

Seven Words

Writers especially, then readers, hear not only the immediate contours of words but also their undertones and overtones — temporal layers of meaning bequeathed by the works of literary tradition and also present in daily talk of the age. They also move within peripheral hearing: in a work, each word resonates with other words, so that each has a coterie of cohorts, phonetic as well as semantic. Readers especially will always be hearing in the words of the moment responses to those in works not only preceding but also succeeding the work presently in progress — and must often struggle to disentangle the narrations to maintain the integrity, the genuine multiplicity of the foci in motion, rather than letting the conversation collapse into a stagnating hubbub.

Writers then form their works as much out of the overtones and overtones, and out of lateral meanings, as out of the words themselves, i.e. artificially isolated from their companions. It is precisely the interplay of their cohorts that allows words to intertwine to form a smooth fabric for calling attention to what they are about — the subject of the work — rather than only to themselves. The cohorts may not suffice to do the job, although they may come close, as in haiku and many terse utterances of daily talk. For each language also brings along inherited expectations of sequence, rhythm, and trope, all of which figure in the interplays essential to inciting attention to the subject — or, failing that, to themselves only. And writers distinguish their works partly by their manner of conforming to and deviating from these expectations.

After talking with a publisher expressing interest in my translation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, I finally undertook and quickly executed a plan I had been thinking about for a decade or more: a commentary on my choices for translating a number of words in the text.

I again found very helpful, even indispensable, the complete index of words: *Handbuch zum Textstudium von Martin Heidegger's 'Sein und Zeit'* by Rainer A Bast and Heinrich P. Delfosse (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1979).

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*Mostly, I corrected typographical errors. However, under *Bewandtnis*, I accounted for the fact that I originally translated the term with a neologism (evolvment) but have since tried “dynamic context” and “being bound up with.”

Any great work, one bequeathing as much as inheriting, comes with a personality distinctly its own — all according to the successful way it configures and converges its interplays. And its personality perennially changes as it grows older and interacts with subsequent works — those by other authors as well. Thus Heidegger's first monumental work appears differently as it has gotten overlaid, and will continue to be overlaid, by subsequent re-envisionings of its subject.

A translation even more so. Whichever word of my native tongue I choose for one in the foreign tongue, it will resonate differently among its own cohorts and with the tradition conveyed by this second language. Immediately, the translated work presents a personality of its own — as competent readers of both versions will easily notice. Who has ever read, competently, a work by Aristotle, first in a translation and then in the original, and not been transported through a looking glass into a region in may respects inverted? In the course of the ages, originals and their translations become ever more distant cousins.

Does that mean a translation necessarily counteracts the original? You may cite the familiar Italian answer in the affirmative: *traduttore, traditore* — an example of a resonance that does not quite come off in English: “translator, traitor.” But, in obvious self-interest, I say it is the *reader* who is more than likely the traitor, the one who would betray the text in whatever tongue it appears. A translation is, like the original, *up against* what the text is about, and readers betray it so long as they fail to address themselves to what it is up against.

Reader, whether you read *Sein und Zeit* or some version of *Being and Time* — read either one actually, fruitfully — you are going to have to labor hard in the field to get it to bear the fruits essential to it, rather than just weeds. You are going to have to get it to work — exactly, exactingly, as performers and conductors must get their scores to work. And you may fail — likely will — at first rehearsal. As we all have — all who have taken upon

themselves decisive works with the intent to retain them as insightful rather than to glean them for leftover opinions.

Like anything that must be performed, translations too can be good, bad or middling. Good if readers can and sometimes do find a way through them to what they are about, bad if they cannot or do not, middling if they allow readers to start going but leave them stranded part way on the journey (which the best readers will not mind: grateful for the head start, they will forge ahead by themselves, perhaps recurring to the original).

Every translation being a reading, an interpretation in the musical sense, there will always be new ones of those works that both inherit and bequeath. For these always change, requiring new readings. That is, each sends us back to the origin, if not to the original text intending to focus us on the origin. And, in keeping with the original, each successful translation will have its own personality.

For my own translation I chose not to call attention to the German underlying the English — not ever. An exercise in taking responsibility for my own rendition. Instead, I prepared an analytic index that for a large number of the English words, where I do record the German and which, more importantly most frequently cites the sentences in which the words occur, thereby putting them to work.

But it may also prove instructive to discuss some of them. A bit of shoptalk, as it were. A number came to mind as I was preparing the translation. Here are seven, starting with the shortest.

je
jeweils, jeweilig, Jemeinigkeit

Speaking of the price of a bunch of things, a clerk may tell you, “10 ¢ each,” and an exercise in arithmetic tells you the cost of the bunch. Similarly, we can talk about the dogs in a kennel *one at a time* (the breed of each), as opposed to talking about them as

a whole (the noise they are making). In contrast, we sometimes intend to speak about *everything of a kind*, and all at once: the total price, the nature of sound transmission, the nature of dogs as distinct from wolves.

The word occurs 403 times in *Sein und Zeit*, and I have generally translated it as “in each instance.” It first occurs on p 2: everyone supposedly uses the concept of being, and *in each instance* already understands what he means by it. It occurs again on p. 3, in the translation of Thomas Aquinas’ Latin: an understanding of being is already included *in each instance* of comprehending something. In neither case is there a *general* understanding. And the third occurrence, on p. 4, underscores the task of Heidegger’s own work: the fact that, *in each instance* of determining how things are (the sky *is* blue, I *am* happy) we are already living within an understanding of being, while the *sense* of being remains obscure, demonstrates the basic necessity of recovering the question of this sense.

The seventh and eighth occurrences (on p. 7) introduce the thematic employment of the word. Concerned to choose and understand what we should contemplate while raising the question of the sense of being, we might pause to notice that this very concern suggests where might profitably start: we should first examine the being that each of us *in each instance* is. For your and I have already dared to stick out.

Yet, as we turn toward this one being that protrudes already, we likely bring along elements of our long tradition already interpreting this effort: that of Socrates, Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and finally 20th-Century psychologists. To free ourselves of the leftovers from these efforts (perhaps to recover their original power), we might turn to how we are *situated* — already (in each instance!) engaged with things and other people within a situation prior to, cleansed of, these inherited overlays.

So Heidegger’s work asks me and you to contemplate the situation in which we find ourselves — in each instance our situatedness: I mine, you yours. Not, then, our situation apart from ourselves, and not situations in general. Or not right away: one of the tasks of contemplating my own situation is to discover, to uncover, how this one situation might engender the concern for the whole — its own whole, and then also the whole inclusive of yours, his, hers, theirs; past, present and future. And how this initial situatedness might invite two versions of such wholeness: the one apart from and the other inclusive of myself as engaged in the contemplation.

Yet... here we are reading someone telling us that we have to look not just for ourselves (every philosophical work asks this of us) but at our own situation, and he will tell us already what we are going to find. How can an author do this without already assuming a universality of, in this case, “situatedness”? Shouldn’t an author rather just tell us what he or she finds, and leave it to us to find and tell our own?

An ancient principle of education is that learning takes place as the learner concentrates on one instance, fathoming it until it reveals the universal. Perhaps one puppy to take care of for a while — or one city, one lover, one geometric figure. Guidance is possible, but the individual must engage willingly in the learning process; the teacher (or, as one used to say, the master) imparts nothing of great significance, but directs the attention of the learner — always toward the one instance, whereupon, with luck, the learner passes on to the holistic import of the one instance and thereby comes to know instances in general. — This principle contrasts strikingly with today’s academia, built as it is on the Enlightenment understanding of knowledge as accumulative and heritable precisely because placing us in an intellectual realm where instances are incidental illustrations of the idea. This understanding of knowledge corresponds to the dominant understanding of being propagated by our universities.

We might then understand *Being and Time* as providing guidance of the sort provided anciently by Plato's and Aristotle's works (and still recalled in much later works) — with the important difference that the instance at issue for each reader is his or her own situatedness (“being in a world,” Heidegger says — reserving “situation” for this location revealed at moments when we take finally take full responsibility for it). Guidance, that is, for the reader's uncovering of how and where he or she is. Unlike the guidance provided by a good proof in physics, which will always require demonstrations transcending what lies under our noses — because what's at issue not only transcends any one instance but also transcends our own situatedness (although Werner Heisenberg's account of quantum theory tantalizes).

It will hardly escape my reader's notice that much literature (novels, epics, poems, stage plays, meditative autobiographies) also provide guidance in the uncovering of instances of situatedness — and thereby also contrast with the arm's-length discourses of modern science. Yet such literature is much kinder than *Being and Time*: it cheerfully allows us to believe the discourse, along with its uncovering, belongs to another.

Finally, there are the cousins and progeny of this one word. The adverbial *jeweils* (32 occurrences) resonates with time: being is *every single time* the being of some determinate thing (every time the term is used; p. 9). The adjective *jeweilig* (98 occurrences) could often be translated simply as “each” (or “respective”: the basic principles of *each* discipline; p. 9) but often suggests the stronger sense of “in each instance” (highlighting one aspect of something requires, *in each instance*, that we look to the whole phenomenon; p. 53).

And, awkwardest of all, there's the noun Heidegger compounds out of *je*, obtaining what I have translated as *instantial mineness* on pp. 53 and 240: *Jemeinigkeit* occurs only five times, and for the three times it occurs on pp. 42 and 43 I have translated it more fluently, e.g. [*its character*] *as in each case mine*

(instead of “its character of instantial mineness”). Along with the facility of the German language to compound sentences with qualifying clauses, this facility to compound words works better in German than in French, Italian or English. Still, a noun suggests a focal point rather than a way to configure our own focalizing, as do adverbs and adjectives. These compounds do serve a purpose.

In logical terms, all these occurrences, whether of *je*, *jeweils*, *jeweilig*, or *Jemeinigkeit*, intend “distributive” rather than “collective” discernment of how and where each of us is. And especially discernment of what is distinctively one's own — as distinct from what's second-hand — things only heard about from others, who often pass on traditional views of our situatedness — and also from what's inferred or surmised. And such discernment may have to be engendered: Heidegger suggests that only my mortality brings “instantial mineness” home to me: not, or not entirely, a book written by another.

man

das Man

The second sentence of Heidegger's Introduction says that, nowadays (by the 1920s) *one* considers oneself absolved from the arduous task of kindling anew the ancient battle over the question of being. In English we would rather avoid this impersonal construction, especially in its reflexive form, and say rather something like “there's the general conviction that the question is superfluous.” But German-speakers routinely say *man*, just as French-speakers say *on*: it's a convenient way of talking about things happening without having to specify the human agency. In fact, educated speakers of English often resort to it for simple phrasing: “At this point one might say . . .” (avoiding the more personal “you” or “I,” the longer “someone” and the awkward passive voice “it might be said”).

It is perhaps in adolescence that one first discovers intuitively what Heidegger's work asks us to uncover thematically: that, for the most part, agency (if such it might be called, by analogy) belongs to the human dimension of our situation — that, paradoxically, you and I who now agree to consider, as individual agents, the basics of our situatedness *prior* to our meditative exercise, are, in this prior condition, primarily immersed in an *anonymity* of agency. There are already ways of doing things, thinking things, wanting things, feeling things: these govern our situation, define our role in it, allow us to commune with others and to discover things along with others. In adolescence this prior condition of agency affronts the nascent sense of our own individuality, and we speak — at least I and my cohorts at the time did speak — of “society” or “they” (family, teachers, neighbors, policemen) as pressuring us to conform (in our dress, our manners, our ambitions, even our feelings). In contrast, now individuated to the point where we can undertake the task of considering freshly our essentially unfresh situation, you and I might be able to appreciate its positive aspects. First, it assures that we are already engaged with others, even on the proverbial desert island, so that our task is not primarily to gain access to others (as those aspire to do whose meditations lead them to withdraw into what they think of as their private world). And, secondly, it reminds us of the recurrent task of earning our own agency, our own insight, even our own name: of taking our situation as our own rather than as simply foisted off on us.

I have then translated the German word with the English impersonal “one” — even though its lineage is very nearly the opposite of the German and French, both of which draw upon the generic sense of the Latin *homo* (Dante's Italian, long preceding the study of human being all by itself, employs *uomo* impersonally as well). In decided contrast, our English “one” stems from its use as a grammatical number: a demonstrative one as distinct from an indefinite plurality.

The word occurs 233 times in all, 75 times in its colloquial sense prior to its thematic usage. So long as it serves as a pronoun there's nothing misleading about the English term, although often an English variant is smoother. But of course Heidegger makes a noun out of it, complete with its definite article: *das Man*. Which then translates as “the one” — a phrasing that undercuts the indefiniteness of the original. An acquaintance of mine, a Plato scholar, found this translation offensive for another reason: in Greek philosophy the concern for τὸ ἓν, “the one,” aims for definite unity substantiating otherwise disparate plurality — it names what the intellectually adroit among us strive to achieve, not our condition prior to such development. I can imagine, too, that the translation might offend readers of Kierkegaard, whose sense of “the one” is precisely that of the individual who has extracted himself or herself from the “the crowd” — and may therefore be able to read meditative works such as his own. Socrates already said it in answer to the question, To whom we might wisely lend our ears? — not to the many (the bearer of generally accepted opinions about healthy decisions, healthy bodies and healthy cities), but to the one (who knows these things).

The advantage of my translation over others is that it retains the resonance of the verbal and the substantive formulations in the original. “We enjoy things, take pleasure in them, the way *one* enjoys; we read, see and judge regarding literature and art the way *one* sees and judges; then too we pull ourselves out from “the masses” the way *one* pulls oneself out; we get indignant the way *one* gets indignant. The one, which is nothing determinate and which all are, although not as a sum, prescribes the manner in which everydayness is.” So too the way one writes English sentences, the way one separates one's trash for recycling. The adolescent “they” resonates with divisiveness, even a call to arms; the impersonal “one” resonates rather with a basically comfortable unity.

One must choose one's resonances. In the present instance I myself would like to emphasize one strain of thinking in *Being and Time*: that "the one" provides the platform, the "default" condition (as one can say nowadays, recalling computer programs), or the "material cause" (as those who have studied Aristotle carefully can say), for all further developments of human agency, and especially those various developments leading to various insights of the sort answering to the question of being.

Intimate cousins of "the one" (descended, as it were, by the distaff) is a family of terms I translate with the Latin-based English verb "collapse": *verfallen* (infinitive and past participle), *verfallend* (present participle), *Verfallen* (substantive), *Verfallenheit* and *Verfallensein* (abstract nouns), *Verfall* (once, in a commentary), *Fall* (as in "fall from grace"), *fallen* and *Fallen* (verb and noun easily transliterated as "falling"). If you insist on keeping the root throughout, you can translate all these words with slight variations on "falling": one sort of resonance. However, with the prefixed versions Heidegger is asking us to see something about our condition that the unprefix versions do not address: namely, that at any given (ordinary) moment, our condition is quietly imploded — functional, all too functional, but not fully open to the occasion (on automatic pilot, as it were). Judged at moments when we might hope for more, and especially when a crisis looms, the situation appears as an old building that has not been properly maintained: it's collapsed (*verfallen*). Then, too, we can now see it *is* collapsing: while it may occasion despair, such insight may also occasion inspiration. Indeed, Heidegger's point of the diagnosis is to suggest it is time — it is *always* time — for an overhaul (and, incidentally, you may here detect a basic meaning for temporality). So we end up contemplating at length what I translate as "collapsedness": something differing considerably from personal lapses of faith or decorum, and having nothing to do with Eve.

Gerede

Rede

The past participle of *reden*, talking, is *geredet*, which then easily (in German) serves to form a noun: *das Geredete*, "what's (been) talked about already." Heidegger asks us to see in our condition the essential prevalence of "rehashing," as we say in colloquial English. He then borrows a familiar word in his own language, *Gerede*, to name this prevalence. To retain the resonances I translate the German as "re-talk." The "re-" parallels the German prefix in emphasizing the temporality at issue.

The first difficulty for the reader, however, is to learn the prevalence of talk itself: not just the fact that most people talk (talk then as an obvious feature of most situations), but talk as an *a priori* condition evident, upon careful examination, throughout every situation and allowing such other obvious phenomena as sharing circumstances, paying attention to others, analyzing proposals, reading and writing, solitary thinking (reviewing and planning) — then too the frustrations and failures of all these. A world (start by concentrating on sub-worlds, like those of tending to a household, working in an office complex, camping out in the woods, repairing machinery, visiting relatives in a hospital) *is* as an articulated whole (sub-worlds have fuzzy borders because they spill over into other worlds). Articulated = assembled, flexible at the joints, functional but also breakable. Heidegger call this *a priori* condition *Rede*, which recalls the kind of talk one gives at a conference, except that here the writer and the listener aims either for entertainment or instruction, and often criticism of the way others have re-assembled familiar facts and manners of expression.

Once we see that and (to some extent) how talk prevails as an enabling condition, we can see how it easily loses its roots while yet continuing to carry us along. We find ourselves saying and writing the same thing, then also hearing and reading the

same thing — discovering perhaps that we are distorting what others are proposing (positively or negatively), even faulting others for not proposing the “right” (i.e., same) things. Indeed, knowing something often means being able to re-say it. If knowledge can take the form of a storehouse, re-talk is our primary way of assuring ourselves and others that we are in fact knowledgeable. And today we have the Internet as our storehouse: skimming is our way of moving electronically through its contents in cheerful oblivion of its, i.e. our own rootlessness: after all, everyone is doing it.

In his 1924 lectures “The Concept of Time” (*Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 64), providing a kind of trailer to *Being and Time*, Heidegger cites academic discourse (*Wissenschaft*) to illustrate what he means by re-talk. Indeed, the original hope of the Enlightenment was that knowledge could accumulate so that subsequent researchers could stand on the shoulders of their predecessors to see further than they. However, for the most part, researchers re-write familiar things, adding a twist here and there for flavor, and can squabble energetically over detail without recalling the original question, subject, or intent. A teacher, too, can very energetically lay out the prevailing discourse of the field of study without any concern about whether the students learn to speak out of its source or merely learn to talk about what others have said. It is important that we recognize the prevalence of re-talk because, in any given institution in any given age, it already determines what counts as “really being” — whereas our own intent is, supposedly, to raise this question freshly.

I have to say, then, that the familiar translation of *Gerede* as “idle talk” is ill advised. It is perhaps inspired by the reasonable translation of Wittgenstein’s remark that “confusions arise when language is idling, not when working” (idling as an engine idles: *leerläuft*). Re-talk is generally running at full capacity, cluttered and clanging, whereas rooted talk is likely quiet and calm.

Re-talk is what ordinary talk essentially is. As we go about our ordinary business, what we actually say and hear is essentially pre-fixed in form, and as we are shopping or selling, doing our bit or asking others to do theirs, informing or being informed (by colleagues or the media), elaborate or imbibed tales — at each moment we draw upon familiar ways of speaking: a tongue with its own grammar and vocabulary (familial or local or national or international). Such re-talk may be weakly rooted, through what Heidegger calls talk — weakly because both drawing upon and passing by what the talk is about. Or it may let the roots wither to near nothing, as in deceitful talk (prevarication) and more or less vicious talk (gossiping, scandalmongering).

Heidegger is trying to scare us. And we should be scared. For we are supposedly engaging in the linguistic enterprise of writing and reading about the conditions for raising the question of being — and, for all our efforts, we may still be begging the question, assuming all along “what really is” and fussing over ramifications of our own presumptions.

Re-talk is the norm, our own vocation-specific platform, and our task is to learn (and help others learn) to speak and to listen, to write and to read, incisively — that is, in a way that reroots talk strongly, saves it momentarily from re-talk, into which is naturally collapses.

The duo *Rede / Gerede* resonates also with subsequent literature: (1) Heidegger’s own meditations on incisive language in the pieces collected under the title *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (partially translated as *On the Way to Language*), (2) his meticulous consideration of the works of others (to help us read through the re-talk of scholarship to recover our heritage), and (3) the meditations of others who have taken up his challenge (already Husserl in the 1936 fragment translated as “The Origin of Geometry,” then also Merleau-Ponty in his 1945 delineation of the difference between *la parole parlée* and *la parole parlante*).

Translation, too, is scary — in this instance having to preserve resonances both internal and external to the work — in each case a selection — while orchestrating all these to resonate with what the work is about.

Da-sein

Mit-sein, Mit-da-sein

AT the end of the penultimate section, Heidegger contrasts his own with Hegel's use of this term. Hegel's phenomenology understands "spirit" as becoming concrete (incarnated, fulfilled) by *being there* (otherwise spirit may only hover over situations abstractly). Heidegger's starts out (*setzt ein*) within the (weak) concretion of "factically thrown ex-sistence" — the way we are *already* "out there" (in order, as he immediately says), to unveil temporality as the original enabling of such being-there). All along, Heidegger has been responding to Hegel.

To side with Hegel first: in his sense of the word, closer to the colloquial expressions in both English and German, *being there* is an important development on the part of the individual — who may at times *not* be there (as every parent, teacher and coach knows, and most of us recognize as we get older and prone to absent-mindedness ourselves). Learning to *be there* is essential in enterprises depending on knowledge rather than willingness just to do what one is told.

Heidegger proposes that we examine carefully the way we are already "out there" dealing with things (if only routinely) and others (if only conformatively). The use of the word *Dasein* to name the focal point of examination deviates importantly from what its everyday use (whether in German or English) may suggest. The intended focal point is, in each instance, the multiple and interwoven *ways* we are there. The achievement of this focal point requires arduous effort on our respective parts, since we are strongly tempted to assume that we are looking

either at ourselves or at others out there in the field — the way researchers in the fields of psychology, sociology, biology, anthropology do (looking out for the universal "human being" lurking within all the empirical variations). But we are "out there" prior to such studies: such research, placing its subject at arm's length, is itself one achievement of our being there — a strange alienation whose results will always be tainted with self-forgetfulness.

Michel Foucault's 1966 *Les mots et les choses* traces the historical developments that led finally (and recently) to the ambition of studying human being in this manner; you can read this work as interplaying with Heidegger's. All the more so if you recall Foucault's acknowledged debt to Heidegger's two-volume work on Nietzsche, where Heidegger addresses explicitly of liberating ourselves from the trappings of this ambition.

The first English translation of Heidegger's masterpiece chose to retain, untranslated, the German for being-there. The choice reflects Heidegger's original conviction that special terminology was required to overcome the re-talk dominating philosophical work. However, within a couple decades he stated that the task was to restore the inherited lexicon rather than devise another one. I suggest that readers try this tact as well.

I am out in a pathless wilderness and I come across an axe and a jacket, partly sunken into the fallen branches and leaves. I sense immediately a human presence, precisely in the absence: these things belonged to someone who was also there, even *is* there — this stretch of wilderness is/was shared. But already before this discovery my wife at home, my colleagues at work, perhaps Plato or Aristotle, Kant or Heidegger have peopled my excursion into the woods: I embarked this morning to get away from their presence, perhaps even to enjoy their absence — in any case, they are there inseparably from my own being there.

From the beginning in Plato and Aristotle, and increasingly ever since in our intellectual tradition, the half-buried axe and jacket trigger my faculty of recollection of human agency, along with my faculty of inference; and, similarly, I remember, or try to forget, my wife and colleagues and authors whom I happen to be studying. These others, obviously absent in the flesh, are present only in me, as an essentially isolated subject who recognizes familiar objects and infers an earlier presence, or happens to retain memories of certain people, alive or dead. Ask any academic psychologist or tradition-bound novelist.

Yet my first experience is that of *shared* being-there. Period. Retaining this pristine experience — sharing it now in contemplation — you might appreciate the observation that this sharedness conditions the possibility of being there with nameable others, of inferring their presence, recalling and anticipating encounters. If so, you are well on your way to a sustained and sustaining examination of being there that does not reduce being-there to human being, i.e. revert to the arm's-length examination of something "out there" — as a detective my examine the axe and jacket and surrounding leaves and branches for signs of foul play.

Indeed, my first experience of things (e.g., my own axe or my own jacket) is that of using them, not puzzling over them for the purpose of describing them and attributing origins to them (hyletic, kinetic, telic or eidetic). Both Plato and Aristotle noted that things *are*, are fully themselves what they really are, only when they are functioning and, in the case of sublunar things, when we are using them. Modernity, however, developed ways of contemplating and knowing things suspended from our involvement with them. Heidegger then asks us to take a second look in order to recover the full force of the our involvement with things as we are actually there with them, prior to becoming detectives bent on providing descriptions of their appearance and attributions of their provenance.

Content with employing the obvious English rendering of the German, my own translation can concentrate on retaining the resonances of this one word with a host of others: essential to being-there is being-with (it's shared) as well as being-there-with (encountering others: no need to infer other minds!). Also, the reader can shift attention directly to the "there" and ask what all the locative entails: what it's like to be in-there.

Still, in the end, the purpose is to develop a mode of thinking that can itself *be there* rather than withdraw immediately into our own world — no doubt also shared, but as scholars share a field, and no doubt insightful into the nature of things, but things put out of their own function and readapted strictly for our own use. In an important sense, Heidegger agrees with Hegel: being fully there must be learned, and this learning is arduous for intellectuals such as ourselves (although "natural" in pre-intellectual work). Heidegger differs only in showing how we might begin at the beginning, with a careful consideration of being-there in its unlearned manifestations and generally weakened forms. He acknowledges the circularity of this enterprise.

Bewandtnis

Bewendenlassen, Zuhandenheit, Vorhandenheit

Here is a word that reminds me of what Augustine said of the word "time": we have no trouble understanding it until we try to understand it. You hear it frequently enough in some parts of the German-speaking world, and in colloquial usage you might easily translate it with phrases including such words as "context" or "background" — with the suggestion that the recollection of it provides also the rationale for what one is more specifically focusing on. For instance, we might closely paraphrase the first occurrence of the word (p. 80) this way: what a sign (like the blinker blinking on the car in front of you at an intersection) primarily points up is always that wherein you are living, where you are tending to things, its own (and your own)

context, this being what provides its rationale (and not simply the fact that the car in front of you is about to turn).

Heidegger is asking us to see, and in elaborate detail, just how things *are* as we in fact deal with them prior to examining them in abstraction from our primary role as tending to them, taking care of them, following and guiding them. Each *is* not only in a context but *is as* its context: both as bringing the context into play and as available to us by assigning to us our role in responding to it. The blinker on the care in front of you (often inconspicuous when not in fact blinking), but also tools (that axe and jacket out in the wilderness) and rockcliffs for climbing, chickens in our coops, cows in the field or deer in hunting season — each *has its being* from its context, *is bound up* in it.

Its *dynamic* context, I want to add. The German connotes movement, whereas the English suggests stasis. Heidegger then drifts into the verbal form *bewenden*, which in colloquial usage corresponds roughly with such English expressions as “letting things run their course” — letting the context do its work in regard to the specific thing we might otherwise wish to alter by our own agency. It is the dynamic context of wending your way through traffic, a context including dozens of co-functional things (stoplights, crosswalks, lanes, accelerator, steering wheel...) that makes “relevant” — even *available* — that blinking blinker: that lets it function, let’s it be bound up with other things.

One of the most important achievements of *Being and Time* is its clarification of how things most concretely arise for us, therefore also how we ourselves most concretely rise to them, namely as *zuhanden* (quite easily and literally translated at “at hand”). They do so (and *are*) in keeping with a “whole dynamic context” (provided by the slightly more broadly intended “world” in which you are involved: here including your having to pick up your kids and take them to the dentist before getting back to your other work). And each *is* as coming and going, both taking its own course and requiring you to guide some things in their

coming and going: an account clearly resonating with Aristotle’s of the narrower form of involvement he calls *τέχνη*.

The achievement requires an account of how we (and especially we intellectuals) come to the project of understanding things “out of context” — or, rather, in the special contexts of investigation that we learn in school. Here, those things occupying our attention are no longer “in use”: no longer *zuhanden*, at hand, but rather *vorhanden* (again easily and literally translated as “on hand”). Arriving at the scene of an accident, an investigator (from the police, perhaps from an insurance company) does not work with blinkers, stoplights, crosswalks and the likes, but measures their interrelations, along with any skid marks, fresh vs. old damage, and so on. Yet the investigation itself has its own dynamic context, with myriad things at hand — but this *Bewandtnis* contrasts with the first and hovers eerily out of sight for those wishing to get on with their day.

It is especially important that the translation neatly retain this distinction between things being at hand (within reach, used, put to use, bound up with one another) and things being on hand (examined out of their original context, therefore countable and storable — as the wreckage might be). Heidegger’s challenges us to learn a kind of thinking (meditating, reflecting, reading and writing) that does justice to our concrete dealings with things, and thereby learn to “put in its proper place” the kind of intellectual discourse that modernity has devised for accounting for things only as on hand, unbound — as we think of things as resources for subsequent exploitation.

Essential to thinking this distinction through is a discernment of our being there within a dynamic context conditioning both our own role and the availability of things to us as, first, working with them, bound up with them as they are bound among themselves — but then also learning to investigate them. One of Heidegger’s signature thoughts is that one way, perhaps the prime or even only way, of learning this discernment is the

experience of its utter devastation: of the dynamic context no longer sustaining our role in it, but rather appearing vacuous: What's the point of taking the kids to the dentist and getting back to work? Or even pausing to let the other guy turn? Not that I won't do these things, but that the whole of things raises the distressing question.

The world has the character of complete meaninglessness. In dread, it's not as though this or that arising for encounter had a dynamic context in which it could appear threatening." (p. 186)

As distinct from what occasions fear, what occasions dread and what appears threatened refer to the same, our being-there:

Especially what occasions it arises for encounter not as something determinate one is taking care of; the threat comes from nothing at hand or on hand, but comes rather from everything at hand and on hand having nothing more to "say" to us. There is no longer a dynamic context for innerworldly things. (p. 343)

However, in the colloquial sense, one could translate the last sentence more simply as: "There's no justification [no *raison d'être*] for innerworldly things [i.e. the things we are taking care of or looking into]." That's one of the problems of translation: employing the word to name a demanding topic of contemplation, Heidegger also lets it drift back into its easy usage.

zeitigen

Zeitigung, Bewegtheit

One of the chief aims of Heidegger's work is to allow for careful consideration of what it means for things to reveal themselves fully, and this in consonance with the traditional principle that we ourselves must learn to be fully there to bear witness to the revelation. Learn, that is, to allow for this revelation in a way undercutting the modern supposition that

the we inaugurate it by withdrawing into the special position of independent observation, calculation and decision — the modern predisposition to devise a mix of objectivity and subjectivity.

True, anyone able to engage in such considerations has already moved out of ordinary engagements into a meta-discourse of sorts. Yet Heidegger is suggesting throughout *Being and Time* that we might exploit this vantage point to raise the most reflective question: How do our ordinary engagements already evidence the possibility — more exactly, the urgency, even the necessity — of achieving this vantage point. Modulated by this question, the withdrawal will not carry the flavor of an absolute, as it does in modern philosophy.

Heidegger then asks us to look out for signs of, even seeds of growth. How does our being-there evidence incipient *ripening, maturation*, into something more than the absorption marking its (our) initial movement? Or: How may we understand, albeit from our "outside" vantage point, how our condition is moved, changed, developed "inside"? Or: What makes being-there evolve, even devolve?

The key verb for such movement is *zeitigen* — which has no other meaning than to ripen, to mature, to fructify: transitively, to make bear fruit; intransitively (in German, reflexively), to bear fruit. From which Heidegger easily forms the noun *Zeitigung*, a key word in his own account. Early translators saw in these words the root *Zeit* and strove to retain the resonance with "time" — a retention that utterly obliterates the simplicity and importance of the question Heidegger is raising.

The verb first occurs on p. 22: fresh contemplation is difficult because tradition, initially forming our being-there, necessarily fructifies (brings about, generates) cover-ups. It next occurs in a question posed on p.152: since every investigation moves within a presupposed interpretation of what is investigated, How can it (we, now) fructify (come up with) legitimate results, i.e. not argue in a circle? And then the first occurrence of the noun on

p. 235, announcing the projected achievement of the second half of the book: temporality itself, to be freshly understood, will reveal its own possibility of fructification (maturation, transformation, metamorphosis), i.e. whole new ways of understanding what's going on in our being-there. On p. 304 Heidegger elaborates on the promise: each element already exposed in the structure of being-there will become clearer when we see it as a fructification (a development, a modulation, an "effect") of temporality (yet to be freshly understood). Finally, on p. 328 both the verb and the noun start taking on the thematic meaning governing the remaining one-hundred pages of the book: temporality *is* not, is not something that "is" (that arises for encounter), it rather fructifies, *is* the fructifying that throbs throughout our condition, yielding both tasteful fruit (as in art works), tasteless fruit (as in banalized and banalizing interpretations), and distasteful fruit (as in baneful actions and frustrations).

Heidegger here addresses a question central to our tradition, first available in Zeno, Plato and Aristotle, then again in Leibniz, Newton and Kant — the question, What gets things moving? That is: How can we intellectuals understand "the buzzing, booming confusion" in which we find ourselves? — While Zeno left the question hanging by seemingly denying that things are moving (or denying that we can understand them as getting moved), Plato incipiently, and Aristotle finally, answer that what makes their movement intelligible is their pending fulfillment (even failure to get fulfilled): this restfulness not only governs restlessness but supplies the focus of our understanding. — While Leibniz and Newton devised a way of intellectualizing movement itself, relocating the intellect-defying notion of the infinite into our own formulations (thereby taming and harnessing it), Kant supplied the overall account of human experience that justified this relocation. — And we today, in the aftermath of these decisive developments (maturation, fructifications) are left with a mishmash (a veritable "buzzing, booming confusion") of

intellectual accounts of movement: modern notions of gravity to explain both terrestrial and celestial motions; of instinct to explain behavior of animals (including ourselves); of genetic structure to explain reproduction, maturation, deformation and termination of plants and animals; of greed, self-interest and fear to explain economic forces; and finally of "human nature" to detect in what it means to be human a variety of causes for historical changes in social formations and intellectual interpretations. Throughout these efforts there hovers something like Adam Smith's "invisible hand" — an underhanded recourse to divine intervention after all, or at least to the notions of purpose, intention, fulfillment hearkening back to our earlier traditions.

Heidegger directs our attention rather to the ordered movement already taking place in our everyday being-there in a "dynamic context" where purpose obviously reigns independently of any consideration of the fulfillments possible either for what we death with or for our own nature, and where the interconnections of things require no leaps over infinitudes of space and spatialized time. The main task is to unveil, in this our world, the "seeds" of possible fruit-bearing — the urgencies calling for the kinds of extra-ordinary developments we associate with the marvels of art work and the like. But an important subsidiary task is to recover the power of the earlier accounts of κίνησις (movedness), and therewith our Greek and modern heritage (much facilitated by the distinction between at-hand-ness and on-hand-ness, itself fructified by his the refreshed sense of temporality). While Plato and Aristotle posed the question of growth as prominent in φύσις (unposed by Parmenides and Zeno), and Leibniz, Newton and Kant posed the question of knowing motion in our own formulations of space and time, Heidegger poses the question in regard to a third focal point, our ever-initial being-there. And employs the metaphor of ripening, maturing, or fructifying to name the movement first of all at issue for our being there with others dealing with things.

In this one word lies multiple challenges: to focus on something hitherto unthematized, to search for seeds of development, to reassess (along with a fresh understanding of time) the positive and negative role of tradition, and finally (in later works) to recover the power of the literature of our tradition in order to overcome, at moments, the tasteless or even poisonous fruits it will always engender. Reader, I wish you luck!

das Seiende

das nicht-daseins-mäßige Seiende

Such a simple word! Yet how can it best be translated into English? An early translation of a later work tried “the essent” — a neologism that, understandably, did not take. The first translation of *Being and Time* tried “entities” — an abstract noun that fails to resonate with the concrete meaning of the original. I myself have often settled on “beings” — as have most other translators, I believe.

So what’s the problem? For one thing, the German is singular. For another, it is adjectival (formed from the present participle of “to be”); it is not a substantive — not a noun as, say, “creature” or “thing” would be. Perhaps the more neutral “what is” would do in some cases. But... How can we get a fix on what this word designates?

There in our dynamic context, we deal with things and people by considering each, arising for encounter, *as* something that fits or fails to fit into the on-going affair. While we may mistake things, misuse them, underestimate or overestimate their role in the context, our being there still requires something like “attribution”: it is... But in each instance one “is” sends us to the next “is” within the context: it is first and foremost dynamic even though there may be occasion, as when a police officer examines the scene of an accident, where the attribution itself is

at issue and appears static (bearing now on something on hand rather than at hand).

Our ordinary condition buzzes and booms with such pre-intellectualized (unthematized) attributions — myriad flashes of “it is” organized according to our involvements, our own being there in some dynamic context, itself nameable as . . . doing housework, watching a game of chess, strolling through the woods, climbing a mountain, or whatever.

The problem of translation is that we — translators and readers — live within inherited interpretations of what’s going on in this initial arena of flashing attributions. My first formulation follows Heidegger’s account of their *initial* configuration (each “is” sends us along to another, all within a dynamic context: each *is* as an “as”). But now we are trying to focus (reflectively, contemplatively, thematically) on something else that “is”: the whole of our being-there, the whole of these “ises” — something that also imposes itself on us, posing questions of an order transcending the questions internal to our ordinary contexts. And here our inheritance impinges on our understanding of the word “is”: the difference between the “is” as signaling something *about* something and as signaling the something itself. Indeed, there is (again that “is”) an enigmatic contrast between what a horse or a city is doing or undergoing, where or when it is happening, how it strikes us, how it relates to something else and so on, and what it is “in itself” — what it *really* is, what the horse-trainer or the city-leader must know in order to discern those details accurately and guide the development of the horse or the city properly. As modern thinkers turned increasingly to what they themselves, as intellectuals rather than artisans or leaders, could know about horses and cities, the question of what *really* is concentrated attention on principles of organizing the details rather than penetrating them: these principles now (since Kant) count as what *really* is.

Each “flash in the pan” *is*, and each of us very frequently asks about its what, its how, its where, its when, etc. (in line with Aristotle list of ten categories). Each happens. It’s something we encounter. It’s something we initially determine and then perhaps re-determine or further determine, even find enigmatic — all in a flow itself framed by a context, perhaps by different contexts. Greeks called it simply τὸ ὄν, Germans easily call it *das Seiende* — an appearance before us, one that hardly distinguishes itself from a determination on our part (indeed, we could also translate the Greek and the German as “determination”: each “is” has a follow-up).

Routine thinkers have no need to go beyond the “flashes in the pan” within their fields; indeed, fields of inquiry have become increasingly defined by their steadfast answers. However, full-fledged thinkers go on to ask about their status — better, their dynamic (power, potential): ask about their *being*. Aristotle says that our concern to become clear about τὸ ὄν, about a flash, ultimately leads to a concern about ἡ οὐσία, its “substance” (its estate). Heidegger translates this question as bearing on *das Sein des Seienden* — what we might have to translate into English as “the being of beings” (resorting to the plural for the second in order to retain the distinction, and perhaps capitalizing the first for the same reason). But all the translations fail to resonate fully with the original words of the original thinkers.

Essential in reading *Being and Time* is that we keep remembering what it asks us to focus on: our being-there in its multifarious manifestations. Everything that then appears for our consideration takes its measure from our dealings with it, including what we see ourselves and others refashioning to be (to appear) as on hand rather than at hand. What then do we make of the talk on p. 333 of *das nichtdaseinsmüssige Seiende*? — beings *not* taking their measure from being-there?

As being-in-world, being-there ex-sists factually with and near inner-worldly encountered things. For this reason,

the being of being-there receives its comprehensive ontological transparency only within the horizon of the clarified being of beings not taking their measure from being-there, and this also means: the being of what, not at hand and not on hand, only “subsists.”

Heidegger has elsewhere remarked that fully effective art works may serve as examples: great cathedrals, great plays, great paintings, great works of contemplation. These do not take their measure from being-there, they rather measure our being there (and, as a consequence, take the measure of each of us capable of entering into them). With such works in mind — as beings, as things, as flashes in the pan that keep flashing — I highlight what’s only penumbral in the German suffix *-mäßig*, the sense of measure, a word recalling the ancient and ever-recurring debate over the dictum that “man is the measure — of what is that it is and of what is not that it is not.” Be it remembered, though, that being-there is a phenomenon, a being, in its own right, already suffused with measures to which we, as individuals and as communities must own up; if Heidegger’s work enters this debate, it is as a third party.

So is translation essentially distortive of the original? Pointless, hopeless, worthless, thankless? No more so that just reading the original. Indeed, native speakers of German do not enjoy any remarkable advantage (perhaps they will less likely be waylaid by *Zeitigung*, but they are even more likely to be waylaid by *Gerede*). Indeed, the advantage we German-reading non-natives have is that we must immediately triangulate to focus more conscientiously on what the original is asking us to address. To approximate this advantage of ours, natives would have to translate the German into a second language (say, ancient Greek) and then discuss among themselves which resonances to retain and which to forgo.