

## Naming Being – Or the Philosophical Content of Heidegger’s National Socialism

Vincent Blok

### Table of Contents/Inhaltsverzeichnis/Table des Matières

#### I. Texts from Heidegger’s *Nachlass*

<i>Martin Heidegger</i> Zerklüftung des Seins .....	9
--	---

#### II. Articles

<i>Bernhard Radloff</i> Crossing-Over and Going-Under: A Reading of Heidegger’s Rectorial Address in Light of <i>Contributions to Philosophy</i> .....	23
--	----

<i>Peter Trawny</i> Heidegger und das Politische: Zum „Rechtsphilosophie“-Seminar .....	47
--	----

<i>Adéline Froidecourt</i> La poésie de Pindar à l’aube de la métaphysique .....	67
---	----

<i>Vincent Blok</i> Naming Being – Or the Philosophical Content of Heidegger’s National Socialism .....	101
--	-----

<i>Natalia Artemenko</i> Zu Martin Heideggers Interpretation von Aristoteles: Der wiederaufgefunde Natorp-Bericht von 1922 .....	123
--	-----

<i>Christophe Perrin</i> Pascal, utile mais incertain selon Heidegger .....	147
--	-----

<i>Thomas Kalary</i> Heidegger’s Aristotle Interpretation of 1922 and its Significance for his Fun- damental Ontology .....	169
---	-----

<i>Giusti Strummiello</i> „Alte Wörter“: Gelassenheit und Gottheit bei Heidegger und Eckhart .....	191
---	-----

#### Introduction

With the publication and translation of Emmanuel Faye’s book *Heidegger, l’introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie. Autour des séminaires inédits de 1933–1935* in 2005 and 2009 respectively, the controversy around Martin Heidegger’s engagement with National Socialism flared up again.<sup>1</sup> Faye is not blaming Heidegger for a *political* mistake during the thirties. National Socialism “inspired his works in their entirety and nourished them at the root level – so much so that it was impossible to dissociate them from his political commitment.”<sup>2</sup> As the title of his book already suggests, Faye is blaming Heidegger for introducing National Socialism into philosophy: “in the courses and seminars that are ostensibly presented as ‘philosophical,’ we witness a progressive dissolving of the human being, whose individual worth is expressly denied, into a community of people rooted in the land and united by blood. . . . Thus, through Heidegger’s teaching, the racial conceptions of Nazism enter philosophy.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to hit its mark, Faye’s criticism has to fulfil two conditions. First of all, it has to be clear what National Socialism is. Secondly, it has to be clear what actual relation there is between Heidegger’s philosophy and National Socialism.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger, l’introduction du nazisme dans la philosophie. Autour des séminaires inédits de 1933–1935* (Paris: Albin Michel 2005); Heidegger: *The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. Michael S. Smith (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Faye, *Heidegger. The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Faye, *Heidegger. The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> These two conditions are derived from Lacoue-Labarthe’s discussion with Adorno (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1987); *Heidegger. Art and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 105–107). Adorno wrote that Heidegger’s ‘philosophy is fascist right down to its most intimate components’. Lacoue-Labarthe converts this accusation into a question: “What do the commitment of 1933, the paucity of his explanations, the absence of any disavowal, and his silence on the Extermination (and the responsibility of Germany and Europe) do to the philosophy or the thought of Heidegger? Do they merely cast a local, passing shadow

Faye does at least not satisfy the second condition, because he is unable to take Heidegger's philosophical position into account. This becomes clear when we enquire into Faye's concept of philosophy. According to Faye, humanistic values are the underlying principles of philosophy<sup>5</sup> – the rationality of the human individual or the 'I think' of Descartes<sup>6</sup> – and "the vocation of philosophy is to serve the evolution of man."<sup>7</sup> It is very doubtful whether Faye is able to think through the relation between National Socialism and Heidegger's philosophy – the question of being – because his Cartesian concept of philosophy rejects the possibility of any human beings' openness to the ontological difference Heidegger is talking about. Because Heidegger abolishes the Cartesian-humanistic principles of philosophy, Faye excludes him even from the tradition of philosophy: "The example of Heidegger shows us that it does not suffice to use philosophical terms or to comment on philosophers to be one."<sup>8</sup> But with the same right, we could say that it does not suffice to use National Socialist terms to be one. Even if names such as 'Führer', 'Kampf', 'Volk', 'Marsch' in Heidegger's Rectorial Address match the official language of the party, whose members belonged to his audience, we cannot conclude that "the most extreme principles of Hitlerism" are expressed.<sup>9</sup> In order to satisfy

upon a body of thought that is otherwise intact and basically uncompromised? Or do they tarnish that thought irremediably to the point that it might be termed, in all essentials, 'fascist'?" (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 105). For a convincing account of the essence of National Socialism, see the book of Lacoue-Labarthe (see also Eric Michaud, *Un Art de L'Éternité: L'image et le temps du national-socialisme* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996); *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004)). *La fiction du politique* is one of the few truly charitable attempts to come to terms with the philosophical content of Heidegger's National Socialism, and to draw progressive lessons from this for our future philosophical reflections.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. xxiii, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. "Wichtig wird ... die Frage, was Faye unter Philosophie versteht. Es stellt sich heraus, dass Faye nicht so sehr eine bestimmte Aktivität vor Augen hat, die an eine reichhaltige Tradition gekoppelt ist, sondern eine einzige spezifische Position innerhalb dieser Tradition. Jedes wahrhaftige Denken, so Faye, muss den Geist des menschlichen Individuums zum Ausgangspunkt nehmen, das heißt, das "ich denke" von Descartes, und muss diesen Geist oder diese Ratio als universell bei den Menschen vorhanden voraussetzen" (Frans van Peperstraten, "Der Nazismus-Vorwurf: Wo wird das Denken zur Ideologie?", *Heidegger Jahrbuch* 5 (2009), p. 282).

<sup>7</sup> Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. 321.

<sup>8</sup> Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. 317.

<sup>9</sup> Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, op.cit. p. 6. In a critical review of Faye's book, van Peperstraten has convincingly shown that Faye's interpretation of Heidegger's texts is not only doubtful but also deliberately deceptive in certain respects. Based on an incomplete quote for instance – "... ist das Prinzip der Einrichtung einer Rassenzüchtung [...] metaphysisch notwendig" – Faye concludes that Heidegger is legitimizing the 'racial selection' of the Nazis, whereas the full quote actually shows that Heidegger is precisely opposing racism:

the second condition, Faye had to ask about the *philosophical significance* of these names. Unlike Faye, in this article we focus on the *philosophical content* of Heidegger's National Socialism. When we speak of the 'philosophical content' of Heidegger's National Socialism, we do not assume that his Rectorial Address constitutes a *philosophy*. For Heidegger's basic experience (*Grunderfahrung*) is that the *ownmost* of man and world cannot be projected entirely in a projection (*Entwurf*) of thinking, i. e. in a philosophy of being.

Heidegger introduces this basic experience right at the beginning of *Being and Time*. He claims there "that we live already in an understanding of being and that the meaning of being is at the same time shrouded in darkness."<sup>10</sup> Heidegger speaks explicitly of the understanding of *being* (*Seinsverständnis*), which means that it must not be confused with our understanding of *beings*. Understanding of being doesn't mean that 'being' is somehow available in the world and can then be understood. *Seinsverständnis* is about the being of our understanding, i. e. the 'how' of our understanding of man and world. How do we understand man and world today?

In his retrospective account *Das Rektorat 1933/34. Tatsachen und Gedanken* from 1945, Heidegger outlines the situation in which he decided to take over the rectorate of Freiburg University. He understood the prevailing situation of the world at that time as the era of the "universal dominion of the will to power."<sup>11</sup> Will to power means that reality is grasped in terms of its benefit for life (power-preservation [*Machterhaltung*] and power-enhancement [*Machtsteigerung*]); a forest is for instance represented as a potential producer of wood or as recreation after work. The will to power determines the way the world appears to us and the way we understand and interact with the world.

According to Heidegger, in our self-evident understanding of the world (*Seinsverständnis*), the meaning of being (*Sinn von Sein*) remains hidden. This concealment cannot be projected in a projection of thinking, nor can it be understood.

"Nur wo die unbedingte Subjektivität des Willens zur Macht zur Wahrheit des Seienden im Ganzen wird, ist das Prinzip der Einrichtung einer Rassenzüchtung, d.h. nicht blosse aus sich wachsende Rassenbildung, sondern der sich selbst wissende Rassengedanke möglich und d.h. metaphysisch notwendig" (Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsches Metaphysik. Einleitung in die Philosophie – Denken und Dichten*, GA 50 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), p. 56). Only when the subjectivity of the will to power is our point of departure is the 'Einrichtung einer Rassenzüchtung' metaphysically necessary. But it is clear for all readers of Heidegger's work that he rejects precisely the subjectivity of the will to power (Frans van Peperstraten, "Der Nazismus-Vorwurf: Wo wird das Denken zur Ideologie?", op.cit. pp. 294–295).

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1927–1977), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933/34. Tatsachen und Gedanken", *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), p. 375.

Heidegger calls the meaning of being the projecting-opening-domain (*Entwurfsbereich*), "that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself."<sup>12</sup> This domain is the space *between* being and thinking, the openness I have to stride through to reach things in the world. Our understanding presupposes (in the meaning of an *acceptio*) this projection-domain, which cannot be projected in a projection of thinking; on the contrary, it withholds itself in every thinking projection. Heidegger experiences, in other words, an incommensurability or twofold between the brightness of our understanding of being (unconcealment) and the darkness of the meaning of being (concealment), something *beyond thinking* which is unreachable for understanding.

It is in this basic experience that the root cause of Heidegger's "mindfulness (*Besinnung*) toward an overcoming of the metaphysics of the will to power" has to be found.<sup>13</sup> He considers such overcoming first of all necessary because the *metaphysical* question of being takes beings as its starting point and is asking about the *what-is* or the beingness (*Seiendheit*) of these beings, not about their 'how' that delineates our understanding of being. According to Heidegger, our understanding of being is not itself a being and cannot be discussed with reference to or as beings, because it concerns 'being' as such: "According to the usual interpretation, the 'question of being' means asking about beings as such (metaphysics). But if we think along the lines of *Being and Time*, the 'question of being' means asking about being as such. This meaning of the expression is also appropriate both in terms of the matter at stake and in terms of language; for the 'question of being' in the meaning of the metaphysical question about beings as such precisely does *not* ask thematically about being. Being remains forgotten."<sup>14</sup> According to Heidegger, the forgottenness of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*) reigns today, i. e., the forgottenness of being as twofold in being itself, namely between the understanding of being (unconcealment) and the meaning of being (concealment).

Heidegger considers the overcoming of the metaphysics of the will to power necessary in the second place because the different configurations of the understanding of being – 'being' is for instance understood as *phusis*; 'Gegenstand', 'will to power' etc. in the history of metaphysics – show the fundamental trait of presencing (*Anwesen*) of all metaphysics.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, metaphysics is unable to reflect on the twofold between the understanding of being and the meaning of being.

With this, it becomes clear that Heidegger's reflections on the overcoming of the metaphysics of the will to power do not result in a new philosophy, i. e. a projection

<sup>12</sup> GA 2, p. 201.

<sup>13</sup> GA 16, p. 376.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage", *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), p. 421.

(*Entwurf*), representation (*Vorstellung*), *thesis* or *mythos* about being: "The first philosophical step in understanding the problem of being consists in avoiding the  $\mu\upsilon\theta\acute{o}\nu$   $\tau\iota\nu\alpha$   $\delta\iota\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ , in not 'telling a story,' that is, not determining beings as beings by tracing them back in their origins to another being, as if being had the character of a possible being."<sup>16</sup> Every philosophical projection of being is aiming at the presence of being, in which the open space between being and thinking, the meaning of being remains unquestioned and forgotten.

What then is at stake for Heidegger, when his philosophical efforts do not result in a new philosophy? The representing way of thinking cannot easily be replaced by a new way of philosophical thought which is able to reflect on the twofold of the understanding of being and the meaning of being. Because it is the natural tendency of thinking to lose itself in representation (will to power), any attempt towards the overcoming of representation (will to power) immediately encounters a methodological problem: we are always already absorbed in the omnipresence of representation (will to power). How to say goodbye to representation when it characterizes all human behavior, Heidegger is asking himself.

We receive an indication of the *Sache* of Heidegger's thought when we take a remark about the status of his own concepts into account. In a lecture from 1929/30 concerning *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics*, Heidegger says that "what philosophy deals with only discloses itself at all within and from out of a transformation of human *Dasein*."<sup>17</sup> This transformation puts an end to representation – the thinking projection of being – and therefore ourselves as representing subjects, in favour of a way of human existence that knows itself surrounded by the twofold between the brightness of our understanding of being (unconcealment) and the darkness of the meaning of being (concealment). Heidegger's work does not constitute a philosophy, but aims at such a transformation of human existence (*Dasein*). When we speak of the 'philosophical content' of Heidegger's National Socialism, therefore, this 'content' is not a philosophical projection of being. It is on the contrary related to the task of transforming our way of philosophical thinking, i. e. of human existence (*Dasein*). But precisely with regard to this distinction between Heidegger and the philosophical tradition we have to take the critical remarks of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1940–2007) into account.

Lacoue-Labarthe fully acknowledges that Heidegger's question of being does not constitute a 'new thesis on being', i. e. a new philosophy: "The delimitation and deconstruction (*Destruktion*, *Zerstörung*, *Abbau*) of philosophy (of ontology) do not constitute a philosophy, not even a philosophy of philosophy ... There are, inevitably, Heideggerian theses, to which one may choose to subscribe or not. But these theses do not form themselves into a philosophy, ... unless one were quite

<sup>16</sup> GA 2, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, GA 29/30 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), p. 423.

dishonestly ... to reduce Heidegger's theses to theses from the philosophical (e.g. Hegelian) tradition, in feigned ignorance of the incommensurability that exists, by definition, between a thesis of being and the question of being."<sup>18</sup>

According to Lacoue-Labarthe, however, Heidegger indulges in philosophy precisely during the period of his commitment to National Socialism in 1933–34. He produces statements that are philosophical and rooted in the philosophical tradition in this period: "the commitment of 1933 is founded upon the idea of a hegemony of the spiritual and the philosophical over political hegemony itself ... which leads us back at least to the Platonic *basileia*, if not to Empedocles. His statements (on Germany, on work, on the University etc.) are purely and simply programmatic and are, moreover, organized in a number of 'Appeals'."<sup>19</sup> In his efforts to overcome the metaphysics of the will to power and in his announcement of the 'other beginning' of philosophy, Heidegger is doing precisely what he is blaming Jünger for in *Zur Seinsfrage*; he 'crosses the line' of metaphysics and produces the first outlines of his other way of philosophical thought, according to Lacoue-Labarthe.<sup>20</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe claims that, because all efforts to transcend representation re-introduce what it claims to pass beyond, Heidegger during the thirties re-introduces a metaphysical thesis or a philosophical projection of being,<sup>21</sup> a myth, type or fiction about being.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., pp. 10–11.

<sup>19</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> In *Über die Linie*, which was first published in a *liber amicorum* occasioned by the sixtieth birthday of Heidegger in 1949, Jünger discusses the question whether we live in the age of fulfilled nihilism and, if so, whether we can overcome such nihilism. Jünger wants to cross the line of nihilism into a new era where "eine neue Zuwendung des Seins" takes place and puts an end to the age of fulfilled nihilism. Six years later, in 1955, in a *liber amicorum* occasioned by Jünger's own sixtieth birthday, Heidegger responded with an 'open letter': *Über 'Über die Linie'*, later published as *Zur Seinsfrage*. In this essay, Heidegger insists on the prior question about the essence of nihilism. Contrary to Jünger's crossing the line, Heidegger's main concern is the line itself: "Im Titel Ihrer Schrift 'Über die Linie' bedeutet das 'über' soviel wie: hinüber, trans, meta. Dagegen verstehen die folgenden Bemerkungen das 'über' nur in der Bedeutung des: de, *peri*. Sie handeln 'von' der Linie selbst, von der Zone des sich vollendenden Nihilismus" (Martin Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage", *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann 1976), p. 386). Heidegger observes here, "dass Sie [Jünger] im 'Hinüber' über die Linie, d.h. im Raum dieses und jenseits der Linie, die gleiche Sprache sprechen. Die Position des Nihilismus ist, so scheint es, in gewisser Weise durch das Überqueren der Linie schon aufgegeben, aber seine Sprache ist geblieben" (GA 9, p. 394). In the end, Heidegger argues against Jünger that nihilism cannot be overcome at all and that the question of nihilism must be brought back to the question of Being. For the confrontation between Heidegger and Ernst Jünger in the thirties, see Vincent Blok, "An indication of Being – Reflections on Heidegger's Engagement with Ernst Jünger," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* (2011): pp. 194–209.

<sup>21</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 12. According to Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger's re-introduction of a metaphysical thesis is not abandoned and repudiated in his later work. "None the less, from 1934 ... to the final developments

The distinction we made between Heidegger and the philosophical tradition is challenged by Lacoue-Labarthe, at least his philosophical efforts during the period in which he aligned himself with the National Socialists. Because all efforts to transcend representation result in a new thesis on being, Lacoue-Labarthe concludes that we have to give up all efforts to transcend re-presentation: "we are still living on philosophical ground and we cannot just go and live somewhere else"<sup>23</sup>. According to Lacoue-Labarthe, the only access we have to the meaning of being is *within* representation and *as* representation, namely by the "interruption, suspension, fragmentation or extenuation" of representation.<sup>24</sup>

The question is, however, whether we throw the baby out with the bathwater, when we give up the task of transforming our way of thinking because of Heidegger's tendency towards transcendence. Unlike Lacoue-Labarthe, our first hypothesis is that Heidegger's Rectorial Address is not a thesis on being, but already gives indications of another way of philosophical thinking. Secondly, and more important, our hypotheses is that this transformation towards another way of philosophical thinking does not re-introduce what it claims to pass beyond – a thesis on being – but dwells on the ambiguity of the names that delineate our understanding of being.

In the first section of this article, the philosophical question of the Rectorial Address is discussed. It is shown that *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* deals with the question of the identity of human existence in connection with the question about the foreign (*Fremde*) and one's own (*Eigene*). In the second section, it is shown that the Rectorial Address is a highly ambiguous text in which a transformation of human existence is at stake, i.e. another beginning of philosophical thinking. The transitional character of the Rectorial Address is found in the ambiguity of the names used in this lecture – 'Führer', 'Kampf', 'Volk', 'Marsch' –

of his thinking on Hölderlin, until it produces, along the lines of a model which it is impossible not to identify with the Romantic model of Jena, a 'new mythology', albeit one which is inscribed – with all the requisite vigilance – in negative. (But all the same, the Geviert and the 'lack of sacred names', the ring (*Ring und Gering*) of the world and the four, the waiting for a new god and a host of other themes of the same order all make up a mythology in the philosophical meaning of the term." See Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 13–14. But if this is really the case, then it is unclear why Heidegger doesn't have a philosophy, as Lacoue-Labarthe also claimed at the outset of his book as we have seen.

<sup>22</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typographie," in: S. Agacinski et al., *Mimesis: Des Articulations* (Paris: Flammarion, 1976), p. 199; "it is the whole vocabulary of what I have called elsewhere onto-topology that comes to punctuate the Address throughout: Prägung or Gepräge, the stamp, the imprint, or the type" (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *L'imitation des modernes. Typographies II* (Paris: Gallilée, 1986), p. 168. For a non-metaphysical interpretation of Heidegger's concept of gestalt, see Vincent Blok, "Establishing the Truth: Heidegger's Reflections on Gestalt", *Heidegger Studies*, 27 (2011): 101–117.

<sup>23</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 6.

which raises a claim concerning the transformation of human existence. The ambiguity of the names in Heidegger's Rectorial Address gives us an indication of Heidegger's transformation of philosophical thinking. In the third section, we elaborate on Heidegger's response to this claim in connection with the question about philosophical empiricism.

### I. The Confrontation with the First Beginning in *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*: The Question about the Foreign and One's Own<sup>25</sup>

Because Lacoue-Labarthe's criticism is that Heidegger indulges in philosophy, at least during his commitment to the National Socialists in 1933–34, the first question we have to answer is to what extent the claim concerning the transformation of philosophical thinking is at stake in Heidegger's Rectorial Address?

The central idea of the Rectorial Address is that the 'leader' is guided by a 'spiritual mission'. From the philosophical background of the Rectorial Address, discussed in the introduction of this article, we can conclude that words like *Führer* and *Auftrag* do not concern *beings* but *Being*, respectively, the meaning of being.<sup>26</sup> When Heidegger speaks about a 'spiritual mission,' this is not an attempt to lead the leader in the way of an order from Master Heidegger to Master Hitler, as is claimed by Karl Jaspers.<sup>27</sup> This mission relates rather to our understanding of being, that is, to the way the world appears and the way we understand and interact with the world. This mission (*Auftrag*) bears (*tragen*) or leads (*führen*) human thought, because this bearing ground articulates our understanding of the world and of ourselves in a specific way; thinking as representation (will to power) encounters only the world as represented (will to power). Only in light of representation can man and world encounter each other.

Heidegger's attempt in the Rectorial Address to overcome the metaphysics of the will to power shows itself in the question about our own identity. He asks if we know who we ourselves are. This question applies not only to the National Socialists who were listening to his speech, but equally to our philosophical thinking in this article. Is it obvious that human existence is absorbed in the mutual representation of being and thinking (will to power), in which the meaning of being remains forgotten? Or is our human existence primarily exposed to the understanding of being, which delineates ever new configurations of being –

*physis, subject-object, will to power, etc.* – and stays surrounded by the meaning of being?

Since not only the metaphysics of the will to power, but *each* philosophical projection is characterized by the forgottenness of being, the overcoming of the metaphysics of the will to power demands a confrontation with what Heidegger calls the beginning (*Anfang*) of philosophical thinking. The confrontation with the beginning of philosophy is of crucial importance in Heidegger's Rectorial Address.

This self-reflection, namely the reflection on the question if we know who we ourselves are, occurs in the Rectorial Address in connection with the question about the ownmost (*Wesen*) of the German university. Why? "The will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as will to the historical spiritual mission of the German people ... *Together*, science and German fate must come to power in the will to its ownmost."<sup>28</sup> Although the meaning of this thought is not immediately apparent, it becomes clear that our identity is related to the ownmost of the German university. The will of the ownmost of the university consists of two elements, namely 'science' on the one hand and the 'fate of Germany' on the other.

As we will show in more detail below, the name 'science' in Heidegger's Rectorial Address doesn't mean the sciences as they are taught at the university today. 'Science' refers here to the rise of Greek philosophy. Formally speaking, we can say that in the Rectorial Address the *Greek* is opposed to the *German*, i.e., the question if we know who we ourselves are is unfolded here as a reflection on one's own – the 'German fate' – and the foreign – science in the meaning of Greek philosophy.<sup>29</sup> The self-reflection is brought in connection with the will of the ownmost of the German university, because this should be the place where the confrontation between one's own and the *foreign* should reach its conclusion. This opposition structures the self-reflection in Heidegger's speech: he first speaks about science and then about the German fate. The point of departure for Heidegger's question about the ownmost of science is not science as it is taught at the university today, but the 'beginning' of Greek philosophy, because the "inner necessity" of science shows itself in this beginning. In what does the inner necessity of science consist and what does it have to do with the beginning of Greek philosophy?

According to the Platonic Socrates, the origin of philosophical reflection lies in an impasse or *aporia*. This is not an embarrassment or ignorance with regard to mysterious things or events. The *aporia* exists with regard to the identity (or the

<sup>28</sup> GA 16, p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> We must somewhat nuance this distinction between one's own and the foreign. In the Rectorial Address, Heidegger seems to speak about the Greek as *origin* of the German's own (cf. GA 16, p. 108), while the Greek is explicitly connected with the foreign only after 1934, in a lecture on Hölderlin. However, because a differentiation is at stake here, we insist on the distinction between one's own and the foreign and do not specifically consider the ownmost of the foreign (namely the foreign as origin or as unbridgeable foreign).

<sup>25</sup> Parts of this section were published earlier in *Studia Phenomenologica*, vol. 10 (20/0), pp. 273–292.

<sup>26</sup> For the political implications of Heidegger's *ontocentrism*, see Vincent Blok, "Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus oder die Frage nach dem philosophischen Empiricismus", op.cit. pp. 277–278.

<sup>27</sup> cf. Otto Pöggeler, "Den Führer führen? Heidegger und kein Ende", *Philosophische Rundschau* (1985), p. 27.

ownmost) of things, which had remained concealed in the self-evident interaction with these things. By the displacement in the *aporia* with regard to the *identity* of things, humankind is pushed away from its normal interaction and the philosophical concern about the identity of these things arises. The self-evident accessibility of the 'being' or the identity of beings to thought is broken and is the impetus for the philosophical question about the being of these beings. By the question about the being of beings, metaphysical thinking tries to find a way out of this *aporia*, which means that the beginning of philosophy consists in the search for ways out of the impasse. The inner necessity to which science is exposed, according to Heidegger, is the philosophical question about the being of beings, which comes up with the displacement in the *aporia*.

Heidegger conceives this beginning as an *Aufbruch*, in which Western man rises up (*steht auf*) against "beings in a whole (*Seiende im Ganzen*) and understands it as the beings that it is."<sup>30</sup> What is meant by the whole of being, and what is the difference with being as such? In a lecture on the basic concepts of metaphysics from 1929/30, these concepts are further elaborated. Greek science (*epistēmē*) asks about the *phusis*. Based on an example from Aristotle, Heidegger shows that for the Greeks *phusis* does not have the narrow meaning of a natural being, and that the *epistēmē phusikē* does not yet designate a scientific discipline directed towards the facts within a specific area of research only. The Aristotelian *epistēmē phusikē* is reflecting primarily on the question of what life, time, space etc. are as that in which the variable and therefore the moved (*phusis*) is what it is. "This επιστήμη φυσικῆ has as its object everything that in this meaning belongs to φύσις and that the Greeks designate as τὰ φυσικά. The questioning proper to these sciences dealing with φύσις is the supreme question of the Prime Mover, of what this whole of φύσις is in itself as this whole."<sup>31</sup> Aristotle asks for the "whole" by the question of the prime mover. This question of the prime mover, which is understood by Aristotle as the Divine without any specific religious doctrine, belongs to the *epistēmē phusikē*.

*Phusis* however does not only designate nature in this sense. *Phusis* also concerns the *nature* of things, i. e. nature in the meaning of the ownmost of beings. The metaphysical question concerning beings as *such* (*ousia*) is called the *ontological* question. According to Aristotle, the different questions concerning *phusis* as the whole of what is (theology) and as being as such (ontology) belong together in the *first philosophy* (*protē philosophia*). Abstracted from normal interaction with things in the world, the philosophical question about the *phusis* in this double meaning arises. The beginning of Greek science is therefore the beginning of ontology.

In the Rectorial Address, Heidegger discusses two characteristics of the ownmost of Greek science. The idea that according to the Greeks knowledge (*technē*)

is weaker than necessity (*anankē*) is the starting point for the characterization of these two properties. The *technē* represents the search for ways out of the impasse (*aporia*) and, with this, for the solution to the metaphysical question about the being of beings. Heidegger says that for the Greeks, knowledge (*technē*) is important compared to the predominance of the *phusis*. Why doesn't this characterization just as well apply to today's science?

According to Heidegger, we make it too easy for ourselves when we look at these *Greek* thoughts about the ownmost of science from the perspective of *current* science. Modern science understands Greek thought as exclusively typified by the *theoretical attitude*. This attitude *refrains* from any intervention in nature (*praxis*), doesn't *create* something and is bound only by the empirically given. With regard to Greek thought, current science says that theoretical reflection is just done for its own sake (we shall come back to the importance of the theoretical for Greek science). The question of the validity of Heidegger's remarks about *current* science will not be discussed in this article. Here, we are only interested in Heidegger's demonstration of the *ownmost* of Greek science. There are two reasons, according to Heidegger, why current science cannot be characterized with reference to Greek science.

First, the theoretical reflection of Greek science is not done for its own sake. The first characteristic of the ownmost of Greek science is exactly the displacement in the *aporia* with regard to the *identity* of things, which is the *impetus* for the search for ways out of the impasse (*technē*) through the metaphysical question about the whole of being and being as such. The theoretical reflection of the Greeks is not done for its own sake, but because of the inner necessity to which science is exposed,<sup>32</sup> namely the displacement in the *aporia*.

Here it becomes clear why Heidegger speaks of a revolt (*Aufstand*) of the Greeks *against* the whole of being. This revolt has nothing to do with the revolutionary hordes of the Nazis. Beings are *phusis* for the Greeks, i. e., that which comes to presence from out of itself and has the tendency to conceal itself.<sup>33</sup> The *technē* is impotent compared to the "power of the concealedness" of the *phusis*, and this impotence incites the appropriation of the *phusis* from the side of *technē*. The *technē* revolts *against* the *phusis*, because nature has the tendency to conceal herself and tries to resist the appropriation by the *technē*.<sup>34</sup> This attack (*Angriff*) of the Greek *technē* against the *phusis* doesn't yet indicate the exploitation of nature ("total mobilization"), as is the case today.<sup>35</sup> That which comes to presence from

<sup>32</sup> GA 16, p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> "φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φάσκει (Heraclitus, Fragment 22 B 123).

<sup>34</sup> cf. GA 9, p. 223.

<sup>35</sup> According to Lacoue-Labarthe, the 'Greek model' of the *technē* against the *phusis* is indeed the "truth of Nazism that was buried and that did not reveal itself (or did so only partially) but which was none the less active as such" (Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit., p. 102; cf. pp. 97–98).

<sup>30</sup> GA 16, pp. 108–109.

<sup>31</sup> GA 29/30, p. 49.

out of itself (*phusis*) is represented by Greek *techné* in order to prevent its regression into obscurity (concealment). Only through the *techné* are beings unveiled in their 'unfathomable inalterability'<sup>36</sup> and so made present and available as the unconcealed, i. e. the truth.

The appeal of today's science to the Greeks is secondly incorrect, according to Heidegger, because Greek theory is *praxis* per se. With this, we touch upon the second characteristic of the owmmost of Greek science. The theoretical reflection of science is not *opposed* to the *praxis*, but is considered the highest form of *energeia*, of the being-at-work of human being. For the Greeks, science is not a cultural asset next to other ways to take care of the world, such as the concern for our daily bread, but the owmmost of Greek science is precisely the fact that the philosophical question of being *permeates* human existence; human *Dasein* only *is* what it is on the basis of this questioning: "For the Greeks, science is not a 'cultural asset' but the innermost determining center of the whole of popular (*volklich*) and national (*staatlich*) existence. The Greeks thought science not merely a means of bringing the unconscious to consciousness, but the power that hones and encompasses all of existence."<sup>37</sup>

What, then, is the meaning of the owmmost of Greek science for us? The beginning of Greek philosophy lies now more than two millennia behind us and the sciences have steadily evolved over the centuries. What could the meaning of this beginning be for us today? The significance of this beginning is, according to Heidegger, that science can only become the innermost necessity for *us* again, if we submit to the distant command (*ferne Verfügung*) of the beginning, in order to catch up with the greatness of this beginning.

That does not mean, however, that today's science has to submit to the distant command of the Greeks and to ask about the whole of being and as such. Heidegger's appeal to Nietzsche's statement "God is Dead" in his Rectorial Address shows that the metaphysical question about the being of beings has vanished, that is, that exactly the owmmost of Greek science is the *foreign* for us.<sup>38</sup>

Although nowadays hardly anyone even asks about the being of beings, the beginning of thinking still *reigns*, according to Heidegger. The beginning concerns

<sup>36</sup> GA 16, p. 109.

<sup>37</sup> GA 16, p. 110.

<sup>38</sup> GA 16, p. 376. The meaning of the words of Aeschylus, that knowing (*techné*) is far weaker than necessity (*anagkè*), therefore does not offer a possibility of actualizing this saying. In a lecture given in 1941, Heidegger says about such sayings: "Die Übertragung soll den Spruch von uns weg und in das Befremdliche und Befremdende rücken und dort stehen lassen; denn auch die nachher versuchte Auslegung bemüht sich keineswegs darum, den Spruch uns zugänglich zu machen, ihn also auf unser Maß zurechtzuschneiden, sondern wir sollen uns erfahren als die von dem Spruch Ausschlossenen, als die Entfernten und endgültig Entfernten von dem, was der Spruch sagt, und was als solche Sage ist." See Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe*. GA 51 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981), p. 96.

the *phusis* and all representation – even today – is *against* this *phusis*. In what sense? In the introduction of this article, we distinguished between the understanding of being and the meaning of being. Representation (will to power) is *against* the meaning of being and therefore, the *Sinn von Sein (phusis)* is the distant command of the beginning of thought.

To what extent does this beginning of thinking still reign today? The technological character of the search for ways out of the *aporia* applies not only to the metaphysical notion of the whole of being and as such. The representations of modern science are an outgrowth of the owmmost of Greek science, because every representation consists in the presentation (*techné*) of the being of beings for thinking, regardless of whether this representation concerns the *techné* of Greek philosophy or the will to power of Nietzsche or the representation of modern science. This beginning of thinking still *reigns*, because the meaning of being (*phusis*) cannot be projected in a projection of thinking (*techné*, *representation*, *thesis*), while every philosophical projection (*techné*) *against* the *phusis* is motivated by this meaning of being.

The *submission* to this distant command is just the opposite of the revolt of Greek philosophy. The owmmost of Greek science (*techné*) is definitely *not* the confrontation (*Auseinandersetzung*) with the *phusis* but quite the opposite, namely a movement directed *against* the *phusis*. The beginning of thought is absorbed in the representation (*techné*) of the being of beings and has forgotten the self-withdrawing meaning of being (*phusis*). The *aporia* is therefore an experience that is laid-out to be *lifted* by representation, whereas Heidegger tries to dwell and stay in the neighborhood of the *phusis* itself. The experience of *phusis* or the meaning of being is the experience of an irremovable *concealment* that pervades our understanding and interaction with the world; what is at stake here is the experience of the twofold between the brightness of our understanding of being (unconcealment) and the darkness of the meaning of being (concealment).

This adherence to the experience that the meaning of being cannot be projected in a projection of thinking – an experience which has to be distinguished from the forgottenness of being of the first beginning – is brought in a close relationship with the *German* fate of science in Heidegger's Rectorial Address. This science does no longer consist in the representation (*techné*) of the being of beings for thinking. It is the "questioning, uncovered standing one's ground in the midst of the uncertainty of the whole of being," i. e., in the midst of the meaning of being that withdraws itself in handing over (*Geschick*) the understanding of being (*Seinsverständnis*), which determines the way the world appears to us (will to power) *and* the way we people understand and interact with the world (will to power).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> GA 16, p. 111.

Here it becomes clear that a transformation towards a new way of philosophical thought is at stake in Heidegger's Rectorial Address. This self-exposure-towards-the-sense-of-being is called the 'submission' to the 'distant command' (the meaning of being/*phusis*). This submission to the distant command calls for the destruction of *one's own* and the transformation of human existence (*Dasein*)<sup>40</sup> towards the "uncovered standing one's ground in the midst of the uncertainty of beings in a whole." In order to "regain the greatness of the beginning" and submit to the distant command, we have to expose ourselves to the concealed and uncertain, the meaning of being, and become sensitive to the handing over (*Geschick*) of the 'spiritual mission' (*Auftrag*) which bears (*tragen*) the way we understand and interact with the world. This mission is inevitable (*un-umgänglich*),<sup>41</sup> because it structures the way we understand and interact (*Umgang*) with the world around us.

According to Heidegger, this science has nothing to do with the present-day scientific disciplines. The *ownmost* of *German* science is that it takes the end of onto-theology into account and exposes itself to the meaning of being. This transition from the leading question about beings as such (metaphysics) towards the grounding question about being as such, is what is at stake in Heidegger's Rectorial Address.<sup>42</sup>

## II. The Naming of Being

Now that important aspects of the philosophical meaning of Heidegger's Rectorial Address have become clear, we can now ask whether the critical remark of Lacoue-Labarthe was to the point. Although we saw in the previous section that the transition from the leading question towards the grounding question of philosophy is what matters in Heidegger's Rectorial Address, and although we saw that the representation of beings in metaphysics *and* in modern science is seen as the *for-eign*, it is still possible that Heidegger's efforts to deconstruct *das Eigene* end up in a new thesis on being.

There is indeed some reason to think so. Heidegger's overcoming of the metaphysics of the will to power in his Rectorial Address makes use of the same terminology of will and power. Can we conclude therefore that Heidegger in his Rectorial Address re-introduces (Will to Power), that is, the opposite of what he claims to pass beyond (will to power), as Lacoue-Labarthe suggests? That Heidegger is focusing on the prevailing understanding of being (will to power), is demonstrated by the fact that he himself makes use of terms like will and power in his Rectorial

<sup>40</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, GA 69 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> GA 16, p. 111.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis)*, GA 65 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989–1994), pp. 73–77; GA 40, pp. 130–131.

Address. He is questioning the meaning or meanings of this ubiquitous relation between reality *as* represented (will to power) for thinking *as* representation (will to power). This does not necessarily mean, however, that his own way of thinking is blinded by this concept.

We find a first indication of this in Heidegger's destruction of the will in his Rectorial Address. There he says that the *will* of the *ownmost* of science requires from us, that we "place ourselves under the power of the *beginning* of our spiritual-historical existence."<sup>43</sup> In the previous section, it became clear what is meant by the *ownmost* of science and the beginning of our spiritual-historical existence. If Heidegger relates the will to this beginning, then this concept has to be destroyed. By its very nature the will is without a beginning,<sup>44</sup> because the will is only willing *itself* (power). Because of this self-interest of willing, the will is always already away from the beginning and therefore, away from any possible limitation of willing by this beginning. When Heidegger therefore says that the will of the *ownmost* of science requires from us that we place ourselves under the power of the beginning, then his concept of the will has to be destroyed and is only used in this destroyed way.<sup>45</sup>

Another example of Heidegger's destruction of the will can be found in a lecture on the will to power as art from 1936/37. Here Heidegger widens the meaning of the name "will" to the extent that the will actually does not want anything at all, but is the enduring of the twofold (*Dasein*).<sup>46</sup> Although in the Rectorial Address the notion of the will is destroyed, the question remains whether Heidegger's ambition to overcome the metaphysics of the will to power (forgottenness of being) is distorted by the very will itself. The text of the Rectorial Address shows an undecidedness: On the one hand, the text is formulated in terms of will and power, on the other hand, it intends the destruction of these concepts. The meaning of this undecidedness becomes clear when we look in more detail at the text of the Rectorial Address.

Heidegger says here that *willing* the *ownmost* of transformed – German – science is *dangerous* for human existence. This willing indeed calls for a transformation of human existence, as we saw in the previous section, i.e. saying goodbye to the *certainty* of the representing subject and to the presupposed *continuity* between being and thinking (*Seinsverständnis*) in order to *expose* human existence to what it encounters: the twofold between the understanding of being and the

<sup>43</sup> GA 16, 108.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. GA 69, pp. 73–74.

<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere I have argued that Heidegger in the beginning of the thirties didn't embrace the will in a non-critical manner, as interpreters like Jacques Derrida and Brett Davis suggest, but that his position is due to his phenomenological destruction of the concept of the will.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, GA 6.1 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996), p. 41.



meaning of being. This is called "the spiritual world." The word spirit is not used by Heidegger in order to introduce a *spiritual* form of National Socialism, as an alternative to the biologically-oriented National Socialism of Hitler and his comrades.<sup>47</sup> Spirit is the confrontation with the *phusis*, is "the primordial attuned, knowing resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) toward the ownmost of being."<sup>48</sup>

The ambiguity of the Rectorial Address shows itself in the name *Entschlossenheit*, which means resoluteness and refers to the resoluteness of the *will* to embody the ownmost of science as "world-shaping power."<sup>49</sup> Literally however, *Entschlossenheit* means *Ent-schlossenheit* or dis-closedness, i. e. precisely not will to power but the self-exposure-towards-the-sense-of-being.<sup>50</sup> Heidegger speaks of an *attuned dis-closedness*, because the meaning of being cannot be projected in a projection of thinking, while all projections are *moved* by this meaning of being, namely *against* the *phusis* (cf. § 2). Therefore, even though Heidegger repeatedly uses terms like will and power in his Rectorial Address, this 'willing' of the spiritual world means, on the contrary, the permanent *exposure* to the meaning of being.

The will of the spiritual world is the confrontation with the *phusis* or the meaning of being, and the "forces that are bound up with the earth and with blood", of which Heidegger speaks in this context, point at this *phusis*-character of the meaning of being. However much Heidegger's nostalgic descriptions of farms and farmers in the Black Forest awake our romantic yearning for the pre-industrial era, and however much this seems to be consistent with the Nazi propaganda of that time,<sup>51</sup> the *erd- und bluthafte Kräfte* of which Heidegger speaks have nothing to do with the *Blut und Boden* mentality of the National Socialists; they point at the *phusis*-character of the meaning of being.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> "But, on the other hand, by taking the risk of spiritualizing nazism, he might have been trying to absolve or save it by marking it with this affirmation (spirituality, science, questioning, etc.). By the same token, this sets apart Heidegger's commitment and breaks an affiliation. This address seems no longer to belong simply to the 'ideological' camp in which one appeals to obscure forces – forces which would not be spiritual, but natural, biological, racial, according to an anything but spiritual interpretation of 'earth and blood.'" See Jacques Derrida, *De l'esprit* (Paris: Editions Gallée, 1987); *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington, and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 39).

<sup>48</sup> GA 16, p. 112.

<sup>49</sup> GA 16, 113.

<sup>50</sup> GA 6.1, p. 49.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Michael Zimmermann, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity. Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), pp. 69–76.

<sup>52</sup> I cannot deny that it is sometimes difficult to relate Heidegger's writings of that period to the *phusis*-character of the meaning of being, for example: "... wissen, was die künftige Gesundheit des Volkskörpers bedeutet und was sie von jedem Einzelnen verlangt" (GA 16, p. 233).

The ambiguity of the Rectorial Address shows itself in the *names* used in this speech: will, *Entschlossenheit*, etc. This brings us to Heidegger's concept of language in the thirties. His concept of language is in at least two respects distinguished from traditional concepts of language.<sup>53</sup> First of all, the ownmost of language does not primarily consist in making *assertions* (*Aussagen*) about beings in the world, but in naming. Heidegger speaks about the "naming force of language and words."<sup>54</sup> The primary function of names consists in their demonstrative function; names show something.<sup>55</sup> "Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. This naming nominates beings to their being *from out* of that being. Such saying is a projecting-opening of the clearing wherein announcement is made as (*als was*) what beings will come into the open."<sup>56</sup> In language, in names, a meaningful world is articulated. An example of such naming is the name 'will to power', in whose light our world appears as represented (will to power) to thinking as representation (will to power).

With this demonstrative function of names it becomes clear, in the second place, that language is not understood as an *instrument* which is in control of human existence: "Human being does not have a language – but conversely, language 'have' human being, i. e. he 'is' only the one who he is (i. e. exposed amidst the disclosed beings) on the ground of language."<sup>57</sup> The example of the will to power shows that human being is involved (*einbegriffen*) in this meaningful world, in which the will to power structures the way we understand and interact with the world around us (will to power).

With the undecidedness of the Rectorial Address, which shows itself in the ambiguity of the names used in this speech, the meaning of the *German fate* of science becomes clear, the handing over (*Schickung*) of the way the world appear to us and the way we people understand the world concerns the meaning of

<sup>53</sup> See for Heidegger on language the study of Joseph Kockelmans, *On Heidegger and Language* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP 1972) and more recently Gert-Jan van der Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language: Heidegger, Ricoeur and Derrida on Disclosure and Displacement* (Chicago: Duquesne UP, 2010). For a critical assessment of the development of Heidegger's philosophy of language as naming, see Dieter Thomä, "The name on the edge of language: a complication in Heidegger's theory of language and its consequences". In: R. Polt, G. Fried (ed.), *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), pp. 103–122.

<sup>54</sup> GA 40, p. 16; cf. p. 108, 180–181.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. "Das Wesen der Sprache besteht vielmehr darin, dass in ihr sich der Mensch überhaupt erst hinauswagt in das Seiende – in ihr geschieht die ursprüngliche Enthüllung und Offenbarung des Seins –; die Sprache ist nicht erst der nachträgliche Ausdruck dieser Enthüllung der Dinge, sondern dieses Enthüllens selbst" (GA 16, p. 329–330). The Greeks already knew that names primarily show something (deleiben) (cf. GA 9, p. 279).

<sup>56</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, GA 5 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> GA 16, p. 330–331.

German names.<sup>58</sup> These names “are not just shells into which things are packed for spoken and written intercourse.”<sup>59</sup> On the contrary, the names of my mother’s language are my nation, my native ground.<sup>60</sup>

With this, it also becomes clear why Heidegger makes use of “common language” of the thirties such as “*Kampf*,” “*Wille*” and “*Macht*” in his Rectorial Address.<sup>61</sup> For common language responds (*Entsprechen*) to the claim of language (spiritual mission), i.e. the will to power. At the same time, common language raises a claim concerning the transformation of human existence, as Heidegger’s destructured concepts of the will and resoluteness as the enduring of the twofold has shown. The methodological meaning of language is that the point of departure for the transformation of human existence is found in the ambiguity of the names, and consist in the response (*Entsprechen*) to the claim (*Anspruch*) of these names.

This claim of language shows itself in the Rectorial Address, for instance in the “Vorrücken” and “Standhalten” in the “outermost post, endangered by constant uncertainty about the world”, which we need if we are *willing* the ownmost of science.<sup>62</sup> This standing one’s ground (*Standhalten*) is called self-assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*) in the Rectorial Address. Normally we understand this word as ‘keeping up’ and in this way as the assertion of the self. We can understand this name from out of the will to power, namely as the self-preservation and self-enhancement of the will to power. Just like the name *Entschlossenheit*, however, self-assertion can also be understood in a non-willing sense, namely as “sticking one’s head (*Haupt*) into the wind” and in this sense, the exposure to the meaning of being that withdraws itself in handing over (*Geschick*) the identity or ‘self’ of man and things.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> “Das Wesen der Sprache besteht vielmehr darin, dass in ihr sich der Mensch überhaupt erst hinauswagt in das Seiende – in ihr geschieht die ursprüngliche Enthüllung und Offenbarung des Seins –; die Sprache ist nicht erst der nachträgliche Ausdruck dieser Enthüllung der Dinge, sondern dieses Enthüllens selbst” (GA 16, pp. 329–330). The question remains whether this relation is different in the German language, when we compare it for instance with the Dutch or French language (cf. Thomas Sheehan, “Heidegger and the Nazis”, *The New York Review* 16-6 (1988), p. 44; Derrida, *Of Spirit*, Heidegger and the Question, op.cit. pp. 82–83).

<sup>59</sup> GA 40, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> Wouter Oudemans, *Omeria* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> That Heidegger’s way of philosophical thinking not only in the twenties but also in the thirties makes use of common language, becomes for example clear in his lecture about *Die gegenwärtige Lage und die künftige Aufgabe der deutschen Philosophie*, 30 November 1934. Also here “einen geläufigen Sprachgebrauch” builds the point of departure for Heidegger’s reflection on the ownmost of history (GA 16, p. 321).

<sup>62</sup> GA 16, p. 112.

<sup>63</sup> This *other side* of the names *Selbstbehauptung*, *Entschlossenheit* etc. is overlooked completely by Lacoue-Labarthe, when he conceives the meaning of the Rectorial Address out of a “model of self-formation” (cf. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, op.cit. p. 79).

That this meaning of the name *Selbstbehauptung* is not artificial but really resonates in the Rectorial Address, is shown by the fact that Heidegger uses this word in relation with the word *Führerschaft*. As we have already seen in the first section, the leading of the leader concerns the spiritual mission, which articulates the way the world appears and the way we understand and interact with the world. The leader is leader only thanks to the *exposure* to the claim of the spiritual mission, which determines the way we understand and interact with the world, and this is self-assertion in the meanings we have just discussed. Being-led (*führen-lassen*) by a spiritual mission is not opposed to the representation of being (will to power), but endures the twofold between the understanding of being (will to power) and the meaning of being. That the leader is in the lead has therefore nothing to do with thirst for power, but with the *binding* character of the spiritual mission, which leads the leader; as such, the leader *responds* to the spiritual mission. The methodological meaning of the undecidedness or ambiguity of Heidegger’s language in the Rectorial Address not only makes clear that his use of National Socialist names does not mean that he embraces “the most extreme principles of Hitlerism” (contra Faye), but the undecidedness of the names in the Rectorial Address – Will, *Entschlossenheit*, *Selbstbehauptung* etc. – also raises a claim concerning the transformation of human existence.

Heidegger obviously saw in the rise of Hitler the moment at which the transition towards the other beginning could take place.<sup>64</sup> In the thirties, Heidegger thought that Adolf Hitler was a leader in the meaning just discussed.<sup>65</sup> According to Heidegger, this leader was not on the way to conquer Europe and destroy the Jews, but exposed himself to the spiritual mission and was in this meaning the personification of the German fate. Heidegger speaks in this respect about ‘world-shaping powers’, i.e. the shaping of the world and the human habitation of this world in the light of this new way of human existence. Hitler’s National Socialist revolution is seen here as exemplary for the transition Heidegger is calling for, and also the university should contribute to the “pedagogical will”<sup>66</sup> of the National Socialists, i.e. to the transformation from subject towards *Dasein*.<sup>67</sup> In this sense, “*The Self-assertion of the German University*” claims the National Socialist revolution of the German university.<sup>68</sup> Because it is clear, however, that this transformation of

<sup>64</sup> “Die nationalsozialistische Revolution ist nicht bloß die Übernahme einer vorhandenen Macht im Staat durch eine andere dazu hinreichend angewachsene Partei, sondern diese Revolution bringt die völlige Umwälzung unseres deutschen Daseins” (GA 16, pp. 327–328; cf. p. 192).

<sup>65</sup> “Adolf Hitler, unser großer Führer und Kanzler, hat durch die nationalsozialistische Revolution einen neuen Staat geschaffen, durch den das Volk sich wieder eine Dauer und Stetigkeit seiner Geschichte sichern soll” (GA 16, p. 151); “Der Führer selbst und allein ist die heutige und künftige deutsche Wirklichkeit und ihr Gesetz” (GA 16, p. 184).

<sup>66</sup> GA 16, p. 224; cf. pp. 96, 240.

<sup>67</sup> GA 16, p. 169.

<sup>68</sup> GA 16, p. 136; cf. pp. 790–791.

human existence didn't take place and that the will to power has become *ubiquitous* in our totally mobilized world, in this article we leave the question about the specific character of these world-shaping powers and the contribution of the universality to these powers aside.

Much more important for the question posed in this article are the indications of Heidegger's concept of 'philosophy' that we find here. Based on the undecidedness or ambiguity of language in his Rectorial Address, we can conclude that Heidegger is not indulging in philosophy by means of a thesis on being. Although the Rectorial Address consists of theses, the philosophical meaning of this speech does not lie in these theses but in the undecidedness of the names that underlie each thesis. On the one hand, these names articulate the way the world we live in appears and is understood by us (will to power). On the other hand, Heidegger's 'philosophy' is solely responding to the possible claim concerning the transformation of human existence within these names. The philosophical meaning of the Rectorial Address is that nothing is stated or asserted in his speech (thesis); Heidegger attempts to respond to the claim of the names – *das Entsprechen der Anspruch der Sprache* – which precedes every thesis but is itself not a thesis and cannot be discussed as a thesis (contra Lacoue-Labarthe). Why not?

Heidegger says that "the question about *being* will be most intimately intertwined with the question about *language* for us."<sup>69</sup> As we have seen, being concerns the twofold between the understanding of being (unconcealment) and the meaning of being (concealment). If the question about being is intertwined with the question about language and Heidegger remarks that every saying of being is kept in words and naming,<sup>70</sup> then also language has to be characterized by this twofold. The twofoldness of language consist in the fact that naming articulates a pregnant meaning of a word (unconcealment) which stays surrounded by its concealed horizon of meaning; this twofold of the understanding of being and the meaning of being is shown by names such as *Wille, Entschlossenheit, Selbstbehauptung* etc. in this section; the destruction of the actual meaning of these names and the response (*Entsprechen*) to the claim (*Anspruch*) of these names. This response is far from producing a new philosophy, because in following the claim of language, the twofold of language is not given up but preserves the clearing of self-concealment (contra Lacoue-Labarthe)<sup>71</sup>. It is in this respect that Heidegger can claim that language, i. e. naming, is "the original resonance of the truth of a world."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> GA 40, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> GA 65, p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> Even if Heidegger makes use of the term thesis on his own account in the *Origin of the Work of Art*, it is clear that this thesis is not a projection of being: thesis is understood here out of the truth as unconcealment, out of the clearing of self-concealment (cf. GA 5, pp. 70–72).

<sup>72</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung im abendländischen Denken*, GA 44 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann 1986), p. 110. In this article, we cannot

### III. Philosophical Empiricism

Heidegger recognized in Hitler's rise to power an event through which the transition to the *other* beginning could take place. Later on he realized that the rise of Hitler could not be associated with such a transition. With reference to a quote from Hitler from 1939, where he says that the ultimate justification of human behavior can be found in the "benefit for the whole" that results from it, Heidegger asks whether "the questionableness of the ownmost of human being with regard to his concealed relation to being (*Seyn*)" is not renounced completely here. "Is not man beforehand and ultimately tied here to the pursuit and control of beings in the abandonment by being?"<sup>73</sup> Hitler will never seriously question who we ourselves are. He understands human being self-evidently as the working animal (*arbeitende Tier*) that is absorbed in the *Kampf um die Erdherrschaft*.<sup>74</sup> In later attempts, therefore, Heidegger doesn't claim anymore that the other beginning has already started, but that the response to the claim of the spiritual mission is up to the "thinker that comes."<sup>75</sup>

What matters to us, however, is not to blame Heidegger for his error with regard to Hitler. Instead of asking for apologies, our question should be whether the possibility of mistakes belongs to philosophical empiricism. If philosophical thinking is led by the claim (*Anspruch*) of names, then a mistake with regard to this claim is very well possible, that is, that the name does *not* have a claim on us.<sup>76</sup> The philosophical test consist in the question whether these names are really able to determine and mark my human existence.<sup>77</sup> If we examine the Rectorial Address in this

further elaborate on Heidegger's understanding of the ownmost of language, and we must restrict ourselves to the given indications in the essays of 1933–1935. For Heidegger's conception of the ownmost of language in his *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and the consequences of this conception for our reading of Heidegger's work, see Parvis Emad, *On the Way to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung*, GA 66 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann 1997), p. 123.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Bernhard Radloff, *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 296–297.

<sup>75</sup> GA 66, p. 41; cf. pp. 40–42, 57, 61.

<sup>76</sup> With this, we touch on the question whether names can be true or false. According to the traditional viewpoint, only a proposition can claim to be true or false. The meaning of names is established by convention, but cannot claim to be true or false (Aristotle, *Peri Hermeneia*, 16a20–21). With the question about the possibility of making mistakes with regard to names, we enter the discussion about this issue in Plato's Cratylus, according to which names can indeed be true or false. A further discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, just as is the allegedly Cratylist inspiration of Heidegger's concept of language (cf. Christopher Eagle, "Right Names: On Heidegger's Closet Cratylism", *Epoché* (2009), pp. 57–75; Dieter Thomä, "The Name on the Edge of Language: A Complication in Heidegger's Theory of Language and Its Consequences," op.cit.).

<sup>77</sup> "Wir können es überprüfen, indem wir nachforschen, ob wir in Mitsprache des eben Ausgesprochenen sagen könnten: 'Ja, so will ich es. Ich will mich den Forderungen unter-

way, we cannot but conclude that the claim of this lecture remains unfulfilled. There was no other handing over (*Schickung*) of being in which human existence is articulated in a new way.

Rather, we must conclude that both the speeches of Hitler and Heidegger in the thirties responded to the claim of the will to power. The Will to Power characterizes the understanding of being of Hitler, when he speaks about the 'benefit for the whole', and of Heidegger, when he speaks about the will to the spiritual mission. Heidegger discusses the *response* to the spiritual mission in terms of will and power. Later on he realized that the will is essentially bound up with human existence as subject, and therefore the 'will' to the spiritual mission *prevents* the *exposure* to the spiritual mission. As Heidegger came to realize this, he dropped the terminology of will and power altogether. Since then he only speaks about "willing of the non-willing," to indicate the exposure to the twofold of the understanding of being and the meaning of being.<sup>78</sup>

Just as it belongs to philosophical empiricism that names do not have a claim on us and are mistakenly responded to, however, it belongs to the same philosophical empiricism to keep the possibility open of such a claim for the "thinker to come." This brings us back to the undecidedness of the names in the Rectorial Address. The examples have made clear that the names in the Rectorial Address can be read in two distinct directions, namely in the direction of the will to power of the subject on the one hand, and in the direction of the exposure to the spiritual mission on the other. There is an ambiguity in the Rectorial Address which is grounded in the undecidedness of the question who we ourselves are. We have to admit that names such as "German" and "people" have nothing to say to us. But it is unempirical to conclude that these names will *never* speak, will never be able to determine the way we understand and interact with the world. The meaning of this undecidedness for our philosophical thinking is that we are possibly waiting for a name which still has to come.\*

stellen, mich fügen in die Macht eines Willens, mit Willen mitstehn'. Wir könnten uns prüfen, ob wir das wollen oder ob wir 'nein' sagten oder ob wir gestehen müssten, dass wir weder das Ja noch das Nein vollziehen, sondern nur hierhergeraten sind und uns mitreihen lassen." See Martin Heidegger, *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998), p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> A further elaboration of Heidegger's confrontation with the will is beyond the scope of this article (cf. Bret Davis, *Heidegger and the Will. On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2007)).

\* This essay owes much to the inspiring discussions about the Rectorial Address that the author was fortunate to have with Th. C. W. Oudemans.

### III. Essays in Interpretation

George Kovacs

The Revolution of Thinking in Heidegger's *Seminare: Hegel-Schelling* (1927-1957), and Its Implications for the Study of His Thought ..... 215

Bogdan Mincă

Die Übersetzung von Heideggers *Vorträge und Aufsätze* ins Rumänische als ein philosophisches Gespräch mit drei anderen Sprachen (Deutsch, Latein, Griechisch) ..... 237

### IV. Update on the *Gesamtausgabe*

249

### V. Errata and Omissions in Recent English Translations of the *Gesamtausgabe*

265

### Addresses of Contributors

269