

MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND THE PLACE OF LANGUAGE

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Within the text of *On Time and Being*, which significantly broadens, yet calls our attention back to problems raised in *Being and Time*,¹ Martin Heidegger speaks of his own exposure of "the point of departure of the question in *Being and Time* to an immanent criticism."² In the brief space of the pages which follow, I do not intend to attempt an exposition of this statement *per se*, nor to work out Heidegger's sense of his own development from *Being and Time* toward his later writings. Heidegger has taken much care to speak about any and all talk or criticism of a reversal of his thought. His letter to Father Richardson³ is clear in claiming the sense of his being on a path of thinking which has its roots in *Being and Time*, and in the problems and questions raised there, but which have borne fruit in other directions, nonetheless never forgetting their rich and original source-bed. I mention the question of the development of Heidegger's thought only to emphasize that I take him at his word. Thus, in what follows I wish to explore Heidegger's notion or sense for the place of language, beginning upon the path struck out upon in *Being and Time*, and continuing along this way in the writings that followed.

To carry out this exploration I shall first analyze closely, albeit briefly, the way Heidegger situates language in *Being and Time*, particularly drawing upon his remarks in §§33 to 38.⁴ I shall supplement these remarks in a second section which analyses his remarks in §§39 to 44,⁵ in order to show the re-

¹Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972). Hereinafter I shall cite both paginations of *Being and Time*, first the translation, followed by "H." to indicate the *Sein und Zeit* pagination.

²Cf. "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" in Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 55.

³Martin Heidegger to Father Richardson, letter of April 1962 and "Preface" to William J. Richardson, S.J., *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

⁴*Being and Time*, pp. 195-224; H. 153-180.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 225-274; H. 180-231.

lation of care and anxiety to truth and ultimately to language. Heidegger's thinking in respect to language is fundamentally related to his notions of *care* and *totality*. These ideas thought out carefully and together have laid the groundwork for the reflections in later writings, most fully developed in the notion of the *place* of *naming* as the site of the play of the Fourfold. The richness of this place, and man's care for it are at stake in full view of the truncating of that place, reflected in Heidegger's notion of *Gestell*. My third section of exploration shall attempt to discover this notion of *place* for Heidegger, the place of language and the Fourfold as a development from the earlier analysis of *Being and Time* toward a more thematically enriched version of the relationship of language and meaning-beings—later expressed as language's naming and the originary place of the Fourfold.

1. Heidegger's treatment of language in *Being and Time*, its relation to fallenness, thrownness, and anxiety (§§33-38).

Heidegger's discussion of discourse and language in *Being and Time*, §33, draws heavily on the distinction made earlier between the ancient ontology's sense of logos and logos as discourse. Also crucial is the distinction between the existential-hermeneutical "as" versus the apophantical "as" of assertion. Assertion is seen to be the communicative pointing out which gives something a definite character. Yet, Heidegger shows that all assertion is grounded in fore-sight, fore-having, and fore-conception. Simply, assertion is made possible because it is grounded in an interpretation which understands. Dasein can only assert and "make sense" of assertions because it is the Being whose clearing a path in its world has made for itself an intelligible context out of which and about which to make assertions. For example: As Dasein asserts about an object ready-to-hand it does so in bringing that object to the fore as present-at-hand. Yet, the assertion about this object as present-at-hand is possible only because Dasein has always already understood the prior unity and relation of presence-at-hand/readiness-to-hand. As this limited example shows, the copula "is" is an impossibility—at least in one sense. The assertion *never* merely couples, joins two disparate elements (e.g.-subject-predicate). Rather, it can only function as talking about them when Dasein always already understands their prior unity. The assertion does not bring about the unity but is grounded in its already being there.

The section on discourse and language makes explicit as a theme the attempt to clarify the relation of the two. Discourse is existentially equi-priordial with understanding and state-of-mind and as such grounds language. Heidegger claims that intelligibility has always already been articulated even when not appropriately interpreted. What does this mean? Dasein is the being whose Being is at issue for itself. This very Being is in the world. As

such, Dasein clears a way for itself in and through its world. Only because Dasein is the being which tunes and is tuned by its world, illumines and is illuminated by its world, is any meaning possible. Dasein is meaningful both because and in spite of the unmeaning which is the character of entities "non-Dasein like".⁶ That which gets articulated in interpretation is the meaning which is always already in the world for Dasein. Discourse articulates the totality of significations in which Dasein has its world; the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world gets expressed in discourse. This totality of significations grounds the "putting into words" of the prior understanding of intelligibility. Words follow on the heels of Dasein's articulation of meaning and Dasein's pre-linguistic, discursive understanding of intelligibility—not the reverse.

Discourse is one existential state in which Dasein is disclosed; it is constitutive for Dasein's ek-sistence. Hearing and keeping silent are possibilities of discursive speech because they are always already involved in a context of meaning *not* dependent on speech. They have meaning for Dasein precisely because discourse, equiprimordial with state-of-mind and understanding, grounds (not follows) linguistic utterance as meaningful. Discourse is a taking hold of, an appropriating of meaningful contextualization. Discourse is Dasein's way of working out "its Being as at issue for itself" to itself—even pre-linguistically. Discourse is Dasein's unspoken interrogation of itself; it is meaningful as a spoken question only because of its having prior discursive concern before language.

In discourse, Dasein "ex-presses" itself;⁷ it can go out of itself only because there was never an internal/external division to begin with. Dasein was always already its here/its there. Hearing is never merely of "pure noise" for Dasein. This is so because Dasein as here-Being and there-Being has always been involved in a referential totality—a totality of signification. To hear pure noise is to train oneself to isolate fragmented aspects of sounds which are always already taken as unified, meaningful wholes. Thus, Heidegger notes that it was not unimportant that the Greeks emphasized man as showing himself as one who "talks".⁸ Although not with sufficient depth to go beyond "logos" as assertion, the Greeks pointed to speech as important. For Heidegger, it indicates that man's speaking-hearing as a way of discovering the world and himself, points to the need for a more explicit analytic of Being. This, in the way of a thematic analytic of Dasein, revises the Greek concept of logos—thus making discourse the logos *and* the ground for speech. (In

⁶Recall *Ibid.*, p. 193; H. 152.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 205; H. 162.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 208-209; H. 165.

Section 3, we shall see Heidegger's later re-treatment of this Greek notion of logos.)

The discussion of language returns to average everydayness, emphasizing Dasein's being "thrown-Being-in-the-world". Dasein is thrown into its world and thereby into the publicness of the "they". What does this mean? Idle talk is the first exemplary phenomenon of the "they" absorption of Dasein. Idle talk frequently hides a way that the understanding of Dasein has been interpreted; average intelligibility is communicated in Dasein's everyday speech. Yet, this type of speech reflects that Dasein has not gotten down to the business of articulating its primordial understanding of meaning, the totality of signification. Idle talk is the possibility of "understanding" without any individual, appropriative grasp of the primordial discourse *for oneself*. It does not uncover but closes off Dasein's understanding—it uproots it. This, however, is a persistent, stubborn problem of Dasein's average everydayness. It is Dasein's structural groundlessness in the everyday which by its very nature is *not* made evident.

In a limited sense, curiosity is the "visual" brother of idle talk. Curiosity similarly reflects Dasein's non-involvement or envelopment in its world. That is, in the sense that curiosity doesn't want to see to understand but *just* to see (linking it with idle talk) and *say* it has seen. Again, through this structure Dasein uproots itself, distracts itself, never carries along what is close. Both curiosity and idle talk are related to ambiguity. Things "look" to be understood but never really are; they are "spoken of" as intelligible but really are not. Ambiguity is Dasein's closing off its ownmost Being as thrown possibility. The ambiguity of idle talk and curiosity ensures that possibilities are closed off before really encountered. The union of curiosity, idle talk, and ambiguity in average everydayness hides, or closes off Dasein's ownmost concern for possibilities by enveloping it in the "they". Yet, Dasein does not effect this union of fore-closure of its possibilities. How does it come about?

This occurs through Dasein's fallenness. Fallenness expresses Dasein's absorption into its world, as alongside the world of its ownmost concern. Yet, as a positive possibility, Dasein's most frequent factual state, Dasein is this not-Being-its-self. This is fallenness, Dasein's falling from itself to itself, as evident in idle talk—groundless floating, curiosity-disclosing everywhere and nowhere, and ambiguity—uprooted understanding. Yet, Dasein gets itself into this falling; it is tempted by its Being-in-the-world with others. That this falling is tempting for Dasein would be enough; yet, Dasein becomes at ease in its fallenness. This "at ease" reflects Dasein's having as a positive possibility the dimming down of its own Being-as-an-issue for itself. Thus, the "at ease" aspect of fallenness is nonetheless alienating—of Dasein from its ownmost possibility. The whole circle of Dasein's owning-up, disowning itself, is the

entanglement of fallenness. Falling is related to Dasein's thrownness in that Dasein's factual existence is always a problem. Thrownness is Dasein's constant problem of having itself as a Being whose Being is an issue for itself. Falling does not deprecate the evidence for Dasein's thrownness; rather, it shows that Dasein's absorption into the world or into the "they" of other factual beings is never complete but a constant flux. Fallenness as a positive possibility for Dasein uncovers, once exposed itself as a "stubborn" problem, Dasein's thrown possibility.

In chapter six, Heidegger defines Dasein's average everydayness as

Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentially-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being Alongside the 'world' and in its Being-with others.⁹

Yet, as this description indicates, if Dasein is to disclose itself for itself it must do so for the most part in a simplified manner. The phenomenon anxiety will provide such access to Dasein's Being as being revealed as care. Dasein's absorption in the "they" is a fleeing of itself in the face of itself. Falling is Dasein's not owning up to itself, to its thrown possibility, by closing it off from itself. The turning away from itself of falling is grounded in anxiety which is Dasein's facing its Being-in-the-World. In anxiety what threatens is *no*-thing. Dasein faces the world *as* world; the ready-to-hand, the entities in the world, even Being-with others *all* recede such that Dasein loses the possibility of "understanding" itself publicly. Anxiety re-thematizes Dasein's concern for itself as its ownmost, thrown possibility. Dasein feels "not at home" in Being-in-the-world. Anxiety is the re-disclosure of Dasein's Being-at-issue for itself.

2. Heidegger's treatment of care and truth in Being and Time, preparatory to his later analyses of the place of truth, truth as meaning-being. (§§39-44).

Heidegger has pursued the notion of anxiety in order to determine whether that basic state-of-mind could bring to the fore the primordial structural unity of Dasein in an explicit and distinctive fashion. He has shown that anxiousness as state-of-mind is a way of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Yet, that about which Dasein has anxiety, as a way of its Being, is its potentiality for Being-in-the-world. Heidegger has shown that Dasein has de-severance and directionality as its Being-in-the world. Thus, Dasein is always already on its way and ahead of itself. Dasein is this ahead-of-itself-already-Being. It is simultaneously (structurally) worlded-ahead-of-itself-Being. The conjoining of Dasein's facticity and its potentiality for Being is care—the primordial struc-

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 225; H. 181.

ture which is either manifest as concern (Being-alongside as concerned, circumspective dealing with the ready-to-hand) or solicitude (Being-with; the Dasein-with-Dasein context).¹⁰

Dasein in its Being-ahead-of-itself becomes absorbed in the "they" as a possibility of its Being. Yet, even this losing-itself of Dasein is a way of Dasein's Being at issue for itself. For care is the primordial, structural unity of Dasein and as such is existentially "a priori". Thus, care is the ground of any factual attitude or situation. Care cannot be directed into (e.g.) will or addiction or urge.¹¹ Rather, these are possible only because care is Dasein's primordial, structural unity. Thus, willing is the seizing of potentiality-for-Being towards the possibility of the entity willed. The influence of the "they" is such as to dim down Dasein's potentiality-for-ownmost-Being to mere, not-yet-actualized possibilities. Willing, addiction, and urge as possible ways of Dasein's Being are rooted in Dasein's thrownness and Dasein as care. Some pre-ontological evidence will help clarify these notions regarding care.

Pre-ontological documents reflecting Dasein's always already having understood itself as care are cited by Heidegger as confirmation of the Existential Interpretation of Dasein.¹² The ancient fable about "care" reveals that care is that which belongs to Dasein for its lifetime. Dasein gets the name "homo" because it consists of earth —¹³ humus; it receives its Being in relation to time, however. Both Dasein's thrownness into the world and its projection into its ownmost possibilities compose its Being as care— a single basic state.

The meaning of Being is explicable only if there is understanding of Being. We have seen that Dasein is the Being whose Being is an issue for itself understandingly. Here, Heidegger reminds us again that the analytic of Dasein is necessary to, but directed toward, the ultimate question of understanding Being. Yet, Dasein must be clarified further in the analytic. Dasein as falling-Being diverts itself into its world. As such, interpretation begins to take its clues or orientations from entities in the world ready-to-hand. It is the next step to take Being merely as the meaning of reality. Thus, the analytic of Dasein gets diverted; modes of Being get described negatively and privatively in relation to Reality. It therefore becomes necessary to clarify the foundational relation of Reality to Dasein.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237; H. 193.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 238; H. 194.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 241ff.; H. 196-198.

¹³ Here one glimpses a foreshadowing of the importance of "earth" for Heidegger, to be thematized in later writings.

Heidegger understands the problem of reality to be essentially the problem of access to the real. As such the question becomes (1) can the real be independent of consciousness? (2) can there be transcendence of consciousness into the real? Yet, these questions have been attacked in the analytic of Dasein, at least implicitly. The analytic has shown knowledge or knowing as a founded mode which is possible only because Dasein has always already understood its world as a totality of signification, even though not always thematically. The question of the Reality of the external world is a problematic one only to the extent that the phenomenon of the world has not been elucidated.

What Kant called the scandal of philosophy (proof of "Dasein of things outside of me") was a problem for him precisely to the extent that he failed to clarify the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.¹⁴ Thus, the various attempts to link the Being-present-at-hand-together of the physical and psychical are on the wrong track from the outset. The "proof" Kant sought is what Dasein always already *is*. That Kant and most of the philosophical tradition overlooked this is evidence of the pervasive nullification, epistemologically, of the "external world". This is related to Dasein's falling and the diversion of Dasein's primary understanding of Being to Being as presence-at-hand. This diversion *is* Dasein's falling. Both Idealism *and* Realism go astray in the sense of overlooking the ontological foundation of "knowing" which is Dasein's very Being-in-the-world. Likewise, mere theories of "resistance of external" entities overlook that such is possible only by way of the disclosedness of the world by Dasein which is the Being of disclosure—who illumines, clears a path, gives direction. Thus, Heidegger distinguishes between "is" and "is there".¹⁵ Only by virtue of the Being of Dasein, which is Being-There is "there-is" possible at all. "Externality" in the traditional sense is only possible by way of Dasein and Dasein alone.

In like fashion, the notion of truth is clarified by Heidegger.¹⁶ The traditional conception of a locus of truth, an ultimate ground, is seen as only a shadow of the factual situation. Dasein as the Being which illumines, clears the path, lightens the way, is in the truth as well as not in the truth. Truth is an existential way of Being for Dasein —Being-true as Being-uncovering. The disclosure of the world is possible only by virtue of Dasein's Being-as-disclosedness. By Dasein's disclosedness the primordial phenomenon of truth is attained. The possibility of Dasein's being in the untruth is, again, related to its falling—the possibility grounded in Dasein's Being as thrown-projection.

¹⁴*Cf. Being and Time*, pp. 247ff.; H. 203ff.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 255; H. 212.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 256-273; H. 212-230.

The continual struggle is Dasein's covering the phenomenon of truth due to the very understanding of Being which Dasein always already has. Thus Heidegger concludes that apart from Dasein there is no truth or untruth; for there would then be no disclosedness:

*Because the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein's Being.*¹⁷

Here it is important to recall that Dasein alone has meaning, as "over against" entities in the world as unmeaning.¹⁸ The spirit of *Being and Time* in its entirety is perhaps to indicate this, the radicality of Dasein's distinctive status as the being for whom its Being is in question, yet in its primordial relationship to beings not having the status of Dasein. The relativity of all truth to Dasein's Being indicates the primacy of Dasein's *place*. Yet, the intricate web which *is* Dasein, its world, is too rich, too full, too complex to allow a *predominance* of Dasein's status *over* entities in the world. For the primacy of Dasein's *place* is always discussed in the context of its relationship to entities and the truth of entities. Hence, Heidegger clearly indicates that any discussion of the *place* of truth in relation to Dasein can not revert to the notion of an ultimate ground.

The primacy of the notions briefly outlined above, derived from an exposition of central passages in *Being and Time* concerning language, care, and truth, points us to a sketching out of the *place* of revelation as Heidegger understands it. The analysis of *Being and Time* indicates that within this *place* of illumination, clearing-a-path, truth occurs first in the disclosing of beings *as* meanings, i.e.-as meaning-beings. The importance and strength of the "as" of this formulation is the potent indication that the *place* of revealing or disclosure is "linguistic", taken in the fullest and most originary sense. *Being and Time* has already fashioned a path toward understanding the *place* of the event of meaning-beings in its talk about "logos" and "aletheia". The continuity of Heidegger's project is the pursuit of this central path leading toward the *place* of the Fourfold as the event of disclosure of the "linguistic-thing", the "sensible-sense". Heidegger's later writings bear the fruit of these seeds carefully sown in *Being and Time*.

3. Exploration of the place of truth of the meaning-being as the place of the Fourfold.

Having followed Heidegger along the path of *Being and Time* and having become involved in the powerful existential analytic of Dasein therein, one

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 270; H. 227.

¹⁸Cf. footnote 6.

arrives at the last published section of the work to be confronted with a startling phrase:

The distinction between the Being of existing Dasein and the Being of entities, such as Reality, which do not have the character of Dasein, may appear very illuminating; but it is still only the *point of departure* for the ontological problematic; it is nothing with which philosophy may tranquillize itself.¹⁹

Here, Heidegger generally alludes to the tasks still before him, the paths to be explored further. Most particularly he speaks of the problem of “Thing-concepts” and the fascination of Dasein for “presence-at-hand” rather than readiness-to-hand, in spite of the latter’s *closeness* to us. He speaks of the great difficulties of handling the ontological problematic in primordial fashion if rooted in any distinction between “consciousness” and “thing”. In light of these problems, Heidegger quite modestly states in spite of all his work in *Being and Time*, that “the *question* of the meaning of Being remains unformulated and unclarified...”²⁰ In this sense Heidegger speaks of his thought as “on the way”, having understood an approach to Being in seeing Dasein as Being-in-the-world and its comportment toward entities.

In a letter written in the form of a brief article regarding theology, published many years after *Being and Time*, Heidegger indicates some of the principle directions his thought has taken and the sense in which the question of the meaning of Being is formulated anew. Although the text bears on theological considerations, Heidegger’s approach to them is emblematic of his general attitude toward thinking. He claims that if theology is to achieve a “non-objectifying thinking and speaking” it must *not*

borrow the categories of its thinking and the form of its speech from philosophy or the sciences, but [...] think and speak [...] with fidelity to its subject matter.²¹

Implicit in this statement is Heidegger’s continual concern that thinking not become a prisoner of either the scientific world or of the philosophical tradition. The task of thinking, as already outlined at the end of *Being and Time*, is to concern itself with the nearness-farness of Dasein’s relationship to entities in the world, and more generally to the “subject” of any and all thinking.

¹⁹*Being and Time*, p. 487; H. 436-437.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 487; H. 437.

²¹“The theological Discussion of ‘The Problem of a Non-Objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Today’s Theology’ – Some Pointers To Its Majors Aspects” (Letter of March 11, 1964) in *The Piety of Thinking* (collection of essays by Martin Heidegger) translated by James J. Hart and John C. Maraldo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 23.

Yet, this must be done in a more primordial fashion than by a *mere* return to the “things-themselves” based upon the solid ground of a transcendental subject. Heidegger appears to be continually re-working the *place* of the problem of Dasein’s birth *to* and *of* the world, as the place of a *giving of sense*.²²

What is striking in this article, and relates to our discussion of language for Heidegger, is his characterization of thinking in terms of speaking. Particularly, he poses his position as over against another contemporary position—that of Carnap. He characterizes Carnap’s approach as a technological-scientific view to language which wants to subject all thought and discourse to a technical-logical system of signs. Heidegger views his own position formally as a “speculative-hermeneutical experience of language.”²³ He notes that his position grows out of concern for the question as to what is to be experienced as the subject matter itself for the thinking of philosophy and how this subject-matter, Being as Being, is to be expressed.²⁴ Heidegger decisively noted that there is no question here of a philosophy of language. Rather, at this juncture and perhaps beyond *Being and Time*, Heidegger moves to the explicit avowal that language is the “realm within which the thinking of philosophy and every kind of thinking and saying move and repose.”²⁵

Thus, the thrust of the renewed analysis after *Being and Time* is to re-situate the question of Dasein’s nearness-farness to entities-in-the-world in the *place* of a thinking which is a “letting-be-said”²⁶ of that which shows itself. Thinking is thus a co-responding, answering to that which shows itself. Here, Heidegger speaks of his re-formulation of the problem as showing “to what extent poetizing too is a pensive saying.”²⁷ This similar theme is expressed in “What is Metaphysics?” where Heidegger succinctly states:

The thinker utters Being. The Poet names what is holy.²⁸

Heidegger’s meditation on the *place* of language, carried out in many essays on the works of Hölderlin, Stefan George, Trakl, and other poets and

²²Here I make use of two central notions, at least implicitly derived in great measure from the richness of Heidegger’s analysis, from Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Cf. *La Phénoménologie de la Perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945):—“Naître, c’est à la fois naître du monde et naître au monde.” (p. 517); “la Sinngebung” (p. 501ff.).

²³*The Piety of Thinking*, p. 24.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Cf. “What is Metaphysics?” in *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1949), p. 360.

writers, bears out the assumptions of this remark regarding thinkers and poets. The exploration of the place of language, the event of sensible-sense, is uncovered as Heidegger thinks through the utterance of Being in relation to poetic naming of the holy. The essay entitled *Hebel – Der Hausfreund* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1957) bears out this exploration as well as striking the path toward the later formulation of language as the place of the Fourfold/Gestell relationship.

Heidegger's initial concern in speaking of Johann Peter Hebel's writings is to show the universality of his work, against the possible claim of its provinciality. The broader context of the meditation, however, is to show the sense in which poetry, regional or not, is rooted in a source and moves toward the openness of discourse. Hebel for Heidegger is exemplary of the poetic task, naming the "holy"—the totality, the whole, indicating a path toward seeing the original *place* of man's organic relation to his world. Heidegger outlines the poetic task:

The poet concentrates the world within a saying of which the world constitutes but a reflection of a retained *douceur*, by which the world appears as if it were discovered for the first time.²⁹

With Heidegger, one envisions the poet's fashioning the world at the heart of a saying or word which reflects something of the illumination of the world, yet in a re-tained, re-taken fashion. In so doing the poet allows us to glimpse the world *as if* discovered for the first time. The central notions of *Being and Time* of revelation, illumination, lighting a path, and clearing a way, are implicit here as well as the notion of a world, organically concentrated, a referential totality of meaning. The appearance of the world *as if* discovered for the first time bespeaks the apophantical "as" analyzed formally in the existential analytic. The place of the "as", the site of the event of the poet's naming the holy, is the locus of the appearance of the world.

The place where world appears is reflected by the poet as he participates in the clearing which is the "open for everything that is present and absent".³⁰ Yet, complicating the nature of this, the place of presence and absence, is the familiar Heideggerian notion of truth as revelation. For the poet's task is a work, a labor, because the possibility of revelation is *not* the possibility of total revelation. Heidegger writes:

²⁹My working translation of:

Der Dichter versammelt die Welt in ein Sagen, dessen Wort ein mild-verhaltenes Scheinen bleibt, worin die Welt so erscheint, als werde sie zum erstenmal erblickt.

(*Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 25.)

³⁰Cf. *On Time and Being*, p. 65.

That which the spirit of language shelters is that all-governing loftiness from which every thing draws its origin, so as to be of value and bear fruit.³¹

The loftiness characteristic of language, from which all things draw their own origin, is the bestowal of value and fertility. The relation of language to the originary place of the fusion of meaning-Being is seen as a sheltering and protection of the place wherein world has meaning *and* a covering-over of the place. The interplay of language and Being is thus continually a hiding and an un-hiding. The possibility of man's involvement in the dynamics of this play is his ability to find the originary place by answering language:

In truth, language speaks, not man. Man speaks only insofar as he answers (*co-responds*) to language.³²

The somewhat odd character of the title Heidegger has chosen for his essay on Hebel begins to become more clear. Certainly, Hebel is the poet who wished his writings to be expressive to man at home with himself in the most mundane sense. Hebel was the poet of his region, the friend of the homes of that region. But beyond this sense, Heidegger shows Hebel and poets in general, as well as all men and women concerned with their ek-sistence, as the friends of the house or the home. The intention is clear in view of a concise remark from another work: "Language is the house of Being."³³ Language is the home man inhabits in his relation to Being. Co-responding to language, with and through it, is the possibility of his most primordial relationship to his world. It is important that one see, according to Heidegger, that one does not merely *use* language, nor *have* it; rather, language speaks and man speaks in response to the speaking of language. This is borne out in the corollary idea of man's dwelling in his world, or inhabiting it as his home:

The world as *sensible-sense* spans the extent of the play-ground between earth and sky. Language keeps open the *place* where man on the earth and under the sky, inhabits the home of the world.³⁴

³¹Working translation of the following passage in *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 10:

Was der Sprachgeist in sich birgt, ist jenes Hohe, alles Durchwaltende, woraus jeglich Ding dergestalt seine Herkunft hat, daß es gilt und fruchtet.

³²Working translation of the following passage in *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 34:

Eigentlich spricht die Sprache, nicht der Mensch. Der Mensch spricht erst, insofern er jeweils der Sprache ent-spricht.

³³"The Nature of Language" in *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 63.

³⁴Working translation of the following passage in *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 38 (emphasis added):

The strength and richness of Heidegger's notion of language are clear from this passage. Hebel is spoken of as the friend of the home because he calls us to respond to language with him. Our response is with and to the sensible-sense of word-logos. The long range project of *Being and Time* which began with a consideration of phenomenology —the speaking of the logos— is borne out as Heidegger speaks of the word as sensible-sense. We see the development of the linguistic-thing as an event arising out of the place of language. Man's relation to language is his involvement with and response to the originary fusion of word-thing-world. The possibility of man's being forgetful of Being is his ability to cut himself off from the organic relation of this "triplicity". The organic interplay of the elements of sensible-sense, word-thing-world, is the staying power which shelters the spirit of language. Yet, we have seen the possibility that sheltering may become a stifling of this spirit. False totality is possible; for example...

Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news.³⁵

Heidegger has retained his notions of authenticity-inauthenticity and deficient modality as at the heart of language. We see that language keeps open the place of sensible-sense, the possibility of the event of the coming to Being of things in the world, but that man's participation as co-responsible and co-respondant is needed. Man inhabits language, the house of Being, but moreover:

The building which establishes the home is what it is in its truth only when from the beginning is accorded the letting-dwelling which awakens and assures the most original possibilities of dwelling. If we think of the verb "to dwell" with enough fullness and meaning then it speaks to us of the way by which man, on the earth and under the sky, brings to pass his migration from birth to death.³⁶

The possibility of man's understanding his world in its fullness is linked to his understanding of his being-mortal, that he shall die, that his being is contextual and finite, as was his beginning, when thrown into his world. Al-

Das Wort durchmißt als der *sinnliche Sinn* die weite des Spielraums zwischen Erde und Himmel. Die Sprache hält den Bereich offen, in dem der Mensch auf der Erde unter dem Himmel das Haus der Welt bewohnt.

³⁵*On Time and Being*, p. 58.

³⁶Working translation of the following passage in *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 17:

Das Bauen aber, dadurch das Haus erstellt wird, ist das, was es in Wahrheit ist, nur dann, wenn es zum voraus auf das Wohnenlassen gestimmt bleibt, welches Lassen jeweils ursprünglichere Möglichkeiten für das Wohnen weckt und gewährt. Denken wir das Zeitwort "wohnen" weit und wesentlich genug, dann nennt es uns die Weise, nach der die Menschen auf der Erde unter dem Himmel die Wanderung von der Geburt bis in den Tod vollbringen.

though being-toward-death is not analyzed here thematically as in *Being and Time*, it is evident that it is central to man's understanding his relationship to the *place* of sensible-sense as a relation or movement of finite transcendence. Man's relationship to his world is neither willfully appropriative *nor* substantial with man as solid, central ground; at least, it is not this way in its fullest, most authentic sense. For Heidegger speaks of man's constructive relation to language as a letting-dwelling which on the earth and under the sky is a movement or migration. As such it must be an organic movement with the "elements" of world. The early formulation of the *place* of man with language is proposed in the Hebel essay as Heidegger explores Hebel's sense of man:

Whether we like to admit it to ourselves or not, we are plants which need roots to grow from the earth in order to be able to flower in the ether and bear fruit.³⁷

In this earlier formulation of the *place* of language, before the formulation of the Fourfold, Heidegger takes up Hebel's poetic image and employs it to explain man's position at home in his world. He is working toward a holistic notion of the fusion of man and word-thing-world. Yet, it is evident that his intended use of Hebel's image, which is an organic one, is in the service of avoiding the consciousness/"thing-concepts" schism to which Heidegger alluded at the end of *Being and Time* as being inadequate.³⁸ Heidegger's use of Hebel's image thus seems his provisional, transitional construction to describe man's relation to the place of the event of meaning-being and this relation's involvement with man's mortal migration. The span of man's migration from birth to death has thus to do with a building-dwelling in the *topos* which language shelters. The description of the place of this dwelling, between earth and sky, is sketched by Heidegger at least partially on traditional terms:

The earth —this word in Hebel's phrase names all which, visible, audible, or palpable, sustains and surrounds us, impassions and clams us: the sensible. The ether (the sky)— this word in Hebel's phrase names all which we perceive but not with the sense organs: the not-sensible, meaning, spirit-mind.³⁹

³⁷Working translation of:

Wir sind Pflanzen, die —wir mögen's uns gerne gestehen oder nicht— mit den Wurzeln aus der Erde steigen müssen, um im Äther blühen und Früchte tragen zu können.

(Johann Peter Hebel, III, p. 314.; cited in Heidegger, *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, p. 37).

³⁸Cf. footnote 19.

³⁹Working translation of the following passage in *Hebel – Der Hausfreund*, pp. 37-38:

It is certain that within the *Hebel* essay, Heidegger wishes to achieve a full understanding of sensible-sense as being fundamentally, and in an ordinary way, linguistic-conceptual-perceptual. To fight the temptation toward or slipping into the traditional schism of consciousness/"thing-concepts", he thus employs the richer earth and sky imagery. Since man has been viewed within the essay as the one who in his dwelling, in the course of a migration toward death, is capable of letting-dwelling, man can co-respond to language. The structure outlined is thus one of mortal-earth-sky as constitutive of the *place* which language shelters, the *place* where the thing appears. The absence of the divinities from the schema (more precisely, the absence of their absent-presencing) will be rectified in the later Fourfold. This change will reflect the primacy of language which, when incorporated more fully in the notion of *place* will help Heidegger avoid the implicit weakness of the mere earth-sky *topos* and its potential mis-construction on the traditional terms of the merely perceptual-conceptual view of the *place* of the thing as related to man.

The move to the Fourfold is begun especially in "The Thing" and in meditations on the pre-Socratic thinkers. The essay "Logos", a meditation on the thought of Heraclitus, bears out more fully the attempt to see language and the *place* of the thing holistically. Meditating and exploring Fragment 50 of Heraclitus, Heidegger points to the unity of all things as founded in the relationship of the *word* and the *thing-said*. The full implication of the *Hebel* essay, that the place of the event of thing-word-world is the place of Logos, is brought out explicitly:

The receptive place has, as Logos, placed all that is present in un-hiddenness. To place is to shelter. All that is present is thus sheltered in its ownmost presence inasmuch as it is possible for mortal λέγειν to search it and bring it out into its presence. Λόγος places, sets up and hands down, that is to say re-replaces the present thing within its presence.⁴⁰

That placing is sheltering had been seen in the *Hebel* essay; that the *place* is explicitly "Logos" is now emphasized more strongly. The coming to Being

Die Erde – dieses Wort nennt in Hebels Satz alles das, was uns als Sichtbares, Hörbares, Fühlbares trägt und umgibt, befeuert und beruhigt: das Sinnliche. Der Äther (der Himmel) – dieses Wort nennt in Hebels Satz alles das, was wir vernehmen, aber nicht mit den Sinnesorganen: das Nicht-Sinnliche, den Sinn, den Geist.

⁴⁰Working translation of the following passage in Heidegger, "Logos", *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1967), p. 16:

Die lesende Lege als der Λόγος Alles, das Anwesende, in die Unverborgenheit niedergelegt. Das Legen ist ein Bergen. Es birgt alles Anwesende in sein Anwesen, aus dem es eigens als das jeweilige Anwesende durch das Sterbliche λέγειν ein- und her-vor-geholt werden kann. Der Λόγος legt ins Anwesen vor und legt das Anwesende ins Anwesen nieder, d.h. zurück.

of beings in their fullness is now seen as necessarily related to the word. That the thinker utters Being, tries to make the question of the meaning of Being a matter of thought, is now more clearly understood in relation to the poet's naming the holy. Logos places and shelters all that is present; as such Logos protects *and* hides the world of man and things. Man's co-responding to and with language is required; *mortal* λέγειν is needed to search and bring out *all* that is present in its presence. The *Being and Time* notion that Dasein worlds its world has not been lost, but more forcefully enriched by its originary relationship to language. Logos places, sets up, and hands down, *re-places* the present thing. It is by this, Heidegger's linking language to mortal co-responding, that he is able to bridge the gap between man and thing. The thing-said, the linguistic-being, is not, on this account, isolated from the temporal ec-stasis of man. The placing, setting-up, and handing-down which Logos achieves in relation to man bespeaks the involvement of things within a tradition which arises out of a future based in the presence of the sensible-sense, the thing as said. Logos places things and re-places them to the fore in their original relationship with man.

The poetic task, and its relation to the thinking task, is reformulated on terms of the thing-named as the originary structure making possible a world for man:

To name (ὄνομα), if thought of in regard to λέγειν is not to *ex-press* the meaning of a word, but rather to let-lie-before in the light in and through which something endures, by its having a name.⁴¹

There is no sense in which word and thing are related merely externally for Heidegger. The holistic fusion of word and thing as the the thing-said *is* the original fusion which was the constitutive structure of the possibility of any emergence or *e-vent* of the thing whatsoever. Naming is *neither* tacking a name onto a thing which could have a presence without the word *nor* a conceptual ex-pression of the word which could float freely above or apart from the thing. Rather, naming is the original *and* originary fusion of word and thing as sensible-sense in a world-context. Naming is letting things be in their ownmost presence *as* they lie before us. Separation of word from thing and such modes of thinking as "calculative thinking", logical reduction of things-concepts to formulae, *etc.*, are all based on the original and originary possibilities of naming. Heidegger amplifies this fundamental sense of language in affirming and commenting upon Stefan George's poetic formulation:

⁴¹Working translation of:

Das vom λέγειν her gedachte Nennen (ὄνομα) ist kein Ausdrücken einer Wortbedeutung, sondern ein vor-liegen-lassen in dem Licht, worin etwas dadurch steht, daß es einen Namen hat. (*Ibid.*, p. 19.)

Where word breaks off
No thing may be.⁴²

The intricate web which immeshes word and thing involves man, without whose participation the event of the thing-said would be impossible. As Heidegger has earlier spoken of man's place as the "stand-in" (*Platzhalter*) for nothing,⁴³ he now in later writings speaks of the need for man's care for that place in terms of naming, as letting-lie-before us things in their presence. The richest version offered by Heidegger concerning man and his place, his standing in for nothing, in relation to the fusion of word and thing, is the place of the introplay of the Fourfold and its deficient mode in standardization.

The simple analysis of a jug in an essay entitled "The Thing" is the occasion upon which Heidegger most fully elaborates the place of the round dance of the Fourfold as the event of meaning-being, or sensible-sense, or thing-said, the various formulations which were his prior attempts at understanding the organic unity of man with thing-world-word. The marriage of earth and sky spoken of here, and allusive of the *Hebel* analysis, is combined with the relations of mortals and divinities. These four, the Fourfold, are united in their *simple one-foldness* (*Einfalt*) as "preceding everything that is present".⁴⁴ By their introplay things are gathered into their presence, into a single time-space, as perduring or staying. The gathering of the thing spoken of here is a reformulation of Heidegger's continual concern since *Being and Time* for the question of proximity, distance and nearness. The staying of the thing brings the Fourfold elements near to each other as their play toward each other is the emergence of the thing.

Heidegger views the relationship of the play of the Fourfold and the thing as one of mutual appropriation. Moreover, each element of the Fourfold unites with and appropriates each other element in a mirror-play or intropenetration which affords the place of the emergence of the thing. The place of the thing-said which emerges is the place of λέγειν; for the staying of the thing is a letting-lie before us in its presence. Naming as this letting-lie before us is the fashioning of world which emerges as ultimate context for all things. The thing-said, if "understood" in its relation to logos, is held in its presence by man's ability to accomplish the building-dwelling which allows him his place within the fullness of the place of the Fourfold. This building-

⁴²"The Word" cited in Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language" in *On the Way to Language*, p. 60.

⁴³Cf. Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" in *Existence and Being*, p. 343.

⁴⁴Cf. Heidegger, "The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 173.

dwelling is carried out by the mortal, always already related to the Fourfold. Earth is involved as inexhaustible source, nourishing all things, giving them substance and sustenance. This darkness and richness of earth as bearer and mystery of origin contrasts with sky. Sky is emphasized as bearer, source and contrast of light and shadow. Its play, changes, and mood, as natural force and as profound distance, are involved also with its yielding the changes of seasons and temporality. Sky plays as change and movement in the mutual context of and play with the persistence and originary sameness and source-fullness of earth. The divinities are viewed as harbingers of god-head which does not nor cannot present itself in any tangible sense. The god emerges in his ownmost presence only as an absence, for his divinity defies any comparison with beings that are present. And the mortals take up their position in this introplay with the other three. Heidegger emphasizes that only mortals are capable of death as death:

Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the shelter of Being. They are the presencing relation to Being as Being.⁴⁵

Here Heidegger emphasizes the mutual appropriation of all elements of the Fourfold and that no single element in the introplay insists upon its own particularity. Yet, within the mutualness of this appropriation, the character of man's involvement as the mortal is striking. First, Heidegger notes that although metaphysics has regarded man as rational animal, as such man remains dominated by life-experience, without an appropriate understanding of his ownmost dying nor of his place in the introplay of the Fourfold. Hence: "Rational living beings must first *become* mortals."⁴⁶ Secondly, when man understands his position in the play-place of the Fourfold, it is understood as the "presencing relation to Being *as* Being". The "as" calls to our attention the mortal's involvement with language. Ultimately, the play of the four is the worlding or emergence of world. This emergence is possible only on the terms of the full and mutual introplay of the Fourfold *and* the building of the home of Being— language. The mortal is spoken of as the "presencing relation to Being *as* Being" because of his co-response to language in his care for the *place* of the emergence of world. Although all elements play, having organic relation and appropriation with and of each other, only the mortal appears capable of care for the place because of the importance of his relation to Being *as* Being. This relation, that of understanding the place, that of finite transcendence, is the work of language:

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

Men alone, as mortals, by dwelling attain to the world *as* world.⁴⁷

The notion of dwelling bespeaks man's becoming mortal and heeding the call of things *as* things, involving himself with a "thinking that responds and recalls".⁴⁸ We begin to understand with Heidegger that the path of man's migration from birth to death is a challenge to him to seek out his fitting *place*. Man must *become* mortal to participate fully in the place of emergence of sensible-sense. For the full involvement of word-thing-world may remain hidden to man. Needed is a thinking that recalls, retrieves the originary *place*, the role of the mortal in naming and helping to bring to presence the thing-said in the context of world. That this thinking is both needed and possible for man is indicated in the fullness of *poiesis* as contrasted with the present epochal determination of Being as standardization or enframing (*das Ge-stell*).⁴⁹ Thinking must continually be "on its way" toward the response to and recall of language which involves care for a world. Standing in the Fourfold as shepherd and neighbor of Being, the mortal discovers the *gift* of world which he can and invariably does "world", the *gift* of things-named which come into their presence. Man's involvement with and response to language, as recall to the place of the Fourfold, as the setting to work of the truth of Being, is the mortal's ever recurring, re-invoking, re-taking, and re-giving of this fragile but rich gift for himself with others.

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⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁴⁸Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴⁹Cf. *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, "Die Frage nach der Technik" and "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Ibid.*, p. 85; footnote.