

CHAPTER 3: HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF TRUTH

Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where alētheia, truth, happens.¹

In this chapter, I move on to an elucidation of Heidegger's conception of truth in *Being and Time* (§ 44), *On the Essence of Truth*, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, *The Question concerning Technology*, *The Nature of Language* from *On the Way to Language* and *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*. I do this in order to trace the development of Heidegger's thought on truth, and to indicate the links between his conception of truth to those on technology and language. It is only in this chapter that I examine a theme in Heidegger's corpus by looking at texts in isolation. I do this since I believe that his conception of truth opens a way to understanding the themes of technology and language. In other word, I believe that truth is the point around which his ideas on technology and language turn. This will then form the basis for exploring the question of whether his intimate linkage of these three themes is fruitful and tenable.

3.1 An Introduction to Heidegger's Conception of Truth

Western philosophy has been preoccupied with the notion of truth since its very beginnings, and yet 'it is paradoxical that, whereas philosophy is regarded as the search for truth, few philosophers have inquired deeply into the question of what truth is.'²

The question of truth lies at the centre of Heidegger's philosophical reflections. According to Walter Biemel, the core of Heidegger's questioning is twofold: It is an inquiry into Being, and at the same time, it is an inquiry into *alētheia*.³ In this section I will discuss Heidegger's conception of truth as it appears in *Being and Time*, *On the Essence of Truth*, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, *The Question concerning Technology*, *The Nature of Language* and *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*. I do this in order to trace the development of his thought regarding truth, to show the intrinsic unity of his thought, and to begin to shed light on the significance of the fact that that technology, truth and language are intimately connected in Heidegger's vision.

The hermeneutical interpretation of the word 'truth' forced Heidegger to rethink and question the modern experience of truth. He claimed that there was an essential difference between viewing truth as correctness, and truth as unconcealment - the hermeneutical meaning he saw hidden in the more common meaning of the word. For Plato, and those that followed, *alētheia* meant correctness, a correspondence between knowledge and the object.

According to Heidegger, ever since Plato, we have been asking what ourselves and the universe must be like if we are going to have the sort of certainty and clarity that Plato felt we ought to have. Thus, Heidegger says: ' All metaphysics, including its opponent, positivism, speaks the language of Plato.'⁴

Heidegger argues that the history of the discourse on truth has ignored the experience of truth as an opening that lets unconcealment occur⁵. He claims that the primordial phenomenon of truth has been concealed by Dasein's forgetfulness of Being - its reduction of the Being of beings to the ready-to-hand. Heidegger does note, however, that although the Greeks may have thought of truth in terms of correctness, they at least continued to call truth by a word with etymological traces that allude to a primordial experience with unconcealment. He says:

At the same time, we must not overlook the fact that for the Greeks, who were the first to develop this initial understanding of being as a branch of knowledge and to bring it to dominance, this primordial understanding of truth was also alive, even if pre-ontologically, and it even held its own against the concealment implicit in their ontology - at least in Aristotle.⁶

Modernity, however, is permeated by the correspondence theory of truth - correctness, or agreement with the matter at hand. This view of truth implies that the experience of truth is necessarily structured in terms of the relationship between a subject and an object. As we have seen in the previous chapter, one of Heidegger's aims was to decentre the subject, and I believe that his conception of truth extends this task. Thus, Heidegger's interpretation of *alētheia* as unconcealment opens up a dimension of truth that was not visible to the philosophers of modernity.

3.2 Heidegger's Concept of Truth in *Being and Time*. (§ 44)

The exposition of care as the being of Dasein culminates in the enquiry into the connection between Being and truth. This section of *Being and Time* is the point at which the pre-temporal analysis of Dasein ends. Now, Heidegger shows how philosophical thought centres on the connection between Being and truth since its very beginnings. His investigation begins with a discussion of the traditional concept of truth and its ontological foundations. Heidegger then moves on to an investigation into the primordial phenomenon of truth and an account of how the traditional concept was derived from this view. Lastly, he discusses the mode of being of truth and the presupposition of truth.

The customary concept of truth takes a statement as the true locus of truth and sees its essence as being situated in the correspondence of a judgement with its object. Thus, Heidegger distinguishes between the truth ascribed to judgements and a more fundamental sense that should be attached to the term 'truth'.⁷ The truth of judgements may be described as the agreement of the thing and the intellect, in the Aristotelian tradition. The statement of Aristotle that the 'experiences' of the soul are in the likeness of things, which is not meant to be taken as a definition of the essential nature of truth, led in the Middle Ages to the definition of *veritas* as *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, a definition which maintained its popularity beyond Kant.

For Heidegger, in addition to the truth of judgment there exists a more essential form of truth that lies not largely in a judgement, but in the human ek-sistence itself, insofar as it is a revealing. The agreement of the judgment with the real thing presupposes that reality has already been drawn from concealedness in a more fundamental way⁸. To draw real things from concealedness to unconcealedness (*alētheia*) requires a certain 'light'. This light is Dasein's ek-sistence itself, its being-in-the-world from which originally all meaning draws its light.⁹

The expression Dasein is 'in the truth'¹⁰, does not mean that Dasein is in possession of all truth. It means that because of its overtness or open stance (*Offenständigkeit*), which includes its to-be-discovering, Dasein is able to 'disclose'.

Heidegger tells us that 'Dasein is equiprimordially in truth and untruth'.¹¹ What does he mean here? Heidegger conceives Dasein as being-in-the-world. This means that the openness of Dasein involves the articulated structure of care as a whole,

including the factor of projection (the temporalisation of the future). In other words, Dasein projects itself on its possibilities, opening up its world for itself. Also included is the factor of thrownness – the fact that Dasein always finds itself in a particular world.

In projecting, Dasein may understand himself on the basis of his very own possibilities (authenticity). When this happens, we have the ‘truth of existence’¹². Or, Dasein may understand himself in terms of the world, to which he has ever already forfeited itself (inauthenticity). Dasein is then in untruth. In this way, Heidegger can say that Dasein is in truth and untruth. When Parmenides places the goddess of truth in front of two paths¹³, those of discovering and concealing, this marks for Heidegger an early insight into the fact that Dasein stands in truth, as well as in untruth.

It is important to remember that by saying that Dasein is in truth does not mean that truths are planted in him by some mysterious power, but that by virtue of being-in-the-world, he is always open for all that is part of his world.

We find the continuation of Heidegger’s enquiry into truth in the lecture *On the Essence of Truth*. How does it differ from the preceding conception in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger has located truth, in an essential sense, in human ek-sistence insofar that this ek-sistence is a revealing?

3.3 Heidegger’s Concept of Truth in *On the Essence of Truth*

In the introduction to this lecture, Heidegger reminds us that he is investigating the *essence* of truth, and not the various kinds of truth with which we are familiar. In a manner similar to that of *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins with explaining the common sense concept of truth, namely, truth in the sense of correspondence, and inquires into what is assumed in this concept of truth. He then moves on to allow the problem of truth to emerge in a new light. Here it becomes evident that the nature of human being himself must be thought anew as a result of this questioning. We are provided with an exposition of the nature of Dasein as it must be understood in terms of the nature of truth, and this exposition leads to a new determination of the nature of philosophy itself.

Heidegger notes that the common concept of truth takes correspondence as its basic feature. In the discussion of §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger contrasted truth as

correspondence and truth as unconcealedness, and explained how truth can be equated with correspondence and judgement be taken to be the locus of truth. Here Heidegger proceeds in a different way, without rejecting the conclusions arrived at in *Being and Time*.

He tells us that we do not only call judgements true. We ordinarily speak of a true state of affairs. When here, in the thing, we thus equate true and real, this means that when we have a certain concept of the thing, and when the thing corresponds with this concept, we say that it is true – it is as it should be¹⁴.

Statements are also usually called true or false. 'A statement is true if what it means and says is in accordance with the matter about which the statement is made.'¹⁵ Thus, being right or corresponding is itself capable of being understood in two ways, namely the correspondence of a thing with the idea of it as conceived in advance, as well as the correspondence of that which is intended by a statement with the thing itself.

The traditional definition of truth, *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*, is normally understood in the sense of propositional truth (the approximation of a statement to what it is about), but for propositional truth to be possible at all, it is necessary that we have a definite conception of the thing. In both cases, truth is conceived of as 'conforming with', and is equated with rightness or correctness (*Richtigkeit*)¹⁶.

To better understand the fact that the traditional concept of truth can be understood in both ways indicated above, Heidegger points us to the medieval understanding of it. He notes that in this interpretation, each version of conformity contains two meanings of *intellectus*. The conformity of the thing with the intellect refers to the divine intellect. In this view, as created by God, things are created in accordance with His ideas, and so they necessarily conform to his ideas. The human intellect is also created by God, and so must also satisfy the divine idea. Heidegger explains:

The *intellectus humanus* too is an *ens creatum*. As a capacity bestowed upon man by God, it must satisfy its *idea*. But the understanding measures up to the idea only in accomplishing in its propositions the correspondence of what is thought to the matter, which in its turn must be in conformity with the *idea*. If all beings are 'created', the possibility of the truth of human knowledge is grounded in the fact that matter and

proposition measure up to the idea in the same way and therefore are fitted to each other on the basis of the unity of the divine plan of creation.¹⁷

Heidegger goes on to show how this interpretation of truth as correspondence is retained even when the medieval position is abandoned. The rationality of the world (*Weltvernunft*) now replaces God as creator. He says:

The theologically conceived order of creation is replaced by the capacity of all objects to be planned by means of a worldly reason (*Weltvernunft*) which supplies the law for itself and thus also claims that its procedure is immediately intelligible (what is considered 'logical').¹⁸

Even when this position is abandoned, the interpretation of truth as the correctness of correspondence survives, acquiring an almost absolute validity, and it is forgotten how this interpretation was originally justified.

Heidegger now continues to discuss what correspondence really means. We may speak of correspondence between two things when they have the same appearance. (He uses the example of two five Mark coins). They are not one, but what is common to them is the sameness of appearance. In the context of the problem of truth, however, a different kind of correspondence is meant – namely the correspondence between a thing /matter and a statement. How is it possible that two such disparate things can correspond?

Let us explore Heidegger's example in this regard: This coin is round. Here, the statement is in accordance with the thing. But how are the thing and the statement supposed to be in accordance, considering that the relata are manifestly different in their outward appearance? The coin is made of metal, but the statement is not material at all. The coin is round, but the statement has nothing spatial about it. One can purchase something with the coin, but the statement has no purchasing power. How can the sentence, so unlike a coin, correspond to the coin when it says something about the coin? The approximation of a sentence (statement) to some matter (thing) must mean some special kind of relation. Heidegger calls it a representative (*vor-stellende*) relation, in which the statement is keyed to the thing and says something about how it is in any particular respect.

Heidegger thinks of re-presenting (*Vor-stellen*) not in the psychological sense, but rather as to 'let the thing stand opposed as object'¹⁹. The thing so opposed, according to Heidegger, must traverse an open field of opposedness (*Entgegen*), and nevertheless maintain its stand as a thing and show itself as something withstanding (*ein Ständiges*).

Thus, for Heidegger, in order that the person who states something may represent anything as an object (*Gegen-stand*), the thing must show itself – it must enter into a realm which Heidegger calls the 'open region'. Heidegger rejects the idea that the representing subject creates this region – rather, the representing subject must place himself within this sphere. A relationship between the presenter and the represented occurs, which Heidegger conceives of as a comportment (*Verhalten*), which is distinguished by the fact that, standing in the open region, it adheres to something opened up as such.

Heidegger tells us that if the correctness (truth) of statements becomes possible only through this openness of comportment, then what first makes correctness possible must be taken as the essence of truth. He says:

Thus the traditional assignment of truth exclusively to statements as the sole essential locus of truth falls away. Truth does not originally reside in the proposition. But at the same time the question arises as to the ground of the inner possibility of the open comportment that pre-gives a standard, which possibility alone lends to propositional correctness the appearance of fulfilling the essence of truth at all.²⁰

In the next section of the essay, entitled *The Ground of the Possibility of Correctness*, Heidegger's reflections on truth are given an unanticipated turn, for now it becomes evident that 'the essence of truth is freedom'.²¹ This is quite contrary to the traditional concept of truth, and Heidegger goes about discussing how freedom is to be conceived in his view in the section on *The Essence of Freedom*.

So far, freedom has been exhibited as man's open stance (*Offenständigkeit*). Standing in the open region, he is able to subject himself to what is manifest and shows itself in it, and commit himself to it. With this commitment, there takes place a letting-be (*Sein-lassen*). For Heidegger, this letting-be does not refer to neglect or

indifference, but rather means to 'engage oneself with beings'²². To let beings be as the beings which they are, means for Heidegger to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness along with itself. Letting-be is not just any activity of man, but is that by virtue of which he becomes Dasein, an entity that is defined by its relationship to the open. It now becomes clear once again why from *Being and Time* onwards, Heidegger speaks of Dasein instead of man. For, man is man only by virtue of being in the open, standing in the open and letting-be what is manifested.

Unconcealment is experienced at the moment when '... the first thinker takes a questioning stand with regard to the unconcealment of beings by asking: what are beings?'²³. This signifies a great moment for Heidegger, since it also signifies the beginning of historical existence, of the history of the West. What is ordinarily called history is only something secondary compared with the openness in which humankind stands at a particular time – the openness which it guards and which is the basis of its entire relationship to what-is.

Heidegger cautions that man does not possess freedom as a property. Rather, the opposite is true: 'Freedom, *ek-sistent* disclosive Dasein possesses man – so originally that only *it* secures for humanity that distinctive relatedness to being as a whole as such which first founds all history.'²⁴

In the act of representing, human being can let an entity itself lay its claim upon him and become representable. In this way, human being establishes a bond with beings. But, Heidegger tells us, it is just this characteristic (the essence of truth as freedom) that makes it possible for human being not to let what-is be as it is, but to cover up and misrepresent it. Semblance comes to power and the non-essence of truth comes to the fore. But if freedom is not an attribute of human being, then untruth also should not simply be attributed to human being as a kind of failure. In other words, 'If the essence of truth is not exhausted by the correctness of statements, then neither can untruth be equated with the incorrectness of judgements.'²⁵

Heidegger now continues his enquiry into the connection between truth and untruth on the basis of a discussion of the meaning of attunement or mood (*Stimmung*). I have already discussed the concept of mood as an existential from *Being and Time*, where it was analysed in connection with the movement of thrownness and also as a primordial mode of disclosure of the world. In this lecture, however, the concept of

mood is developed as a manifestation of the primordial openness, which corresponds with our relationship to what-is in its totality and is based on it. Heidegger seeks a fundamental attunement and finds it in the primordial relationship with beings in their totality. 'Man's comportment is brought into definite accord throughout by the openedness of being as a whole.'²⁶ Usually we stick to the particular entity that is at that moment manifest, and what is whole is just that which does not become thematic. This means that that to which we are attuned actually conceals itself. Thus Heidegger can state: 'In the ek-sistent freedom of Da-sein a concealing of being as a whole propriates (*ereignet sich*). Here there *is* concealment.'²⁷

Disclosure of any kind can only take place on the basis of concealedness. While letting an entity be, Dasein relates itself to this hiddenness or un-revealedness (*Un-entborgenheit*), but purely in such a way that the hiddenness itself remains concealed from it. According to Heidegger, this is 'the mystery'²⁸.

A thinking that seeks to reach out to beings in their totality encounters hiddenness and experiences it as the distinctive nature of truth, which means, as untruth. It is true that concealedness is the basis of all disclosure, but traditionally, we are so thoroughly gripped by the thing that is revealed that concealedness itself (the mystery) falls into oblivion. Oblivion of the mystery does not make it lose its power, but rather the consequence of this forgetting expresses itself in the fact that human being clutches onto what is 'readily available'²⁹. Human being mistakenly takes himself, as subject, to be the standard for all beings, and so *in-sists* rather than *ex-sists*. In other words, human being holds fast to what is offered by beings, as if they were open of and in themselves. Here, once again, we see how Heidegger attempts to decentre human being from his privileged position as subject.

As insistent, human being is turned towards the most readily available beings, and in insisting human being errs. 'Man's flight from the mystery towards what is readily available, onward from one current thing to the next, passing the mystery by – this is *erring*.'³⁰ It is because error stems from the essence of truth that human being is able to advance from error to this essence. This takes place in the course of thinking that reflects on Being itself. In this lecture, Heidegger calls it philosophy, although later, he will expressly set philosophy off against thinking.

Heidegger concludes:

The present undertaking takes the question of the essence of truth beyond the confines of the ordinary definition provided in the usual concept of essence and helps us to consider whether the question of the essence of truth must not be, at the same time and even first of all, the question concerning the truth of essence. But in the concept of 'essence' philosophy thinks Being. In tracing the inner possibility of statements back to the ek-sistent freedom of letting-be as its 'ground', likewise in pointing to the essential commencement of this ground in concealing and in errancy, we want to show that the essence of truth is not the empty 'generality' of an 'abstract' universality but rather that which, self-concealing, is unique in the unremitting history of the disclosure of the 'meaning' of what we call Being – what we for a long time have been accustomed to considering only as being as a whole.³¹

The lecture *On the Essence of Truth* was to have been completed by a second lecture *On the Truth of Essence*. The latter failed for reasons cited in the *Letter on Humanism*. Here Heidegger explained that this division was withheld because the available language of metaphysics was inadequate to express the turn from *Being and Time* to *Time and Being*. He tells us that:

The adequate execution and completion of this other thinking that abandons subjectivity is surely made more difficult by the fact that in the publication of *Being and Time* the third division of the first part, 'Time and Being' was held back...The division in question was held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning (*Kehre*) and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics. The lecture 'On the Essence' of Truth'...provides a certain insight into the thinking of the turning from 'Being and Time' to 'Time and Being'.³²

When we compare the above lecture to *Being and Time*, we note how Heidegger's thought has been extended. In *Being and Time*, the traditional concept of truth is put into question, as is the traditional view that truth has its locus in judgement. In the context of Dasein as being-in-the-world, truth is seen as the truth of existence – i.e. as resoluteness. Resoluteness in the sense of unclosedness is the presupposition of man's relation to entities, in which relation entities show themselves to be true. In this lecture, the situation is altered. Thinking does not start from Dasein and proceed in the direction of truth, but rather, Dasein and its relation to what-is is seen from the

point of view of truth. The relation of human being to beings is characterised as an open stance, which in turn is thought of as freedom.

In its decisive steps, which lead from truth as correctness to ek-sistent freedom, and from the latter to truth as concealing and errancy, Heidegger's lecture accomplishes a change in questioning that belongs to the overcoming of metaphysics. Every kind of anthropology and all subjectivity of human being as subject is not merely left behind, as it was already in *Being and Time*, but rather, the movement of the lecture is such that it sets out to think *from Dasein*.

3.4 Heidegger's Concept of Truth in *The Origin of the Work of Art*

This text begins with the announcement of its central concern, namely, discovering the origin from which a work of art becomes a work of art. Heidegger avoids the simple answer that the origin of the artwork is the artist himself, and tells us that the question of origin (*der Ursprung*) relates the work of art to truth as *alētheia* or unconcealment. What does this mean?

When we try to understand a work of art, we find that we can consider it by way of the fact that it is a thing. Heidegger analyses the various familiar attempts at defining a thing: a thing as the bearer of traits, a thing as a unity of a manifold of sensations, a thing as formed matter³³. He goes on to distinguish between a thing that is naturally there (for example, a clod of earth); a thing that is meant for use (a hammer); and the work (in the sense of a work of art). When we try to see what is essential in these distinctions, we find that the aforementioned interpretations do not take us very far. This view of things is exhibited in the history of metaphysics with its attempts at thinking about beings. Heidegger is engaged in a continuing questioning of metaphysics, and so is concerned with finding another path, which represents a turning away from metaphysics. In this essay, his path proceeds as follows:

In order to find out what a utensil is, Heidegger begins with an examination of an artistic representation – Van Gogh's picture of a peasant's shoes. From this picture we learn something of the world of the peasant – his work and exertions, his worries and hardships. Now, we have a new definition of a utensil – reliability. In other words, the artwork has shown us the shoes (utensil) in terms of their serviceability (reliability). Can we justify this definition? The concept of a utensil solely in terms of its serviceability grasps it merely from the point of view of its utility. If we do not move

beyond this obvious way of understanding a utensil, we get to know the utensil only as pure instrument. In Heidegger's example, there is present, along with the shoes, the realm of labour as the world of the peasant.

The essence of the exposition on utensils is that by way of a work of art (van Gogh's picture) we have learned that what makes a utensil what it is, is its reliability. The utensil character has become apparent through being represented in a work of art. The work makes manifest what a certain entity is. 'The artwork lets us know what the shoes are in truth.'³⁴ In the work of art, then, something makes its appearance. This stepping-into-appearance is the first allusion we find in this essay to the realm of *alētheia* as unhiddenness. Disclosure of a particular being means that an entity becomes accessible in its essential nature. In the case of the peasant shoes, they become familiar in terms of their reliability. When this occurs, it is a happening of truth, where truth means letting beings become accessible in their essence.

From the work, we come to know what the thing really is as a utensil. At the same time, we come to know what the work is, namely, what happens in and through the work - the becoming accessible of an entity with regard to what it is.

If we wish to understand the special feature of the work, as compared with the utensil and the mere thing, we must investigate the phenomenon of the work showing-itself. In other words, if the work of art is 'truth setting itself to work'³⁵, we must examine how truth is to be considered in its connection with the nature of the work. To do this, Heidegger carries out an analysis of a Greek temple. In the previous example, it was possible to understand art in terms of a depiction and to think that the work fulfils its function by representing something. In this case, the temple represents or copies nothing. And yet: 'It is the temple work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being'³⁶. The temple thus brings to light the world in which it exists. The temple is also erected at a particular site, and so by standing there, the temple brings the site itself to light. The site is not just another place, but is that on which all locations are grounded, what the Greeks called *physis*, and what Heidegger calls the 'earth'.

The world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar or unfamiliar things that are at hand. But neither is it a merely

imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things. The *world worlds*, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-non-objective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being.³⁷

We typically understand the world as the sum of objects known to us, or those that we could possibly know. Heidegger rejects this view. We cannot know the world of the Middle Ages by adducing the objects known in that period. We can only arrive at a conception of the world when we come to know the manner in which entities become accessible to human being in a particular epoch, or, to put it differently, the kind of openness in which human being stands, so that entities may be encountered in a corresponding fashion.

Because the world consists, for Heidegger, in the happening of openness, and because the work of art 'sets up the world'³⁸, Heidegger can say that 'The work holds open the open region of the world'.³⁹

Setting up (*Aufstellen*) a world is one main attribute of a work. The other characteristic is setting or putting forth (*Her-stellen*). This suggests the practical idea of mechanical production, but this is not what Heidegger has in mind when he speaks of putting forth. In the usual sense of producing (*Herstellen*), it is a question of working up some material for the purpose of preparing some equipment or tool. The stuff of which the tool is made is subsumed entirely in the function that it is meant to perform. This disappearance of the stuff in favour of its utility in the production of a utensil is contrasted with the way in which the stuff stands out in a work of art. This is not a making in which something new is produced, but one that frees us for that on which we ever stand or dwell. The earth makes its appearance because the work sets itself back into it.

Heidegger points out that although the scientific-calculating mode of experience can objectify the earth and thus have it available for control, this way of dealing with it does not make the earth comprehensible as the earth, i.e. our dwelling place.

Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate it. It causes every merely calculating importunity upon it to turn into a destruction. This destruction may herald itself under the appearance of mastery and of progress in the form of the technical-scientific objectification of nature, but this mastery nevertheless remains an impotence of will.⁴⁰

Thus, for Heidegger, 'The setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth are two essential features in the work-being of the work.'⁴¹ It is by virtue of setting up a world and setting forth the earth that the work is a work. The repose of the work, which distinguishes it from the mere thing and the utensil, happens in both these modes of setting. But is rest something that can happen?

Only what is in motion can rest. The mode of rest varies with the kind of motion. In motion as the mere displacement of the physical body, rest is, to be sure, only the limiting case of motion. Where rest includes motion, there can exist a repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence supreme agitation, assuming that the mode of motion requires such a rest.⁴²

Heidegger now continues to discuss the op-position of world and earth, in order to highlight the agitation mentioned above and to bring us to a better understanding of repose.

The strife between world and earth first exhibits itself as the opposition between what opens itself up and something that shuts itself in. In the world, we have the realm of openness, in which our decisions can unfold. Historical worlds can therefore be differentiated from one another on the basis of the modes of openness characterising them. The earth, on the other hand, is the 'spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing.'⁴³

There is no world without earth, no openness that cannot settle down on the earth. 'The world grounds itself on the earth, and earth juts through the world.'⁴⁴ The earth is that which exhibits itself in the open and that which we come to see as the place where world grounds itself, where it installs itself. Heidegger tells us that the opposition of the world and earth is strife, and that it is in the work where this strife is brought to a head.

Heidegger now continues with *alētheia* – the unconcealment of beings - as the principal theme of the essay. He reminds us that truth as correctness or rightness presupposes that entities stand in the open. Thus, unhiddenness as clearing is the presupposition for the idea of truth as correctness. Yet, unhiddenness is also not a supposition expressly made by human being, but one in which he is transposed, though without actually noticing it because we always cling to entities which are manifest to us. Heidegger explains:

But it is not we who presuppose the unconcealment of beings (Being) puts us into such a condition of being that in our representation we always remain installed within and in attendance upon unconcealment. With all our correct representations we would get nowhere, we could not even presuppose that there already is manifest something to which we can conform ourselves, unless the unconcealment of beings had already exposed us to, placed us in that cleared realm in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws.⁴⁵

Because this clearing is not thought of or noticed as a clearing, Heidegger can say that it withdraws itself, that it is a concealment. This character of concealment exhibits itself in two ways, namely, as a refusal and a dissembling. When we say of an entity only that it is, we seem to dispense with everything else. The present entity seems to defy further dissemination. This is what Heidegger means by refusal. When an entity places itself before another, when we take the one for the other, when a being appears but presents itself as other than it is, this concealment is dissembling. Here we have an indication of the possibility of error, deception or oversight.

Refusal has a certain priority, while dissembling is a secondary mode of concealing. Concealment is not something to be abolished or overcome since we do not have concealment under our control. We are always exposed to it. Being exposed to concealment is described by Heidegger as the denial-permeated, denial-dominated nature of truth that he formulates as follows: 'Truth, in its essence, is untruth.'⁴⁶ Unconcealedness as clearing involves denial in the mode of concealing. This points to the fact that in truth itself, strife prevails. In this strife, the clearing is what is contended for. Truth is a happening – a happening of the conflict between unconcealedness and concealment. 'The essence of truth is, in itself, the primal strife in which that open centre is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back into themselves.'⁴⁷

Heidegger reminds us that the world is not simply the open region that corresponds to clearing, and the earth is not simply the closed region that corresponds to concealment⁴⁸. By thinking of world as a specific openness, the opposition between openness and concealment is not eradicated. The openness, in which decisions are made, does not make these decisions less significant. The openness is not some kind of controlling power, but rather generates a relationality with entities. What occurs in it is altogether undetermined. In this indeterminateness lies also that which remains unmastered in the sense of the concealed.

One of the ways in which truth happens as the primal strife between clearing and concealing is in the work of art. Heidegger is not saying that by representing something the work gives expression to what is true. Heidegger says: 'Thus in the work it is truth, not merely something true, that is at work.'⁴⁹

Heidegger tells us that 'beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment'⁵⁰. For him, the beautiful is not explained in terms of subjective experience, of how the work affects the subject, but in terms of the openness that becomes manifest in a work of art. How an entity makes its appearance within unconcealedness can be grasped, and it is by way of this stepping into appearance that we gain an indication of the sway of unconcealedness itself, that is to say, of Being. In the work, the sway of unconcealedness gives to the work its beauty, i.e. its character of shining forth. In it, this shining itself makes its appearance, though in such a peculiar way that we do not notice it at all. It is important to note here that Heidegger is not saying that beauty is the only mode of experiencing truth, but only that it is one possible way.

In the next section of the essay, entitled 'Truth and Art', a change takes place in Heidegger's approach to the problem. Previously, the inquiry proceeded from art to truth. Now, he seeks to gain insight into art from the point of view of truth.

Heidegger notes that 'Truth is untruth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-revealed, the uncovered, in the sense of concealment. In unconcealment, as truth, there occurs also the other 'un-' of a double restraint or refusal.'⁵¹ The strife going on within truth leads to the contest for such a thing as openness, in which what is manifest makes its appearance. The work of art is an entity in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy. Heidegger names several other ways in

which truth establishes itself, namely in deeds that found a political state, in the essential sacrifice, and in thinking itself. In contrast, Heidegger sees science as standing in a realm that is already opened up.

Heidegger returns to a discussion on the tension between world and earth. In the earth, there is gathered together for Heidegger what we so inadequately seek to conceive of as material, and what is necessarily part of the work of art, although in different ways in the plastic and graphic arts as opposed to music and poetry. The place of the concept of form is taken by figure or shape (*Gestalt*), which at first seems to be similar to it. But figure is not the look of what is pictured in the work, it is rather the way in which truth is fitted together in its appearing, which Heidegger calls the 'rift' (*Riss*) – the coming into view of the strife of world and earth. Strife is not a rift, as a mere cleft is ripped open, rather it is, in Heidegger's sense of the word, the intimacy with which opponents belong to each other.

Through the work, our ties with the world and earth are changed. In the work we are torn out of the accustomed and the familiar ceases to be so. Expressly experiencing this change in our relation the world and earth is for Heidegger the preserving (*Bewahren*) of the work.' Preserving the work means standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work. This 'standing –within' of preservation, however, is a knowing.¹⁵² This standing-within requires a special attitude in the one who experiences it. Standing-within means closeness in the sense of familiarity. This idea is elucidated in the text in the context of knowing and willing. Heidegger says that he who truly knows beings knows what he wills to do in the midst of them. In other words, the knowing that Heidegger refers to here is not a knowing in the sense of merely getting to know something and representing it. It is rather a knowing that opens up to us what we have to do – what we want.

Heidegger now turns his questioning back to art, the initial subject of the enquiry. 'If art is the origin of the work, this means that art lets those who essentially belong together at work, the creator and the preserver, originate, each in his own essence.'¹⁵³ But art itself was originally defined as the setting-into-work of truth. Setting into work is thought of in a twofold sense – as the establishment of truth itself in the figure; and as the preserving of the truth that happens in the work. Letting truth, in the sense of openness, happen, Heidegger calls poetry (*Dichtung*). He states that: 'All art, as the letting happen of the advent of truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry.'¹⁵⁴

This definition of art in terms of poetry does not mean reducing all arts to poesy, but rather that in all art, what is composed (*gedichtet*) is truth in the sense of unconcealedness. Language is that through which entities are brought into the open, and so Heidegger can call language itself poetry in the essential sense. In this essay, then, we can now see the intimate entwining of Heidegger's thought on truth and language. The disclosure of entities that occurs in language is presupposed in all possible dealings we have with entities.

Heidegger now continues to elucidate the determination of poetry as the founding of truth. This founding is understood in a threefold sense – as bestowing, as grounding and as beginning. Through the transformation that occurs within the work of art, something out of the ordinary is created. This something is an overflow, a surplus – the granting of this surplus is bestowing.

In the bestowing of art there occurs a projecting, which makes possible for man that within which he stands – his abode. This is the grounding that occurs in art. For Heidegger, the early thinking of the Greeks, which precedes metaphysical thinking, laid the ground on which we stand today. At each time in the history of the West, a new and essential world arose. At each time, the openness of what is had to be established in beings themselves, by the fixing in place of truth in figure. At each time, unconcealment of what is took place.

In conclusion then, Heidegger thinks the original nature of art in terms of the nature of truth. In this essay, he questions the concept of *alētheia* more radically. To enquire into art is at the same time, in this essay, to enquire into world and earth (Being), as well as into *alētheia*.

In both *Being and Time*, as well as *The Origin of the Work of Art*, truth and un-truth are intimately related. It is Dasein's temporal articulation that constitutes its Being as a dialectic of truth and untruth. This means that the ontology of an artwork, i.e. the winning of truth within a context that involves both truth and untruth, is not an isolated ontology, but lies, instead, at the heart of Dasein's being. The link between art and truth is justified in that both are grounded in the same primordial existential phenomenon and share the same dialectical subtlety.

3.5 Heidegger's Concept of Truth in *The Question Concerning Technology*

In 1949, Heidegger delivered four lectures to the Bremen Club under the general title *Insight into What Is*. Each lecture had its own title, namely, *The Thing*, *The Enframing*, *The Danger* and *The Turning*. *The Enframing* was completely revised as *The Question Concerning Technology* in 1953. It is this essay that I will discuss in detail in this section, firstly to come to grips with how Heidegger views truth in it, and secondly to prepare the way for Chapter 4 which deals specifically with Heidegger's conception of technology.

The starting point of the essay is provided by the common conception of technology as an instrument. Heidegger proceeds to demolish this conception in the course of his presentation. He tells us at the beginning of the essay that 'The essence of technology is by no means anything technological.'⁵⁵

Heidegger admits that the concept of technology as instrument is 'uncannily correct', but he draws a distinction between the correct and the true, indicating that his course of thought is intended to advance from representing the right to the apprehension of the true. Thus, already in the first few pages of this essay, Heidegger hints at the intimate connection he will draw between technology and truth.

In order to traverse this path leading from the correct to the true, it is important to understand what is meant by the instrumental. It is a means. A means is that whereby something is effected and something is attained. This points us in the direction of the question of causality. For centuries, philosophy has taught that there are four causes: *causa materialis* (matter), *causa formalis* (form), *causa efficiens* (efficient cause) and *causa finalis* (final cause). In doing so, it appeals to the authority of Aristotle. But Heidegger reminds us that in Greek thought, causality had nothing to do with effectuating and causing. What we call cause (*Ursache*) and what the Romans called *causa*, was called *aition* by the Greeks, which means being indebted to or responsible for.

What is owed in this being-responsible-for, this involving in debt? Heidegger tells us that it is the being-responsible-for that lets 'what is not yet present arrive into presencing.'⁵⁶ This occasioning in the sense of bringing forth is called *poiēsis*.

Poiēsis is not limited to the agency of man, since *physis* (nature) too is *poiēsis*. Constantly, and by itself, nature brings things into presence – lets entities be present. There is, however, a difference between a bringing forth by man and natural production. The latter does not need any other agency to let something become present. Nature is by itself and in itself, a bringing forth. Heidegger tells us that:

Bringing forth brings out of concealment into unconcealment. Bringing forth propriates only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [*das Entbergen*]. The Greeks have the word *alētheia* for revealing. The Romans translate this with *veritas*. We say truth and usually understand it as correctness of representation

Bringing technology into relation with *alētheia*, which at first seemed to be strange, now seems plausible. If we think of *alētheia* as disclosure, which makes something unhidden in the sense of letting something appear and of attaining presence, then we can see that what is produced in every bringing forth is indeed a presence. If we admit that technology is a kind of bringing-forth, then technology also belongs to the realm of *alētheia*.

In Greek thought, from which the concept of *techne* derives – *techne* and *episteme* belong together, since both are modes of knowing. Heidegger cites Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book VI, Chapters 3 and 4, as evidence in this regard. Here *techne* and *episteme* are explicitly regarded as modes of disclosing. Aristotle viewed *techne* with specific regard to the fact that it reveals whatever 'does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another.'⁵⁷ In this process, what is decisive is the prevision of the figure or form to be attained. It is in this previsioning that there occurs the disclosure, which then constitutes the basis of everything that follows.

Heidegger takes up the possible objection that although this way of defining *techne* may be applicable in the Greek sphere, it cannot be applied to the modern machine-powered technology. We can now ask whether the interconnectedness of *alētheia* and *techne* also apply to modern technology and what the essential nature of modern technology is?

Heidegger tells us that within the realm of modern technology, *alētheia* and *techne* also exhibit this close interconnectedness. Even modern technology must be seen in the context of hiddenness and disclosure. To do so adequately, one must consider the question of the essence of modern technology. This is the central question of this essay, for it concerns the manner in which, in modern technology, a disclosing or uncovering takes place. In other words, how do entities manifest themselves in the technological way of dealing with them? This leads to another question: How does the human being who is determined by technology respond to what is given?

Heidegger's answer is that in the technological attitude, everything is presented merely in respect to its availability and disposability – everything becomes standing reserve (*Bestand*). Thus, turned into something 'on order', everything is put into use. Utilising puts everything in such a position that what is thus placed follows the result that is to ensue. Everything is thus 'in consequence of'. The consequence is something that has been from the very first intended as the desired result. The result is that kind of consequence which itself remains geared to the upshot of further consequences. The standing reserve is sustained by a particular kind of placing – dis-posing [*Be-stellen*, positing in the manner of making disposable].

This way of viewing beings defines a new epoch. In the previous epoch, entities were apprehended as objects. In the modern period, man was seen as a 'knowing' subject, and that which faced him an object. Man therefore was seen as the measure of things. In modern technology, this idea is carried to the extreme, in the sense of man having mastery over all the objects in the world. The mastery shows itself in the power of having something at one's disposal, and this takes place in the *Bestand* – the transformation of things into standing reserve.

Heidegger does not see this transformation as simply the result of human caprice. The change from object to standing reserve allows us to become aware of a transformation of unconcealedness (*alētheia*), a transformation that according to Heidegger is totally outside man's control, even though it concerns him deeply. Such a transformation we find in human being's dealings with entities in the manner of the Greek concept of *bringing-forth*, or the objectification that occurred subsequently, or finally, in the contemporary mode of turning into standing reserve.

Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating

and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed. The unconcealment of the unconcealed has already appropriated wherever it calls man forth into the modes of revealing allotted to him. When man, in his way, from within unconcealment reveals that which presences, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment, even when he contradicts it. Thus when man, investigating, observing, pursues nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing reserve.⁵⁸

Thus, for Heidegger, the essence of human being remains to be defined and sustained by his relationship to unconcealedness. This is in line with his view as explained in the sections on *Being and Time*, *On the Essence of Truth* and *The Origin of the Work of Art*. The openness, which lets every manifest entity be encountered, is this unconcealedness. Along with the mode of openness, in which human being is placed, his relation and approach to the manifest entities also changes.

The technological way of dealing with entities is thus not an activity capriciously chosen by man; rather, human being is placed within this way of dealing with them by that specific mode of unconcealment itself, which Heidegger calls Enframing (*Ge-stell*). *Ge-stell* is not of the nature of a thing, but names a specific mode of unconcealedness.

Enframing means the gathering together of the setting upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing reserve. Enframing means the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that is itself nothing technological.⁵⁹

The fact that machinery of various sorts is bound up with the operations and organisation of technology should not lead us to think of *Ge-stell* as referring to what is of such a thingly character. Heidegger discards a description of technology as an instrument, and rather wants to inquire back into the unconcealedness typical of technology.

He goes on to point out that the word *Stellen* in *Ge-stell* is intended to keep alive the connection of *Stellen* in the sense of bring forth, as it occurs in *poiēsis*. In the kind of bringing forth or producing that conforms to *poiēsis*, entities are brought into presence, but not in such a way that they are standing reserve. The Greek letting-become-present that we have in this bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis* and the modern securing of resources as a challenging of Nature in the sense of *Ge-stell* are two opposite poles that belong in the same dimension – the basic dimension of unconcealment (*alētheia*). Unhiddenness happens in both, though in very different ways.

Heidegger tells us that 'Man's ordering attitude and behaviour display themselves first in the rise of modern physics as an exact science.'⁶⁰ Heidegger believed that modern science is in essence technological. He calls modern physics the '...herald of enframing, a herald whose provenance is still unknown.'⁶¹ I will discuss Heidegger's indictment of modern science in Chapter 4 in more detail.

Heidegger goes on to focus on understanding the *Ge-stell*. In the *Ge-stell*, there is not meant anything thingly, but rather a mode of human being's relationality to entities. Heidegger deliberately avoids speaking of relationality, since it implies human being to be the centre of relations. In its modern form, this position has been exposed and seen through by Heidegger as a particular mode in which metaphysics has evolved. Because we stand within this metaphysical tradition, it is very difficult for us to escape this approach.

In the *Ge-stell*, a particular mode of disclosure occurs. Human being is intimately involved in this disclosure, but he is nevertheless not the master of disclosing. Heidegger says: 'Enframing is the gathering together which belongs to that setting-upon which challenges man and puts him in position to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. As the one who is challenged forth in this way, man stands within the essential realm of enframing.'⁶²

Thus, in the *Ge-stell*, human being experiences a particular mode of disclosing – he is placed in it as a kind of destiny. Heidegger regards the pondering of this destiny to be one of human being's most fundamental tasks, since this pondering opens up a pre-eminent possibility – the possibility of not simply remaining restricted to this particular way of dealing with what is. This possibility of escaping from a specific relationality is opened up in and by thinking. It lies in inquiring into the dimension that

is the primary basis of every kind of disclosing, the dimension of unconcealedness. This quest enables human being to find himself, i.e., to find a determination of his own being, which is sustained by the relationship to unconcealedness.

This does not, however, mean that human being is a mere bearer or messenger. How concealment comes about does not lie with human being. But, on the other hand, human being need not necessarily be totally absorbed in dis-posing, for he is capable of recollecting that which delivers such a thing as dis-posing at all. In disclosing as *poiēsis*, disclosing as objectification and disclosing as dis-posing, what is appears in a different manner, and human being also understands himself differently.

In the case of dis-posing, we see how human being is allowed to be only something dis-posable, and yet, human being puts on airs of being the absolute master over every being. '...Man everywhere and always encounters only himself.'⁶³ In Heidegger's interpretation, however, the very opposite becomes evident – '*In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e. his essence.*'⁶⁴

The supremacy of *Ge-stell* '...threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth. Thus where enframing reigns, there is *danger* in the highest sense.'⁶⁵ This is because truth is not, for Heidegger, located in the statement, but is, rather, as unhiddenness, that destiny within which human being stands.

Yet, if in the *Ge-stell* a certain mode of unhiddenness is exhibited, if in every kind of unhiddenness something like a granting is involved, then precisely here too, the idea of something that grants may become a matter calling for thought. Thus human being may be seen in terms of his relationship to truth, which is Heidegger's constant endeavour. Such thinking may contribute something towards surmounting the loss of substance that results from the sheer dis-posing and securing of resources. This could become the start of a process of transformation – a transformation made possible in the sense of a happening that rescues, which can emerge in the midst of the utmost peril. It is conceivable that such a transformation may come about precisely from the realm of art, for in art the main point has long been a letting-come-to-light of that which is. It may also come about in thinking, as distinguished from mere philosophising that remains ensnared within the grip of metaphysics.

3.6 Heidegger's Concept of Truth in *On the Way to Language: The Nature of Language*

Throughout his work, Heidegger remains on the trail of language. In this section, I concentrate on understanding Heidegger's conception of truth in relation to language by focusing on a text from *On the Way to Language* entitled *The Nature of Language*.

The introduction to the three lectures entitled *The Nature of Language* describes what is at issue as the possibility of 'undergoing an experience with language'.⁶⁶ To undergo an experience with language means to let ourselves be properly concerned by the claim of language in that our attention is drawn to our relation with language. In other words, Heidegger is not suggesting that we carry out experiments with language, but rather that we recall that language is our abode.

Thus, from the beginning of this essay, Heidegger makes it clear that his enquiry into the nature of language is not intended to be conducted along the lines of a modern metaphysics, and that investigations of a metalinguistic character remain bound to this way of thinking. 'Metalinguistics is the metaphysics of the thoroughgoing technicalization of all languages into the sole operative instrument of interplanetary information.'⁶⁷ Here we can already see the intimate connection between language and modern technology in Heidegger's view.

In undergoing an experience with language, our objective is that language itself may 'bring itself to language', give utterance to itself. Language has the special peculiarity that we live in it, are at home in it, but usually without expressly turning our attention to it. To extricate himself from this situation, Heidegger appeals to a poet. He does so because in his view, the poet possesses a privileged relationship to language and also can give utterance to this relationship. Heidegger chooses a poem by Stefan George called *The Word*, which appeared in 1919, to form the centre of his discussion:

The Word

Wonder or dream from distant land
I carried to my country's strand

And waited till the twilit morn
Had found the name within her bourn-

Then I could grasp it close and strong
It blooms and shines now the front along...

Once I returned from happy sail,
I had a prize so rich and frail,

She sought for long and tidings told:
'No like of this these depths enfold.'

And straight it vanished from my hand,
The treasure never graced my land...

So I renounced and sadly see:
Where word beaks off no thing may be.

The first triad tells us about the poet – he is able to bring home marvellous things and treasures seen in dream. The goddess of fate, Norn, presents him with names for what he has brought in. Thus, that which already is, is made to shine forth by the word, even for others. It is through the name that the poet keeps hold of his vision, which is then able to unfold itself by virtue of this retention. What is presented here is a highlight of the poetic act. The triad culminates in the evocation of a presence.

In contrast to this, the second triad speaks of an experience in which the poet brings for the purpose of being given a name, not a faraway thing, but something familiar – he calls it a jewel, a treasure. We may here conjecture that it is *the* jewel that makes the being of its bearer manifest – enables this being itself to appear. But precisely for that the goddess Norn cannot find any name. Since she had found, till then, a name for every entity, it might be supposed that what is now presented is a nonentity. But, on the other hand, it is called a jewel all the same, specially precious, and therefore an entity of an unmatched kind.

Because there is no word for it, the treasure disappears - the poet cannot retain it. Here a new mode of the word's being appears. The word can provide a name not merely for grasping something that already is, but on the contrary, it is that which

bestows presence as well. 'Stated more explicitly, the poet has experienced that only the word makes a thing appear as the thing it is, and thus lets it be present.'⁶⁸

According to Heidegger, the end of the poem mentions not that which is to be renounced, but the realm into which renunciation must enter. 'What the poet learned to renounce is his formerly cherished view regarding the relation of thing and word.'⁶⁹

The poet experiences himself as one who is entrusted with the word. He is the trustee of the word. Here, expression is given to a boundary-experience for which no word is adequate, for which Norn cannot find a name. This should not, however, be taken in a purely negative sense. For with the learning of renunciation, the potency of the word also becomes apparent. In the mood of sadness Heidegger discovers 'the mood of replacement into the nearness of what is withdrawn but at the same time held in reserve for an originary advent.'⁷⁰ We can characterise this mood as also the basic mood in Heidegger's thinking, as the mood of the 'time of need'. In the withdrawal of Being and in the thinking of this withdrawal, there is the announcement of a new advent, once the withdrawal as such has been experienced. This becomes clear in Heidegger's attitude towards metaphysics. He thinks of the history of metaphysics as the epoch of the oblivion of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*). This epoch is not at once concluded with the emergence of Heidegger's thought, but the absence of Being is first expressly thought of and comprehended as the epoch of the remoteness of Being, providing thus the possibility of a reversal, which no one can say when it will come about. These comments on language and on the poet's words are not just auxiliary problems that happen to engage Heidegger, but, in them, his basic experience is gathered together and a repetition of the question about Being occurs in them.

What matters to Heidegger here is listening to the promise of language. 'Language must, in its own way, avow to us itself – its nature.'⁷¹ Once this happens, we become capable of understanding a thinking experience with language. The preparation for such an experience consists in having a glimpse of the neighbourhood of poetry and thinking, in our ability to establish ourselves in this neighbourhood.

Heidegger's interpretation is meant to show that regardless of the important statements about language we find made in the realm of thought, in spite of the stimulating things that have been composed in language, the essence of language 'nowhere brings itself to word as the language of being.'⁷² We saw earlier that while

we are speaking, language itself falls back and withdraws in favour of what is said in it. This withdrawal might have its ground in 'that language holds back its own origin and so denies its being to our usual notions.'⁷³ The difficulty here is in abstaining from personifying such a state of affairs. Heidegger offers a conjecture as to why the essential nature of language denies itself to us: '...the two kinds of utterance par excellence, poetry and thinking, have not been sought out in their proper habitat, their neighbourhood.'⁷⁴ It is precisely this that Heidegger will do in the second of the three lectures in the series *The Nature of Language*.

The attempt to interpret the concluding verse of George's poem was intended to show that here the issue is the relationship between the thing (entity) and word, and that it is the word that enables the thing (entity) to be and keeps it in being. The word thus does not merely stand in relation to the thing, but is 'what holds, relates, and keeps the thing as thing'⁷⁵. The word is what Heidegger calls the relationship (*Verhältnis* – a holding together), by which he does not simply mean a mere relation, but something that holds and keeps, in the sense of that which vouchsafes or grants.

What poets and thinker have in common is the element of language, though we do not yet know how this element is to be understood, and how it changes according to whether words are used poetically or as in thinking. From the approach adopted in the interpretation of George's poem, it seemed that we had reached the 'neighbourhood' of poetry and thinking, that what was poetically composed was accessible by approaching it from the side of thinking. Heidegger points out, however, that something crucial is missing in this attempt, namely the grasp of this neighbourhood as such, the neighbourhood in quest of which the interpretation began.

Whenever we speak, we already dwell in language, but expressly to understand this is the most difficult of tasks. And if it is this dwelling that defines man in his very being, then, that returning 'into the sphere of human being'⁷⁶ is what is presented as a task to us in Heidegger's thought and is what lies at the basis of all his aspirations. The sphere mentioned here should not be thought of in terms of a 'fixed place' to which man is pinned down, but rather as the place at which he is provided with his possibilities of development.

Heidegger never thinks of this return as a capricious step back to the archaic, which is impossible since *Dasein* is conceived as historical and Being is thought of in the

dimension of time. In this context, Heidegger contrasts the 'step back into the location of man's being' or nature, with the 'progress of the machine world'.⁷⁷ This contrast implies that so long as human being does not know what his nature is and in what it is grounded, every advance in the sense of achieving technical mastery remains questionable. For here, he who advances can measure his advance only in terms of his increasing ability to gain mastery over nature and has no need to know anything about his own plight or to find out whether the aspect of nature that becomes visible in his mode of dealing with it is really nature as such.

While interpreting the poem by George, Heidegger left as an open question in what sense the jewel is to be understood. He now suggests that the precious gem, for which the goddess is unable to find a word, is nothing but the word itself. This shows the limits of the poet. In the land of the poet, the word for the word cannot be found.

The word is not a thing. We will never find it if we look for it among the world of things. The word *is* not, if we reserve the *is* for the realm of entities, and yet, it is in a more pre-eminent sense than all things. '...We may never say of the word that it is, but rather that it gives.'⁷⁸

It gives, not in the sense of being there, of being present-on-hand, but rather in a sense of giving, a gift. By its very nature, the word gives, it bestows. What it grants is Being. This should not be understood, however, in the sense that the word generates the thing as, according to the medieval concept, God's thoughts originate all that is. We must call back to mind the concept of the clearing, in which all entities are able to appear without themselves being created by the clearing.

'For man is man only because he is granted the promise of language, because he is needful to language, that he may speak it.'⁷⁹ This sentence expresses a crucial shift in the essay. Until now, our concern has been the determination of man's proper nature; in the process we came upon language as the abode of man, which as such remains hidden from him even though it is that which is closest to him. Now, man abruptly withdraws into the shadows and language comes to the forefront. Man now appears to be the one who is used by language. How are we to understand this?

In order to advance on this path of questioning, Heidegger summarises the essential nature of language to be situated in 'saying'. 'To say' means to show: to make appear, to set free, 'to offer and extend what we call World, lighting and concealing

it'.⁸⁰ This is a consistent development of thought regarding language based on *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in which letting-appear is perceived in its double character of releasing and holding back, of disclosure and concealment.

The guiding principle for the experience of language is as follows: 'The being of language: the language of being.'⁸¹ In this key statement, a reversal is executed that, once we have grasped it and have ourselves undergone it, takes us to the very limit.

In the first sentence, essence/being is understood in the sense of a what. Its subject is language and the intention here is to understand the essence of the subject. 'Essence so understood becomes restricted to what is later called the concept, the idea or mental representation by means of which we propose to ourselves and grasp what a thing is.'⁸² Essence understood in this manner thus remains caught up within the realm of metaphysical representation.

The second sentence is meant to bring about a conversion from metaphysical representing to a non-metaphysical thinking. This is very difficult to accomplish, since human being is enmeshed in metaphysical representing. For this reason, the second sentence seems very strange to us.

Whereas in the first sentence, essence/being means 'whatness', in the second sentence, it should be conceived of as meaning 'lasting' and 'lingering', though not merely in the sense of sheer duration, but as that which concerns, touches or affects us. '...Language belongs to this persisting being, is proper to what moves all things because that is its most distinctive property.'⁸³ How are we to understand this all-moving, path-generating being? In the later writings, Heidegger conceives it as the 'fourfold', as the four world-regions of earth, sky, mortals and divinities, which in their interaction constitute the world.

In his interpretation of verses from the fifth strophe of 'Bread and Wine', Heidegger finds in Hölderlin the word as '...the region that determines earth and sky to be world regions, as it makes earth and sky, the streaming of the deep and the might of the heights, encounter one another.'⁸⁴ Thus, language is understood as that on which the interaction of the four world-regions is based. It is in this interplay that nearness comes about. Nearness and saying as letting-appear constitute the essential mode of being of language – they are the same.

'Language, Saying of the world's fourfold, is no longer only such that we speaking human beings are related to it in the sense of a nexus existing between man and language. Language is, as world-moving saying, the relation of all relations. It relates, maintains, proffers and enriches the face-to face encounter of the world's regions, holds and keep them, in that it holds itself – Saying – in reserve.'⁸⁵

The sounding of language is not considered here as a result of physical processes. Language is regarded as that primordial reality that holds the world-regions together, which at the same time means, holds them apart. We are always in danger of regressing into our customary ways of representing, of regarding language as something like an external bond, so that it is hard to see where this bond comes from and where it derives its power to bind together.

For Heidegger, language is not a separate entity, to be found outside the fourfold of the world, but is rather to be found within the fourfold itself, as a relation of the fourfold. Language is not a transcendental power – to consider it as such would be to conceive it metaphysically. Rather language is the nearness that prevails in the fourfold, for which Heidegger suggests the term 'nighness' (*Nahnis*). It is, in other words, the primordial gathering (*Versammlung*).

Heidegger now turns to Heraclitus and his idea of *logos*, which Heidegger had earlier interpreted as the original gathering. Language as the primordial gathering is soundless. From it comes the gift of saying 'is' to man. The gathering, soundless language of stillness is the language of essence, provided we do not represent it metaphysically.

In the context of the next essay, *The Way to Language*, the term event (*Ereignis*) emerges as a central point. Heidegger tells us in this essay that 'Language speaks in that it, as showing, reaching into all regions of presence, summons from them whatever is present to appear and to fade.'⁸⁶ The interconnection of language and letting appear runs throughout all the texts dealing with language from *Being and Time* onwards although there is a change in the conception of letting-appear and of what it is that speaks. The speaker, man, can speak only because he listens to language, and he can listen to it only because he belongs in it. 'Saying grants the hearing, and thus the speaking, of language solely to those who belong within it.'⁸⁷ In this way, Heidegger is able to single out granting as the basic feature of language.

The relation of the speaker to language reminds us of the relation of Dasein to Being. For Heidegger, Dasein can only be because of Being, but, on the other hand, Being has need of Dasein. Similarly, 'Language needs human speaking, and yet is not merely of the making or at the command of our speech activity.'⁸⁸

The fundamental underlying language, which Heidegger calls 'saying' enables all appearing. 'Saying pervades and structures the openness of that clearing which every appearance must seek out and every disappearance must leave behind, and in which every present or absent being must show, say, announce itself.'⁸⁹ Through a consideration of what takes place in saying as thus conceived, Heidegger comes upon the *Ereignis*, the event of appropriation, or the disclosure of appropriation. There occurs '...the opening of the clearing in which present beings can persist and from which absent beings can depart while keeping their persistence in the withdrawal.'⁹⁰

This granting should not be conceived on the model of causality. 'There is nothing else from which the Appropriation itself could be derived, even less in whose terms it could be explained.'⁹¹ This is what the eye, seeking to penetrate the riddle of the giving of saying, of what saying gives, ultimately rests upon. Heidegger has said that Being gives⁹², but here he points out that it is the *Ereignis* that vouchsafes even this; *it gives*⁹³.

The multiple possibilities of showing refer to saying as showing, and this in turn refers to *Ereignis*, the mode of disclosure in which appropriation occurs. The *Ereignis* is not some strange power standing above Being. In reflecting on the *Ereignis*, we are not trying to leave language behind. It is a new view of language that has been fashioned in the light of the question as to how language lets human being himself speak, by opening himself up to the clearing in which every entity is able to appear.

In speaking, what happens is a manifestation of the *Ereignis* itself, which does, however, remain hidden from the speaker himself. That is why experiencing in thought the nature of language is for Heidegger a revealing of the movement that leads from *Ereignis* to man's speech. Language has the power to bestow the clearing because it is in its very nature a granting appropriation (*Ereignis*). The moment of historicity is also present here. The appropriation is not something that happens only once – it is capable of showing itself or withdrawing itself. It is in conformity with this showing itself or denial that language happens and human speech itself changes.

We can see, then, that Heidegger's thought on truth necessarily is connected with his thought on language. In the excerpt from *On the Way to Language* just discussed, it is evident that Heidegger's conception of truth has not changed, but has indeed been expanded by connecting it with language in an intimate fashion.

3.7 Heidegger's Concept of Truth in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*

Heidegger tells us that this work is meant to provoke an 'immanent criticism' of *Being and Time*, i.e. to inquire into the basic experience underlying that book and the aptness of its formulations, without abandoning the perspective of the question of Being.

Heidegger begins by calling philosophy metaphysics. 'Metaphysics thinks beings as a whole - the world, man, God – with respect to Being. Metaphysics thinks beings as beings in the manner of a representational thinking that gives grounds.'⁹⁴ Thus, for Heidegger, metaphysics seeks after the ground of beings and calls this ground Being. Being is understood in the sense that it lets entities become present. This ground can be conceived as causing or producing the real or actual (God as the ultimate ground), or as the transcendental ground (Kant's condition of the possibility of experience), as the dialectical movement of Absolute Spirit (Hegel), as an explanation of the process of production (Marx) or as Will to Power (Nietzsche).

What then does the end of philosophy mean? It is not regarded as an ending in the sense of extinction, but rather as the place, '...that place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its uttermost possibility.'⁹⁵ This gathering is at the same time the completion of philosophy. Completion means a coming to an end.

Heidegger reminds us that we cannot regard Kant's philosophy as more perfect than Plato's, and the latter's as more perfect than, for example, Parmenides'. In every philosophy something finds expression, which in itself possesses a necessity of its own. When we judge philosophy from the point of view of science, it is easy to succumb to the illusion that the earlier is always the imperfect. This is not the proper way for looking at philosophies. Plato's thought is not rendered redundant by subsequent philosophies. On the contrary, for Heidegger, Platonism dominates

throughout the whole of metaphysics, which in its final form is the reversal of Platonism we find in Nietzsche.

The development of philosophy is accompanied by the formation of the sciences, which then break away from philosophy. Today, we are in the midst of a process in which questions that were formerly dealt with by philosophy are increasingly passing into the realm of science. For Heidegger, this is the mark of the completion of metaphysics. Modern metaphysics is for Heidegger the ground from which the sciences have emerged.

The development of philosophy into the independent sciences that, however, interdependently communicate among themselves ever more markedly, is the legitimate completion of philosophy. Philosophy is ending in the present age. It has found its place in the scientific attitude of socially active humanity. But the fundamental characteristic of this scientific attitude is its cybernetic, that is, technological character.⁹⁶

The question that now arises is whether, with the end of philosophy in the sense of its absorption into the sciences, is there a possibility which philosophy itself has not developed, a first possibility that lies hidden at the core of philosophy itself? In order to answer this question, one must surely consider philosophy in its historical unfolding. Heidegger moves on then to ask what task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy. He discusses the views of two philosophers – Hegel and Husserl – in order to further elucidate the matter of thinking.

In Heidegger's view, both Hegel and Husserl uttered the call 'to the thing itself'⁹⁷. Heidegger notes that from the perspective of both these philosophers, the matter of philosophy is subjectivity. He believes that ruminating on his insights into the work of Husserl and Hegel are not helpful, unless we ask what remains unthought in the call to the matter itself.

According to Heidegger, philosophising is '... already admitted to the free space of the clearing. But philosophy knows nothing about the clearing.'⁹⁸ Heidegger refers to this situation as the oblivion of Being. Presence, the word for Being as conceived by the Greeks, is always dependent on what Heidegger calls the clearing (*Lichtung*).

Clearing, to open or lighten, means to make something free and open, as when one clears an open space in a forest of trees. Heidegger tells us that metaphysics, which stresses the 'natural light' of the thinking subject who casts his beam on objects has not attended to the clearing of Being – the opening that precedes all natural and divine light. For Heidegger, the task of thinking requires then a creative return to early Greek thinking, since even the Greeks did not secure the clearing for thought and keep it from oblivion.

In this respect, Heidegger returns to the early words of Parmenides. In his poem, *alētheia*, unconcealedness, is called 'well-rounded' because it is turned in the pure sphere of the circle where beginning and end are everywhere the same.⁹⁹ Previously, Heidegger had shown that the path of thinking needs the clearing in order to come into being. Now he suggests that what-is can become present only as a result of this openness. Thus, what the clearing grants is the path on which the enquiry into what-is may be conducted, in regard to its being present; and the fact that what-is itself achieves presence.

We must think *alētheia*, unconcealment, as the clearing which first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other. The quiet heart of the clearing is the place of stillness from which alone the possibility of the belonging together of Being and thinking, that is presence and apprehending, can arise at all.¹⁰⁰

The question already put forward in early Greek thought and one which remains a question for the entire metaphysical tradition – namely, how thinking and Being belong together – is here considered by Heidegger in terms of *alētheia*.

Now it seems that *alētheia* emerges as the basis of Being and of truth. *Alētheia* can now no longer be equated with truth, since it is that which grants truth in the first place – truth in the sense of correspondence or of absolute certainty of knowledge. Heidegger now turns his critique on himself, and criticizes the attempt in *Being and Time* to translate *alētheia* as truth. He says:

Insofar as truth is understood in the traditional 'natural' sense as the correspondence of knowledge with beings, demonstrated in beings; but also insofar as truth is interpreted as the certainty of the knowledge of Being; *alētheia*, unconcealment in the sense of the clearing, may not be

equated with truth. Rather, *alētheia*, unconcealment thought as clearing, first grants the possibility of truth. For truth itself, like Being and thinking, can be what it is only in the element of the clearing.¹⁰¹

For Heidegger, there is only presence because of *alētheia*. Yet, human being remains bedazzled by what is present and does not question presence and the clearing that grants presence. Heidegger asks whether this is so because '*lethe* belongs to *a-alētheia*, not as a mere addition, not as shadow to light, but rather as the heart of *a-alētheia*.'¹⁰² Thus, in this essay, we see how Heidegger reinterprets his identification of *alētheia* and truth that we noted in all the previous works. *A-letheia* is not truth, but rather that which makes it possible for us to speak of truth in the first place.

3.8 Summary

For Heidegger, all talk about *alētheia* must remain provisional. If we forget this, we shall turn his thinking, which regards itself primarily as an enquiry, as the paving of a path, into a kind of dogmatics. Heidegger's thinking of *alētheia* can be seen as an ever-renewed search for fresh start. He does not provide any final solution, but instead constantly tries out new approaches.

I have demonstrated in this chapter how Heidegger's thought on truth develops through a selection of his works. We can see that his thought on truth turns around the concept of unconcealedness or *alētheia*. It is only in *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking* that Heidegger disconnects truth and *alētheia* from their previous identification, and claims that *alētheia* grants the possibility of truth.



- ¹ M. Heidegger, *The Question concerning Technology in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 319.
- ² W.B. Macomber, *The Anatomy of Disillusion: Martin Heidegger's Notion of Truth* (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 3.
- ³ W. Biemel, *Martin Heidegger: An Illustrated Study* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 25.
- ⁴ M. Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D. F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 444.
- ⁵ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time, A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), § 44.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- ⁷ J.J. Kockelmans, *Heidegger and Science* (Boston, University Press of America, 1985), p. 175.
- ⁸ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 207.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 208; See also M. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*, D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 122.
- ¹⁰ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 209.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 204.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.
- ¹⁴ M. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.), (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 117.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 123.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137.
- ³² M. Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 231.
- ³³ M. Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p.156.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.



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- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
46 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
47 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
48 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
49 *Ibid.*, p. 181.
50 *Ibid.*
51 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
52 *Ibid.*, p. 192.
53 *Ibid.*, p. 196.
54 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
55 M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 311.
56 *Ibid.*, p. 317.
57 *Ibid.*, p. 319.
58 *Ibid.*, p. 324.
59 *Ibid.*, p. 325.
60 *Ibid.*, p. 326.
61 *Ibid.*, p. 327.
62 *Ibid.*, p. 329.
63 *Ibid.*, p. 332.
64 *Ibid.*
65 *Ibid.*, p. 333.
66 M. Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (London, Harper and Row, 1971), p. 57.
67 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
68 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
69 *Ibid.*
70 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
71 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
72 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
73 *Ibid.*
74 *Ibid.*
75 *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83.
76 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
77 *Ibid.*
78 *Ibid.*, p. 88.
79 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
80 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
81 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
82 *Ibid.*
83 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
84 *Ibid.*, p. 100.
85 *Ibid.*, p. 107.
86 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
87 *Ibid.*
88 *Ibid.*, p. 125.
89 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
90 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
91 *Ibid.*
92 M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York, Harper and Row, 1972). p. 5.
93 M. Heidegger. *The Way to Language in On the Way to Language*. P.D. Hertz (trans.) (London, Harper and Row, 1982), p. 127.
94 M. Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking in D.F. Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger (Revised and Expanded Edition)* D.F. Krell (trans.) (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 432.
95 *Ibid.*, p. 433.
96 *Ibid.*, p. 434.
97 *Ibid.*, p. 438.
98 *Ibid.*, p. 443.
99 *Ibid.*, p. 444.



¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 448.