner of asking brings together the other three ways of asking the question. The fourth question is then revised by Heidegger to read as follows: “What is it that calls on us to think? What makes a call upon us that we should think and, by thinking, be who we are?”⁶⁹

Section 2.1 What “Thinking” signifies

Having clarified the meaning of the verb “to call” Heidegger moves to the first formulation of the question, which asks what “thinking” and “thought” signify, in order to explore what the word “thinking” designates. It is Heidegger’s intention to move

⁶⁶*Ibid.* Pg. 118.

⁶⁷*Ibid.* Pg. 118.

⁶⁸*Ibid.* Pg. 118.

⁶⁹*Ibid.* Pg. 121.

beyond a common understanding of the word “thinking” to the original meaning of the word. According to Heidegger common speech views words as *terms*. Terms consist of a word-sound that is uttered and a sense-content or signification that attaches to the sound, although the term itself is non-sensual.⁷⁰ Heidegger refers to terms as “buckets or kegs out of which we can scoop sense”, and this manner of understanding terms is indicative of our first encounter with *words*, since words are understood as terms.⁷¹ This first encounter with words is constitutive of our common interaction with words. This common interaction is divorced from an experience of words as they are in their essence: “What we encounter at first is never what is near, but always only what is common. It possesses the unearthly power to break us of the habit of abiding in what is essential, often so definitively that we never come to abide anywhere.”⁷² According to Heidegger when we hear directly what is spoken directly we do not at first hear the words as terms or the terms as sound. This means that we do not hear what is said as it is filtered through the common meaning of the word, this meaning having arisen through man’s manipulation of language. Rather than identifying words with terms and thus with their sense-content and word-sound, words are to be listened to in the *speaking of language*, as opposed to the *employment* of language. Speaking language is more of a letting language speak through man, than man utilizing language for his expression.

⁷⁰Ibid. Pgs. 128-129.

⁷¹Ibid. Pg. 129.

⁷²Ibid. Pg. 129.

As we are told in Heidegger's essay "Building Dwelling Thinking", man mistakenly thinks of himself as the master and shaper of language. In this role as master and shaper of language man covers over the primal meanings of words by using language for expression, rather than letting language speak through him.⁷³ The original meanings of words are hidden beneath these "foreground meanings" created by man, and because of his misinterpretation of himself as the master of language, language withdraws from man.⁷⁴ In examining the meaning of the word "thinking" Heidegger is going to travel beneath the foreground meanings and listen to what language originally says in the word "think". In so doing he returns to the origin of the word "thinking" in Old English.

The Old English tells us that "*thencan*", "to think" and "*thancian*", "to thank" are closely connected. Heidegger notes that the Old English noun for "thought" is "*thanc*" or "*thonc*" and that this refers to a grateful thought and the expression of such a thought. Apparently, traces of this noun can be found today in the word "thanks".⁷⁵ As Heidegger says: "The "*thanc*" that which is thought, the thought, implies the thanks."⁷⁶ Although the word "think" can be connected to the word "thank" Heidegger admits that this does not reveal the meaning of the word "thinking". Rather, this connection raises further

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Heidegger, Martin. "Building Dwelling Thinking" from Poetry, Language Thought. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1971. Pg. 146.

⁷⁴Ibid. Pg. 148.

⁷⁵Heidegger, What is Called Thinking? Pg. 139.

⁷⁶Ibid. Pg.139.

questions concerning the nature of thinking as thanking, and the nature of thinking itself: “‘Is thinking a giving of thanks?’ ‘What do thanks mean here?’ ‘Or do thanks consist in thinking?’ ‘What does thinking mean here?’”⁷⁷

Not only is thinking related to thanking, but memory is also connected to thinking. Memory is defined by Heidegger as a gathering of thought upon that which calls us to think. Memory is more than simply recollection, it is rather the gathering of the recollected thought. Furthermore, in gathering, memory is a keeping within itself that to which we must give thought.⁷⁸ Thus Heidegger says that thought needs memory since memory is this gathering of thought. Together with the questions concerning thinking and thanking we may add questions concerning the nature of memory— is it solely “a container for the thoughts of thinking?” and what exactly is the relation between thinking and memory – does thinking itself reside in memory?”⁷⁹

The relationship between these words is left open, but Heidegger turns to the word “*thanc*” since it is taken as a clue “that in the speaking of those words the decisively and originally telling word is the “*thanc*”.”⁸⁰ The word “*thanc*” is then contrasted with our contemporary definition of “thought”. Today a thought is conceived of as an idea, notion or opinion, yet the root word “*thanc*” refers to “the gathered, all-gathering thinking

⁷⁷Ibid. Pg. 139.

⁷⁸Ibid. Pg. 139.

⁷⁹Ibid. Pg. 139.

⁸⁰Ibid. Pg. 139.

that recalls", and this thinking is related to one's disposition or heart.⁸¹ The heart that Heidegger speaks of, he says, is akin to the heart of which Pascal speaks.⁸² According to Pascal we can come to know truth, in particular first principles (the existence of space, time, movement and number) by the heart. The heart gains knowledge through instinct and intuition, rather than proving knowledge by reason. Pascal maintains that although we cannot prove by reason what the heart knows instinctively this does not mean that knowledge gained by the heart is uncertain; rather it reveals "the feebleness of our reason".⁸³

From this definition of "*thanc*" that refers to the all-gathering thinking that recalls, it seems that "*thanc*" is related to the memory; in fact, Heidegger explains that not only does "the *thanc*" mean one's disposition or heart, but "memory" and "thanks" also "move and have their being in the '*thanc*'".⁸⁴ Heidegger claims that originally "memory" was not equated with recollection, but rather in its origin memory refers to one's entire disposition, as it is intimately focused on things that speak to us "essentially" in thoughtful meditation. Memory is less a matter of being able to recall and more of a concentration on and genuine interest in staying with the things that "speak" to us and

⁸¹Ibid. Pg. 139.

⁸²Ibid. Pg. 139.

⁸³Pascal, Blaise. Pensees. Trans. Martin Turnell. London: Harvill Press. 1962. Pg. 161.

⁸⁴Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 140.

concern us.⁸⁵ This concentration on things, which is referred to as a “steadfast intimate concentration”, is further emphasized by Heidegger’s claim that in its origin “memory” is similar to devotion. Heidegger defines devotion as “a constant concentrated abiding with something”.⁸⁶ This abiding with something is not centered solely on what is past, but with what is in the present and to come as well. According to Heidegger, the past, present and future are joined in unity with the memory’s own present being. In that memory is this devotion, and holds to that which maintains its concentration, it is able to recall; yet this ability to recall does not overshadow memory’s possession of retention. Heidegger points out that retention by the memory refers to retention of the present and future as much as of the past, whereas recalling simply refers to calling up the past.

Memory originally means a focused staying with things, and the “*thanc*” originally contains within itself this notion of memory. The “*thanc*” is then originally defined as “the gathering of the constant intention of everything that the heart holds in present being”.⁸⁷ From this definition Heidegger has drawn together the notion of memory as the gathering of thought and memory as devotion. Heidegger defines “intention” as “the inclination with which the inmost meditation of the heart turns toward all that is in being – the inclination that is not within its own control and therefore also

⁸⁵Ibid. Pg. 140.

⁸⁶Ibid. Pg. 140.

⁸⁷Ibid. Pg. 141.

need not necessarily be first enacted as such.”⁸⁸ This is not the first time that Heidegger has spoken of “inclination”. In lecture I of Part I he explains humankind’s inclination to think and the inclination of that which we think of toward us. There is a two-way relation of inclination between ourselves and that to which our thought is directed. As Heidegger explains, we incline only toward something that also inclines toward us.⁸⁹ That which inclines toward us does so by “appealing to our essential being as the keeper who holds us in our essential being”.⁹⁰ Thus this relation of inclination appears to be based on the recognition by our essential being that it is held by that which inclines towards us. However, this notion of “holding” is likewise not one-sided, as Heidegger tells us that being held is dependent on our holding onto that which holds us and we are able to maintain our hold by retaining that which holds us within our memory.⁹¹ This notion of inclination as involving two sides seems reinforced by Heidegger’s statement that the inclination of the heart is not within its own control. It seems then that the heart is moved by Being.

The “*thanc*” in relation to thought and memory has now been discussed; what is left to be considered is the relationship between the “*thanc*” and thanks. This relationship resides in the fact that the “*thanc*”, thought of as the memory, can be equated with the

⁸⁸Ibid. Pg. 141.

⁸⁹Ibid. Pg. 3

⁹⁰Ibid. Pg. 3.

⁹¹Ibid. Pg. 3.

meaning of the word “thanks”. Giving thanks, according to Heidegger, is an act of the heart giving thought to what it possesses and what it is. The heart, inasmuch as it is memory, not only gives thought, but also gives itself in thought to that which holds its concentration.⁹² Thereby, not only does the heart hold in concentration what it is staying with, but it is held as well. The “thanc”, as the original memory, consists of the thinking back that devotes what it thinks to that about which it thinks. In giving thanks we give thanks for something that has been given by someone else-- a gift. Our essential nature, which enables us to be who we are, is the highest and most lasting gift we can be given. We thereby owe thanks for this gift, the gift of thinking. Heidegger adds that this gift of thinking is “pledged” to what is to be given thought, namely Being.⁹³ We are given the gift of thinking and thinking enables us to give thanks for this gift by giving thought to that which gives us the gift. Thanking is then thinking: “All thanking belongs first and last in the essential realm of thinking.”⁹⁴

Although he has explored the word “memory” by uncovering its hidden meaning, Heidegger asserts that the nature of memory is not named in the word that he has uncovered. It is rather that the initial meaning of this word merely provides us with a clue.⁹⁵ It appears that memory, taken as the heart and disposition, is a specifically human

⁹²Ibid., Pg. 141.

⁹³Ibid., Pg. 142.

⁹⁴Ibid., Pg. 143.

⁹⁵Ibid., Pg.150.

capacity of retaining and recalling. However, memory is not to be thought of solely in this narrow sense, since it appears to be that which brings together thinking and Being. Heidegger explains that the thinking that recalls “already lives” in the gathering, constitutive of memory, that has previously kept and keeps hidden that which is to be thought about. The nature of that which keeps safe and hidden resides in preserving and conserving. This preserving and conserving is thought of in terms of “the keep”, which means the custody or guard.⁹⁶ Memory, as the thinking that recalls, resides where that to which we give thought is harbored. This dwelling place where memory finds its home is called the “keeping”, and the keeping gives what is to be thought as a gift. However, the keeping is not distinct from Being, “the keeping is not something that is apart from and outside of what is most thought-provoking”.⁹⁷ Rather, the keeping itself “is the most thought-provoking thing” and its mode of giving.⁹⁸ Heidegger tells us that the memory is not only a recalling of what we are to give thought, but it is also a keeping of that which we are to give thought. Furthermore, keeping is the essence and fundamental nature of memory. As Heidegger states: “Memory, as the human recall of what must be thought about, consists in the ‘keeping’ of what is most thought-provoking. Keeping is the fundamental nature and essence of memory.”⁹⁹ Thus, not only does memory already

⁹⁶Ibid. Pg. 150.

⁹⁷Ibid. Pg. 151.

⁹⁸Ibid. Pg. 151.

⁹⁹Ibid. Pg. 151.

dwell in the keeping that is Being, but memory is also able to keep Being within it.

Highlighting the fact that memory is not simply a human capacity Heidegger tells us that man does not create the keeping, he only dwells within it. The keeping not only preserves Being, but it also protects it from withdrawing into oblivion, or being denied of thought.¹⁰⁰ However, this is no assurance that Being will be protected from oblivion, since, as Heidegger says, the keeping is not compelled to preserve in this manner. Evidence of this is that Being has withdrawn into oblivion, and this withdrawal can be traced to the beginning of Western thought.

In retrieving the ancient meanings of the words "*thanc*" and "memory" we can hear what "thinking" tells us through these meanings; but as Heidegger points out, we cannot call the word "*thanc*" back into the spoken language, as it would be a manipulation of language. Therefore Heidegger states that what is spoken in the word "thinking"– "*thanc*"– remains in the realm of the unspoken.¹⁰¹ This leads to the conclusion that the word "thinking" is not determined by what is spoken and unspoken in the speaking of the word. To inquire into the determination of the word "thinking" we must turn to the question "what is called thinking?" and ask it in terms of what, since ancient times, has been understood by thinking.¹⁰² Therefore, prior to thinking in accordance with memory and thanks we must answer the call to think by starting from

¹⁰⁰Ibid. Pg. 151.

¹⁰¹Ibid. Pg. 153.

¹⁰²Ibid. Pg. 153.

where we stand – thus we must “deliver” ourselves to the call that calls us to think in agreement with the *logos*.¹⁰³ This marks the start of Heidegger’s inquiry into the traditional conception of “thinking”, i.e. the second of the four formulations of the question about thinking, to which I will now turn.

Section 2.2 The traditional conception of “Thinking”

In explicating the origin of what is traditionally conceived of as thinking, Heidegger maintains that thinking is traditionally conceived of as logic and that when we go back to the Greek we find that “logic” is an abbreviation of the Greek title: “the understanding that concerns the *logos*”, i.e. “*episteme logike*”.¹⁰⁴ *Logos* is a noun and the verb to which it corresponds, which is *legein*, signifies “saying something about something”. The *logos* is then “the assertion of something about something”, and by association with logic as the doctrine of the *logos*, thinking is given the same definition.¹⁰⁵ Speech is then fundamental to thinking, and this presupposes that that which is to be the subject of the assertion must be something which can be spoken about. More to the point, what the assertion says, the predicate of the assertion, must be compatible with the subject of the assertion. As Heidegger explains, it cannot be asserted

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* Pg. 165.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 155.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 155.

that a triangle laughs because “triangle” and “laughter” are not compatible.¹⁰⁶

Heidegger maintains that it is essential to the realization of our destiny that we become aware of the thinking that has been dominated by the *logos*. He states that:

As long as we ourselves do not set out from where we are, that is, as long as we do not open ourselves to the call and, with this question, get underway toward the call – just so long we shall remain blind to the mission and destiny of our nature.¹⁰⁷

Setting out from where we are requires understanding how we came to where we are, and this in turn requires looking back. The question that guides Heidegger’s look back is: why it is that for Greek thinking, which determines thinking, even up to the present, “thinking” receives its essential character from “saying” and *logos*? Heidegger concludes from this that the one and only thing that is decisive for the saying of the *logos*, which is still considered to be the basic character of thinking, is the call which has called thinking and still calls thinking “into its long-habituated nature”.¹⁰⁸ The question that then guides Heidegger’s inquiry into the traditional conception of “thinking” is: “what is the calling that has directed and is still directing us into thinking in the sense of the predicative *logos*?”¹⁰⁹

Heidegger points out that this question is not an historical question, “in the sense of narrative history”, nor is it a world-historical question – it does not focus on an

¹⁰⁶Ibid. Pg. 155.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. Pg. 165.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Pg. 164.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. Pg. 164.

occurrence as a chain of events.¹¹⁰ Thus Heidegger's inquiry, as lead by this question, is rather an historical re-thinking of the call that directs us into thinking in the manner of the *logos*. However, this re-thinking is not simply a returning to the Greek origin of the word "thinking" and formulating ideas about it. Rather, Heidegger characterizes this inquiry in terms of a submitting and delivering ourselves to this call.¹¹¹ He further goes on to refer to the inquiry as that which allows one to be open to the call and to get "underway toward the call".¹¹² In fact, Heidegger refers to thinking -- and this is the context in which we are to understand his inquiry as a historical re-thinking -- as a way; it is a way that we respond to by getting and remaining underway in order to clear the way. Heidegger distinguishes between clearing and setting out on the way, and taking up a position somewhere along the way in order to merely talk about it. It is essential then, that we set out on the way, and thus walk the way, rather than speculate about it. As Heidegger says: "Only when we walk it, and in no other fashion, only, that is, by thoughtful questioning, are we on the move on the way. This movement is what allows the way to come forward."¹¹³

In asking the question "what is called thinking?" we are thinking in the manner of getting underway. However, although Heidegger characterizes the inquiry into the

¹¹⁰ibid. Pg. 164.

¹¹¹ibid. Pg. 165.

¹¹²ibid. Pg. 165.

¹¹³ibid. Pg. 169.

second question, which asks after the call that directs us into thinking in terms of the *logos*, as a questioning that gets us underway, it appears that this inquiry is not so much a getting underway as a stopping beside the way in order to talk about it. Although Heidegger wants his readers to walk the way it seems that there is a rift between walking the way and explaining or revealing the way. This is evident with his comment that the attempt to ask the question “what is called thinking?” in the second mode of asking it inevitably begins to look as though it is a “historical consideration of the beginnings of Western philosophy”.¹¹⁴ Heidegger responds to this stating: “We shall let it go at that, not because we are indifferent to that impression, but because it cannot be dispelled by talking about it instead of setting out on the way of our question.”¹¹⁵ There is, then, a difference between setting out on the way that is thinking, and trying to convey to others how this way begins with the Greeks. Setting out on the way involves directly experiencing the call, while in trying to convey the way to others this experience cannot be replicated.

When Heidegger looks back to the thinkers of the beginning of Western thought this rift between experiencing, or walking the way, and speaking about the way becomes apparent. As he points out, the beginning is not to be thought of merely historically as the first instance wherein the question of the calling was raised; rather, the beginning is the beginning because these thinkers “experienced” the claim of the calling by responding

¹¹⁴Ibid. Pg. 167.

¹¹⁵Ibid. Pg. 167.

to it in thought.¹¹⁶ These thinkers were then underway; sent on their way, in fact, by being addressed by Being as that which is to be given thought.¹¹⁷ Yet Heidegger claims that in the address the source of the call appears, but not in its “full radiance” or under the same name. Heidegger tells us that before investigating the calling that calls all Western and European thinking we must “try to listen to an early saying which gives us evidence how much early thought generally responds to a call, yet without naming it, or giving it thought, as such.”¹¹⁸ This saying is from fragment # 6 of the writing of Parmenides, and is usually translated as follows: “One should both say and think that Being is”.¹¹⁹ As previously mentioned this inquiry inevitably appears as an historical description, yet Heidegger tells us that although it would be in “keeping with the way” if we tried to “trace in thought” what the saying tells us, it seems explanation and talk, instead of simply walking the way, is necessary. Thus Heidegger states:

But today, when we know much too much and form opinions much too quickly, when we compute and pigeonhole everything in a flash – today there is no room at all left for the hope that the presentation of a matter might in itself be powerful enough to set in motion any fellow-thinking which, prompted by the showing of the matter, would join us on our way. We therefore need these bothersome detours and crutches that otherwise run counter to the style of thinking ways. This is the necessity to which we bow when we now attempt, by circumscribing the matter in ever narrower circles, to

¹¹⁶Ibid. Pg. 167.

¹¹⁷Ibid. Pg. 167.

¹¹⁸Ibid. Pg. 168.

¹¹⁹Ibid. Pg. 168.

render possible the leap into what the saying tells us.¹²⁰

To render the leap into what the saying tells us will not be possible without translating the saying and translation does not occur without interpretation. Heidegger points out that we give attention to the saying while we are underway, on the way the question “what calls on us to think in the manner of the *logos*” provides. However, this question influences how we look at the saying, as an interpretation of it will be filtered through the question; thereby the translation and interpretation will not be completely objective. Furthermore, Heidegger suggests that although attempts may be made to put aside presuppositions and references to other philosophical texts when carrying out an interpretation, these attempts ultimately fail. This leads Heidegger to comment on the fact that no interpretation is objective, including an interpretation of the saying in question.¹²¹ Since an interpretation of the saying will not be objective Heidegger is lead to question how we are to translate the saying. His answer to this is that there is one way open for translation: “Without regard to later philosophy and its achievement in interpreting this thinker, we shall try to listen to the saying, so to speak, in the first bloom of the words.”¹²² Heidegger also provides a clue as to how his translation, and the accompanying interpretation, will proceed, in his explanation of how an interpretation is a dialogue with the work to be interpreted:

¹²⁰Ibid. Pg. 171.

¹²¹Ibid. Pg. 176.

¹²²Ibid. Pg. 176.

Every interpretation is a dialogue with the work, and with the saying. However, every dialogue becomes halting and fruitless if it confines itself obdurately to nothing but what is directly said – rather than that the speakers in the dialogue involve each other in *that* realm and abode about which they are speaking, and lead each other to it. Such involvement is the soul of the dialogue. It leads the speakers into the unspoken.¹²³

Thus Heidegger's translation and interpretation will be a dialogue with Parmenides' saying wherein Heidegger will be lead into the realm from which the call that calls thinking in the manner of the *logos* is made.

To begin his translation and interpretation Heidegger inserts colons within the saying to emphasize its word structure; he also divides the saying onto four separate lines. By inserting colons and dividing the saying onto separate lines the translation is "fitted more closely now to the Greek text".¹²⁴ In being more closely fitted to the Greek text Heidegger can begin his dialogue with Parmenides. The usual translation of the saying is still "One should both say and think that being is", but Heidegger renders the saying, now with colons inserted and on separate lines as:

"Needful:
The saying also thinking too:
Being:
To be."¹²⁵

Heidegger in fact refers to this rendering of the saying as "our saying" and points out that by inserting colons into the saying the order of the words appears. In "our saying", as

¹²³ *Ibid.* Pg. 178.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 182.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 182.

opposed to the usual translation, the words appear side by side without connection by other words. In the usual translation: "One should both say and think that Being is" the words "both" and "that" give the words in the saying a specific order. The lack of connector words in the original Greek, which is the reason Heidegger inserts colons, is evidence of the saying's *paratactic*, (i.e. side – "*para*"), rather than *syntactic* nature. Heidegger states that paratactic sentence structures are found in the languages of primitive people and children.¹²⁶ The implication is, then, that as a pre-Socratic thinker Parmenides is "downgraded" by comparison with Plato.¹²⁷ Although paratactic sentence structures are indicative of primitiveness and lack the sophistication of syntactical language, Heidegger insists that in this case paratactic does not refer to pre-syntactic or primitive.¹²⁸ Instead Heidegger maintains that although the word order may possess a paratactic form, the content of the saying moves beyond its form because it "*speaks* where there are no words, in the fields between the words which the colons indicate."¹²⁹ Therefore, although the form of the saying is paratactic, the content of the saying is not dependent on the form and thus speaks with the sophistication of syntactic language.

Following Parmenides' language word for word, Heidegger starts with the word, usually translated as "needful" and reaches into the origins of the words in order to fully

¹²⁶Ibid. Pg. 183.

¹²⁷Ibid. Pg. 184.

¹²⁸Ibid. Pg. 186.

¹²⁹Ibid. Pg. 186.

elucidate them. It seems that the Greek word translated as “needful” comes from a verb which means “I handle and so keep in hand, I use, I have use for”.¹³⁰ By investigating the nature of “using” it is revealed that “use” does not refer to utilizing and exploiting, but rather the nature of “using” lies in handling. Through the notion of “handling”, “use” implies a “fitting response”, as handling requires that the hand which handles a thing must fit that thing. Not only does “use” imply “a fitting response”, but it also consists in leaving that which is being used in its essential nature. In fact, it is only proper use which carries the thing it is using to its essential nature and keeps it there. From this we see that in using something we are actually bringing it to and letting it enter its essential nature, and keeping it safe there as well.¹³¹ According to Heidegger “use itself is the summons which demands that a thing be admitted to its own essence and nature, and that the use keep to it.”¹³² In this manner proper use is something beyond the capacity of man, in that it is only Being which can let a thing enter into its essential nature. Thus, Heidegger now renders the word “needful” within the initial translation as “It is useful”.¹³³

The initial translation of the saying tells us that what is useful is “the stating, so thinking too”.¹³⁴ Heidegger states that the Greek words *legein* and *noein* are translated

¹³⁰Ibid. Pg. 187.

¹³¹Ibid. Pg. 187.

¹³²Ibid. Pg. 187.

¹³³Ibid. Pg. 187.

¹³⁴Ibid. Pg. 196.

correctly in accordance with the dictionary as “to state” and “to think” respectively.

However, this translation is not accurate. As Heidegger states:

We simply do not notice what violence and crudity we commit with the usual translation, precisely because it is correct according to the dictionary, how we turn everything upside down and throw it into confusion. It does not even occur to us that in the end, or here better in the beginning of Western thinking, the saying of Parmenides speaks to us for the first time of what is called thinking.¹³⁵

If we jump ahead and use the word “thinking” in the translation, we are assuming that the Greek text has already established what thinking is, when in fact it “only leads up to the nature of thinking”.¹³⁶ Therefore, “thinking” cannot be the translation of *legein* by itself or *noein* by itself. Heidegger points out that although within logic, the theory of the *logos*, *legein* and *noein* imply thinking, properly to translate Parmenides’ saying we must look back to a time prior to the *logos*. In so doing we inquire into the call that called *legein* and *noein* into their natures as thinking conceived of in relation to logic. As Heidegger states:

... we are inquiring back into the past, are asking for that call which was first to summon *legein* and *noein* to that nature which, subsequently, restricts itself to a mode whose determination will be ruled by logic as the essence of thinking.¹³⁷

To emphasize further that the usual translation is inaccurate, that *legein* and *noein* should not carelessly be translated as “stating” and “thinking”, Heidegger examines the

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 196.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* Pg. 197.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* Pg. 197.

peculiar order of the words in the usual translation. According to the usual translation what is needful is *first* the saying *then* the thinking that being is. However, it is much more likely that the sentence be given thought first, then stated. Yet as the saying proclaims, it is the stating, then the thinking, that “constitute what admits the ‘it is useful’ into its essence and there holds it”.¹³⁸ The order of the words is central to the meaning of “it is useful”, yet the order itself is contrary to a practical application of the saying. To resolve this problem Heidegger moves beyond the usual translations of *legein* as “stating” and *noein* as “thinking”. The usual translation interprets “stating” and “thinking” as they are commonly understood, “stating” as mere speaking and “thinking” as logic. In moving beyond the usual translation it is discovered that “stating” does not in fact refer to “to speak” or to language, but rather that the Greek for “stating” is the same as our word “lay”.¹³⁹ Heidegger asserts that for the Greeks “stating” was understood as a “laying out, laying before, laying to”.¹⁴⁰ Laying something out consists in making it lie so that it may lie before us. What is of importance to this “laying” is not the act of setting something up so that it may lie before us, but rather it is that that which lies before us has set itself up, has settled into its situation and is lying before us. In accordance with this, that which lies before us appears and comes forward on its own. Heidegger states that the things that

¹³⁸Ibid. Pg. 198.

¹³⁹Ibid. Pg. 198.

¹⁴⁰Ibid. Pg. 199.

lie before us are “supremely close by”.¹⁴¹ In fact, they are “what has come close by, beforehand”, yet we usually do not see them “in their presence”.¹⁴² “Laying” can be connected to “stating” in the sense that saying something about something makes that thing lie before us and thereby appear. Heidegger asserts that the “making-to-appear” and the “letting-lie-before-us” is the essence of stating and the *logos*.¹⁴³ Translating stating in this manner Parmenides’ saying now runs: “It is useful: to lay, to let lie before us”.¹⁴⁴

Having properly translated *legein* Heidegger moves on to *noein*. *Noein* is translated with “perceive”, but Heidegger cautions that “perceive” must not be taken as an exact translation, especially if perceive is thought of as the perception of something. According to Heidegger “perceive” is to be equated with “receive”. This equation makes reference to Kant’s philosophy wherein perception refers to being receptive to sense impressions. When it is understood as reception, perception is passive, and to be distinguished from an active perception, since active perception entails holding preconceived notions of, or attitudes toward, that which is perceived.¹⁴⁵ Thus Heidegger explains:

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* Pg. 201.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* Pg. 201.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* Pg. 202.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 202.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 203.

Noein so translated – to use a Kantian distinction for the sake of convenience – is pointing toward perception in the sense of receptivity, as distinguished from the spontaneity with which we assume this or that attitude toward what we perceive.¹⁴⁶

However, this perception is also to be distinguished from passive acceptance. Perception, we are told, is reception, yet it also includes the active trait of undertaking something.

This active trait of undertaking something consists in a concern with that which is perceived. This concern leads to taking up and doing something with the thing perceived. What we do with what we have perceived and where we take it is very specific: we take it to heart, and keeping it at heart we leave it exactly the way it is.¹⁴⁷ Thus by Heidegger's translation *noein* is "taking something to heart"; furthermore, *nous*, which is the noun to the verb *noein*, originally means almost exactly what Heidegger has explained as the meaning of *thanc*, devotion and memory.¹⁴⁸ According to Heidegger devotion and memory are brought together in his definition of *thanc*. Heidegger defines *thanc* as the gathering of the constant intention of everything the heart holds in present being.¹⁴⁹

When *legein* and *noein* are understood as letting lie and taking to heart the phenomenological aspects of Heidegger's thought become apparent. Heidegger has explained that in laying it is of extreme importance that what is laid has already come to lie before us. He states: "... what lies before us is primary, especially when it lies there

¹⁴⁶Ibid. Pg. 203.

¹⁴⁷Ibid. Pg. 203.

¹⁴⁸Ibid. Pg. 203.

¹⁴⁹Ibid. Pg. 141.

before all the laying and setting that are *man's* work, when it lies there prior to all that man lays out, lays down, or lays in ruin."¹⁵⁰ By letting things lie before us as they lie, we are able to see things as they are in themselves, in their truth, prior to all the laying that man carries out. Laying can then be seen as "a relatedness that pervades man's stay on this earth from the ground up".¹⁵¹ What lies before us in the widest sense can be referred to as the ground level and in the widest sense it can be designated with "there is".¹⁵² *Noein* can be related to a phenomenological seeing and to *legein* because it is a thinking that perceives *beforehand* by taking to mind and heart. The heart, according to Heidegger, is a wardship that guards what lies before us and keeps it as it is. Heidegger also claims that *noein* refers to scenting, which for man is divination. Heidegger tells us that authentic divination "is the mode in which *essentials* (my italics) come to us and so come to mind, in order that we may keep them in mind."¹⁵³ Heidegger describes this divination as "the great hall where everything that can be known is kept, concealed", rather than being the "outer court before the gates of knowledge".¹⁵⁴ This description reveals that taking to heart and mind, as man's scenting or divination, is an intuitive or immediate knowledge that sees things and knows them prior to the application of logic or

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.* Pg. 205.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.* Pg. 206.

¹⁵²*Ibid.* Pg. 207.

¹⁵³*Ibid.* Pg. 207.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.* Pg. 207.

reason. Just as animals simply put their noses in the air or on the ground and receive various smells, so too does man, when he is divining, simply let his divining rod lead him to water. In divining man becomes an open vessel, waiting to receive the appropriate sign from the divining rod which indicates the presence of water. Thus it seems that in equating divination with the scenting of animals Heidegger is telling us that man's scenting, his manner of becoming aware of and knowing the world around him, is, as a taking to heart and mind, an intuitive and immediate reception of things that lie before us as they appear. Phenomenologically speaking this reception of things that lie before us as they appear occurs prior to any interference by theoretical or scientific concepts, prior to any "laying" that man carries out. *Noein*, as divination, allows man to be open to the things around him as they simply appear before him; as such divination is the great hall that allows man to encounter everything that is kept within it. What is useful is then to let things lie before us as they are and come to know them in their truth as what they are. Parmenides' saying is now translated as: "Useful is the letting-lie-before-us also (the) taking-to-heart too".¹⁵⁵

With the translations of "saying" and "thinking" Heidegger reveals that stating and thinking penetrate each other. Firstly, stating, as letting-lie-before-us, "unfolds of its own accord" into thinking.¹⁵⁶ According to Heidegger, when we let something lie before us we are already keeping it in mind and heart, and thereby we have already taken it to heart.

¹⁵⁵Ibid. Pg. 207.

¹⁵⁶Ibid. Pg. 208.

Conversely, thinking is always a stating, in that taking to heart what lies before us means that we “take it as it is lying”.¹⁵⁷ Taking to heart is thereby a gathering in two ways: we gather ourselves to what lies before us and we gather what lies before us to itself when we take it to heart. Gathering it to itself, that which lies before us is able to become manifest in terms of how it lies before us.¹⁵⁸ Stating and thinking are then involved in a give and take relationship and each penetrates the other. With the establishment of the relation between stating and thinking the saying is translated as follows: “the letting-lie-before-us such (as this), the taking-to-heart too (such as the other).”¹⁵⁹

The saying is then put together with the final words “being” and “to be” and the final translation is read: “Useful is: letting-lie-before-us and so (the) taking-to-heart too: being: to be.”¹⁶⁰ According to Heidegger the Greek words *eon* (being) and *emmenai* (to be) not only belong together but also designate the same thing. In fact, Heidegger informs us that Parmenides uses the word *eon* for *emmenai*, thus the translation ends with a repetition of the word *eon*. Heidegger rectifies this apparent redundancy, and illuminates how “being” and “to be” belong together, by pointing out that “being” necessarily has two meanings because it is a participle. Grammatically, a word that is a participle participates in two meanings that refer to each other; one of these meanings is

¹⁵⁷Ibid. Pg. 209.

¹⁵⁸Ibid. Pg. 209.

¹⁵⁹Ibid. Pg. 209.

¹⁶⁰Ibid. Pg. 217.

nominal and the other is verbal. For example, the word “blossoming” can mean either that which is blossoming, a rosebush, or the act of blossoming.¹⁶¹ As a participle “being” means a being and something which is in being. Heidegger questions why participles have two meanings and his answer is that it is not because they participate in two meanings, but rather that participles are participles because “what they state is always applied to what is in itself twofold”.¹⁶² The participle “being” is that which is in itself twofold, and the dual meanings of all other participles emerge from the twofold nature of “being”: “The dual meaning of participles stems from the duality of what they tacitly designate. But this dualism in its turn stems from a distinctive duality that is concealed in the word *eon*, being.”¹⁶³ The twofoldness of the participle “being” consists in the following dualism: that a being has its being in Being and Being is the Being of a being. Thus, just as “blossoming” refers to something that is blossoming and the act of blossoming, “being” refers to the noun Being and the verbal designation “in Being”.

Rather than returning to the grammatical or logical origin of the concept of participle, Heidegger traces the history of the participle back to Plato’s dialogue the “Sophist”, where it is central to Plato’s thinking. Within this dialogue participation refers to the participation of a being in its idea. The idea enables the being to appear as a particular being because the idea is the face and form of the being. When the being

¹⁶¹Ibid. Pg. 220.

¹⁶²Ibid. Pg. 221.

¹⁶³Ibid. Pg. 221.

appears it is “in present being”; thus we can say of the being that “it is”.¹⁶⁴ For Plato the idea constitutes the Being of a being, and the relation of a given being to an idea is participation. Heidegger points out that the participation of a being in Being presupposes the existence of the duality of being and Being. The predominant question of the history of philosophy emerges from this duality as “what is the particular being in its Being?” and, remaining with this question, Western-European thinking moves from beings to Being.¹⁶⁵ The particular being is transcended in order to reach the Being in which the particular being is. Starting with the Greeks the particular being is thought of as aligned with the physical. This question of what the particular being is in its Being leads to metaphysics, wherein the particular physical being is transcended. This transcendence from the particular physical being to the metaphysical realm of Being reinforces and furthers the duality between being and Being. Since the participation of beings in Being presupposes a duality between the two, the duality of beings and Being must be what first lies before us and is taken to heart, prior to a consideration of the one in the other.¹⁶⁶ In that the saying tells us that thinking means “letting-lie-before-us and so taking-to-heart also: beings in being”, the saying goes to the heart of the duality of beings and Being that founds metaphysics.

Heidegger states that looked at grammatically, and thus “seen from the outside”,

¹⁶⁴Ibid. Pg. 222.

¹⁶⁵Ibid. Pg. 222.

¹⁶⁶Ibid. Pg. 223.

Parmenides' saying tells us to "take to heart being as participle and with it take heed of to be in Being, the Being of beings."¹⁶⁷ From this grammatical and determining standpoint the duality itself, of Being and to be, is not inquired into or given thought. What is instead given thought is the question of what beings are in their Being, with beings as the focal point, and thus the duality is thought of within metaphysics as simply "beings-in-being". Therefore, the thinking that follows the call that calls us to think beings in being refers to: "letting lie before us and so taking to heart also: beings in being."¹⁶⁸ This grammatical interpretation of "being" and "to be" gives rise to the belief that we can know what these words mean by looking to beings in the world. Heidegger explains that it seems that we know, or profess to know what "being" and "to be" mean. Yet when we stop and reflect on it we discover that we do not know because we do not know how to represent "being" and "to be" to ourselves. Even though we cannot represent "being" and "to be" we believe that clarification can arise by pointing to a being. The pointing, it turns out, merely indicates that which we are pointing to, and not "being".¹⁶⁹ Heidegger explains this as follows:

And yet, to make clear what "to be" says we need only point to some being -- a mountain, a house lying before us, a tree standing there. What do we point out when we help ourselves by such indications? We indicate a being, of course; but strictly speaking the indication comes to rest on the mountain, the house, the tree. Now we imagine that we have the answer to precisely what is still in question. For we

¹⁶⁷Ibid. Pg. 224.

¹⁶⁸Ibid. Pg.. 224.

¹⁶⁹Ibid. Pg. 225.

do not, after all, inquire about a being as mountain, as house, as tree, as though we wanted to climb a mountain, move into a house, or plant a tree. We inquire about the mountain, about the house, about the tree as a given being, in order to give thought to the being of the mountain, the being of the house, the being of the tree.

We notice at once, it is true, that being is not attached to the mountain somewhere, or stuck to the house, or hanging from the tree. We notice, thus, the problematic that is designated with “being”. Our question therefore becomes more questioning. We let beings, as beings, lie before us and give our heart and mind to the “being” of particular beings.¹⁷⁰

Since “being” and “to be” point us toward beings, as long as we accept “being” and “to be” as the translation of the Greek we will not be able to hear what the saying is telling us. Heidegger claims that what is needed is for us to “pass over into the Greek sphere” of “beings” and “to be” rather than simply transposing.¹⁷¹ Heidegger maintains that when we attempt to sufficiently translate the words “being” and “to be” we are attempting to “take to heart That which calls on us to think”, and thereby we are asking the question “what is called thinking?” in the fourth sense: “What is That which calls on us to think, by so disposing the conjunction of stating and thinking that it relates to It?”¹⁷² Thus “being” and “to be” direct *legein* and *noein* into the nature of thinking and thereby they constitute the fundamental nature of thinking.

¹⁷⁰Ibid. Pgs. 225-226.

¹⁷¹Ibid. Pg. 226.

¹⁷²Ibid Pg. 231.

Section 2.3 The phenomenological "leap of vision"

The duality of beings and Being is the focus of the last stages of Heidegger's retranslation of Parmenides' saying. Rather than providing a detailed exegesis of this final stage I will simply summarize it, as it is rather lengthy and not entirely necessary to provide a complete exegesis. Although Heidegger translates the Greek "being" (*eon*) and "to be" (*emmenai*) into the English "being" and "to be" he tells us that this does not get to the heart of what the Greek words mean when heard with Greek ears. Thus we must transpose ourselves with a "leap of vision" into the Greek sphere.¹⁷³ However, even with a leap of vision into the Greek sphere the meaning of "being" is elusive and not easily articulated. Recall at this point that Heidegger has previously alluded to this leap. Prior to his translation and interpretation of Parmenides' saying Heidegger told us that the attempt to interpret and translate this saying is the attempt to "render possible the leap into what the saying tells us".¹⁷⁴ But Heidegger's translation and interpretation has taken us as far as it can reach and now we must attempt this leap ourselves.

The leap of vision which *sees* what is *heard* by the word "being" appears to be a phenomenological "seeing" somewhat akin to Husserl's phenomenology, Husserl being the philosopher who schooled Heidegger in phenomenology. Husserl's phenomenological method, as presented in his work The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, consists in an attempt to reach the subjective ground

¹⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 232.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Pg. 171.

of the sciences, a ground which has not been investigated by the sciences but rather has been presupposed. Thus this subjective ground, or life-world, which is pre-given to science and thereby presupposed by science, is that on which the sciences have been grounded. The life-world is the pregiven horizon and ground of validity for objective science.¹⁷⁵ It is the sensibly and immediately experienced world. In relation to science the life-world is the purely intuitive "merely subjective-relative".¹⁷⁶ That which is immediately and intuitively experienced in the life-world is presented, and thereby experienced, in an original self-givenness or self-evidence. Objects that become calculated, measured and subjected to scientific investigation are originally given in an immediate self-givenness which presents them as how they appear prior to being thought of as scientific data. Husserl's phenomenological method begins with a reduction to the life-world, but it moves beyond the life-world to the transcendental realm. Heidegger, being a student of Husserl's, was in agreement with the need for a reduction to the pre-given and presupposed foundation of the sciences. In Being and Time Heidegger refers to this reduction as an ontological inquiry into the Being of certain areas of entities. However, for Heidegger this ontological inquiry itself remains "naive and opaque if in its researches into the Being of entities it fails to discuss the meaning of Being in general."¹⁷⁷

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Husserl, Edmund. The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. Trans. David Carr. United States: Northwestern University Press. 1970. Pg.123.

¹⁷⁶Husserl. Pg.125.

¹⁷⁷Heidegger, Being and Time. Pg. 31.

Heidegger refers to this clarification of the meaning of Being as ontology's "fundamental task".¹⁷⁸ For Heidegger phenomenology, as "fundamental ontology" is to investigate not only the Being of entities, but the meaning of Being itself. In doing so phenomenology lays the foundations of the sciences.¹⁷⁹ The phenomenological "seeing" Heidegger speaks of in What Is Called Thinking? appears to be a seeing that reaches beyond the Being of particular entities to the meaning of Being itself.

In his book, Heidegger's Philosophy of Being, Herman Philipse elaborates on the differences between the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. To begin with, for Husserl phenomenology is a science which studies transcendental consciousness and its intentional correlates – beings in their constitution by transcendental consciousness. However, for Heidegger, phenomenology is to describe the ontological constitution of different kinds of beings. In particular Heidegger focuses on human existence, thus his phenomenology focuses on bringing to light the essential structures of human existence as they are experienced pre-theoretically and unscientifically. Philipse identifies four elements to Husserl's phenomenology, as Husserl conceives of it in Ideas I. These four elements are as follows: 1) phenomenology is purely descriptive and avoids theorizing; 2) phenomenological description of the way entities are "constituted in" transcendental consciousness is an ontological explanation of their mode of being; this emerges from 3) the constitution of entities in consciousness is the "being" of these entities; and 4)

¹⁷⁸Ibid. Pg. 31.

¹⁷⁹Ibid. Pg. 30.

transcendental phenomenology is an eidetic discipline in that it tries to reach the essential structures of entities.¹⁸⁰ Philipse reports that in section 7 of Being and Time, wherein Heidegger provides his description of phenomenology, Heidegger endorses 1, 2 and 4, but rejects Husserl's transcendental idealism (3). This rejection occurs because Heidegger views transcendental idealism as a solution to the problem of the external world. Heidegger takes issue with the problem of the external world because he maintains that when we look at human existence pre-theoretically, we will see that human existence and the world are not separable.

The problem of the external world arises through the use of concepts such as consciousness, substance and material object, which are not based on a pre-theoretical experience of life, but rather on a Cartesian scientific conception of the world.¹⁸¹ These scientific conceptions allow the problem of the external world to arise because they allow for a separation of human existence and world. Heidegger asserts that human existence, or *Dasein*, is not a consciousness in a body maneuvering through a collection of entities that make up the world; rather, *Dasein* is a whole person and *Dasein*'s world is inseparable from it since the world is in fact a constitutive structure of *Dasein*. *Dasein*'s being is primarily "being-in-the-world" and the world can be thought of as consisting in a

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Philipse, Herman. Heidegger's Philosophy of Being. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1998. Pg. 117.

¹⁸¹Philipse. Pg. 117.

meaningful structure provided through *Dasein*'s relations to the things in the world.¹⁸²

Therefore, not only do the traditional concepts not reach an experience of everyday life, but the problem of the external world, to which these concepts can be applied, function to separate man from his world as they do not allow him to be seen essentially as being-in-the-world.

Philipse maintains that Heidegger's rejection of Husserl's transcendental idealism can be viewed as a "radicalization" of Husserl's principle of theory-free description.¹⁸³ By rejecting Husserl's transcendental idealism Heidegger is rejecting the philosophical tradition from which Husserl's transcendental idealism emerged (the tradition of Cartesian epistemology) and the scientific concepts that permeate it. By this rejection Heidegger rules out any infection by these scientific and theoretical concepts in his exploration of the way ordinary life is experienced.¹⁸⁴ The method of phenomenology Heidegger presents in Being and Time occurs by letting "that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself".¹⁸⁵ Philipse maintains that the subject matter of Heidegger's phenomenology is being, thought of as the ontological constitution of specific kinds of beings.¹⁸⁶ However, as previously stated, in Being and

¹⁸²Philipse. Pg. 25.

¹⁸³Philipse. Pg. 118.

¹⁸⁴Philipse. Pgs. 117-118.

¹⁸⁵Heidegger, Being and Time. Pg. 58.

¹⁸⁶Philipse. Pg. 118.

Time Heidegger refers to phenomenology as “fundamental ontology” since it is to investigate the meaning of Being in general. Heidegger’s phenomenology seems to move beyond pre-theoretical descriptions of the ontological constitution of certain beings to an attempt to reach Being as the process of nonconcealment.

Thus it appears that Heidegger’s “radicalization” of Husserl’s theory-free description is even more radical with the introduction of the notion of the “leap of vision”, which can be referred to as a phenomenological seeing that sees that which cannot be easily described at all, let alone pre-theoretically. It can possibly be asserted that description becomes secondary to the actual experience of viewing, as Heidegger himself states that in the leap of vision it is the looking that is decisive rather than putting what is seen into words.¹⁸⁷ This view to Being, then, requires a “leap” of vision which seems to rest more on having faith in what one is seeing than on empirical facts or reports of what has been seen. In fact, Heidegger tells us that what has been seen in a leap of vision cannot be demonstrated by reason but can only be proven by being seen again. Thus he states that the seeing in a leap of vision “is more than just the seeing with the eyes of the body”.¹⁸⁸

These descriptions of the leap of vision reinforce what has been previously mentioned of the rift between direct experience, which corresponds to thinking as a setting out on the way, and explaining or talking which merely take up a position along

¹⁸⁷Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 233.

¹⁸⁸Ibid. Pg. 232.

the way. When we think in the manner Heidegger puts forward we set out on the way and remain underway. We cannot compel others to think by describing or explaining our getting underway, one must simply walk the way for oneself. Heidegger tells us in Part I of What Is Called Thinking? that man is a pointer, pointing toward Being's withdrawal. We point towards Being's withdrawal because we are drawn toward and into it, and in being drawn toward it we point toward it. In fact, Heidegger tells us that man's essential nature lies in being a pointer.¹⁸⁹ Can we extend this to Heidegger himself and suggest that Heidegger is attempting to be a pointer, pointing toward the withdrawal of Being, and in so doing pointing toward the way of thinking? As a pointer who is drawn toward Being Heidegger can walk the way himself, and hope that his walking becomes a pointing for others. However, to put his walking into words seems to be in vain, as he tells us himself that one must walk the way for oneself.

In fact, from what Heidegger says, it appears that to put one's getting underway into words one's only recourse is to poetry. In reference to his assertion that man is a pointer Heidegger discusses a few lines from a poem written by Hoelderlin. Heidegger tells us that a possible title for the poem in question was "*Mnemosyne*", which translates from the Greek into "Memory". Heidegger then proceeds to tell us what we now know of memory: that it is the gathering of thought, the gathering of recollection, upon what demands to be thought and that it keeps concealed within, that to which thought must be

¹⁸⁹Ibid. Pg. 9

given.¹⁹⁰ However, Heidegger also informs us that memory is the “thinking back to what is to be thought is the source and ground of poesy”.¹⁹¹ Since memory is the source and ground of poesy, poesy is able to flow back toward the source and think in the manner of a thinking back and recollecting.¹⁹² Thus Heidegger concludes: “Poetry wells up only from devoted thought thinking back, recollecting.”¹⁹³ From this statement it appears that poetry is connected to, but separate from thinking that is underway. Furthermore, if there is to be any articulation of being on the way then it seems that poetry may be this articulation. This would explain Heidegger’s references to the poetry of Hoelderlin, scattered throughout the text, and his comments that allude to poetry being able to show us the way to thinking. As he says, Hoelderlin’s poetry “may summon us with a larger appeal, and hence greater allure, upon a way of thought that tracks in thought what is most thought-provoking”.¹⁹⁴ However, the text What Is Called Thinking? is not a work of poetry, although at times Heidegger’s writing can be thought of as poetic, and if Heidegger is to point the way toward thinking in this text he must resort to using

¹⁹⁰Ibid. Pgs. 10-11.

¹⁹¹Ibid. Pg. 11.

¹⁹²Ibid. Pg. 11

¹⁹³Ibid. Pg. 11.

¹⁹⁴Ibid. Pg. 12

language which explains, rather than poetizes.¹⁹⁵

Since the meaning of “being” as seen within the leap of vision depends entirely upon the seeing and is not easily rendered by language, Heidegger tells us that when we try to express what the leap sees the expression appears as a mere assertion made on a whim. Although it may appear to be an arbitrary assertion, Heidegger attempts to put into language what the leap sees by suggesting that the Greek words for “being” and “to be” refer to “what is present” and “to be present”.¹⁹⁶ “Present” means something that is present, in the sense of present to us. Moreover, “present” and “presence” mean “what is with us”, and in turn this means “to endure in the encounter”.¹⁹⁷ For the Greeks being present and abiding are not thought of simply as duration. Rather, they are thought of in terms of coming close by, as opposed to being away. Presence is then a spatial presence instead of a temporal presence. One can then ask of this manner of conceiving presence: “when does the presence come closer and what does it come closer to?” Heidegger explains that what is present is so by virtue of its rise from unconcealment. Furthermore, in that it has risen from unconcealment, what is present has entered into that which has

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It is worthwhile to point out that although poetry and phenomenology, as a “leap of vision”, appear to be the same, for Heidegger they are not. In his references to Hoelderlin’s poems and from what he has explained of poetry, it seems that for him poetry and phenomenology are two distinct methods of trying to reach Being. However, the distinction appears to be as subtle as to rest on the fact that phenomenology, as a “leap of vision” is something akin to faith, while poetry is not.

¹⁹⁶Ibid. Pg. 233.

¹⁹⁷Ibid. Pg. 234.

already risen from unconcealment, the unconcealed. Taking a mountain range as an example, the mountains rise from unconcealment into the unconcealed landscape, and thereby the mountains are present. Yet Heidegger explains further that although that which is present has risen from unconcealment, the rise from unconcealment is itself not apparent. As Heidegger says:

But this rise from unconcealment, as the entry into what is unconcealed, does not specifically come to the fore in the presence of what is present. It is part of presence to hold back these traits, and thus to let come out only that which is present. Even, and in particular, that unconcealment in which this rise and entry takes place, remains concealed, in contrast to the unconcealed present things.¹⁹⁸

Heidegger then returns to the saying of Parmenides and applies the translation of “presence of what is present” to it. The presence of what is present is That to which the stating and thinking remain directed. This means that stating and thinking are claimed by the presence of what is present. It is only by the conjunction of stating and thinking, and their subsequent focus on the presence of what is present, that the nature of thinking required by the presence of what is present will be adequate. Furthermore, the presence of what is present in a veiled manner names the “It” in “It is useful”¹⁹⁹, and thereby names that which calls thinking into its essential nature, into the conjunction of stating and thinking.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Pgs. 236-237.

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It is to be noted that the “it” in “it is useful” does not arise out of the Greek but rather from Heidegger’s translation. There is no “it” in the Greek.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Pg. 239.

Heidegger reports that Parmenides often says thinking, taking-to-heart, instead of stating and thinking, and Being rather than the Being of beings. Following Parmenides' substitution, Heidegger claims that thinking qua thinking belongs together with Being and thereby belongs to Being.²⁰¹ Heidegger cites another fragment of Parmenides for evidence of this. This fragment is usually translated: "For it is the same thing to think and to be".²⁰² By examining the words "the same", which do not mean "identical with", Heidegger discovers that we can speak of "the same" in relation to thinking and Being because Parmenides tells us that, without and apart from any relation to Being, thinking is not thinking: "for not separately from the presence of what is present can you find out the taking-to-heart."²⁰³ Thereby "the same" refers to what belongs together: "for the same: taking to heart is so also presence of what is present."²⁰⁴ Thinking and Being belong together because the essential nature of thinking consists in its concentration on the presence of what is present. Conversely, Being keeps and guards thinking within itself as what belongs to it. From the presence of what is present the call is made that calls us into the essential nature of thinking, "that admits thinking into its own nature and there keeps and guards it."²⁰⁵ The call calls thinking into its own nature by directing thinking into

²⁰¹ Ibid. Pg. 240.

²⁰² Ibid. Pg. 240.

²⁰³ Ibid. Pg. 241.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. Pg. 241.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Pg. 242.

Being. Yet this does not answer questions of why and how the Being of beings calls us into thought. Heidegger can relay to us that the presence of what is present is not Being by itself or what is present taken alone, or both added together in synthesis: it is rather that "their duality, emerging from their unity kept hidden, keeps the call."²⁰⁶

From Heidegger's discussion of the leap of vision, "thinking" and Being as the presence of what is present, it is possible to make connections between seeing, thinking and presence. To begin with, it has already been established that the duality of Being and beings cannot be observed; we can only see beings, not Being. Furthermore, we cannot see beings rise from unconcealment, we can only see that beings are present. However, through the leap of vision that Heidegger describes, it is possible to discern that from Being beings rise from unconcealment and thereby Being is the presence of what is present. That which calls us to think in the manner of letting lie before us and taking to heart is calling us to see in the manner of a leap of vision. We are called upon to see what is not merely present, i.e., beings, but what makes beings present, Being. When we let what lies before us lie before us as it is, we see it in its presence. Moreover, when we take it to heart as it lies before us we are also seeing what is present in its presence.

From an explication of What Is Called Thinking? we can summarize that for Heidegger thinking, in its origin, signifies the *thanc*. The *thanc* in turn signifies thanking, devotion and memory. The *thanc* is thought of as the gathering of the constant intention of everything the heart holds in present being. Memory is similar to this in that

²⁰⁶ibid. Pg. 242.

it is the gathering of thought upon that which calls us to think, i.e., Being, and it is also a staying with things. Devotion and the *thanc* are connected, since both are a staying with things. Finally, thanking can be brought together with the *thanc* because it is defined as the act of the heart giving thought to what it has and is and it is also an abiding with that which it gives thought. These notions of gathering, of staying with that which is given thought, and of the heart, are brought together in Heidegger's explanation of thinking as the *thanc*. When Heidegger turns to the traditional conception of thinking he finds that it originates from the *logos*. This identification of the *logos* with thinking results in the connection of thinking with stating. Furthermore, Heidegger's examination of the *logos* leads to an examination of a fragment of Parmenides which Heidegger interprets to mean that stating is a letting-lie-before-us and thinking is a taking-to-heart that which lies before us. According to Heidegger's interpretation of the saying of Parmenides, that which lies before us and is taken to heart is the duality of Being and beings. Thus Heidegger concludes What Is Called Thinking?:

... we have learned to see that the essential nature of thinking is determined by what there is to be thought about: the presence of what is present, the Being of beings. Thinking is thinking only when it *recalls* in thought the *eon*, That which this word indicates properly and truly, that is, unspoken tacitly. And that is the duality of beings and Being. This quality is what properly gives food for thought. And what is so given, is the gift of what is most worthy of question.²⁰⁷

With this introduction of the gift of Being I now turn to chapter 3, which consists of an analysis of the notion of "the gift", and that of "thanking", as both these notions seem to

²⁰⁷Ibid. Pg. 244.

point to theological aspects in Heidegger's philosophy.

Chapter 3 “The Gift” and “Thanking”

Section 3.0 Being, beings and language

In this chapter I will explore Heidegger’s references to “the gift” and “thanking” in explaining the thinking of Being. In exploring these two notions I will focus on the possibility that Heidegger’s use of these words to describe man’s relation to Being, and thinking itself, call into question Heidegger’s insistence that Being is not a being. In fact, I would like to consider whether the use of such terms has theological connotations and thereby makes Being into God. I have divided this chapter into three sections, the first of which lays the groundwork for an examination of Heidegger’s theological sounding language by examining what Heidegger says of language in relation to Being and beings. Once I have established what Heidegger says of how Being and beings are brought into language I will move to considerations of what Heidegger actually says of Being, in the subsequent sections on “the gift” and thinking as “thanking”. The sections examining the notion of the gift and that of thanking will each move beyond mere examination of these terms to a discussion of whether Heidegger characterizes Being as the giver of the gift of thinking, and of whether thinking as thanking is a thanking that is directed to Being. In attending to these issues I will be considering whether through his language Heidegger makes Being into a being, in particular God.

To begin this section, (section 3.0) I will continue where I left off with the last chapter, (chapter 2, section 2.3) in discussing the duality of Being and beings. I will take up this discussion by emphasizing the relation between Being and language and how

Being and beings are brought into language. To assist in the consideration of the relation between Being and language, and how Being and beings are brought into language, I will turn to Heidegger's essay "Letter on Humanism" since it takes up both considerations. To this point I have focused on "What Is Called Thinking?" and the essay "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'" because the latter gives a background understanding of Heidegger's view of metaphysics while the former presents Heidegger's concept of thinking in relation to his view of metaphysics. The essay "Letter on Humanism" provides Heidegger's view on how the humanistic tradition, which Heidegger views as encapsulated within metaphysics, understands man. To explain how man is underestimated by humanism Heidegger describes the relation between man and Being, in particular how this relation occurs through language and thinking. The "Letter on Humanism" then brings together Heidegger's assertions on metaphysics and his concept of "thinking", in relation to an understanding of man as he who thinks Being and brings Being into language. This will provide a starting point which identifies how, according to Heidegger, Being can be spoken of, and thereby enables further discussion of how Heidegger does speak of Being.

As we have seen, Heidegger maintains that saying is really laying, in the sense of letting-lie-before-us. What is crucial to this letting-lie-before-us is that that which lies before us has set itself up and is lying before us, not that we have set it up ourselves. Laying is connected to saying in that saying something about something makes it lie before us and appear. Thinking, as taking-to-heart, is not simply conjoined with saying,

but the two are in fact united. Taking to heart and mind is the gathering of everything that lies before us, and through the gathering and saying of what lies before us that which lies before becomes manifest.

But that which first of all lies before and is taken to heart is the difference between Being and beings. Thus, what is spoken of initially is this difference. Although the difference between Being and beings is what first lies before us and is spoken of, what actually lies before us as what can be spoken of, is what is present – beings. Being brings forth beings, but in this bringing forth it conceals itself. Through saying we then make beings appear and let them lie before us. However, it is in realizing that beings are beings through the lighting of Being, rather than being represented and set up as objects that humans can dominate, that the truth of Being is brought to language, along with the truth of beings. When we speak of beings we do so in a manner that lets beings appear and become manifest through the lighting of Being because we are the openness or lighting of Being in which beings become manifest.²⁰⁸ Therefore, in speaking of beings, we speak of Being as this lighting, or presencing of beings. As Heidegger says,

In its essence, language is not the utterance of an organism; nor is it the expression of a living thing. Nor can it ever be thought in an essentially correct way in terms of its symbolic character, perhaps not even in terms of the character of signification. Language is the light-concealing advent of Being itself.²⁰⁹

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Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism". From Basic Writings. Ed. David Farrell Krell. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1978. Pg. 205.

²⁰⁹Ibid. Pg. 206.

Heidegger is very specific about what we can say about Being and how we can say it. In being very specific Heidegger is able to set up a distinction between his thinking and metaphysical thinking, as the latter tries to “represent” Being as a being and thereby speaks of and explains Being as though it is a being. Since Being is not a being, it cannot be *explained* as a being in reference to other beings, and yet we can *say* the truth of Being. This division between explaining and saying is pivotal to the distinction between metaphysical thinking that represents, and the thinking that thinks Being and brings Being to language through thinking. In explaining, we look upon that which is to be explained as an object before us, and the explanation that results is essentially determined by us. Yet the speaking that Heidegger puts forward in contradistinction to this explaining is rather a letting something arise and speak through us. As Heidegger states, thinking “lets itself be claimed by Being so that it can say the truth of Being.”²¹⁰ Language, for Heidegger, is as he says, “the house of Being”. Not only does Being dwell in this home, but man also takes up residence there to guard Being’s home: “Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of Being insofar as they bring the manifestation to language and maintain it in language through their speech.”²¹¹

But, rather than being claimed by Being so that Being can become manifest in language and speak through man, humanity, within the rise of subject-ism, employs

²¹⁰Ibid. Pg. 194.

²¹¹Ibid. Pg. 193.

language for the manipulation, domination and objectification of beings. As previously explained in chapter I subject-ism takes its rise with the move from the subject as *subjectum* or *hypokeimenon*, to the subject as the ego which determines everything around it as an object represented by it. Through the employment of language for these purposes beings can be subject to explanations and proofs, which follows from their being encountered as “actualities” in a “calculative business-like way”, but also scientifically and philosophically.²¹² Heidegger then concludes that it is through such explanations and proofs that we come to believe that we can approach Being as though “it were already decided that the truth of Being lets itself at all be established in causes and explanatory grounds, or what comes to be the same, in their incomprehensibility.”²¹³ Thus, in order for Being to become manifest in language, thereby returning language to its essence as the house of Being, we must let ourselves be claimed by Being rather than representing Being.²¹⁴ When we are claimed by Being and bring Being to manifestation in language we recognize the difference between Being and beings and put this difference in words by naming beings.

In What Is Called Thinking? Heidegger tells us that to name “is to call and clothe something with a word”.²¹⁵ What is called responds to, or is at the call of the word and

²¹²ibid. Pg. 199.

²¹³ibid. Pg. 199.

²¹⁴ibid. Pg. 199.

²¹⁵Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 120.

when it is called it is called to appear as what is present. Thus, as Heidegger says: “By naming, we call on what is present to arrive.”²¹⁶ When we name beings and thus bring them into language we are calling beings into presence and become aware of beings as they are brought forth from Being. By bringing the truth of beings, as the unconcealed, into language, the truth of Being as that which unconceals beings is also brought into language. This naming can then be thought of as a *saying*, which does not attempt to conceptualize or grasp beings, but rather lets them speak through man as they lie before us. With this naming, then, the duality of Being and beings is revealed.

From this examination of language we see that, for Heidegger, language returns to its essence, and Being becomes manifest in language when we listen to Being and let language speak through us. When we listen to the call of Being and are claimed by Being we are able to witness beings as they are brought forth from Being; thus as they are in themselves. However, language is also relevant for Heidegger because Being itself puts restraints on what can be said of it. In other words, the very nature of Being, if Being can be spoken of in such a manner, limits how it can be described and what can be said of it. Being is not a being, and thereby it cannot be described as such. But Heidegger's insistence that Being is not a being limits what Heidegger can say of Being. Just as the “seeing” within Heidegger's “leap of vision” is not easily put into words, as the essence of this leap is the seeing, so too is Being not easily expressed in language. Although Heidegger tells us that we must let language speak through us, this is

²¹⁶Ibid. Pg. 120.

incredibly difficult to do because our everyday experience of language emerges from our understanding of thinking, which in turn emerges from the *logos*: thinking is saying something about something in the form of a proposition. That which is asserted about something is a predicate, and that of which the predicate is asserted is the subject. Language, as based on the subject-predicate form, can be seen as a manipulation of language in its essential form, i.e., language as that which speaks through man rather than being used as a tool for man. This manipulation of language seems to manifest itself in the very manner by which we use language -- to say something about something by predicating it. However, this manner of saying something about something differs from Heidegger's explanation of "laying". Laying, as a saying something about something, calls a being into presence as that which has risen from unconcealment. Saying something about something in the manner of predication seems to be altogether different, as it overlooks the mere presence of a being in favor of *what* can be said about it. In fact, it can even be said that this predication that occurs in language reinforces the subject-ism of metaphysics. This subject-ism presents itself in language through the emphasis on the subject and predicate. In language we say something about a subject by predicating it, we make it accessible to us in language by giving it predicates. The subject-ism of language then resides in the fact that by giving a being predicates we determine it ourselves and are able to grasp it in the manner it has been determined. We, in a sense, place a boundary around the being by thinking of it merely in relation to those predicates that we apply to it. A being or subject is then limited to those predicates which are

determined and applied to it by man. Man essentially “captures” a being in language, and this capture can in fact be seen as another manner of humanity’s objectification and domination of the earth. Rather than the naming which calls a being into presence, and allows it to appear as it is in itself, by applying certain predicates to a being we are designating or labeling it as a particular thing in the manner by which it may be useful to see it. However, Being is not some thing which we can predicate. Being cannot be encountered as a being, thus the limiting aspect of language is not applicable to Being. Instead, the limit is in terms of what we can say of Being. In this sense the “seeing” of Being would take priority over any possible expression of Being in language. Yet, if Heidegger is to tell his readers about Being, he must have recourse to language. The duality of Being and beings then further manifests itself in the fact that beings can easily be put in language, in the sense of being named and being labelled, while Being cannot.

Section 3.1 The analysis of “the Gift”

The difference between Being and beings is further emphasized in language by the use of the word “is”. In “Letter on Humanism” Heidegger mentions that in Being and Time the statement “... only as long as Dasein *is* (that is, as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible), ‘is there’ Being”²¹⁷ refers to the problem of using the word “is” in relation to Being. In German “there is” translates as “*es gibt*”, which is an impersonal phrase, and in English “*es gibt*” literally means “it gives”. Heidegger tells us

²¹⁷Heidegger, Being and Time. Pg. 212.

that “it gives” is used instead of “is” in order to avoid saying that “Being is”. Heidegger fears that saying “is” in relation to Being may permit Being to be thought of as a being, since “is” can rightly be said of a being. However, Heidegger points out that “in the early age of thinking” Parmenides tells us that “*esti gar einaí*”, which translates: “for there is Being”.²¹⁸ From Parmenides’ statement Heidegger suggests the possibility that “is” can only appropriately be said of Being, not individual beings. Thus what properly “is” is Being rather than individual beings.²¹⁹ Reference to Being as what properly “is” or “already is” occurs in “Letter on Humanism” in Heidegger’s discussion of the accomplishment of the relation of Being to the essence of man through thinking. Heidegger states that this accomplishment can only occur because Being “already is” and only that which already is can be accomplished.²²⁰ As Heidegger states: “... what ‘is’ above all is Being”.²²¹

“It gives” is used instead of “there is” to highlight the ontological difference between Being and beings; however, the “it gives” also speaks of the manner in which Being presents itself, if Being can be said to present itself at all. According to Heidegger

²¹⁸Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism”. Pg. 214.

²¹⁹Ibid. Pg. 214.

²²⁰Ibid. Pg.193.

²²¹Ibid. Pg. 193.

in the phrase “it gives” the “it” that “gives” is Being.²²² Moreover, he tells us that the essence of Being is giving.²²³ This giving occurs through Being giving its truth and itself. Thus Heidegger refers to Being as the “self-giving into the open”.²²⁴ Therefore, it can be said that Being gives itself; however, “it is” does not give itself as itself, it rather gives the duality of itself and beings by bringing forth from itself beings as beings.

Not only does Being give itself and its truth, but in What Is Called Thinking? we are told that Being gives thinking to man. In his initial discussion of the four ways of asking the question “what is called thinking?” Heidegger mentions that the fourth formulation of the question, which is “what is it that calls on us to think?”, is more than just another formulation of the initial question. As I have previously pointed out, this formulation of the question also asks: “What makes a call upon us that we should think and, by thinking, be who we are?”²²⁵ At this point in the text Heidegger refers to Being as what is “most thought-provoking” and tells us that that which is most thought-provoking gives us itself, as a gift, to think about. Furthermore, that which calls us to think does not merely give us itself to think about, but it “first gives thought and thinking

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In his essay “Theology in ‘Zeit und Sein’” Peter Harris points out that in Heidegger’s essay “Time and Being” the “It” that gives is “*Ereignis*”, or Event of Appropriation. *Ereignis* in fact gives Being. Harris, Peter. “Theology in ‘Zeit und Sein’” Unpublished. 2001. Pgs. 3 and 12.

²²³Ibid. Pg. 214.

²²⁴Ibid. Pg. 193.

²²⁵Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 121.

to us, it entrusts thought to us as our essential destiny and thus first joins and appropriates us to thought."²²⁶ Being then gives itself to us as a gift and gives us the gift of thinking.

Heidegger also speaks of Being giving thought to man in "Letter on Humanism". In this essay Heidegger states: "Thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to Being solely as something handed over to it from Being."²²⁷ As that which gives thinking, Being is described as the "enabling" which enables thinking by embracing it and bringing it into its essence. Thinking is said to be "of" Being to the extent that thinking belongs to Being, and thus can be given by Being. In belonging to Being, thinking listens to Being and it is by this listening that thinking is what it is in its essential nature.²²⁸ In fact, Heidegger claims that to say that thinking *is*, is to say that "Being has fatefully embraced its essence."²²⁹ Heidegger seems to be saying that thinking truly "is" when Being has brought about the accomplishment of thinking as that which "is".

Being brings about this accomplishment by embracing thinking. We are told that to embrace a "thing" or "person" in its essence is to love and favor it. Heidegger focuses on the idea of favoring and reveals that in an original way to favor is to bestow essence as a gift. Furthermore, this favoring is the proper essence of enabling "which not only can

²²⁶Ibid. Pg. 121.

²²⁷Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism". Pg. 193.

²²⁸Ibid. Pg. 196.

²²⁹Ibid. Pg. 196.

achieve this or that but also can let something essentially unfold in its provenance, that is, let it be.²³⁰ Being is then the enabling, and this enabling has its essence in favoring, which in itself is a bestowing of essence as a gift. It seems then that we can conclude that giving is an essential aspect of Being.

I would suggest that there are two reasons for speaking of giving as characterizing Being's relation to man and of giving as the essence of Being. The first is that since Being is not a being which can be represented, Heidegger must insist that Being is not to be characterized as a being which "is", and in accordance with this that the thinking that thinks Being not be representational. It seems that the best way to avoid this is to claim that our thinking of Being is given to us by Being. In this way we cannot devise our own conceptions of Being, because our thinking of Being has been given to us by Being itself. For example, within Nietzsche's metaphysic, according to Heidegger's account, Being is seen as the will to power, yet this is merely an interpretation of Being sent from itself. The history of Being is Being itself presenting itself through beings, yet not presenting itself as itself. However, when we think Being in the manner Heidegger puts forward, thinking is not a thinking *of* some thing, but this thinking is a letting ourselves be called and claimed by Being. This notion of Being giving itself to us to be thought about, giving thinking to us as our essence, and of giving itself in giving beings, is crucial in order to emphasize that thinking is not a setting up before ourselves what is to be thought about, but rather a waiting to be called and claimed by Being, thereby placing ourselves

²³⁰Ibid. Pg. 196.

in submission or releasement to Being.

These notions of waiting and releasement to Being are found in Heidegger's dialogue "A Conversation on a Country Path", itself found in his text Discourse on Thinking. The dialogue is between a scholar, a teacher and a scientist and is focused on a discussion of the nature of thinking. The teacher is a mouthpiece for Heidegger's views and thereby introduces Heidegger's "thinking" to the other two. The scientist's contributions to the conversation indicate that he is a proponent of representational thinking; yet over the course of the conversation he is swayed toward Heidegger's thinking. The scholar seems to be a mediator between the two working to flush out the views that both are presenting.

The concept of thinking that Heidegger presents in "A Conversation on a Country Path", which is opposed to representational thinking, is that thinking consists in being open to the manner by which beings arise from Being, and to Being itself. By thinking in this manner, which Heidegger refers to as "releasement", man is open to Being and thus is an openness; but at the same time Being is open to man as *the region*, or expanse, from which beings emerge. In German "region" translates as *gegnet*, which means "expanse".²³¹ Thus in this text Heidegger refers to Being as "that-which-regions" thereby emphasizing that Being is an openness which presents beings to man, and that this manner of being open is an *activity* that Being carries out.²³² Although releasement is a

²³¹Heidegger, Discourse on Thinking. Pg. 66.

²³²Ibid. Pg. 27.

manner of thinking which man is capable of, we are told in the dialogue that releasement is to be “let in” from somewhere beyond ourselves.²³³ Although releasement is presented as some kind of goal, we are told that representational thinking is the only thinking possible to mankind at present, and because representational thinking will not instigate releasement we must simply *wait* for releasement. Heidegger explains that waiting is contrary to *awaiting* because *awaiting* is a waiting for something which we represent to ourselves, while waiting does not have an object. When we wait we leave open what we are waiting for because “waiting releases itself into openness, into the expanse of distance, in whose nearness it finds the abiding in which it remains”.²³⁴

Further into the conversation it is discovered that releasement is a movement that rests in Being, or that-which-regions, and Being enables releasement. According to Heidegger, waiting releases us from representational thinking and in releasement we reach Being. Waiting is releasing oneself into the openness of that-which-regions and is a going into that-which-regions. Not only does waiting release one into that-which-regions, but waiting is also held by that-which-regions when it enters into it.²³⁵ To the extent that waiting is held by that-which-regions it can be said that releasement is let in by that-which-regions. According to Heidegger releasement must be based upon that-which-regions and the movement releasement has toward that-which-regions must have

²³³Ibid. Pg. 61.

²³⁴Ibid. Pg. 68.

²³⁵Ibid. Pg. 72.

come from that-which-regions. That releasement must be based upon that-which-regions is in accordance with the fact that its relation to that-which-regions is determined by that-which-regions.²³⁶ Heidegger tells us that releasement emerges from that-which-regions, because in releasement we remain released to that-which-regions and in fact this releasement is sustained through that-which-regions. Furthermore, we are released to that-which-regions in our being, because we originally belong to that-which-regions. This belonging occurs because we are appropriated to that-which-regions through that-which-regions.²³⁷ Thus Heidegger states:

Releasement comes out of that-which-regions because in releasement man stays released to that-which-regions and, indeed, through this itself. He is released to it in his being, insofar as he originally belongs to it. He belongs to it insofar as he is *appropriated* initially to that-which-regions and, indeed, through this itself.²³⁸

It is then concluded that the nature of waiting is releasement to that-which-regions, and since that-which-regions lets releasement belong to it then the nature of thinking resides in "the regioning of releasement by that-which-regions".²³⁹

From this examination of Discourse on Thinking we see that thinking is a waiting to be called by Being, and that when we are called by Being we are released to Being. This manner of releasement is not simply a belonging to Being, but seems to be similar to

²³⁶Ibid. Pg. 73.

²³⁷Ibid. Pg. 73.

²³⁸Ibid. Pg. 73.

²³⁹Ibid. Pg. 74.

what Heidegger has said of devotion. In discussing what “thinking” signifies Heidegger explains that the *thanc* refers to the memory, and that memory means the same thing as devotion. Devotion is defined as a constant concentrated abiding with something, and it is the heart that carries out this concentrated abiding.²⁴⁰ Similar to devotion, releasement is a staying with that-which-regions because it belongs to it in the same manner that the heart stays with Being.²⁴¹ Although Heidegger does not explicitly state it, there appears to be a sense of submission or of giving oneself to Being in the notion of releasement. We submit and give ourselves over to that-which-regions because we realize that we originally belong to and are appropriated by it.

I have now presented what I suggest to be the first reason Heidegger speaks of giving as characterizing Being’s relation to man and of giving as the essence of Being. To recapitulate: the first reason is that the best way to avoid any representational thinking which makes Being into a being which “is”, is to insist that our thinking of Being is given to us by Being. The second reason, which follows from the first, is that Heidegger must refer to the notion of the gift because Being itself leaves this as the only way for us to speak about it. We cannot see Being, it conceals itself and withdraws from us; thus the only way we can say anything of the truth of Being is if Being gives itself to us, enabling man to think and speak of it. Therefore, we wait for Being to give itself, and as we have

²⁴⁰Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pgs. 140-141.

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I will return to the concept of devotion to discuss it in relation to worship. However, it is presently worthwhile to point out the similarity between devotion and releasement.

seen, if we do not wait for this giving but instead go about conceiving of Being on the basis of beings, we are unable to reach Being. Being sends us interpretations of itself based on beings, but these interpretations arise from not waiting for Being to give itself as itself. As a result of this unwillingness to wait, man turns to beings in order to find Being. It appears then that Being determines itself as self-giving. Thus it is fitting to speak of “the gift” of thinking from Being, and the gift of Being as that which is to be thought about, because any contact we have with Being seems to arise only if Being gives itself to us.

However, despite the fact that speaking of “the gift” is necessary for Heidegger’s distinction between representational thinking and the thinking that thinks Being, and because of his claim that thinking of Being is only possible if Being gives itself to be thought about, this notion of the gift is reminiscent of the Christian notion of “grace”. In his book Heidegger’s Philosophy of Being Herman Philipse suggests that although Heidegger insists that Being is not the Christian God, Heidegger’s thought is not that removed from the Christian tradition. In fact, Philipse refers to Heidegger’s thought as “postmonotheist”. Philipse explains that Heidegger’s thought can be termed *postmonotheist* because for Heidegger monotheism is over, the God that has been misinterpreted as Being is dead, as Nietzsche has pronounced.²⁴² However, Heidegger’s

242

For Nietzsche “God” represents the suprasensory world “as the world that truly is and determines all, ideals and Ideas, the purposes and grounds that determine and support everything that is and human life in particular”. (Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche: ‘God is Dead’”, Pg. 66) The suprasensory realm can also be considered as man’s highest value. When Nietzsche pronounces the death of God he is referring to his belief that man

thought remains *monotheist* to the extent that structural parallels can be found between traditional Christian theology and Heidegger's later discourse on Being. These two aspects of postmonotheism are complementary and thus the postmonotheist theme is defined as: "the attempt to replace the Christian religion by a different variety of religious discourse, the meaning of which is parasitic upon the monotheist Christian discourse that it intends to destroy".²⁴³

According to Philipse, Heidegger's intention to destroy Christian discourse stems from the fact that in Heidegger's view the Christian tradition misconceived Being as a being by taking Being to be God, whom they saw as the highest being. Heidegger's problem with the Christian God lies in the notion of creation – that God is a creator and all other beings God's creation.²⁴⁴ With this notion of creation "to be" becomes synonymous with "being produced" and production becomes a central theme within metaphysics, culminating in the interpretation of beings as in some manner being produced by humans. In Being and Time Heidegger says that createdness "in the widest sense of something's having been produced, was an essential item in the structure of the

has realized that the ideals and goals presented by the suprasensory realm cannot be actualized within the sensory realm. Thus the suprasensory realm, or the highest values, devalue themselves. In response to this man brings about a revaluation of values which recognizes the will to power as the principle of the new value-positing. (Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pgs. 66 and 75)

²⁴³Philipse. Pg. 187.

²⁴⁴Ibid. Pgs. 184-85.

ancient conception of Being".²⁴⁵ Philipse points out that Heidegger advocates a rejection of the ancient conception of God as a creator because this notion "dispels our sense of wonder about the fact that beings *are*."²⁴⁶ Rather than simply accepting that beings have been created by God Heidegger thinks that we should look to Being "as the wonderful process of revealing entities to us".²⁴⁷ However, despite Heidegger's intention to destroy Christian discourse and reinstate Being as the process of unconcealment, Heidegger's discourse can be seen as parasitic upon the Christian discourse. This Christian discourse upon which Heidegger's thought is parasitic is primarily informed by Luther; in fact Philipse asserts that the apparent religious aspects of Heidegger's later works can be thought of as "a radicalization of Luther".²⁴⁸ Furthermore, Philipse claims that it is possible to understand Being's self-giving essence in relation to the Christian conception of grace when Heidegger's thought is considered to be a radicalization of Luther.

Phlipse explains that Luther's break with Roman Catholicism was brought about in reaction to "extravagant" practices within Catholicism, such as selling indulgences. The practice of selling indulgences gave testimony to the fact that human actions were being traded for inner repentance, and this lead Luther to question the justification of man

²⁴⁵Heidegger, Being and Time. Pg. 25.

²⁴⁶Phlipse. Pg. 191.

²⁴⁷Ibid. Pg. 191.

²⁴⁸Ibid. Pg. 182.

before God. Luther came to the conclusion that, contrary to the Church's belief that good works and sacraments aid in the justification of man, "God's righteousness cannot be conceived in terms of a transaction in which satisfaction is made to God."²⁴⁹ Luther found the basis of this belief in St. Paul, who claimed that man is made righteous before God and transformed only by God's grace. Consequently, human actions are severed from the ultimate determination of man's destiny. "Grace alone decides".²⁵⁰ Therefore, St. Paul and Luther hold that grace is not an obligation God has toward us in response to our adherence to the laws of religion and the sacraments, or our good deeds. Rather, grace is a free gift of God and God is the one who determines the dispensation of it.

Heidegger speaks in a similar manner of the gift of Being, maintaining that we may prepare ourselves for Being's coming, but in the end it is decided by Being alone whether it will continue to withhold itself or give itself to us.²⁵¹ In his essay "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'" Heidegger speaks of thinking as being preparatory, and explains the nature of this preparation as follows: "What matters to preparatory thinking is to light up that space within which Being itself might again be able to take man, with respect to his essence, into a primal relationship. To be preparatory is the essence of such thinking."²⁵² Although we may prepare ourselves to receive Being's grace, it is apparent

²⁴⁹Ibid. Pg. 182.

²⁵⁰Ibid. Pg. 182.

²⁵¹Ibid. Pg. 196.

²⁵²Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'". Pg. 55.

that Being alone will decide when it gives itself. This can be attested to when Heidegger speaks of Being *favoring* man, Being's inclination toward man, and, as we have seen from Discourse on Thinking, that the releasement of man to Being is "let in" by Being. In fact, the very notion of a gift seems to imply that it is the giver who decides whether the gift will be given, since otherwise we cannot speak of that which is given as a gift.

Although Philipse refers to Heidegger's thought as postmonotheist, a distinction must be made between the God of traditional philosophy, which is a misinterpretation of Being, and the God of faith. Heidegger himself makes this distinction in his book Identity and Difference wherein he explains the essential constitution of metaphysics as onto-theology. In Identity and Difference Heidegger explains that metaphysics is onto-theology because it is concerned with beings as beings (thus it is ontology) and it is concerned with finding the reason or ground of the totality or whole of beings (thereby being theologic).²⁵³ Metaphysics interprets the Being of beings as this ground of beings taken as a whole:

Metaphysics thinks of beings as such, that is, in general. Metaphysics thinks of beings as such, as a whole. Metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of the all that accounts for the ground, that is, of the All-Highest. The Being of beings is thus thought of in advance as the grounding ground.²⁵⁴

However, the Being of beings comes to be thought of as God when the *first* ground is

²⁵³Heidegger, Identity and Difference. Pg. 54.

²⁵⁴Ibid. Pg. 58.

sought out. Thus the Being of beings is “represented fundamentally, in the sense of the ground” only when it is represented as *causa sui*.²⁵⁵ Heidegger points out that *causa sui* is the metaphysical concept of God.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, Heidegger distinguishes between the metaphysical concept of God and the god of faith or the divine God. In reference to the metaphysical God Heidegger states: “Man can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god. Before the *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music and dance before this god.”²⁵⁷ However, the thought of God that is not based on an understanding of him as *causa sui*, is, as Heidegger states, “perhaps closer to the divine God” and “more open to Him than onto-theo-logic would like to admit”.²⁵⁸

From this we see that for Heidegger there is a difference between the metaphysical conception of God, and the God of faith. When Heidegger refers to the misinterpretation of Being as a being, namely God, he is referring to the metaphysical God. However, when Heidegger speaks of the possibility of the God of faith it is not necessarily thought of as a being in relation to Being, but as something that can only be understood once the truth of Being is understood. Thus it seems that a possible God of faith does not stand above Being. In “Letter on Humanism” Heidegger states: “Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of

²⁵⁵Ibid. Pg. 69.

²⁵⁶Ibid. Pg. 60.

²⁵⁷Ibid. Pg. 72.

²⁵⁸Ibid. Pg. 72.

the holy is the essence of divinity to be thought. Only in the light of the essence of divinity can it be thought or said what the word 'God' is to signify."²⁵⁹ The analogy Philipse draws between Heidegger's Being and God seems to be an analogy between the Christian God of theology, the *causa sui* and highest being, and Being. Although Heidegger sees the Christian God of theology as a being, it will be revealed that there are structural parallels between the God of theology, particularly the theology of Luther, and Being. Furthermore, I hope to show that faith seems to play a large enough role in the thinking of Being to draw similarities between religious faith and the thinking of Being.

Heidegger maintains that Being is not a being and cannot be represented, yet he uses language that places Being in proximity to a God that he insists is thought of as a being. If Being can be thought of not merely analogously with this God, but can in fact be identified with it, the only reason Being would then be interpreted as a being is because Heidegger insists that in the Western tradition God is represented as a being. But this is simply Heidegger's own interpretation of God and it seems quite possible that proof could be found to discredit this interpretation.

In fact, John Macquarrie, in his book Heidegger and Christianity, argues that Heidegger overlooks the varieties of theologies, in particular the theologies of Paul Tillich, Dionysius the Areopagite and St. Thomas, who all speak of God in terms of

²⁵⁹Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism". Pg. 230.

Being rather than as a being.²⁶⁰ Macquarrie explains that Tillich “eventually came to see God’s relation to the creatures in much the same terms as Heidegger visualized the relation of Being to beings.”²⁶¹ For Tillich “God is not a being, not even the supreme being, but Being itself.”²⁶² Moreover, according to Macquarrie, Tillich was not the first to claim that God is Being; in fact, theologians had been speaking of God as Being from the time of Dionysius the Areopagite, who referred to God as “*hyperousia*”, “beyond being”. Likewise St. Thomas, who used the term *ens*, ‘a being’, for God, qualified this term in order to distinguish the *ens* of God from “all innerworldly entia” as a unique reality that may be thought of as “wholly other” to finite entities.²⁶³ Therefore, if Heidegger’s theistic language can be said to move beyond analogy with God to identification, then the only reason Being would be thought of as a being, is because Heidegger himself holds to an interpretation of God which sees God as a being. This interpretation of God as a being seems to be necessary for his discourse on Being, for otherwise God would either be ontologically equal or superior to Being, and Heidegger would have to speak about God and Being in the same manner, or revert to speaking solely about God. Although Heidegger does draw a distinction between the God of faith

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Macquarrie, John. Heidegger and Christianity. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company. 1994. Pg. 55.

²⁶¹ Ibid. Pg. 55.

²⁶² Ibid. Pg. 55.

²⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 55.

and traditional conceptions of God, he seems to focus primarily on insisting that the traditional conceptions of God make God into a being, thereby differentiating Being from God. However, it is in the realm of faith that similarities between the thinking of Being and religious faith can arise. In Heidegger's identification of thinking with thanking these similarities present themselves.

Section 3.2 Thinking as thanking

In this section I will build upon the conclusions reached in chapter 1, where I discussed the origin of "thinking" in the *thanc*, as these conclusions are useful in a further consideration of "the gift". In this explanation of what "thinking" signifies, Heidegger reveals that "thinking" has its origin in the word *thanc*, and that the *thanc* is itself connected to memory and "thanks". Just as memory is a gathering, keeping, and staying with things so, too, is the *thanc*, as it is the gathering of the constant intention of everything that the heart holds in present being. Likewise, "thanks" and the *thanc* are brought together, to the extent that giving thanks is an act of the heart giving thought to what it is staying with and what it is. Inasmuch as thanks and memory are a concentrated abiding with things, memory and thanks can be equated with devotion. Therefore, since the *thanc* is connected to memory and thanks, the *thanc* can also be thought of as similar to devotion. Giving thanks is giving thought, and thanks are given for the gift of our essence, given to us by Being. Thus we give thanks for the gift of thinking by giving thought to Being. In my discussion of "the gift" I have presented the possibility that the

notion of “the gift” functions to hinder a representation of Being as a being to be dominated and manipulated by man, by placing Being above man as the giver of his essential nature. Being gives man the gift of thinking, his essential nature, but man must simply wait to receive this gift. When thinking is characterized as thanking, memory and devotion, the representation of Being appears to be hindered. If giving thanks is giving thought and thought is regarded in its origin as the *thanc*, the gathering of the constant intention of everything the heart holds in present being, then thanking is also this gathering of constant intention. This identification of thanking as thinking reveals the nature of thanking to be contrary to representational thinking. What the heart holds in present being is what lies before, and it holds what lies before *as* it lies before and has set itself up before us. In representational thinking what lies before us is what is set up by man. Therefore, thinking as thanking, in the manner Heidegger describes, cannot occur within representational thinking.

The identification of thinking with thanking also reveals that the relation between Being and man is not one of subject and object. Man is thankful to Being and this seems to place him in a position of supplication to Being. Giving thanks, which is giving thought, allows for man’s realization that he is not the determining center of the world who comes to decide what Being is, but rather there is something higher than man, which man comes to stand humbly beneath in order to receive the gift of his essence. In receiving this gift man maintains his humble stance and gives thanks to Being by giving thought to Being. Giving thought to Being is also a keeping Being in memory and

constantly staying with Being.

Giving thought can then be considered to be devotion, and as Macquarrie suggests, it can even be considered as worship. Macquarrie suggests that from Heidegger's discussion of the heart giving thanks and giving itself in thought to that which holds it, that to which it "thinks of itself as beholden, not in the sense of mere submission, but beholden because its devotion is held in listening", thinking can be seen as worship.²⁶⁴ Macquarrie interprets thinking as follows:

A true thinking is more than an intellectual operation, it is a disposition infused with thankfulness. This disposition is addressed to that which is above all thought-worthy and thought-evoking. To quote: "How can we give thanks for this gift, the gift of being able to think what is most thought-evoking, more fittingly than by giving thought to the most thought-evoking?" Thinking therefore is for Heidegger close to worship, and the expression 'piety of thinking' is not misplaced when applied to him.²⁶⁵

Whereas Macquarrie speaks of thinking as worship, Philipse speaks of thinking as devotion. Philipse explains that for Heidegger, *Denken*, the German for "thinking", is substituted by *Andenken*, the German noun for "remembering", which Heidegger uses as a verb. According to Philipse, *Andenken* is related to the German word *Andacht*, which means *devotion*.²⁶⁶ Thinking can be seen as devotion when we consider thinking to be a constant questioning, as Philipse does. However, this devoted thinking differs from

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Macquarrie, Pg. 82. Macquarrie quoting from Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 141.

²⁶⁵Ibid. Pg. 82.

²⁶⁶Philipse. Pg. 197.

religious devotion, which rests on faith, simply because Heidegger distinguishes the thinking of Being from religious faith. Faith does not question, "faith is seen as the presumption of knowing the answer to all questions concerning the meaning of life."²⁶⁷ Not only is thinking not to be equated with faith, but it is also removed from logic, to the extent that what thinking yields can never be proven or brought together in a logical argument.²⁶⁸ Although Heidegger distinguishes thinking from faith, his notion of the "leap of vision" appears to require faith. As Heidegger has stated in What Is Called Thinking, a leap is required for thinking to think Being. In speaking of translating the words "being" and "to be" into Greek Heidegger states:

Such translation is possible only if we transpose ourselves into what speaks from these words. And this transposition can succeed only by a leap, the leap of a single vision which sees what the words "being" and "to be", heard with Greek ears, state or tell.²⁶⁹

Philipse singles out this notion of the leap, pointing out that it recalls what St. Paul and Kierkegaard have said of folly and faith respectively. St. Paul says that by God's doing the wisdom of the world became folly, thus faith came to appear foolish or mad when viewed from a common sense perspective. Similarly, Kierkegaard maintains that faith will only come to us by a leap, because there is an abyss between finite human beings and the Infinite, i.e., God.

Heidegger appears to be saying something similar in relation to thinking, when he

²⁶⁷Philipse. Pg. 197.

²⁶⁸Ibid. Pg. 198.

²⁶⁹Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Pg. 232.

states that thinking may appear foolish when viewed from a common sense perspective, and that a leap is necessary for thinking of Being. Thinking can, then, be connected to religious devotion to the extent that it appears as foolish and that it also requires a leap. What Kierkegaard and St. Paul regard as faith is analogous to Heidegger's thinking, in that Heidegger's thinking is not the representational, scientific or common sense thinking that constitutes the traditional conception of thinking. Thinking stands outside all of these, thereby opening itself up to accusations of "irrationality". This distance between the thinking of Being and the representational thinking of metaphysics lends itself to the discussion of a "leap" because "we can never prove what thinking yields, nor argue for it".²⁷⁰ I would suggest that there are further similarities between religious faith and Heidegger's thinking.

In order to examine these similarities I will turn to Heidegger's essay "Phenomenology and Theology", where Heidegger sketches out the difference between philosophy and theology, and carries out a phenomenological reduction of theology. I will focus here primarily on Heidegger's comments on faith, in order to reveal similarities between Heidegger's thinking and faith. First of all, Heidegger tells us that the essence of faith can be thought of as a mode of human existence which "according to its own testimony – itself belonging to this mode of existence – arises not from Dasein or spontaneously through Dasein, but rather from that which is revealed in and with this

²⁷⁰Philipse. Pg. 198.

mode of existence, from what is believed."²⁷¹ Thus we see that the essence of faith is dependent upon revelation since it in fact arises from that which is revealed in faith. Moreover, faith cannot be entered into unless one believes that which is revealed; thus faith testifies for itself. According to Heidegger, Christ, the crucified God, is revealed to faith and gives rise to faith. Similarly, the crucifixion, although it is an historical event, is "known" only by belief. Heidegger explains that that which is revealed in faith is imparted to actually existing individuals or communities of individuals.²⁷² This imparting of revelation is not an imparting of information of past, present or future happenings, but rather "this imparting lets one partake of the event, which is revelation (= what is revealed) itself."²⁷³ Heidegger adds that the "part-taking" of faith is *given* only through faith. The event of crucifixion is that which one partakes in and by partaking in this event one's entire human existence, as a Christian existence, is placed before God. Once this revelation occurs and one has been brought before God, one becomes aware of one's forgetfulness of God. Heidegger concludes from this that "being placed before God means that existence is reoriented in and through the mercy of God grasped in faith."²⁷⁴ From this we see that faith understands itself only in believing. Furthermore, it is not by

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Heidegger, Martin. "Phenomenology and Theology" from *The Piety of Thinking*. Trans. and Commentary James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1976. Pg. 9.

²⁷² *Ibid.* Pg. 9.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* Pg. 10.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 10.

theoretical confirmation of his inner experiences that the believer comes to know about his existence in faith. Rather, it is only by belief that he comes to know of this existence.

Heidegger also tells us that the occurrence of revelation, which is passed to faith and occurs through faithfulness itself, “discloses itself only to faith”.²⁷⁵ Heidegger quotes Luther, stating that “Faith is permitting ourselves to be seized by the things we do not see”²⁷⁶, but he adds to this that faith is more than the revelation of something actually occurring, it is not “some more or less modified type of knowing”.²⁷⁷ According to Heidegger faith is an “appropriation of revelation”.²⁷⁸ I think that in this context “appropriation” may in fact be interpreted in terms of Heidegger’s explanation of “thinking”: as a taking something up and staying with it, a taking to heart perhaps. Heidegger phenomenologically reduces faith to the “believing-understanding mode of existing in the history of the revealed, i.e., occurring, with the Crucified”, yet it seems that from his explanation of part-taking that faith can be compared to thinking in the manner of taking-to-heart.²⁷⁹

Heidegger also explains that theology is the science of what is disclosed through faith, which is that which is believed; but that which is believed is not a coherent order of

²⁷⁵ Ibid. Pg. 10.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 10 From Erlangen Ausgabe WW, Vol. 46, p. 287.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. Pg. 10.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. Pg. 10.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Pg. 10.

propositions about facts or occurrences to which we can give assent.²⁸⁰ That which is believed is revelation, and revelation only occurs through faith. Moreover, theology as a conceptual interpretation of faith, cannot make faith legitimate by founding it and securing it, neither can it make it easier to accept faith and remain faithful. In fact, theology can only reveal that faithfulness cannot be gained through the science of theology, but can only be gained through faith.²⁸¹

The motive for this consideration of Heidegger's insights on theology is to reveal that faith, as he presents it, seems comparable to Heidegger's leap of vision, which is required for thinking. Faith is that which is revealed, it is *given*. The truth of a revelation is accepted on the basis of belief, not from facts or arguments. In much the same way Heidegger's leap of vision consists of a belief-in, rather than a belief-that. According to the endnotes of the commentators, James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, to "Phenomenology and Theology", the positive sciences begin with beliefs-that "which comprise the guiding paradigms, procedures, laws, etc. taken for granted by the science, and which open up the realm to be investigated."²⁸² However, the positive science of theology, in illuminating the object of faith, is based on a belief-in. Heidegger's "thinking", as it is a thinking of Being which does not take Being as its object, seems comparable to a belief-in, rather than to a belief-that, since he contrasts his thinking with

²⁸⁰Ibid. Pg. 11.

²⁸¹Ibid. Pg. 12.

²⁸²Ibid. Footnote 4, Pgs. 170-171.

logical scientific thought. Furthermore, although he does not speak of thinking of Being as occurring by way of a revelation, the notion of the gift of thinking from Being may be a substitution for revelation.

The discussion of the “leap of vision” also appears to be comparable with faith, to the extent that this leap of vision cannot be proven logically or conveyed to others, rather it must simply be experienced. Just as the imparting of revelation given in faith is not an imparting of information but instead lets one partake of that which is revealed in faith, so too can the leap of vision be spoken of as a partaking in the event of the revelation of Being. In his book Heidegger's Ways Hans-Georg Gadamer explains that for Heidegger God can only be “known” rather than proven within metaphysics. Similarly, the thinking of Being corresponds with a “knowing” that does not attempt to subject Being to scientific or logical proofs, thereby trying to grasp or control Being as its object. Thus Gadamer states:

But the one searching for God – and this is Heidegger's point – “knows” of God; those who attempt to prove his existence are those who kill him in precisely this way... Just as one can know of the divine without grasping and knowing God, so too is the thinking of Being not a grasping, a possessing or a controlling.²⁸³

This “knowing” of God and of Being appears reminiscent of a belief-in, as it does not resort to scientific or logical proofs, but seems rather to arise through faith. In this manner I would suggest that Heidegger's thinking shares similarities with faith and

283

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Heidegger's Ways. Trans. John W. Stanley. New York: State University of New York Press. 1994. Pgs. 179-180.

religious devotion.

In relation to this devotion and quest for Being Philipse asks “Should we not suppose, then, that thinking in the sense of the later Heidegger is a postmonotheist analogue of the search for God in faith?”, and presents evidence that Heidegger’s discourse is *structurally* parallel to Christian discourse.²⁸⁴ Philipse asserts that Heidegger’s later discourse on Being is informed by a Lutheran model, but he stresses that this model is the *form* of Luther’s thought, rather than the *content*. Philipse identifies three tenets which make up the form of Luther’s thought, brought together as the Lutheran model which Heidegger appropriates. The first of Luther’s tenets is that there is an original revelation of God in Christ and in the Bible.²⁸⁵ His second tenet is that the tradition of theology that brought God’s revelation to humans betrayed the revelation because it turned to Greek conceptions, which were incompatible with it, to articulate its message. Luther was opposed to Aristotle’s conception of God as eternal substance, since as such God could not become manifest to humans in time. In the Christian faith an experience of temporality is central to human existence because it functions to remind humanity of its finitude and of the necessity of living one’s life in preparation for the second coming of Christ.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, Luther maintains that the Aristotelian misconception of God was in fact sent to humans by God himself. This misconception

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Philipse. Pg. 198.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Pg. 182.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. Pgs. 174-175.

was sent to humans as punishment for not acknowledging God, for conceiving of God on the basis of Greek thought. In other words, starting with the Greeks, God is not acknowledged as God, and in response to this God sent [sic] us misconceptions of him which result in God distancing himself from humankind.²⁸⁷ Thus we see that the “wisdom of the world”, i.e., Greek philosophy, was made foolish by God.²⁸⁸ Since wisdom is made folly, the possibility presents itself that the way to God is through faith, not speculation. The last tenet is that because it is a “falling away from the origin”, the tradition, that is Scholastic philosophy emerging out of Aristotle, must be destroyed in order to “revive” the original message.²⁸⁹

We can see how this model of tradition as falling from an origin has operated in Heidegger’s thought, although Heidegger’s relationship to Christianity has led to a reversal of the Lutheran model, wherein he looks to the Greeks as the origin of the revelation of Being, and sees Christian theology as the corruption of Greek thought and the beginning of the fall. Initially Heidegger agreed with Luther that Greek metaphysics had corrupted the Christian experience of life, which focused on the temporality of life. The origin at this point was then Christianity. But eventually he came to hold that the Christian conception of God as a creator and ground of beings made Being into a being by taking God as the highest being.

²⁸⁷Ibid. Pg. 195.

²⁸⁸Ibid. Pg. 186.

²⁸⁹Ibid. Pgs. 182-83.

From this Lutheran model we can see that although the content of Heidegger's discourse differs from Luther's, the form is the same: Being initially revealed itself to man, this revelation was hidden by incorrect conceptions of Being made by metaphysics and theology, sent to man from Being itself, and this tradition of the forgottenness of Being must be destroyed in order to reach the original revelation of Being. This call for destruction seems to arise from the realization that in order to "think" properly we must abandon the representational, subjectivist thinking of metaphysics and instead wait for and listen to the call of Being and open ourselves to Being once we hear this call. In accordance with what Philipse proposes, although Heidegger maintains that Being is not God, it can be said that his discourse on Being is structurally similar to Christian discourse on God. Just as man waits for the grace of God, so too does Dasein wait for the gift of Being; just as man devotes himself to and worships God, so too does Dasein give thanks to Being by thinking of Being and keeping Being in remembrance by constantly staying with it.

Section 3.3 Conclusion

On the basis of this examination of Heidegger's concept of "thinking" and his references to "the gift" and thinking as "thanking", I would suggest that these references do have theological connotations, particularly in relation to Luther's theology and the notion of faith. Heidegger maintains that Being is not God, but I would suggest that the language he uses presents the possibility for discussion of an analogy between Being and

God. I have made reference to the notion of “grace” and drawn connections between Heidegger’s explanation of faith and his own explanations of Being. Heidegger insists that the God of Christian theology and that of metaphysical thought is considered to be a being, but Macquarrie has brought forth evidence to the contrary. Macquarrie suggests that some theologians provide descriptions of God which specifically do not refer to God as a being. If Macquarrie’s suggestions are correct, then it can be shown that God has not always been thought of as a being. Furthermore, if God has not always been thought of as a being, then it becomes apparent that this is not acknowledged by Heidegger.

Heidegger’s theological sounding language seems to result from his attempt to step outside of metaphysics and speak of Being in a non-representational manner. It is in fact questionable whether Heidegger is able to step outside of metaphysics because he has no other option than to use metaphysical language in explaining his concept of “thinking”. It would surely be extremely difficult to write philosophical texts that do not have recourse to metaphysical language, which according to Heidegger seems to be all-encompassing. It would be even more difficult to attempt to speak of Being in a non-representational manner, when the representational language of metaphysics cannot be avoided. As I have explored, referring to the “gift” of Being, and to thinking as “thanking”, bring to light the problems in trying to escape a language that is inherently subjectivist and representational. Heidegger’s attempt to escape metaphysical language seems to be successful when he turns to a phenomenological approach that is similar to faith and does not focus on metaphysical language. However, the phenomenology that

appears to help Heidegger escape from metaphysical language, the phenomenology that emerges in What Is Called Thinking?, allows for comparisons to be made between Heidegger's philosophy and theology.

By using theistic language, particularly his notion of a "leap of vision", Heidegger seems to view phenomenology, as a method of reaching beings as they appear from out of the unconcealment of Being, as analogous to an act of faith. Description stops short when we reach the point at which a leap is required because attempts at describing what a leap reveals are futile. The point at which a leap is required is the point where we are to see the duality of Being and beings, thus Being as the process of unconcealment. Furthermore, since it is the seeing or looking itself that is essential in the leap of vision, the leap of vision must be carried out by the individual. Consequently, one cannot believe that a leap of vision is possible unless one partakes in the leap for oneself. Just as in religious faith it is the revelation itself that gives birth to faith, so too is it the experience of the leap that will allow one to believe that such a leap is possible. Phenomenology, at least as he defines it in Being and Time, is based on description, yet description appears to be downplayed when Heidegger applies the phenomenological method to an attempt to reach Being as the process of unconcealment.. In fact, description seems to appear in the form of the poetic word. Yet, this may be the point Heidegger is trying to make: that we must not exclusively rely on language for phenomenology, not only because it is riddled with concepts, but because it is based on a thinking that interprets the world in terms of subjects and predicates which do not allow

beings to lie before us as they are in themselves. Perhaps Heidegger is telling us that in order for language to speak through us, in order to be able to *say* the truth of Being, we must not only refer to thinking, in the manner of a letting-lie-before-us, but we should turn to poetry as well. This may be the phenomenological seeing Heidegger is proposing: it is a seeing that one must experience for oneself and that requires faith that one will see. And if we are to describe what is viewed in this seeing, language, as the *tool* of humankind, must be put aside in favor of saying of Being and the language of poetry. Thus it can be said that Heidegger's radicalization of theory-free description moves one step further in revealing the importance of poetry in describing Being.

Heidegger wanted to avoid the subject-object dualism and the subject-ism of metaphysical language. He did not want Being to be thought of as a highest value, or for the thinking of Being to consist in a willing which wills to make everything, including Being, into a value. The alternative to using metaphysical language, which places man at the center of the universe, is to remove man from this center by placing him in a position of humility before Being and beings. Thus Heidegger speaks of Being giving itself to man and giving man thinking, his essential nature. As I have pointed out, this giving is comparable to the Christian notion of "grace". When Heidegger relates thinking to thanking, parallels can be drawn to religious devotion and worship. Heidegger does maintain that faith differs from philosophy because it does not question. But although this difference is important, when Heidegger's description of faith is explored it is revealed that faith is similar to Heidegger's thinking of Being. I would suggest that these

similarities, comparisons and parallels bring Heidegger's discussions of thinking about Being in close proximity to, but not to be identified with, Christian theology. There are similarities between theology and Heidegger's thought, and analogies can be drawn between God and Being, but I would maintain that the question of whether Being is a substitute for God, and whether this is a fair question to pose, cannot be answered without further investigation. Such further investigation would entail a more comprehensive study of Heidegger's texts, with the intention of determining the legitimacy of his claim that God has traditionally been thought of as a being, and the relevance of his neglect of theologies which seem to suggest otherwise.

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