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# The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy



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# The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy

In cooperation with

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## The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy

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**Aim and Scope:** *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* will provide an annual international forum for phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy in the spirit of Edmund Husserl's groundbreaking work and the extension thereof in the phenomenological tradition broadly conceived. The editors welcome the submission of manuscripts containing original research in phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy, contributions to contemporary issues and controversies, critical and interpretative studies of major phenomenological figures, investigations on the relation of phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy to the natural and human sciences, and historical studies and documents pertaining to phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy. **Translations** of classic and contemporary phenomenological texts are also welcome, though translators should make arrangements with the editors in advance.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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# A Conversation with Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann on *Mindfulness*

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As Thomas Kalary and I began translating into English Heidegger's second being-historical treatise, *Besinnung*, (*Mindfulness*),<sup>1</sup> we realized right away that an intimate connection exists between the hermeneutic-phenomenological import of this work and its peculiar syntax and grammatical ambiguities. The editor of the original German text of *Mindfulness*, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann agreed to hold a private seminar with me for the specific purpose of highlighting this connection. In the course of the lengthy discussion that ensued, our conversation focused specifically on the hermeneutic-phenomenological import of this work, its syntax and grammatical ambiguities. In order to share the outcome of that conversation with the readers of *Mindfulness*, in what follows I shall present a selected number of the questions that I put to Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and the responses that he gave to each question.

Parvis Emad: At several junctures of *Mindfulness*, especially in the allusions he makes to beings in the other beginning, Heidegger uses the word 'again' and thus creates the impression that what will become of beings in the other beginning actually happens 'again,' since it has happened once before. We come upon one such instance in a passage in section 8 of *Mindfulness* which comes right after the "Introduction." In this passage Heidegger contrasts machination's unbridled being of power with the gifting that might come from be-ing and asks:

whether be-ing would gift the grounding of its truth as distress from out of which the *countering* of god and man cross with the strife of the earth and the world. Such a criss-crossing is the struggle of struggles: the en-owning wherein beings are 'owned over' again to the belongingness to be-ing. (*Mindfulness*, 11)

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1. See, Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Continuum, 2006). All references to this work will be made with *Mindfulness* followed by page number.

How are we to understand the word ‘again’ in the clause “the en-owning wherein beings are ‘owned over’ again to the belongingness to be-ing”? Is Heidegger actually saying that beings were once ‘owned over’ to the belongingness to be-ing? How can this be the case when in the first beginning beings are abandoned and dis-enowned by be-ing?

Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann: In the first beginning before metaphysics begins with Plato, beings are *not yet* abandoned and dis-enowned by be-ing. The abandonment of beings by be-ing and their dis-enownment begin in a peculiarly subtle and hidden manner with the beginning of metaphysics. However, it is with the beginning of modernity that the dis-enownment of beings and their abandonment by be-ing become overwhelming. Here the word ‘again’ reminds us of the pre-Platonic, pre-modern first beginning when dis-enownment of beings, and their abandonment by be-ing had not yet become as overwhelming as in the present epoch.

P. E.: In the same vein, we come upon the words ‘once again’ when Heidegger addresses the word of be-ing as an en-owned word:<sup>2</sup>

But perhaps the word “of” be-ing must en-own itself and remain in the stillness of the few; perhaps a decision is already made about a gulf between be-ing and what “they” hold as a being. Perhaps this gulf itself is the beginning, if once again the inceptual places itself between gods and man as the bridge for their countering. (*Mindfulness*, 50)

How are we to grasp the words ‘once again’ in the clause “if once again the inceptual places itself between gods and man as the bridge for their countering” and how do these words relate to the word of be-ing as a word that has to en-own itself?

F.-W. v. H.: At the very least we have to address the following issues here. First, the genitive ‘of’ in the phrase ‘the word *of* be-ing’ is both a *genitivus subjectivus* and *genitivus objectivus* at the same time. For this reason Heidegger places this word between quotation marks. Recalling the intricate relationship in *Sein und Zeit* that is called ‘thrown projecting-open’ (*der geworfene Entwurf*), we realize that the word ‘of’ be-ing has to be an en-owned word because it is a word that is implicated in be-ing’s ‘en-owning forth throw’ and Da-sein’s ‘en-owned projecting-opening’ neither of which sways without the other. Secondly, in order to grasp the word ‘of’ be-ing as one which has to en-own itself and remain within the stillness of the few, we have to bear in mind that this word emerges from out of be-ing’s ‘en-owning forth throw’ and Da-sein’s ‘en-owned projecting-opening.’ The word ‘few’ reminds us, of course, of the ‘Joining’ in *Contributions to Philosophy* that is called “The Ones to Come.”<sup>3</sup> The ‘few’ are those who *receive* be-ing’s

2. For a discussion of the keywords such as ‘enowning,’ ‘en-owned,’ etc. See “Translators’ Foreword,” in *Mindfulness* (London: Continuum, 2006) xiii-xlii.

3. See, Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 277 ff.

‘en-owning forth throw’ insofar as they are thrown into that throw and *enact* an ‘en-owned projecting-opening’ of that throw. Thirdly, this passage shows that the word *Ereignis* even when it is *not* hyphenated should be taken in the sense of enowning and enowment—never in the sense of an ‘event’—insofar as the arrival of the word ‘of’ be-ing depends on the inceptual—be-ing—placing itself ‘once again’ between gods and man as the bridge of their countering. In sum, the words ‘once again’ have to be grasped in terms of be-ing’s ‘en-owning forth throw’ and Da-sein’s ‘en-owned projecting-opening.’

P. E.: In a passage in which Heidegger refers to man by using the words “*ihn selbst*” (he himself) instead of “*sich selbst*” (himself), he (Heidegger) says:

Through mindfulness—inquiring-musing—man enters the truth of be-ing and thus takes man “himself” unto the fundamental transformation that arises out of this truth: the expectancy of Da-sein. (*Mindfulness*, 40)

What or who is the ‘subject’ of this sentence? Is it ‘mindfulness,’ or ‘man,’ or ‘the truth of be-ing’?

F.-W. v. H.: We have to bear in mind that here as earlier in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger is keen to avoid the reflexive form “*sich*,” because of the latter’s entanglement in “subjectivity.” In this passage and elsewhere in *Mindfulness* he avoids the reflexive “*sich*” and instead uses the words “*ihn selbst*” (he himself). Keeping this point in mind, we can determine the ‘subject’ of this sentence. To do so we first read the sentence by slightly modifying its word order: “Inquiring-musing man enters the truth of be-ing through mindfulness and thus takes man himself unto the fundamental transformation that arises out of this truth: the expectancy of Da-sein.” The ‘subject’ of the sentence is man, the ‘object’ is ‘the truth of be-ing’ and what relates the two is mindfulness.

P. E.: In a passage which is of paramount importance for grasping the being-historical character of ‘decision’ Heidegger says:

The prime leap [*Ur-sprung*] of be-ing is en-ownment of its truth and along with this en-ownment the opening of the still undecided decision unto the grounding of this truth—undecided ‘for’ this grounding, ‘against’ this grounding or ‘without’ this grounding. (*Mindfulness*, 55)

Correlating the ‘decision’ to the en-ownment of the truth of be-ing, Heidegger characterizes ‘decision’ as still undecided, and highlights this undecidedness by saying that it could be ‘for,’ ‘against,’ or ‘without’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing. Obviously this undecidedness is not of the kind that we come upon in the domain of choice. Neither ‘for’ the grounding nor ‘against’ the grounding, nor ‘without’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing are pre-given options since each has to do with be-ing’s ‘enowning forth throw.’

F.-W. v. H.: This passage is not only important for grasping the being-historical character of ‘decision’ but also for appropriating the “Joining” of *Contributions to Philosophy* that is called “Grounding.”<sup>4</sup> Here the three words, ‘for,’

4. *Ibid.*, 207 ff.

‘against,’ and ‘without’ relate directly to “Grounding.” To put this relatedness in proper perspective, we have to bear in mind that the prime leap of be-ing implicates the en-ownment of its truth and *simultaneously* the opening of an as yet undecided ‘decision.’ Here again we take note of be-ing’s ‘en-owning forth throw’—to which Heidegger refers with the words ‘en-ownment of be-ing’s truth’—and Da-sein’s ‘en-owned projecting opening’—to which he calls attention with the words ‘opening of a decision.’ The undecidedness of this ‘decision’ is manifest in its openness to being ‘for’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing via enactment of an ‘en-owned projecting-opening’; is manifest in this ‘decision’ being ‘against’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing via enactment of a ‘dis-enowned projecting opening’; is manifest in this ‘decision’ having no knowing awareness of this grounding and in this sense being ‘without’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing. In short, the decision is still undecided since it faces three possibilities: ‘for’ the grounding of the truth of be-ing, ‘against’ this grounding and ‘without’ this grounding. Here we must not forget that thinking does not face these possibilities as matters of choice and option, since be-ing’s ‘en-owning forth throw,’ or be-ing’s ‘dis-enowning forth throw’ respectively are not at the discretion of thinking alone.

P. E.: In section 15 of *Mindfulness* which has strong bearings on the distinction between ‘history’ (*Historie*) and history (*Geschichte*)<sup>5</sup> Heidegger alludes to a perspective that has important implications for grasping the “Joinings” in *Contributions to Philosophy* called “Echo,” and “Playing-Forth” and by extension for understanding his views on the relationship between thinkers. He says:

The historically dissociating exposition (in the “Echo” and in the “Playing-Forth”) displaces unto those basic positions, in which and out of which thinkers are no longer “in agreement with each other,” where “agreement” on foundational matters is prevented from happening since no agreement on opining about the same is still capable of carrying a truth. (*Mindfulness*, 56)

In order to move beyond the facile interpretation of this passage and not to confuse it with the view known to everyone, namely that thinkers are not in agreement with each other, we have to be quite clear about the position that Heidegger takes here with regard to agreement between thinkers. Since the central thrust of both “Echo” and “Playing-Forth” is the sustaining distinction between ‘history,’ (*Historie*) and history (*Geschichte*)—a distinction that we would fail to access as long as we are oriented to the possibility of agreement between thinkers—the question becomes as to how we are to come to terms with what Heidegger says here about the agreement between thinkers.

F.-W. v. H.: By including in our deliberations the sentence that comes right after this passage, we can come to terms with what Heidegger wants to get across in this passage. The impact of ‘the historically dissociating exposition’

5. For more on the distinction between ‘history’ and history as well as ‘historically dissociating exposition,’ see “Translators’ Foreword,” in *Mindfulness* (London: Continuum, 2006), xiii-xlii.

upon the relationship between thinkers is this: “The dis-sociating ex-position displaces into a foundational, and in each case, unique attunedness by the grounding-attunement” (*Mindfulness*, 56). Thus displaced into a foundational attunedness, each basic position proves to be so unique that thinkers in the domain of their basic positions are no longer in agreement with each other—Nietzsche and Hegel for instance do not occupy a sphere of agreement. Each thinker is basically unique within his own basic position since each thinker is uniquely attuned by the grounding attunement. In sum, the dissociating exposition overcomes and leaves behind the urge to look for agreement amongst thinkers.

P. E.: In the same section 15 Heidegger brings more light to ‘the historically dissociating exposition’ which distinguishes “Echo” and “Playing-Forth” in that he differentiates a *historical* knowing-awareness from mere ‘historical’ knowledge. Because of the far-reaching implications of this differentiation, I shall quote the passage in question in its entirety:

We obviously need a *historical* knowing-awareness (not mere ‘historical’ knowledge) that comes out of an originary questioning so that we experience, in what is fundamentally unadjustable as such, the *belongingness* to *the unique* (and to its incalculability) and avoid the danger of adjusting to an empty commonality in all that is to be thought—a “commonality” that is suggested simply by the sameness and conformity of basic words and of the prevailing word-concepts. (*Mindfulness*, 61-62)

It should be clear that in light of a *historical* knowing awareness Nietzsche or Hegel are not entirely identical with the Nietzsche or the Hegel that lie at the center of, and are subjected to mere ‘historical’ knowing. Here Heidegger alerts us to the danger that comes with the assumption that Nietzsche and Hegel—to stay with the same example—may be adjusted in such a way that they may fit into a commonality or *Gemeinsamkeit*. He calls this commonality empty, but when he wants to elucidate it he suddenly switches to the neutral “*welches Gemeinsame*.” How to account for this sudden switch to the neutral *Gemeinsame* instead of *Gemeinsamkeit*, and how are we to grasp this commonality without confusing it with the force that is behind all historicization in philosophy?

F.-W. v. H.: With “*welches Gemeinsame*” Heidegger reformulates what he calls “*eine leere Gemeinsamkeit*,” i.e., an empty commonality. The use of the neutral “*welches Gemeinsame*” should be seen as a mere reformulation. What distinguishes a *historical* knowing-awareness from mere ‘historical’ knowledge is an originary questioning which unravels the *belongingness* to *the unique*, that is, to that which is inaccessible to adjustability and calculability. What historicizing in philosophy fails to grasp is precisely this questioning and the ensuing revelation of the *belongingness* to the unique—to be-ing. Consequently, the commonality that historians of philosophy postulate as existing between thinkers is suggested simply by the sameness and conformity of basic words and of the prevailing word-con-

cepts, *and not* by the belongingness to the unique—to be-ing. *The belongingness to the unique and to its incalculability does not constitute a commonality.*

P. E.: Closely related to the historically dissociating exposition is a proper historical distance to which Heidegger refers when he speaks of ἀλήθεια and correctness. He says:

The first beginning of the fundamental projecting-opening of truth unto *clearing*, as well as the fundamental delimitation of truth as *correctness*, begin with what is un-unfolded, that is, with what the early Greeks named ἀλήθεια after the name and the gestalt of the goddess—a word that we readily and aptly translate with *sheltering-unconcealment*, and its inceptuality we nevertheless intimate the least without proper historical distance. (*Mindfulness*, 91)

How are we to grasp the meaning of what Heidegger calls here a proper historical distance without confusing it with ‘historical’ distance? I find this question unavoidable if we are to understand how the first beginning begins with ἀλήθεια as what is un-unfolded.

F.-W. v. H.: Here we have to carefully think through the following interrelated issues. First, what the early Greeks named ἀλήθεια is un-unfolded in spite of the translation of this word with *sheltering-unconcealment*. Secondly, mere repeating of this translation and its frequent employment in the literature are not enough: thinking has to come to terms with ἀλήθεια as un-unfolded. And thirdly, this requires that thinking complement the achievement which *is this* translation by intimating the inceptuality of ἀλήθεια through a proper historical distance. Fourthly, thinking obtains such a distance by honing in on the first-ever-inceptual ἀλήθεια in its ownmost sway, that is, by holding it removed from all the later modifications and adjustments within the first beginning. And this requires that thinking return to the pre-Platonic ἀλήθεια in the first beginning. The point here is not to get bogged down in a mere repetition of this translation but to come to terms with it by going back to the question that Heidegger raises at the very beginning of *Contributions to Philosophy*, namely “But how does be-ing sway?”<sup>6</sup>

P. E.: From among many sections in *Mindfulness* that Heidegger devotes to *Sein und Zeit*, one seems to have a particular importance because it highlights ‘in-abiding’ by explicitly referring to it as that which constitutes the “*essentia*” of man:

To understand the inabiding “of” man in the sense of *genitivus essentialis* is to approach inabiding by taking it as a quality that hangs on to man—it means presupposing man as a subject that is already determined. In truth, that is, in accord with *this* thinking, *inabiding* means the anticipatory determination of the fundamental ground “of” man in the direction of which he can first be experienced *inabidingly* in his ownmost. Inabiding constitutes the “*essentia*” out of which the title “man” first draws its fundamental naming power. (*Mindfulness*, 123)

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6. *Contributions to Philosophy*, 5.

It is interesting to note that with the first sentence Heidegger dissociates ‘inabiding’ from a quality that hangs on to man and thus points out that ‘inabiding’ should not be taken in the sense of *genitivus essentialis*. But it is with the last sentence in this passage, that he characterizes ‘inabiding’ as what constitutes the “*essentia*” of man. Given the fact that from the earliest pages of *Sein und Zeit* all the way to the Nietzsche lectures and beyond, Heidegger has consistently and persistently dissociated his use of the word “*essentia*” from the traditional understanding of this word, to what extent does the use of the word “*essentia*” in the last sentence of this passage maintain the same consistent and persistent dissociation from the traditional understanding of “*essentia*”?

F.-W. v. H.: Let us begin to deal with this question by noting that here Heidegger places the word *essentia* between quotation marks. He always uses this device when he wants to point out that in his usage a familiar word claims a different meaning. The second thing is that we have to grasp this passage from *Mindfulness* against the background of the characterization of ‘existence’ that Heidegger presented in section 9 of *Sein und Zeit*, because ‘inabiding’ is the being-historical word for ‘existence.’ In other words, what he designates as ‘existence’ on his transcendental-horizonal pathway of thinking, he calls ‘inabiding’ on his being-historical pathway of thinking. It is in this light that we have to approach the last sentence in this passage: like ‘existence’ ‘inabiding’ too is not a ‘what,’ or ‘a quality that hangs on to man in the sense of *genitivus essentialis*.’ Rather, ‘inabiding’ is the “*essentia*,” or *das Wesen* that sways, abides, endures and whiles in man—‘inabiding’ is not *of* man when ‘of’ is taken in the sense of *genitivus essentialis*. In the first volume of my commentary on *Sein und Zeit*, I addressed this determination of “*essentia*” by dealing with it in the context of relationality of man to “his having to be his being.”<sup>7</sup> Heidegger sharpens this determination in section 9 of *Sein und Zeit*, by saying that “*Das ‘Wesen’ des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz!*” The ‘ownmost’ of Dasein lies in its existence.” Here Heidegger places the word ‘*Wesen*’ between quotation marks in order to draw attention to the fact that in his usage this word does not have the familiar meaning of *Wesen* in the traditional sense of *essentia*. The ownmost of Dasein, its *Wesen* lies in existence, that is, lies in that in man which we hold in our view when we observe man’s comporting toward his ‘having to be.’ Everything that I am, everything that could be called my ‘being in this or that way’ is determined from out of my existence—out of this *comporting relation to being*, out of this *Seinsverhältnis*. To have to be one’s own being means comporting oneself in one’s being toward one’s own being. This relation of being unto which every Dasein is thrown and of which every Dasein takes part has to be enacted. To have to be one’s own

7. See, F.-W. von Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins*, vol. I “*Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*” (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag, 1987), 114 ff.

being means *to have to be* in every moment of one's being the being that is disclosed to one as one's own being—means to comport oneself in the manner of relating to one's being, that is, to the being that one has to be. And this varying, changeable but enactable comporting that Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* calls 'existence' has nothing in common with the permanence and immutability that needs no enactment and marks the traditional concept of "*essentia*."

Now, understood in light of the differentiation of *Wesen* from *essentia*, 'in-abiding' too is barred like its predecessor 'existence' from any permanence and immutability and proves to be that which sways, abides, endures and whiles in man and in this sense needs to be enacted. Thus when Heidegger characterizes 'inabiding' as that which constitutes the "*essentia*" out of which the title man draws its fundamental naming power, he uses the word "*essentia*" not in the traditional sense of the permanent and immutable essence but in the verbal sense of the enactable swaying, abiding, enduring, and whiling.

P. E.: One of the prominent features of *Mindfulness* is the light it sheds on the theme of technicity. In the many sections which Heidegger devotes in this work to technicity, especially sections 9, 10, 11, 63, and 64, he shows how technicity emerges from within that swaying of be-ing that in *Contributions to Philosophy* he calls machination. While in the Fifties and the Sixties readers of Heidegger's essay on technicity, *Die Frage nach der Technik*, (published first in 1954), were hard put to grasp the place that this work occupies in the continuity of his thought, the readers of *Mindfulness* seem to be in a better situation. If they would take their lead from the analyses of machination that Heidegger presents in this work, they would see that technicity emerges from within that swaying of be-ing that he calls machination. From the many questions that may arise in this connection I should mention the question concerning art, and *mutatis mutandis* concerning modern art. However, here I am especially interested in one particular question which given the brevity of its treatment in *Mindfulness* calls for special attention. In the course of outlining various characteristics of the epoch of technicity and analyzing the relationship between art and modernity, Heidegger talks about symbols, and says:

In the epoch of technicity numerous and ever more blustering "symbols" arise, that is, they are now "made" and produced more than ever, because symbols are not needed at all by 'beings in the whole' and man. (*Mindfulness*, 153)

The question here is, why in the epoch of technicity man and 'beings in the whole'<sup>8</sup> no longer need symbols, and why are these nevertheless 'produced' and 'made' in the light of technicity?

F.-W. v. H. : A symbol gives a visible expression to a particular meaning. For

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8. For more on the appropriateness of the rendition of the phrase, *das Seiende im Ganzen* with 'beings in the whole,' see "Translators' Foreword" in *Mindfulness*, (London: Continuum, 2006), xiii-xlii.

instance, dove as a symbol becomes a visible expression of peace. Now before the epoch of technicity symbols arose without their having been made. No calculation, and no measurement preceded the symbolization of the dove. It became spontaneously the symbol for peace. However, in the epoch of technicity which is distinguished by the overwhelming abandonment of beings by be-ing and the overwhelming domination of calculation, the spontaneously arising symbols disappear, and are replaced by symbols that via calculation and measurement are ‘made’ and ‘produced.’ On the one hand, man and ‘beings in the whole’ no longer need those symbols that used to arise spontaneously and were not ‘made.’ On the other hand, technicity dominates and controls beings by using symbols that technicity itself, as part of its domination of beings, ‘makes’ and ‘produces.’ Technicity thus imposes upon beings the symbols that technicity itself via calculation and measurement ‘makes’ and ‘produces.’ Such a ‘making’ and ‘producing’ must be grasped according to the insights that Heidegger gains into the relationship of ‘makeability’ and ‘producibility’ to machination as outlined in sections 9, 10, and 11 of *Mindfulness*.

P. E.: As Heidegger in *Mindfulness* deals with modernity, technicity, and machination—all of which one way or the other has to do with power—he says of be-ing that be-ing is ‘powerless’ but is not ‘impotent.’ How are we to grasp his juxtapositioning of ‘powerlessness’ and ‘impotency’ in relation to be-ing? I find the response in a passage in which Heidegger addresses explicitly the suffix “-less” in ‘powerless’ and tells us how to approach this suffix. The passage reads:

The grounding-attunement vis-à-vis the *powerless*. The power-less: what is power, what is the lack of power? How to understand the *-less*? From out of refusal. (*Mindfulness*, 166)

F.-W. v. H.: In this passage like many more in *Mindfulness*, Heidegger speaks in a deliberative musing tone which the reader has to take into account. If the reader completes this passage in his own mind by following its deliberative musing tone, he realizes that this passage actually presents a series of questions concerning power as well as the responses to these questions. Taken in its deliberative musing tone, the first sentence is asking what is the grounding-attunement vis-à-vis the ‘powerless.’ In the second and the third sentence Heidegger hyphenates the word ‘powerless’ and suggests that to grasp the ‘power-less’ it is necessary to know what power is, and what the lack of power is. Finally, with the last sentence he delivers the response by relating the suffix “-less” to refusal.

In order to grasp the questions that are laid out in this passage, it is necessary that we go back to the two paragraphs that precede this passage. Doing so we realize that the series of questions that Heidegger raises here have to do with φύσις, more specifically with be-ing as φύσις. Thus when the first sentence asks what is the grounding-attunement vis-à-vis the ‘powerless,’ Heidegger asks

about the grounding-attunement vis-à-vis what is powerless within φύσις. In the same vein, when he asks what is power, and what is the lack of power, he wants to differentiate what is 'power-less' within φύσις without taking his bearings from what has power, respectively what lacks power. And this differentiation leads him to the last question: how are we to grasp the suffix "-less" in 'power-less' in relation to φύσις? He responds by saying: through refusal. Thus the suffix "-less" in 'power-less' points to the fundamental trait of be-ing, i.e., refusal. The suffix "-less" in 'power-less' points to be-ing's refusal of what is called power as well as of what is called the lack of power, the impotency. In the two paragraphs that precede the one which we are considering, Heidegger takes the "-less" within φύσις as that which leads to the dis-empowerment of φύσις, to its 'divesting the sway,' to its 'not-finding-the-way' unto enowning—in short, leads to the insight into φύσις itself as that which was not capable of grounding ἀλήθεια.

P. E.: All of this seems to have a strong bearing on understanding Heidegger's characterization of beings in the first beginning. As he points out in the part of *Mindfulness* that is entitled "Be-ing and Power," the first beginning did not grasp beings in terms of power, actuality and effectiveness:

The first thinking-beginning did not at all grasp beings simply as "actuality", but grasping them rather as the *rising presencing*, as that wherein a being as such gathers itself unto its 'counter-turning' and presences and remains as what 'counter-turns' [to man]. (*Mindfulness*, 169)

The question here becomes as to how to understand what transpires in the first beginning as rising presencing. How do we distinguish rising presencing from power, actuality, effectiveness and how do we grasp the specific sense in which rising presencing 'counter-turns' to man. Can we take the rising presencing to be the same as what 'counter-turns' to man?

F.-W. v. H.: Here again we should not lose sight of the fact that this account of rising presencing has to do with φύσις. As rising presencing, φύσις itself is that wherein a being as such gathers itself unto its 'counter-turning,' that is, as that which presences and 'counter-turns' to man. A being that rises and presences in this manner 'counter-turns' to man but while this being can be made an object of observation, calculation, etc. the 'counter turning' of the rising presencing cannot at all be made an object. More specifically put, the 'counter-turning' of the rising presencing is not the same as the countering by which an object faces man as the subject. The 'counter-turning' of rising presencing is not the 'oppositional countering' that marks the rise of object, objectification and calculation in modernity.

P. E.: One of the words used in *Mindfulness* in an entirely new meaning is

the word *Vermenschung* that we translate with ‘dis-humanization.’<sup>9</sup> This word plays a significant role in the entirety of part XVIII that is entitled “Gods.” Understanding ‘dis-humanization’ is indispensable for grasping the ramifications of Heidegger’s being-historical approach to the question of god. He alludes to the relationship between ‘godlessness of gods’ and ‘dis-humanization’ of man when he says:

Since long ago man is without attunement and the godless gods have fallen prey to the ‘dis-humanization’ of man and have become a ‘filling’ in the hidden emptiness and boredom of “live-experience.” (*Mindfulness*, 211)

Given the fact that *Mindfulness* unmistakably distinguishes ‘dis-humanization’ from ‘dehumanization’ (*Entmenschung*), and given the fact that ‘dehumanization’ has nothing to do with the ‘godlessness of gods’ how are we to grasp the relationship between ‘dis-humanization’ of man and ‘godlessness of gods’?

F.-W. v. H.: With and through the word ‘dis-humanization’ Heidegger alludes to everything that is *not* ownmost to man, that is, ‘subject,’ ‘subjectivity,’ and *animal rationale*. Neither ‘subject,’ nor ‘subjectivity,’ nor *animal rationale* reaches the dimension of man’s ownmost. But this is *not* to say that ‘subject,’ ‘subjectivity,’ and *animal rationale* indicate the ‘dehumanization’ of man. Man is not ‘dehumanized’ when he is identified with the ‘subject,’ ‘subjectivity,’ or *animal rationale*. And yet when he is identified with the ‘subject,’ or conceived in terms of ‘subjectivity,’ or grasped as *animal rationale*, man is ‘dis-humanized’ because neither ‘subject,’ nor ‘subjectivity,’ nor *animal rationale* reaches the dimension of being’s ‘ownhood’ which manifests itself as the truth of be-ing. Neither of these reaches that dimension, because of the assumption that underlies and sustains the conception of man as ‘subject,’ ‘subjectivity,’ and *animal rationale*—the assumption namely that man’s ownmost is exclusively obtainable from out of man himself, from out of his live-experience and his representation. To make this assumption is to be totally oblivious of man’s being that is allotted to the ‘ownhood’ and the truth of be-ing.

With the ‘dis-humanization’ of man, with the forgottenness of his allotment to the ‘ownhood’ of be-ing, the ‘godless gods’ fall prey to this ‘dis-humanization’ by becoming a ‘filling’ in man’s boredom and the emptiness of his ‘live-experience.’ It is important to keep in mind that ‘dis-humanization’ and the preponderance of human live-experience and human representation do not bring about the ‘godlessness of gods.’ This happens independently from ‘dis-humanization’ of man and the preponderance of human live-experience and representation. To put this a little differently, we have to say that as man is ‘dis-humanized’—*not* ‘dehumanized’—he will exploit ‘godless gods’ through his live-experience and representation. We can say then that ‘dis-humanization’ of

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9. For a detailed discussion of the rendition of *Vermenschung* with ‘dis-humanization,’ see “Translators’ Foreword” in *Mindfulness*, (London: Continuum, 2006), xiii-xlii.

man—which is not the same as his ‘dehumanization’—consolidates the ‘godlessness of gods.’

P. E.: All of this, of course, is closely tied to what Heidegger calls the flight of gods. He alludes to this flight when he speaks of the possibility that gods may inceptually return to their sway, and may find *again* the sway of the truth of be-ing. Using the word ‘again’ he gives rise to the impression that this ‘returning’ to the sway of the truth of be-ing has happened once before. He says:

Here again, overcoming any wish for “religion” (as sinking deep into some form of divinization of beings) gifts gods the most marvelous of gifts, namely the possibility of grounding gods’ godhood by virtue of which they can *inceptually* return to their sway. This re-turning no longer comes upon what is past. What this re-turning finds *again* is the sway of the truth of be-ing which has never been grounded and never taken in possession . . . (*Mindfulness*, 215)

In quoting this passage, I italicized the word ‘again’ in order to make clear what is at issue here. Why does Heidegger say that gods’ ‘returning’ to their sway finds ‘*again*’ the sway of the truth of be-ing? Why does he use the word ‘again’? Is he suggesting that the inceptual ‘returning’ of gods to their sway, which *again* finds the sway of the truth of be-ing, has happened once before? What seems to speak against this interpretation is the fact that Heidegger characterizes this ‘returning’ *not* as a ‘returning’ to what is passed and gone by but as a ‘returning’ to the sway of the truth of be-ing which is on-going. How are we to account for this word ‘again’?

F.-W. v. H.: If we look closely at this passage, we realize that understanding the word ‘again’ depends on a precise grasping of what Heidegger means by ‘returning.’ Without going deeper into it, we merely keep in mind what Heidegger says about this returning: gods’ inceptual ‘returning’ to their sway presupposes the grounding of gods’ godhood by virtue of which they can inceptually return to their sway and find ‘again’ the sway of the truth of be-ing. Leaving out what that grounding is all about, we shall inquire into the ‘returning.’

Let us first keep in mind that gods’ ‘returning’ to their sway is said to be inceptual. This ‘returning’ is inceptual since it implicates both the first and the other beginning. Specifically put, gods return *from* their alienated sway (*entfremdetes Wesen*) in the first beginning *to* their sway *before* this alienated sway which actually takes place in the other beginning. Accordingly, gods in the other beginning can unfold their heretofore hidden sway as it is sheltered within the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning. Looked at in this manner, we understand gods’ inceptual ‘returning’ to their sway to be the same as gods’ unfolding their sway in the other beginning. That is why, as Heidegger points out both in *Contributions to Philosophy* and *Mindfulness*, gods *need* the swaying of be-ing as enowning. We allude to this need when we say that gods’ inceptual ‘returning’ to their sway is the unfolding of gods’ sway in the other beginning which unfolding *needs* the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning.

Now to return to the question concerning the word ‘again,’ we can say that the key for properly grasping this word lies in understanding that gods’ inceptual ‘returning’ to their sway is a ‘returning’ to their sway *before* gods were alienated from their sway in the first beginning. And to unfold their sway in the other beginning, gods return ‘again’ to their un-alienated sway *before* the first beginning for which returning they need the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning. In short, this unfolding is in need of the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning. To sum up, by taking our lead from (a) gods alienated sway in the first beginning, and (b) from gods’ unfolding their sway in the other beginning, and (c) from the insight into this unfolding as one which is in need of the swaying of the truth of be-ing as enowning, we obtain a proper understanding of the word ‘again’: we realize that this word does not refer to a selfsame process that gets repeated but to a process which is being-historical, happens only once and is thus *‘einmalig.’*

P. E.: Closely related to the preceding discussion is what Heidegger lays out in section 71 of *Mindfulness*. Entitled “Gods and Be-ing” this section has important implications for and entails a tacit critique of metaphysical theology. However, one statement stands out here as especially noteworthy and that is the one in which Heidegger alludes to a ‘knowing remoteness’ of man and of gods. He says:

*‘Being is be-ing’—here the knowing remoteness of man and of gods simultaneously enowns itself, but in such a way that in the mutual beholding sheltering-concealing both refuse gods’ sway and man’s ownmost that belong to be-ing. (Mindfulness, 223 f.)*

It seems to me that to obtain at least a preliminary understanding of the critique of metaphysical theology that Heidegger lays out in this section, one has to be clear about what he calls the ‘knowing remoteness’ of man and of gods. How are we to grasp the ‘knowing remoteness *of* man and *of* gods’ with specific reference to ‘knowing’? What distinguishes this ‘knowing’?

F.-W. v. H.: In the clause “the knowing remoteness of man and of gods” the word ‘of’ that appears before the word gods parallels the word ‘of’ that appears before the word man. This is to say that in both usages the word ‘of’ has the same meaning. Seen in this light, we realize that here we are not dealing with two kinds of ‘knowing remoteness’—one that would belong to man, and the other that would be attributed to gods as if they too could claim a ‘knowing.’ More specifically, understanding the word ‘of’ in both of its usages is referentially dependent on what Heidegger designates ‘knowing remoteness.’ This ‘knowing’ belongs to and distinguishes being-historical thinking insofar as this thinking undergoes the experience that ‘being is be-ing,’ that is, that ‘being is enowning.’ What emerges from this thinking-experience is the ‘knowing’ that is aware of be-ing’s mastery. This is the knowing of that mastery which consists in

be-ing's refusal (*Verweigerung*) by virtue of which man's ownmost and the gods' sway are withheld in 'remoteness.' This is to say that the 'knowing remoteness' of man and of gods must be grasped in terms of be-ing's refusal, which is not to be thought as an attribute of be-ing or as an addendum to be-ing. This refusal is an enowning refusal. In other words, the 'knowing remoteness' of man and of gods are 'indicators' of the refusal that enowns man's ownmost and gods' sway while man's ownmost and the gods' sway mutually behold each other.

Looked at in this way, we grasp the passage under consideration and obtain a preliminary understanding of the implications that this section 71 has for metaphysical theology provided that in speaking and thinking about the 'knowing remoteness' of man and of gods, we do not lose sight of the following: (a) be-ing's refusal which reverberates in and enowns the 'knowing remoteness' of man and of gods and (b) be-ing's refusal that enowns man's ownmost and gods' sway while these mutually behold each other, and (c) the withholding of man's ownmost and gods' sway in be-ing's enowning refusal. Of paramount importance for grasping Heidegger's critique of metaphysical theology here is the mutual beholding of man's ownmost and gods' sway.

P. E.: In *Mindfulness* Heidegger often makes critical observations on the Latin translations of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια. For instance, holding in his regard the Greek ineptual interpretation of being he observes that this interpretation was not preserved in its purity because of "the seemingly unimportant translation of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια with *actus, agere*—acting, creating, *actus purus*, the creator god—*ens creatum*." (*Mindfulness*, 257) By saying that this translation is "seemingly unimportant," he implies that a proper translation of these 'guiding words' of philosophical thinking is highly important. In this connection we must note that the Latin translation of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια does not only concern the translation of these 'guiding words' of philosophy but also pertains directly to the controversial issue in philosophy of interlingual translation in general. In this connection there are three questions that need to be addressed. (1) Through his criticism of the Latin translations of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια is Heidegger suggesting that the Romans had another possibility for translating these words but did not use that possibility? (2) Through his criticism of the Latin translations of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια is Heidegger suggesting that the language of the Romans was in principle incapable of undertaking this translation in a manner that accords with the truth of be-ing? (3) Assuming that the response to this last question is in the affirmative, how are we to grasp the incapability of the language of the Romans, if the sway of this language, that is, its *Wesen* cannot be thought without the sway, respectively the swaying (*Wesung*) of the truth of be-ing?

F.-W. v. H.: The first thing we have to bear in mind is that the question of the translation of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια from Greek into Latin is a being-historical question. And this is to say that Heidegger takes seriously and criti-

cizes the translation of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια with *actus*, *agere* and *actus purus*, because this translation is a being-historical translation and as such falls in the domain where the distinction between history (*Geschichte*) and ‘history’ (*Historie*) is the deciding distinction. Keeping this distinction in mind, we can say that seen from within Heidegger’s being-historical purview, the sway of the Latin language is determined by a being-historical withdrawal of that which shapes the sway of the Greek language. Considering this withdrawal, we can say that the Romans in principle did not have any possibility for translating ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια other than the possibility that they had when they translated ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια with words such as *actus*, *agere*, etc. Considering this withdrawal, we can also say that seen from within the being-historical purview, the language of the Romans was incapable of experiencing, seizing and preserving and correspondingly translating the unconcealing that is sheltered in the guiding Greek words such as ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια. Bearing these points in mind, I can now respond to the third question, namely how are we to grasp the incapability of the language of the Romans, if the sway of this language cannot be thought without the sway, respectively the swaying of the truth of be-ing.

It is true that the sway of the Latin language cannot be thought without the sway, respectively the swaying of the truth of be-ing. However, we should not forget that the sway, respectively the swaying of the truth of be-ing are historically (*geschichtlich*) self-transforming, which is an indication that the truth of be-ing is not permanent, constant, and immutable. Finally, we should not forget that in relation to the sway, respectively the swaying of the truth of be-ing, the sway of the Latin language is determined by the withdrawal of what the Greek language experienced and called ἀλήθεια. Accordingly, it is *this withdrawal* that we have to take into account if we are to properly grasp Heidegger’s critique of the Latin translations of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια.

P. E.: Throughout *Mindfulness* and *Contributions to Philosophy* when he speaks of be-ing, Heidegger occasionally uses the words “‘in-between’ of beings.” In one instance of this usage, he addresses this ‘in-between’ more closely when he states that as the inabiding Da-sein this ‘in-between’ fosters a transformed relation to itself that is only a representationally grasped and misinterpreted relation. He says:

Being (swaying in “time”) announces itself as the ‘in-between’ of beings that fosters a distinctly transformed relation to itself, that is, the inabiding Da-sein. But this fostering is only a representationally grasped and misinterpreted relation if we consider that be-ing as enowning [*Ereignis*] en-owns Da-sein as the swaying of be-ing’s grounding of its truth . . . (*Mindfulness*, 276)

How can be-ing as the ‘in-between’ of beings foster a relation to itself that is only a representationally grasped and misinterpreted relation? Does be-ing itself foster this relation?

F.-W. v. H.: Here Heidegger addresses an issue that is in play throughout his writings and not only in *Mindfulness* and *Contributions to Philosophy*. This is the issue of speaking of be-ing in a way that suggests that be-ing ‘does’ certain things. When impelled by the peculiarities of our ‘subject’ oriented language we speak of be-ing as though it ‘does’ certain things, or as in the present instance, when we say of be-ing that it ‘fosters’ a relation to itself, then this way of speaking of be-ing is inappropriate to be-ing. And this is exactly what Heidegger wants to get across with what he says in this passage. By alluding to ‘a representationally grasped and misinterpreted relation,’ he contrasts ‘fostering,’ ‘doing’ and the likes with be-ing that “en-owns Da-sein as the swaying of be-ing’s grounding of its truth . . .” (*Mindfulness*, 276). What counts here is grasping the ‘fostering’ not as ‘a representationally grasped and misinterpreted relation,’ but as a word that alludes to the enowning that en-owns Da-sein as the swaying of be-ing’s grounding of its truth. In short, all the unavoidable ways of speaking of be-ing that attributes to be-ing certain ‘doings,’ loses its inappropriateness when it is considered from within the purview of the enowning that en-owns Da-sein as the swaying of the grounding of be-ing’s truth.

P. E.: Even a cursory look at *Mindfulness* and *Contributions to Philosophy* is enough to show that in these works Heidegger often makes lengthy and instructive observations on *Sein und Zeit* and on the works that fall within its domain, such as *Vom Wesen des Grundes*.<sup>10</sup> Understanding these observations is of paramount importance for grasping the place that Heidegger assigns to both *Sein und Zeit* and *Vom Wesen des Grundes* from within the purview of his being-historical thinking. Of particular interest is the observation he makes on *Vom Wesen des Grundes* when he says:

Although, all the works from *Sein und Zeit* up to *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, as the threshold, still speak and present metaphysically, *the thinking* in these works is *not metaphysical*. (*Mindfulness*, 286)

With the analyses presented in *Mindfulness* as well as in *Contributions to Philosophy*, he makes clear why he can say that the ‘thinking’ in *Sein und Zeit* and *Vom Wesen des Grundes*—‘thinking’ as distinguished from ‘speaking’—is not metaphysical. However, when he characterizes *Vom Wesen des Grundes* as ‘the threshold’ up to which all other works of his still speak the language of metaphysics, he leaves us with the impression that *Vom Wesen des Grundes* itself no longer speaks the language of metaphysics. How do we come to terms with this impression?

F.-W. v. H.: Since *Vom Wesen des Grundes* deals thematically with ‘transcendence’—whose being-historical overcoming takes place in *Contributions to Philoso-*

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10. For reasons as to why here and elsewhere in this text, the titles *Sein und Zeit* and *Vom Wesen des Grundes* are kept in German, see “Translators’ Foreword,” in *Mindfulness*, (London: Continuum, 2006) xiii-xlii.

phy—even *Vom Wesen des Grundes* speaks the language of metaphysics. However, insofar as near the end of *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, Heidegger lays out ‘transcendence’ as the freedom toward the ab-ground, he takes a decisive step toward a language that is no longer metaphysical. It is to this step that the word threshold refers. The juncture near the end of *Vom Wesen des Grundes* is the one in which Heidegger for the first time speaks of “ab-ground.” There he says that “[t]he ground that arises through transcending holds itself in reserve as freedom itself. And freedom itself *as origin* becomes the ‘ground.’ . . . But as *this* ground freedom is the ab-ground of Dasein.”<sup>11</sup> Here for the first time Heidegger has a ‘pre-view’ of the ‘ab-ground’ which in *Contributions to Philosophy* and in *Mindfulness* he then lays out being-historically. It is this ‘pre-view’ that helps us grasp the observation he makes in our passage on *Vom Wesen des Grundes*. What Heidegger wants to get across with this observation is this: insofar as *Vom Wesen des Grundes* obtains a ‘pre-view’ of ‘ab-ground’—a ‘pre-view’ that is evident in the speaking of ‘ab-ground’—this work marks the threshold between the metaphysical and the no longer metaphysical *speaking*. And yet in its *thinking*, *Vom Wesen des Grundes* does not succeed in getting beyond this threshold, because this thinking is occupied by the metaphysical issue of transcendence.

P. E.: The question of being is a recurrent theme throughout *Mindfulness* and frequently subjected to analyses that not only highlight this question itself but its various misunderstandings. At one point Heidegger addresses one such misunderstanding by critically assessing the attribution to this question of a meaning that does not inherently belong to this question. He says:

Therefore, it is only an illusion when out of “one’s” heedless opinion “one” ascribes “one’s” own meaning to the phrase, the “question of being.” Every attempt of this kind already depends on an interpretation of being that completely and continually eludes the undertaking to name and explain the wording of this phrase. (*Mindfulness*, 301 f.)

Given the minute analyses of the question of being in *Sein und Zeit*, and elsewhere in Heidegger’s writings, which should forestall such misunderstandings, how are we to grasp ‘an interpretation of being’ that eludes this question and how are we to understand the meaning that ‘one’ draws from such an interpretation and attributes to this question? Specifically, what does Heidegger mean when he speaks of ‘ascribing’ a meaning to the ‘question of being’ that is drawn from ‘one’s’ own heedless opinion?

F.-W. v. H.: In this passage Heidegger alludes, in a critical tone, to the philosophical literature that followed the appearance of *Sein und Zeit*. What distin-

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11. M. Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1976), p. 174. The quotation shows how misleading it is to translate the word “*Ab-grund*” with abyss and how absurd it is to hyphenate this word as “ab-yss.” For more on this rendition and its misleading character, see “Translators’ Foreword,” in *Mindfulness*, (London: Continuum, 2006) xiii-xlii.

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