

productive exchange with technology. We could for once learn to set limits to technology: for instance, by refraining from wanting to make everything we are technologically able to make. Just consider the task of stopping the armaments race: it is clear that the demand for limitations demands something like a new and different kind of person. And philosophy has always been connected with the hope of awakening consciousness of the necessity to find new ways in times of crisis.<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats*, edited by P. Alt and R.K. Alspach, third edition (New York, 1966), pp. 161, 808-811.
2. Paul Celan, *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (Stuttgart, 1955), p. 22.
3. On 'new mythology', Hegel, Schopenhauer, Heidegger and Celan, see my book, *Die Frage nach der Kunst: Von Hegel zu Heidegger* (Freiburg and Munich, 1984). Concerning the difference between Becker and a philosophy of art in the manner of Heidegger and Gadamer, see my book, *Heidegger und die hermeneutische Philosophie* (Freiburg and Munich, 1983), pp. 365-388. See also my book, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking* (Atlantic Highlands, 1985).
4. I should like to thank Christopher Martin Fry for reading through the manuscript of this article.

## HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF REASON

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### I Irrationalism and Phenomenology

In his long study of the emergence of the cult of irrationalism in European culture since the eighteenth century, Lukács defends the possibility of an objective, explanatory science of the human condition (dialectical Marxism) against the pervading irrationalistic philosophical tendencies of the past two centuries--tendencies which he seeks to explain in terms of the *Angst* and dilemma of individualistic bourgeois humanity in the era of high capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Lukács begins with the Romantic writer Schelling, who made intellectual intuition the linchpin of his system, and continues through Nietzsche and Kierkegaard to Heidegger, and then to fully-fledged Nazi thinkers like Jünger, Krieck and Rosenberg. Lukács considers Heidegger's emphasis on phenomenological 'essential intuition' to be dangerous, because due to its 'irrationalistic arbitrariness anything at all can be brought about'.<sup>2</sup> *Sein und Zeit*, then, with its emphasis on the silent call of care (*Sorge*), the moment of insight (*Augenblick*) and decision, and its demand for authenticity, is seen as an expression of the *Zeitgeist*, as a mere *Lebensphilosophie*, a 'vitalism' which includes an 'abstract and mythicising anthropology'.<sup>3</sup> In short it represents an extreme form of uncritical, arbitrary subjectivism.

In the *Jargon of Authenticity* and in *Negative Dialectics*, T. Adorno has continued this critique, arguing that Heidegger's thought 'accommodated itself to the goal of subordination even where it aspires to resist that goal'.<sup>4</sup> Authenticity which has no critical moment is no more than an immediate submission to authoritarianism. Heidegger's mysticism, says Adorno, is a threat to the establishment of a rational social order. In his recently translated work, *Against Epistemology*, Adorno draws Husserl (and by implication all phenomenology) into the dock to stand trial with Heidegger for abdicating philosophy's rule of reason in favour of a nostalgia for origins and for the uncritical description of what is dogmatically given, that is, of the status quo.<sup>5</sup> For Adorno then, phenomenology (Husserlian and Heideggerean) has been involved in a *destruction* of reason.

Heidegger would probably not object to the label of 'destroyer of reason' (though Husserl would be quite upset!). In *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) (1927) and ever since, he has repudiated what he calls 'rationalism' and also thinking which is based on logic.<sup>6</sup> He rejects the definition of man as a rational animal.<sup>7</sup> He also rejects the one-track thinking which has become universal in the technological world with its deracinated pursuit of reason as *ratio*, a form of analysis, measuring and balancing, which is directed towards a goal and wishes to achieve results, which is guided by rules, and which in the last analysis claims to be universal, self-grounding, self-sufficient and comprehensive. Heidegger does want to *destroy* (or 'deconstruct') the edifice of reason, which he feels has emerged not just from the Enlightenment but from the ancient Greeks, and which has been determining western civilization since then.

However, Heidegger equally repudiates irrationalism, even as early as *Being and Time*, including all forms of mystical intuitionism and ecstatic unity with being. Far from being the most extreme form of individualist subjectivism, his thinking is at the opposite pole from subjectivism. It is also opposed to arbitrariness, 'freefloating results',<sup>8</sup> and emotionalism. For Heidegger phenomenology was a possibility (SZ, 38), a way (SZ, 436-437) (with a strong emphasis on the 'openness' inherent in those words) of avoiding both rationalism and subjectivism, of avoiding speculative metaphysics as well as deracinated, analytical ratiocination. The problem of reason is central to his thought, and especially what he takes to be its two highest poles--the Principle of Identity and the Principle of Sufficient Reason. In providing a critique of this kind of Leibnizean rationalism, Heidegger hopes to free western thought from its 'logocentrism' and open it up towards the mystery of being. But can it scarcely be possible that such a thinker could be charged with irrationalism (a term he feels is outmoded and defunct anyway), especially when so many of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt school owe their critique of technological reason to Heidegger? That old quarrel seems to be trapped within the two poles of Enlightenment and Romanticism, as Gadamer and Ricoeur would label them, between critical reason and inspired intuition. Heidegger's thinking lies totally outside of these poles and offers a new approach to the problem of the relationship between phenomenology and reason. This article will explore this new approach.

First, I'd like briefly to point out that 'traditional' phenomenologists--Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty--have operated within two paradigms of reason which derive from Kant and Hegel. These paradigms remain unquestioned and unreduced in their writings--even in Merleau-Ponty who claims to be tracing the line of constituting reason as opposed to constituted reason.

Second, I would like to argue that Heidegger is the first phenomenologist to become fully aware of the problems of this unreduced reason operative in phenomenology, and that he himself

attempts a reduction of it, in so doing of course changing the nature of the reduction itself. In later writings he recognizes more explicitly the interconnection of language and reasoning. He seeks to save the pure possibility of phenomenology from the practice of analytic, rationalistic description which accompanied essential intuition and prevented the unprejudiced showing of the phenomenon. From the beginning Heidegger had moved away from the cognitive model of intentionality and from the structure of transcendental subjectivity which supported Husserl's phenomenological reductions, emphasizing more the being-in-the-world of humans as their horizon.

Later he moved to even question the nature of the horizon of the world itself and to ask how the world 'worlds', a question which pushed him to the limit of language. This new recognition produced another thinking, which Heidegger calls variously other thinking (*Anderesdenken*), meditative commemorative thinking (*Andenken*), or just simply thought (*Denken*) which many people see--including Richardson<sup>9</sup>--as a reversal or turning away (*Kehre*) from phenomenology towards poetic thinking, mytho-poetic reasoning, or just simply towards silence.

I would like to argue more in line with recent French commentators of Heidegger--like Beaufret, Fédier, Greisch--that Heidegger never renounces phenomenology.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the very fact that he reissued so many of his early works on phenomenology unchanged points in this direction. Heidegger remains from first to last a phenomenologist and never renounces his belief that phenomenology is the key to ontology; that is, that a certain pathway arrives at being; that, in the old language, consciousness and its object, *ens*, can be one. Other thinking and meditative silence are in fact the most essential primordial phenomena to be studied. They release us from the trap of thought imprisoned in language to allow access to the truth of being. The true task of reason and of language in so far as we can use these words at all is to recognize the being of the silence and of the openness which founds reason and language. Heidegger moves far beyond Husserl's belief that all conscious acts are intentional to place emphasis on the absolutely originary, non-intentional act of meditative silence, which simply *waits*, and does not will.

In other words, the new view of reason Heidegger possesses belongs to his retrieval of the essence of phenomenological awareness. As Heidegger himself says in 'My Way to Phenomenology' (1963):

The age of phenomenological philosophy seems to be over.... But in what is most its own phenomenology is not a school. It is the possibility of thinking, at times changing and only thus persisting, of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought. If phenomenology is thus experienced and retained, it can disappear as a designation in favour of

the matter of thinking whose manifestness remains a mystery.

'Supplement' (1969):

In the sense of the last sentence one can already read in *Being and Time*, pp. 62-63: 'its essential character does not consist in being *actual* as a philosophical school. Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. The comprehension of phenomenology consists solely in grasping it as possibility'.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Heidegger, in proposing a new model of reason, is also proposing a new model of phenomenology.

## II Reason in Traditional Phenomenology

I will rehearse briefly the position of reason in traditional phenomenology, to set the problem in context.

### A. *Dialectical Reason in Phenomenology*

Curiously, phenomenology has had very little to say on the problem of the essence or nature of reason. This is an extraordinary omission given the origin of phenomenology in the Kantian critique of pure reason and, of course, the first fully-extended description of the struggle of reason to arrive at full consciousness of itself in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Heidegger recognized the worth of Hegel's *Phenomenology* (as did Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) as genuine phenomenology: that is as the description of the appearance of phenomena in the manner of their appearance. All adopted its central insight that, as Levinas put it,<sup>12</sup> there is a strict correlation between the intelligible object and the psychical modality in which it is apprehended. Or in other words: not just any meaning is accessible to any thought.

In Hegel, dialectical thinking tries to link these apprehensions of meaning into a complex, ascending order of awarenesses of increasingly wider comprehension without loss of concreteness or immediacy, until thought has developed a concept adequate to its object. Later phenomenology does not deny Hegel's insight that these levels of awareness were interconnected. It does, however, take issue with the speculative structure of their arrangement. Yet even here, Sartre, for example, does not take issue with the major ways in which two awarenesses resemble and are related to each other: namely, that they either mirror and are transformed into each other or that they negate and contradict each other. Sartre, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, thinks this out in great and subtle detail, but he never ceases to hold to phenomenology's desire for the concrete experience even if now he seeks to discover there, as he says in *Search for a Method*, 'concrete syntheses...within a moving dialectical totalisation which is nothing else

but history,...for truth is something which becomes,...it is a totalisation which is forever being totalised'.<sup>13</sup> Sartre's reason then is Hegelian reason without the Absolute Subject, without the totaliser.

What is reason for Merleau-Ponty? Although Merleau-Ponty rejected Hegel's metaphysical theses on the existence of Absolute Mind or Spirit, he does hold onto the idea of a meaningful, historical, dialectical process between human beings and the world, which it is the business of philosophy to trace. He holds onto the overall moment of reason while relativizing it. Reason is the temporal flux of the world, and the world is 'primary embodiment of rationality' (p. xxi).

This famous passage in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception* is usually regarded as a classic statement of phenomenological method:

Because we are in the world we are condemned to meaning and we cannot do or say anything without it acquiring a name in history. Probably the chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality. Rationality is precisely measured by the experiences in which it is disclosed. To say that there exists rationality is to say that perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges. But it should not be set in a realm apart, transposed into absolute Spirit or into a world in a realist sense. The phenomenological world is not pure being but the sense which is revealed when the paths of my various experiences intersect....

Or again:

Philosophy is not the reflection of pre-existent truth but, like art, the act of bringing truth into being. One may well ask how this creation is possible and if it does not recapture in things a pre-existent reason. The answer is that the only pre-existent Logos is the world itself and that the philosophy which brings it into visible existence does not begin by making it possible; it is actual or real like the world of which it is a part and no explanatory hypothesis is clearer than the act whereby we take up the unfinished world in an effort to complete it or conceive it. Rationality is not a problem.<sup>14</sup>

When we look closer, we see that Merleau-Ponty holds to an uncritical idea of the unity of the world, and continually refers to the uniqueness of the world. Rationality for him is the floating structure produced by the interrelation of this world with human subjectivity. The unity produced is, as he says, the focus of rationality. I quote again:

But it will be asked if the unity of the world is not based on that of consciousness and if the world is not the outcome of a constituting effort, how does it come about that appearances accord with each other and group themselves into things, ideas and truths?... Why does my life succeed in drawing itself together in order to project itself in words, intentions and acts? This is the problem of rationality. The reader is aware that, on the whole, classical thought tries to explain the concordances in question in terms of a world in itself or in terms of an absolute mind. Such explanations borrow all the force they can from the phenomenon of rationality and therefore fail to explain it. Absolute thought is no clearer to me than my own finite mind, since it is through the latter that I conceive of the former. We are in the world which means that things take shape, an immense individual asserts itself, each existence is self-comprehensive and comprehensive of the rest. All that has to be done is to recognise these phenomena which are the ground of all our certainties. The belief in an absolute mind or in a world in itself detached from us is no more than a rationalisation of that primordial faith.<sup>15</sup>

Although this is meant as a clear refutation of Hegel, the very terms of the discussion are deeply Hegelian, and his attempt to chart the meaningful history of humans in the world becomes more and more Hegelian in his later essays. In Sartre's words, history is a totalization without a totalizer, dialectical rationality charts the sequence of these totalizations while avoiding the scholasticism of the totality. This view of reason as the process of coming to meaning in history is very common in phenomenology but it so far lacks a phenomenological reduction and tends to confirm the view that phenomenology is a neo-Hegelian development with the excesses of absolute spirit removed. I give Merleau-Ponty as an illustration because he is often held to be close to the original Husserl in intention (closer, certainly, to the unpublished working notes of Husserl).

#### B. Reason Based on Intuition

Apart from this dialectical conception of reason the other main view of reason operative in mainstream phenomenology is really a development of Cartesian reason or Kantian reason which is built on the twin pillars of intuition and judgement.<sup>16</sup> Husserl and his followers believe that intuition is the basis of every rational assertion,<sup>17</sup> and Husserl believes the main problem is to discover the kinds of intuition which lead to certain judgements which constitute genuine knowledge, even if these intuitions--in the later writings such as *Experience and Judgment*--belong to the pre-predicative level.<sup>18</sup>

Husserl bases everything on intuition and thus reason is seen as in the Cartesian model to depend on clear and distinct certain (or

apodictic) intuitions. Thus, Husserl's famous principle of all principles, in *Ideas* (Section 24), which Heidegger singles out for comment in a late essay, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking',<sup>19</sup> states:

The very primordial dator (or *presentive*) intuition is a source of authority (*Rechtquelle*) for knowledge,...whatever presents itself in intuition in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality) is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be, though only within the limits in which it then presents itself.

Here Husserl is making a stand against the common types of a priori or speculative reasoning as well as against a very narrow positivistic empiricism. His emphasis on intuition, however, though laudable, fell into some common traps--particularly in relation to language and the role of language in shaping the emergence of intuitions. Derrida criticizes Husserl for making the logical the paradigm of all language and of all thinking. Derrida says, in his *Speech and Phenomena*:

As Fink has shown, Husserl never raised the question of the transcendental logos, the inherited language in which phenomenology produces and exhibits the results of its reductive operations. The unity of ordinary language (or the language of traditional metaphysics) and the language of phenomenology is never broken in spite of the precautions, the 'brackets', the renovations or innovations.<sup>20</sup>

This is because, as Derrida goes on to say:

Being interested in language only within the compass of rationality determining the logos from logic, Husserl had, in a most traditional manner, determined the essence of language by taking the logical as its *telos* or aim.<sup>21</sup>

Rationality and the sphere of logic seem more or less co-extensive for Husserl so that his intuitions look less comprehensively meaningful than they initially proposed to be.

Furthermore there is the ever-present danger, articulated by Gadamer in the second supplement of *Truth and Method*, that the following question can be asked:

...whether there may not be hidden in our experience of the world a primordial falsity; whether, in our linguistically transmitted experience, we may not be prey to prejudices or, worse still, to necessities which have their source in the linguistic structuring of our first experience of the world and which would force us to run with open eyes, as it were, down a path whence there was no other issue than destruction.<sup>22</sup>

By ignoring the hold that language has on our thought we are doing more, according to Gadamer, than making a philosophical mistake. We are threatening our very existence on the planet. 'If we continue thus we can predict...with certainty the fact that life on this planet will become impossible'. He goes on:

And so behind this there lurks the uneasy question whether, in all our thought, even in the critical dissolution of such metaphysical concepts as substance, accident, the subject and its properties and the like, predicative logic included, we are doing any more than thinking through to its conclusion that which made itself into the linguistic structure of the Indo-Germanic peoples millennia before any written tradition. We raise this question today just when we are at the end of our linguistic culture--an era heralded by technological civilisation and its mathematical symbolisms.... We have reached the point where we must ask what the determining factor is.... [Heidegger] has taught us to see that Greek metaphysics is the beginning of modern technology.... Is our western experience an insurmountable barrier?<sup>23</sup>

I have been carried beyond Husserl's emphasis on intuition as the foundation of rationality to raise the spectre that perhaps this intuition as moulded by language does not necessarily exclude bias and distortion. This, of course, has been the theme of the most recent phenomenological developments in Ricoeur, Derrida, Gadamer and Habermas. But in so far as they have been carried far beyond the original methodology of phenomenology I propose to leave them out of account. Furthermore I believe--despite objections from Habermas, for example--that they owe their being to Heidegger and that in so far as his thinking has not been thought through, their critique of reason is not fully comprehensible.

### III Heidegger and Reason

Thus far we have two common views of rationality in phenomenology--neither making rationality the central problem: the one Hegelian which sees in reason a complicated movement of meaning which is always totalizing and encompassing its opposite, a reason which is responsive to the world which has a history; and on the other side the intuitive narrower view of reason as essentially a logical process founded on certain intuitions, whose nature it is phenomenology's function to clarify.

I mention these two together because Heidegger is concerned with and takes issue with both forms of reason, the Hegelian and the Husserlian. In his essay *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, he sees both types of thinking--the one he calls 'speculative-dialectical thinking' and the other 'ordinary intuition'--as concerned with subjectivity.<sup>24</sup> Heidegger shows that for Hegel the

dialectic comes to see substance as subject, for Husserl his principle of all principles is grounded in transcendental subjectivity.

In this 1964 essay, Heidegger is concerned--as he was in 1927 in *Being and Time* (Section 7)--to characterize phenomenology in terms of the slogan 'to the things themselves', '*zu den Sachen selbst*'. Here he takes *die Sache* to mean the matter of philosophy--that with which philosophy is ultimately concerned. It is, for Heidegger, Plato's *pragma auto* in the *Seventh Letter* 341C7.<sup>25</sup> Heidegger feels that what matters for thinking is *its matter*, to think what thinking should be about, what determines thinking. He feels that for Hegel and for Husserl what philosophy is about is subjectivity.

Hegel's speculative dialectic is the movement in which the matter as such comes to itself, comes to its own presence. Husserl's method is supposed to bring the matter of philosophy to its ultimately originary givenness, that means: to its own presence. The two methods are as different as they could possibly be. But the matter as such which they are to present is the same, although it is experienced in different ways.<sup>26</sup>

Heidegger feels that both approaches leave something unthought: the nature of rationality itself--although that is not Heidegger's word. What is left out--in Heidegger's dense formulation--is the openness (*Lichtung*) which is presupposed by all coming to light, whether it be in the Hegelian way or the Husserlian. This openness is presupposed by the Hegelian play of coming to presence of the phenomena:

Speculative dialectic is a mode in which the matter of philosophy comes to appeal of itself and for itself and thus becomes presence. Such appearance necessarily occurs in some light.... But brightness in turn rests on something open, something free which might illuminate it.... Only this openness grants to speculative thinking the passage through that which it thinks.<sup>27</sup>

Again:

But light never first creates openness. Rather light presupposes openness.

And:

It is necessary for thinking to become explicitly aware of the matter called opening here. We are not extracting mere notions from mere words, e.g. opening, as it might appear on the surface.... What the word designates in the connection we are now thinking, free openness, is a primal phenomenon...we would have to say primal matter.<sup>28</sup>

He goes on to claim that this thinking of openness may be the phenomenon which must first of all be understood:

The phenomenon itself, in this case the opening, sets us the task of learning from it while questioning it, that is, of letting it say something to us.<sup>29</sup>

Heidegger is redefining the aim and method of phenomenology, and with it the task of thinking and the meaning of rationality. He is staying with the old Hegelian and Husserlian slogan of 'to things themselves', but *the matter*, now, is that which gives *openness* for thought, which allows everything to appear and which folds everything into itself.

Heidegger is never interested in simply investigating methods or techniques of reasoning or thinking; he even cites Kant and Hegel as having recognized that such thinking *about* thinking must inevitably end in failure. Nor does he want to criticize thinking, he wants instead to go to the root of his own thinking, to find its *Ursprung*, its origin. This he does by offering an 'immanent critique',<sup>30</sup> as he calls it, of *Sein und Zeit*. He wants to find the matter which gives rise to his thinking at that time and which still guides it in advance.

Too often critics have concentrated on the word *being* and assumed that Heidegger wrote *Being and Time* based on his phenomenologically purified intuition of being. Nothing could be further from the truth. Heidegger's essay, *Sein und Zeit*, never gets to being. It is concerned rather with the absence of being from our *thinking*. It proposes a way of destroying or deconstructing our thinking so that the memory of an original awakening which took place in ancient Greece can be recollected, so that it may be understood. Once this is understood it becomes possible to see clearly the unity of Heidegger's entire work (a unity which can easily be seen by examining early texts written soon after *Being and Time* such as *What is Metaphysics* or *The Essence of Reasons*, where the absence of being or a kind of non-being dominates the thinking).

If we want to understand Heidegger's work *Being and Time*, we must recall to ourselves what he said later many times in regard to his theological beginnings. Heidegger was puzzled initially by the problem of articulating the right word, the *meaningful* word. His aim in his theological studies had been 'to seek the Word which is able to call one to faith and preserve one in faith',<sup>31</sup> or as he put it in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 'the relation between the Word of Sacred Scripture and theological-speculative thinking'.<sup>32</sup> He was searching for the correct relation between his thinking and the word. This he felt was given to him in phenomenology, although he reported having a continuous difficulty in reading Husserl which, as he says, 'concerned the simple question of how thinking's manner of procedure which called itself phenomenology was to be carried out'.<sup>33</sup> He actually solved his problem by an encounter with language--the Greek language and especially the

manner in which the Greeks used the word *aletheia*, as he recounted:

What occurs for the phenomenology of the acts of consciousness as the self-manifestation of phenomena was thought more originally by Aristotle and in all Greek thinking and existence as *aletheia*, as the unconcealedness of what is present, its being revealed, its showing itself.<sup>34</sup>

Meditation on the etymology of the word, *phenomenology*, was able to reveal to Heidegger both the essence of phenomenology and the manner through which it would proceed, as well as--though much later--the meaning of the matter which phenomenology would clarify.

In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger proclaims the importance of understanding the word, which gives itself from out of its original oneness with what it names. Thus he says in Section 44 (*SZ*, 220):

The ultimate business of philosophy is to preserve the force of the most elemental words in which *Dasein* expresses itself and to keep the common understanding from levelling them off to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as a source of pseudo-problems.

Part of his strategy in *Being and Time* was to recover the Greek meanings of words, but part of his strategy was to invent new terminology. Later he felt that this latter half of his strategy had been mistaken and now he kept only with the first part--to remember or to recover older hidden meanings. As he says in his letter to Richardson, what was necessary was not 'the invention of new terms but rather a return to the originary content of our own language which is always in process of dying away'.<sup>35</sup> Thus he now investigated both the German and the Greek languages (omitting the Hebraic and other important influences on European culture, as critics like Levinas and Ricoeur have noted).

Heidegger's actual interpretations of words like *phenomenology* or *aletheia* or *logos* are familiar to everyone and I need not repeat them here. What I want to do is to look closer at Heidegger's operating procedure: how he learns from language, how his thinking is concerned with words--that is, with the *matter* of thinking itself.

The emphasis on finding the word which awakened thought (in the Heideggerean sense) is what brought Heidegger to phenomenology. Actually the words are already there, it is not a question of inventing a new language--the language already exists. Already there exists an original unity between thinking and being, it exists in language, in the *logos*. Although this seems to be perfectly clear its implications have been missed by many Heidegger commentators. The original intuition--the phenomenologically grounded intuition on which Heidegger will base his thought--is the intuition already contained in the appropriateness of language for the world. What Heidegger seeks to

uncover then is this event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) which first set language into motion.

Now Heidegger can be somewhat confusing at this point. He speaks as if this event took place in the past, among the early Greeks and in Heraclitus in particular, for it was Heraclitus who spoke of *logos* and *phusis* as one. It was the early Greeks who experienced true saying, the original saying of the word which made manifest what was hidden. In *Was heisst Denken?*, he even states that the original *logos* was one with the *muthos* until Plato separated them. *Muthos*, he says, is 'what has its essence in its telling--what appears in the unconcealedness of its appeal'.<sup>36</sup> Its primal concern is with a memory of the original event of the unity of language and being.

Now the main problem here is not that Heidegger is saying that Western rationality is originally one with myth (Cornford, Cassirer and others have known this) but that this original event should be recoverable now. After all, the world of the Greeks has decayed or withdrawn. But Heidegger always claims that language preserves its origin, in fact that it has no other being than that which it derives from its origin.

As he says in *Sein und Zeit* (Section 6), talking about his understanding of the destruction:

We understand the task as one in which...we are to destroy the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those *primordial experiences* in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of being--the ways which have guided us ever since.<sup>37</sup>

The Greek intuition is concealed in the nature of language, in fact actually *is* the nature of language; language would have no being without it. Later in his essay 'The Turning' (*Die Kehre*), answering the question 'how must we think?', he says:

Language gives to every purposeful deliberation its ways and byways. Without language there would be lacking to every doing every dimension in which it could bestir itself.... In view of this language is never primarily the expression of thinking, feeling and willing. Language is the primal dimension within which man's essence is first able to correspond at all to being and its claim.... This primal corresponding is thinking.<sup>38</sup>

Going back to the Greek essence of language doesn't involve going back in time, getting involved in historiography or whatever,<sup>39</sup> it doesn't involve turning back the clock. It actually involves having a new experience of time, where linear sequential clock time no longer applies. The essence of time is so involved with the essence of language that a definite alteration in the temporal sense occurs when this kind of

linguistic meditation is performed. This was only vaguely felt by Heidegger at the time of *Sein und Zeit*, but by the time we have come to his radio talk on *Zeit und Sein* the temporal dimension of speaking has become uppermost. Here he says that what determines both time and being is their belonging together, the *Ereignis*. Thinking phenomenologically he is saying that there is at the root of experience an original upsurge which gives both time and being their 'space' and 'location' (note the imagery).

In the essay 'The End of Philosophy', which I take to be crucial for the understanding of the later Heidegger, he says explicitly:

We may suggest that the day will come when we will not shun the question whether the *opening*, the free open, may not be that within which alone pure space and ecstatic time and everything present and absent in them have the place which gathers and protects everything.<sup>40</sup>

Traditional philosophy, he says, knows nothing of this *opening* although it thinks in the open. 'Philosophy does speak about the light of reason, but does not heed the opening of being'.<sup>41</sup>

The original intuition of the Greeks then can be experienced, as can the modern understanding with its rationality, because they are both dependent on the open. But further the opening itself can be experienced. This is the subject of one of Heidegger's most difficult pieces, the 'Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking' in *Gelassenheit*.<sup>42</sup> Here he describes how it is possible for thought to reach the Open.

#### IV Meditative Thinking and Openness

Openness, the site of language and of being, can only be reached by attending to a different kind of thinking from our everyday reason, calculation and inferential ratiocination. It is not, however, a privileged experience in the sense that it is restricted to the few, the enlightened or the mystic. Openness is by its very name something which all human beings have access to all the time, although they do not know this and do not focus their attention on it. Meditative thinking is the kind of thinking which seeks to experience openness fully.

To achieve meditative thought we move completely outside the domain of science in all its forms. Science does not think, Heidegger says in *Was heisst Denken?*<sup>43</sup> In fact he explicitly says that an unbridgeable gulf separates science from thinking, a gulf that requires a *leap* in order to cross it. The whole area of rationality and its structuring must be abandoned. Thus meditative thought is not a technique or an instrument to gain access or mastery over an object. In

a certain sense it has no steps, or none that Heidegger wishes to enumerate. I am not at all sure that it involves discursive thought at all. Meditative thinking breaks with the Husserlian and phenomenological rule that all conscious acts are intentional, have a content. Heidegger's description of meditative thinking implies that it 'lets go' of or becomes disinterested in objects in order to come into a more direct relation with the act of thinking itself. This does not mean making thought subject to its own self-conscious scrutiny, as it means for Descartes and Husserl, rather it means loosening the grip which the ego has over thinking. Meditative thinking becomes aware of itself only to become more aware of its ground--which is really an *Abgrund*, an abyss, original openness. In other words such thinking is not seeking its first principle in the Aristotelian or scholastic sense, the sense of metaphysics; it rather is experiencing the actual movement of manifestation itself, its process. It is quite the reverse of speculative thinking. As far as I can understand from reading *Gelassenheit* and the *Der Spiegel* interview<sup>44</sup> and many of Heidegger's latest texts, meditative thinking first becomes aware of the background or horizon of thinking in order then to recognize that horizons are limitations to the experiencing of the true unlimited, the unbounded (*apeiron*), the anarchic (in the original Greek sense), the open. This open lies beyond the horizon, as it were. That is, it lies beyond all intellectual figuration and structuring, outside all ideological direction; it is an experience of pure knowing.

We can experience this phenomenologically. We do so not when we pay attention to intentional acts and intuit essences but when we remove the sense of orientation and directedness from our attention. Husserl, in *Ideas* and elsewhere, distinguished the general phenomenon of the 'turning to',<sup>45</sup> or directedness of attention, from intentionality in a stricter sense, which is a positing of meaning even in non-directed acts like silence or pausing or so on. Heidegger is going much further in positing a thinking which is outside of all willing and also outside of 'spontaneity', as he says Kant characterized thinking. It begins by willing to renounce willing, but of course since this is still intentional behaviour it must open itself further to the possibility of non-willing altogether. This happens for Heidegger only if we put ourselves in the right attitude (like the earlier *mood* in *Sein und Zeit*) of waiting which is not a waiting-for. Heidegger says this waiting 'really has no object',<sup>46</sup> it is a form of consciousness or of comportment which is totally removed from representational conceptual thinking. We must go further still than waiting; this is still not thinking in its essential nature but is only preparatory to thinking.

In order to get truly to the heart of the matter (*die Sache*) of thinking, we need to experience *Gelassenheit* or letting be, or releasement:

*Gelassenheit* is indeed the release of oneself from transcendental representation and so a relinquishing of the

willing of a horizon. Such relinquishing no longer stems from a willing, except that the occasion for releasing oneself to belonging to that which regions [*die Gegnet*] requires a trace of willing. This trace however vanishes while releasing oneself and is completely extinguished in releasement [*Gelassenheit*].<sup>47</sup>

This *Gelassenheit* is discussed by Heidegger with explicit reference to the thought of Meister Eckhart. It is not my intention here to develop Eckhart's discussion of detachment or releasement; rather I am concerned to understand 'letting be'.<sup>48</sup> Heidegger is clearly differentiating himself from Eckhart's view. He attributes to Eckhart the view that one opens oneself and denies self-will in order to be open to divine will. Heidegger wants to be more open still, it is not a matter of letting divine will take over but rather it is a rethinking of what Heidegger calls in *Sein und Zeit* the structure of resolve, that is 'the opening of *Dasein* particularly undertaken by him for openness'.<sup>49</sup>

Heidegger is at pains to point out that meditative thinking does not mean passivity or a 'will-less letting in of everything, and basically the denial of the will to live'.<sup>50</sup> As resolve it is open towards truth, towards being and towards the openness which founds truth and being. This thinking is rather one with the openness, one with truth itself. It steps aside from willing or intending, and thus sets itself aside from meanings, from concepts, from representations. It even is uninterested in the horizons of thought. It sees the horizon as 'but the side facing us of an openness which surrounds us', and seeks to experience the regioning of the openness itself.

This does not mean abandoning all critical questioning. Heidegger has not given up his privileging of the question over the judgement which opens *Sein und Zeit*. As he says in *Die Frage nach der Technik*, questioning is the piety of thought. He has simply overcome intellectualist leanings in his understanding of human being as questioner, and now sees the whole of human existence as a kind of questioning advancement or proposal of the appearance of truth. In his later writings the stress is more on the *matter* which comes to humankind to be thought; that is, what gives a manifesting power to language.

As he says in the *Heraclitus Lectures* for 1943-44:

The rare and true thoughts do not arise from self-made thinking; and they certainly do not live in things, as a stone in a meadow or a net in water. The true thoughts get thought-to man [*zu Gedacht*] and indeed only when he is in his proper devotion [*Andacht*] i.e. in practical readiness for thinking which comes to meet him as what is to be thought.<sup>51</sup>

What is the relation of this meditative thought to language? Obviously since it thinks the naming and manifesting power of language (i.e. the open) this itself cannot be named yet it does not simply belong to the sphere of the nameless. As the Teacher in the dialogue, *Conversation on a Country Path About Thinking*, says:

But is it really settled that there is the nameless at all?  
There is much that we cannot say, but only because the name it has does not occur to us.<sup>52</sup>

This is precisely where Heidegger's thoughts on releasement deviate from Zen Buddhism with which it is often compared.<sup>53</sup> While Zen experiences the detachment as a nameless state of pure emptiness, Heidegger sees detachment as deeply tied in with language. As he says, the openness, the region [*die Gegnet*], is in fact tied to a naming:

For in the region in which we stay everything is in best order only if it has been no one's doing...because it is the region of the word, which is answerable to itself alone.<sup>54</sup>

Our thinking comes from out of the experience of our language. It is only by experiencing that experience that we are capable of effecting a change in orientation which would make a dialogue with other cultures possible--especially the inevitable dialogue with Eastern thought. It is as if we cannot stay long with the experience of the open and are driven to language--just as, in *Sein und Zeit*, authenticity consisted in recognizing that inauthenticity governs most of our everyday dealings with the world.

Unfortunately there is not sufficient space here to develop the differences between Heidegger's approach and the Zen teaching with which it has so often been rather rashly compared. Heidegger's master is Heraclitus not Dogen or Ikkyu. His releasement is always in a curious relation with *Bodenständigkeit*, with situatedness or rootedness, and it is a meditative thinking which is a form of remembering, of *Nemmosyne*, rather than a sudden intuition of enlightenment. It is a thinking which is aware of its own arising in history--not in the sense that it is aware of something in the past but that the essential relationship to time in this meditation has changed so that this essence presents itself rather in the form of possibility. It is a possibility, however, which must be thought in the manner which it gives itself as a withdrawal of disappearance:

What withdraws from us draws us along by its very withdrawal.... As we are drawing towards what withdraws, we ourselves point towards it.... As he is pointing that way, man is the pointer.... His essential being lies in being such a pointer. Something which in itself, by its essential being, is pointing, we call a sign. As he draws towards what withdraws man is a sign. But since this sign points towards

what draws away it points not so much towards what draws away as into the withdrawal. The sign remains without interpretation.<sup>55</sup>

Heidegger then quotes from Hölderlin:

We are a sign that is not read  
We feel no pain, we almost have  
Lost our tongue in foreign lands.<sup>56</sup>

#### NOTES

1. G. Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, translated by D. Fernbach (London, 1979).
2. *Destruction of Reason*, p. 494.
3. *ibid.*, p. 498.
4. T. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, translated by K. Tarnowski and F. Will (Evanston, Ill., 1973); and T. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E.B. Ashton, (London, 1973), pp. 61-131.
5. T. Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, translated by W. Domingo (Oxford, 1982), especially pp. 124 ff.
6. See the very revealing remarks on rationalism and irrationalism in *Sein und Zeit* (hereafter *SZ*), pp. 135-136. The critique of logic is found in *SZ*, section 35.
7. *SZ*, 48-49.
8. *SZ*, 19 and *SZ*, 36.
9. W. Richardson, *Heidegger: From Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague, 1963).
10. See, for example, R. Kearney and J. O'Leary (eds), *Heidegger et la question de Dieu* (Paris, 1980).
11. 'My Way to Philosophy', in Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, ed. and trans. by J. Stambaugh (New York, 1972).
12. E. Levinas, in A.-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), *The Phenomenology of Man and the Human Condition* (Dordrecht, 1983), p. 155.

13. J.-P. Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. by H. Barnes (New York, 1968).
14. M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by C. Smith (London, 1962), pp. xix--xx.
15. *ibid.*, pp. 408-409.
16. For example, in *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* Descartes says that the only mental operations which can arrive at knowledge are two--intuition and deduction:

By *intuition* I understand, not the fluctuating testimony of the senses, nor the misleading judgement that proceeds from the blundering constructions of imagination, but the conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives us so readily and distinctly that we are wholly freed from doubt about that which we understand. Or, what comes to the same thing, intuition is the undoubting conception of an unclouded and attentive mind, and springs from the light of reason alone; it is more certain than deduction itself.

*The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Volume I, trans. Haldane and Ross, p. 7.

17. See, for example, Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. by G. Etzkorn (The Hague, 1973), p. 3.
18. That is, what Husserl calls the original self-evidence, which must be on hand if predicative judgement is to be possible: Husserl, *Experience and Judgment* (London, 1973), p. 20.
19. See M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York, 1972), p. 63.
20. J. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. by D.B. Allison (Evanston, Ill., 1973), pp. 7-8.
21. *ibid.*, p. 8.
22. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by W. Glen-Doepel, edited by J. Cumming and G. Barden (London, 1975), p. 491.
23. *ibid.*, p. 494.
24. M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
25. It is worth following up the reference because Plato is not often cited by Heidegger despite the importance that Heidegger assigns

to him for moulding or distorting Greek thought and subsequent Western thought.

The reference is, of course, to perhaps the most famous passage of the Seventh Letter where Plato says that those people who have written books on the subject on which Plato has devoted his life do not understand the matter.

Such writers can in my opinion have no real acquaintance with the matter. I certainly have composed no work in regard to it, nor do I intend to do so in the future, for there is no way of putting it in words like other studies. Acquaintance with it comes rather after a long period of attendance on instruction in the matter itself (*to pragma auto*) and of close companionship, when suddenly like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the soul and at once becomes self-sustaining (341c-d, translated by L.A. Post).

Here he sees that *die Sache* is experienced by an attendance which is silent, and by analogy the kind of wealth that can be gained by phenomenological attention to it need not be articulable in words.

26. M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, p. 64.
27. *ibid.*, p. 64.
28. *ibid.*, p. 65.
29. *ibid.*, p. 66.
30. *ibid.*, p. 55.
31. H.-G. Gadamer, 'Heidegger and Marburg Theology', in D.E. Linge (ed.), *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley, 1977), p. 198.
32. M. Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. by P. Hart, (New York, 1971).
33. M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, p. 76.
34. *ibid.*, p. 79.
35. W. Richardson, *Heidegger: From Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague, 1963).
36. M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, trans. & ed. by D. F. Krell, (London, 1978), p. 351.

37. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 22.
38. M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. by W. Lovitt (New York, 1977), pp. 40-41.
39. *ibid.*, p. 158.
40. M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, p. 66.
41. *ibid.*
42. Translated by J. Anderson and E. Hans Freund as *Martin Heidegger: Discourse on Thinking* (New York, 1966).
43. Translated by J. Glenn Gray as *What is Called Thinking?* (New York, 1968).
44. Translated in T. Sheehan (ed.), *Heidegger: The Man and Thinker* (Chicago, 1981).
45. E. Husserl, *Ideas*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson, (London, 1962), pp. 109 ff.
46. M. Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
47. *ibid.*, p. 80.
48. See J.D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Athens, Ohio, 1978); and R. Schürmann, 'Trois penseurs de délaissement: Maître Eckhart, Heidegger, et Suzuki', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 12 (1974), 455-478.
49. M. Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 81.
50. *ibid.*, p. 80.
51. M. Heidegger, *Heraklit*, ed. by Manfred Frings, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1979), LV, 187. See also M. Zimmerman, 'Heidegger and Heraclitus on Spiritual Practice', *Philosophy Today* (1983), 87-105.
52. *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 70.
53. See, for example, Wei-hsun Fu, 'Heidegger and Zen on Being and Nothingness: A Critical Essay in Transmetaphysical Dialectics', in *Buddhist and Western Philosophy: A Critical Study* (New Delhi, 1978); J. Mehta, 'A Western Kind of Rishu', in *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*; J. Steffney, 'Man and Being in Heidegger and Zen Buddhism', *Philosophy Today*, 25 (1981); R. Schürmann, 'The Loss

- of Origin in Soto Zen and Meister Eckhart', *The Thomist*, 42 (1978), 281-312.
54. *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 71.
55. *Basic Writings*, ed. by D.F. Krell (London, 1978), pp. 350-351.
56. *ibid.*