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**The Temporality of Language:
Kant's Legacy in the Work of
Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin**

by

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Submitted for the qualification of PhD

to Warwick University

Department of Philosophy

Date of Submission: 10 January 1995

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisor Andrew Benjamin for his help and encouragement in the preparation and writing of this thesis. I must also thank the British Academy for the two years of funding they provided for my research. Special thanks must, however, go to Lisa McCarten - for her tireless support throughout every stage of the work, her enthusiasm for the project undertaken, the time she gave to the reading and correcting of the manuscript, and above all, for her belief in my ability to finish it.

Summary

Contrary to the idea that there are fundamental differences between the work of Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin, the thesis shows that there exists a profound similarity in the direction of their projects, by exploring how they took up Kant's critical legacy concerning the temporality of language: the belonging together of language and time. The ground of Kant's system and of the necessity of systematicity – the three-fold synthesis which 'generates' time under the direction of conceptuality – is elucidated via the Second Analogy and the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*. It is argued that Kant's understanding of language and time remains fixed within a circular justification of Newtonian Science, which prevented him from taking up the critical resources of his treatment of teleological concepts and applying it to his idea of the critical system itself. Heidegger's and Benjamin's work may be understood as taking up the hermeneutic circularity of Kant's philosophical system, though freeing it from its appeal to a limited time determination. They both develop notions of a more originary temporality in conjunction with a linguistic phenomenology. They further allow this more critical thinking of language and time to reflexively fall back on the writing of philosophy itself. Their understanding of the temporality of language is explored through the way 'translation' focuses, in each case, a thinking of tradition and of linguistic works. The thesis rejects attempts to separate Heidegger's early work from his later approach, and further rejects a tendency to focus on Benjamin's style of writing in isolation from its theoretical basis. The thesis concludes by arguing that the work of both Heidegger and Benjamin points to a rethinking of Kant's legacy of the necessity of system, in terms of system as the inescapable belonging together of language and time.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used; full references are given in the bibliography.

Ak	<i>Kant's Gesammelte Schriften, Academy edition.</i>
AÜ	<i>Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers</i>
BPP	<i>Basic Problems of Phenomenology</i>
CJ	<i>Critique of Judgment</i>
CPR	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
GA	<i>Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe</i>
GS	<i>Benjamin's Gesammelte Schriften</i>
HCT	<i>History of the Concept of Time</i>
KPM	<i>Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics</i>
NL	<i>The Nature of Language</i>
OGTD	<i>Origin of German Tragic Drama</i>
SH	<i>Schriften Hamanns</i>
TT	<i>The Task of the Translator</i>
V&A	<i>Vorträge und Aufsätze</i>
WL	<i>The Way to Language</i>

*Dedicated to
my Mother and Father*

INTRODUCTION

If all experience occurs in time and all theorization about experience occurs in language, then the very inclusiveness of the subjects *language* and *time* entails that any work of philosophy must implicitly involve notions of both language and time. Traditional philosophical terms such as *experience* or *notion* will also carry implicit assumptions, though perhaps multiple or ambiguous, about language and time; assumptions carried over from the philosophical discourses which specified them as philosophical terms. Thus theorization or philosophizing explicitly about language and time cannot escape the circle of the assumptions made about language and time in the very terminology used to discuss them. This will be true in any attempt to determine the relation between language and time. Indeed the use of the word *relation* already suggests that they are two independently existing entities which only subsequently interact with each other. The phrase *the temporality of language* will be used to mark the question of the belonging-together of language and time, since the word 'of' is suitably ambiguous between subjective and objective genitive. That is, ambiguous between the 'notion' of time determined by language and the 'notion' of time determining language (the word *notion* being marked as problematic due to the need to question its linguist-temporal assumptions).

It is in the work of Kant that the question of how language and time are co-ordinated, is first systematically treated. The three-fold synthesis of apperception 'generates' time for Kant, and yet it does so under the direction of conceptuality. The consequences of this co-ordination are not, however, worked through by Kant because of his declared aim to render a transcendental justification for Newtonian science, and thus a Newtonian view of conceptuality and temporality. In particular, Kant does

not take adequate account of the consequences of his perceived link between language and time for the possibility of system and the writing a systematic philosophy, nor for the nature of system as a *legacy*.¹ In the treatment of his project as both system and legacy Kant did not allow his thinking of language and time to reflexively fall back on, and question, the systematization of language and time.

The work of Heidegger and Benjamin will be explored in the way they take up the Kantian legacy of a thinking of the temporality of language. This is not to suggest that their work consists of a true 'return to Kant', since for them the nature of legacy itself also must be questioned. For Heidegger, this questioning will take the form of a 'destruction' of the tradition of metaphysics; for Benjamin, it will be through an understanding of the philosophical work as 'doctrine'. Nor will the attempt be made to trace a line of lineage back from Heidegger and Benjamin to Kant, through the 150 years of diverse post-Kantian philosophies which separate them. While this may be an important project, it would precisely prejudice the question of the nature of philosophical tradition itself, a question which is again central for Heidegger and Benjamin. Nor, however, will the attempt be made to stage a confrontation between their work, to decide which of them is most true to the 'spirit' or 'letter'² of Kant's work, as if such terms did not already hold a particular determination of the temporality of language in relation to a philosophical work.

Rather, the thesis will show that the work of each of Heidegger and Benjamin, though in very different ways, is a 'taking up' of the Kantian 'legacy' of the question of the temporality of language, and a working through of the reflexivity of such a questioning in terms of the linguistic work and its traditionality. Kant's work is thus a common 'origin' for Heidegger and Benjamin, but where the nature of this origin

is rethought, in each case, from out of a thinking through of the temporality of language. A circularity, therefore, obtains in each case between the taking up of Kant's legacy of the temporality of language and the rethinking of what 'taking up' and 'legacy' mean in the light of the temporality of language. The work of both Heidegger and Benjamin can thus be regarded as the unfolding of the circularity which lies already in Kant's work, but not laid out.

Heidegger's and Benjamin's thinking are often regarded as being in opposition to each other, and Benjamin's hostility toward Heidegger's work is well known.³ This hostility may also be found in the scholarly literature on Benjamin, even to the extent (though perhaps paradoxically) of accusing Heidegger of plagiarizing Benjamin's writings.⁴ The differences between their styles of thinking and terminologies, their literary and philosophical interests, not to mention their political involvements, are indeed striking, but by reading their work in terms of a common 'origin', the ground is thereby laid for a productive dialogue, breaking their work out of the insularity of the respective camps or schools of thought.⁵ This thesis is a necessary prolegomena to such a productive dialogue, which will not be undertaken in detail here. Rather, by allowing Kant's legacy to become visible in their work as a whole, the proximity of their projects will be made to cast light on the significance of that legacy itself.

Chapter 1 will show how the co-ordination of language and time is constructed in Kant's work and how this thought may be seen to fracture his attempts to remain with a justification of Newtonian conceptuality and temporality. Chapters 2 and 3, treating Heidegger and Benjamin respectively, show how for each of them, their work as a 'whole' constitutes a way of thinking out of, but never leaving, the circularity of Kant's project. Chapters 4 and 5 treat the way Heidegger and Benjamin,

respectively, understand translation and how translation becomes, for each, a focus for rethinking the nature of a linguistic work and the way it is 'handed on', in relation to the temporality of language explored in the earlier chapter. Chapter 6, the conclusion, will review the proximity which has been seen to arise between their work in the previous chapters, and explore the significance of this proximity for a thinking through of the temporality of language which Kant's work brings to light. In particular, it will be possible to return to the question of systematicity, in order to ascertain what light is cast by the rethinking of the temporality of language by Heidegger and Benjamin.

Notes

1. 'Aber was ist denn das, wird man fragen, für ein Schatz, den wir der Nachkommenschaft, [...] zu hinterlassen gedanken?', *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 22 vols, ed. by the Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1942), vol I: *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, Bxxiv; translated as *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan, (1929), 1989), Bxxiv: 'But, it will be asked, what sort of a treasure is this that we propose to bequeath to posterity?' References to the first Critique will be given in the form CPR followed by the standard A/B numbering.

References to English translations will be given for all the works referred to in the thesis, where they are available. However, the translations given will often have been modified to yield uniformity and to give a more 'word for word' rendition of the German.

2. This distinction, taken up from Fichte's 'On the Spirit and the Letter in Philosophy' (*Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. by J.H. Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), VIII, pp. 270-300; translated by Elizabeth Rubenstein in *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel*, ed. by David Simpson (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 74-93), was commonly used by Neo-Kantian writers in debates over who was the true inheritor of Kant's work.

3. Benjamin himself, in a letter of 1930, wrote that he expected sparks to fly from the clash of his philosophy with Heidegger's. He writes: 'J'attends quelque scintillements de l'entre-choc de nos deux manieres, très differentes, d'envisager l'histoire.' (*Walter Benjamin: Briefe*, ed. by Gerschom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, 2 vols (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), II, 506). Whilst no mention of Benjamin has come to light in Heidegger's work or letters, Benjamin mentions Heidegger's work several times, all of them extremely negative. The first concerns Heidegger's first lecture at Freiburg, 'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft' 1915, which was published in 1916. Benjamin wrote that he considered it

'Eine furchtbare Arbeit' (*Briefe I*, 129) and goes on to write, 'daß nämlich nicht nur das, was der Verfasser über die historische Zeit sagt (und was ich beurteilen kann) Unsinn ist, sondern auch seine Ausführungen über die mechanische Zeit schief sind, wie ich vermute.' (*I*, 130) ('that what the author says about historical time (and what I am able to judge) is nonsense, but also his expositions on mechanical time are crooked, as I suspect.')

In 1920, concerning Heideggers Habilitationsschrift on Duns Scotus, which Benjamin seems to have read while he himself was researching the Scholastic view of language, he wrote: 'Es ist unglaublich, daß sich mit so einer Arbeit [...] jemand habilitieren kann. Die nichtswürdige Kriecherei des Autors vor Rickert und Husserl macht die Lektüre nicht angenehmer.' (*I*, 246) ('It is unbelievable that anyone can qualify [...] with such a work. The author's undignified boot-licking of Rickert and Husserl does not make for pleasant reading.')

Ten years later, in the period from which the first quotation above is taken, Benjamin seemed to be planning a decisive confrontation with Heidegger's work. In another letter of 1930, Benjamin mentions a planned reading group on Heidegger's work, which, however, never took place: 'Es bestand hier der Plan, in einer ganz engen kritischen Lesegemeinschaft unter Führung von Brecht und mir im Sommer, den Heidegger zu zertrummern.' (*II*, 514) ('There was a plan to destroy Heidegger, in an closed critical reading group under the leadership of Brecht and myself, in the summer.')

Then in 1938, after years of struggle and financial hardship in trying to find an audience for his work, and as the crisis in Germany deepened, it must have been with great sadness that Benjamin wrote the following from Denmark: 'Mir kommt hier etwas mehr linientreues Schrifttum vor Augen als in Paris und so geriet ich neulich an ein Heft der 'Internationalen Literatur' in dem ich, anlässlich eines Teils meiner Wahlverwandtschaftenarbeit als Gefolgsmann von Heidegger figuriere.' (*II*, 771) ('Literature towing the party line is more noticeable here than in Paris and so recently I came across an issue of 'Internationale Literatur' in which I figure as a follower of Heidegger, on account of my *Elective Affinities* essay.')

The reason for Benjamin's severe remarks on Heidegger's work, must obviously in part stem from Heidegger's Nazi affiliations. However, the early quotations cited above also indicate that Benjamin took a highly negative stance before the time of Heidegger's political involvements. The question of whether, or how, Benjamin misinterpreted Heidegger's work will not be part of this thesis, nor the question of the wider consequences, on an understanding the political aspects of their work, of finding profound similarities between them.

4. Werner Fuld, *Walter Benjamin, Zwischen den Stühlen: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1979). After a long quotation from the prologue to Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Fuld writes: 'Wesentliche Elemente der Sprachtheorie Benjamin's übernimmt Heidegger in seinem 1936 in der Zeitschrift *Das Innere Reich* erschienenen Aufsatz "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung"; manche Sätze sind fast wörtliche Zitate. Das Ende dieses Textes Heideggers läßt sich übrigens als verschlüsselte Kritik an der nationalsozialistischen Gegenwart verstehen.' (p76) The last sentence is perhaps of greater interest than the incredible claim Fuld makes. The underlying reasoning is maybe as follows: Benjamin's work must be antithetical to Heidegger's because of their differing political affiliations; Benjamin's thinking is 'completely useless for the purposes of fascism'; in order, therefore, for Heidegger to take up Benjamin's ideas, Heidegger's essay must be part of a 'coded criticism' of National Socialism. Each of these three clauses would need to be questioned. What is clear, however, is the extent to which the political affiliations of Heidegger

and Benjamin are used to structure the perceived differences in their work.

5. Comparative works of the kind 'Heidegger and X' are, of course, common. For example, George F. Sefler, *Language and the World: A Methodological Synthesis Within the Writings of Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1974). Sefler's explicit method (xxii-xxxiii) is to compare the 'structure' of their work, but this turns out to mean little more than the 'results' of their thinking, for example, a rejection of representational theories of language. One of the aims of this thesis is to systematically lay the ground for a dialogue between Heidegger and Benjamin by investigating the way they took up a common legacy, the question of language and time, from Kant. Only through such a ground laying can a 'comparative' study be undertaken which is not simply a comparison of completed *corpora*, but a productive engagement, which itself hands on a legacy of questioning in the light of the present.

CHAPTER 1: KANT AND THE CO-ORDINATION OF LANGUAGE AND TIME

I. Introduction

Kant's philosophy was revolutionary in placing time at the heart of knowledge via the deduction of the Categories and the Schematism. While Heidegger and Benjamin both wrote on Kant's work explicitly, this chapter will not take the standard form of proving direct lines of influence between Kant's work and theirs, as if to show that their work constitutes the true 'return to Kant'.¹ Such an approach would deny any importance to the hundred years of reflection and reaction to Kant's work which gave rise to the diverse forms of German Idealism and German Romanticism, as well as to the diverse forms of Neokantianism. This wide range of developments of Kant's legacy would have conditioned the historical situation in German academia with respect to Kant and it would be problematic to argue they had no influence upon Heidegger and Benjamin. It would, of course, be possible to trace a lineage of Kant's legacy back through these diverse post-Kantian philosophies, but such an approach would also precisely prejudge the question of the nature of a *legacy* in relation to a philosophical work, a question which will be seen to be central to both Heidegger and Benjamin. Rather, the form of this chapter will be to show how the question of the belonging together of language and time is raised in Kant's work and how its implications were only partially recognized by him. By following through the implications of the belonging together of language and time in relation to Kant's project it will be possible to demonstrate the complexity of issues which the works of Heidegger and Benjamin address. The question of the temporality of language can thus be approached in a way which does not

bias an investigation in favour of either Heidegger or Benjamin, nor does it allow their work to seem to spring up separately and *ex nihilo*, nor does it allow their confrontation to become a closed debate.

There is, however, also a further, equally important reason for starting with Kant, which concerns a prevalent misunderstanding of their work. This reason is the need to counter a view, which, simply stated, asserts that experience is something which happens *in time*. This philosophical *prejudice*, (so termed because such a view prejudices that which is precisely at issue, that is, the nature of time), is often found mapped on to the work of both Heidegger and Benjamin. To give just two examples: In Benjamin's work, this prejudice is applied to the idea of the Messiah, so that it appears as if Benjamin understands the Messiah to arrive *in some future time*. In Heidegger's work, the covering or uncovering of Being is understood as happening in time, such that one may have a nostalgia for a time *in which Being was uncovered*. To prevent this misunderstanding from arising, and thus to appreciate particularly the profundity of both Heidegger's and Benjamin's thinking of time, one needs to look again at the idea played out in Kant's work that experience does not happen in time, but rather that experience and time spring forth together (or more precisely, in terms of Kant: generated together by the three-fold synthesis of conceptuality) and that neither is *prior* to the other.

The investigation of language and time in Kant's work will be in three parts. The first (section II) will be concerned with how Kant sets up the inter-relation of language and time. In section III it will be argued that Kant draws back from a thesis of the temporality of language in his reconciliation of Newtonian physics with teleological conceptuality. The last section will be concerned with the implicit temporality which governs Kant's critical philosophy in terms of the assumptions he made

about language and time and how these assumptions condition the structure and form of Kant's systematic philosophy as such.

II. The Critical Legacy

At the time of his working on the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*², Kant was conscious of the need to provide guidance on how its status as a legacy to philosophy was to be understood. In the preface to the second edition he writes:

Aber was ist denn das, wird man fragen, für ein Schatz, den wir der Nachkommenschaft, mit einer solchen durch Kritik geläuterten, dadurch aber auch in einen beharrlichen Zustand gebrachten Metaphysik, zu hinterlassen gedenken? (CPR Bxxiv)

But, it will be asked, what sort of a treasure is this that we propose to bequeath to posterity? What is the value of the metaphysics that is alleged to be thus purified by critique and established once for all?

Kant's answer, that the results of his critique are negative in nature, in that they limit the speculative employment of reason, must be held in conjunction with his assertions that the system he is proposing is not a fixed and dogmatic one, but rather one which will develop over time. The principle of this development arises from the system's own intrinsic principles of organisation, its inner unity and coherence. It is in this regard that Kant often draws on the metaphor of the organism when he is describing the relation of the system as a whole to its parts.

[...die reine spekulative Vernunft] in Ansehung der Erkenntnisprinzipien eine ganz abgesonderte für sich bestehende Einheit ist, in welcher ein jedes Glied, wie in einem organisierten Körper, um aller anderen und alle um eines willen dasind. (CPR Bxxiii)

[Pure speculative reason, so far as the principles of its knowledge are concerned, is a quite separate self-subsistent unity, in which, as in an organised body, every member exists for every other, and all for the sake of each.

In the second section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, entitled *The Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, Chapter III (*The Architectonic of Pure Reason*), Kant further details this comparison to the extent of making the concept of a system and the concept of an organism structurally identical:

Das Ganz ist also gegliedert (articulo) und nicht gehäuft (coacervatio); es kann zwar innerlich (per intus susceptionem), aber nicht äußerlich (per appositionem) wachsen, wie ein tierischer Körper. (CPR A833/B861)

The whole [*vis à vis* the system] is thus organised (*articulatio*), and not aggregated (*coacervatio*). It may grow from within (*per intus susceptionem*), but not by external addition (*per appositionem*). It is thus like an animal body.

Kant's characterization of the development of critical philosophy is circular in two related senses. First, the concept of the organism is one which requires its own transcendental justification within the critical system; Kant undertook this in the *Critique of Judgement*³, nine years after the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Secondly, the idea forming the organised unity of the critical system, which allows the animal metaphor to have relevance, is itself a critical element within the system. The system 'is possible only by means of an idea of the totality of the *a priori* knowledge yielded by the understanding' ('nur vermitteltst einer *Idee des Ganzen* der Verstandeserkenntnis *a priori* [...] möglich'; CPR A64/B89), and this idea of totality is further grounded, for Kant, in the transcendental unity of apperception.

Given what was said above about the circularity implicit in philosophizing about language and time, the circularity involved in Kant's conception of critical philosophy and its progression through time is not to be regarded as a fault which could have been avoided. Rather, the thoroughness of Kant's critical investigation into conceptuality and time precisely brings to light the circularity of thinking language and time together in a systematic way. The value of Kant's legacy is therefore positive, and not merely negative, in that the project raises the question

of its own existence in time and thus its own status as legacy. It is this value which makes Kant's work so fundamental for understanding Heidegger and Benjamin.

Heidegger's engagement with Kant spanned the length of his academic and teaching career: one of his earliest major publications was *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929), and one of his last was *Kant's Thesis About Being* (1962). In the preface to the fourth edition of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1973), Heidegger wrote with reference to the book's composition shortly after *Being and Time*: 'Kant's text became a refuge, as I sought in Kant an advocate for the question of Being which I posed' ('Kants Text wurde eine Zuflucht, bei Kant einen Fürsprecher für die von mir gestellte Seinsfrage zu suchen'⁴). Heidegger specified further that it was the connection (*Zusammenhang*) in the Schematism between the problem of the Categories and the phenomenon of time, that he found Kant's support.⁵ This connection will be explored below and Heidegger's general approach to the legacy of philosophical tradition will be investigated in Chapter 2.

Benjamin's engagement with Kant resulted in only one finished essay explicitly treating the Kantian problematic: *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy*.⁶ This essay, along with other fragmentary notes, will be treated in detail in Chapter 3, where it will be shown that Benjamin's rejection of Neo-Kantianism stemmed directly from a consideration of both the link between language and time in Kant's critical philosophy and the nature of the philosophical legacy which Kant's work represented. Although after leaving academia, Benjamin never again engaged with Kant's work in a sustained way, the essay *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy* gives the clearest insight into what gave rise to Benjamin's philosophical style of thinking. The importance which Kant's work had for Benjamin around the time he was writing the essay can be gauged from the following comment in a letter to Scholem dated 22 October 1917:

...bin ich des festen Glaubens, daß es sich im Sinne der Philosophie und damit der Lehre, zu der diese gehört, wenn sie sie nicht etwa sogar ausmacht, nie und nimmer um eine Erschütterung, einen Sturz des Kantischen Systems handeln kann sondern vielmehre um seine granitne Festlegung und universale Ausbildung. [...] Einzig im Sinne Kants und Platos und wie ich glaube im Wege der Revision und Fortbildung Kants kann die Philosophie zur Lehre oder mindestens ihr einverleibt werden. (*Briefe I*, 150)

I am of the certain belief that in the field of philosophy and hence of the doctrinal field to which philosophy belongs, indeed which it perhaps constitutes, there can never be a shattering, a collapse of the Kantian system, but only its ever more firm establishment and universal development. [...] Only in the spirit of Kant and Plato and, in my opinion, along the path of revising and expanding Kant, can philosophy become doctrine or at least be incorporated into doctrine.⁷

It is the predicted 'universal development' of the Kantian system which is sketched in *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy*. The kabbalistic overtones of Benjamin's idea of philosophy as 'doctrine' (*Lehre*) will be shown to arise from his consideration of the nature of tradition in terms of the temporality of a philosophical legacy.

Kant's use of the animal metaphor for the legacy of his critical system, a metaphor based on the similarity of a relationship of 'parts' to 'whole' (*CPR A832/B860*), suggests that there are no difficulties in moving from a material system to a linguistic one. Yet Kant nowhere in the *First Critique* critically thematizes language (*die Sprache*) as such. He does, however, consider language in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*⁸, in the section *On the Ability of Using Signs (Von dem Bezeichnungsvermögen)*:

Alle Sprache ist Bezeichnung der Gedanken, und umgekehrt die vorzüglichste Art der Gedankenbezeichnung ist die durch Sprache, dieses größte Mittel, sich selbst und andere zu verstehen. Denken ist *Reden* mit sich selbst [...], folglich sich auch innerlich (durch reproductive Einbildungskraft) *hören*. (*Ak VII*, 192)

All language is signification of thought and, on the other hand, the means *par excellence* of intellectual signification is language, the most important way we have of understanding ourselves and others. Thinking is *talking* with ourselves [...], so it is also *listening* to ourselves inwardly (by reproductive imagination) (p65)

Given that Kant goes on to discuss the sign language of deaf people and states that it is 'hardly possible' (*kaum möglich*) to conceive that they have, and think with, concepts, it would be relatively easy to attack deconstructively Kant's prioritizing of the voice.⁹ In order to appreciate the profundity of Kant's linking of language and time, one must initially accept his link between a linguistic sign and a concept. In the same section as the quotation above, Kant differentiates symbols from characters in that the latter have no meaning in themselves, but rather 'by association' (*durch Beigeseilung*) lead to intuitions and, through these, to concepts (*Anthropology* p64; Ak VII, 191). Thus Kant can write:

[D]aher das *symbolische* Erkenntnis nicht der *intuitiven*, sondern der *discursiven* entgegengesetzt werden muß, in welcher letzteren das Zeichen (charakter) den Begriff nur als Wächter (*custos*) begleitet, um ihn gelegentlich zu reproduzieren. (Ak VII, 191)

Accordingly, the opposite of *symbolic* knowledge is not *intuitive* knowledge but *discursive* knowledge, in which the sign (character) accompanies the concept only as its guardian (*custos*), so that it can reproduce the concept when the occasion arises. (*Anthropology* p64)

The word translated 'association', *Beigeseilung* also has connotations of 'being assigned to' in the sense of someone being assigned to someone else, in this case to guard them (*Wächter* from *wachen*, 'to keep watch'). This simple and close link of assignment between the sign and this concept, may, however, provide insight into Kant's understanding of the concept itself. Kant begins his section on the *Bezeichnungsvermögen* by defining the ability to use signs in terms of time:

Das Vermögen der Erkenntnis des Gegenwärtigen als Mittel der Verknüpfung der Vorstellung des Vorhergesehenen mit der des Vergangenen ist das *Bezeichnungsvermögen*. (Ak VII p191)

The ability of knowledge of the present as the means for connecting ideas of foreseen events with those of past events is the *ability of using signs*. (*Anthropology* p64)

If the ability to use signs is the ability of connecting (*Verknüpfung*, which can also mean 'knotting', 'tying together' of 'combining') the future

and past in the present, then what Kant is proposing here is an embryonic idea of the temporality of language (subjective genitive). Since Kant links the sign to the concept so closely, this idea of the temporality of the sign may be used to guide a pursuit of the link between conceptuality and time through the sections of Kant's 'Transcendental Analytic' and into the *Critique of Judgment*. The problems which Kant encounters in bringing together an understanding of conceptualization in the determination of time, with an understanding of time in the determination of conceptuality, will be seen to open the field of the temporality of language (in its objective and subjective genitives) - the field with which Heidegger and Benjamin are concerned.

Kant's definition of 'concept' appears in the section entitled *The Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept* in the Transcendental Deduction of the first critique:

[Der Begriff] aber ist seiner Form nach jederzeit etwas Allgemeines, und was zur Regel dient. (CPR A106)

A concept is always, as regards its form, something universal which serves as a rule.

The concept is a rule for the reproduction of a manifold of intuitions in so far as it represents their necessary reproduction together.¹⁰ The successively intuited manifold must be combined into a unity which carries with it an element of necessity. That is, the empirical apprehension of a stone in one's hand followed by an apprehension of a feeling of weight could never give rise to the necessity involved in the thinking of the stone as being itself heavy. For Kant, all necessity is grounded in a transcendental condition, in other words, introduced by the synthesis of the manifold and not found empirically amongst our intuitions. Yet if a manifold of intuitions is to be held together in a necessary unity, there must be a unified consciousness which can 'run through' and reproduce the succession of intuitions.

Also muß ein transzendentaler Grund der Einheit des Bewußtseins, in der Synthesis des Mannigfaltigen aller unserer Anschauungen, mithin auch der Begriffe der Objekte überhaupt, folglich auch aller Gegenstände der Erfahrung, angetroffen werden, ohne welchen es unmöglich wäre, zu unsern Anschauungen irgend einen Gegenstand zu denken: denn dieser ist nichts mehr, als das Etwas, davon der Begriff eine solche Notwendigkeit der Synthesis ausdrückt. (CPR A106)

There must, therefore, be a transcendental ground of the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions, and consequently also of the concepts of objects in general, and so of all objects of experience, a ground without which it would be impossible to think any object for our intuitions; for this object is no more than that something, the concept of which expresses such a necessity of synthesis.

Kant is arguing that if we were to inspect our consciousness we would only find a flux of empirical inner appearances, without any necessary unity which would justify the positing of a unified consciousness. Therefore, this empirical apperception must itself be grounded in a transcendental unity of apperception. A unitary transcendental ego must be posited in order to account for the necessity we perceive in conceptualization. Since appearances are not things in themselves, this transcendental ground of the possibility of concepts is also the ground of the possibility of all objects of experience (and thus knowledge), in that both are synthetic unities of appearances involving necessity, and in that an object is 'that something, the concept of which expresses such a necessity of synthesis.'

In the Transcendental Deduction of the first edition, Kant separates out three forms of synthesis necessarily found in all knowledge, each grounded by the unity of apperception, though his cross-referencing between them makes clear that they are separated for heuristic reasons only, and that there is but one synthesis, which is three-fold. The first is the *Synthesis of Apprehension in Intuition*. All appearances belong to inner sense, the pure form of intuition of which is time, thus Kant writes that 'all our knowledge is thus finally subject to time' ('sind [...] der Zeit unterworfen'; CPR A99). However, if the successive intuitions

were not 'run through, and held together' ('das Durchlaufen der Mannigfaltigkeit und denn die Zusammennehmung'; A99) the mind would be unable to distinguish time in the sequence of one impression after another, indeed there would be no perception of time at all.¹¹ Thus while time as the pure form of intuition of inner sense had been treated separately by Kant in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, the experience of time is only 'generated' (cf A162/B202) through a synthesis of the apprehended intuitions. Such a synthesis presupposes that previous intuitions can be 'held' on to, that is reproduced in order to be 'ordered, connected, and brought into relation' (A99). This necessity of reproduction for knowledge, Kant calls the *Synthesis of Reproduction in the Imagination*, though he acknowledges that it is 'inseparably bound up with' (A102) the synthesis of apprehension. If, however, the synthesis of reproduction did not operate according to rules, but was instead only arbitrary, experience would be merely a chaotic flux with no order. Yet since the rules for connecting and ordering appearances cannot be derived empirically either (since there can be no empirical perception of necessity) there must be a further synthesis which itself combines the manifold into rule bound unities; this Kant calls the *Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept*. The German word for concept, *der Begriff* (from *begreifen*, 'to comprehend'; related to *greifen*, 'to take hold of' or 'to grasp'), suggests for Kant its role in 'holding' successions of intuition together in unities (A103).

The *Transcendental Deduction* thus clearly demonstrates the link between the concept and the ordering of the manifold; but since this ordering is also the condition for the experience of time, as was shown above in relation to the synthesis of apprehension, Kant is also thus proposing that conceptualization is the condition of possibility for experience of time. It is possible, therefore, to understand the

Transcendental Deduction as a transcendental version of what Kant proposed in the *Anthropology* concerning the ability to use signs as the capability of combining the future and past in the present. The three-fold synthesis demonstrates the inter-dependence of the syntheses of apprehension (of present intuition), reproduction (of past intuition), and recognition (of a law bound unity, which thus prescribes that which necessarily follows from one appearance, for example the holding of a stone in one's hand, and which thus has a futural element). Whereas the assertion from the *Anthropology* assumes the givenness of the past and future aspects of time which the *Bezeichnungsvermögen* combines as knowledge of the present, the transcendental version demonstrates that the three aspects of time (past, present and future) are themselves grounded upon the three-fold synthesis which is the necessary condition of all knowledge.

Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* also understands the three modes of synthesis in terms of expressing the three-fold unity of time as 'present, having-been and future' (p121; GA 3, 177). However, for Heidegger, this has a place in his rather 'violent' (Heidegger's word, p138) interpretation of Kant's emphasis on the imagination, in the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction, as pointing beyond time as a given ordered sequence of nows to 'original time':

Diese Jetztfolge ist aber keineswegs die Zeit in ihrer Ursprünglichkeit. Die transzendente Einbildungskraft vielmehr läßt die Zeit als Jetztfolge entspringen und ist deshalb - als diese entspringenlassende - ursprüngliche Zeit. (GA 3, 175-6)

This sequence of nows is by no means time in its originality. The transcendental power of the imagination rather allows time as sequence of nows to spring forth, and as this letting-spring-forth it is therefore original time. (KPM p120)

While Heidegger's understanding of '*ursprünglich*' time and ecstatic temporality will be discussed in Chapter 2, in order to show here that the 'violence' of Heidegger's interpretation is based on sound insight, it

is necessary to pursue further Kant's linking of time to conceptuality - a point which Heidegger does not consider at any length in his Kant book.

As was shown, the three-fold synthesis, as conditioning the very possibility of conceptual knowledge, also gives rise to the experience of time. Kant is proposing that time is grounded in conceptual cognition, or in other words, he is putting forward a theory of the temporality of (belonging to, determined by; subjective genitive) the concept. However, by following further Kant's characterization of the general rules of the ordering of the manifold in conceptualization, that is, the pure concepts of the understanding, it will become clear that there is already an implicit temporality conditioning Kant's view of the concept - an implicit temporality of (determining, objective genitive) the concept.

After dealing with the synthesis of recognition and the transcendental unity of synthesis, in the Transcendental Deduction of the first edition, Kant goes on to consider further these general rules for the ordering and combination of the manifold. Since, as has been argued, the general rules for the synthesis cannot be empirically derived, they must be provided *a priori* by the understanding:

Diese Gründe der Rekognition des Mannigfaltigen, so fern sie bloß *die Form einer Erfahrung überhaupt* angehen, sind nun jene *Kategorien*. (CPR A125)

These grounds of the recognition of the manifold, so far as they concern *solely the form of an experience in general*, are the *categories*.

Individual empirical concepts are rules derived from experience which has been ordered by the categories; they are 'only special determinations of still higher laws, and the highest of these, under which the others all stand, issue *a priori* from the understanding itself' ('nur besondere Bestimmungen noch höherer Gesetze, unter denen die höchsten, (unter welchen andere alle stehen) *a priori* aus dem Verstande selbst herkommen', A126). Kant is able to list the twelve such categories by considering the

understanding in its pure synthesis, that is, the operation of the understanding when it is not involved in synthesizing the manifold, and thus which is demonstrated in the rules of logic. Kant is, therefore, able to justify his list of categories by reference to his list of the 'logical functions in all possible judgements' (A79/B105). He relies for this list on traditional grammar, which, by having progressed along a 'sure path' ('*sicheren Gang*') of enquiry, has rendered a 'closed and completed body of knowledge' (Bviii). The move from the table of judgments to the table of categories is justified in terms of the unity of the understanding and that it has the 'same function' in relation to the combining of representations in a judgment as in relation to the combining of intuitions in a representation (A79/B104-5).¹²

Immediately after the Transcendental Deduction, in the Schematism, Kant goes on to show what results when the categories are applied to appearances, or rather, to time as the formal condition of all appearances.¹³ Since as was shown above, it is the combination of the manifold which first gives rise to the experience of time, the Schematism is thus concerned with the determination of time experience by the categories:

Daher wird eine Anwendung der Kategorie auf Erscheinungen möglich sein, vermittelt der transcendentalen Zeitbestimmung, welche, als das Schema der Verstandesbegriffe, die Subsumtion der letzteren unter die erste vermittelt. (A139/B178)

Thus an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental determination of time, which, *as the schema* of the concepts of understanding, mediates the subsumption of the appearances under the category. (My emphasis)

Kant is thus able to characterize the schemata of the pure concepts clearly as conditioning the experience of time:

Die Schemata sind daher nichts als *Zeitbestimmungen a priori* nach Regeln, und diese gehen nach der Ordnung der Kategorien, auf *Zeitreihe*, den *Zeitinhalt*, die *Zeitordnung*, endlich den *Zeitbegriff* in Ansehung aller möglichen Gegenstände. (A145/B184)

The schemata are thus nothing but *a priori* determinations of time in accordance with rule. These rules relate in the order

of the categories to the *time-series*, the *time-content*, the *time-order*, and lastly to the *scope of time* in respect of all possible objects.

In the section following the Schematism, *The System of all Principles of Pure Understanding*, Kant essentially details further the operation of the schemata, but this time understood as 'principles', the most general *a priori* determinations of experience, the 'universal rules of unity in the synthesis of appearances' (A156-7/B196). It is at this point that Kant's approach obtains its greatest justification; the principles thus obtained are in general agreement with the laws of Newtonian physics.¹⁴ For both Heidegger and Benjamin, this complicity between the Kantian project of a critique of pure reason and Newtonian physics demonstrated that a certain narrow notion of experience was operating in Kant's system. Benjamin writes, for example, that 'it was an experience or a view of the world of the lowest order.'¹⁵

The appeal to Newtonian physics brings to light, however, the circularity of Kant's method.¹⁶ For Kant, all knowledge and thus all conceptual cognition is 'finally subject to time' (A98-99), the form of inner sense, but conversely time itself is determined with a view to the justification of Newtonian science and thus in relation to the conceptuality of Newtonian bodies. Kant himself acknowledges the inescapable circularity of such an approach; concerning the idea of a principle of pure understanding he writes: 'it has the peculiar character that it makes possible its own ground of proof, namely experience, and that in this experience it must always itself be presupposed' ('[...] er die besondere Eigenschaft hat, daß er seinen Beweisgrund, nämlich Erfahrung, selbst zuerst möglich macht, und bei dieser immer vorausgesetzt werden muß. A737/B765). This circularity between time and conceptuality only becomes truly vicious if the time determination within Newtonian conceptuality is shown not to be universally applicable. Since for Kant

the *a priori* conditions of Newtonian conceptuality are also the conditions of possibility of objective experience as such, the existence of objective experiences which do not conform to the determination of time by Newtonian conceptuality would cast substantial doubt on Kant's transcendental analysis. On the one hand, Kant's method of justifying the determination of time by reference to Newtonian conceptuality would appear viciously circular; on the other hand, outside of this closed conformity to Newtonian physics, the general inter-dependence of conceptuality and time would become visible. The next section, therefore, will be concerned with Kant's discovery that, indeed, not all concepts do conform to Newtonian conceptuality and temporality, and that this does indeed point to the wider circle of the inter-dependence of concept and time, and thus to the field of the temporality of language with which Heidegger and Benjamin will be concerned.

III. Temporality and Teleology

Amongst the principles of pure understanding, it is the second Analogy which is at the heart of Kant's determination of time in relation to Newtonian conceptuality. (The full title of the Second Analogy is 'Principle of Succession in Time, in accordance with the Law of Causality'.) It was on the question of causality, and the impossibility of obtaining the element of necessity between cause and effect from empirical experience, that Hume's scepticism cut most deeply for Kant. By grounding the three-fold synthesis of the manifold on one side in the transcendental unity of apperception, and on the other in the pure concept of causality (the schema of which is necessary succession of the

time-order), Kant could thereby validate Newtonian science transcendently.

Though the scholarly debate over the Second Analogy has reached no consensus over whether or not it solves the problem of causality for empiricism, what is important in this context is the relation between conceptuality and time-order determination.¹⁷ Given that the three-fold synthesis combines the successive intuitions, thus making the experience of time possible, the question for Kant is how to allow for the possibility that on some occasions the intuitions need to be held together as successive intuitions of the same object, eg a house, while on other occasions they need to be held together as effect following a cause, that is, an event. In the case of an object, the order of the reproduction of the appearance of its different parts, under the one concept, has no necessary sequence. While in the case of an event, the order of the appearances, under its concept, must have a necessary sequence.

Jede Apprehension einer Begebenheit ist also eine Wahrnehmung, welche auf eine andere folgt. Weil dieses aber bei aller Synthesis der Apprehension so beschaffen ist, wie ich oben an der Erscheinung eines Hauses gezeigt habe, so unterscheidet sie sich dadurch noch nicht von andern. (CPR A192/B237)

Every apprehension of an event is therefore a perception that follows upon another perception. But since, as I have above illustrated by reference to the appearance of a house, this likewise happens in all synthesis of apprehension, the apprehension of an event is not yet thereby distinguished from other apprehensions.

The thrust of Kant's solution is essentially clear. Since the necessity involved in objective succession cannot be derived from the subjective succession of empirical appearances, objective succession must be transcendently prior; this requirement is provided for by the schema of the category of causality. However, were it to apply to every series of intuitions, there would again be no difference between object and event. The difference lies in the rules which constitute the concepts of object and event. When a sequence of appearances is judged to be an event, the

concept involves a rule in accordance with which the appearances in their succession are determined by the preceding state. Particular events are thus determinations of the manifold in which their concepts stand under, and are thus determinations of, the higher, pure concept of causality.¹⁸ When a sequence is judged to be an object, the rule of the concept is such that it holds the appearances together as a unity existing through time. It is then this unity which becomes subject to the category of causality. In the cases of both object and event, objects are given a position in time - either co-existent with other objects, or necessarily following upon the existence of the preceding state.

Zu aller Erfahrung und deren Möglichkeit gehört Verstand, und das erste, was er dazu tut, ist nicht: daß er die Vorstellung der Gegenstände deutlich macht, sondern daß er die Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes überhaupt möglich macht. Dieses geschieht nun dadurch, daß er die Zeitordnung auf die Erscheinungen and deren Dasein überträgt. (CPR A199/B245-6)

Understanding is required for all experience and for its possibility. Its primary contribution does not consist in making the representation of objects distinct, but in making the representation of an object possible at all. This it does by carrying the time-order over into the appearances and their existence.

This quotation makes it clear that, for Kant, every concept of an object carries with it a determination of time-order in accordance with the *a priori* determinations of time (the schemata) by the categories. In this way the concept of an object is given a transcendental guarantee of its place in a cause and effect nexus described by Newtonian mechanics. This is not to say that Kant has succeeded here in grounding empiricism transcendently, since whether a sequence is judged to be an event or an object can only be decided by appeal to the appearances, that is - empirically:

Soll also meine Wahrnehmung die Erkenntnis einer Begebenheit enthalten, da nämlich etwas wirklich geschieht; so muß sie ein *empirisches Urteil* sein, in welchem man sich denkt, daß die Folge bestimmt sei. (CPR A201/B246, my emphasis)

If, then, my perception is to contain knowledge of an event, of something as actually happening, it must be an *empirical*

judgment in which we think the sequence as determined. (My emphasis)

The existence of this circularity in Kant's justification of the conceptualization of object and event has led some scholars to posit a certain Platonism in Kant's work¹⁹. It is argued that if the difference between objects and events can only be made by illegitimate appeal to empirical experience, then the concepts of all objects must exist prior to all experience. While this view has a certain attraction on the basis of a concern to give Kant's project a closed coherence, such a suggestion is radically opposed to the tenor of Kant's assertions that all knowledge is finally subject to time. A Platonic theory of concepts would suggest the opposite: that all knowledge is finally outside of time, in the sense of belonging to a realm separate from a realm of temporal occurrence. The question of the atemporality of Platonic theories of language will be taken up later in the chapters on Heidegger's and Benjamin's theories of translation. The question will also arise in connection with the tension between the implicit and explicit connections between language and time in Kant's work which will be explored in section IV. In the present context, and in order to move towards this consideration, there is a more immediate problem in Kant's approach, concerning the possibility of objects and their concepts which do not conform to the Newtonian conceptualization of experience: the organism and the concept of the organism.²⁰

The question of the concept of an organism, and thus of the organism as an object of experience is treated at length in the second half of the *Critique of Judgment*, entitled the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*. There are essentially two related poles to the question of teleology for Kant. The first concerns the general purposiveness in nature as a whole; that is, the fact that the scientist expects particulars to be subsumable under empirical laws, empirical laws to be subsumable

under more general laws, these laws under higher laws, and so on, in a regular and seemingly intentional way. The second concerns the way the parts of an organism interact in such a way as to seem to presuppose the unity of the organism as their purpose.

The purposiveness of nature as a whole, Kant calls the subjective finality of nature, and can be characterized as the way:

die besondere empirischen Gesetze [...] nach einer solchen Einheit betrachtet werden müssen, als ob gleichfalls ein Verstand (wenn gleich nicht der unsrige) sie zum Behuf unserer Erkenntnisvermögen, um ein System der Erfahrung nach besonderen Naturgesetzen möglich zu machen, gegeben hätte. (Ak V, 180)

particular empirical laws must be regarded [...] according to a unity such as they would have if an understanding (though it be not ours) had supplied them for the benefit of our cognitive faculties, so as to render possible a system of experience according to particular natural laws. (*Critique of Judgment* p19)

The observation that nature operates 'as if' it had been designed by a grand architect, does not require the positing of such a metaphysical being. This would amount to ascribing intentionality to nature as a thing in itself, whereas nature, for Kant, 'is not given to us as organized' (*CJ* p51), but rather is made up of appearances constructed by our cognitive faculties. Empirical laws are determinations of the universal laws, or categories, which the understanding prescribes to nature in the synthesis of the manifold. The unity of nature is thus a result of the unity of apperception, and the idea of the purposiveness of nature is a critical principle of reason for the use of reflective judgment.

This view is essentially repeating what Kant had already said in the *First Critique* concerning the third regulative idea of pure reason:

Die dritte Idee der reinen Vernunft, welche eine bloß relative Supposition eines Wesens enthält, als der einigen und allgenugsamen Ursache aller kosmologischen Reihen, ist der Vernunftbegriff von Gott. [...] Bleiben wir nur bei dieser Voraussetzung, als einem bloß regulativen Prinzip, so kann allenfalls daraus nicht weiter folgen, als daß, wo wir einen teleologischen Zusammenhang (nexus finalis) erwarteten, ein bloß mechanischer

oder physischer (*nexus effectivus*) angetroffen werde.
(*CPR* A685/B713, A687/B715)

The third idea of pure reason, which contains a merely relative supposition of a being that is the sole and sufficient cause of all cosmological series, is the idea of God. [...] And provided we restrict ourselves to a merely regulative use of this presupposition, even error cannot do us any serious harm. For the worst that can happen would be that where we expected a teleological connection (*nexus finalis*), we find only a mechanical or physical connection (*nexus effectivus*).

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant develops this notion of the regulative idea by drawing a distinction between determinant and reflective judgment (p18; Ak V, 179). Determinant judgment concerns the subsuming of particulars under the universal transcendental laws, and thus describes the operation of the understanding as detailed in the first Critique (*CPR* A69/B94). Reflective judgment concerns the movement from particulars to a more general law under which they may be subsumed, and it is this operation of the understanding which requires a law for its guidance. This law is the principle of the purposive unity of nature, a law which itself stems from the unity of apperception in the determinant judgment of the understanding.

Yet the last sentence of the above quotation marks a problem which could not be addressed simply by repeating ideas already developed in the first Critique, and it is the problem the *Critique of Teleological Judgment* has to negotiate. The problem is this: if the manifold is synthesized according to category of causality, how then is it possible *in the first place* to observe a teleological connection, which then is subsequently found to be 'only' mechanical? Indeed, if it is possible to perceive a teleological connection, then this must show that the manifold has been synthesized according to a teleological principle. However, 'teleological connection' is given no place in the table of categories of the understanding, but is rather said to be a regulative principle of reason. The question of the 'teleological connection' thus marks the question of

whether Kant is able to retain the strict distinction between determinant and reflective judgment, and, further, the distinction between understanding and reason.

The focus for the question of teleological connection is the organism and the concept of the organism. For Kant, an organism is not merely an aggregate of parts in the same way an object, such as a house, is constituted by its parts; but neither do the parts of an organism have a simple necessary time-order of cause and effect. Instead, the parts of an organism work together in a coordinated way, that is, as if their effect (the living organism) were presupposed as a cause of their coordination. Indeed, such objects are 'explicable [*erklärbar*] in this way alone' (CJ 33; Ak V, 383). Kant states the opposition he sees between mechanism and teleology with great clarity:

Wenn wir nun ein Ganzes der Materie seiner Form nach als ein Product der Teile und ihrer Kräfte und Vermögen sich von selbst zu verbinden [...] betrachten: so stellen wir uns eine mechanische Erzeugungsart desselben vor. Aber es kommt auf soche Art kein Begriff von einem Ganzen als Zweck heraus, dessen innere Möglichkeit durchaus die Idee von einem Ganzen voraussetz, von der selbst die Beschaffenheit und Wirkungsart der Teile abhängt, wie wir uns doch einen organisirten Körper vorstellen müssen. (Ak V, 408)

Now where we consider a material whole and regard it as in point of form a product resulting from the parts and their powers and capacities of self-integration [...] what we represent to ourselves in this way is a mechanical generation of the whole. But from this view of the generation of a whole we can elicit no conception of a whole as end - a whole whose intrinsic possibility emphatically presupposes the idea of a whole as that upon which the very nature and action of the parts depend. Yet this is the representation which we must form of an organized body. (*Critique of Teleological Judgment* p65)

Kant's analytic of teleological judgment in the concept of an organism remains the same as was developed in the first Critique: to recognise the teleological ordering of the parts does not mean the postulation of a grand architect of nature; we 'put the final causes into things, rather than, as it were, lifting them out of our perception of things'.²¹ Kant

wants to maintain that teleology is only an heuristic principle, albeit a transcendental one. The deeper question of how it is possible to perceive something as organism when the understanding constructs objects as mechanically connected is not directly addressed by Kant.²² It is this deeper question which causes Kant's attempted resolution of the opposition between mechanism and teleology (in the 'Dialectic of Teleological Judgment) to become fraught with contradictions.²³ On page 66 (Ak V, 409), Kant asserts that we should simply 'estimate nature on two kinds of principles. The mechanical mode of explanation would not be excluded by the teleological as if the two principles contradicted one another.' Yet just three pages later, he asserts that 'these two principles are not capable of being applied in conjunction to one and the same thing in nature' since, he goes on, 'each mode of explanation excludes the other' (p69; Ak V, 412). Teleological judgments are only heuristic for the investigation of nature which we 'may and should explain [...] on mechanical lines' (p74; Ak V, 415), yet Kant asserts that 'it is utterly impossible [...] to hope to understand the generation even of a blade of grass from mere mechanical causes' (p66; Ak V, 409. My emphases); and Kant further asserts that 'by the constitution of our understanding we must subordinate such mechanical grounds, one and all, to a teleological principle' (p73; Ak V, 415).²⁴

The root of Kant's difficulties lies his idea that teleology and mechanism are 'two principles' (p66; Ak V, 409), forgetting that teleology is a principle of reason and mechanism a principle of the understanding.²⁵ In *The Antinomy of Pure Reason* in the first Critique, the existence of entities posited by principles of pure reason, such as God or the free ego, could be relegated, though remaining transcendently necessary, beyond the reality constructed by understanding to the noumenon. Whereas, in the case of teleology and mechanism, organisms as

entities posited by a principle of reason, populate reality all too obviously. In view of the impossibility of placing teleology in the noumenon, beyond the reality constructed by the understanding, Kant argues that both principles together point beyond reality to their reconciliation in a 'supersensible ground' (p71; Ak V, 413), which is the 'cause of the world' (p67; Ak V, 410) and which bears 'some resemblance' (p65; Ak V, 409) to it.²⁶

While the merging of understanding and reason, which is marked by Kant's phrase 'two principles', together with the problematic status of his metaphysical assertion of a ground of their reconciliation, both lie at the heart of German Idealism, there is yet a more general question arising from Kant's analysis of teleology and mechanism. It will be the question taken up by Heidegger and Benjamin, and which will separate them from German Idealism while explaining their closeness to this tradition of post-Kantian thought. It is the question of the belonging together of language and time itself.

To see how this question arises in Kant's work, it is necessary to consider further his opposition of mechanism and teleology. Kant was deeply engaged with the science of his time and, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, was concerned to provide not only a transcendental justification of Newtonian physics, but also purify it of its appeals to 'occult' qualities, such as the 'impenetrability' of bodies, and 'occult' entities, such as the transcendently real status of space and time. In an age when Aristotelian teleological explanations were being purged from science²⁷, Kant wanted to assert that not only were teleological judgments heuristically necessary for the mechanical investigation of nature, but that 'we are obliged, despite those mechanical causes, to subordinate in the last resort to causality according to ends' (p74; Ak V, 415). Kant's problems with the mechanism-teleology opposition sprang from the way

the table of categories in the first Critique had been presented as closed and complete, and thus teleology could not then be added as a mode of the synthesis of the manifold without seriously jeopardizing the whole of the critical method advanced there.

The solution to the opposition lies in the fact that there is no opposition. This is not to say that teleology can be included in a Newtonian table of categories (the categories, it must be remembered, via the Schematism give rise to the Principles of pure understanding and thus to universal laws of nature in line with Newtonian physics.) Rather, there is no opposition because mechanism is itself teleological. The synthesis of recognition in the three-fold synthesis of the first Critique, concerns the role of concepts in the construction of experience; these concepts go on to play a part in mechanical explanations and investigations of nature. However, their role as characterized by Kant in the three-fold synthesis is a teleological one. Concepts order the manifold of appearances into wholes according to a presupposed idea of that whole. The manifold itself cannot give rise to the idea of such a whole, as this would simply be a version of transcendental realism. The ordering of parts in relation to a whole which one is incapable of 'lifting out of our perception' (*First Introduction* p408; Ak XX, 220) is precisely how teleological judgment is understood by Kant. Thus, implicit in the first Critique, is an idea that *all* concepts are teleological. The difference between concepts used in (so called) mechanical explanation, such as the concepts of Newtonian bodies, and concepts used in (so called) teleological explanations, such as the concept of an organism, would turn on the degree to which the manifold is teleologically ordered. Since the three-fold synthesis is also the condition of the possibility of experience as such, as well as the experience of time, the difference between (so called) mechanical concepts and (so called) teleological concepts turns on

the way time is generated differently in each type of concept, though the difference is to be thought not so much qualitatively, as quantitatively or *quantumly*.²⁸ The concept of a thing, taken as a Newtonian object, generates time as a series of unified, singular moments in which the thing stands as a whole, and in which it can be understood as taking part in events considered as necessary sequential orders of moments. The concept of a thing as a (so called) teleological object, such as an organism, generates time in a more 'stretched' fashion (Heidegger's term); that is, the thing stands in a longer temporal span than the singular moment, and in which it can be understood as ordering and regulating itself in a way which cannot be considered as a necessary sequence of moments. Newtonian object and organism are not opposed, rather, the stretch of time determined by the concept of each varies in each case.

The Newtonian object and the organism, therefore, lie at different ends of a spectrum of the different ways time may be generated in the three-fold synthesis. One might, thus, expect that there are things which do not fall neatly one side or the other of a mechanism-teleology opposition. In the third Critique one does, indeed, find Kant giving examples of objects which are not organisms, yet do still require teleological judgment, and it is this fact which most clearly illustrates the way Kant could not separate mechanism and teleology, and further points to the teleology, and thus the temporality, of all concepts and all things. For example, on page 405 of the first introduction, Kant mentions 'crystal formations' as teleological products of nature, and on p425 he talks about the lens, of which one says that its 'purpose' is to refract light. This latter example is a good illustration of how the concept of an object prescribes what the object does (ie. refract light), such that if an object is found not do such, it can no longer be thought of under that concept. Charles Sherover in *Heidegger, Kant and Time*²⁹ briefly develops this point:

A concept is essentially a futural referent because it is predictive and prescriptive. [...] It sets out essential 'attributes' by which I may recognise and verify its relevance to an object before me. (p256)

This view certainly ties in with one aspect of Kant's idea of the *Bezeichnungsvermögen* in the *Anthropology* as 'the ability to know the present as the means for connecting ideas of *foreseen events* with those of past events' (my emphasis). However, Sherover has imposed upon Kant the priority which Heidegger puts on the future in his early work (a priority which will be explored in chapter 2). The idea of the predictive character of the concept, as predicting the future behavior of the object, also suggests the existence of time as a pre-given 'homogeneous' continuum (to use Benjamin's word) existing extrinsically to the predictions. The picture developed above of the teleology operating implicitly in the three-fold synthesis does not place any special emphasis on the future, and further, since the three-fold synthesis itself generates time, the concept is seen to be inseparable from the generation of the temporality of its object. Kant's analysis has brought to light the way the concept determines time, that is the *temporality* of the concept (in subjective genitive); thus the teleological construction of experience in the three-fold synthesis concerns not simply the future of an object, but rather the way the past, present and future of an object are generated together. It may thus seem that the word *teleology* is inappropriate; indeed, the word *temporality* to describe the way a concept generates the time of its object, is to be preferred, since it avoids connotations of a presupposed futural emphasis. However, the Greek word *τέλος*, while often translated correctly as 'goal' or 'end', also can mean 'performance', 'execution' or 'coming to pass' since its verbal form *τέλειν* generally means 'to perform' or 'to execute'. The teleology of a concept may thus be understood as concerning the way a object 'comes to pass' or 'performs itself'. Given Weiland's Kantian reading of Aristotle's understanding of *τέλος* in *The*

*Problem of Teleology*³⁰, where he argues that the heuristic function of teleology in Aristotle's method of investigation was misunderstood in Aristotelianism, which turned it into a fixed set of ends, it becomes possible to re-read the *progress* from Aristotelian science to Newtonian science in a new way.³¹

The idea of the progress into and of modern science is a key theme in the work of Heidegger and Benjamin; both saw Kant's explicit attempt to justify Newtonianism in the first Critique as supporting an impoverished understanding of reality, yet both found in Kant the seeds of a more profound questioning of time and progress. Their work can thus be understood as re-activating the implicit questioning in Kant's work of the belonging together of time and conceptuality, or, as posed by the *Anthropology*, time and language. It is a questioning which, as was suggested above, can be traced back to Aristotle and, for Heidegger, to the Presocratic understanding of *λόγος*. The radically different ways in which Heidegger and Benjamin took up this tradition of questioning will be explored in the chapters to come.

The phrase *tradition of questioning* is itself capable of being read in the subjective and objective genitive. Both senses will be important for Heidegger and Benjamin, and the two thinkers are united in taking up the question of the way Kant's philosophy is a tradition, that is, the status of a *legacy* in relation to Kant's organic system. Just as for Kant, the organism could not be thought of as existing as a simple unity in its single moment of time, progressing along a continuum of such moments, so for Heidegger and Benjamin, Kant's system and other historical philosophical systems could not be thought of in this way either. To put this in another way, Kant's work raises the *question* of the temporality of language while also raising the question of the temporality of its *answer*. In this way, Kant's work represents a profound moment in the

thinking of language and time, and it is necessary to understand the convoluted issues it raises in order to be able to understand what lies at the heart of Heidegger's and Benjamin's work. The bringing together of Heidegger and Benjamin is by no means in order to show one approach to be better than the other; rather, it is that the *belonging together* of Heidegger and Benjamin in a tradition opened by Kant, may itself shed light on the *belonging together* of time and language. In particular, their work will be investigated in the way they reinstate the circularity of the temporality of language, beyond Kant's attempt to ground his project in a Newtonian temporality. The next section will now explore the tensions which form in Kant's system by this grounding, in order to lead into a consideration of the work of Heidegger and Benjamin.

IV: The Temporality of Critique

It was noted above in relation to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* that the question of teleological judgments has two different, though related, foci. One concerns the perception of nature as a purposive whole, and thus concerns the way the scientist expects his research to form an organised system of knowledge. It was shown that Kant essentially repeated his analysis from the first Critique by arguing that this form of judgment was a transcendental regulative idea of reason. The other focus was on individual teleological conceptions *within* the science, particularly on the organism, and it was here that Kant's critical approach to teleology ran into problems. It was argued above that the difficulties stemmed from the attempt to maintain a clear distinction between reason and understanding. Since, however, in Kant's conception, it is reason which is responsible

for the idea of the formal *outer* unity of a system of science, these difficulties can thus be understood as arising from Kant's attempt to maintain a clear distinction between the outside of a system and its parts inside. Just as in the case of science, the teleological form of the whole could not be held apart from a consideration of the teleological form of its parts, that is, *all* its concepts, so for Kant's critical system itself, a consideration of the teleological forms of its concepts must ensue. To put this another way, since Kant had raised the issue of the temporality of his system (as organism and legacy), the question of the temporality of its constituents must also be raised. The remainder of this chapter will consider the temporality of several key elements of Kant's critical system together with the temporality of the critical approach as such. In this way it will become clear how Kant's critical approach to language and time has consequences for the way philosophy itself is understood.

The most fundamental element in Kant's system is the transcendental unity of apperception. Kant had posited a formal unity which would hold the three-fold synthesis together and thus explain the necessity which was perceived in the succession of momentary intuitions, a necessity which Hume had been forced to deny. Hume's scepticism had also attacked the idea of the self, since no idea of an abiding self could be found amongst the flux of impressions. Kant dealt with both problems at once by arguing that there must be a unitary self in order to even experience the flux of inner appearances; it must therefore be a transcendental condition of experience, that is a transcendental self underlying the empirical self. Kant thus writes: 'this pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception' (CPR A107). Since the three-fold synthesis itself generates time and permanence in time, the positing of such an entity reveals a commitment to a pre-critical idea of objectivity and time at the heart of Kant's analysis. That is, the

transcendental self is conceived of as an object existing continually present in time, without considering how presence is itself generated in the synthesis of the manifold.

The object-like status of the self is hidden by Kant's reference to it as a 'consciousness', yet if this aspect is emphasized, this only serves to set up an infinite regress since it is consciousness which needs to be grounded by transcendental apperception: 'There must, therefore, be a transcendental ground of the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold' (A106). If the transcendental apperception is a consciousness, then it will require grounding by a further transcendental ground, and so on. Both Heidegger and Benjamin make explicit reference to the uncritical objectivity of the self at the heart of Kant's work.³²

Kant's transcendental ego introduces an uncritical ground into the belonging together of language and time in the three-fold synthesis. The projects of Heidegger and Benjamin are attempts to think this belonging together beyond such a grounding. In order to appreciate the profundity of such a move, it will be useful to consider two very different reactions to Kant's work - those of Fichte and Hamman. Fichte was the first to take up the problem of the objectivity of the transcendental ego in Kant's work in terms of the infinite regress it seemed to set up:

Denn dann wäre nach ihm die Möglichkeit alles Denkens bedingt durch ein anderes Denken, und durch das Denken dieses Denkens, und ich möchte wissen, wie wir je zu einem Denken gelangen sollten! (*Sämmtliche Werke* I, 476)

The possibility of all thinking would be conditioned by another thinking, and by the thinking of this thinking, and I should like to know how we are ever to arrive at any thinking at all! (*Science of Knowledge*³³ p49)

Fichte's answer, however, is to step back from the problem of how the self is to be understood or conceptualized by making an idea of intuition of the self central. The intellectual intuition is 'the immediate consciousness that I act and what I enact' (*Science of Knowledge* p38; 'das

unmittelbare Bewußtsein, daß ich handle, und was ich handle', I, 463)).

Through intellectual intuition, the self is found to be pure self-positing activity, 'thetic not synthetic' (p72). While this in one way avoids the problem of the self as an object whose thinking could only be made possible by appeal to a further transcendental ground of unity, in another way Fichte is more dogmatically empiricist than Kant since he needs an uncritical view of language and conceptuality which will allow him to describe what he finds through intellectual intuition.³⁴ Kant's three-fold synthesis in the first Critique was concerned to move away from the idea of a simple link between intuition and conceptualization in order to counter dogmatic empiricism. The appeal to intellectual intuition is a retreat from a reflexion upon the role of language in experience.

Benjamin makes the point more generally that:

für Fichte beruhte die Möglichkeit der Anschauung des Ich auf der Möglichkeit, in der absoluten Thesis die Reflexion einzubannen und zu fixieren. (*Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* GS I.1, p32)

for Fichte the possibility of the intuition of the 'I' rests on the possibility of enchanting and fixing reflexion in the absolute thesis. (*The Concept of Art-Criticism in German Romanticism* GS I.1, 32)

In his lectures on the origin of language, Fichte defines language as 'the expression of our thoughts through arbitrary signs' in order to keep cognition and language entirely separate, and thus denying the critical thrust of Kant's view of the role of language in cognition. Thus Fichte may be understood as trying to counter the uncritical objectivity of the self at the heart of Kant's system whilst actually perpetuating the residues of an uncritical view of language in Kant's system which had allowed Kant to uncritically conceptualize the transcendental unity of apperception in the first place. The way the role of language in the construction of the critical system is not thematized by Kant even though language (as conceptualization) is thematized in the critical system,

indicates an absence of reflexivity which was thus perpetuated by Fichte. Benjamin understood the early German Romantics as taking up the issue of this 'fixing' of reflection, and his view will be discussed in Chapter 5. However, the question of the uncritical view of language underpinning the construction of Kant's system was taken up very soon after the publication of the first Critique, by Hamann.³⁵

In his *Review of Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' and Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*³⁶, Hamann is particularly critical of the separation he perceived in Kant's work between understanding and intuition. Kant's emphasis on the *a priori* forms of the understanding, that is, on its functions prior to, and independent of, empirical experience, suggests to Hamann 'a gnostic hatred of matter or a mystic love of form' (*Metacritique* p215; SH p248). He ironically proposes that Kant's purifications of Reason had not gone far enough, and that to complete the project Kant would need to purify reason of language, which has 'no other credentials than tradition and usage.' (p215; SH p246) Against this trajectory of the Kantian project, Hamann argues that it is conceptuality which links understanding and intuition:

Worin besteht der formelle Unterschied der Begriffe *a priori* und *a posteriori*? [...] Sind *prius* und *posterius*, Analysis und Synthesis nicht natürliche *correlata* und zufällige *opposita*, beide aber, wie die Rezeptivität des Subjekts zum Prädikat, in der Spontaneität unserer Begriffe gegründet? (SH p239)

What is the formal distinction between concepts *a priori* and concepts *a posteriori*? [...] Are *prius* and *posterius*, analysis and synthesis not natural *correlata*, and accidental *opposita*, but both of them grounded, like the receptivity of the subject to the predicate, in the spontaneity of our concepts? (*Review* p209)

For Hamann, then, the 'whole ability to think rests on language' (*Metacritique* p216; SH p249). Hamann develops this thesis in two directions. The first is a linguistic understanding of all experience, and it is a direction which Benjamin refers to in his essay *On the Program*

of the *Coming Philosophy* (p9; GS II.1, 168). Hamann's view of experience is essentially similar to that which Benjamin found in Kabbalah.³⁷

Jede Erscheinung der Natur war ein Wort, das Zeichen, Sinnbild und Unterpfand einer neuen geheimen, unaussprechlichen, aber desto innigern Vereinigung, Mitteilung und Gemeinschaft göttlicher Energien und Ideen. Alles, was der Mensch am Anfange hörte, mit Augen sah, beschaute und seine Hände betasteten, war ein lebendiges Wort. (SH p222)

Every phenomenon of nature was a word, the sign, image and pledge of a new union, communication and community of divine energies and ideas – secret, inexpressible, but all the more profound. Everything that man saw, heard, touched, was a living word. (*The Knight of Rosenkreuz's Last Will about the Divine and Human Origin of Language* p73)

Benjamin's appeal to a similar kabbalistic understanding of experience in *On Language As Such, and the Language of Man* will be explored in Chapter 3. The second direction in which Hamann develops his thesis is towards a revised understanding of reason:

Reason is language, logos [...] Yet these depths are still obscure to me; I still await an apocalyptic angel with a key to this abyss. (Letter to Herder, 18 August 1784, quoted in *Smith* p249)

Heidegger uses this direction of Hamann's thought as the basis for one of his later essays entitled *Language*. Heidegger's later understanding of language will be discussed in Chapter 2. For both Benjamin and Heidegger, the idea that language cannot be separated from thought in order to act as the instrumental means of the latter's expression, is central. A more profound link between the three thinkers, however, is the way an emphasis upon language is concomitant with a renewed questioning of *time*, in relation to experience, and *tradition*, in relation to reason. Hamann, for example, writes the following, which is reminiscent of Kant's words in the *Anthropology*:

What would the most exact and careful knowledge of the present be without a divine renewal of the past, without an inkling of the future. (*A Flying Letter*, quoted in *Smith* p235)

And the correlative of this in relation to reason is an insight into the relation between reason and tradition:

All chatter about reason is pure wind: Language is its organ and criterion. [...] Tradition is the second element. (Letter to Herder, 8 December 1783, quoted in *Smith* p245)

Hamann may thus be understood as developing the consequences of Kant's critical linking of time and conceptuality for the possibility of the critical project as such, by turning Kant's critical insights on to the uncritical view of language and reason which underpinned the critical system. It is Kant's idea of the *a priori* which can be seen to shelter reason's execution of its own critique from the consequences of a profound linking of language and time. The idea of *a priori* is what structures the very method of transcendental criticism, in that it refers to that which is 'prior' to, and a condition of, empirical experience. Since the three-fold synthesis generates time, the *a priori* thus refers to something outside of time. The appeal to this atemporal condition of experience allows Kant to maintain that pure reason is itself unchanging, a view justified by an appeal to the way the table of logical judgments has remained unchanged since Aristotle. The idea of *a priori* understood in this way thus is concomitant with a view of reason as being distinct from the temporal appearance of tradition, or rather, the tradition which pertains to reason is understood as the preserving 'handing down' of an unchanging entity, its unchanging nature being guaranteed by the *a priori* which is the condition of possibility of time. It thus becomes clear that the idea of the *a priori* determines how a tradition of thinking is understood, that is, how philosophy itself is conceived.

The idea of the *a priori* as referring to something 'prior' to experience, indicates that the idea of *a priori* itself involves a time determination. The model of time implicit in Kant's *a priori*, is time understood as isolatable moments, such that the *earlier* (the conditions of experience) stands independently of what follows *later* (that is, experience itself). This view of time in which the earlier stands separately from

the later, is the temporality pertaining to Newtonian objects. Since, as was shown above, Kant was unable to hold to this view of time for all objects of experience and instead a more complex view of the interaction of time and language was required, it thus becomes possible to apply this insight to the time determination metaphorically implicit in the *a priori*. Thus the *a priori* is not to be understood as the objectified isolation of the earlier and the later, but rather understood on a view of time *stretching* between them. The direct consequence of applying this critical view of the *a priori* to the position of reason, is that reason can no longer be held to exist in an atemporal realm distinct from the temporal appearance of tradition, instead they must be understood to be held together in a more complex way, such that the nature of the 'handing down' and the nature of reason (thus the nature of philosophy itself) are co-determined in a thorough-going understanding of the temporality of language. It is this project which is taken up by Heidegger and Benjamin.

This chapter has shown that while the question of the belonging together of language and time was raised in Kant's work in relation to the three-fold synthesis of experience and the temporality of the critical system as a organic legacy, it has far reaching ramifications on every aspect of Kant's project as well as the understanding of philosophy as such. In the chapters which follow, the very different attempts by Heidegger and Benjamin to think the convolutions of language and time will be considered. Yet, in that they take up the same question raised by Kant, the different attempts, with their different styles and terminologies, different literary and philosophical interests, different political involvements, are themselves already convolved within the temporality of language. It is in considering the proximity between the projects of

Heidegger and Benjamin that the belonging together of language and time may be further illuminated.

NOTES

1. The phrase 'return to Kant' or 'back to Kant', introduced by Otto Liebmann (*Kant und die Epigonen*, 1865), became the clarion call for the Neo-Kantian schools.
2. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 22 vols, ed. by the Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1942), vol I: *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*; Translated as *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan, (1929), 1989). References to the first Critique will be given in the form CPR followed by the standard A/B numbering. References to Kant's complete works will be in the form 'Ak' followed by volume and page number.
3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). References to this work will be given in the form 'CJ' followed by the page number. References to *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* will be to Ak V.
4. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. by Richard Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), iii. Translation of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* in *Martin Heidegger: Gesamtausgabe* ed Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), vol. 3, xiv. Further references to the English translation will be in the form 'KPM'; references to Heidegger's collected works will be given in the form 'GA' followed by volume and page number.
5. In the period immediately before Heidegger started writing *Being and Time* he was increasingly drawn to Kant. In the middle of his lecture course *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA 21), WS 1925-26, Heidegger changed from lecturing on Aristotle to Kant. The lecture course of WS 1927-28 was given over entirely to Kant: *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants 'Kritik der Reinen Vernunft'* (GA 25). This turn toward Kant is well documented by Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993). Kisiel cites a letter written to Jaspers in 1925, concerning his Kant seminars where Heidegger remarks: 'The most beautiful part of it is that I am beginning *actually to love Kant*' (Kisiel p409).
6. Walter Benjamin, *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy*, trans. Mark Ritter, in *Benjamin*, ed Gary Smith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp1-12. Translation of 'Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie', in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols, ed. by Rolf Tiedmann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), II.1, p157-171. Further references to the collected works will be in the form 'GS' followed by volume and page number.

7. Translation taken from Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. by James Rolleston (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991) pp40-1.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. by Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974). Translation of Ak VII.
9. Derrida develops his argument against the phonocentric bias in philosophy of language in *Speech and Phenomena*, trans David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973) and *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), where he argues that it marks an idealized conception of the self-affecting and self-present metaphysical subject. This line of argument will not be developed here, though the problems of such a programmatic application of deconstruction will be touched upon at various points in the chapters below.
10. The question of the intuition verses concept divid is treated well in Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 66-68. Allison does not, however, discuss the relationship of the concept to time.
11. This point is also made by W.H. Bossart, 'Kant's "Analytic" and the Two-fold Nature of Time', *Kant-Studien*, 69 (1978), 288-298. He writes for example: 'The transcendental synthesis of time is not so much a synthesis of moments time which are given, as it is a generation of temporal relations between data of experience' (p294). Bossart remains, however, within a psychologistic context of discussing the 'consciousness' of time; he also does not consider the Newtonian character of the 'temporal relations' generated.
12. Stephen Körner, *Kant* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 50-55, provides a clear discussion of Kant's 'clue' for the discovery of all pure concepts of the understanding.
13. Kant's doctrine of the Schematism has given rise to much difference of opinion. G.J. Warnock, 'Concepts and Schematism', *Analysis*, 8 (1949), 77-82, sees the Schematism as arising from Kant's mistaken separation of the possession of a concept (rule) from the ability to use it. Moltke S. Gram argues against the 'rule theory' of the Schematism in *Kant, Ontology and the A Priori* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 95-100. His argument is that they can only function as rules in the sense of being translations of the logical functions of thought in the categories into 'temporal' terms. Henry E. Allison devotes a chapter to the schematism in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 173-198, in which he reviews many of the positions taken, and essentially concurs with Gram's view, stressing the place of time in the Schematism. His general approach to the transcendental idealism of time is, however, to stress its givenness as a pure form of intuition and not its generation in the three-fold synthesis. Thus the categories are transformed into 'temporal' terms in the Schematism, rather than understanding the Schemata as precisely the determination of the 'temporal'.
14. For a thorough investigation of Kant's relationship to the sciences of his day see Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harward University Press, 1992): 'Kant was deeply engaged with the sciences of his day and with the mathematical physics of Newton in particular. [...] In his critical period, we see Kant

attempting to redefine the nature and method of metaphysics in the light of the recent advances in mathematics and mathematical physics' (p xi).

While Kant's justification of Newtonian science is fundamental for understanding the circularity of his project, it is by no means an uncritical support of Newton's thinking. Newtonian absolute space and time were clear examples for Kant of an appeal to occult entities (A39/B56). On this point see Allison pp. 11-12.

15. *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy* p2; GS II.1, p158.

16. Without further investigating this circularity, Friedman writes in *Kant and the Exact Sciences*: 'Newton's *Principia* represents a realization of the transcendental principles of the First Critique; but it is also an object of an application of transcendental philosophy' (p136). Charles M. Sheroover, *Heidegger, Kant and Time* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1971), is on the point of recognising the circularity of Kant's method when he writes: 'Kant's analytic procedure was a "vertical" slice-through of experience (as one cuts down through a layer of cake) in order to determine the requisite structure of what is experienced. His categories, then, were primarily geared to what was presumed to be the structure of the experienced things as such. Implicitly taking the scientific structuring of the context of experience as given, his appointed task was to transplant it into the *cogito* inherited from Descartes. His working conception of time, then, comes not from an examination of the time of the subject's experiencing, but from the ordered structure of what is experienced at any time' (p245).

17. P.F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London and New York: Methuen, 1966), is well known for finding in Kant's transcendental justification of causality 'a *non sequitur* of numbing grossness' (p 137). For Strawson this *non sequitur* lies in Kant's move from a conceptual to a causal notion of necessity: 'It is a very curious contortion indeed whereby a conceptual necessity based on the fact of change is equated with the causal necessity of that very change' (p 138). Allison in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* replies that this is to take Kant as an empirical idealist, see pp. 216-234. See also Lewis White Beck, 'A Non-Sequitur of Numbing Grossness?', in *Essays on Kant and Hume*, ed. by Lewis White Beck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 147-153. Beck criticises Strawson for disregarding Hume's sceptical attack on the notion of causality, which lay behind Kant's approach (pp. 151-152).

18. Wayne Waxman, 'What Are Kant's Analogies About?', *The Review of Metaphysics*, XLVII (1993), 64-114, provides a similar reading of Kant's Analogies in the light of his interpretation of transcendental idealism.

19. For example George Schrader, 'Kant's Theory of Concepts' in *Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Paul Wolff (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp134-155.

20. See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's 'Critique of Judgment'* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p191: 'Kant chose to adhere to a relentless sense of mechanical causality in the explication of physical phenomena, even though he realized it would not work for organic life.'

21. Immanuel Kant, 'The First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*', in *Critique of Judgment*, trans Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987) pp385-441 (footnote 27, p408). The German is

in Ak XX, 193-251 (220): 'Wir legen, sagt man, Endursachen in die Dinge hinein und heben sie nicht gleichsam aus ihrer Wahrnehmung heraus'.

22. George Schrader, 'The Status of Teleological Judgment in the Critical Philosophy', *Kant-Studien*, 45 (1953-54), 204-235. Schrader presents a fine, open ended account of the question raised here. As he succinctly puts it: 'Kant's real difficulty is the decision whether or not to treat organic entities as phenomenological objects. If they are, teleology is an *a priori* principle, and mechanism and teleology are regulative, and thus neither is transcendentally necessary' (p225). Schrader is mistaken, though, in seeing a strict opposition between 'regulative' and 'transcendentally necessary'.

23. John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's 'Critique of Judgment'*, gives a thorough over-view of Kant's difficulties, especially in relation to the Second Analogy (p221-223).

24. There have been several notable accounts to reconcile Kant's 'two principles' more adequately. T.D. Weldon, *Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), reconciles them by maintaining that the noumenal character of things is 'through and through organic and that these things appearing under the forms of space and time preserve discernible traces of the organic nature' (p244). This interpretation falls back on a realist view of the noumena; it is also not clear how space and time are opposed to the organic nature of things, such that only 'traces' of their organic nature remain.

Michael Kraft, 'Kant's Theory of Teleology', in *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments*, IV, 132-153, also reconciles mechanism and teleology by appeal to the 'thing in itself' hidden behind a 'veil of appearances': 'The fact that we use both mechanism and teleology indicates that the world is not an absolute, tht it is not a thing in itsel. The mechanical explanation of events is not final, but an X must stand behind appearances' (p78). J.D. McFarland provides a useful over-view of literature on this question in *Kant's Concept of Teleology* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1970). After reviewing the range of opinion, he concludes that teleology and mechanism, are simply united in the 'super-sensible world' (p120). His proposed reinterpretation of teleology as 'function' suggests he has not grasped what is entailed by the idea of a critique of teleological judgment, since the notion of 'function' is, of course, teleological.

25. Schrader writes in 'The Status of Teleological Judgment in the Critical Philosophy': 'Kant suggests, it seems, that mechanism and teleology are two alternative ways of interpreting causality' (p225). In this way, Schrader also overlooks the differences between them.

26. Kant's appeal to the supersensible ground of nature as the reconciliation of teleology and mechanism, and thus reason and understanding, clearly supports Zammito's contention in *The Genesis of Kant's 'Critique of Judgment'* that ethical and theological concerns were utmost in Kant's mind in his writing of the third Critique.

27. In the light of this project, together with the fact that throughout the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Aristotelian teleological science was found increasingly unsatisfactory and even ridiculed, Kant's attempt to provide a transcendental basis for the necessity of teleological judgment appears out of place. This testifies to the rigor with which Kant took up the question of conceptualization in the light of thinking of all knowledge as subject to time. W. Wieland succinctly expresses this in 'The Problem of Teleology', in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. by Jonathan

Barnes (London: Duckworth, 1975), I, 141-160 (141): 'The beginning of modern thought can be defined by the decay of belief in that universal teleological order. [...] But the teleological elements in modern mechanics have not been appreciated in their full significance.'

28. The term *quantitatively* is used here only in a suggestive way, to prevent a clear opposition between two forms of time reinscribing an opposition between mechanical and teleological concepts. The term does, however, have unwanted connotations of time as an additive sequence. A better term is *quantumly*, since Kant himself draws a distinction between time understood as *quantitas* and as *quantum* (Axioms of Intuition A163/B204). The former refers to the synthesised unity of time, the latter to time as a pure form of sensible intuition. This distinction explains why, in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, time is a pure form of intuition and not a general concept (A31-32/B47): concepts are synthesized out of parts, while time as the pure form of intuition which 'underlies' synthesis is always 'one single time' (A32/B48). Kant's distinction between time as a pure form of intuition and time as generated in the three-fold synthesis has not been treated in this chapter because Kant confuses them early on and understands the former in terms of the latter. For example already in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* he writes: 'Time is nothing but the form of inner sense [...]. It has to do [...] with the relation of representations in our inner state' (A33/B49). The distinction thus, in one sense, plays no major role in the first *Critique*, and the artificial separation of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* from the *Transcendental Analytic* was critically reviewed by Hegel. The idea that there is a more original time which 'underlies' (A32/B48) its synthesis into additive sequential moments will be taken up in relation to both Heidegger's and Benjamin's understanding of time.

29. Charles M. Sherover, *Heidegger, Kant and Time* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1971)

30. W. Wieland, 'The Problem of Teleology' in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, etc (London: Duckworth, 1975), vol. 1 (Science), pp141-160.

31. Whilst Wieland does not mention Kant's approach to teleology, his interpretation of Aristotle is very much in this direction. That is, Wieland argues for the need to remember that *τέλος* is only one of the four causes in contradistinction to Aquinas' interpretation which saw 'final cause' as the cause of the others. He argues further that for Aristotle, the four causes were just the four ways of speaking about causation in general usage, and thus that 'final cause' must not be taken as referring to a universal teleological order - the misinterpretation which is found in scholastic Aristotelianism. The advantage of Wieland's reading is that it allows a clear distinction to be seen between Aristotle and Plato: 'The *Physics* is written against Plato's *Timeaus* and the idea of a wise creator to explain order. Aristotle wants to show that to recognise a meaningful natural order does not force one to assume the existence of an authority which consciously plans' (p 156). Against Wieland's reading, Aristotle uses an idea of *τέλος* in a wider sense than merely a 'regulative' principle of thought or speaking. The *τέλος* of an object is linked to its *μορφή* and *εἶδος* through Aristotle's idea of *ἐντελέχεια*. The 'form' or 'idea' of an object, however, is what is given in the object's definition (*λόγος*). It would seem, therefore, that a more profound understanding of Aristotle's thinking of teleology would be concerned precisely with this link between *τέλος* and *λόγος*. If *τέλος* is understood in the sense of 'coming to pass', thus stressing its temporal

connotation, it would be possible to re-read Aristotle's teleology as a profound statement of the temporality of language.

32. Benjamin writes for example:

Diese Subjekt-Natur des erkennenden Bewußtseins rührt aber daher daß es in Analogie zum empirischen das dann freilich Objekt sich gegenüber hat gebildet ist. (GS II.1, 161)

The subject-nature of this cognizing consciousness, however, stems from the fact that it is formed in analogy to the empirical consciousness, which of course has objects confronting it. (*On the Program of the Coming Philosophy* p4)

33. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Die Wissenschaftslehre*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by J.H. Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), vol 1. Translated as *The Science of Knowledge*, trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

34. William Rasch, 'Chastising Reflection: Fichte's Suspicion of Language', *Monatshefte*, 84(4) (1992), 417-430, provides an interesting discussion of Fichte's view of language from a deconstructive standpoint.

35. Robert E. Butts, 'The Grammar of Reason: Hamann's Challenge to Kant', *Synthese*, 75(2) (1988), 251-283, provides a useful outline of the problems Hamann saw in Kant's neglect of the question of language.

36. There is a selection of Hamann's writings in *J.G.Hamann: A Study in Christian Existence* by Ronald Gregor Smith (London: Collins, 1960). References to the German will be to *Schriften J.G.Hamanns* ed. Karl Widmaier (Leipzig, Im Insel Verlag, 1921), and in the form 'SH' followed by the page number.

37. Further discussion of Hamann's thinking of the relationship between experience and language may be found in J.C. O'Flaherty, *The Philosophy of Hamann* (London: AMS Press, 1852), especially pp. 34-38.

CHAPTER 2: HEIDEGGER AND THE EVENTUAL MEETING OF
LANGUAGE AND TIME

I. Method as Weg

In pursuing the question of the belonging together of language and time in Heidegger's project, this chapter will present a trajectory through his work. Heidegger's analysis of time would seem to occur predominantly in his early works up to 1930, for example *History of the Concept of Time* (1925), *Being and Time* (1927), *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927) and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929). The works focusing on language appear towards the end of his writing career in the 1950s, for example *The Nature of Language* (1958) and *The Way to Language* (1959).¹ The question of language is not, however, absent from the earlier works, nor is the question of time absent from the later ones.² The question of the belonging together of language and time thus stretches across the whole of Heidegger's writings. Given the huge volume of Heidegger's corpus, an attempt to trace the variations in the relationship between language and time throughout the development of Heidegger's thought would be an enormous task, and certainly could not be completed in any detail in a single chapter. Since, however, the purpose of this chapter is to prepare the ground for an engagement between Heidegger and Benjamin on the question of language and time, this chapter will be concerned only to identify, in a more schematic way, the key moments in Heidegger's thinking of language and time. These key elements will be the basis for a more detailed analysis of translation and history in Chapter 4 and thus also for the engagement with Benjamin's thought.

Given that the questions of language and time stretch across the

whole of Heidegger's work, it is first necessary to consider certain methodological questions concerning the approach to, and presentation of, this 'whole'.³ Three related questions must be considered: first, is it necessary to take Heidegger's early works into account, instead of concentrating on his later, developed views on language and time? Secondly, how is the idea of 'development', in relation to the move from Heidegger's early work on time to his later work on language, to be understood? And thirdly, how, in general, is Heidegger's legacy to be approached, without implicitly prejudging the question of its systematicity or unsystematicity (or anti-systematicity)?

The first question, 'is it necessary to take Heidegger's early works into account', is answered in the affirmative by Heidegger himself in commenting on the distinction between *Heidegger I* (before the 'turn', *die Kehre*) to *Heidegger II* (after the 'turn'):

Ihre Unterscheidung zwischen "Heidegger I" und "Heidegger II" ist allein unter der Bedingung berechtigt, daß stets beachtet wird: Nur von dem unter I Gedachten her wird zunächst das unter II zu Denkende zugänglich. Aber I wird nur möglich, wenn es in II enthalten ist.

The distinction you make between "Heidegger I" and "Heidegger II" is justified only on the condition that this is kept constantly in mind: only by way of what Heidegger I has thought does one gain access to what is being thought under Heidegger II. But [the thought of] Heidegger I becomes possible only if it is contained in Heidegger II.⁴

In this quotation, Heidegger is describing a peculiar referentiality back and forth between his early and later work. This relatedness will be discussed in more detail below.⁵ There are, though, other reasons apart from Heidegger's own view which can be suggested in support of the contention that the early work must not simply be considered as surpassed by the later. One reason is that present in the second question above: the nature of the 'development' of Heidegger's thinking must not be prejudged. The second reason is that the tensions which exist between the early Heidegger and the late Heidegger are themselves

illuminating for an assessment of Heidegger's project as a 'whole'. For example, the tensions between questioning and saying, and between remembering and forgetting.

The project of fundamental ontology, as developed in Heidegger's early works is a *questioning* - 'what does it mean to be?' - an essential part of which is the destruction of the tradition of Western ontology. This latter aspect is characterized in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics as a remembering*:

Die Endlichkeit des Daseins - das Seinsverständnis - liegt in der Vergessenheit. [...] Der fundamentalontologische Grundakt der Metaphysik des Daseins als der Grundlegung der Metaphysik ist daher eine "Wiedererinnerung". (GA 3, 233)

The finitude of Dasein - the understanding of Being - lies in forgetfulness. [...] The basic fundamental-ontological act of the metaphysics of Dasein as the laying of the ground for metaphysics is hence a "remembering again". (KPM p159)

In the later work, however, the questioning would seem to come to an end in favour of Saying (*die Sage*); in *Time and Being*⁶ (1962) Heidegger rhetorically asks whether the question as to what *das Ereignis* is, ought not to be given up (*verzichten*). Questioning is not simply abandoned, though, in Heidegger's later work; rather Heidegger writes that questioning *forgets* itself:

Besinnung braucht es als ein Entsprechen, das sich in der Klarheit unablässigen Fragens an das Unerschöpfliche des Fragwürdigen vergißt, von dem her das Entsprechen im geeigneten Augenblick den Charakter des Fragens verliert und zum einfachen Sagen wird. (*Wissenschaft und Besinnung* (1955) in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* p70)

Reflection is needed as a responding that forgets itself in the clarity of ceaseless questioning away at the inexhaustibility of that which is worthy of questioning - of that out of which, in the moment properly its own, responding loses the character of questioning and becomes simply saying. (*Science and Reflection*⁷ p182)

Reflection (*die Besinnung*) is the word Heidegger uses in the essay *Science and Reflection* to name the thinking of being in opposition to the fixed ontology by which a science proceeds. As the quotation makes

clear, the questioning approach of fundamental ontology is not simply to be left behind in a later, more poetic, work. There is, rather, a more complex relationship whereby saying arises from ceaseless questioning of being ('that which is worth of questioning', '*das Fragwürdige*') and what it means to *be*. To concentrate upon Heidegger's later work in an exposition of the belonging together of language and time would be to divorce saying from questioning. And since questioning in fundamental ontology is guided by a temporal analysis, such an approach would overlook an implicit affirmation of the necessary connection of temporal analysis to the later work. If the question of the belonging together of language and time in the Heideggerian project is not to be prejudged, therefore, there is a need to initially hold together the seemingly diverse poles of Heidegger's work. In other words, Heidegger's corpus must be crossed with a "necessary speed", to take a term from Benjamin (Benjamin's theory of reading will be developed at length in chapter 3). Such a reading will be presented below.

A further reason for approaching Heidegger's work with a certain "speed" relates again to the second question posed above concerning the 'development' of Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger's work is very often presented 'developmentally' and with a tendency to break down his work into phases and stages, related in turn by turns and reversals.⁸ Heidegger himself used the term *Kehre* to describe the 'change' (*Wendung*) of his thought after the period of *Being and Time*, and despite his protestations to the contrary, it is often taken to indicate a change of standpoint or an abandonment of the issues in *Being and Time*.⁹ The consequences of this approach are that Heidegger's work is regarded as a progression, wherein the early phases are surpassed, and also that the individual stages are treated as isolated systems of thought which may be judged according to their completeness or incompleteness.

A prevalent example of this approach is the one used by Herman Rapaport in *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language*¹⁰ to structure his analysis of Heidegger: was the project of *Being and Time*, the radical temporal destruction of the metaphysical tradition, completed, or did Heidegger "hesitate" (p66) in his execution of the task? Such an approach ignores Heidegger's frequent assertions, beginning in *Being and Time* itself (H22), that the metaphysical tradition cannot be simply 'shaken off' (*Abschüttelung*), and that 'one can in no way leave it behind like a no-longer believed and upheld doctrine.'¹¹ Rapaport's approach also overlooks the question of systematicity itself, that is - to ask, concerning the project of *Being and Time*, whether or not it was completed - precludes the questioning of systematicity itself. As was shown in chapter 1, the idea of the system carries its own thesis of the temporality of language. The idea of a system as an organic whole was seen to require a prior concept which would account for an interdependence of parts which was not experienced as a chain of cause and effects. The quotation above seems to indicate that Heidegger thought that the parts 'Heidegger I' and 'Heidegger II' should be taken as interdependent in this way, and that they are thus connected via their common relationship to a 'whole'. It will be argued that Heidegger's work is not simply systematic in the way Kant sought to ground systematicity, but rather that the idea of 'whole' here itself points to a rethinking of system. It will be argued below that Heidegger's later work is involved in a destructive, questioning re-reading of his early work and thus that the relationship of the parts is circularly determined from within the project, as was shown to be the case for Kant's system. The early work is not thus simply left behind (as in a progressive, developmental model), nor can the parts be simply related in a static object-like whole (as would be the case if it were grounded in a Kantian subjectivity), rather

it will be argued that Heidegger's *Denkweg* is characterized by a complex reflexivity upon the language of its saying of, and the time of its incessant questioning of, that which guides thinking.¹² The questioning of systematicity in relation to the linguistic work will be investigated in chapters 4 and 5 on translation. It is here that the proximity of Heidegger's and Benjamin's thinking to Hegel's will need to be considered. Hegel's work will be understood in terms of its being 'the working out of a fundamental intention of Kant's problematic.'¹³

There is one further way in which the systematicity of Heidegger's work is decided implicitly in advance, and this concerns the nature of the legacy of Heidegger's work to modern philosophy. The question of the legacy of Heidegger's thinking is then, the third methodological question posed above: how in general is Heidegger's work to be approached, as a whole, left to posterity? Just as Kant gave guidance on how his system was to be considered as a legacy, so too does Heidegger. He stressed repeatedly that he did not want his work thought of as a philosophical position, but rather as a path of thinking and reflection which had to be carried on incessantly. (For example, he writes in *The Problem of a Non-objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Contemporary Theology* that a 'Heideggerian philosophy [...] does not exist.'¹⁴ And in a foreword to volume 1 of the *Gesamtausgabe* he stresses that his work must not be taken as completed.¹⁵) Heidegger thus did not want his work to be taken as simply lying in the past and treated as an object for historical analysis; the understanding of legacy which this would involve would take his work to be closed and finished, handed on from a past which is similarly closed and finished.

Yet if there is one philosopher who has done more to relegate Heidegger's project to a past from which we have moved on, it is Jacques Derrida. His comment that a metaphysics of presence finds its

profoundest support in Heidegger's work serves to relegate Heidegger's project to the tradition of metaphysics, which by implication the deconstructionist critic has moved beyond¹⁶. Whereas Heidegger's destructive engagement with the past texts of Western philosophy stems from an analysis of time in which the past is not simply a 'now' which no longer *is*, but rather very much *is*, though as having-been (this will be explained in more detail below), Derrida's deconstructive engagement serves to support an idea of time as linear progression, in which the critic exists in a moment of time which has progressed beyond that of the text being criticised. By distancing deconstruction from the projects of both Heidegger and Benjamin, Derrida gives his work a 'newness' and superiority which is implicated in the view of time as progression, characteristic of modernity.

The following reading of Heidegger's legacy has several aims. First, to bring out the essential elements of Heidegger's thinking on language and time, in order to prepare for the later engagement with Benjamin. Secondly, to allow different points on Heidegger's path to resonate together in order to bring out the reflexivity of the incessant questioning, and questioning of questioning, and so on, which becomes Saying when questioning questions the appropriateness of questioning and thus necessarily, though momentarily forgets itself. While in order to emphasise this path of thinking the presentation of Heidegger's work is necessarily chronological, it must constantly be borne in mind that Saying does not succeed questioning in a chronological way, rather they belong together on his path and as his method (from μέθοδος, a 'following after' or 'pursuit', from μετά, 'after' and ὁδός 'way' or 'path'), the temporal and teleological connotations of which must themselves be thought from within a thinking of the temporality of language.

II. The Project of Fundamental Ontology

In chapter 1 it was shown that a clear circularity was involved in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, a circularity which Kant himself acknowledged: the pure concepts of understanding were deduced (*Deduktion* in its older meaning has the sense of to justify, as before a court of law) by reference to Newtonian science, yet it was Newtonian science which the Critique sought to secure transcendently. This circularity was shown to become vicious when it was demonstrated that there were certain experiences, those of organisms in particular, which did not fit into a Newtonian conceptuality and that the Critique functioned to circularly justify only a narrow range of experience. While acknowledging this limitation of Kant's project, Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* sought to emphasize the essential thrust of Kant's work, which was to provide a metaphysics of metaphysics, or in other words, to provide the transcendental ground for any possible metaphysics.

Die folgende Untersuchung stellt sich die Aufgabe, Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft als eine Grundlegung der Metaphysik auszulegen, um so das Problem der Metaphysik als das einer Fundamentalontologie vor Augen zu stellen. (GA 3,1)

The following investigation is devoted to the task of interpreting Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as a laying of the ground for metaphysics and thus of placing the problem of metaphysics before us as one of fundamental ontology. (KPM p1)

Fundamental ontology for Heidegger is thus the deepening of the project he finds in Kant: giving the formal conditions of any possible ontology. Heidegger will also want fundamental ontology to explain at the same time how it is that metaphysics haunts (Kant's word CPR Bxv; *heimsuchen*) human nature. Heidegger states this in a way which clearly shows the affinity between his project and Kant's, at the beginning of *Being and Time*.

Die Seinsfrage zielt daher auf eine apriorische Bedingung der Möglichkeit nicht nur der Wissenschaften, die Seiendes als so und so Seiendes durchforschen und sich dabei je schon in einem

Seinverständnis bewegen, sondern auf die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der vor den ontischen Wissenschaften liegenden und sie fundierenden Ontologien selbst. (H11)

The question of being aims therefore at ascertaining the *a priori* conditions not only for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities of such and such a type, and, in so doing, already operate with an understanding of being, but also for the possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations. (H11)

The name 'fundamental ontology' together with the usual capitalisation of the word 'Being' in English serve to suggest that Heidegger is seeking to understand being as that which grounds the existence of the entities posited by an ontology. Such a suggestion would lead to an infinite regress, since it would be necessary to ask further what grounds the existence of being. Rather, fundamental ontology seeks to ask how the existence of the entities posited in an ontology is understood; the question of being is the question of what it means for these entities *to be* as grounds for things in the world, and what it means for these things *to be* in need of grounding, and further, what does *to be* mean in general given that for so long that which *is* has been determined in such a dual fashion. Kant had sought to underpin all knowledge and experience by showing how time was determined *a priori* by the pure logical judgements of the understanding. Following in this direction, fundamental ontology, as will be shown, is concerned to show how Being in general is understood through various determinations of time: the temporality of an entity, the temporality of an ontology and the temporality of the *a priori* which links them. That is, Heidegger wants to ascertain the proper nature of time, '*ursprünglich*' time, which is thus capable of being determined in such diverse ways.

Given the circularity implicit in Kant's approach, the initial problem for fundamental ontology is that it needs to start with an understanding of being. The question of being, and questioning in general, must be

guided in advance by an understanding of what it asks about. In terms of Kant's project, the understanding of experience which guided the Critique was too narrow and one sided in that it was limited to Newtonian science.

Im Blick auf Kants Wesenbestimmung des Dings als Naturding können wir ermessen, daß Kant von vornherein die Frage nach der Dingheit der uns umgebenden Dinge nicht stellt. Diese Frage hat für ihn kein Gewicht. Sein Blick heftet sich sogleich auf das Ding als Gegenstand der mathematisch-physikalischen Wissenschaft. (GA 41, 131)

Looking at Kant's determination of the essence of the thing as natural thing, we can gauge that from the start Kant does not pose the question of the thingness of the things that surround us. This question has no weight for him. His view immediately fixes itself on the object of mathematical-physical science. (*What is a Thing?*¹⁷ p128)

Science is only 'one way' (*Science and Reflection* p174) in which what is may be experienced. Heidegger is not concerned to try and avoid the circularity of Kant's approach, rather to start with a more broad understanding of how entities are experienced, in order to take account of the circularity of experience itself.¹⁸ For Heidegger, this more broad understanding is found not in science, but in 'everydayness', the way one interacts with things in the world without ever thematising them, or ever considering them even as objects. The thingness of things in an everyday understanding is characterised by the way one uses things, negotiates one's way around things, and in general relates to them without ever considering them as objects. Thus Heidegger writes that when one considers how the Being of entities is understood in general, one learns that:

Entsprechend und erst recht ist das Ding im Sinne des uns zunächst - vor aller Theorie und Wissenschaft - Begegnenden nur bestimmbar aus einem Zusammenhang, der vor aller und über aller Natur liegt. (GA 41, 131)

The thing, as encountered closest to us, before all theory and science, is adequately and first of all definable in a relational context which lies *before* and *above* all nature. (*What is a Thing?* p129)

And Heidegger gives the following description of such an everyday relation to things in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

Wie zeigt sich das Seiende, wobei wir uns zunächst und zumeist aufhalten? Hier im Hörsaal sitzend, erfassen wir zwar nicht Wände - es sie denn, daß wir uns langweilen. Gleichwohl sind die Wände schon zugegeben, vordem wir sie als Objekte denken. [...] Vielmehr ist primär gegeben - wenn auch nicht ausdrücklich und eigens bewußt - ein Dingzusammenhang. (GA 24, 231-2)

How do the beings with which we dwell show themselves to us primarily and for the most part? Sitting here in the auditorium, we do not in fact apprehend walls - not unless we are getting bored. Nevertheless, the walls are already present even before we think them as objects. [...] What is primarily given instead - even if not in explicit and express consciousness - is a thing-contexture. (BPP p163)

What Heidegger means by *Dingzusammenhang* is that things are not experienced in a senseless jumble, but rather one is able to find one's way around things and make use of things in a coherent way. However, how is this 'one', which 'experiences', to be understood? For Heidegger, what stood in the way of Kant's attempt to lay the ground for metaphysics was that he 'took over Descartes' position quite dogmatically'¹⁹ with regard to the subjectivity of the subject. As was shown in chapter 1, the transcendental ego was given an uncritical object-like status, which ultimately served to make possible the experience of objects by functioning as the unifying ground of the syntheses. To put this another way, the Newtonian conception of science which was to be justified, ultimately and circularly determined the nature of the self which was to make Newtonian science possible. Again, Heidegger is not proposing that this circularity is a fault which could be avoided, rather it is necessary to 'begin' with a view of the self which is broader, closer to the everyday experience of 'losing oneself' in one's activities. ('Begin' is in quotation marks because as will be shown, Heidegger will also be concerned to ask about the *temporality* of such the circularity.)

Heidegger names this self *das Dasein*, which is to be understood not as

'experiencing' a world which is essentially outside of it, but rather as always already being-in-the-world, such that its view of itself can be determined by the different ways it behaves, in the world: for example, lost in its activities, or thought of like an object. Heidegger writes in *Being and Time*:

Nicht zu viel, sondern zu wenig wird für die Ontologie des Daseins "vorausgeht", wenn man von einem weltlosen Ich "ausgeht", um ihm dann ein Objekt und eine ontologisch grundlose Beziehung zu diesem zu verschaffen. *Zu kurz trägt der Blick*, wenn "das Leben" zum Problem gemacht *und dann auch gelegentlich* der Tod berücksichtigt wird. *Künstlich dogmatisch beschnitten* ist der thematische Gegenstand, wenn man sich "zunächst" auf ein "theoretisches Subjekt" beschränkt, um es dann "nach der praktischen Seite" in einer beigefügten "Ethik" zu ergänzen. (H316)

If, in the ontology of Dasein, we 'take our departure' from a worldless "I" in order to provide this "I" with an object and an ontologically baseless relation to that Object, then we have 'presupposed' not too much, but *too little*. If we make a problem of 'life', *and then just occasionally* have regard for death *too*, *our view is too short-sighted*. The object we have taken as our theme is *artificially and dogmatically curtailed* if 'in the first instance' we restrict ourselves to a 'theoretical subject', in order that we may then round it out 'on the practical side' by tacking on an 'ethic'. (H316)

Dasein, as the entity which can ask 'what is the meaning of being?' and which is thus concerned with being, is the thematic object of *Being and Time* when it is understood more broadly than a worldless subjectivity and rather is understood as always already 'outside' of itself in the world such that its concern with being is a concern with its own being-in-the-world. Dasein can relate to entities in the world in various ways, of which science is one. In each of the different ways, the being of the entities (the way the entities are) is determined differently, but these different ways are only possible because Dasein has an *a priori* understanding or comportment towards being. Dasein, that is, ek-sists (Greek ἔκστασις, 'standing outside'); it exists as stepping out of itself towards beings, the being of which can be variously determined, and always is determined *before* any experience of beings (BPP p11; GA 3, 14).

It is thus the existence of Dasein which fundamental ontology seeks to analyse, and, following on from Kant's temporal analysis, Dasein's concern with beings will be found to be constituted by its comportment towards the past, present and future, such that a determination of Being is always a determination of the unity of these temporal comportments, or as Heidegger puts it, being is always a projection upon ek-static (ecstatic) temporality.

However, just as Kant's transcendental analysis was guided in advance by the nature of entities found in Newtonian science, while in turn the transcendental analysis served to censure Reason's improper ways of thinking, it may be argued that Heidegger's own analysis of the everydayness of Dasein's non-objectifying concern with the world, has been guided in advance by what he wanted to show, ie. that Dasein exists as an ecstatic temporality which is prior to its determination into a series of objectified now points. And conversely, it could be argued that Heidegger's depiction of ecstatic temporality as the proper, *ursprünglich* time of Dasein, would seem to a circular argument for a view of the proper way of being in the world. These objections are in no way avoided by Heidegger. With regard to the first objection, the circular nature of Heidegger's project, he maintains, rather, that it cannot be avoided. (The second objection will be considered in section III below.) The circularity between the everyday way of coming across entities, the analysis of Dasein's being-in-the-world, and the temporal analysis of Dasein's existence, form an essential part of fundamental ontology - its hermeneutical circle. An attempt to avoid this circularity or to ignore it would be to subscribe to a philosophy of immediate intuition of the nature of what is, such as was shown to be present in Fichte's science of knowledge, in the sense of immediate intuition of the self as pure activity.

Fundamental ontology is not alone in being involved in circularity. One purpose of the extensive analysis of Dasein's factual everyday existence is to show how all modes of understanding, whether they be particular sciences or metaphysical ontologies are guided in advance by an understanding, though perhaps vague and unthematized, of the area in which the entities they are questioning after lie. Or as Heidegger puts it at the beginning of *Being and Time*: 'Every questioning is a seeking. Every seeking takes its direction beforehand from out of what is sought' ('Jedes Fragen ist ein Suchen. Jedes Suchen hat sein vorgängiges Geleit aus dem Gesuchten her.' H5) What will be seen to be distinctive about the hermeneutic circle of fundamental ontology, is that it questions the time determination present in the circularity of questioning, and thus the temporality of its own hermeneutic circling. The purpose of fundamental ontology, understood explicitly as a resonance between the questioning and what is questioned after (that is, as a hermeneutic circle), is precisely to illuminate that time and place (the *Da*) in which the entity which is the question, and the entity which is the questioned, circle each other. All questioning, scientific and philosophical, is a factual possibility of Dasein, not least that questioning after the meaning of being. Thus when (as was quoted above) Heidegger claims that fundamental ontology is to provide the *a priori* conditions for any ontology, this means that the being of the ontological question itself (ie 'What is the meaning of being?'), that is, its essential circularity, must itself be included reflexively within the project. Heidegger states this as follows:

Die existential Analytik ihrerseits [...] ist letztlich *existenziell*, *d.h. ontisch* verwurzelt. Nur wenn das philosophischforschende Fragen selbst als Seinsmöglichkeit des je existierenden Daseins existenziell ergriffen ist, besteht die Möglichkeit einer Erschließung der Existenzialität der Existenz und damit die Möglichkeit der Inangriffnahme einer zureichend fundierten ontologischen Problematik überhaupt. (H.13)

The existential analytic, on its part, is ultimately *existentiell*, that is, *ontically* rooted. Only if the questioning of philosophical research is itself seized upon in an *existentiell* manner as a possibility of the being of each existing Dasein, does it become at all possible to disclose the existentiality of existence and thus the possibility of undertaking an adequately founded ontological problematic. (H.13)

Thus it is only by bringing to light the circularity of questioning, and proceeding by reflecting upon that circularity in a way which must itself be acknowledged to involve circularity, that the project of fundamental ontology can disclose Dasein's proper existence. This explains why, in the quotation above from *Being and Time* H.315-6, the words 'point of departure' and 'in the first instance' were within quotation marks; there can be no simple beginning to a project of fundamental ontology. No experience may be taken as a simple starting point, since (even if 'experience' were not itself a problematic concept), Kant's work has already served to show that 'experience is in itself a circular happening through which what lies within the circle becomes exposed [eröffnet]' (*What is a Thing?* p242). Fundamental ontology must, therefore, remain watchful and questioning of any starting point which may be implicitly introduced to begin the questioning, and rather must attempt to speak from within its circularity:

Die Bemühung muß vielmehr darauf zielen, ursprünglich und ganz in diesen "Kreis" zu springen, um sich schon im Ansatz der Daseinsanalyse den vollen Blick auf das zirkelhafte Sein des Daseins zu sichern. (H.315)

The endeavour must rather aim to leap into the 'circle', primordially and wholly, in order even at the start of the analysis of Dasein, to secure for itself the full view of Dasein's circular Being. (H.315)

Thus far, the exposition of Heidegger's project has been mostly formal or methodological. The reason for this is that what Heidegger actually 'says' from within the circularity of fundamental ontology is more problematic, and indeed Heidegger himself acknowledges that what he says *must* be flawed, if the methodology of fundamental ontology is taken

seriously²⁰. Since Dasein, in its everyday existence, deals with entities or beings, it is always possible for an element of a fundamental ontology to be given an entity-like status without the question being asked concerning how the being of this entity is understood. In Kant's case, the being of the transcendental ego was not considered, with the result that it took on an object-like status in reflection of the Newtonian objects of experience it made possible. Since there must always already be an understanding of being, in order for there to be any comportment towards that which is (beings), and since being is always the being of that which is, it is always possible for being itself to be objectified and thus for beings to be understood as modifications of, or diverse appearances of, some other supreme entity or entities. Heidegger writes that 'it is in the objectification of being as such that the basic act constitutive of ontology as a science is performed' (BPP p281). ('In der Vergegenständlichung des Seins als solchen vollzieht sich der Grundakt, in dem sich die Ontologie als Wissenschaft konstituiert,' GA 3, 398.) Thus in the historical philosophical ontologies of the nature of existence, the questioning of the meaning of being is suspended with regard to the being of the entities which are understood to ground or underlie existence.

In the case of fundamental ontology, since Dasein is both the questioner and the questioned, it is not possible to step out of the hermeneutic circle in order to view with transparency the elements which need to be questioned further, and thus any 'saying' from within the circle must instead become a legacy for continued questioning and 'destruction' just as in the case of the philosophical ontologies of Western philosophical tradition. Heidegger writes, for example, at the end of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

Am Ende *müssen* diese Fehlinterpretationen vollzogen werden, damit das Dasein durch ihre Korrektur hindurch den Weg zu den eigentlichen Phänomenen gewinnt. Ohne daß wir es wissen,

wo die Fehlinterpretation liegt, können wir ruhig überzeugt sein, daß sich auch in der temporalen Interpretation des Seins als solchen eine Fehlinterpretation verbirgt, und wiederum keine beliebige. Es wäre wider den Sinn des Philosophierens und jeder Wissenschaft, wollten wir nicht verstehen, daß mit dem wirklich Gesehenen und dem echt Ausgelegten eine grundsätzliche Unwahrheit zusammenwohnt. (GA 3, 459)

In the end, these faulty interpretations *must* be made, so that Dasein may reach the path to the proper phenomena by correcting them. Without our knowing where the faulty interpretation lies, we can be quietly persuaded that there is also a faulty interpretation concealed within the Temporal interpretation of being as such, and again no arbitrary one. It would run counter to the sense of philosophizing and of every science if we were not willing to understand that a fundamental untruth dwells with what is actually seen and genuinely interpreted. (BPP 322)

It is this insight into the untruth which accompanies truth, which was to lead on to Heidegger's thinking of the truth of being as un-concealment [*Un-verborgenheit*]. While this is an indication that Heidegger's work, after the period of *Being and Time*, arose from a continuing of the reflexive questioning implicit in fundamental ontology, there is a still more profound question which needs to be explored: what is the place of language in fundamental ontology, given that a work of fundamental ontology such as *Being and Time* is linguistic? And further what is language?

Reflections such as these concerned Heidegger in his later work. The idea, used above, of a 'saying' from within the hermeneutic circle, mixing as it does terminology from the early and late Heidegger, brings to light the reflexivity between 'Heidegger I' and 'Heidegger II': the question of the nature of language can only be asked with profundity from out of the method of fundamental ontology, where the circularity of the being of the subject (who 'uses' language) and the being of entities (which are 'signified by' language) is questioned; yet because the project is linguistic, and the questioning of the nature of language constitutes Heidegger's later work, the early work must be considered as contained within the later. In order to reach the point at which the question of

the being of language may be broadened from its narrow circular determination (the *subject* uses language to signify *entities*), it is first necessary to consider what is said from within the hermeneutic circle of Heidegger's fundamental ontology, that is, Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's circularity as ecstatically temporal.

III. Phenomenology and Temporality

Within the hermeneutic structure of *Being and Time* Heidegger endeavors to portray a thoroughgoing phenomenological account of Dasein's involvement with beings which can then be interpreted as original (*ursprünglich*) temporality. The choice of phenomenology as a 'starting point' has been guided in advance by the ultimate temporal analysis, and the temporal understanding of phenomenology thus obtained at the end of *Being and Time* will need to be the basis of a more radical phenomenology of being, and thus of the being of the beings treated phenomenologically at the 'starting point'. Thus again the 'remarkable "relatedness backward and forward"' ('eine merkwürdige "Rück- oder Vorbezogenheit," H8) in the question of the meaning of being cannot be avoided. However, the choice of time as the horizon for the interpretation of phenomenology seems at first arbitrary. Given the hermeneutic circle there can, of course, be no appeal to a direct intuition of the original nature of Dasein's phenomenological way of existing. Rather, within the context of *Being and Time* the problematic of time arises precisely from the need to consider the temporal language which the circularity of fundamental ontology uses: the asking after what is 'original', 'fundamental', or how Dasein 'always already' is. The appeal to temporal terminology in other

ontologies, such as Kant's *a priori*, serves as a clue to the unquestioned place of time in the historical questioning of being.

As was shown in chapter 1, the ground of Kant's ontology was provided by an entity, the transcendental ego, the presence through time of which was left uncriticised, and for Heidegger this failure is part of a general tendency in the history of philosophy to understand being by reference to the stable presence of something through time. Just as Aristotle's philosophical term οὐσία ('essence') meant 'one's own property' before its philosophical coinage, so too did the German *Wesen* ('essence') mean similarly, 'estate' or 'homestead', thus with connotations of stable presence around about one. Thus the place of the problematic of time in Heidegger's fundamental ontology is justified by the need to question the understanding of being as presentness (*Anwesenheit*; NB *das Anwesen* means 'estate' also). As will be discussed below, being as presentness has a place in the hermeneutic circle ultimately because of the temporality of the circle itself, that is, its inability to make a stand over against the philosophical tradition as something in the past, thus again a reflexivity or circularity is present. Heidegger writes, for example, later:

Woher nehmen wir aber das Recht zur Kennzeichnung des Seins als Anwesen? Die Frage kommt zu spät. Denn diese Prägung des Seins hat sich längst ohne unser Zutun oder gar Verdienst entschieden. Demnach sind wir in die Kennzeichnung des Seins als Anwesen gebunden. (*Zeit und Sein* p6)

But what gives us the right to characterize being as presence? This question comes too late. For this character of being has long since been decided without our contribution, let alone merit. Thus we are bound to the characterization of Being as presence. (*Time and Being* p6)

In order, then, to move towards a thorough-going interpretation of time in relation to the questioning of being (via a temporal interpretation of the *Dasein* who is concerned with being), the 'starting point' must be one which has not been narrowed to a view of entities in terms of appearances or modifications of something which is uncritically

understood as present through time. This 'starting point' is phenomenology. The phenomena with which Dasein has dealings are not understood as appearances of something else, such as a thing-in-itself, but rather as simply that which they show themselves to be. Neither are they simply present in an objective way before and independent of Dasein's involvement with them, rather they show themselves in that Dasein's intentionality has always already comported itself towards them as the world in which it is involved. As was mentioned above, Dasein is understood as always already outside of itself, it transcends the world in the sense of a 'stepping over' the world in order to allow beings to show themselves within the horizon which the transcending opens: 'For the Dasein there is no outside, for which reason it is also absurd to talk about an inside,' BPP p66 ('Für das Dasein gibt es kein Draußen, weshalb es auch widersinnig ist, von einem Innen zu reden' GA 3, 93). The directedness of Dasein's intentionality and that towards which it is directed belong together in a phenomenological account of being-in-the-world.

The term 'phenomena' means thus 'that which shows itself in itself' (H28) and not as an 'appearance', which must be understood as an announcing of something (or reference to something) through something which shows itself, and which thus presupposes the concept of phenomena. This does not mean, however, that phenomenology wants to be a philosophy of intuition or a philosophy of the immediate (HCT p88).²¹ Rather, the way that-which-is shows itself, depends on Dasein's comportment towards it.

Seiendes kann sich nun in verschiedener Weise, je nach der Zugangsart zu ihm, von ihm selbst her zeigen. (H28)

Now that-which-is can show itself from itself in many ways, according in each case to the kind of access to it.

In the introduction, Heidegger understands this comportment towards

phenomena as precisely the λόγος of phenomenology. Λόγος is understood as the 'letting-be-seen' (*Sehenlassen*) which in particular sciences determines the general way phenomena show themselves and are understood. Thus within the idea of phenomenology there is the mutual relationship of that which shows itself from itself and that which lets it be seen in the way it shows itself.²² Phenomenology thus already embraces what Heidegger called in relation to Kant 'the circular nature of experience'. However, this is not to say that the Dasein 'experiences' phenomena in this way, as if its intentional comportments were like spokes radiating from a transcendental ego. It must be remembered that Dasein is its transcendence, as already outside of itself in the world which shows itself in one meaningful way or another. Dasein's understanding of itself can only ever be a reflection of its comportment towards the world:

Alltaglich versteht man sich und seine Existenz aus dem, was man betreibt und besorgt. [...] In unmittelbarem leidenschaftlichen Ausgegenbensein an die Welt selbst scheint das eigene Selbst des Daseins aus den Dingen wider. (GA 3,227)

In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. [...] As the Dasein gives itself over immediately and passionately to the world itself, its own self is reflected back to it from things. (BPP p159)

In Part I, Division I of *Being and Time*, which will not be explored in detail, Heidegger attempts a thorough-going description of Dasein's comportment towards the world. This could be understood as an elucidation of the λόγος of a phenomenology of Dasein's everyday way of being, yet language only has a small place in the description where it is discussed predominantly as 'discourse' (*die Rede*). Instead, Heidegger talks of Dasein as always already being involved in a world of 'Significance' (*Bedeutsamkeit*), which Heidegger calls the 'Care' structure. These terms refer to the meaningful contexture of involvements and range of possibilities which constitute Dasein's world in its everyday use and

negotiation of entities. It appears thus that the λόγος of everydayness, as the concerned letting be seen of that with which Dasein is concerned in an everyday sort of way, is understood pre-linguistically.

Das Bedeutungs ganze der Verständlichkeit *kommt zu Wort*. Den Bedeutungen wachsen Worte zu. Nicht aber werden Wörterdinge mit Bedeutungen versehen. (H161)

The totality-of-Significations of understandability is *put into words*. To Significations, words accrue. But word-things do not get supplied with significations.

Before exploring this view of language in more detail it will be necessary to characterize briefly how Dasein's existence in a world of Significance is temporally interpreted.

The Signification context of Dasein's being in the world is shown in Part 1, Division I of *Being and Time* to be constituted by three essential elements: Understanding, State-of-mind (*Befindlichkeit*) and Falling (*Verfallen*); Part 1, Division 2 shows how they have particular emphases towards the past, present and future. Understanding is the way Dasein comports itself toward different possibilities of its involvements by projecting a potential way of being. Understanding as potentiality for being is thus essentially futural because in understanding Dasein comes towards itself (expectant of a possibility) from out of its current way of being.

State-of-mind is the way Dasein finds itself to be in a world it has not chosen; it is thus grounded primarily in a comportment towards the past (*Gewesenheit*, 'having-been-ness') since Dasein finds itself in a world which already has been. In Heidegger's words, Dasein 'constantly is having been' ('ständig gewesen ist', H340).

Falling is the way Dasein comports itself towards the entities with which it is concerned and is able to fix on their need to be present to hand (*Vorhandensein*). Falling is thus grounded in making-present (*Gegenwärtigen*). In an extreme case future possibilities of being are

given up, thrownness is forgotten, and Dasein improperly ('inauthentically') understands itself, and being in general, in terms of present at hand objects.

Heidegger emphasizes that these three components of Dasein's being in the world, Understanding, State-of-mind, and Falling are not separate compartments, but rather mutually determine each other in a complex way. Neither do the dimensions of time on which they are based follow each other in a sequence such that the future is later than having-been, or such that having-been is earlier than the present. Rather, they must be thought of as unified in Dasein's ecstatic compartment towards the world, and as so unified, constituting the Significance structure of being in the world. Dasein thus exists as the unity of its compartments towards the 'then, when...', the 'on the former occasion, when...' and the 'now that...' (H407) ('dann, wann...', 'damals, als...', 'jetzt, da...').

Since Dasein's intentional compartments are, as was shown above, to be understood phenomenologically as letting phenomena show themselves, Dasein cannot be understood as comporting itself to pre-existing dimensions of time. Rather time must be understood from out of the unity of Dasein's compartments as a unity of expecting, retaining and making present, in its transcendence. In other words, the temporal dimensions of time must be understood as Dasein's temporal compartments. Time is outside of itself, indeed it is the original 'outside of itself' (ἐξστρατιχόν, which Heidegger translates as *das Aus-sich-heraustreten*, H329). Dasein exists as the unity of its ecstatic temporal compartments; the being of Dasein is constituted by its ecstatic temporality and as such must be understood as 'stretched along' between its expecting and retaining.

Time understood as a series of now points comes about when, in Falling, Dasein's involvement with objects present at hand leads it to

interpret its comportment towards the future as a 'not-yet-now' and its comportment towards its having-been as a 'no-longer-now'. Time is homogenized²³ into a linear, infinite series of now points which are thought of as being at a standstill within time; 'Everything that occurs rolls out of an infinite future into an irretrievable past' (CT p18). When the 'now' is thought more properly from out of Dasein's ecstatic temporality, it is seen that 'now' names something which is always the same, yet also always other than itself: 'being-now is always *being-other*' (BPP 248) ('das Jetztsein ist je *Anderssein*' GA 3,350). This 'otherness' (*Andersheit*) can be understood from out of ecstatic temporality as the stretchedness of a now towards its 'no-longer' and 'not yet':

Im Jetzt als sochem liegt schon die Verweisung auf das Nicht-mehr und Noch-nicht. Es hat in sich selbst die Dimension, die Erstreckung nach einem Noch-nicht und Nicht-mehr. Das Jetzt hat aufgrund dieses *Dimensionsgehaltes* in sich den *Character eines Überganges*. (GA 3,352)

In the now as such there is already present a reference to the no-longer and the not-yet. It has the dimension within itself; it stretches itself toward a not-yet and a no-longer. [...] Because of this *dimensional content* the now has within itself the *character of a transition*. (BPP 248)

Rather than time being understood as a series of isolated now points, where the transition between each being would need to be understood as the handing on of the object like contents of the now, the now itself is transition, a span stretched out towards what is to be and what has been. This span determined as a time-point thus only is a specific determination of time's dimensionality, and the span may be considered differently in different contexts: 'The scope of the dimension of a now varies; now in this hour, now in this second' (BPP 249).

Time interpreted as ecstatic temporality is original (*ursprünglich*) time, where the word 'original' must itself be understood from out of ecstatic temporality. The constitutive act of ontology is the finding of some 'original' entity in the sense of it being *prior* to, and thus

grounding, the existence of the world. As was shown in chapter 1, Kant's *a priori* was not questioned as to its temporal connotations, with the result that experience of Newtonian objects and the *a priori* Newtonian categories could stand opposite each other, each reflecting and thus justifying the other, without the temporality of their circularity being properly thematised. Further, understanding and reason could be envisaged as two isolated realms, such that reason could investigate the transcendental operations of understanding in a way which did not implicate reason's own functioning. The 'originality' of ecstatic temporality must not be understood as introducing into fundamental ontology the temporal connotations of a Kantian '*a priori*', rather it refers to the temporality of the hermeneutic circle of fundamental ontology itself.²⁴ The questioning in fundamental ontology is guided in advance by what it asks after, that is, it reaches out toward that which it seeks and is thus futural; yet it is also determined by decisions made 'without our contribution, let alone merit', and thus stretches out towards the past. The hermeneutic circle is thus constituted by its ecstatic temporality.²⁵ The dimensional 'now' of the hermeneutic circle, reaching out towards the past and future, must be the circle's coming to presence, its being written, its being spoken. What this means for an understanding of the nature of language, precisely the temporality of language, and indeed what 'being spoken' or 'being written' mean here, was not pursued by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. This may be regarded as a failing of the project, only if the project is made to stand in isolation from its future as an incessant questioning.

What is thus distinctive about Heidegger's conception of 'hermeneutics' is thus not simply that he takes the circularity of Dasein's understanding (for example, as found in Kant's project) as the 'starting point' for his own hermeneutically circular project, but rather that

Heidegger's project is a questioning of the understanding of time involved in hermeneutic circularity itself. Thus it is not the case that ecstatic temporality is the 'conclusion' of Heidegger's hermeneutic fundamental ontology, but rather that the circularity of the project itself has an ecstatic temporality. Another way of putting this, would be to say that certain traditional hermeneutic projects have an unquestioned time determination (for example: 'belief is *prior* to understanding, but understanding is a *prerequisite* of believing', or the *a priori* of Kant's circularity), while the temporality of Heidegger's circle is precisely that understanding of time towards which the project moves within the circle. This is essentially why Heidegger's fundamental ontology can be called an authentic (*eigentlich*) analysis - the temporality of the circle is thought from that which is the circle's own (*eigen*): a consideration of the nature of time. Even writers who are sympathetic to Heidegger's emphasis of the hermeneutic circle, such as Jean-Luc Nancy in *Le partage des voix*²⁶, do not seem to have appreciated that Heidegger's hermeneutic project is different because its circularity has an ecstatic temporality and not a temporality homogenized into now points such that the 'starting point' and the 'interpretation' have object-like, independent existence.²⁷

Since hermeneutic projects are linguistic projects there will necessarily be a reciprocity or circularity between the temporality of the circle and the temporality of language (objective genitive). For example, within a traditional hermeneutic project, the time determination of the circle as a movement from now-point to now-point, and a view of words as signs for objects, mutually reinforce each other in a homogenized view of time. However, before proceeding to consider Heidegger's understanding of the nature of language in more detail, it will be necessary to consider briefly several problematic elements of the analysis of Dasein: authenticity, mineness and the *Augenblick*. Whilst Heidegger's well known

admission in the *Letter on Humanism* (that the third division of the first part of *Being and Time*, 'Time and Being', was held back because 'thinking failed in the adequate saying of this reversal [Kehre],²⁸), refers to the problem of language, in the context of the essay it is, rather, a more guarded admission of the elements of a metaphysical subjectivity in the Dasein analytic. This would have meant that the reversal (to understand being out of ecstatic temporality) would have consisted of a reflection of these elements. More generally, to have conceived of 'Being and Time' and 'Time and Being' in a single, finished, work where one is simply the reversal of the latter, would be to reduce the hermeneutic circle to a closed reflectivity, rather than 'a peculiar relatedness backwards and forwards' which plays incessantly within the whole:

"Das Ganze" - dies sagt: der Sachverhalt von "Sein und Zeit", von "Zeit und Sein". Die Kehre spielt im Sachverhalt selbst. (Richardson p xix)

"The whole" - this means: the matter in "Being and Time", in "Time and Being". The reversal plays in the matter itself.

(It is worth noting that the word Heidegger uses here in this late essay *Sachverhalt* is related to the word which has been translated 'comportment': *Verhalten, Verhaltung*. The use of the word in the essay *Time and Being* (1962) in its resonance with the early work will be discussed below.)

Heidegger's frequent invocation of Dasein's authenticity and inauthenticity (*Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit*) would seem to be one of the most problematic elements of his analysis of Dasein, indeed as a methodological tool for moving between Dasein's everyday involvement in the world and its temporal analysis, it would seem to cast doubt on the entire project.²⁹ Yet Heidegger wants to maintain that 'inauthenticity' does not mean a lesser way of being than 'authenticity' and further that 'the expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense' ('diese Ausdrücke sind im strengen Wortsinne terminologisch gewählt,' H43). Heidegger also asserts on several occasions that the existential analysis

of Dasein is not prescriptive for Dasein's existentiell existence. (The German *existenziell* refers to the particular aims and intentions, *Ziele*, with which a particular Dasein may concern itself.)

Die existenziale Interpretation wird nie einen Machtspruch über existenzielle Möglichkeiten und Verbindlichkeiten übernehmen wollen. (H312)

Existential interpretation will never seek to take over any authoritarian pronouncement as to those things which, from an existentiell point of view, are possible or binding.

While this may be strictly true, it is still the case that *Being and Time* asserts a proper way of Dasein's regarding of its existentiell involvements, what ever they may be in its particular case. This culminates in the idea of Dasein's authentic historizing, that is, not abandoning itself to that which is past, nor aiming at progress from a past which has been left behind, but rather fetching-again, repeating (*Widerholen*, H385), the possibilities of its existence as having-been. A problem arises, however, in that to assert that this way of appropriating one's factual existence is itself an existentiell possibility for Dasein, Heidegger has to appeal to a voluntaristic conception of Dasein's subjectivity.

The roots of this voluntaristic conception go back deeper into the existential analytic: Dasein can only 'pull itself together' (*sich zusammenholen*, H390) out of the homogenization of its time into a 'no-longer-now' and a 'not-yet-now' because in Dasein's anxiety (in the face of its own death) which brings it back to its thrownness, the ecstatic present can be 'held on to' ('ist [...] gehalten,' H344). Dasein's death is in each case mine ('[...] der Tod je meiner ist,' H425) because mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) constitutes Dasein's being: '[...] Dasein überhaupt durch Jemeinigkeit bestimmt ist.' This quotation belongs to a sentence which has been referred to already, and reads in full:

Die beiden Seinsmodi der *Eigentlichkeit* und *Uneigentlichkeit* - diese Ausdrücke sind im strengen Wortsinne terminologisch gewählt - gründen darin, daß Dasein überhaupt durch Jemeinigkeit bestimmt ist. (H43-4)

The modes of being, *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* - these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense - are both grounded in the fact that Dasein as such is characterized by mineness.

This appeal to 'grounding' is the root of Heidegger's problematic voluntarist conception of Dasein; mineness is understood as a foundational starting point rather than being understood phenomenologically.

Heidegger could only claim to have access to such a ground by proposing a philosophy of immediate intuition, such as was shown in chapter 1 to operate in Fichte's science. To put in question the idea of a founding mineness, does not, however, somehow weaken or destroy the foundations of Heidegger's method of hermeneutic phenomenology, since this latter consists precisely in the questioning of proposed foundations and 'starting points' (cf. above, the questioning of transcendental ego in Kant's fundamental ontology).³⁰ It is the concept of mineness, though, which allows Heidegger to step outside of the hermeneutic circle of phenomenology, to stand back and *describe* it, and thus put it to work as an existentiell possibility of one's historical existence. In a profound way, therefore, the problem of mineness is linked to the problem of bringing the hermeneutic circle to expression, and more generally, the question of the relation of language to the hermeneutic circle. The minimal space given over to the question of language in *Being and Time* is thus rooted in the way the concept of mineness had already allowed Heidegger to leap out of the hermeneutic circle to a stable ground from which language could be used to give a description of the circle.

Before turning to consider language - how language is understood in relation to the ecstatic temporality of the hermeneutic circle, the temporality of language in its subjective and objective genitives - it is necessary to explore briefly the meaning of 'authenticity' (*Eigentlichkeit*), a word which will be heard in a different way after Heidegger's questioning of the nature of language.

If the questioning of mineness as a ground for authenticity and inauthenticity does not, in fact, undermine the hermeneutic circle, then it still remains necessary to determine how authenticity and inauthenticity are used by Heidegger to structure the movement of the circle. Dasein's inauthentic mode of being is its falling into everydayness. Heidegger writes concerning Falling in *Basic Problems*:

Was sich hier in einem theoretischen Gebeite der ausgebildeten Ontologie zeigt, ist eine allgemeine Bestimmung des Daseins selbst, daß es die Tendenz hat, aus den Dingen primär sich zu verstehen und den Begriff des Seins aus dem Vorhandenen zu schöpfen. (GA 3,384-5)

What appears here in a theoretical field of developed ontology is a general determination of the Dasein itself, namely, that it has the tendency to understand itself primarily by way of things and to derive the concept of being from the present at hand. (BPP 272)

Dasein's inauthenticity comes about when, because it primarily is involved with things, it understands itself and being in general in terms of things, without thus questioning the time determination involved. As has been argued in relation to Kant's Critique, such a move closes down the hermeneutic circle to a simply reflectivity between objects and what grounds them, which is also understood in an object-like way. Authenticity, then, refers to the re-opening of the hermeneutic circle, by allowing a questioning of time to determine the movement of the circle itself. Dasein understands itself authentically when it does not ground its understanding on something which stands, unquestioned, outside of a phenomenological approach, but rather understands itself in terms of that which is its ownmost - the hermeneutic circle of its existence.

Die Voraufgabe einer "phänomenologischen" Sicherung des exemplarischen Seienden als Ausgang für die eigentliche Analytik ist immer schon aus dem Ziel dieser vorgezeichnet. [...] Phänomenologie des Daseins ist *Hermeneutik*. (H37)

The prior task of 'phenomenologically' assuring that entity, which is to serve as example, as the point of departure for the authentic analysis, has always already been marked out by its finishing point. [...] The phenomenology of Dasein is a *hermeneutic*. (H37)

This quotation indicates that Dasein is authentic when it understands itself from out of the circling of hermeneutical phenomenology, where even the time of this circling, the 'always already', must, as was shown above, be understood from out of the circle. No element must be posited lying outside of the circle, but rather each must be characteristic (*sich eignen*) of the circle, peculiar (*eigen*) to it in being proper (*eigentlich*) to the hermeneutic thinking of ecstatic temporality. It is thus that the word *Eigentlichkeit* may be taken to name this understanding of Dasein. The idea of Dasein understanding itself *from out of* the circle seems to imply, however, that an exteriorization is still required. This, then, is a reference to the yet unconsidered part of language in hermeneutic phenomenology. If the project requires a speaking from within the ecstatic circle, does what is said leave the circle in its being expressed? If this were so, this would suggest there could never be an 'authentic analysis' because in its linguistic nature an inauthentic element would be introduced. The place of language in *Being and Time*, and the question of understanding language in an authentic way will now be considered.

IV. Language and *Die Rede*

Just as Heidegger was concerned in the period of *Being and Time* to move away from thing-like conceptions of the subject in his use of the term *Dasein*, so also he was concerned to move away from conceptions of language which saw words as things present at hand for the use of a metaphysical subject. This view of language was a target for his criticism throughout all the periods of his writing, though the view he opposed to it, underwent change. In *Basic Problems*, after characterizing

a view of language in which an idea in the mind refers to a being outside the mind, he writes:

Es entsteht das Problem: Wie kann der Vorstellungszusammenhang in der Seele mit den Dingen draußen übereinstimmen? Das pflegt man als das Problem der Wahrheit oder der Objectivität zu formulieren. Diese *in sich grundverkehrte Fragestellung* ist aber dadurch motiviert, daß die Aussage zunächst als Wörterfolge genommen wird. (GA 3, 294)

The problem arises, how can the ideational complex in the mind agree with the external things? This is customarily formulated as the problem of truth of objectivity. But this *fundamentally wrongheaded approach to the question* is motivated by the fact that assertion is taken first as verbal sequence. (BPP p206-7)

In the view of assertion as verbal sequence there is the idea of words as things which may be put together in the mind of the speaker in order to be used to refer to things in the world. Against this view, Heidegger develops an initial phenomenological view of language: if Dasein is always already being in the world, then the different components of assertion (word, signification, that which is thought, that which *is*) must be determined in their phenomenological interconnection.³¹ Words have 'reference' only because something like entities have been unveiled by Dasein's ecstatic comportment towards the world with which it is concerned, and thus which already exists as a contexture of significance for Dasein.

Es sind nicht zunächst Wörter da, die zu Zeichen für Bedeutungen gestempelt werden, sondern umgekehrt, aus dem sich selbst und die Welt verstehenden Dasein, d.h. aus einem schon enthüllten Bedeutungszusammenhang heraus wächst diesen Bedeutungen je ein Wort zu. Die Wörter können, wenn sie in dem gefaßt werden, was sie ihrem Wesen nach besagen, nie als freischwebende Dinge genommen werden. (GA 3, 297)

It is not the case that first there are the words, which are coined as signs for meanings, but just the reverse - it is from the Dasein which understands itself and the world, from a significance-contexture already unveiled, that a word accrues to each of these meanings. If words are grasped in terms of what they mean by their essential nature, they can never be taken as free-floating things. (BPP p208-9)

At this stage the 'essential nature' of words is that they are Dasein's expressing itself as being in the world and occupying itself with beings.

There is a strong sense, therefore, that 'what is primary is being in the world, that is, concerned understanding and being in the context of meanings' (HCT p210). In other words, a sense of being-in-the-world as prior to language.³² A sign theory of words thus is still present, albeit one where what is signified is understood not as a thing existing independently of Dasein, but rather understood phenomenologically as an aspect of Dasein's involvement in the world. Indeed, at one place in *Being and Time*, an idea of language is used to explain the change from understanding entities in the contexture of involvements in which they are used (what Heidegger calls 'ready to hand', *zuhanden*), to understanding them as objects existing independently of Dasein and outside its involvements (ie. present at hand, *vorhanden*).

Das *zuhandene* Womit des Zutunhabens, der Verrichtung, wird zum 'Worüber' der aufzeigenden Aussage. (H158)

Something *ready-to-hand* with which we have to do or perform something, becomes an '*about which*' of the assertion that points it out. (H158)

It would thus seem that language is implicitly caught up in the process of Dasein's inauthentic understanding of its world and itself as two present at hand entities which stand apart from each other (the '*Worüber*' and the '*Aussage*'). Such a conclusion would cast doubt on the possibility of an 'authentic analysis' as such, given its linguistic nature. However, such a conclusion comes about by maintaining a sign relation between words and the significance structure of being in the world. This 'relation' itself needs to be subjected to phenomenological analysis, that is, the *a priori* of being-in-the-world in relation to language must be thought phenomenologically.

Heidegger moves in this direction in *Being and Time* by making 'discourse' (*die Rede*) equiprimordial with Dasein's being in the world. The idea of discourse allows Heidegger to be able to move from the existential analysis of being in the world to Dasein's factual use of

language, in an attempt to avoid introducing an objective sign-based separation between them. Given the minor place of a discussion of discourse in the existential analysis, it would seem that Heidegger had not seen at this stage the implications of making something like language primordial to Dasein. In particular this 'primordially' is not adequately questioned in its temporal connotations, thus allowing it to function as a Kantian *a priori* 'grounding' the existentiell use of language, thus making possible the expressive use of language in assertion and, moreover, making possible the describing of the hermeneutic circle in fundamental ontology. Just as Kant had to maintain a distinction between understanding and that which was to describe it, reason, so Heidegger has to introduce a distinction between two ideas of language:

Das ursprüngliche 'Als' der umsichtig verstehenden Auslegung (ἑρμηνεία) nennen wir das existenzial-hermeneutische 'Als' im Unterschied vom *apophantischen* 'Als' der Aussage. (H158)

The primordial 'as' of an interpretation (ἑρμηνεία) which understands circumspectively we call the *existential-hermeneutical* 'as' in distinction from the *apophantical* 'as' of the assertion. (H158)

The problematic nature of this distinction (*Unterschied*) is thrown into starker relief, when it is seen that when Heidegger came to write the introduction to *Being and Time*, the λόγος of Dasein's hermeneutic phenomenology is itself understood as ἀποφάνεσθαι, letting something be seen from out of itself:

Der λόγος läßt etwas sehen (φάνεσθαι), nämlich das, worüber die Rede ist. (H32)

The λόγος lets something be seen (φάνεσθαι), namely, what the discourse is about.

Phenomenology and discourse are thus apophantic and involved in a *worüber*, which was seen above to be characteristic of the objectifying tendency of existentiell assertion.³³

A similar difficulty is found in section 34 of *Being and Time* ('*Dasein und Rede. Die Sprache*'). Discourse is existentially equiprimordial

(*gleichursprünglich*) with state of mind and understanding and yet the latter two 'express' themselves as discourse – 'sprechen sich als Rede aus' (H161). Language, understood as an entity within the world, is the 'expressedness of discourse' ('*Die Hinausgesprochenheit der Rede*', H161). It appears then that an idea of *aussprechen*, literally 'speaking out', not only works within the existential analysis of understanding, state-of-mind and discourse, but also to allow a movement between (implying a distinction between) the existential analysis and existentiell language. This idea of *aussprechen* is never thematized in *Being and Time* and at the precise place where one would expect discourse's *a priori* relation to language and its equiprimordiality with understanding and state-of-mind to be considered, section 68d 'The temporality of Discourse', Heidegger writes less than one page on discourse before returning to a discussion of the other aspects of Dasein's existential constitution.³⁴

In the section on the temporality of discourse, Heidegger merely states that discourse does not temporalize itself primarily in any definite ecstasis, as was the case for understanding, state-of-mind and falling, though the making-present has a privileged constitutive function ('*das Gegenwärtigen [hat] eine bevorzugte konstitutive Funktion,*' H349). Discourse is rather 'grounded' in the ecstatical unity of temporality. By making the *unity* of temporality into something which 'grounds', one is reminded both of the transcendental unity of apperception in Kant, and also the mineness which is the condition of possibility of Dasein's authentic temporality; both point to the residues of an uncriticised subjectivity who, in order to be able to describe what happens in the hermeneutic circle of ecstatic temporality, stands outside the circle and *has* language.

A further reason which may be cited for the brevity of section 68d, is that, 'because in discourse one is talking about entities,' the analysis

of the temporality of discourse can only take place in relation to the interpretation of being in the light of ecstatic temporality, that is, the projected third division of *Being and Time*: 'Time and Being'. Section 68d itself contains a footnote referring to this third division of the project, which was deleted in the later editions of *Being and Time*. In a sense, therefore, section 68d is the longest of the treatise because it asks for all Heidegger's later thinking on the truth of being and the nature of language to be read in its place. The project, therefore, turns itself inside-out at this point as the problematics of language and the truth of being can no longer be seen as contained within the existential analysis, but rather the existential analysis must be understood as contained in the later thinking. But further, the reversal can no longer be seen as completing a single, closed project because it was precisely an uncriticised distinction between *Rede* and language, where *Rede* is understood as the formal *a priori* condition of language, which allowed the fundamental ontology to be written. It is in the questioning of this *a priori* and the *aussprechen* which links discourse and language, that the incessant questioning which is proper to the hermeneutic circle continues, and that Heidegger's later work has its 'starting point'.

V. The Appropriate Event of Language and Time

In this final section, elements from Heidegger's later thinking will be presented in order to lay the ground for a more detailed discussion of the belonging together of language and time in chapter 4. In a sense, therefore, this section will attempt to draw closer to the eventual meeting of language and time which was announced by the title of the

chapter. In particular, it will move towards an interpretation of *das Ereignis* (often translated as 'the event of appropriation') as Heidegger's way of thinking language and time. That is, it does not so much name the event of an eventual meeting, or even the event of their always already belonging together, but rather names the way along which they are properly thought together – the saying of its time and the time of its saying.³⁵

In relation to the project of *Being and Time* the temporality of the hermeneutic circle, in the sense of both the temporality of its movement and what guided the movement, was shown to be ecstatic temporality. However, this 'showing' of the authentic temporality of the hermeneutic circle happened by way of a closed reflectivity between *Rede* and language such that the expression (*aussprechen*) of the hermeneutic circle (objective genitive; Heidegger's writing the project of *Being and Time*) was made uncritically distinct from the view of language which operated 'within' the circle (*die Rede*). Language was, therefore, not thought authentically (*eigentlich*), that is, in a sufficiently questioning hermeneutic way. Heidegger's later work is concerned with finding such a way of thinking – a way which is 'properly' (*eigentlich*) hermeneutical, 'properly' questioning of its own time of saying (subjective and objective genitive). Of course, Heidegger speaks very little about time explicitly in his later work (the major exception being *Time and Being*, which will be discussed below). This is an indication that Heidegger remained satisfied in using the temporal analysis of *Being and Time* as the 'starting point' for his reflections upon the truth of being, in terms such as *aletheia*, *Unverborgenheit* and *Wesen*; that is, as a 'starting point' for the determination of being from the horizon of ecstatic temporality. When Heidegger again gives explicit detail of his understanding of time in the 1962 essay *Time and Being*, his starting point is taken almost word for

word from various writings of the period of *Being and Time* (contrary to David Wood's opinion in a recent essay that 'when time reappears it is virtually unrecognisable'³⁶). Heidegger's thinking of the truth of being will not be explored in detail at this point, in order to concentrate on his reflections upon language, and thus to move toward an understanding of *Ereignis* as a way of thinking which will be pursued further in chapter 4.

As was shown above, the idea of Dasein became problematic when it was used to allow the project of fundamental ontology to be put to use as an existentiell way of being; that is, Dasein still involved elements of a voluntaristic subject. This voluntarism was shown not to be fatal to the analysis because it was based on an idea of 'grounding' the circle which would be questioned by hermeneutic temporal phenomenology itself. By the time Heidegger wrote *What is a Thing?* (1935-6), the term Dasein had been essentially replaced by the idea of the open (*das Offene*) as the 'circular happening through which what lies within the circle is exposed [eröffnet]', (*What is a Thing?* p242). Heidegger also calls this open the between (*das Zwischen*) which 'lies between the thing and man, which reaches out beyond things and back behind man' (p244). Instead of a thinking of the Da-sein which is 'in each case mine', Heidegger develops the *Da* as the place within which man and thing encounter each other. This place is the letting-show-themselves of beings in their coming to presence, and thus is understood from out of a phenomenological ecstatic temporality which has been questioned with regard to its grounding in the mineness of Dasein. As was described above, the entities which show themselves are not mere appearances (*Erscheinen*) of something else, rather, that-which-is 'seems' (*scheinen*) phenomenologically in one way or another. The being of that-which-is gets determined according to the way beings show themselves in the open. If being is understood by way

of particular beings, or particular determinations of being, this means a founding conception of being is introduced, instead of thinking properly about being in a phenomenological temporal way. The being of that which is, is lingering (*Verweilung*), presencing (*Anwesenung*), thought of as an emergence (*Hervorgang*) and transition (*Übergang*), and not as simply persisting through infinite time (*Basic Concepts*³⁷ p103-4/ GA 51,120-1).

When being as such (without reference of beings) is thought of phenomenologically, it too seems to be in one way or another, depending on how it is questioned after. Being is only in one way or another, but equally it could be said that being is not at all. That which seems to be in one way or another is not, such that showing itself happens to it subsequently. Heidegger writes, for example, in *The Principle of Reason*³⁸ (1955-56):

Being has its own in self-revealing (Sein hat sein Eigenes in Sichentbergen). Being is not beforehand something for itself that only then brings about a self-revealing. Self-revealing is the property (Eigenschaft) of being. Being addresses us from out of this self-revealing and as this self-revealing. (p69)

That which shows itself as being, precisely is not, and thus does not show itself. This is Heidegger's idea of the 'withdrawal' of being in its showing itself - the truth of being as un-concealment, that is, an unconcealment in which a concealment, and thus an untruth, also takes place.

Wir erfahren das Menschentum jetzt in solchem Aufenthalt, in dem das Sein als Zuwurf die Unumgänglichkeit bekundet und darin seine Unantastbarkeit; wir erfahren einen Aufenthalt, in dem das Sein sich aber auch gleichsam in die Zerstörung seiner selbst preisgibt, wenn anders das Sein sogleich durch alles Vorstellen und Denken seiner zu einem Seienden wird. (GA 51, 85)

We now experience humanity in an abode where being shows its unemcompassability as what is cast toward us, and therein its inviolability. We experience an abode where also equally, however, being gives itself up in the destruction of itself, when being at once becomes a being through all representing and thinking of it. (*Basic Concepts* p71-72)

Heidegger's thinking of the being of beings as transition, and of being as such, as un-concealment, (that is, not as *what* 'goes over' in a transition, or as *what* is unconcealed in un-concealment), follow directly, however, from *Being and Time*: when being is considered in relation to beings it is thought in terms of time as presencing of beings which strive for permanent endurance; when being as such is considered, it is thought as withdrawing or giving itself up to be thought as a being.

During the 1930s, Heidegger's views of language underwent considerable modification as the uncritical distinction between *Rede* and language was questioned.³⁹ The tension between *Rede* being equiprimordial with being-in-the-world, and *Rede* as expressing being in the world, is thought through phenomenologically in terms of language as the letting-show of world; that is, it is language which allows world to be.

Die Sprache ist nicht nur ein Werkzeug, [...] sondern die Sprache gewährt überhaupt erst die Möglichkeit, inmitten der Offenheit von Seiendem zu stehen. Nur wo Sprache, da ist Welt. (*Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung* GA 4, 33-48)

Language is not a mere tool, [...] on the contrary, it is only language that affords the very possibility of standing in the openness of the existent. Only where there is language, is there world. (*Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry*⁴⁰ (1936), p299)

The λόγος of phenomenology that was treated in the introduction to *Being and Time* no longer undergoes division into an existential *Rede* and an existential *Sprache*, but rather is understood simply as the nature of language. Λόγος is understood through Heidegger's interpretation of λέγειν as a laying-before and a gathering up.

Das λέγειν, legen, meint in seinem 'beisammen-vor-liegen-Lassen' gerade dies, daß uns das Vorliegende anliegt und deshalb angeht. [...] Dem λέγειν liegt bei seinem gesammelt-vor-leigen-Lassen an dieser Geborgenheit des Vorliegenden im Unverborgenem. (*Vorträge und Aufsätze* p211)

Λέγειν, to lay, by its 'letting-lie-together-before' means just this, that whatever lies before us involves us and therefore concerns us. [...] By letting things lie together before us, λέγειν undertakes to secure what lies before us in unconcealment. (*Logos*⁴¹ p62-3)

A word is no longer thought of as something which accrues to Dasein's world which has been brought to light in its pre-linguistic phenomenological comportment, rather the word, as name, allows the entity to stand in the open⁴²; it calls the entity into unconcealment.

Nennen heißt: hervor-rufen. Das im Namen gesammelt Niedergelegte kommt durch solches Legen zum Vorliegen und Vorschein. Das vom λέγειν her gedachte Nennen (ὄνομα) ist kein Ausdrücken einer Wortbedeutung, sondern ein vor-liegen-Lassen in dem Licht, worin etwas dadurch steht, daß es einen Namen hat. (*Vorträge und Aufsätze* p223)

To name means to call forward. That which is gathered and laid down in the name, by means of such a laying, comes to light and comes to lie before us. The naming (ὄνομα), thought in terms of λέγειν, is not the expression of a word-meaning but rather a letting-lie-before in the light wherein something stands in such a way that it has a name. (*Logos* p73)

These last two quotations are taken from Heidegger's translating interpretation of Heraclitus Fragment 50; the question as to why Heidegger turned to an engagement with Greek philosophy for an understanding of language will be considered in detail in chapter 4. In the introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger clearly understood that the hermeneutic circle of the project of fundamental ontology, was not free-floating as an object in time, but was rather historical in its temporal existence. The question of the meaning of being was not, therefore, to be answered by a free-floating result (H19), but rather would always take place from the horizon of ecstatic temporality and thus be constituted by an engagement with, and fetching back of, the history of inquiry into the meaning of being.⁴³ After the period of *Being and Time* Heidegger saw with increasing clarity that the historicity of the hermeneutic circle was constituted by its language, and thus that language had to be understood in terms of its ecstatic temporality, that is, not as an entity present at hand which endured from moment to moment, but as itself stretching through time. To put this another way, language calls that which it names to presence, yet language also *is* in some sense; language calls

itself to presence in the saying of its historicity: poetry and translation.

The question of the relation of being to language was first asked explicitly in the collection of notes entitled *Beiträge zur Philosophie*:

Die erste wirkliche Frage, mit der zugleich alle Sprachphilosophie als solche [...] hinfällig wird, ist die nach dem Bezug der Sprache zum Seyn, eine Frage, die freilich in dieser Form noch gar nicht trifft, was sie fragt. Dieser Bezug läßt sich aber auf einem Wege verdeutlichen, der zugleich noch jenen Bereich in den Blick faßt, der in der bisherigen Betrachtung über die Sprache immer leitend war. (Beiträge zur Philosophie, GA 65, 499)

The first real question, with which equally all language philosophy as such [...] becomes untenable, is that of the relation of language to being, a question which clearly in this form does not hit upon what it asks. This relation is made clearer only on a way which, at the same time, holds that region in view, which was always guiding in the earlier considerations about language.⁴⁴

The question of the 'relation' of language to being can too easily be understood as asking about two entities which exist in independence before their relation. It must rather ask about how they belong together from the horizon of temporality, and thus direct itself towards how language has been thought of in the past. Predominantly language has been thought of as a possession of man, and in such a way that the metaphysical determination of the nature of man has been reflected in the way language has been understood.

Das leiblich-seelisch-geistige Wesen des Menschen wird in der Sprache wiedergefunden: der Sprach-(Wort)-Leib, die Sprach-Seele (Stimmung und Gefühlston und dergleichen) und der Sprach-Geist (das Gedachte-Vorgestellte) sind geläufige Bestimmungen aller Sprachphilosophie. (Beiträge zur Philosophie, GA 65, 502)

The body-soul-spirit nature of the human is found again in language: the linguistic-(word)-body, the linguistic-soul (mood and emotional connotation and the like) and the linguistic-spirit (what is thought/represented) are common determinations in all language philosophy.

Just as *Being and Time* questioned the metaphysical determination of the human being in Western philosophy to arrive at a temporal phenomenology of Dasein in terms of the unity of its compartments towards the present

(falling), past (state-of-mind) and future (understanding), so also language must be considered phenomenologically in its present (word), past (mood) and future (concept). And just as after the period of *Being and Time*, the subjectivity implicit in the project which had allowed the project to be written, was questioned, so also must the nature of language in which language is spoken about be questioned. The *temporality* of language (objective genitive, language understood from the horizon of ecstatic temporality) and the temporality of *language* (subjective genitive, its saying of the ecstatic unity of present, past and future) must circle each other hermeneutically. Since, for Heidegger, language's saying of the ecstatic unity of time happens in poetry (*and also* translation, though this 'and also' is misleading, as will be shown in chapter 4, because poetry is understood as a translation from one language into the same language; translation from one language to another being only a special case of this), the thinking of the temporality of language is the hermeneutic circling of phenomenology and poetry, of questioning and saying. Phenomenology allows poetry (language) to show itself in an ecstatically temporal way, poetry allows phenomenology (ecstatic temporality) to say itself in an ecstatically temporal way.

This hermeneutic circling of phenomenology and poetry is named by Heidegger *das Ereignis*. The appropriate (*eigentlich*) analysis which was the hermeneutic circle of temporal phenomenology in *Being and Time* has, via the questioning of the language of its questioning, becomes the appropriate event (*Ereignis*) of phenomenology and poetry.⁴⁵ This change is nowhere better illustrated than by comparing Heidegger's analysis of a poem by Rilke in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (p172-3; GA 3,244-247) to his engagement with poetry in his later work. In *The Basic Problems* Heidegger uses a long quotation from Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* as an instance (*Beleg*) of his idea that entities are

not predominantly understood as present at hand objects which exist from moment to moment, but rather are for the most part understood within a context of meaningful involvements and associations which is world.

Die Dichtung ist nicht anders als das elementare Zum-Wort-Kommen, d.h. Entdecktwerden der Existenz als des In-der-Welt-seins. (GA 3, 244)

Poetry is nothing but the elementary coming into words, that is, the becoming uncovered, of existence as being-in-the-world. (p171-2)

It is again clear that at this stage Heidegger thought of being-in-the-world as prior to language, such that it *comes* to words. Of more interest in this context, is the way poetry is subsumed within the project of fundamental ontology, such that Heidegger gives a phenomenological interpretation of poetry, or more precisely, gives a temporal phenomenology of poetry. In Heidegger's later work, poetry is understood as language's saying of itself as its ecstatically temporal existence and thus to continue thinking in a properly (i.e. ecstatically temporal) hermeneutic way, Heidegger develops, particularly through an engagement with Hölderlin, what may be called a poetic temporal phenomenology: the four-fold of earth and sky, mortals and divinities. The term 'poetic temporal phenomenology' is misunderstood, however, if it is held to suggest that poetry and phenomenology simply become a unity. It is, rather, that they are the *Same*, where 'Same' is understood as a belonging together in distinctness, and where the distinction is understood from out of ecstatic temporality and not as the separation of two objects.

Das Dichten und das Denken begegnen sich nur dann und nur so lange im selben, als sie entschieden in der Verschiedenheit ihres Wesens bleiben. [...] Das Selbe läßt sich nur sagen, wenn der Unterschied gedacht wird. [...] Das Selbe versammelt das Unterschiedene in eine ursprüngliche Einigkeit. Das Gleiche hingegen zerstreut in die fade Einheit des nur einförmig Einen. ('...dichterisch wohnt der Mensch...', in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* p193)

Poetry and thinking meet each other in one and the same only when, and only as long as, they remain distinctly in the distinctness of their nature. [...] The Same is said only if the difference is thought. [...] The same gathers what is distinct

into an original being-at-one. The equal, on the contrary, disperses them into the dull unity of mere uniformity. ('...Poetically Man Dwells...' p218-9)⁴⁶

Heidegger's poetic temporal phenomenology follows the same circling, reflecting temporality of the earlier project of fundamental ontology. The 'remarkable relatedness backwards and forwards' has become the mirroring belonging together of the fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals:

Jedes der Vier spiegelt in seiner Weise das Wesen der übrigen wieder. [...] Das Spiegeln ereignet, jedes der Vier lichtend, deren eigenes Wesen in die einfältige Vereignung zueinander. [...] Wir nennen das ereignende Spiegel-Spiel der Einheit von Erde und Himmel, Göttlichen und Sterblichen die Welt. [...] Das Spiegel-Spiel von Welt ist der Reigen des Ereignens. (*Das Ding in Vorträge und Aufsätze* p178-9)

Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. [...] The mirroring - lightening each of the four - appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another. [...] This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth, sky, divinities and mortals, we call world. [...] The mirror-play of world is the round dance of appropriating. (*The Thing* p179-180)

In *Being and Time* the circular existence of Dasein's being-in-the-world was thought authentically as the hermeneutic circle in which the 'starting point' mirrored the 'conclusion' (ecstatic temporality), and where the temporality of this reflexivity was also thought from out of authentic temporality. Here, world is thought as the mirror-play of its compartments (the directedness of world toward earth and sky, divinities and mortals) in which the nature of the mirroring is again thought from out of the circle itself - the mirroring is thought appropriately (*eigenes, ereignen, Ereignen, Vereignung, Reigen*). The project of phenomenology is thus still present, but its linguistic presence, its saying, with the verbal as well as conceptual associations between its words, has been thought from out of poetry as language's saying of its temporal existence.

In the essays *The Way to Language* (*Der Weg zur Sprache*) and *The Nature of Language* (*Das Wesen der Sprache*) Heidegger develops his

poetic temporal phenomenology through the idea of Saying (*sagen, die Sage*). In a similar way to his understanding of *λόγος*, Saying is understood to mean 'to show, to let appear, to let be seen and to let be heard' (WL p122; 'zeigen, erscheinen-, sehen- und hören-lassen' GA 12, 241), and Heidegger's word for this is *die Zeige* ('showing', 'pointing out', 'signaling'). This more phenomenological aspect of Saying is linked specifically to poetry in that speaking (*sprechen*) is always already a listening (*Hören*) to language (WL 123; GA 12, 243). In every speaking and thus every questioning, language must already have been granted (*zugesprochen; Zuspruch*, 'grant'. NL 71; GA 12, 165); language is granted in that it speaks and its speaking is a Saying, a Showing:

Die *Sprache* spricht. [...] Die sprache spricht, indem sie sagt, d.h. zeigt. (GA 12, 243)

Language speaks. [...] Language speaks, in that it says, that is, shows.

From the idea of the listening (*Hören*) Heidegger returns to an *eigentlich* hermeneutics through the idea of belonging (*gehören*):

Wenn das Sprechen als Hören auf die Sprache sich die Sage sagen läßt, dann kann dieses Lassen sich nur er-geben, insofern und insonah unser eigenes Wesen in die Sage eingelassen ist. Wir hören sie nur, weil wir in sie gehören. (GA 12, 244)

If speaking, as listening to language, lets Saying be said to it, this letting can only arise in so far - and in so near - as our proper nature has been let into Saying. We hear Saying only because we belong within it. (WL p124)

In contrast to *Being and Time*, the expression (*ausprechen*) of an authentic (*eigentlich*) phenomenal analysis can itself only be proper (*eigen*) if that speaking (*sprechen*) is itself a listening (*Hören*) and thus a belonging (*Gehören*) to the Saying (*Sagen*) of its language, a Saying which is a Showing (*Zeigen*), and thus understood phenomenologically. Here again one sees a dense interplay of verbal and conceptual associations in Heidegger's expression of the belonging together of phenomenological thinking and poetry. This mode of expression makes it difficult to take

any single word out of the ring of associations which Heidegger weaves without privileging its 'meaning' above its 'sound' or 'look'. Heidegger also develops different vocabularies depending on what is being spoken about (the essays *The Way to Language* and *The Nature of Language* treat language specifically), that is, depending on the matter, *die Sache*, being considered.⁴⁷ There is thus a move from the systematicity of *Being and Time* to a certain multiplicity of reflections and approaches. Each essay may be regarded, in its treatment of the matter at hand, as an individual hermeneutic temporal-poetic circularity. There is no straightforward rejection of systematicity though, and this is indicated most clearly by the presence of an element which persists across Heidegger's later thought: *das Ereignis*.

The words *das Ereignis*, *ereignen* and *Ereignen* appear in many of Heidegger's late essays, though his use of them is in each case within a dense ring of associated words which thus allows no simple 'definition'. For example, in *The Thing* which was quoted from above, *ereignen* is used in the expression of the mirror-play of the fourfold, and an associated form, *sich ereignen* (a common German expression for 'to occur' or 'to happen'), is used for the 'taking place' of world. ('Aus dem Spiegel-Spiel des Gerings des Ringen ereignet sich das Dingen des Dings', V&A p179; 'Out of the mirror-play of the reel of the ringing the thinging of the thing takes place.')

In the essay *The Way to Language*, the word *Ereignis* is introduced after Heidegger has said that the moving force (*Das Regende*) in the Showing of Saying is 'owning' (*das Eignen*) (WL p127; GA 12, 246). Heidegger clarifies what he means by *Eignen* by writing that the Showing (*Zeigen*) brings what it points to into its own (*sein Eigenes*), from where it shows itself and abides (*verweilen*) according to its kind (*nach seiner Art*); the word is thus allowed to stand in its echoing of the *eigentlich*

temporality of phenomenology. A further series of associations follows: the bringing owning is the appropriating (*das Ereignen*); the appropriating (*das Ereigende*⁴⁸) is *Ereignis* itself, and nothing apart from it ('Das Ereigende ist das Ereignis selbst - und nichts außerdem.' GA 12, 247). *Ereignis* would seem to name, therefore, the movement of thorough-going, ecstatically temporal circling and self-circling poetic temporal phenomenology: the circling of poetry and phenomenology.⁴⁹

Within the context of this essay on language, where Heidegger has developed an idea of Saying which is itself both a showing and a listening, he writes:

Das in der Sage Waltende, das Ereignis, können wir nur so nennen, daß wir sagen: Es - das Ereignis - eignet. [...] Das Ereignis ist sagend. (GA 12, p 247, 251)

That which preveils in Saying, the appropriating event, we can only name when we say: It - the appropriating event - owns. [...] The appropriating event is sayingly.

The bringing of these two statements from *The Way to Language* together shows that within the essay and even within the complexity of Heidegger's discussion of both *Sage* and *Ereignis* a circularity takes place: *Ereignis* is present in Saying, but its presence is by way of saying. *Ereignis*, as the principle of an irreducible circling of phenomenology and poetry (in this context: showing and hearing), enters into a hermeneutic circle with the matter being discussed, and thus in proper phenomenological fashion, lets itself be thought from out of the matter itself. The occasionality and individuality of the later essays thus springs from *Ereignis*, as the thinking of the temporality of language. With this in mind, it is now necessary to consider what takes place when the matter (*die Sache*) to be thought is the *Sachverhalt* (cf. above, *Verhalten* is translated 'comporting') of temporal phenomenology itself: being / time in Heidegger's late essay *Time and Being*.

There is surely a certain irony in play in the fact that, while a

fundamental problem in *Being and Time* was the minor role of language, and while a large part of Heidegger's later writings deal with language specifically, language would seem hardly to be mentioned at all in *Time and Being*. Apart from a brief discussion of the traditional grammatical understanding of the 'es' of the German idiomatic phrase 'es gibt', 'language' appears in Heidegger's allusions to the language of the essay itself.

Ein kleiner Wink für das Hören sei gegeben. Es gilt, nicht eine Reihe von Aussagesätzen anzuhören, sondern dem Gang des Zeigens zu folgen. (*Zeit und Sein* p2)

Let me give a little hint on how to listen. The point is not to listen to a series of propositions, but rather to follow the movement of showing. (*Time and Being* p2)

In the period of *Being and Time*, as was shown above, propositions (*Aussagen*) were understood in relation to Dasein's falling, its objectifying understanding of being in terms of the present at hand. It would seem, then, that Heidegger's suspicion of propositional language, the objectification of that which is spoken about, by the subject-predicate structure of the proposition, is simply repeated in *Time and Being*. However, between these two instances, Heidegger's view of language had, as has been considered, undergone considerable change. Language understood as the human being's way of crystallising the flux of becoming into objects in order to survive, and thus as a fundamental falsification (a view which may, for instance, be attributed to Nietzsche), would be based on an uncritical distinction between being and becoming. Heidegger's reflection on language coming out of the temporal phenomenology of *Being and Time* led him to the idea of language being ecstatically temporal. Propositional language can thus be understood phenomenologically as being only a particular mode of the unity of language's temporality: a mode in which time is homogenized to now-points in which objects stand, and, as was shown in chapter 1 in relation to Kant's synthesis of recognition in

a concept, having a certain futural emphasis. Thus when Heidegger refers to the need to 'follow the movement of showing' he is alluding to the need to think of language from out of temporal phenomenology, that is, in its *Saying* as showing. This means that the lecture itself must be understood in its ecstatic existence: its comportment towards the past and in particular its echoing of *Being and Time*, its comportment towards the present, seen as the interplay of the audible and visual associations between the words, and also (and thus not only) its comportment towards the future in the understanding of its words as having conceptual meaning. Since for Heidegger, language's saying of its ecstatic temporality is poetry, his directive at the beginning of the essay must be heard as an appeal for the lecture to be taken as poetry.

Given the density of the essay's 'word-plays' as well as allusions to his earlier work, it would be impractical to give a thorough-going exposition of *Time and Being*. It is, however, possible to point to elements of its hermeneutic circularity.

Heidegger begins with a brief discussion of his understanding of being as an unconcealing in which being *is* not, and thus as a withdrawing. The different understandings of being through history is thought through the idea of being showing itself as a sending (*Schicken*) or gift (*Geben*) of the 'es gibt Sein'. Since being has always been thought as a determination of presence, the 'es' of the 'es gibt Sein' might suggest that 'time' is meant, thus Heidegger turns to consider time. His discussion of time repeats many of the elements of his early work, but it moves towards an understanding of the ecstatic comportments as a reaching (*Reichen*) which prevails in each dimension: present, past and future. The unity of the three dimensions consists in their interplay, their reaching towards each other. Time's own reaching is the fourth dimension of time, thus 'proper time is four-dimensional' (TB 16) ('Die

eigentliche Zeit ist vierdimensional,' ZS 16). Time's proper 'reaching' (*Reichen*), which opens the other three dimensions, and thus the region (*Bereich*) where beings may show themselves, is also thought as the giving of the 'es gibt Zeit'. Heidegger is then in a position to relate the giving proper to being and the giving proper to time in the saying (*Sagen*), "'Es gibt Sein", "Es gibt Zeit"' (ZS 19):

Beide, Sein sowohl wie Zeit, nannten wir Sachen. Das 'und' zwische beiden ließ ihre Beziehung zueinander im Unbestimmten.

Nunmehr zeigt sich: Was beide Sachen zueinander gehören läßt, was beide Sachen nicht nur in ihr Eigenes bringt, sondern in ihr Zusammengehören verwahrt und darin hält, der Verhalt beider Sachen, der Sach-Verhalt, ist das Ereignis. Der Sach-Verhalt kommt nicht nachträglich als aufgestocktes Verhältnis zu Sein und Zeit hinzu. Der Sach-Verhalt ereignet erst Sein und Zeit aus ihrem Verhältnis in ihr Eigenes. (ZS p20)

We have called both - being as well as time - matters. The 'and' between their connection to each other indeterminate.

What now shows itself, is that what lets both matters belong together, what not only brings both matters into their own, but maintains and holds them in their belonging together, their relation, the matter being related itself, is the appropriate event. The matter being related is not a relation superimposed retrospectively on being and time. The matter being related first appropriates being and time out of their relation in to what is appropriate. (TB p19)

The most prominent ring of associations in this passage runs: *halten, Verhalt, Sach-Verhalt, Verhältnis*. (In the phrase 'the matter being related' as a translation for *Sach-Verhalt*, 'related' needs to be heard both in the sense of 'establishing association' and of 'tell' or 'narrate'.) In the Saying ('Es gibt Sein', 'Es gibt Zeit'), the showing (*zeigen*) and the belonging (*gehören*), one hears echos of Heidegger's thinking of language. *Ereignis* is what lets being and time belong together in their relation (*Sach-Verhalt*, 'the matter being related, told'), but it is this relation which appropriates being and time out of their mere relation (*Verhältnis*, 'connection') into what is proper to them (*ereignen, Eigenes*). A circularity thus obtains such that the *belonging together* of being and time, must itself be thought from out of being properly understood and

time properly understood (where 'properly understood' would be a reference to ecstatic hermeneutic phenomenology).

Schicken von Sein beruht im lichtend-verbergenden Reichen des mehrfältigen Anwesens in den offenen Bereich des Zeit-Raumes. Das Reichen aber beruht in eins mit dem Schicken im Ereignen. Dieses, d.h. das Eigentümliche des Ereignisses, bestimmt auch den Sinn dessen, was hier das Beruhen genannt wird. (ZS p21)

Sending of being lies in the opening-concealing reaching of manifold presence into the open realm of the time-space. Reaching, however, lies in one with the sending, in appropriating. This, that is the peculiar property of Appropriating, determines also the sense of what here is called lying. (TB 20)

The proper understanding of being lies (*beruhen*, 'to be based', 'to rest on') in the proper understanding of time; the proper understanding of time lies together with the proper understanding of being; and 'lies' is thought from out of *Ereignis*. The circling stops when it is asked 'what *Ereignis* is', expecting an object which would ground the belong together of being and time.⁵⁰ Rather, it must be remembered that *Ereignis* is 'sayingly':

Was bleibt zu sagen? Nur dies: Das Ereignis ereignet. Damit sagen wir vom Selben her auf das Selbe zu das Selbe. (ZS p24)

What remains to be said? Only this: the appropriate event appropriates. With this we say the same from out of the Same on towards the same.

From the point of view of logic, Heidegger admits, it would seem nothing is being said. The use of the spatial/temporal prepositions ('von...her', 'auf...zu') is, rather, a reference to the ecstatic temporality of Saying, as was discussed above. Heidegger thus again appeals for the lecture to be heard as poetry, or rather as poetic temporal phenomenology. The word 'Same' brings to mind the phenomenological belonging together of what is asked and that which is sought, the 'starting point' and the 'interpretation'. The iteration of the word 'Same' indicates that the expression of the hermeneutic circle must itself be thought circularly from out of ecstatic temporal phenomenology and thus its saying from out of the ecstatic temporality of poetry. *Ereignis* is the name for that way

of thinking in which the saying 'vom Selben her auf das Selbe zu das Selbe' is taken up as a 'clue for reflection' ('Anhalt für das Nachdenken', ZS p25). As this way of thinking, *Ereignis* can never finally be said, rather it exists only within the incessant circling of phenomenological questioning and poetry, where the circling is thought from out of the ecstatic temporality of poetic temporal phenomenology itself. Heidegger expresses this in three short paragraphs almost at the very end of the essay:

Sein ohne das Seiende denken, heißt: Sein ohne Rücksicht auf die Metaphysik denken. Eine solche Rücksicht herrscht nun aber auch noch in der Absicht, die Metaphysik zu überwinden. Darum gilt es, vom Überwinden abzulassen und die Metaphysik sich selbst zu überlassen.

Wenn eine Überwindung nötig bleibt, dann geht sie dasjenige Denken an, das sich eigens in das Ereignis einläßt, um Es aus ihm her auf Es zu - zu sagen.

Es gilt unablässig, die Hindernisse zu überwinden, die ein solches Sagen leicht unzureichend machen. (ZS p25)

To think being without beings means: to think being without regard to metaphysics. Yet a regard for metaphysics still prevails in the intention to overcome metaphysics. Therefore, it is necessary to cease overcoming and leave metaphysics to itself.

If an overcoming remains necessary, it concerns that thinking which properly enters into the appropriate event in order to say It from out of It on towards It.

It is necessary to overcome unceasingly the obstacles that make such a Saying easily inadequate. (TB 24)

The first and the third paragraphs are linked by the repetition of words. ('vom überwinden abzulassen', 'unablässig [...] zu überwinden'; 'to cease overcoming', 'to overcome unceasingly'.) The first would indicate the need to leave phenomenological questioning completely and turn to poetry; the third states the need to maintain a continual questioning. The middle paragraph mentions *Ereignis* and the need for thinking and saying to belong together. It is the belonging together of questioning and poetry expressed in the middle paragraph which allows poetry (the first paragraph) and questioning (the third paragraph) to remain distinct.

To conclude this chapter, then: it is *Ereignis* which names

Heidegger's way of thinking the temporality of language. The way is the incessant circling (appropriately thought) of a temporal phenomenology of language and language's poetic ecstatic temporality. In order to move towards an engagement between Heidegger's thought and Benjamin's, this rather methodological description will be further explored in chapter 4, particularly in relation to Heidegger's thinking of translation.

Notes

1. References to Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975ff) will be given in the form: 'GA' followed by volume and page number. References to English translations will be given though most passages quoted will have been modified to give a more literal rendering and to provide consistency between translations.

Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (HCT), trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); translation of GA 20: *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffes. Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962); translation of GA 2: *Sein und Zeit*. References to this work will be given in the numbering of the German version, prefixed with 'H'. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (BPP), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982); translation of GA 24: *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie. Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (KPM), fourth edition, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); translation of GA 3: *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik. 'The Nature of Language'* (NL), in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971), p57-108; translation of 'Das Wesen der Sprache', in GA 12: *Unterwegs zur Sprache. 'The Way to Language'* in the same volume p111-136; translation of 'Der Weg zur Sprache', also in GA 12.

2. The idea of a difference between the early and later work is almost universal in Heidegger scholarship. For example, Rudolf Allers, 'Heidegger on the Principle of Sufficient Reason', *Journal of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XX (1959-60), 365-373: 'It is as one knows, a favorite procedure of Heidegger's to take a text, to interpret, and to comment on it. Linguistic analysis and etymological explanation have replaced phenomenology' (p369). The introductory section of this chapter may be understood as countering certain interpretations of this difference, which regard the early and later work as standing apart and independent of each other, or which see a simple development in Heidegger's thought.

3. Henri Birault, 'Existence et vérité d'après Heidegger', *Revue Métaphysique et de Morale*, LVI (1951), 35-87, stresses the unity of Heidegger's thought. He speaks of 'la vivante unité de la pensée heideggerienne' (p35). It is necessary to ask further, however, how this unity is to be thought.

4. Heidegger's forward to William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1963), in parallel translation, p xxii, xxiii.

5. See also, John Sallis, 'Language and Reversal', in *Martin Heidegger in Europe and America*, ed. by Edward G. Ballard and Charles E. Scott, pp. 129-150. Sallis makes explicit reference to the need for *Being and Time* not to be thought of as left behind in Heidegger's later work (p140).

6. Martin Heidegger, *Time and Being*, in *On Time and Being* trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1972), p1-24. Translated from *Zeit und Sein*, in *Zur Sache des Dendens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969), p1-25
7. Martin Heidegger, *Wissenschaft und Besinnung* in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Gunther Neske, 1954), p45-70. Translated as *Science and Reflection* in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. Willian Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) p155-182.
8. William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), usefully concludes his work by stressing the need to understand that 'Heidegger's perspective from beginning to end remains phenomenological' (p627). There has, however, been no treatment to date of Heidegger's later work as phenomenology. Richardson also, though, imposes a divide on Heidegger's work in terms of the incompleteness or completion of the task of overcoming metaphysics: 'Heidegger I was victimized by the metaphysics he was trying to overcome [...] The language of metaphysics was inadequate to the task of giving expression to an essentially non-(pre-)metaphysical thought' (p625). Richardson does not question the temporality implicit in the 'non-' or the 'pre-'.
9. Cf. Richardson p xvi, xvii and Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism* in *Basic Writings* trans. David Farrell Krell (revised and expanded edition) (London: Routledge, 1993) p213-265.
10. Herman Rapaport, *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press: 1989)
11. Martin Heidegger, *Überwindung der Metaphysik* in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* p71-99 (p72).
12. Heidegger early on rejects an understanding of phenomenology as a 'reflective' process (H.115). Such an understanding formed the ground of Husserl's idea of the inspection of the intentional acts of consciousness. The problem with such a thinking of 'reflection' is that it posits the distinct separation of that which inspects and that which is inspected, and in this way the circularity of questioning is grounded and becomes fixed in the model of two objective realms standing opposite each other. The circularity of questioning, which is at the heart of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein, may be understood as reflexive, but where the temporality of the separation between the question and what is asked after, is also questioned and thought beyond a model of distinct, objective realms.
13. GA 32: *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 194. Translated as *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 135.
14. Martin Heidegger, 'The Problem of a Non-objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Theology' in *Philosophy and Religion* ed. Jerry H. Gill (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1968), p59-65 (p60). Translated from 'Das Problem eines nichtobjektivierenden Dendens und Sprechens in der heutigen Theologie', GA 9: *Wegmarken*, 68-78. 'Der Anschein soll vermeiden werden, als handle es sich um eine Darlegung dogmatischer Thesen aus der Heidegger'schen Philosophie, die es nicht gibt' (p69).

15. In the editor's afterword to volume 1 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, GA 1, 437-440. 'Die Gesamtausgabe soll [...] anleiten, die Frage aufzunehmen, mitzufragen und vor allem dann fragender zu fragen.' (p436)
16. For example Jacques Derrida, *Différance in Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (New York and London: Harvester Press, 1982) p1-27 (p22) and *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakrovorty Spicak (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976) p12.
17. Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing*, trans. W.B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch (Indiana: Gateway Editions Ltd, 1967). Translation of *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, GA 41.
18. This point is entirely absent from a recent study of Heidegger and Kant: Frank Schalow, *The Renewal of the Heidegger-Kant Dialogue: Action, Thought and Responsibility* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). For Schalow, 'hermeneutic circle' describes the method by which Heidegger interprets Kant, rather than describing the circularity of experience and knowledge which he found in Kant's work.
19. *Being and Time*, H24.
20. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p322; GA 3, 458. See below.
21. Nor is it a case of pre-established harmony, which L.M. Vail suggests in *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972). 'There is some original harmony between our sensations and the speech we use to report them. In this respect Heidegger's position resembles an idealist position, minus the metaphysical interpretation of "mind"' (p173).
22. Phenomenology must not, then, be understood as a revealing of the hidden character of things, as if to attain the thing-in-itself behind its appearances. Such an interpretation is given by Magda King, *Heidegger's Philosophy: A Guide to his Basic Thought* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964). 'But what are the 'things' that phenomenology lets us see? What are, for it, the phenomena par excellence? They are *not* the real things we meet within the world, which are always directly accessible to us and do not need a difficult and intricate method to bring them to light. The phenomenon of phenomenology must be such that they are usually half-hidden, disguised or forgotten, so that they in themselves demand a special approach. These phenomena are not beings but the being of beings' (p155).
23. Cf Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time* (CT), trans. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p18.
24. L.M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*, gives an interpretation of Heidegger's thought through the notion of the Kantian *a priori*. Concerning *Ereignis*, he writes: 'This bears a close resemblance to Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories. [...] At any and each moment, we operate in a whole whose general character is pre-disclosed to us, as we might say, a realm of relevant possibilities' (p173). Such an interpretation overlooks the temporal and hermeneutic aspects of the question about what is 'pre-disclosed'.
25. Heidegger further clarifies the term 'hermeneutic' in *Being and Time* H.37-8 and H.231-2. He stresses that the term as understood in historiography is only a derivative sense; in its primary sense for Heidegger it

refers to the circularity of understanding in interpretation. 'Every interpretation has its fore-having, its fore-sight, and its fore-conception. [...] The totality of these 'presuppositions' [...] we call the "hermeneutical situation"' H.323.

26. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le partage des voix* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1982). Translated as 'Sharing Voices' in *Transforming the Hermeneutical Context*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p211-259.

27. Similarly disappointing is William V. Spanos, *Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), who has a chapter on the hermeneutic circle in relation to Kierkegaard. 'The hermeneutic circle is thus not a vicious circle, despite its presuppositions about being. For at the end of the temporal process of interpretive disclosure the whole, the form it discovers or retrieves, is quite different from the whole, the form, as object understood in the beginning' (p134). This characterization of Heidegger's hermeneutic circle, by not questioning after the temporality of the 'temporal process', which leads to something 'quite different', does not serve to differentiate it from standard ideas of hermeneutics.

28. Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism' in *Basic Writings* trans. David Farrell Krell (revised and expanded edition) (London: Routledge, 1993) p213-265. Translated from 'Brief über den Humanismus', in GA 9: *Wegmarken*.

29. This is David Farrell Krell's view in *Of Memory, Reminiscence and Writing*, chapter 6. 'The analysis of ecstatic temporality will not support the binary opposition of appropriateness/inappropriateness upon which the whole of *Being and Time* is constructed' (p253). That this is not the case, is argued below and concerns the rethinking of the opposition in the light of the need to question the implicit subjectivity in the work.

30. Krell details well the voluntarism of *Being and Time* in *Of Memory, Reminiscence and Writing*, but sees it simply as a fundamental flaw of the project, rather than the basis for further questioning.

31. John Sallis in 'Language and Reversal' gives a useful analysis of Heidegger's view of language in *Being and Time*, though he stresses language's thrownness, rather than noting Heidegger's analysis of language as having no particular temporal ecstasis.

32. David A. White also concludes this in his discussion of language in the period of *Being and Time*, in *Heidegger and the Language of Poetry* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p147.

33. For further discussion of the tension between Heidegger's treatment of language and the idea of λόγος developed in the introduction to *Being and Time*, see David A. White, *Heidegger and the Language of Poetry*, p148-50.

34. It is also interesting to note that falling is considered in the previous section, 68c, without reference to either discourse or language, even though previously 'assertion' was clearly associated with Dasein's falling.

35. There is a certain tendency in Heidegger scholarship, if not to objectify *Ereignis* – which Heidegger specifically warns against – then at least to give it a certain transcendental existence. For example, L.M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*: 'How is it possible for our language to be *about* anything? Heidegger's suggestion is that the rules of thoughtful and attentive usage of language belong in some sort of harmony or sameness with the laws that govern the presence of all things. This harmony or self-sameness Heidegger calls *Ereignis*' (p173). The interpretation of *Ereignis* given in this section will stress its significance as naming a way of thinking, and thus will avoid, also, giving it a special power, such that appeal to *Ereignis* automatically places Heidegger's thought beyond metaphysics. Françoise Dastur, 'Language and *Ereignis*' (in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. by John Sallis (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 355–369), is unable to explain the power she ascribes to an appeal to *Ereignis* when she writes: 'With the thought of *Ereignis* as language, i.e., of a durable unfolding of Being as language [...] all the phantoms of metaphysics should disappear' (p365).
36. David Wood, 'Reiterating the Temporal: Toward a Rethinking of Heidegger on Time' in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations* ed. John Sallis (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993) p136–159 (p136–7).
37. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993). Translation of GA 51: *Grundbegriffe*
38. Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. by Reginald Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991). Translation of *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1957)
39. John Sallis, 'Language and Reversal', charts the changes in Heidegger's view of language, but understands Heidegger's later writings as effectively taking the place of the unpublished final section of Part I of *Being and Time*. He speaks of the fulfilment of *Being and Time* (p144) and cites Heidegger's phrase 'to significations, words accrue' in relation to the later work. In this way Sallis overlooks the significance and reasons for Heidegger's distancing himself from the position of *Being and Time*.
40. Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry in Existence and Being* (London: Vision Press, 1949), p293–315. Translation of 'Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung', GA 4: *Erörterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, 33–48
41. Martin Heidegger, *Logos in Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), p59–78. Translated from *Logos in Vorträge und Aufsätze* p207–229.
42. There is thus a continuity in Heidegger's treatment of *λόγος*, once the uncritical division into language and *Rede* had been questioned. For further discussion of this point, see George Joseph Seidel, *Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics: An Introduction to His Thought* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1964): 'The central notion of the logos as the primordially thought ground for phenomenology and as the idea of authentic thinking with reference to being remains fundamentally the same, from first to last, in the thought of Heidegger' (p9).

43. Thus the project of the destruction of the history of ontology may be seen to arise from the ecstatic temporality of the hermeneutic situation of phenomenology. It is thus not simply the case, as Laszlo Versényi argues in *Heidegger, Being, and Truth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), that after *Being and Time* Heidegger changed the focus of phenomenological analysis away from Dasein's everydayness to 'a more original manifestation'. He writes concerning this: 'The opposite of Dasein's everyday feeling and doing are the uncommon experiences of artistic creation and ultimate human freedom. Perhaps in these extreme situations Being reveals itself more originally than anywhere else, [...] the exceptional, fundamental, and all too rare insight that is vouchsafed to a few great men in the history of thought' (p84). This idea of being manifesting itself most originally to 'a few great men', is to ascribe to Heidegger an historicism very close to Rickert's. Heidegger's thinking of history from out of the hermeneutic situation will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.

44. The old German word 'Seyn' has been rendered by the Anglo Saxon 'beon'. Heidegger used the word 'Seyn' instead of 'Sein' at this period as another way of trying to counter the objectivizing of 'Sein' by stressing that being can only be spoken historically.

45. Commentators have generally not taken account of the hermeneutic circularity of *Ereignis* as a way of thinking. For example, Otto Pöggeler in 'Being as Appropriation' (trans. by Rüdiger H. Grimm, in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Murrey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 84-115) gives a thorough account of Heidegger's references to *Ereignis*, but ultimately sees it as another name for being. He writes: 'The carrying out of the ontological difference - the happening of truth - is thought of as the carrying out of the event of appropriation' (p107). In making this statement Pöggeler also overlooks the hermeneutic circularity between being and beings in the happening of the ontological difference, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4, in relation to Heidegger's essay *Identity and Difference*.

46. Martin Heidegger, '...dichterisch wohnet der Mensch...' in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* p 187-204. Translated as '...Poetically Man Dwells...' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) p211-229.

47. This situation is well expressed by Gerald L. Bruns, *Heidegger's Estrangements: Language, Truth and Poetry in the Later Writings* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Commenting on Heidegger's reflection on the word 'way' (*Wege, be-wägen, wägen*) at the beginning of the lecture 'The Nature of Language', Bruns writes: 'If one were trying to extract a point from this passage, it would perhaps be that the "way" is multiple, distributed in every direction, and that the country (*Gegend*) is just this plurality of courses, a dissemination of directions' (p142).

48. The difference between an infinitival noun and a present participle noun cannot be followed in English; the present participle noun, however, has the connotations of the 'doing' of the action named in the infinitival noun.

49. This interpretation is thus in rejection of the prevalent tendency to ascribe a certain 'real' existence to *Ereignis*. In his essay 'The Experience of Language', Robert Bernasconi writes concerning *Ereignis*: 'It decides what is holy and what is unholy, what is great and what is small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master

and what slave' (p14). Against this assimilation of *Ereignis* to a Judeo-Christian idea of divinity, the interpretation of *Ereignis* as naming a way of thinking is more in line with Bernasconi's comment, in the same essay, that '*Ereignis* is first and foremost the word of the thinker at the time of the end of philosophy' (p14).

50. Joseph J. Kockelmans seems precisely to understand *Ereignis* as existing as a ground when he writes in *On the Truth of Being* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 'That which makes both, namely, being and time, what they properly are (*Eigens*) and makes them belong together is what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*, aboriginal and appropriating event. In other words, that mysterious "it" about which we have spoken is the *Ereignis*. And this *Ereignis* is ontologically prior to Being as well as time, because it is that which grants to both what they properly are' (p71).

CHAPTER 3: BENJAMIN AND MESSIANIC ANALYSIS

I. Introduction: Benjamin's Method as *Umweg*

In an analogous fashion to the previous chapter an overview of Benjamin's project will be presented in order to develop an idea of Messianic analysis as Benjamin's way of thinking the temporality of language.¹ Again, this will be done by exploring how he took up the legacy of Kant's critical philosophy. The form of Benjamin's work would seem to differ so greatly from that of Heidegger, however, that it is necessary briefly at the outset to consider this difference, in order to begin to allow a more productive resonance to take the place of what otherwise may seem a stark opposition. This difference will also necessitate that an overview take a different form in the case of Benjamin than it did for Heidegger. This introductory section will concern the question of its form, in terms of the need to provide a theoretical grid, which underpins the presentational form of Benjamin's work.

A stark opposition would seem to exist precisely between the ways in which Heidegger and Benjamin described the *method* of their thinking. In Chapter 2 it was shown how Heidegger's method (from the Greek *ὁδός*) was precisely a way or path (*ein Weg*). In the presentation of Heidegger's project, the trajectory of a questioning path of thinking was described from his early work to the later work, enabling the 'whole' of the project to appear as a *Weg*, in the complex circling of a temporal phenomenology and a poetic phenomenology. For Benjamin, however, method must be '*Umweg*'² (detour, roundabout way, circuitous route). Benjamin writes further: 'Darstellung als *Umweg*'; the presentation of a

work of philosophy must itself take the form of a circuitous or elliptical route. Within the context of the *Epistemo-critical Prologue* to Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama (Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels)*, from which these quotations have been taken, the meaning of his use of the word *Umweg* may be understood initially as the need to move away from a form of philosophical presentation which gives the appearance of a continuous series of arguments and which leads, at the end of the piece, to something which is held to be proved true. Instead, the flow of argument in a philosophical treatise is constantly interrupting itself:

Verzicht auf den unabgesetzten Lauf der Intention ist sein erstes Kennzeichen. Ausdauernd hebt das Denken stets von neuem an, umständlich geht es auf die Sache selbst zurück. Dies unablässige Atemholen ist die eigenste Daseinsform der Kontemplation. (GS I.1, 208)

Renouncing the uninterrupted course of its intention is its primary characteristic. Tirelessly thinking begins anew, circuitously it returns to the matter in hand. This continual pausing for breath is the most proper form of existence of contemplation. (OGTD p28)

The purpose of this chapter will be to reconstruct the thinking of language and time which underlies this methodology. This purpose will itself require justification because the notion of *underlying* with respect to an idea or a truth in relation to its presentational form will be seen to be precisely that with which Benjamin wishes to take issue. Such a justification will be considered below, together with the problems which ensue from treating Benjamin's textual practices in isolation from their theoretical basis.³ The temporal connotations of the notion of mediation which separates philosophical terms such as form and content, appearance and essence, sign and signified, are central for Benjamin and will be explored in this chapter primarily in terms of his criticism of the Kantian *a priori* which separates and mediates the forms of pure intuition and the categories, intuition and understanding.

Any attempt to reconstruct Benjamin's thinking of language and time,

must take into account the form of the 'whole' of his work. The form of existence of this 'whole' is the same as that of the philosophical treatise characterized by Benjamin in the above quotation. There appears to be no linear development of ideas in the chronological sequence of his works, nor would there seem to be a consistent explanatory terminology developed in his writing. While certain terms do re-occur, such as 'the now of recognizability' ('*das Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*') and the 'messianic', which both appear in his early notes and essays of 1917-20 and in one of his last works, *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (1940), their usage is almost always without explanatory context and thus their elliptical appearance serves to interrupt rather than clarify the argument at hand.

These two aspects of Benjamin's work, the apparent lack of a linear development in the progression of his writings and the apparent lack of a developed philosophical terminology, need to be compared with Heidegger's work. Many of Heidegger's later essays were shown in Chapter 2 to move away from the systematicity of *Being and Time* into a form where a more fluid terminology appeared, developing out of the matter being treated, rather than being an interpretive terminology imposed upon it. The chapter also explored the way Heidegger emphasized that the earlier, critically questioning approach was not simply left behind in the 'development' of Heidegger I into Heidegger II, but rather was 'contained' (*enthalten*) in it. Since these two aspects of Heidegger's work are chronologically separated, giving the appearance of an earlier phase which stands apart from a later phase which in turn seems to have surpassed the former, it was necessary for an overview to run through the progression of Heidegger's work and thus bring them into a resonance with each other. In this manner, the complexity of Heidegger's *Weg* as the interaction of a critical temporal phenomenology and a poetic phenomenology could be made to appear in a way which did not prejudge

the temporality of their chronologically separate appearances, or indeed the temporality of the progression itself. In other words, the temporality of the 'whole' in relation to the parts of Heidegger's project, which was presented in Chapter 2, had to reflect the notion of the temporality of language developed *within* the project. In an identical fashion here, the temporality of the 'whole' of Benjamin's project in relation to the individual works, must be understood through the notion of the temporality of language which he developed in his work. Since it is the purpose of this chapter to present Benjamin's thinking on time and language, a certain circularity is involved wherein the presentation presupposes the 'conclusion'.

Such a circularity was also found in Chapter 1 in relation to Kant's thinking of a critical system: Kant understood his philosophical system as having the temporality of a organism; the possibility of perceiving an entity to be an organism was treated critically within the system and was shown to require an idea grounding its unity to be presupposed; in relation to the critical system itself the grounding idea was seen to be the transcendental unity of apperception. It was argued, however, that the temporality of the transcendental unity which grounded Kant's system was modelled uncritically on the temporality of the Newtonian object, and thus in opposition to the critical treatment of time within the system. In other words, Kant attempted to ground, thus break, the circularity of his project, and, as was shown in Chapter 2, Heidegger's 'starting point' was to argue that this circularity was not something to be avoided, but rather must be more thoroughly carried through. In relation to an approach to Benjamin's work, then, the circularity between the form of presentation and the idea of the temporality of language developed must be allowed to appear. The remainder of this introductory section will thus consider the form of Benjamin's work, in the light of *'Darstellung*

als Umweg'. The thinking of language and time which 'underlies' Benjamin's notion of presentation will then be explored in the remainder of the chapter.

In the Prologue to Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, philosophy is characterized as being concerned with the presentation of a configuration of ideas. The ideas must divest the phenomena being treated of their 'false unity' in order that 'thus divided, they partake of the genuine unity of truth' (OGTD p33) ('um aufgeteilt an der echten [Einheit] der Wahrheit teilzuhaben' GS I.1, p213). The ideas are not to be thought of as being abstracted from phenomena, rather, in a similar manner to Kantian pure concepts of the understanding, they determine the arrangement of the phenomena (OGTD p34; GS I.1, 214). However, unlike Kantian categories, they have an explicit temporal and linguistic existence. Benjamin writes for example in relation to the *idea* of tragedy or the *idea* of Trauerspiel, that 'idea of a form [...] is nothing less living than any concrete literary work'⁴ ('Die Idee einer Form [...] ist nichts weniger Lebendiges als irgendeine konkrete Dichtung' GS I.1, p230). These ideas which order the phenomena, must themselves be thought of as existing in discontinuous multiplicity:

Das philosophische Gedankenreich entspinnt sich nicht in der ununterbrochenen Linienführung begrifflicher Deduktionen, sondern in einer Beschreibung der Ideenwelt. Ihre Durchführung setzt mit jeder Idee von neuem als einer ursprünglichen an. Denn die Ideen bilden eine unreduzierbare Vielheit. Als gezählte - eigentlich aber benannte - Vielheit sind die Ideen der Betrachtung gegeben. (GS I.1, p223)

The realm of philosophical thought does not develop in the unbroken lines of conceptual deductions, but in a description of the world of ideas. The implementation of such a description starts off with every idea anew as an original one. For the ideas form an irreducible multiplicity. As an enumerated - more properly though, named - multiplicity, the ideas are given to consideration. (p43)

This quotation indicates the predominant way in which Benjamin understands the nature of an idea - as a name. Whilst they are also

described in relation to the Platonic theory of Ideas (GS I.1, 216; OGTD p36) and as Leibnizian monads (GS I.1, 228; OGTD p47-48), the major thrust of the *Prologue* is towards a linguistic understanding of ideas:

Die Idee ist ein Sprachliches, und zwar im Wesen des Wortes jeweils dasjenige Moment, in welchem es Symbol ist. [...] Wie die Ideen intentionslos im Benennen sich geben, so haben sie in philosophischer Kontemplation sich zu erneuern. In dieser Erneuerung stellt das ursprüngliche Vernehmen der Worte sich wieder her. Und so ist die Philosophie im Verlauf ihrer Geschichte, die so oft ein Gegenstand des Spottes gewesen ist, mit Grund ein Kampf um die Darstellung von einigen wenigen, immer wieder denselben Worten – von Ideen. (GS I.1, 216-7)

The idea is something linguistic, indeed that moment in the essence of the word in which it is a symbol. [...] Just as ideas give themselves intentionlessly in naming, so they have to be renewed in philosophical contemplation. In this renewal the original apprehension of the words produces itself again. And in this way, in the course of its history which has often been an object of derision, philosophy is rightly a struggle for the presentation of a limited number of words – of ideas – which always remain the same. (OGTD p36-7)

Benjamin's understanding of ideas in relation to his thinking of symbols and the intentionlessness of truth will be explored below in this chapter. However, already it may be seen that Benjamin's notion of the 'renewing' of the name will have certain affinities with a Heideggerian thinking of language and history. This becomes clearer when it is appreciated that immediately following the above quotation Benjamin goes on to mention the questionableness of inventing new philosophical terminologies, which thus lack historical 'objectivity' (*Objektivität*). The notion of a renewal of what Benjamin calls the *Hauptprägungen* of philosophy in order to produce an *ursprünglich* apprehensions of them, could equally be applied to Heidegger's attempts in his later work to rethink the *Grundbegriffe* of philosophy, such as *Wesen* ('essence') and ἀλήθεια (*Wahrheit*, 'truth'). His work in the period of *Being and Time* was, of course, marked by a proliferation of neologisms, though this was precisely before Heidegger's turning to focus upon language explicitly. However, to avoid the impression of a merely superficial similarity between their projects, it will

be necessary to explore in detail Benjamin's theory of names particularly in relation to his understanding of time. It will then be possible to allow the temporality of language which 'underlies' Heidegger's view of philosophy to be seen in its proximity to that which 'underlies' Benjamin's.

It is Benjamin's understanding of ideas as having a linguistic existence as names which provides the immediate context in the *Origin of German Tragic Drama* for understanding his method as *Umweg*. The theory of names is not simply applied by Benjamin to proper names or philosophical terms, but also to quotations, the fragments of the early German Romantics and even philosophical systems themselves. In the context of a philosophical treatise the theory of names operates to interrupt and break up the appearance of a deductive flow of arguments. The same approach lies behind Benjamin's notion of montage, a form of presentation which he used in *One Way Street* (1926) and mentions specifically in convolute 'N' of the *Passagenwerk*. It also lies behind Benjamin's extensive use of quotation in the *Origin of German Tragic Drama* and the *Passagenwerk*, a work which was to be constituted almost exclusively by quotation.⁵ Yet, further, the theory of names must also be seen to lie behind Benjamin's individual works. As was mentioned above, his corpus does not show a continuous progression of thinking nor a continuous development of a philosophical terminology, rather the individual works demonstrate the discontinuity of names. That is to say, his works show a particular independence of each other, they do not tend to show obvious developmental continuities with each other. This has lead to the individual works being treated in isolation in the critical literature on Benjamin, instead of being seen in relation to a 'whole'.⁶ The problematic relation of the individual works to the 'whole' of Benjamin's works raises precisely the questions of *Umweg*, of

philosophical presentation of a system, and of the temporality of language which determines his understanding of names. Yet if Benjamin's works are not considered with regard to their problematic relation to the 'whole', their discontinuity is apt to be interpreted as a series of isolated and independent philosophical 'points', that is to say, they are interpreted according to a temporality of language modelled on a linear, homogenous series of now-points - the understanding of temporality which Benjamin precisely and explicitly wanted to attack.

This misinterpretation of the temporality of Benjamin's writing leads to the idea that he was proposing a notion of quotation which simply licences the tearing of quotations from their context in a way which is purely destructive of their original meaning. This view neglects the way Benjamin's notion of quotation has its place within his understanding of the temporality of language, and in particular presupposes a transformed idea of reading, which will be explored below. If the tension between Benjamin's notions of presentation (*Umweg*, quotation, fragment), and his 'systematic' rethinking of language and time - precisely in his rethinking of the temporality of the language of systematic philosophy - is lost, Benjamin's thinking is made to ultimately support the view of time he wished to attack. That is to say, Benjamin's work is made to support a view of language where the text has an unproblematic meaning existing 'present' within it, and out of this meaningful context a quotation is torn, in order to simply make it mean something different in a different context. In this view of meaning, the unproblematic separation of the language of a text and the meaning it presents, is modelled on the same view of time as the Kantian *a priori* separation of understanding and intuition. Benjamin's understanding of the temporality of language applied particularly to the question of the meaning of a text is treated at greatest length in *The Task of the Translator*, which will be discussed in

Chapter 5. The misinterpretation of Benjamin's work in the use of Benjamin's textual practices in a way which ultimately supports a temporality of language at variance with his assertions about the nature of time, indicates that the circularity between the 'form' of Benjamin's work and its 'content' has been grounded. Only by providing a more systematic underpinning to Benjamin's view of philosophical presentation is it possible to maintain the tension between systematic thought and presentation, where this 'tension' is precisely his rethinking of the temporality of language.

The misunderstanding of Benjamin's work in a way which holds it within a determination of time as a series of isolated now points may be briefly illustrated with respect to Rodolphe Gasché's recent essay 'Objective Diversions: On Some Kantian Themes in Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.'⁷ On one level this essay misinterprets Benjamin by taking the *Work of Art* essay (1935) in isolation from his view of cinema developed in *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire*⁸ (1939). Gasché reads the *Work of Art* essay as a wholesale celebration of the power of cinema and the destruction of the aura of the traditional work of art, ignoring the way the *Baudelaire* essay views cinema as complicit with an experience of time as a linear, homogeneous series of now-points, and which views the aura of an object in a positive light. On another level, however, this oversight is illuminating for the misinterpretation of Benjamin's own textual practices. The revolutionary power of cinema proposed in the *Work of Art* essay can be understood in relation to the similarity between cinematic presentation and montage. The power of the camera to focus on previously hidden details of commonplace objects and milieus (*Work of Art* p236; GS I.2, 499) introduces discontinuities into familiar contexts, just as montage and quotation break up the meaningful appearance of philosophical argument.

To concentrate solely on this destructive, fragmenting, effect of cinema and montage leads ultimately only to a repetition of an understanding of time as a series of discontinuous, fragmented now-points. In the context of Gasché's essay, this leads him to remain close to Kant and to ascribe to Benjamin a theory of the cinema audience as an autonomous, self-regulating Kantian subject, distracted from the tyranny of any traditional form of thinking:

Free from all domination, this collective subject, testing against one another the success of each individual in dealing with shock, reflects itself into a free, independent subject that gives itself the rule, as it were. (*Gasché* p197)

Quite apart from the echos of *la Terreur* in the idea of a collective testing the individual for his 'success' in partaking of the revolution, Gasché's treatment of the essay has led to what was shown in Chapter 1 to be the Newtonian temporality of the transcendental ego. More importantly, however, the similarity between cinema and Benjamin's textual practice of quotation and montage must lead to the conclusion, that to separate the question of presentation from Benjamin's systematic re-thinking of language and time, can only lead these practices to appear in support of a view of time as a linear, homogeneous series of now points - just as Benjamin suggests that cinema is complicit with this view of time in the *Baudelaire* essay. This is a determination of time which, for Benjamin, is peculiar to the mechanized rationality of modernity:

Es kam der Tag, da einem neuen und dringlichen Reizbedürfnis der Film entsprach. Im Film kommt die chockförmige Wahrnehmung als formales Prinzip zur Geltung. Was am Fließband den Rhythmus der Produktion bestimmt, liegt beim Film dm der Rezeption zugrunde. (GS I.1, 630-1)

There came a day when a new and ugent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film. (*Baudelaire* p132)

The confusion arises in the omission to differentiate between the temporality of language which *underpins* Benjamin's theory of montage as

constituted by discontinuous multiplicity, and the temporality which underpins the modern view of autonomous rationality.⁹ It will be this difference which will allow Benjamin's rethinking of the temporality of language to 'blast open' the continuum of now-points which is already characterized by 'shock-experience', that is, by the isolation of now-points, and thus, it would seem, already characterized by a certain discontinuity. The question of the 'mediation' between that which 'underpins' (i.e. Benjamin's temporality of language) and its presentation is precisely circumvented if Benjamin's rethinking of language and time is not treated systematically, leading to a view of Benjamin's works as standing in isolation as in the misinterpretation of the parts of montage. The purpose of the overview of Benjamin's work in this chapter must therefore be to provide a systematic account of his rethinking of language and time, in order that the question of the relation of system to presentation may be allowed to circle back on to Benjamin's work.¹⁰ To compare this situation briefly once again to that of Heidegger's work: it was shown in Chapter 2 how the separation between a systematic way of thinking and a more poetic way of thinking arising from a consideration of the temporality of language, took on the appearance of a chronological separation of the periods of his work; a separation which thus had to be traversed at speed in order that the temporality of this separation was not prejudged to be the temporality of linear, chronological time. The question of systematicity and presentation will be considered explicitly in Chapter 5, particularly in relation to the essays *The Task of the Translator* and *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*. The overview of the 'whole' of Benjamin's work in this chapter is a necessary prerequisite to an appreciation of the status of his individual works, such as these, in the discontinuity of their existence as names or fragments themselves.

Justification for this approach to Benjamin's work, that is, providing a systematic basis for a corpus which, in its 'form' and 'content' precisely attempts to make the notion of systematicity problematic, may also be found in his treatment of the work of the *Frühe Romantik*. The various forms of the works of the *Athenaeum* journals - consisting of fragments, fragmentary and elliptical pieces and critical essays - bear a great deal of similarity to those found in Benjamin's corpus. In the essay, *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism (Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik, GS I.1, 7-122)*, in which he focuses predominantly on Friedrich Schlegel's work, Benjamin poses two questions:

Gegenüber dem Versuch, im Begriff des Reflexionsmediums dem Denken der Frühromantiker ein methodisches Gradnetz unterzulegen, in das sich ihre Problemlösung wie ihre systematischen Positionen überhaupt einzeichnen ließen, werden sich zwei Fragen erheben. Die erste [...] lautet, ob denn die Romantiker überhaupt systematisch gedacht oder in ihrem Denken systematische Interessen verfolgt hätten. Die zweite, warum diese systematischen Grundgedanken, ihr Dasein zugegeben, in so auffallend dunkler, ja mystifizierender Rede sich niedergelegt fänden. (GS I.1, 40)

With respect to the attempt to underlay the thinking of the Early Romantics with a methodological grid, in the form of the concept of the *Reflexionsmedium*, in which their problem solving as well as their systematic positions may be marked out, two questions arise. The first [...] is whether the Romantics had actually thought systematically or had pursued systematic interests. The second, assuming they did, is why these systematic bases of thought were set down in such strikingly obscure, indeed mystifying language.

Benjamin answers the first by citing places in Schlegel's work where he talks positively about the need for systematic thinking. The answer to the second takes up the majority of the thesis and concentrates on the Romantics' concern with the linguistic existence of the system (in opposition to Kant's unproblematic identification of a linguistic system of thought and the organic system of the organism). While the thesis will be discussed further in Chapters 5, the two questions provide a useful way of summarizing the issues which have been raised in this introduct-

ory section: was Benjamin actually interested in pursuing a systematic philosophy or in actually thinking systematically, and if so why was it presented in such a 'strikingly obscure' fashion? The first will be answered affirmatively in the next section by pointing to places where Benjamin asserts the need for the development of systematic thinking. The obscurity of presentation will be shown to arise from Benjamin's rethinking of language and time – in a similar way to Benjamin's own approach to the Early Romantics, the exploration of his rethinking of language and time will form a 'methodological grid'. (*Ein Gradnetz* is the German word for the geographical grid of the lines of longitude and latitude which map the earth). It will be a grid upon which a methodological *Umweg* can be understood as posing the question of the mediation of systematic 'content' and presentational 'form' in the difference between a linear, homogeneous temporality and messianic time.

II: The Kantian Legacy

By way of approaching Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language, this section will deal with the general way he took up the legacy of Kant's work, particularly his response to its circularity. Up until December 1917, Benjamin had been planning to write his doctoral dissertation on Kant, before suddenly finding this project unsuitable and switching to a thesis on the Early German Romantics. In preparation for the Kantian thesis he wrote the essay *On the Program of the Coming Philosophy (Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie, 1917/18)*¹¹ and also a series of fragmentary notes. While these pieces will be used to understand Benjamin's rethinking of language and time, it must be

recognised that this taking up of the Kantian legacy by Benjamin is already complicated by the fact that Benjamin wrote on Kant conscious of the question of the nature of philosophical legacy itself. That is to say, that while this chapter, in its elucidation of a theoretical grid, will present Benjamin's reaction to the Kantian legacy in a 'standard' philosophical fashion (i.e. how Benjamin took up and developed questions and problems raised by Kant's work), for Benjamin himself this 'taking up' of philosophical questions could not be separated from a questioning of the temporal and linguistic connotations of the notion of *legacy*, which lay behind the idea of their being 'handed down'. That is, the question of the nature of philosophical *tradition*.¹² This question is intimately connected to Benjamin's views of language and time and for this reason a separation of a more 'standard' philosophical treatment of his understanding of language and time in response to Kant from the question of the nature of philosophical tradition, can only ever be artificially performed. While such a separation will, of course, aid clarity, it is necessary to bear in mind the broader question of Benjamin's view of tradition. To this end, the following quotation from a letter he wrote to Scholem in October 1917 gives an indication of Benjamin's concerns and also raises many aspects of his thinking, towards which this chapter will lead.

In der Tat sehe ich nur die Aufgabe, wie ich sie eben umschrieben habe, klar vor mir, daß das *Wesentliche* des Kantischen Denkens zu erhalten sei. Worin dieses Wesentliche besteht und wie man sein System neugründen muß, um es hervortreten zu lassen, weiß ich bis heute nicht. Aber es ist meine Überzeugung: wer nicht in Kant *das Denken der Lehre selbst* ringen fühlt und wer daher nicht mit äußerster Ehrfurcht ihn mit seinem Buchstaben als ein tradendum, zu Überlieferndes erfaßt (wie weit man ihn auch später umbilden müsse) weiß von Philosophie garnichts. Deshalb ist auch jede Bemänglung seines philosophischen Stils pures Banausentum und profanes Geschwätz. Es ist durchaus wahr, daß in den großen wissenschaftlichen Schöpfungen die Kunst mitumfaßt sein muß (wie umgekehrt) und so ist es auch meine Überzeugung, daß Kants Prosa selbst einen Limes der hohen Kunstprosa darstellt.¹³

In fact I see only this task, as I have just outlined, clear before me - to preserve *what is essential* in Kantian thinking. What this essential element involves and how his system must be grounded anew in order to let it emerge, is beyond me at the moment. But I am convinced that whoever does not feel the struggle of *the thinking of doctrine itself* in Kant and who thus does not grasp his work, with the utmost respect for its letters, as a tradendum, as a handing on (and also later rebuilt) does not know anything of philosophy. For this reason, the faulting of his philosophical style is sheer philistinism and profane prattle. It is perfectly true that in great scientific creations, art has to be embraced with it (and vice versa) and thus I am also convinced that Kant's prose itself presents a mathematical limit of high artistic prose.

The idea of Kant's work as 'doctrine' is initially explained in its reference to Benjamin's thinking of religion, which bears similarities to the idea of religion in the Early German Romantics; the use of the latinate word 'tradendum' would also seem to point in the direction of the Romantics' emphasis on Roman culture, in its position of taking Greek culture as a tradition. The reference to the 'letters' of Kantian philosophy indicates the interest Benjamin took in Kabbalah (a Hebrew word which itself means 'tradition'), and also to the distinction of 'spirit' and 'letter' in relation to Kant's philosophy - a distinction which, since Fichte's time, had been used in debates over who were the true successors to Kant. The idea of the need to embrace art along with science and vice versa is prominent in the work of the Early Romantics and also Goethe, and it concerns precisely the question of systematicity and 'artistic' presentation in relation to Kant's work. All these ideas are at play in Benjamin's relation to Kant, and they will be discussed individually at various points below

The quotation also shows that Benjamin was thinking of the need to ground Kant's system anew and not simply break with any idea of systematicity. While, when he wrote this letter, he did not yet know what form this would have to take, the fact that just two months later he decided against a dissertation on Kant in favour of the Early Romantics, indicates that it was precisely in the direction of thinking

through the unification of the *Wissenschaftliche* and art that this 'neugrunden' lay. Further evidence that Benjamin never envisaged a break with systematic thinking is found in the same letter to Scholem:

...bin ich des festen Glaubens, daß es sich im Sinne der Philosophie und damit der Lehre, zu der diese gehört, wenn sie sie nicht etwa sogar ausmacht, nie und nimmer um eine Erschütterung, einen Sturz des Kantischen Systems handeln kann sondern vielmehre um seine granitne Festlegung und universale Ausbildung. (*Briefe I*, p150)

I am of the certain belief that in the field of philosophy and hence of the doctrine to which philosophy belongs, indeed which it perhaps constitutes, there can never be a shattering, a collapse of the Kantian system, but only its ever more firm establishment and universal development.

It is the idea of an 'ever more firm establishment and universal development' of the Kantian system which constitutes the 'coming philosophy' of his Kant essay begun in November 1917. It is here that Benjamin links the idea of system to 'truth' (*Wahrheit*) - a notion with which he wrestled for many years at this period, and which was to be explored in depth in his essay on *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* and *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. To this end he writes in the Kant essay:

Je unabsehbar und kühner die Entfaltung der kommenden Philosophie sich ankündigt, desto tiefer muß nach Gewißheit ringen deren Kriterium die systematische Einheit oder die Wahrheit ist. (*Programm GS II.1*, p158)

The more vastly and boldly the unfolding of the coming philosophy announces itself, the more deeply it must struggle for certainty, the criterion of which is systematic unity or truth. (*Program p1*)

The identity expressed in the phrase 'systematic unity or truth' is a key point in understanding the direction of Benjamin's work because his notion of truth will be shown to arise from a rethinking of language and time in relation to systematicity, in particular Kant's system.

The word *Entfaltung* ('unfolding') was used by the Early Romantics in their theories of criticism (*Kritik*, also translated as 'critique'), a usage Benjamin would have been familiar with, and while he never gave any

clear explanation for his change in thesis topic, the use of this word is illuminating. The philosophy departments in which both Benjamin and Heidegger were educated were still very much under the influence of Neo-Kantianism, a diverse school of thought which had decisive influence on both of them.¹⁴ For around fifty years, dispute had been rife amongst the various factions over which was more true to the spirit of Kant's work. The groups centred predominantly around various voluminous commentaries on Kant's First Critique, commentaries which painstakingly examined Kant's work almost word by word. If Benjamin had merely produced another *Ausbildung* ('development') of the Kantian system, even though perhaps in a kabbalistic style, it would have been simply assimilated to Neo-Kantianism. Yet while Neo-Kantianism embroiled itself in disputes over 'spirit' and 'letter', the question of how the nature of tradition or legacy was understood, was never raised. By turning to the development of Kant's work in Early German Romanticism, where the questions of tradition and the authority of tradition became central, Benjamin was precisely able to engage with and put into question the prevailing and unthinking way Kant was received.

Benjamin, like Heidegger, was, however, also very much influenced by Neo-Kantianism. Klaus Christian Köhnke's recent book, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism*¹⁵, written from the perspective of the modern analytical reception of Kant's work as epistemology, thus taking a resolutely negative stance towards all the various schools of Neo-Kantianism, makes clear that they were not interested in interpreting Kant's work as a theory of how one knows that ideas conform to an external reality. Rather the major thrust common to all the various coteries was to interpret Kant as proposing what may be called an ontology, that is, as exploring the nature of existence or being as such. It was this approach which fundamentally provided the impetus to the work of both Heidegger

and Benjamin in their radicalizing of Husserlian phenomenology.¹⁶ While an explicit questioning of being obviously does not play the central role in Benjamin's work, which it does in Heidegger's, the depth of his questioning of language and time coming out of Neo-Kantianism means that their projects will be exploring essentially the same ground. In a lengthy fragment entitled *On Perception (Über die Wahrnehmung* <fr19>, GS VI, p33-38) Benjamin treats the opposition Kant saw between his work and 'metaphysics', and argues instead that Kant's work is still very much a metaphysics.

Kant hat eine Metaphysik der Natur geschrieben [...]; sie untersucht dann was zum Begriff des Daseins eines Dinges überhaupt oder eines besonderen gehört. (<fr19>, GS VI, 34)

Kant wrote a metaphysics of nature [...]; it sought then what belongs to the concept of the existence of a thing as such or a particular thing.

For Benjamin, as for Heidegger in his early treatment of Kant, what will be of concern is the way Kant's investigation of the 'concept of the existence of a thing as such' took Newtonian science as its starting point. For both Benjamin and Heidegger, this led to an understanding of existence or being which was 'uniquely temporally limited' (*Program* p2; GS II.1, 158). The thrust of Benjamin's response is summarized in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, where he writes:

Der Seinsbegriff der philosophischen Wissenschaft ersättigt sich nicht am Phänomen, sondern erst an der Aufzehrung seiner Geschichte. (GS I.1, 228)

The concept of being in philosophy is not satisfied with the phenomenon, but first by the absorbing of its history. (OGTD p47)

Benjamin wishes here to reject a concept of being which is characterized as the idea of simple unchanging existence through time, oblivious to history, and rather wants a concept of being which encapsulates the 'fore- and after-history' (OGTD p47; 'Vor- und Nachgeschichte' GS I.1, 228) of a thing. This idea of 'fore- and after-history' will be discussed

in detail in Chapter 5. It is clear, however, that Benjamin wants to inject history and time back in a concept of being. And this is precisely the intention outlined in *The Program of the Coming Philosophy*. The essay starts by implicitly announcing the question of linking a 'truly time- and eternity-conscious philosophy' ('ein[el] wahrhaft zeit- und ewigkeitsbewußten Philosophie' GS II.1, 158) to Kant, that is, of counter- ing Kant's justification of a transcendental version of the limited Newtonian conception of time.

In the 'Addendum' to the essay, Benjamin makes clear that there can be no simple appeal to the nature of existence (*Dasein*), but rather that the question of existence always has its place within the question of knowledge. 'Knowledge' must not be understood, however, as simply something existing in the knowing subject, such that the question of existence becomes the epistemological conundrum of scepticism or idealism. As will be shown, the subjection of the question of being to the question of knowledge has much more in common with Heidegger's idea of the hermeneutic circle of every questioning, which thus includes the questioning of being. Towards the end of the 'Addendum' Benjamin writes:

Die Quelle des Daseins liegt nun aber in der Totalität der Erfahrung und erst in der Lehre stößt die Philosophie auf ein Absolutes, als Dasein, und damit auf jene Kontinuität im Wesen der Erfahrung in deren Vernachlässigung der Mangel des Neukantianismus zu vermuten ist. (*Programm* GS II.1, 170)

The source of existence lies, however, in the totality of experience, and only in doctrine does philosophy encounter something absolute, as existence, and in so doing encounter that continuity in the essence of experience, in the neglect of which, the failing of Neo-Kantianism is to be suspected. (*Program* p11)

It is thus in his idea of a 'concrete totality of experience, that is, [...] existence' (*Program* p11; 'ein[el] konkrete Totalität der Erfahrung, d.h. [...] Dasein', GS II.1, 171; Benjamin's emphasis), that Benjamin wishes to differentiate his work from the Neo-Kantians'. The characterization of this totality of experience as a 'continuity' relates back precisely to the

question of the nature of Newtonian time consisting of discreet now-points, and to the question of the nature of the continuity of tradition. The Neo-Kantian schools had all taken over the Kantian emphasis upon a transcendental justification of science, and, in attempting to show the continued relevance of Kant's work in a changing scientific world-view, they persisted with a temporally limited concept of experience. Further, in their very relation to Kant's work - trying to attain to its true 'spirit' while meticulously investigating its 'letter' - they perpetuated a view of philosophical legacy as consisting of an unchanging meaningful 'content' underlying its presentational 'form' which was merely a means of communication. It is in opposition to this twin 'failing' of Neo-Kantianism, that Benjamin develops his idea of existence, the continuity of a totality of experience.

The use of the term 'experience' (*Erfahrung*) would seem problematic here, suggesting as it does an experience in the mind of a conscious knowing subject. It is clear from the *Program* essay, however, that Benjamin wishes the term to be 'stripped of everything subjective' (p5) ('alles Subjekthaften entkleidet' GS II.1, p163). The concept of experience seems rather to indicate a fundamental medium in which different epistemological 'mythologies' may be constructed. Benjamin writes in this respect:

Es ist die Aufgabe der kommenden Erkenntnistheorie für die Erkenntnis die Sphäre totaler Neutralität in Bezug auf die Begriffe Objekt und Subjekt zu finden; mit andern Worten die autonome ureigene Sphäre der Erkenntnis auszumitteln in der dieser Begriff auf keine Weise mehr die Beziehung zwischen zwei metaphysischen Entitäten bezeichnet. (*Program* GS II.1, 163)

It is the task of future epistemology to find for knowledge the sphere of total neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object, in other words, it is to determine the autonomous, originally proper sphere of knowledge in which this concept in no way continues to designate the relation between two metaphysical entities. (*Program* p5)

Benjamin's concept of the totality of experience is precisely this 'sphere

of total neutrality' in regard to subject and object. In the coming philosophy this new concept of experience is linked to a new concept of knowledge, such that any epistemology, for example the notion of knowledge as existing in the true relation of the ideas of a knowing subject to an external object, can only ever be seen as a particular 'mythology'. It is this epistemological mythology which ultimately plays a central role in Kant's work:

Es ist nämlich gar nicht zu bezweifeln daß in dem Kantischen Erkenntnisbegriff die wenn auch sublimierte Vorstellung eines individuellen leibgeistigen Ich welches mittelst der Sinne die Empfindungen empfängt und auf deren Grundlage sich seine Vorstellungen bildet die größte Rolle spielt. Diese Vorstellung ist jedoch Mythologie. (*Programm* GS II.1, 161)

It simply cannot be doubted that the notion, sublimated though it may be, of an individual, living ego which receives sensations by means of its senses and forms its representations on the basis of them, plays a role of great importance in the Kantian concept of knowledge. This notion is, however, a mythology. (*Program* p4)

Benjamin states that Kant's Newtonian view of experience can ultimately be traced back to his view of knowledge (*Program* p3; GS II.1, 160). It was shown in Chapter 1 how the unquestioned existence through time of the transcendental ego (the transcendental unity of apperception) as a Newtonian object served to circularly justify the transcendental deduction of Newtonian experience. Benjamin's linking of the new concept of experience with that of knowledge will be shown to embrace this circularity, but precisely a proper circularity which avoids being grounded in a particular mythology (for example, an epistemology of the 'individual, living ego' and its correlative Newtonian conception of time).

Benjamin goes on to give examples of other possible epistemological mythologies: that of animism, of insane people who identify themselves in part with objects of their perception, or who project their own sensations on to other entities, of clairvoyants, etc. It is in this regard that the following comment reported by Scholem, made during discussions

of the *Program* essay, should be taken entirely seriously:

Eine Philosophie, die nicht die Möglichkeit der Weissagung aus dem Kaffeesatz einbezieht und explizieren kann, kann keine wahre sein.

A philosophy that does not include the possibility of sooth-saying from coffee grounds and cannot explicate it, cannot be a true philosophy.¹⁷

The new concept of experience and the new concept of knowledge connected with it, together form a philosophy which is able to include more 'magical' epistemologies; that is, a philosophy which concerns a continuum within which any epistemological mythology is constructed.

A knowing subjectivity such as Kant's transcendental ego is thus a mythology constituted within the continuum of experience. In fragment 19 of his Kant notes, at the bottom of the page, Benjamin writes: 'Im Sein der Erkenntnis sein heißt Erkennen' (GS VI, 38), an elliptical formulation which may be translated, 'To be in the being of knowledge means to know'. The phrase 'the being of knowledge', when taken in conjunction with his discussion of existence examined above, may be seen to be a reference to the continuum of experience. Thus the whole phrase would seem to suggest that there is no prior knowing subject who, only subsequently, *knows* in one epistemological way or another, but rather that *to be* as such, as knowing in one epistemological way or another, means to exist in an epistemological mythology. In other words, an epistemological mythology does not simply befall a knowing subject, but rather *to be* as *knowing* means to have always already 'fallen' into an epistemological mythology. While the use of the word 'fallen' is rather question begging with respect to the similarity of Benjamin's project to Heidegger's work in the period of *Being and Time*, the similarity in regard to the idea of a sphere of neutrality in relation to subject and object, and to other more magical epistemological mythologies is striking. As was shown in Chapter 2, Heidegger constructed his conception of

Dasein primarily in opposition to an idea of a 'worldless "I"', or 'theoretical subject' (*Being and Time* H316) who 'experiences' and 'knows' a world which is essentially outside of it; rather *Dasein* exists as always already being-in-the-world. Heidegger goes on, however, to talk about 'magical' ways in which *Dasein* may exist:

Das *Dasein* versteht sich, obgleich ohne zureichende ontologische Bestimmtheit, als In-der-Welt-Sein. [...] [Es ist nicht nur vorhanden, sondern hat sich, in welcher mythischen und magischen Auslegung auch immer, je schon *verstanden*. Denn sonst "lebt" es nicht in einem Mythos und besorgte nicht in Ritus und Kultus seine Magie. (*Sein und Zeit* H313)

Dasein understands itself as being-in-the-world, even if it does so without adequate ontological definiteness. [...] *Dasein* is not just present-at-hand but has always, indeed already, *understood itself*, however mythical or magical the interpretation which it gives may be. For otherwise, *Dasein* would never 'live' in a myth and would not be concerned with magic in ritual and cult. (*Being and Time* H313)

For Heidegger, *Dasein* is always already thrown into a world of understanding. In *Being and Time*, the question of being, towards which, *Dasein* in its circular existence is the 'starting point', is characterized as the ascertaining of the *a priori* conditions of any ontology whatsoever (H11) through the determination of the proper temporality of the hermeneutic circle beyond its restriction to a linear, homogeneous, Newtonian conception of time. Similarly for Benjamin, the development of the Kantian system consists in determining the proper *a priori* basis for any epistemological mythology precisely beyond the temporality of the Newtonian subjectivity, through the connection of a concrete totality of experience and a new concept of knowledge.

The circularity of Kant's approach, which was discussed in Chapter 1, was shown to be repeated by Heidegger in Chapter 2 in the idea of *Dasein*'s 'circular existence', but in a way which avoided its grounding in Newtonian temporality. Benjamin takes up the circularity of Kant's project in terms of the concepts 'experience' and 'knowledge of experience', and their relatedness, with respect to the Kant's work. In

relation to Kant, 'experience' refers to the Newtonian science which Kant sought to provide with transcendental justification, 'knowledge' refers to the system of the transcendental categories and transcendental ego. It will be precisely in the nature of the mutually determining *a priori* link between them that the future philosophy will take root:

Es besteht, und hier ruht der historische Keim der kommenden Philosophie, die tiefste Beziehung zwischen jener Erfahrung deren tiefere Erforschung nie und nimmer auf die metaphysischen Wahrheiten führen konnte und jener Theorie der Erkenntnis welche den logischen Ort der metaphysischen Forschung noch nicht ausreichend zu bestimmen vermochte. (*Programm* GS II.1, 161)

There is - and here lies the historical seed of the coming philosophy - a most intimate connection between that experience, the deeper exploration of which could never lead to metaphysical truths, and that theory of knowledge, which was not yet able to determine sufficiently the logical place of metaphysical research. (*Program* p4)

The term 'metaphysics' by no means has the negative connotations for Benjamin as it does for Heidegger. As was indicated above, fragment 19 of his notes contains a discussion of how Kant viewed the idea of metaphysics, such that he constructed his project in opposition to it. For Benjamin, the coming philosophy was to be reached precisely in the envisioning of a 'future metaphysics' (*Program* p3; 'künftige Metaphysik' GS II.1, 160) through a criticism of Kant:

Es ist als Programmsatz der künftigen Philosophie aufzustellen daß [...] nicht nur ein neuer Begriff der Erkenntnis sondern zugleich auch der Erfahrung aufgestellt wäre, gemäß der Beziehung die Kant zwischen beiden gefunden hat. (*Programm* GS II.1, p163)

It is to be made a tenet of the program of the future philosophy that [...] not only a new concept of knowledge should be established but also a new concept of experience, in accordance with the relationship Kant found between the two. (*Program* p6)

This affirmation of the need for the coming philosophy to take root in Kant's metaphysics 'in accordance with the relationship' between a concept of experience and the concept of the knowledge of experience, must not be misunderstood. It is not an affirmation of the metaphysical view of

knowledge as something existing in the mind of a subject which experiences, and formed on the basis of that experience, since Benjamin spends a great deal of time in the *Program* essay attacking this view, as was shown above. Rather, the idea of the 'relationship' or 'most intimate connection' ('tiefste Beziehung') between experience and knowledge of experience must be seen as a reference to the circularity Kant acknowledged in his project - a relationship which may be made productive when freed from the 'unproductive metaphysics' (p3) ('unfruchtbar[e]l Metaphysik', GS II.1, 160) of subject and object.

Benjamin does not further discuss the circular nature of this relationship between experience and knowledge of experience in the *Program* essay, except for a passing comment in a section where he is talking about the way a future philosophy will be concerned with a taxonomy of different epistemological mythologies.

Erfahrung, so wie sie mit Bezug auf den individuellen leibgeistigen Menschen und dessen Bewußtsein und vielmehr als systematische Spezifikation der Erkenntnis gefaßt wird ist wiederum in allen ihren Arten bloßer *Gegenstand* dieser wirklichen Erkenntnis. (*Programm* GS II.1, 162)

Experience, as it is conceived in reference to the individual, living human and its consciousness, *instead of* [my emphasis] as a systematic specification of knowledge, is again, in all its types, a mere *object* of this real knowledge. (*Program* p5)

The idea of experience being a 'systematic specification of knowledge', thus reversing the unproductive metaphysical view of knowledge as formed on the basis of experience, points to the idea of 'circular existence' which Benjamin found in Kant's project. This idea is not explicitly developed in the *Program* essay, but rather is treated at length in fragment 19, *On Perception*, written in October 1917, the month in which he also started the *Program* essay.

In the fragment, Benjamin argues that Kant's attempt to treat nature as determined in its existence *a priori* from reason, not in terms of an

idea of knowledge arising from experience of nature, constituted a metaphysics which carried a danger with it:

In diesem Sinne wäre die *Metaphysik* der Natur etwa als apriorische Konstitution der Naturdinge auf Grund der Bestimmungen der Naturerkenntnis überhaupt zu bezeichnen. Diese Bedeutung der Metaphysik könnte nun leicht zu ihrem gänzlichen Zusammenfallen mit dem Begriff der Erfahrung führen und nichts fürchtete Kant so sehr wie diesen Abgrund. (<fr19>, GS VI, 34)

In this sense, the *metaphysics* of nature was to indicate something like the a priori constitution of the thing in nature, from a ground of the determinations of the knowledge of nature. This meaning of metaphysics could now easily lead to this ground collapsing into the concept of experience and Kant feared nothing so much as this abyss.

Kant was afraid that the circularity of his method would turn his a priori 'Grund' for Newtonian science into an 'Abgrund', an abyss open to the speculative metaphysics of all comers. In order to avoid this abyss, (in the interests of the certainty of science and ethics, Benjamin argues), Kant had to keep apart experience and knowledge of experience. This is the separation of object and subject which the *Program* essay discusses, and in fragment 19 Benjamin explores it in terms of the separation of the Transcendental Aesthetic from the Transcendental Logic, that is, the separation of the pure forms of intuition from the Categories:

So war von vornherein ein einheitliches erkenntnistheoretisches Zentrum vermieden dessen allzu mächtige Gravitationskraft alle Erfahrung in sich hätte hineinreißen können; und andererseits war nun selbstverständlich das Bedürfnis nach irgend einem Fundus aposteriorischer Erfahrungsmöglichkeit geschaffen, d.h. wenn auch nicht der Zusammenhang, so doch die Kontinuität von Erkenntnis und Erfahrung zerlissen. Es ergab sich als Ausdruck der Trennung der Anschauungsformen von den Kategorien die sogenannte 'Materie der Empfindung' die sozusagen künstlich von dem belebenden Zentrum des kategorialen Zusammenhangs durch die Anschauungsformen in denen sie unvollständig absorbiert wurde, ferngehalten wurde. So war die Trennung von Metaphysik und Erfahrung, das heißt nach Kants eigenem Sprachgebrauch von reiner Erkenntnis und Erfahrung durchgeführt. (<fr19>, GS VI, 34)

In this way, a singular epistemological centre had been avoided from the beginning, a centre whose gravitational pull would have been able to suck all experience into itself; and on the other hand the need had now obviously been created for some sort of reservoir of an a posteriori possibility of experience. That is, the continuity of knowledge and experience, if not the

contexture as well, was sundered. The separation of the forms of intuition from the categories, is expressed in the so-called 'material of sensation' which, so to speak, was artificially held at a distance from the living centre of the categorial contexture by the forms of intuition (in which it was incompletely absorbed). In this way, the separation of metaphysics and experience, or in Kant's words, of pure knowledge and experience was implemented.

The 'reservoir of an *a posteriori* possibility of experience' expressed in the idea of 'material of sensation', constitutes the residue of the unproductive metaphysics Kant required to secure Newtonian science. In opposition to this, it is the continuity of the categorial contexture which unites experience and knowledge of experience, which Benjamin wishes to explore. He does so by first of all maintaining a difference between experience and knowledge of experience (they do not collapse together in an abyss), and secondly maintaining the hermeneutic circularity of a primacy of knowledge of experience to experience, but then re-figuring their relationship in the idea of the 'symbol':

Für den Begriff der Erkenntnis ist nämlich die Erfahrung nichts außer ihr liegendes Neues, sondern nur sie selbst in einer andern Form, Erfahrung als Gegenstand der Erkenntnis ist die Eingetliche und Kontinuierliche Mannichfaltigkeit der Erkenntnis. Die Erfahrung selbst kommt, so paradox dies klingt, in der Erkenntnis der Erfahrung garnicht vor, eben weil diese Erkenntnis der Erfahrung, mithin ein Erkenntnis-zusammenhang ist. Die Erfahrung aber ist das Symbol dieses Erkenntniszusammenhanges und steht mithin in einer völlig andern Ordnung als dieser selbst. (<fr 19>, GS VI, 36)

For the concept of knowledge, experience is namely not something new lying outside of it, but only knowledge itself in another form. Experience as an object of knowledge is the unity and continuity of the manifold diversity of knowledge. Experience itself, however paradoxical this sounds, does not simply turn up in the knowledge of experience, because this knowledge of experience is consequently a knowledge-contexture. Experience is, however, the symbol of this knowledge-contexture and consequently stands in a completely different ordering to that contexture.¹⁸

Knowledge does not supervene experience, nor does experience simply come to light in the form of knowledge, rather knowledge of experience is the continuum or contexture of which experience is the 'symbol'.

The concept of a symbol is, of course, capable of many different

meanings and interpretations, and even in Benjamin's work it is by no means always obvious how he wishes to understand it. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, the place where he discusses the 'symbol' at length in its traditional opposition to allegory, he is predominantly concerned to show how the modern (Seventeenth Century) concept of the symbol ('which has nothing in common with the genuine notion except the name', OGTD p159; 'der mit dem echten außer der Bezeichnung nichts gemein hat', GS I.1, 336) has been understood in contradictory ways. The work does, however, contain clues about how Benjamin's understanding of the symbol is to be approached. He argues that the genuine concept is one 'which refers, in a so to speak imperative manner, to the unrent solidarity of form and content' (OGTD p160; 'der in gleichsam imperativischer Haltung auf eine unzertrennliche Verbundenheit von Form und Inhalt sich bezieht', p336). The genuine notion is thus in opposition to the 'vulgar' ('*vulgär*) understanding of the concept of the symbol, in which

die Einheit von sinnlichem und übersinnlichem Gegenstand, die Paradox des theologischen Symbols, wird zu einer Beziehung von Erscheinung und Wesen verzerrt. (GS I.1, 336)

the unity of the sensible and supersensible object, the paradox of the theological symbol, is distorted into a relationship between appearance and essence. (OGTD p160)

It is clear from this quotation that Benjamin, in using the term 'symbol' to describe the relationship between knowledge of experience and experience, does not wish to thereby introduce any straightforward separation, as Kant had done. Further insight into the nature of Benjamin's understanding of the symbol must be looked for in the direction of the *temporality* which determines the nature of its unity and solidarity. Benjamin writes, concerning the descriptions of symbol and allegory given by Görres and Creuzer:

Unter der entscheidenden Kategorie der Zeit, welche in dieses Gebiet der Semiotik getragen zu haben die große romantische Einsicht dieser Denker war, läßt das Verhältnis von Symbol und Allegorie eindringlich und formalhaft sich festlegen. (GS I.1, 342-3)

Within the decisive category of time, the introduction of which into this field of semiotics was the great romantic achievement of these thinkers, the relationship of symbol and allegory may be incisively and formally established. (p166)

The concept of the symbol must be understood from within an understanding of time. Yet it must also be remembered that in the *Program* essay, Benjamin characterized the relationship between experience and knowledge of experience in the idea of experience as a 'systematic specification' of knowledge. The idea of experience as a symbol thus encapsulates precisely the questions of time and language in relation to philosophical systematicity. A complete understanding of the notion of unity which constitutes Benjamin's concept of the symbol will consequently only be attained in the light of a fuller understanding of Benjamin's temporality of language. What this means, however, is that the hermeneutic circularity between experience and the knowledge of experience in the metaphysics of the coming philosophy is determined in its temporality of language, precisely by the investigation of language and time undertaken within the coming philosophy. It is this circularity which will ultimately account for the manner of presentation, the *Umweg*, of Benjamin's philosophy. This situation must be contrasted to Kant's project, where the understanding of time as generated by the three-fold synthesis was not reflected in the temporality of the *a priori* which linked experience and the categories, and where the understanding of language in the 'synthesis of recognition in a concept', in relation to the concept of the organism was not related with thoroughness to the concept of the critical system itself. The thorough circularity of Benjamin's project may, however, be compared to that of Heidegger's project, where the hermeneutic circularity of his later poetic temporal phenomenology, is 'sayingly' ('*sagend*'), in the 'proper' ('*eigentlich*') temporality of *Ereignis*.

The remainder of this chapter will look at how Benjamin explicitly

rethought the questions of time and language. Since in Benjamin's work they are inextricably linked from the beginning, in contrast to the apparent progression in Heidegger's work, the following two sections will consist of only an *emphasis* on temporality and an *emphasis* on language, respectively. This is done for the sake of clarity in discussing his thinking of the temporality of language. These emphases will then be brought together in an initial way, in the final section.

III: Temporality and Its Symbols

The question of time in relation to Kant's project is broached on the first page of Benjamin's *Program* essay:

Das Problem der Kantischen wie jeder großen Erkenntnistheorie hat zwei Seiten und nur der einen Seite hat er eine gültige Erklärung zu geben vermocht. Es war erstens die Frage nach der Gewißheit der Erkenntnis die bleibend ist; und es war zweitens die Frage nach der Dignität einer Erfahrung die vergänglich war. Denn das universale philosophische Interesse ist stets zugleich auf die zeitlose Gültigkeit der Erkenntnis und auf die Gewißheit einer zeitlichen Erfahrung, die als deren nächster wenn nicht einziger Gegenstand betrachtet wird gerichtet. Nur ist den Philosophen diese Erfahrung in ihrer gesamten Struktur nicht als eine singular zeitliche bewußt gewesen und sie war es auch Kant nicht. (*Programm* GS II.1, 158)

The problem faced by Kantian epistemology, as by every great epistemology, has two sides, and Kant only managed to give a valid explanation for one of them. First of all, there was the question of the certainty of knowledge that is lasting, and secondly, there was the question of the dignity of an experience that was ephemeral. For the universal philosophical interest is continually after both the timeless validity of knowledge and the certainty of a transitory experience which is regarded as the immediate, if not the only, object of that knowledge. Philosophers were simply not aware of this experience, in its whole structure, as singularly temporal, and that holds true for Kant, as well.¹⁹ (*Program* p1)

What Benjamin is proposing here is a temporal analysis of the whole structure of knowledge which has been commonly polarized into timeless

truths and the certainty of experiences happening in time. Kant, in his concern to provide a transcendental justification of Newtonian science, geared his critique to demonstrate how the pure concepts of the understanding generated - via the schematism - a time series within which Newtonian objects could be conceptualized, and their involvement in causal events determined. He was thus concerned to present a transcendental determination of the manifold of intuition in the form suitable for the certainty of Newtonian science. As was shown in Chapter 1, the 'timeless' temporality of the *a priori* Categories themselves, which Kant claimed to have inherited directly from Aristotle, and in general the temporality of reason, were by no means given the same thorough treatment. Thus Benjamin states that Kant only treated one side of the problem.

Yet, for Benjamin, Kant's project of showing how the most general laws of nature could be given *a priori* justification was itself only possible because the experience of nature, in the Enlightenment, was being robbed of 'dignity', that is, moving towards 'an experience or view of the world of the lowest order' (*Program* p2; 'eine der niedrigst stehenden Erfahrungen oder Anschauungen von der Welt', GS II.1, 159). Benjamin writes that only an experience 'uniquely temporally limited' (p2; 'singulär zeitlich beschränkte', p158), and whose quintessence was the certainty of Newtonian science, could take such rough and tyrannical treatment by Kant 'without suffering' (p 2; 'ohne zu leiden', p159).

Benjamin writes further in fragment 19:

War nämlich früher das Symbol der Erkenntniseinheit das wir Erfahrung nennen ein hohes gewesen, war die frühere Erfahrung wenn auch in wechselnder Fülle Gott nahe und göttlich gewesen so ward die Erfahrung der Aufklärung in steigendem Maße dieser Fülle beraubt. (<fr19> GS VI, 37)

If namely earlier, the symbol of the unity of knowledge, that we call experience, had been a higher one, if the earlier experience - though also with varying fullness - had been near God and divine, then in the Enlightenment, experience was robbed to an increasing degree of this fullness.

It is in the idea of the 'fullness' (*die Fülle*) that Benjamin wishes to explore the nature of experience which had become so 'uniquely temporally limited' in Newtonian science. In order to understand this idea it is necessary to look again at how Kant linked the existence of nature to his analysis of time. In Chapter 1 it was shown how the Schematism essentially operated to determine experience into a series of isolated, object-like, now-points, which then served to justify the conceptualization of experience into objects and events. To quote again from the Second Analogy:

Zu aller Erfahrung und deren Möglichkeit gehört Verstand, und das erste, was er dazu tut, ist nicht: daß er die Vorstellung der Gegenstände deutlich macht, sondern daß er die Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes überhaupt möglich macht. Dieses geschieht nun dadurch, daß er die Zeitordnung auf die Erscheinungen and deren Dasein überträgt. (CPR A199/B245-6)

Understanding is required for all experience and for its possibility. Its primary contribution does not consist in making the representation of objects distinct, but in making the representation of an object possible at all. This it does by carrying the time-order over into the appearances and their existence.

As this quotation makes clear, the possibility of experience depends on the manifold of intuition being constructed into a determinate time-order. This entailed 'carrying the time-order over into the appearances and their existence', that is, as was explored in Chapter 1, objects are experienced in their existence as standing within a point of time and only having significance in relation to other objects through the determination of one point of time necessarily following another. In this way experience is reduced to a 'Nullpunkt' (*Program* p2/p159) of significance, in that it is understood merely as the contents of the otherwise empty now-point which carries it, having no significance beyond that now-point, except insofar as that now-point itself is in a determinate time-order. For Benjamin, it is this experience of time which characterizes modernity, and Kant's work had simply crystallized out the seeds of this

development. Benjamin writes, for example, in the later essay *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire*, using Freud's idea of an organism's need to defend itself from shocks:

Vielleicht kann man die eigentümliche Leistung der Chockabwehr zuletzt darin sehen: dem Vorfall auf Kosten der Integrität seines Inhalts eine exakt Zeitstelle im Bewußtsein anzuweisen. (GS I.2, 615)

Perhaps the special achievement of the shock defence can be seen in this: that it assigns the event to an exact point of time in consciousness at the cost of the integrity of its contents. (*Baudelaire* p117)

For Benjamin this carrying over of time-order into existence, is the form of experience conditioned by the repetition of identical operations in a mechanized production line. It gives rise to an idea of identity which is itself modelled on the flat uniformity of a linear series of now-points. In the *Baudelaire* essay, Benjamin argues that this form of experience creates the need to subject all aspects of life to the same determination, and it is in this context that he discusses the leisure time activities of cinema and gambling. The successive turns in a gambling game, which have no connection to each other, reflects the experience of isolated now-points. Benjamin adds a note to his discussion of gambling which it will be important to bear in mind in understanding his own view of time:

Der Spieler sagt 'meine Nummer', wie der Lebemann sagt 'mein Typ'. [...] Dieser Denkungsart leistet die Wette Vorschub. Sie ist ein Mittel, den Ereignissen Chockcharacter zu geben, sie aus Erfahrungszusammenhängen herauszulösen. (GS I.2, 635, footnote)

The gambler says 'my number' in the same way as a man about town says 'my type'. [...] This disposition is promoted by betting, which is a means for giving events the character of a shock, detaching them from the experience-contexture. (*Baudelaire* p 136, n.59)

This form of identity (i.e. the idea that the occurrence of the gambler's lucky number will have the same consequences each time), which breaks events out of the continuum of experience, is precisely what needs to be

differentiated from the idea of identity operating in Benjamin's view of time, and which will ultimately give rise to a philosophy of history as the need 'to explode the continuum of history'²⁰.

Given that the modern form of identity, in the repetitions of gambling and the production line, is thus determined by the time-order of now-points which Kant's work serves to justify, it is now possible to understand why Benjamin stresses the importance of a reformulated concept of identity for the coming philosophy:

Die Fixierung der bei Kant unbekanntem Begriffes der Identität hat voraussichtlich in der transzendentalen Logik eine große Rolle zu spielen, insofern er in der Kategorientafel nichts steht, dennoch vermutlich den obersten Begriff der transzendentallogischen ausmacht und vielleicht wahrhaft geeignet ist die Sphäre der Erkenntnis jenseits der Subjekt-Objekt-Terminologie autonom zu begründen. (*Programm GS II.1, 167*)

The fixing of the concept of identity, unknown to Kant, likely has to play a great role in the transcendental logic, inasmuch as it does not occur in the table of categories, yet presumably constitutes the highest of transcendental logical concepts and is perhaps truly suited to founding the sphere of knowledge autonomously beyond the subject-object terminology. (*Program p9*)

The new concept of identity must be the identity of the symbol, one which does not simply express the relation of two entities or realms existing otherwise in isolation from each other, such as the ideas of 'form' and 'content', 'essence' and 'appearance'. In relation to time, the 'contents' of a now-point must not be understood as being carried as in an otherwise empty 'container'. Nor must one now-point exist in isolation from another, its only significance for another now-point depending on the determination of the time-order as a necessary sequence. Rather, the now-point must be thought of as forming a continuum with those around it, breaking out of its determination into a point-like existence on a time-line. The 'contents' do not remain closed within their 'container', but rather stretch out towards their past and future, their 'fore- and after-history'. And the 'content' of experience must no longer

be thought of as merely filling the otherwise empty 'time-order' determined *a priori* by the knowledge of experience, but rather they also form a continuous unity, determining each other, so that the experience which is 'identified' in knowledge is seen precisely as a microcosm or monad of its history of identification in its idea. It is this symbolic unity of experience and knowledge of experience which constitutes what Benjamin calls fullness (*Fülle*). The understanding of time as filled or fulfilled (*erfüllte*), which breaks out of its determination into a linear, homogeneous series of now-points, Benjamin calls the 'messianic power' (*Theses* p254; GS I.2, 694) of time.

Benjamin's discussions about time predominantly appear either in the context of language or art, or in the context of a particular author or work being treated. It is thus impossible to explore his rethinking of time without broaching his linguistic concerns.²¹ For example, the idea of the temporal continuum of experience is treated in relation to Baudelaire in the idea of 'correspondences'. The related idea of 'aura' is developed predominantly in discussions of the nature of the work of art, and his idea of 'non-sensuous similarity' is developed in the context of a theory of reading. One of the most prolonged discussions of time occurs in his essay on the Early German Romantics, where he distinguishes between time as a *Werdeprozeß* and time as an *Erfüllungsprozeß*; however, this takes place in the context of discussing the Early Romantics' view of literary criticism. This relative absence of a purely philosophical or *wissenschaftlich* treatment of time, itself springs from the questioning of philosophical presentation, as was discussed above. The images Benjamin uses in his discussion of time, such as the idea of the messiah itself, can only be fully understood in the context of a fuller exploration of his understanding of language, which will be undertaken below. However, in order to further explore Benjamin's view of time one such image will be

examined which is closely connected to the idea of the 'messianic power' of time: the image of the shooting star.

The image appears just twice in Benjamin's work - once early on, and a second time in his late *Baudelaire* essay (1939). The appearance of the shooting star image in the *Baudelaire* essay is significant in that, in the context of the essay, it not only marks the transition between a discussion of the mechanized temporality of modernity and a discussion of the temporality of Baudelaire's 'correspondences', but it also brings together many ideas expressing their difference. It will, therefore, be worth quoting at length. After commenting that a gambler's desire to win is not what would be called a 'wish' (*ein Wunsch*), he goes on to write:

Der Wunsch seinerseits gehört dagegen den Ordnungen der Erfahrung an. [...] Je früher im Leben man einen Wunsch tut, desto größere Aussicht hat er, erfüllt zu werden. Je weiter ein Wunsch in die Ferne der Zeit ausgreift, desto mehr läßt sich für seine Erfüllung hoffen. Was aber in die Ferne der Zeit zurückgeleitet, ist die Erfahrung, die sie erfüllt und gliedert. Darum ist der erfüllte Wunsch die Krone, welche der Erfahrung beschieden ist. In der Symbolik der Völker dann die Ferne des Raumes für die Ferne der Zeiten eintreten; daher die Sternschnuppe, welche in die unendliche Ferne des Raumes stürzt, zum Symbol des erfüllten Wunsches geworden ist. Die Elfenbeinkugel, die da ins *nächste* Fach rollt, die *nächste* Karte, die zuoberst liegt, sind der wahre Gegensatz zu der Sternschnuppe. Die Zeit, die in dem Augenblick enthalten ist, da das Licht der Sternschnuppe für einen Menschen aufblitzt, ist vom Stoffe derer, die von Joubert mit der ihm eigenen Sicherheit umrissen worden ist. "Zeit", sagt er, "wird auch in der Ewigkeit vorgefunden; aber es ist nicht die irdische Zeit, die weltliche... Diese Zeit zerstört nicht, sie vollendet nur." Sie ist das Gegenstück zu der höllischen, in der sich die Existenz derer abspielt, die nichts, was sie in Angriff genommen haben, vollenden dürfen. (GS I.2, 635)

A wish, however, belongs amongst the orderings of experience. [...] The earlier in life one makes a wish, the greater are its chances of becoming fulfilled. The further a wish reaches out into a distant time, the more it can hope for its fulfilment. But it is experience that leads back into the distance of time, that fulfils and structures time. Thus a wish fulfilled is the crown bestowed upon experience. In folk symbolism, distance in space can take the place of distance in time; that is why the shooting star, which plunges into the infinite distance of space, has become the symbol of a fulfilled wish. The ivory ball which rolls into the *next* compartment, the *next* card which comes to the top of the pack, are the true antithesis of the

shooting star. The time held in the instant in which the light of a shooting star flashes for a person, is of the kind that Joubert has described with his customary assurance. "Time", he says, "is found even in eternity; but it is not earthly, worldly time... It is the time which does not destroy; but only completes." It is the antithesis of that hellish time, in which the existence is played out of those who are not allowed to complete anything they have started. (*Baudelaire* p136-7)

In contrast to the *Erlebnisse* of the gambler, waiting on the next *coup de dés* in a time-order of isolated now-points, the shooting star is the symbol of the experience-contexture, whose time completes (*vollendet*).

Vollenden is the word used by the Early Romantics to describe the role of criticism, a process which takes place in time understood as an *Erfüllungsprozeß*, that is, a process of fulfilment as opposed to the time in which gambler's existence is played out, which allows of no process of completion. The wish is not separated from its fulfilment by homogeneous, empty time, rather it 'reaches out' (*ausgreift*) to the future it hopes for, structuring the continuum of its time as fulfilled time. In opposition to the way Newtonian science robs experience of its 'dignity' by carrying over into existence a time-order, which determines experience as 'uniquely temporally limited', the wish which reaches out beyond its enclosure in the now-point, is its crowning. This symbol of the shooting star is itself the return or reappearance of an image from Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1922). This critical essay followed shortly after Benjamin's dissertation on Early German Romanticism and is itself modelled on the Early Romantics' idea of criticism. The symbol appears at the climax of the essay, yet is not developed or explicitly explained, thus allowing its elliptical status to leave the essay essentially open-ended. The symbol itself is taken from Goethe's novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*The Elective Affinities*), and the essay from the beginning is an implicit preparation for the point where Benjamin can show it to form the symbol of the whole novel. He writes:

In [der Mahnung der Sterne] bestand als Erfahrung was längst als Erlebnis verweht war. Denn unter dem Symbol des Sterns

war einst Goethe die Hoffnung erschienen, die er für die Liebenden fassen mußte. Jener Satz, der, mit Hölderlin zu reden, die Cäsur des Werkes enthält und in dem, da die Umschlungenen ihr Ende besiegeln, alles inne hält, lautet: "Die Hoffnung fuhr wie ein Stern, der vom Himmel fällt, über ihre Häupter weg". Sie gewahren sie freilich nicht und deutlicher konnte gesagt werden, daß die letzte Hoffnung niemals dem eine ist, der sie hegt, sondern jenen allein, für die sie gehegt wird. (GS I.1, p199-200)

In the testimony of the stars there existed, as experience, what had long been denied as *Erlebnis*. For under the symbol of the star, hope had once appeared to Goethe, which he had to seize for the lovers. That sentence which, read with Hölderlin in mind, contains the caesura of the work, and within which, since their embraces seal their end, everything is held, runs: "Hope soared away over their heads like a star falling from the sky". They were certainly not aware of it and it could not be more clearly said, that the ultimate hope is never for the one who cherishes it, but for those alone, for whom it is cherished.

The purpose of the essay is certainly a rejection of the popular treatment of Goethe's novel, which had regarded it as affirming the sanctity of marriage, in the portrayal of a sequence of disastrous events stemming from a disregard of marriage, and a rejection of the popular view of the art work as simply presenting a truth in artist form. It is clear that, for Benjamin, both of these views are based on a view of time determined by Newtonian science. The essay, treating both of these views together, interprets the events of the novel not as a series of *Erlebnisse*, but as forming an experience-contexture, woven into a dense continuum of echos and reflections.²² The 'truth' of the novel is shown to be not the presentation of the sanctity of marriage, but rather precisely to be an exploration of the inseparability and relatedness (*Verwandtschaft*) of that which is veiled (truth) and its veil (beauty). Benjamin understands Hölderlin's concept of the 'caesura' as containing monadically the whole of the work in which it is found, yet is also the symbol of an expressionless power which disrupts its stable progression of meaning. Benjamin's enigmatic thoughts about hope at the end of the above quotation, only obtain clarification in the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, written eighteen years later. There he describes how there is only hope for the

past where the historian, recognising its messianic power, rescues it and cherishes its hope as a caesura, or, what Benjamin calls 'the sign of a messianic cessation of happening' (*Illuminations* p263; 'das Zeichen einer messianischen Stillstellung des Geschehens', GS I.2, 703).

The concepts of messianic time and the messiah are the best known names for the Benjamin's idea of fulfilled time, or the experience-contexture, and its symbol - hope or the wish.²³ This plurality of names is significant and will be treated in detail in relation to Benjamin's work on the Early Romantics in Chapter 5. However, before turning to consider Benjamin's understanding of language which will set the scene for this discussion, Benjamin's notion of messianic time will be considered in the way it brings together many of the issues which have been discussed in this section.

The concept of the messianic appears only infrequently in Benjamin's work. As was stated above, the term is never expanded upon, and serves rather to disrupt than to clarify the context in which it appears. It can now be appreciated that the term itself partakes of the temporality which has been discussed: rather than standing within a progressive development of terms and ideas, it serves to create echos across Benjamin's corpus and between works; rather than being assigned a determinate meaning, it is a symbol of the relatedness of form and content in philosophical presentation, which no longer stand linked by a mediation modelled on the discontinuity of Newtonian now-points. Whilst the idea of the messianic appears most notably in the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, its use there constitutes an echo with one of his earliest essays *Trauerspiel und Tragödie* (1916). It is significant also that Benjamin's key symbol should have its first appearance in an essay treating the differences of two literary forms; this is a clear indication of way the question of time and the question of language were, from the beginning,

inseparable in Benjamin's mind, as was not the case for Heidegger.

Benjamin writes, concerning the way history is often written in the form of tragedy, that in this form,

die Zeit der Geschichte ist unendlich in jeder Richtung und unerfüllt in jedem Augenblick. Das heißt es ist kein einzelnes empirisches Ereignis denkbar, das eine notwendige Beziehung zu der bestimmten Zeitlage hätte, in der es vorfällt. Die Zeit ist für das empirische Geschehen nur eine Form, aber was wichtiger ist, eine als Form unerfüllte. (GS II.1, 134)

the time of history is infinite in each direction and unfilled in every moment. That is, it is unthinkable that a single empirical event would have a necessary relation to the time-position in which it falls. Time, for an empirical event is only a form, but more importantly, an unfilled [or unfulfilled] form.

Already in this early essay one finds a concern with the idea of time understood as an infinite series of empty moments. This concern is also clearly linked to the writing of history and to the idea that the historical event figured as empirical takes on the form of tragedy - which Benjamin analyses as a closed literary form, where the events reach a resolution within the work. In this way, the historical event is thought to stand in isolation in its point of time, interacting with other events only as determined by the linear progression of the time-order in a mechanical and causal way. It is again this idea of time determined by Newtonian science which Benjamin wishes to oppose:

Denn es ist ja nicht so zu denken, daß Zeit nichts anderes sei als das Maß, mit dem die Dauer einer mechanischen Veränderung gemessen wird. Diese Zeit ist freilich eine relativ leere Form, deren Ausfüllung zu denken keinen Sinn bietet. Ein anders ist aber die Zeit der Geschichte als die der Mechanik. [...] [Das] ist zu sagen, daß die bestimmende Kraft der historischen Zeitform von keinem empirischen Geschehen völlig erfaßt und in keinem völlig gesammelt werden kann. Ein solches Geschehen, das im Sinne der Geschichte vollkommen sei, ist vielmehr durchaus ein empirisches Unbestimmtes, nämlich eine Idee. Diese Idee der erfüllten Zeit heißt in der Bibel als deren beherrschende historische Idee: die messianische Zeit. (ibid.)

For it is not to be thought, that time is nothing but the measure with which the duration of a mechanical change is established. This time is certainly a relatively empty form, whose filling in unthinkable. The time of history is, however, different to that of mechanics. [...] That is to say, the determining power of historical time-form cannot be fully understood from an empirical event and nor can it be fully

gathered up in one. Such an event which, in the field of history, is complete, is precisely rather empirically undetermined, namely an idea. This idea of fulfilled time is called in the Bible, as its dominating historical idea: messianic time.

For Benjamin, the historical event understood as an empirical event, for which time is only the measure of its mechanical interactions, hides the messianic power of history. It is only the event understood as an idea - containing its own circularity of knowledge and experience - which allows the fulfilled time-form of that history to be understood as messianic time. In order to better understand this relation of the idea to messianic time it is now necessary to explore the second aspect of its characterization by Benjamin - the linguistic nature of the idea as name and doctrine.

IV: Doctrine and Its temporality

Just as Benjamin's writing on time, and the *temporality* of the symbol, is predominantly tied in with literary contexts, so his discussions of language appear largely in connection with temporal issues. As was stated above, Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language can only be artificially separated into sections on each. However, in order to lay the ground for a fuller determination of Benjamin's thinking in the chapter on translation, it is necessary to move the emphasis on to his understanding of language and the temporality it determines (the temporality of *language*, subjective genitive). This section will consider Benjamin's thinking of language in the way it arises from a consideration of Kant's project. It will then be possible, in the final section, bringing language and time together in an initial way - in the idea of messianic analysis as reading.

As was shown in section II in relation to the refiguring of the relationship between experience and the knowledge of experience, Benjamin did not think that the circularity of Kant's project could be avoided. It was rather the case that what Kant chose as his 'starting point', the knowledge of experience given by Newtonian mechanics, was 'uniquely temporally limited' and ultimately served to ground the project in an unproductive metaphysics of subject and object. In Chapter 1 it was shown how the three-fold synthesis constructed experience according to the rule given by the concept in the synthesis of recognition. The determination of time into a linear time-order depended thus on the concept being held in the form determined by the Categories, which themselves reflected the characteristic of the Newtonian object. In that chapter it was shown how Kant could not, in the end, satisfactorily maintain his distinction between mechanism and teleology, since the limited 'span' of time determined by the concept of the Newtonian object differed only 'quantitatively' (or rather 'quantumly') from the 'span' over which the concept of an organism operated. Since it was thus the nature of the concept used in the three-fold synthesis which ultimately determined the nature of the time-order and thus existence (cf. the quotation from Kant in section III), a reflection on the idea of the concept itself, or rather language, must form the 'starting point' for a development of the Kantian system. Thus Benjamin writes in the *Program* essay:

Wie die Kantische Lehre selbst um ihre Prinzipien zu finden sich einer Wissenschaft mit Beziehung auf die sie sie definieren konnte gegenüber sehen mußte, ähnlich wird es auch der modernen Philosophie ergehen. Die große Umbildung und Korrektur die an dem einseitig mathematisch-mechanisch orientierten Erkenntnisbegriff vorzunehmen ist, kann nur durch eine Beziehung der Erkenntnis auf die Sprache wie sie schon zu Kants Lebzeiten Hamann versucht hat gewonnen werden. (*Programm* GS II.1, 168)

Just as the Kantian theory itself, in order to find its principles, needed to see itself in the face of a science, with reference to which it could define them, so will it similar for modern philosophy. The great restructuration and correction which is to be performed on the mathematically-mechanically

orientated concept of knowledge, can only be attained through a relation of knowledge to language, such as Hamann attempted in Kant's lifetime. (*Program* p9)

This quotation again shows that Benjamin by no means wanted to avoid the circularity into which Kant's project entered with Newtonian science, but rather focus on the precise point of resonance between them: language – which in the First Critique, Kant attempted to limit to the conceptuality of Newtonian objects.

Kant's concern to be able to purify reason so as to be able to give it the *a priori* certainty of mathematics, lead him, Benjamin argues, to overlook the fact that philosophical knowledge is only expressed in language and not numbers and formulae. Since it is language which ultimately constitutes the interface for the circularity of experience and the knowledge of experience, it is language, for Benjamin, which must become the centre of the coming philosophy.

Ein in der Reflexion auf das sprachliche Wesen der Erkenntnis gewonnener Begriff von ihr wird einen korrespondierenden Erfahrungsbegriff schaffen der auch Gebiete deren wahrhafte systematische Einordnung Kant nicht gelungen ist umfassen wird. (*Programm* GS II.1, p168)

A concept of knowledge gained from reflexion on the linguistic nature of knowledge will create a corresponding concept of experience which will also encompass regions whose truly systematic ordering Kant did not achieve. (*Program* p9)

The region Benjamin has in mind here, as not truly systematized within Kant's three Critiques, is religion. Benjamin's understanding of religion, here, is informed by Hamann, Kabbalah and Early German Romanticism.²⁴

As was shown in Chapter 1, Hamann rejected Kant's attempts to maintain a distinction between intuition and understanding, that is, between the experience and the *a priori* concepts of knowledge. Rather, both were grounded in the 'spontaneity of our concepts', and this gave rise to a particular theological linguistic 'phenomenology' – a phenomenology in the sense of a particular immediacy of knowledge of experience, as opposed to

the mediacy of an *a priori* separation of knowledge of experience and experience. To quote again from Hamann:

Jede Erscheinung der Natur war ein Wort, das Zeichen, Sinnbild und Unterpfand einer neuen geheimen, unaussprechlichen, aber desto innigern Vereinigung, Mitteilung und Gemeinschaft göttlicher Energien und Idee. Alles, was der Mensch am Anfange hörte, mit Augen sah, beschaute und seine Hände betasteten, war ein lebendiges Wort. (SH p222)

Every phenomenon of nature was a word, the sign, image and pledge of a new union, communication and community of divine energies and ideas – secret, inexpressible, but all the more profound. Everything that man saw, heard, touched, was a living word. (*The Knight of Rosenkreuz's Last Will* p73; SH p222)

The word *Erscheinung* has been translated 'phenomenon' to avoid the impression that what Hamann has in mind here is the experience of nature as simply the *appearance* of a hidden thing-in-itself. Hamann's idea of a 'new union' is similar rather to the immediacy operating in Heidegger's understanding of the phenomenon as a 'showing' of itself. It is a theological linguistic phenomenology, similar to Hamann's, which is found in Benjamin's *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*. He writes for example:

Das Dasein der Sprach erstreckt sich aber nicht nur über alle Gebiete menschlicher Geistesäußerung, der in irgendeinem Sinn immer Sprache innewohnt, sondern es erstreckt sich auf schlechthin alles. (GS II.1, p40)

The existence of language, however, is not only coextensive with all the areas of human mental expression in which language always inheres in one way or another, but rather it is coextensive with absolutely everything. (*Illuminations* p315)

As will be seen below in regard to Benjamin's theory of reading, this linguistic understanding of the new concept of experience is present in his thinking from his very earliest notes to his last works. He also found such a theory of language developed by the Early German Romantics, in their idea of the absolute as a linguistic *Reflexionsmedium*; (Benjamin's analysis of this idea will be considered in Chapter 5.)

Both Benjamin and Hamann were drawn to Kabbalah, which also

develops a theological understanding of language, yet the deeper attraction for both was the way the nature of tradition was rethought in Kabbalah. It was briefly shown in Chapter 1 how Hamann's view, 'Reason is language, logos', was concomitant with a questioning of the relation between reason and tradition. For Benjamin, the reflection on the linguistic nature of knowledge in relation to Kant's work was concomitant with the need to think through the nature of a linguistic system as a 'tradendum'. In the *Program* essay, Benjamin characterizes this *tradendum* as Kabbalistic 'doctrine' (*Lehre*).

Benjamin had met Gershom Scholem in the summer of 1915 and was greatly impressed by the mystical language philosophy of Kabbalah, on which Scholem was working.²⁵ In a Kabbalist theory of reading, the very letters of the Torah are divine signatures and this gives rise to an understanding of interpretation quite different to the idea that a word is simply the bearer of the meaning to which it is attached. In his work *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*²⁶, Scholem portrays Kabbalistic interpretation as forming a subversive underside to the history of religious interpretation. In opposition to the common practice of interpreting a religious text to show how it confirms contemporary scientific findings, thus holding the text within the prevailing cultural framework of the day, the Kabbalist showed the text's ability to disrupt the idea that it was simply the bearer of contemporary truths by focusing instead on the very letters of the words used.²⁷ In this way the Kabbalist showed that truth was not conveyed *through* the language of the text, but rather was *in* the language itself.

The distinction between that which is communicated 'through' a language and that which is communicated 'in' a language, forms the core of Benjamin's essay, *On Language as Such*. The idea that a word is merely the bearer of an unchanging meaning is constructed on the idea of a

separation between a 'transitory' experience (the contingent use of the word), and a 'timeless' experience (the meaning of the word). As was shown in section III, it was precisely against such a separation of realms, modelled on the isolation of Newtonian objects, that Benjamin's rethinking of time was directed. It is for this reason, in the *On Language as Such* essay, that Benjamin rejects a 'sign' theory of language:

Das menschliche Wort ist der Name der Dinge. Damit kann die Vorstellung nicht mehr aufkommen, die der bürgerlichen Ansicht der Sprache entspricht, daß das Wort zur Sache sich zufällig verhalte, daß es ein durch irgendwelche Konvention gesetztes Zeichen der Dinge (oder ihrer Erkenntnis) sei. Die Sprache gibt niemals *bloße* Zeichen. (GS II.1, 150)

The human word is the name of things. Hence it is no longer conceivable, as the bourgeois view of language maintains, that the word has an accidental relation to its object, that it is a sign for things (or knowledge of them) agreed by some convention. Language never gives *mere* signs. (*Illuminations* p324)

As the quotation indicates, Benjamin wishes to replace a sign theory of language with a theory of naming.²⁸ It is important to bear in mind that his idea of naming is characterized by the temporality it determines, and it is this which constitutes its opposition to the sign theory. It is for this reason that immediately after the above quotation, Benjamin goes on to criticise 'mystical language theory' ('mystische Sprachtheorie'). Such a theory is one which proposes that the essence of a thing is simply its word. Such a suggestion would collapse the distinction between experience (the thing) and knowledge of experience (its word), into a simple immediacy, unquestioning of the temporality of that immediacy.²⁹ For Benjamin, in the *Language* essay, the relation of the thing and its name is also constituted by an immediacy; however, this 'magic' immediacy is characterized by Benjamin in terms of translation. The name is the translation of the language of the thing into the language of the human. Things do not communicate themselves to man *through* their language, as if the thing were a thing-in-itself existing timelessly behind the presentation of itself in language. Rather, things communicate themselves *in*

their language, and man knows them *in translation* and not *through translation* (which would again assert the temporality of a sign theory of language). It is thus the idea of translation, in its bringing together of an idea of reception and spontaneity, which constitutes the heart of Benjamin's phenomenological circle of experience and knowledge of experience:

Für Empfängnis und Spontaneität zugleich, wie sie sich in dieser Einzigartigkeit der Bindung nur im sprachlichen Bereich finden, hat aber die Sprache ihr eigenes Wort, und dieses Wort gilt auch von jener Empfängnis des Namelosen im Namen. Es ist die Übersetzung der Sprache der Dinge in die des Menschen. (GS II.1, 150)

For reception and spontaneity together, which are found in this unique union only in the linguistic realm, language has its own word, and this word also applies to that reception of the nameless in the name. It is the translation of the language of things into the language of humans. (*Illuminations* p325)

Translation is thus by no means a linking of two languages, whereby that which is communicated *through* one, thereby communicated *through* another. The mediacy, between the two languages (of the thing and of the human), enacted by translation does not partake of the Newtonian temporality of the sign, but rather the 'immediacy' of the symbol, that is, the temporality of the experience-contexture in the stretching out of temporality from its confinement in the limited span. This stretching span of temporality breaks the confinement of meaning or truth to a 'timeless' realm, separate from its signification in a text, like the separation of two Newtonian now-points.

A development of this understanding of translation, in respect of translation from one human language to another, is found in Benjamin's essay *The Task of The Translator*. Here again, what is of central importance is how the relationship or kinship (*Verwandtschaft*) of languages is manifested in translation. This kinship is explored in the way an original exists in a continuum of experience with its after-life, and, when brought together with its translation, the way both signify the

linguistic nature of experience-contexture, which Benjamin names 'pure language'. Since translation is one of Benjamin's central ways of thinking the temporality of language, that is, both the temporality of a text (for example, in the idea of its after-life) and the linguistic nature of the contact between 'transitory' experience and 'timeless' knowledge of experience, it will be dealt with at length in a chapter of its own. In the remainder of this section Benjamin's idea of the temporality of *language*, the linguistic nature of the phenomenological circularity of experience and knowledge of experience, will be explored in terms of his notion of doctrine.

It was stated above that Benjamin planned to rethink the nature of the Kantian *tradendum* as doctrine. In the light of his concern to rethink time beyond its limitation in a Newtonian time-order, and to rethink language beyond the oppositions of signified and sign, meaning or truth and its linguistic presentation, his planned dissertation can now be seen to involve a complex intertwining of intentions. First of all, to subject Kant's project to a temporal and linguistic criticism, and secondly to put in question the temporal and linguistic assumptions which characterized the prevailing view of philosophical legacy. This second intention was to be fulfilled by presenting the first intention by way of a kabbalist reading of Kant's work. While the dissertation on Kant was never written (for reasons suggested above), the *Program* essay indicates that the ideas of doctrine would have provided the central link between the two intentions. That is, Kant's work would be read as doctrine, and the linguistic nature of the idea of knowledge operating in it, the pure concepts of the understanding, would also have been read in the same way. In this way a complex circularity could have been unfolded between the presentation of a philosophical system and the temporality of language of its concept of knowledge.

Und damit läßt sich die Forderung an die kommende Philosophie endlich in die Worte fassen: Auf Grund des Kantischen Systems einen Erkenntnisbegriff zu schaffen dem der Begriff einer Erfahrung korrespondiert von der die Erkenntnis Lehre ist. (*Programm GS II.1, 168*)

And thus the demand upon the coming philosophy can finally be put in these words: to create on the basis of the Kantian system a concept of knowledge to which a concept of experience corresponds, of which the knowledge is the doctrine. (*Program p9-10*)

If, in the letter to Scholem, quoted above, Benjamin's intention had been to read Kant's work as doctrine, then in this quotation it can be seen that the relationship between experience and knowledge of experience is itself to be refigured, such that knowledge is the doctrine of experience. This entails a certain collapse of the distinction between a philosophical system and that which it treats, i.e. knowledge of experience. This collapse must again not be understood as the formation of a simple identity, or as a collapse into an 'abyss' which would allow any systematic philosophy to have an immediate identity with 'true' knowledge of existence, rather their unity must be understood from the temporal nature of doctrine as a linguistic continuum between form and content.

This unity is evidenced in the prologue to the *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, where Benjamin argues that a system is not to be thought of as a net, catching truth which flies in from outside (OGTD p28; GS I.1, 207). Rather, truth must be thought of as already in the philosophical treatise; he writes, for example, in one of his preparatory notes for the *Trauerspiel* study: 'for there is no truth over a matter, rather in it', ('denn Wahrheit gibt es nicht über eine Sache, sondern in ihr', <fr 29>, GS VI, 50). In fragment 23 of his Kant notes, Benjamin rhetorically asks whether thinking is a doing ('*Tätigkeit*') of something to something, like hammering or sewing, or rather a 'transzendentes Intransitivum' (GS VI, 43). This again indicates the unity of systematic thought and that which it treats, knowledge of experience. It is this

move towards a unitary and intransitive continuum which gives rise to Benjamin's thinking of ideas and names, and the authority of philosophical treatise and quotation, which will now be explored. Each must be thought as having not a transitive relationship to something outside of it, but read as the doctrinal symbol of the unity of the experience, and knowledge of experience, in which it exists.

In the *Epistemo-critical Prologue* Benjamin encapsulates this move towards unity in the elliptic phrase 'Truth is the death of intention' (OGTD p36; 'Die Wahrheit ist der Tod der Intention', GS I.1, 216). This phrase is given greater specificity in fragment 27, where he writes that truth is the death of the 'intentio' (GS VI, 48). The idea of the 'intentio' as the comportment of the mind towards that which is intended, makes clear that, for Benjamin, truth may only be found in the process whereby it is no longer thought to concern the need for the system to communicate the 'true' knowledge of experience it has captured from outside.³⁰ It is the truth read in a philosophical work which gives it its authority - though both terms, 'truth' and 'authority', must be thought in opposition to their common understanding as somehow 'timeless'. Thus Benjamin writes:

Diese Autorität steht vielmehr durchaus zum landläufigen Begriff der Sachlichkeit darum im Gegensatz, weil ihr Gelten, das der intentionlosen Wahrheit[,] historisch, also durchaus nicht zeitlos ist, [...]. "Zeitlosigkeit" ist also als ein Exponent [des bürgerlichen Wahrheitsbegriff zu entlarven. (<fr 29>, GS V, 50)

This authority stands rather completely in opposition to the common concept of objectivity about a matter, because its validity, that of intentionless truth, is historical and thus in no way timeless, [...]. "Timelessness" is thus to be revealed as an exponent of the bourgeois concept of truth.

The intentionless truth of the authoritative philosophical treatise, in that it is read as the doctrine of the phenomenological unity and circularity of experience and the knowledge of experience, gives each treatise, each authoritative quotation, a certain individuality. They become monads

encapsulating their very own circularity of the experience and knowledge of experience, in which they exist. However, this individuality is again not that of the Newtonian object, since its individuality is 'historical', that is, the continuum of experience it encapsulates is constituted by fulfilled time, and not the mechanical time-order of empty, homogeneous time.

The idea of rethinking the temporality of truth and the authority of a philosophical work is closely parallel to Heidegger's idea of 'loosening up' the hardened tradition of ontology in order to reveal the history of the question of being (for example, *Being and Time* H22). There would, however, appear to be a clear difference (which will be considered further in the Conclusion), in that while Heideggerian 'destruction' relentlessly pursues the way being has been modelled on a 'homogeneous' time-order from one philosophical text to another, for Benjamin the question of existence appears in a tertiary position to the need to read philosophical texts as individual doctrinal monads. He writes, for example, towards the end of the addendum to the *Program* essay:

Eine Erkenntnis ist metaphysisch heißt im strengen Sinne: sie bezieht sich durch den Stammbegriff der Erkenntnis auf die konkrete Totalität der Erfahrung, d.h. aber auf Dasein. Der philosophische Daseinsbegriff muß sich dem religiösen Lehrbegriff, dieser aber dem erkenntnistheoretischen Stammbegriff ausweisen. (*Programm* GS II.1, 170-1)

To say that knowledge is metaphysical means in the strict sense: it is related through the root-concept to the concrete totality of experience, that is however, to existence. The philosophical concept of existence must answer to the religious concept of doctrine, but this latter to the epistemological root-concept. (*Program* p11-12)

The idea that the concept of existence ('*Dasein*') must be subject to the concept of doctrine can be explained, in relation to Kant, in the way Kant's Newtonian Categories, which lead to a Newtonian time-order being 'carried over' into the existence of a thing, must be read as doctrine. As was discussed above, Benjamin's Kant dissertation proposed to treat both

his system as doctrine and the system's concept of the knowledge of experience also as doctrine, thus treating it in thorough-going circularity. This complex doctrinal reading of Kant gives rise, in the *Program* essay, to an interpretation of the categories not as timelessly existing in their inheritance from Aristotle, but rather as historical *Stamm-begriffe* or *Urbegriffe* - root-concepts or primal-concepts.

As was stated above, the Categories in Kant's transcendental logic ultimately determined the nature of the concept in the three-fold synthesis of the manifold; in their reinterpretation as root-concepts or primal-concepts they perform this same function as the point of circularity between knowledge of experience and experience. This, however, is only one aspect of their significance. Thus Benjamin writes:

Der erkenntnistheoretische Stamm- oder Urbegriff hat eine doppelte Funktion. Einmal ist er es der durch seine Spezifikation, nach der allgemein logischen Begründung von Erkenntnis überhaupt zu den Begriffen von gesonderten Erkenntnisarten und damit zu besonderen Erfahrungsarten durchdringt. (*Programm* GS II.1, 170)

The epistemological root- or primal-concept has a double function. First of all, it is the one which through its specification, in line with the general logical foundation of knowledge, penetrates to the concepts of specific types of knowledge and thus to specific types of experience. (*Program* p11)

The second and, for Benjamin, more important function of the primal-concept, is the one which informs the central characteristic of ideas and names: their multiplicitous individuality.

The idea of the multiplicity of primal-concepts arises from the collapse into a linguistic-temporal continuum of Kant's attempt to maintain the tension between the temporality of system and that of its Newtonian centre. In Kant's system the twelve categories were divided into four groups of three, and while he to a certain extent discussed the relation of the categories in each group, the relation of the groups to each other was certainly not treated. It would seem that they existed individually in

an almost additive way, such that no one group gave the true nature of existence, but rather only when added together in the table of categories. The idea of an additive list of categories gradually leading to truth, would be linked to the model of a Newtonian time-order. In chapter 1 it was also shown how the unity of the table of categories was underpinned by the transcendental unity of apperception in the transcendental ego. This idea of a simple unity, again modelled on a Newtonian temporality, grounding and existing outside of the generation of time in the three-fold synthesis, was shown to ultimately ground the organic unity of the system itself. However, Kant was shown to be unable to satisfactorily maintain the distinction between the mechanical time of the Newtonian time-order and the teleological, stretched time of the organism. The temporality of the system was thus opposed to Kant's attempt to ground it with a unity, at its centre, modelled on Newtonian temporality. That is, the tabular boundary separating the Categories from the rest of the system was always already under strain, and similarly, the individual groups of Categories oppose their determination into an additive sequence.

As a result of this, the categories can no longer be regarded as forming a unitary core within a system, but rather they break out of their confinement as parts of a list which 'adds up to truth', so that each one symbolically presents its own circle of knowledge of experience and experience as a doctrine. The system thus becomes constituted by the presentation of a non-additive multiplicity of categories, or primal-concepts, such that their unity within and as the system is that of doctrine. Benjamin presents this result in the form of a lengthy metaphor developed in fragment 20, written around the time of the *Program* essay. In it the relationship between a system and its primal-concepts (referred to here as 'cognitive elements', *Erkenntnisse*) is

pictured by the relationship between a palace and the pictures which hang on its walls. He writes:

Die Aufgabe der Ontologie ist es die Erkenntnisse so mit symbolischer Intention zu laden, daß sie sich in Wahrheit oder Lehre verlieren, in ihr aufgehen, ohne sie doch zu begründen, da deren Begründung Offenbarung, Sprache ist.

Um auf das Bild zurückzukommen: die Wände des Palastes so mit Bildern auszufüllen, bis die Bilder scheinen die Wände zu sein.

Diese gewaltige Intention auf symbolische Schwängerung aller Erkenntnisse ist der Grund der Kantischen Mystik. (<fr 20>, GS VI, 39)

It is the task of ontology to so laden the cognitive elements with symbolic intention, that they lose themselves in truth or doctrine, dedicated to it, without thus grounding it - since its grounding is revelation, language.

To return to the image: to so fill out the walls of the palace with images, that the images seem to be the walls.

This powerful intention to symbolic impregnation of all cognitive elements is the ground of Kantian mysticism.

This quotation again illustrates the 'collapse' together of system and the concept of knowledge operating within it; but again it is not a collapse into an abyss, but into doctrine. The 'cognitive elements' or primal-concepts do not gradually add up to truth, nor is their individuality that of isolated Newtonian objects, rather they are always threatening to break from their framing within the system, and to thus merge and become the system. Truth is not thereby simply reached as if it had the static nature of a Newtonian object, rather it is the movement itself in which, through symbolic lading, the cognitive elements break free from their framing within the system. Benjamin calls this their 'inconspicuous celebrating Dimension' ('die unscheinbar verherrlichende Dimension', *ibid.*).

Even shortly after the period of Benjamin's intensive study of Kant, the terms used to describe this movement of truth change. This can now be understood as the need to avoid a terminology becoming fixed within a new system which would therefore repeat the Kantian problem of a separation between system and concept of knowledge, palace and pictures. For example, in the *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, this symbolic lading

is called 'the act of naming' (OGTD p37; 'Benennen', GS I.1, 217). The primal-concepts are called ideas; they are given intentionlessly in the act of naming, and thus exist in 'irreducible multiplicity' (p43/223). The relationship of the ideas to truth is figured in a number of different images expressing movement: truth is 'actualized in the round dance of presented ideas' (p23; 'vergegenwärtigt im Reigen der dargestellten Ideen', GS I.1, 209); it is again not simply the 'content' covered by the 'form' of its presentation, such that it may be revealed by a lifting of its cover, rather truth shows itself 'as the burning up of the cover entering the circle of ideas' (p31; 'als das Aufflammen der in den Kreis der Ideen eintretenden Hülle', GS I.1, 211). The truth of doctrine may thus be crudely summarized as the movement whereby, when a system is read as doctrine, the cognitive elements (ideas, names) break free from their confinement within their systematic ordering and become themselves a multiplicity of intentionless doctrinal unities, each encapsulating a unity of experience and knowledge of experience in a linguistic, doctrinal continuum.

On the basis of this understanding of the truth of linguistic doctrine, it is now possible to reunite this emphasis upon language with the emphasis of section III on the *temporality* of the experience-contexture, by looking briefly at Benjamin's notion of 'reading'.

V: Messianic Analysis - Benjamins Theory of Reading

The purpose of looking at Benjmin's theory of reading is not to suggest that there is just one way of understanding his thinking of the temporality of language. Though it is certainly a pervasive notion through-

out Benjamin's work, it is only *one* way, another being, for example, the idea of translation. Given his understanding of doctrine as developed in section IV, it can now be understood that there is no one single unifying thought of language and time in Benjamin's work, but only particular ideas - reading and translation, for example - and individual works. This section is thus a basis for Chapters 5, in which individual works will be discussed, in that it is only a particular way Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language came to unity in a name.

In his first set of notes towards the *Passagenwerk*, written in 1928-9, the following remark appears within a discussion of the 'name':

Der Habitus eines gelebten Lebens: das ist es, was der Name aufbewahrt aber auch vorzeichnet. Mit dem Begriff der Mimesis ist zudem schon gesagt, daß der Bereich des Namens der des Ähnlichen ist. Und da die Ähnlichkeit das Organon der Erfahrung ist, so besagt das: der Name kann nur in Erfahrungszusammenhängen erkannt werden. <Q*,24>, GS V.2, p1038)

The habitus of a lived life: it is this which the name keeps safe, but also maps out. That the realm of the name is that of the similar, is already intimated in the concept of mimesis. And since similarity is the organon of experience, this means the name can only be recognised in experience-contextures.

The temporal nature of the experience-contexture and the linguistic nature of the name, are brought together here in the notions of mimesis and similarity. In the short essays which Benjamin dedicated to these notions in 1933, *The Doctrine of the Similar*³¹ (*Lehre vom Ähnlichen*) and *On the Mimetic Faculty*³² (*Über das mimetische Vermögen*), Benjamin develops these notions through an idea of 'reading'.³³ The fact that in the past primitive peoples read their fate from stars, and entrails ("To read what was never written", OMF p336; "Was nie geschrieben wurde, lesen", GS II.1, 213) is given as evidence that they not only perceived a similarity between human life and the stars, but also that this perception was rooted in a mimetic faculty. Benjamin defines this faculty as the 'powerful compulsion to become similar' (DS p69; 'gewaltige[r] Zwang[]

ähnlich zu werden', GS II.1, 210), that is, as the ability of the human to be determined in its existence by that perceived similarity. In the *Program* essay, Benjamin discusses the epistemology of primitive peoples who identify themselves with sacred animals in terms of being a particular epistemological mythology. Since the prevailing epistemological mythology changes over history, the modern person no longer knows what made it once possible to read a similarity between a constellation of stars and a human life. It is necessary, therefore, to speak of 'non-sensuous similarity' ('unsinnlichen Ähnlichkeit') in order for the idea of similarity not to be limited to the sensuous similarity determined by a particular modern form of perception. Thus the general idea of non-sensuous similarity can be understood as a reformulation of Benjamin's idea of the experience-contexture as a sphere of complete neutrality with respect to the epistemological mythology of subject and object. The reading of a similarity consequently partakes of a particular temporality:

Ihre [die Ähnlichkeit] Wahrnehmung ist in jedem Fall an ein Aufblitzen gebunden. Sie huscht vorbei, ist vielleicht wiederzugewinnen, aber kann nicht eigentlich wie andere Wahrnehmungen festgehalten werden. Sie bietet sich dem Auge ebenso flüchtig, vorübergehend wie eine Gestirnkongstellat[i]on. (*Lehre vom Ähnlichen* GS II.1, 206)

The perception of similarity is in every case bound to a flashing. It slips past, can possibly be regained, but really cannot be held fast, unlike other perceptions. It offers itself to the eye as fleetingly and transitorily as a constellation of stars. (*Doctrine of the Similar* p66)

The image of a momentary flashing is reminiscent of the temporality of the shooting star. In the context of the essay, the constellation is read by an astrologer at the moment of birth, and the flashing similarity which is perceived is determinant for the future life or fate of the infant. The perceived similarity partakes of the temporality of the wish or hope, that is, fulfilled time. In the context of reading in the usual sense, the same temporality appears:

Alles Mimetische der Sprache kann vielmehr, der Flamme ähnlich, nur an einer Art von Träger in Erscheinung treten. Dieser

Träger ist das Semiotische. So ist der Sinnzusammenhang der Wörter oder Sätze der Träger, an dem erst, blitzartig, die Ähnlichkeit in Erscheinung tritt. (*Über das mimetische Vermögen*, GS II.1, 213)

The mimetic element of language can only rather appear, like a flame, in a kind of bearer. This bearer is the semiotic element. Thus the coherence of words or sentences is the bearer in which, like a flash, similarity appears. (*Mimetic Faculty* p335)

The 'semiotic element' referred to here is a reference to a sign theory of language, which was discussed above. The image of the 'bearer' and 'flame' is reminiscent, however, of Benjamin's description of truth in the *Origin of German Tragic Drama*. It would thus seem that reading is a process by which truth may appear, where truth is the flaring up of the non-sensuous similarity which constitutes the experience-contexture, and which is otherwise constrained to a particular epistemological mythology. In the case of modern societies, this constraint is the 'uniquely temporally limited' form of Newtonian time-order, determining the mythology of subject and object, signified and sign. Reading can thus be understood as the process by which the stretched, fulfilled time of the experience-contexture becomes momentarily visible, breaking out of its determination in the now-point. Benjamin writes for example:

Das Tempo aber, jene Schnelligkeit im Lesen oder Schreiben, welche von diesem Vorgang sich kaum trennen läßt, wäre dann gleichsam das Bemühen, die Gabe, den Geist an jenem Zeitmaß teilnehmen zu lassen, in welchem Ähnlichkeiten, flüchtig und um sogleich wieder zu versinken, aus dem Fluß der Dinge hervorblitzen. So teilt noch das profane Lesen – will es nicht schlechterdings um das Verstehen kommen – mit jedem magischen dies: daß es einem notwendigen Tempo oder vielmehr einem kritischen Augenblick untersteht, welchen der Lesende um keinen Preis vergessen darf, will er nicht leer ausgehen. (*Lehre vom Ähnlichen*, GS II.1, 209–10)

So speed, that swiftness in reading or writing which can scarcely be separated from this process, would then become as it were, the effort or gift of letting the mind participate in that measure of time in which similarities flash up fleetingly out of the stream of things, only in order to immediately sink back again. Thus even profane reading, if it is not to forsake understanding altogether, shares this with that magical reading: that it is subject to a necessary speed, or rather a critical moment, which the reader must not forget at any cost unless he wishes to go away empty. (*Doctrine of the Similar* p68)

This idea of reading has resonances both with Benjamin's last writings and with his early notes on Kant. His sustained interest in a theory of reading would seem to spring from its combination of receptivity and spontaneity, 'effort or gift', and thus is related to his interest in the notion of translation. In *Konvolut 'N'*, his theoretical notes to the *Passagenwerk* (written in the late 1930's), the idea of reading is given a central role. Benjamin asserts that reality is read like a text, and that the reality of the Nineteenth Century is to be treated as the book of past events (IN 4,21, GS V.1, 580). The relation of the 'then' to the 'now' is also read, such that they come flashingly into constellation in an image. The measure of time in which the image appears is called by Benjamin, the 'now of recognisability' ('Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit', IN 3,1; GS V.1, 578). This idea will be discussed further in Chapter 5 in the context of a theory of knowledge of history. In Benjamin's early notes the idea of reading appears in the idea that 'perception is reading' ('Wahrnehmung ist Lesen', <fr 16-18>; GS VI, 32-33). The context of Benjamin's discussion is the circularity of experience and knowledge of experience in the experience-continuum, which he calls here 'the absolute surface' ('die absolute Fläche', <fr 18>, GS VI, 32). In this context also, reading is connected with the 'now of recognisability' such that Benjamin writes:

Die Handlung, wie die Wahrnehmung treten nur gebrochen, uneigentlich, unreal in das Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit ein. [...] Sie treten gebrochen, in *Symbolischen Begriffen* in das Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit ein, denn dieses Jetzt ist von Erkennbarkeit ganz allein erfüllt und durchwaltet. (<fr 25>, GS VI, 46)

Actions, such as perception, enter the now of recognizability only brokenly, improperly, unreally. [...] They enter brokenly in *symbolic concepts* into the now of recognisability, for this now is filled and run through only by recognisability.

The 'now of recognisability' of reading (as perception) can be seen here to partake of the temporality of truth: the round dance of symbolically laden ideas which, in their intentionless multiplicity, fragment the

perception thought of as a transitive action. Thus in reading, not only does the fulfilled time of the experience-contexture flare up, but also that which is read has its meaningful context broken, becoming a multiplicity of symbols or doctrines of the doctrinal unity of experience and knowledge of experience.

In conclusion, therefore, reading can thus be seen to be constituted by the unity of Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language: the fulfilled temporality of the continuum of experience and the discontinuous multiplicity of ideas and names, a messianic moment which explodes the now-point of a linear, homogeneous time-order and a doctrine which makes the separation of presentational 'form' and meaningful 'content', into a continuum. The systematic basis of these ideas is the methodological grid underpinning of Benjamin's messianic analysis, of which reading and translation are names, and thus symbols of the impossibility of ultimately separating a 'methodological grid' from methodological *Umweg*, in relation to Benjamin's work. His systematic thinking of the temporality of language in response to Kant constitutes the *Umweg* of his work, and the treatment of Benjamin's individual works in Chapter 5 will thus reflect the fact that they too are both symbols in and of this path of thinking.

NOTES

1. References to Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedmann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977) will be given in the form 'GS' followed by volume and page number.

While much has been written on Benjamin's thinking of language (primarily on the early essay *Über Sprache überhaupt*, GS I.2, 140-157 and the translation essay, *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, GS IV.1, 9-21) and time (primarily in the context of Benjamin's theory of history and the text *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, GS I.2, 691-704), the two are rarely

taken together. One of the most thorough interpretations of Benjamin's work of language is Winfried Menninghaus, *Walter Benjamin's Theorie der Sprachmagie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), but Benjamin's rethinking of time and temporality in the same period as his work on language is not considered.

2. Walter Benjamin, 'Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels' in GS I.1, 202-430 (p.208). Translated in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1977), p.28. Cited in the text as 'OGTD'.

3. Samuel Weber, 'Lecture de Benjamin', *Critique* (1969), 699-712, gives a sympathetic interpretation of Benjamin's enigmatic and elliptical style of writing in the light of Derrida's work. He overlooks, however, the question of systematicity and assumes system is simply and straightforwardly rejected. The purpose of this chapter will be to ask precisely the question of whether Benjamin's thinking is systematic, and if so, why it appears so unsystematic.

4. This sentence is not found in the English translation.

5. The long study of the *Passagenwerk* by Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1989), is almost completely devoid of an appreciation of the philosophical bases of Benjamin's later work. Benjamin's early, more explicitly philosophical essays are not considered, and her method is consciously unphilosophical: '[This book] experiments with an alternative hermeneutic strategy more appropriate to [Benjamin's] "dialectics of seeing", one that relies, rather, on the interpretive power of images that make conceptual points concretely, with reference to the world outside the text.' (p6) This method of allowing the images to speak for themselves without presuppositions, yields a reading of the *Passagenwerk* guided by the thinking of the Frankfurt School. Benjamin's criticism of the idea of a presuppositionless approach to a text will be considered in Chapter 5, and in general the approach taken to Benjamin's work in this thesis will be opposed to taking Benjamin's images and expressions at face value, and rather will be concerned to raise the question of their systematic basis.

6. A prime example is Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, which treats Benjamin's late *Passagenwerk* in isolation from his early work. Michael Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literature Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), gives an overview of Benjamin's whole work, but the narrative structure used by Jennings is very much developmental. Jennings argues that after 1912 Benjamin 'steadily developed a complex theory of literary criticism, which as he saw in the 1930's could be adapted to the representation of history.' (p40) Against this tendency to separate Benjamin's work on literature and his work on history, the approach used here is to emphasize that even the early work on language can only be understood in the light of his rethinking of time.

7. Rodolphe Gasché, 'Objective Diversions: On Some Kantian Themes in Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*', in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp.183-204.

8. Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books,

1969). Translation of 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', GS I.2, 431-508. And Walter Benjamin, 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire' in *Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Harry Zohn (London and New York, 1976), pp.107-154. This essay will be cited in the text as simple *Baudelaire*. Translation of 'Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire', GS I.2, 605-653.

9. Christoph Hering in 'Messianic Time and Materialistic Progress: Aspects of the Relationship between Theology and Marxism in Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 16(2) (1985), 205-219, also fails to make this distinction, which leads his, like Gasché, into a highly Kantian reading of Benjamin, in terms of an assertion of the primacy of the subject in opposition to the "continuum" of time: "Blasting" open the continuum of history is to replace it by one in which human beings can be subjects of their own history. [...] Subjects and masters of their lives and no longer in terms of the functioning of an autonomous "continuum".' (p164)

10. Rodolphe Gasché essay, 'Saturnine Vision and the Question of Difference: Reflections on Walter Benjamin's Theory of Language', in *Benjamin's Ground*, ed. by Rainer Nägele (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), pp. 83-104, gives an account of the move from the systematicity of the *Program* essay to the idea of the way language exceeds its limitations in a work. He thereby imposes a chronological, developmental structure upon Benjamin's work, away from systematicity to a fluid, and non-systematic thinking. The persuasiveness of such a view is limited, however, because of his reading of the *Program* essay, which functions as the beginning of the developmental narrative. He regards the essay in terms of Benjamin thinking that 'an immediate absolute certainty of the absolute could be cognitively apprehended' (p97). This reading has no support in the essay, where Benjamin clearly understands the idea of 'higher experience' (called 'the absolute' by Gasché) as a critical medium of the existence of any knowledge, a 'sphere of total neutrality' with regard to knower and known.

11. Walter Benjamin, 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy', trans. Mark Ritter, in *Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics*, ed Gary Smith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp.1-12. Cited below as *Program*. Translation of 'Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie', GS II.1, 157-171. Cited below as *Programm*

12. Claude Imbert discusses this complication in the context of Benjamin's relation to Neo-Kantianism, in 'Le présent et l'histoire' in *Walter Benjamin et Paris*, ed. by Heinz Wismann (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), pp. 743-792

13. *Walter Benjamin: Briefe*, ed. by Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), I, 150.

14. Leo Lowenthal, 'The Integrity of the Intellectual: In Memory of Walter Benjamin', in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. by Gary Smith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 247-259, discusses Benjamin's complex relation to Neo-Kantianism.

15. Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism*, trans R.J.Hollingdale (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

16. For further detail on the clash between Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, see Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith, 'Neo-Kantianism and

Phenomenology: The Case of Emil Lask and Johannes Daubert', *Kant-Studien* (1991), 303-318

17. Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p.77. Translated as *The Story of a Friendship*, trans. Harry Zohn (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981), p.59.

18. The verb translated 'turn up', *vorkommen*, is difficult to translate in this context. It may commonly be translated as 'to appear', 'to occur', 'to come forward', 'to come forward into appearance', 'to come to light'. While the context requires that the verb have an idea of something coming from outside, a translation such as 'comes to appear' has been avoided because it would seem to introduce a philosophical complexity alien to the use to the word *vorkommen*. The rather flat expression 'turn up' has therefore been used.

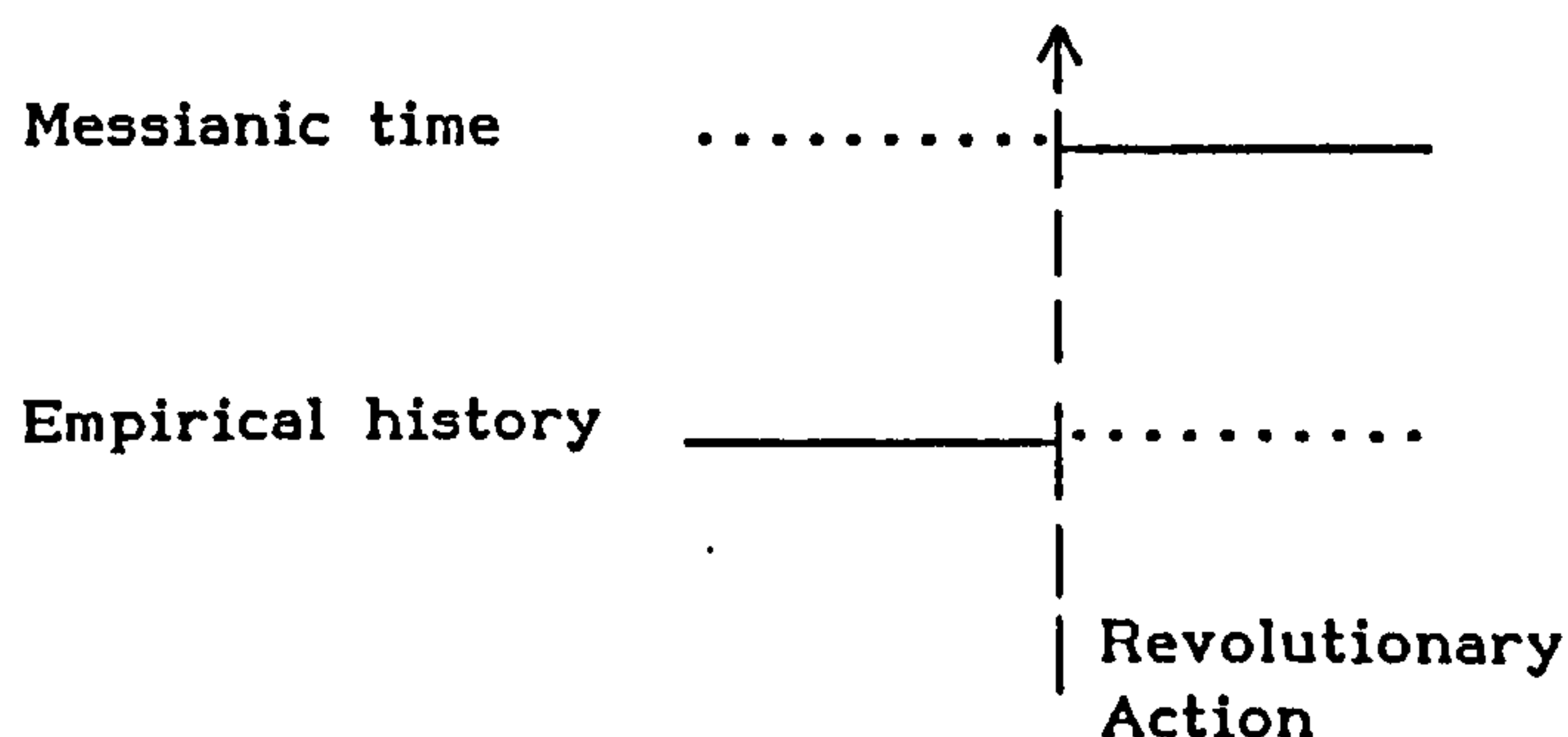
19. The first occurrence of the word *zeitlich* is translated 'transitory' since it is clearly to be understood as a synonym for *vergänglich*, just as *zeitlos* is a synonym for *bleibend*. The second occurrence is translated 'temporal' since it indicates the singularity of an experience which covers both the 'lasting' and the 'ephemeral'.

20. Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in *Illuminations* p261. This phrase in the German is: 'das Kontinuum der Geschichte aufzusprengen' in 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', GS I.2, 701.

21. Claude Imbert, 'Le présent et l'histoire', gives a fine, though schematic overview of Benjamin's thought, stressing the importance of following Benjamin's thinking of time into his thinking of language.

22. For further discussion of the essay, see Michael W. Jennings, *Dialectical Images*, chapter 5 (esp. 166-167). Claude Imbert also provides a useful account of the essay in terms of Benjamin's playing on the reflections set up between the novel and the novella, 'The Wonderous Young Neighbours', it contains.

23. This interpretation of fulfilled, messianic time is at odds with the prevailing tendency to impose upon Benjamin's idea, the uncritical notion of a separation of temporal realms – the realm of history and a supernatural realm of messianic time. Such an interpretation is given by Buck-Morss in *The Dialectics of Seeing*, where she calls them 'time registers': 'They remain disconnected until the act of political revolution cuts across history's secular continuum and blasts humanity out of it' (p242-3). She provides the following diagram in explanation:



The idea of two distinct temporal realms owes much to a certain interpretation of Plato, which will be discussed further in the chapters which follow. Buck-Morss, however, gives this idea a Christian emphasis by her reference to 'history's secular continuum', which is then shattered by an act which moves humanity into a different 'time register'. Jewish traditions of thought about the nature of history do not predominantly separate 'secular' history from *Heilsgeschichte*. Whilst Benjamin's thinking appears distinctly theological in many aspects, it is important not to treat Benjamin's terminology as if it introduces unquestioned metaphysical or religious assumptions, rather his terminology and the style of his thinking must be taken together with the critical base of his thought in Kant's philosophy.

24. These three influences are explored by Menninghaus, *Walter Benjamins Theorie der Sprachmagie* (p22-36), in relation to Benjamin's theory of the 'magical character of language'. By not focussing on Kant, however, Menninghaus misses the philosophical force of a linguistic understanding of phenomena for Hamann (and his interpretation of Kabbalah) and the Early German Romantics.

25. Wohlfarth's well known essay, 'On Some Jewish Motifs in Benjamin', in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 157-214, provides a fine account of the imagery of Benjamin's early essay, *On Language As Such*, but perhaps does not focus enough on the philosophical consequences of Scholem's work on Kabbalah, especially for the question of tradition.

26. Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961)

27. See also Gershom Scholem, 'Revelation and Tradition As Religious Categories in Judaism', in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 282-303. Scholem distinguishes commentary, as seeking to make the Torah applicable '*hic et hunc*' (p296), from Kabbalah as the expression of the force of divinity itself (p294).

28. Winfried Menninghaus, *Walter Benjamins Theorie der Sprachmagie*, provides a fine overview of this essay. He sees the three main issues as: 1) the theory of 'magic immediacy', 2) the theory of translation, and 3) the theory of 'abstract language elements' (p9). He does not, however, consider the phenomenological implications of the essay, as will be suggested below and developed in Chapter 5.

29. Yves Kobry, 'Walter Benjamin et le langage', *Revue D'Esthétique*, 1 (1981), 171-176, picks up this point particularly, but does not relate it to Benjamin's rethinking of the temporality of a sign theory or 'mystical' theory of language.

30. Benjamin's idea of 'intentio' must be understood in the context of a rethinking of the idea of intentionality in phenomenology, as will be shown in Chapter 5.

31. Walter Benjamin, 'Doctrine of the Similar', trans. Knut Tarnowski, in *New German Critique*, 17(1979), 65-69. Translation of 'Lehre vom Ähnlichen', GS II.1, 204-210.

32. Walter Benjamin, 'On the Mimetic Faculty' in *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), pp.333-336. Translation of 'Über das mimetische Vermögen', GS II.1, 210-213.

33. Winfried Menninghaus, *Walter Benjamin's Theorie der Sprachmagie*, gives an interpretation of these two essays in the light of 'On Language As Such'. His analysis of Benjamin's work does not take account of Benjamin's early rethinking of time, and thus he sees Benjamin's work as finding a way between a sign theory of language and an onomatopoeic one.

CHAPTER 4: HEIDEGGER AND THE QUESTION CONCERNING TRANSLATION

I. The Place of Translation

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the term *Ereignis* named Heidegger's way of thinking: the hermeneutic movement of a thorough-going, ecstatically temporal, circling poetic-temporal phenomenology. It was shown that this way of thinking arose from the ecstatic temporal phenomenology of *Being and Time*, via a questioning of its *temporality* of language (objective genitive), that is, a questioning of the subjectivity which grounded its expression (*Aussprechen*), such that in his later work the speaking from out of the hermeneutic circle reflected the ecstatic temporality of poetry, in other words, the temporality of *language* (subjective genitive). This chapter will essentially fill out this rather formal description by specifying Heidegger's thinking of translation in terms of a work and its tradition¹, thought from the movement of the hermeneutic circling of *Ereignis*. This determination of translation must thus be understood entirely within the contours of Heidegger's thinking of the temporality of language as explored in Chapter 2, but also be taken as inseparable from Heidegger's wider thinking of interpretation and the destruction of the history of ontology.² Translation, as involving the historicity of a linguistic work (what Benjamin will call its fore- and after-life), will be shown to bring together Heidegger's thinking of both poetry and history. By specifying Heidegger's thinking of translation, it will thus be possible to assess Heidegger's proximity to Benjamin.³ The meaning and significance of this proximity for a thinking of the temporality of language will be explored in the Conclusion.

While Heidegger's thinking of translation only has its 'place within'

his thinking as a 'whole', it is nevertheless true that there is a reciprocity between the 'place within' and the 'whole'. As well as clarifying the circling of phenomenology and poetry treated in Chapter 2, a focus upon translation has intrinsic importance for understanding the 'whole' of Heidegger's work. Translation is the place of the difference of *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis*, and of modernity and antiquity, and the question of whether these terms are in opposition will reside at this point. Derrida, for example, in his essay *Envoi*⁴ concerning Heidegger's treatment of representation and the representational thinking found in modernity, clearly envisages an opposition between modernity and antiquity in Heidegger's thought, such that ancient Greece is understood as untainted by representational thinking. It is through a focusing on translation that this may be seen to be an inadequate response to Heidegger's portrayal of the difference between antiquity and modernity. The fact that *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis* are, for Heidegger, the same, has gone unrecognised in Heidegger scholarship.⁵ Yet by focusing on translation it will be seen that the difference between the two ways of thinking is not an opposition, but rather that translation mediates their difference within the same. This sameness of *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis* will be explored below in relation to the thinking of language which is found in each.

A further clarifying reciprocity comes into view once it is asked why translation should occupy such a central role in Heidegger's work. The following reasons for the importance of a questioning concerning translation will also apply to Benjamin's concern with translation, and thus will specify, though in an external way, the contours of the convergence of their projects as a whole. The first reason is that within the history of theorizing about translation, translation has predominantly been considered in terms of identity or economy. That is, a translation is thought of in terms of the transfer of the meaning or

'spirit' of a text in one language to a work in another language. The recognition that a perfect transfer is unobtainable leads to an idea of untranslatability and to theorization of loss and gain in translation: the loss of meaning can be compensated for by the gain in clarity, or in improvement of style, or in accessibility of the translated text. An idea of identity remains present, however, as the ideal against which losses and gains may be calculated, and thus which underpins the closed economy in which the original and translation stand. In this ideal, an entity such as the text's 'meaning' or 'spirit' is posited as having an existence independent of the materiality of the original, and which can be repeated identically in another text in another language, at another time. Such a separation of realms modelled on the discontinuity of Newtonian now-points, and found also in Kant's *a priori*, has been shown in Chapters 2 and 3 to be a focus of criticism for both Heidegger and Benjamin. Since, then, translation embodies a thinking of the temporality of language, in terms of linguistic identity accross time, it is a natural focus for the rethinking of time and language.

The second reason for the importance of questioning translation for Heidegger and Benjamin concerns philosophy itself as a tradition of thinking. Philosophy conceives its roots to be in Greek philosophy, yet it was Roman culture, and in Latin, that conceived of Greek works as authorities in a way which was to determine the future of philosophy as a tradition, a 'handing on' and augmenting of Greek knowledge. It is thus that philosophy itself would seem to be rooted between the Greek and the Roman, where this 'between' is constituted by translation. How this translation, or mediation between the Greek and Latin cultures is understood will thus be decisive for how philosophy itself is conceived. It is also at this point that the question will arise of what, for Heidegger and Benjamin, differentiates their thinking from Hegel's idea of

philosophy and history of philosophy. (Hegel's work will be understood as the systematic application of Kant's position to history.) Heidegger's sympathies would seem to lie completely with Greek culture, while Benjamin's seem to lie with Roman culture (via his affiliation with Early German Romanticism). These appearances will be brought into question through an investigation of the 'mediation' between the Greek and Latin, ie., precisely the question of translation.

The third reason for the importance of translation for Heidegger and Benjamin, is particular to their status as German thinkers. Luther's translation of the Bible, or what he called in his *Circular Letter on Translation* (1530), *Verdeutschung*, is of profound importance: first, in its role in the formation of a German cultural identity, and secondly for setting in motion a tradition of theorizing about cultural identity in terms of translation. Concerning the first, Luther's translation coupled with the invention of the printing press, allowed a lingua franca to form from out of the diverse dialects of the German states, thus enabling a wider German cultural identity to emerge. Antoine Berman in his book *Épreuve de l'étranger: Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique*⁶ shows how, in the second half of the Eighteenth Century, a time of increasing social and political unrest in the German states, and a time shortly before the first appearance of the political rhetoric of nationalism, many leading German writers such as Lessing, Herder and Goethe understood translation as forming a necessary structural role in the process of *Bildung*. *Bildung* was to a great extent conceived as a circular movement, a movement beyond one's own borders (an *übersetzen*) to experience another culture, and then to return, enriching one's own; and it was by way of the translation of foreign texts into German that this was to be achieved. Significantly, Goethe suggested that Germany itself had no cultural identity, except as a medium, a *Weltmarkt* for the

works of all other countries.⁷ This concern with translation in the process of *Bildung*, taken together with Voss's translations of Homer, prepared the ground on which German Romanticism and German Idealism were to flourish.⁸ To give an example which will be taken up below (and in relation to Benjamin): Hegel's thought of the spirit's departure from itself, its subsequent alienation (precisely *Entfremdung*), and its return to itself, enriched, is perhaps the pinnacle of this thinking of *Bildung*. And when Heidegger writes: 'Das Heimischwerden ist so ein Durchgang durch das Fremde' (*Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'*, GA 53, 60), it will be necessary to ask if, or how, Heidegger's thinking of translation differentiates his work from Hegel's.

These three reasons, identity in relation to language, the identity of philosophy, and cultural or 'spiritual' identity, must be seen as informing the context in which Heidegger and Benjamin sought to provide an analysis of the nature of translation. This context also helps to clarify the statement in Heidegger's work on Hölderlin's *Der Ister*, which appears at the end of a section initiated by Heidegger's translation of Sophocles' τὸ δεινόν (as a description of the human being) by *das Unheimliche*: "Sage mir, was du vom Übersetzen hältst, und ich sage dir, wer du bist" (GA 53, 76; 'Tell me what you think of translation, and I will tell you who you are').⁹ A perceived need for a questioning of translation is also very much in evidence in the present period. The preface and conclusion to Berman's book reads like a manifesto for the recent boom in 'translation study' or *traductologie*. An underlying theme here, is the idea of translation promoting dialogue and open mindedness; concerning translation Berman writes: 'Elle est mise en rapport, ou elle n'est rien' (p16). Berman's work falls back on an implicit metaphor of liberal democracy with the translated work as a representative of opinion entering a forum of discussion. There have, however, been attempts to think through the

nature of translation more philosophically, for example in the work of Andrew Benjamin and Jacques Derrida.¹⁰ Andrew Benjamin's work is much indebted to Derrida's, but avoids the latter's refusal to understand translation outside of the opposition translatable-untranslatable.¹¹ Derrida's working within this opposition, together with his refusal to see deconstruction as a critical project which is itself a form of translation (which would mark a belonging to a tradition which includes the Early German Romantics, Walter Benjamin and Heidegger), is of considerable significance for understanding his work as a rethinking of the temporality of language.

Section II of this chapter will discuss translation in relation to a rethinking of how a literary work is 'itself' to be understood, beyond its determination in the *Ge-Stell*. The specifically hermeneutic question of what guides a translation, rethought in this way, will be discussed in section III. This separation is for clarity only - the place of translation for Heidegger is always that of a hermeneutic situation, and there can be no question of Heidegger wanting to return to the work 'itself' in some objective sense.

II. *Ge-Stell* and the Law of Translation

The most striking aspect of the place of translation in Heidegger's work is that it has no fixed place. Considering alone the importance for Heidegger of the translation of Greek terms, for example ἀλήθεια, throughout his continual *Wiederholung* of Greek philosophy, it is surprising that he never wrote a text explicitly laying out his thinking on translation. Instead, one finds remarks scattered over many works where

the issue of translation arises from the discussion at hand, the longest being in section 1 of the *Parmenides* lecture course (GA 54, 14–20) and in section 12 of the lectures on *Der Ister* (GA 53, 74–76, 79–83). One possible reason for this is that since his work was so thoroughly concerned with the question of translation in different guises, he did not wish to produce a definitive statement which may have been taken for a translation procedure. There is thus no pre-existing, sustained focus on translation in Heidegger's work, rather it is a case of allowing Heidegger's thinking act as a parabolic mirror, focusing on a single place, which itself becomes illuminating for the whole of his work, and further serves as the place of the *Zwiesprache* between his thinking and Benjamin's.¹² The place of translation in Heidegger's work must, therefore, in a sense be reconstructed, and this must be done in the light of his thinking of the temporality of language as a whole, explored in

Chapter 2.¹³

In this section, Heidegger's thinking of translation will be considered in terms of what will be called the *law* of translation, or more precisely the *Ge-setz* as that which gathers the original and the translated text into a calculative economy. This clarificatory term must be taken as parallel to Heidegger's term *Ge-Stell* and as denoting of the economy of translation in modernity.¹⁴ The term *Ge-Stell* is Heidegger's term for the essence of modern technology. What is being suggested, therefore, is that Heidegger thinks of the essence of translation in modernity in a parallel way to his thinking of technology. In the essay *The Question Concerning Translation*, Heidegger begins by characterising in a broad fashion how technology is conceived: technology is a means to an end, technology is a human activity (QT 4; 'ein Mittel für Zwecke', 'ein menschliches Tun', VA 14). Heidegger remarks that these definitions are correct, but that they do not uncover the essence of technology. It is through the uncovering

of the essence of technology, that the truth of the situation may itself be glimpsed. In a parallel way to technology, translation in modern times is conceived of as a means to an end: a human activity to enable a work to be read by a wider audience who cannot read it in its original language.¹⁵ Thus Heidegger writes in the *Parmenides* lecture course: 'Zunächst fassen wir diesen Vorgang äußerlich technisch-philologisch' (GA 54, 17; 'At first we conceive of this process in an external and technico-philological way'¹⁶). And in the *Ister* lecture he writes: 'Technisch gerechnet ist das Übersetzen das Ersetzen der fremden Sprache durch die eigene oder umgekehrt' (GA 54, 80; 'Considered technologically, translation is the replacement of the foreign language by one's own or vice versa'). In this technological view of translation, language is conceived as a system of signs, such that the meaning signified by a text in one language may be accurately reproduced by signs in a different language.¹⁷ Translation is a means of transport by which the information in a text may gain greater circulation in the world-wide traffic of mass-communication. For Heidegger, this circulation is over-seen by the dictionary as statute book, the authority of which lays down the law determining good and bad translations:

Wer entscheidet aber und wie entscheidet man über die Richtigkeit einer 'Übersetzung'? Unsere Kenntnis der Wortbedeutungen einer fremden Sprache 'beschaffen' wir uns aus dem 'Wörterbuch'. [...] Die Berufung auf das Wörterbuch bleibt immer nur die Berufung auf eine in ihrer Art und ihren Grenzen meist gar nicht faßbar Auslegung einer Sprache. Sobald wir freilich die Sprache nur als Verkehrsmittel betrachten, ist das auf die Technik des Verkehrs und des Austausches zugeschnittene Wörterbuch 'ohne weiteres' 'in der Ordnung' und verbindlich. (*Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'* p74-5

Who decides though, and how does one decided on the correctness of a 'translation'? For our knowledge of the word meanings in a foreign language, we 'employ' a 'dictionary'. [...] The appeal to the dictionary remains always only an appeal to an interpretation of language, which is oblivious of its manner and limits. Certainly as soon as we consider language only as a means of transport, the dictionary (which is geared up to traffic and exchange) is 'in order', 'without further ado' and binding.¹⁸

Heidegger's criticism of a simple recall to the dictionary in translation must not be misunderstood as a bemoaning of the lack of creativity amongst translators. Nor is it simply a case of campaigning for a hermeneutically phenomenological view of language, such as was discussed in Chapter 2 (ie. the word as the showing Saying which lets the phenomenon *be*). Both views would imply that the law of translation is something which can simply be repealed, as if it were simply a human construction.

In a parallel way in *The Question Concerning Technology*, it is emphasised that the *Ge-Stell* is not simply a human activity, but rather it is that which gathers man and object into a calculative economy in which they stand opposite each other, mutually reflecting and re-inforcing their object-like statuses.¹⁹ This reflectivity is the correlative, on a larger scale, to the closed reflectivity which was shown in Chapter 1 to operate between Kant's transcendental ego and the transcendental justification of Newtonian objectivity. It is for this reason that, for Heidegger, the end of metaphysics is technology. The *Ge-setz* of translation can be seen as the inner law of the essence of technology. It is the determination of language in the *Ge-setz*, as the means of transport of information, which allows entities to appear as objects denoted by words, and the human being to appear as a subject which has language for its use, and for there to thus be a circulation of information between subject and object. The *Ge-setz* as the gathering of word and meaning into a lawful correspondence, simultaneously gathers the subject, who has the word, and the object, which is meant, into the *Ge-Stell*.

Just as in *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger makes clear that it is not the case that first there are subjects and objects, which only subsequently befall the calculative ordering of the *Ge-Stell*, but rather it is the *Ge-stell* which first lets there be subjects and

objects, so the *Ge-setz* does not supervene upon 'signifier' and 'signified', but rather lets the signifier *be* as signifier and the signified *be* as signified. What is meant by this, is that *Ge-Stell* and *Ge-setz* are the names for a particular hermeneutic interpretation of existence; 'particular', in that the proper (ie. ecstatically temporal) circularity of being has been grounded via a particular determination of the temporality of that circularity, in order to give rise to a simple reflectivity between two objects.²⁰

It can now be understood that in an essay such as *The Question Concerning Technology* there are essentially two forms of circularity operating. *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis* are the same, though differentiated in their temporality. *Ge-Stell* is a hermeneutic way of thinking constituted by the Newtonian temporality; *Ereignis* is a hermeneutic way of thinking constituted by ecstatic temporality. It is for this reason that, for Heidegger, *Ge-Stell* carries a revolutionary potential, a 'saving power'²¹: once the essence of technology is recognised as a determination of being, in a certain hermeneutic circularity, it becomes possible to glimpse being in another circularity, 'beyond' the limitation of the hermeneutic circularity of being to a Newtonian temporality, 'beyond' a reflectivity (of subject and object, ground and grounded) across a Kantian *a priori* divide. This 'beyond' is not a transition to a true revelation of being which has existed in a super-historical realm, independent of its manifestations in history, such that *Ge-Stell* would be a particular appearance of a timeless universal. Rather it is a 'widening' or 'stretching' of the circularity beyond its limitation to a Newtonian circularity, in the way that, in Chapter 2, it was shown that the Newtonian now-point was only a particular, narrow determination of the span of ecstatic, stretched temporality. In the case of *Ge-Stell* it is not a question of simply discarding, but, rather, rethinking its circularity, so

also there is no question of translation being abandoned as inherently caught in its *Ge-setz*, but rather a need for rethinking it in a more appropriate way. Once the law of translation, which rules in *Ge-Stell*, is recognised as gathering word and object, original and translation, into a peculiar circularity, the possibility arises of another way of thinking translation where the temporality of language is thought in the proper temporality of *Ereignis*.

Heidegger expresses the relation between *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis* with particular clarity as follows:

Das Zusammengehören von Mensch und Sein in der Weise der wechselseitigen Herausforderung bringt uns bestürzend näher, daß und wie der Mensch dem Sein vereignet, das Sein aber dem Menschenwesen zugeeignet ist. Im *Ge-Stell* waltet ein seltsames Vereignen und Zueignen. Es gilt, dieses Eignen, worin Mensch und Sein einander ge-eignet sind, schlicht zu erfahren, d.h. einzukehren in das, was wir *Ereignis* nennen. [...] Was wir im *Ge-Stell* als der Konstellation von Sein und Mensch durch die moderne technische Welt erfahren, ist ein *Vorspiel* dessen, was *Er-eignis* heißt. Dieses verharret jedoch nicht notwendig in seinem Vorspiel. Denn im *Er-eignis* spricht die Möglichkeit an, daß es das bloße Walten des *Ge-Stells* in ein anfänglicheres Ereignen verwindet.

The *belonging* together of man and being in the manner of mutual challenge drives home to us with startling force that and how man is made appropriate to being and being is dedicated appropriately to the essence of man. Within the *Ge-Stell* there prevails a strange making-appropriate and a strange dedication. We must experience simply this appropriating in which man and being are appropriated to each other, that is, we must enter into what we call *Ereignis*. [...] What we experience in the *Ge-Stell* as the constellation of being and man through the modern world of technology is a prelude of what is called *Er-eignis*. It does not necessarily persist in its prelude. For in the *Er-eignis* the possibility arises that it may overcome the mere dominance of the *Ge-Stell* to turn it into a more incipient appropriating. (*The Principle of Identity* p36-7)

The first two sentences make clear that *Ge-Stell* itself can drive home its hermeneutic nature. The third sentence shows that to recognise this circular and mutual determination is already to enter into the way of thinking of *Ereignis*. *Ge-Stell* is a prelude of *Ereignis*, since once the former's circularity has been recognised, the way is open to a move from a 'peculiar' determination of its circularity to a more *anfänglich* one.

What, at first sight, may appear to be an opposition between *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis*, is rather a change in translation: a movement or translation from one interpretation of translation to another. And it is in translating Greek thought that Heidegger attempts to keep open the glimpse of another thinking of translation, another thinking of language and time.

In Greek philosophy, Heidegger 'found' evidence of a way of thinking language and time which was not ruled by the *Ge-setz* of the relation of word and thing as a relation of two objects.²² Rather he found an idea of *phenomenology* in the sense of a letting-be-shown of something in its coming to presence, as explored in Chapter 2. In the word ἀλήθεια he found a thinking of the movement of this coming to unconcealment which had not yet been limited into a reflectivity of two object-like realms. That is, ἀλήθεια named the thinking of a more *anfänglich* hermeneutic circularity. The word *anfänglich*, often translated 'initial' or 'original', could easily suggest that Heidegger's references to the Greeks are essentially a part of a prelapsarian longing in his thought.²³ However, the word, for Heidegger, is linked to the need to rethink the Greek idea of motion.²⁴ What is unconcealed does not simply leave behind its concealed state as if they were two realms separated on the model of Newtonian now-points, rather the beginning persists through the movement. The prefix *an-* is an attempt to suggest this in its ambiguity between its indication of a start of something (eg *anbrennen*, 'to catch fire') and of an approaching something (eg *anrennen*, 'to run into something'). The nature of this beginning which persists through the movement is well illustrated in Heidegger's interpretation of the concept of φύσις:

Gewiß ist φύσεως ὁδός εἰς φύσιν eine Weise des Hervorkommens in die Anwesenung, in der das Woher und Wohin und Wie der Anwesenung dasselbe bleibt. Die φύσις ist Gang als Aufgang zum Aufgehen und so allerdings ein In-sich-zurück-Gehen, zu sich, das ein Aufgehen bleibt. Das nur räumlich Bild des Kreises reicht wesentlich nicht zu, weil dieser in sich zurückgehende Aufgang gerade aufgehen läßt Solches, von dem, zu dem der Aufgang je unterwegs ist.

Certainly φύσεως ὁδός εἰς φύσιν is a mode of coming forth into the presencing in which the 'from which' and the 'to which' and the 'how' remain the same. Φύσις is a progression in the sense of an emergence towards a going-forth, and so is a going back into itself, to *itself*, which remains a going-forth. The merely spatial image of a circle is essentially inadequate because this emergence which goes back into itself precisely lets something go forth, from which and to which the emergence is on the way.²⁵

The 'merely spatial image of a circle' is inadequate because it suggests that φύσις returns to itself after an alienation into a particular 'thing of nature'. Rather, that which φύσις lets go-forth must be thought in a more hermeneutic circularity where the beginning is not simply left behind and then returned to, but rather where the starting point (the 'from which') and the completion (the 'to which') stretch out towards each other in the phenomenological 'how' of their belonging together.

The movement of this transition is always in danger of being covered over, such that the starting point and completion become separated, and the hermeneutic circularity becomes the circular reflectivity of two objects across a divide:

Die φύσις ist das sich-herstellende Wegstellen ihrer selbst, und deshalb gehört zu ihr ein einzigartiges Sich-zustellen von solchem, was *durch sie* erst aus einem Verfüglichen, wie z.B. Wasser, Licht, Luft, zu einem nur ihr Geeigneten, z.B. zu Nahrung and so zu Saft und Knochen wird. Mann kann dieses Geeignete für sich als Verfügliches nehmen und das Verfügliche als Stoff betrachten und die φύσις als einen 'Stoffwechsel'. (*Vom Wesen und Begriff der φύσις* p298)

Φύσις is the self-producing putting-away of itself, and therefore it possesses a unique self-delivering of that which, *through it*, from first being something orderable (eg water, light, air), becomes something appropriated for it alone (eg nutriment, and thus into sap or bones). One can take this 'appropriate' for itself as the 'order-able' and consider this 'order-able' as 'material', and therefore take φύσις as a 'changing of material'. (*On the Being and Conception of φύσις* p267)

In this quotation, Heidegger is arguing that, instead of being thought appropriately in a hermeneutic circle of mutual appropriation of the 'from which' and the 'to which', φύσις can be taken as the transformation

of one material into another. The movement appropriate to hermeneutic thinking thus becomes the change from one object-like state to another. The closure of the hermeneutic circle to a narrow reflectivity is what distinguishes metaphysical thinking from the thinking of *Ereignis*. For example, in Kant the realm which underpins the experience of objects is no longer a basic materiality, but is the Newtonian existence of the transcendental subject. And in the *Ge-Stell* the mutual appropriateness of subject and object has taken hold to the extent that both, in their object-like status, enter into a calculative economy. In an essay such as *The Question Concerning Technology*, an interpretation of Greek thinking is brought in to indicate a hermeneutic way of thinking which has not been closed down in this way, and thus which holds open the possibility of widening *Ge-Stell* into *Er-eignis*, as a properly hermeneutic way of thinking. Heidegger's translations and interpretations of Greek thinking are thus concerned with a avoidance of the reading back the *Ge-setz* of *Ge-Stell* into Greek thinking. It is rather a case of showing that every translation involves a hermeneutic interpretation of language and time, in precisely offering a translation which tries to show the properly *anfänglich* essence of Greek thought, and thus indicating that objectivity is only one form of presencing. Heidegger's translations must not, therefore, be taken as binding or as communicating the original meaning of the words as if his concerns were purely philological. Rather, their concern is always to bring to light the essence of *Ge-Stell* and its law of translation as a hermeneutic circularity and thus open the possibility of a more authentic way of thinking.

In the translating-interpretation of a text, such as Aristotle's *Physics*, and particularly the word φύσις, it is a case of bringing to light the historical transformations which constitute the text. That is, of showing the way a particular interpretation of temporality determines,

in a hermeneutic way, the saying-showing of its language and shapes the historical and poetic resources which that language brings with it. This is a questioning of the text guided by the temporal-phenomenological analysis of *Being and Time*. And just as the questioning approach of the temporal analysis was seen by the later Heidegger to be guided by a thinking of language's own temporality (the temporality of *language*, subjective genitive), so the 'making understandable'²⁶ of a text must show the way the language of a text ultimately breaks through its determination into a particular temporality and how its Saying comes to pass in a more proper way. This two-fold movement of a questioning of a text's systematic determination of temporality and a 'listening' to its language in its Saying-showing is precisely the way of thinking named by *Ereignis* which was explored in Chapter 2. This way of thinking through the matter in question is at the heart of Heidegger's 'destructive' interpretations (*Auslegungen*, from *auslegen*, literally 'laying out') of the history of metaphysics. That is, they are the 'laying out' and 'making understandable' of the interpretation of time and language which is being laid out in the text itself. Translation is not simply a special case of this way of this 'making understandable' (i.e. when the text is in another language), rather there is always already a translation operating in every text (and every speaking), which is precisely its interpretation of language and time. Heidegger's way of thinking through a text is to lay out this interpretation or translation which already constitutes the systematicity of the text. The question of whether the text is in one's own language or in a foreign language is secondary to the need to lay out the interpretation-translation which constitutes its systematicity, in the light of *Ereignis*; that is, a laying out of the temporality of its *language* (subjective genitive) through a questioning of the *temporality* of its language (objective genitive).

The 'making understandable' of a text through translation or interpretation is thus not the attempt to provide a clear and distinct or correct version of a text, but is rather the attempt to cross over into the movement of a text, in the play of the temporality of language in its systematicity. This is only possible when the law of translation has been grasped as a particular hermeneutic of language and time and thus it has been glimpsed that language and time can be thought in a more authentic way, that is, when *Ereignis* has been glimpsed in the form of *Ge-Stell* and its *Ge-setz*. Once the law of translation has been recognised as only a 'particular'²⁷ thinking of translation, the particular and narrow play of language and time in modernity, it becomes possible to enter into the play of a text without simply importing the modern *Ge-setz*. By thinking through a text in the light of *Ereignis*, the possibility is glimpsed of opening the present to a more authentic thinking of language and time. The role of the translator or interpreter is thus to avoid standing over above a text, interpreting it or translating it as if it were a stable object of analysis to which the rules of the *Ge-setz* could be applied, rather it is a case of entering into the translation which already constitutes the text, allowing it to unfold in the light of *Ereignis* and thus to keep open a glimpse of *Ereignis* in the *Ge-Stell*. If the translation, which is the circular, systematic togetherness of language and time constituting a text, is thought of as the 'word' of the poet, and also as the hidden situation of all speaking, a situation which shows itself in modernity in the form of the *Ge-setz*, it then becomes possible to understand the following concise explanation of Heidegger's, laying out his thinking of this translation:

Man meint, das 'Übersetzen' sei die Übertragung einer Sprache in eine andere, der Fremdsprache in die Muttersprache oder umgekehrt. Wir verkennen jedoch, daß wir ständig auch schon unsere eigene Sprache, die Muttersprache, in ihr eigenes Wort übersetzen. Sprechen und Sagen ist in sich ein Übersetzen, dessen Wesen keineswegs darin aufgehen kann, daß das übersetzende und das übersetzte Wort verschiedenen Sprachen.

[...] Die Dichtung eines Dichters, die Abhandlung eines Denkers steht in ihrem eigenen, einmaligen, einzigen Wort. Sie zwingt uns, dieses Wort immer wieder so zu vernehmen, als hörten wir es zum ersten Mal. Diese Erstlinge des Wortes setzen uns jedesmal über zu einem neuen Ufer. Das sogenannte Übersetzen und Umschreiben folgt immer nur dem Übersetzen unseres ganzes Wesens in den Bereich einer gewandelten Wahrheit. Nur wenn wir schon diesem Übersetzen übereignet sind, sind wir in der Sorge des Wortes. Erst aus der so gegründeten Achtung vor der Sprache können wir die meist leichtere und begrenzte Aufgabe übernehmen, fremdes Wort in das eigene zu übersetzen. (*Parmenides*, GA 54, 17-18)

It is said that 'translating' is the transposing of one language into another, of the foreign language into the mother tongue, or vice versa. What we fail to recognise, however, is that we are also already constantly translating our own language, the mother tongue, into its own proper word. Speaking and saying is in itself a translation, the essence of which can by no means be concerned only with the case where the translating and translated words belong to different languages. [...] The poetry of a poet or the treatise of a thinker stands in its own, singular, unique word. It compels us to perceive this word again and again as if we were hearing it for the first time. These newborn words carry us over in each case to a new shore. So-called translation and paraphrase always only follow upon the carrying-over of our whole essence into the realm of a transformed truth. Only if we are already appropriated over to this carrying-over are we in the care of the word. Only out of a respect before language, grounded in this way, can we assume the generally lighter and more limited task of translating a foreign word into our own. (*Parmenides*, p12-13)

The beginning of this quotation sets out the idea of the translation which constitutes all speaking and saying. This may now be understood as the way the *temporality* of language (objective genitive) is determined by the Newtonian temporality of the hermeneutic of *Ge-Stell*, while at the same time language's historicity, or the temporality of *language*, resists such a determination by showing itself in its historical and poetic resonances, and not just in an objective, signficatory dimension. Every 'use' of language is therefore also a showing-Saying by language in its ecstatic temporality, but it is a Saying which is cut-short by the limited, Newtonian conception of time in the *Ge-Stell* in which it is 'used'. The translation into its proper word (its showing-Saying) which constitutes every speaking and saying, shows itself properly in the works of those

thinkers and poets who listen to language's Saying and respond to it by letting it show itself in a way which re-opens the closed circle of signifier and signified. The word of the poet or thinker must, therefore, be heard not under the jurisdiction of the law of the *Ge-Stell*, but rather as bringing to light each time a singular hermeneutic circularity of the temporality of language of its Saying. This Saying must be heard as a singularity because, in its Saying, there is a rethinking of language and time beyond the simple repeated application of the law of word and correct meaning, whose *Ge-setz* is constituted by the temporality of a repetition of identical Newtonian now-points.

The translation-into-its-proper-word which constitutes every speaking and saying is for the most part held within the law of *Ge-Stell*. When, however, the work of a poet or thinker is taken as a thinking through of the hermeneutic circularity of the temporality of language in an authentic way, it must be responded to appropriately, that is in the light of *Ereignis* and not *Ge-Stell*. This responding to a work is a 'making understandable' by further translation or interpretation, and thus an unfolding of the translation which already constitutes the work. Indeed, the work must be regarded as calling for this response if it is to be, as a work of thinking or poetry, and not just the communication of certain information. That is, the work must not be considered as existing object-like in a moment of time which is now past, rather the thinking through of a text in the light of *Ereignis* gives rise to a different view of its existence through time: not the handing itself on, unchanged, from Newtonian now-point to Newtonian now-point, but rather from the point of view of the translation which constitutes it and which it also calls for. From the point of view of the translation which constitutes a work, its Saying may be historically covered over by the imposition of a particular determination of the temporality of language,

thus its assimilation to that way of thinking. However, the thinking through of a work in the light of *Ereignis* can once again bring its translation to appearance precisely by allowing the interplay of its temporality of language and its language's temporality to show itself. In this way the glimpse of *Ereignis* beyond *Ge-Stell* is held open and thus also the possibility of other ways of thinking beyond the present dominance of technology. This way of thinking a work's translation beyond its determination as the transmission of information about ideas is expressed by Heidegger in his lecture course on *Der Ister*. Since it contains many of the ideas which have been discussed, it is worth quoting at length:

Es gibt überhaupt keine Übersetzung in dem Sinne, daß das Wort der einen Sprache mit dem Wort der anderen zur Deckung gebracht werden könnte oder auch nur dürfte. Diese Unmöglichkeit soll jedoch wiederum nicht dazu verleiten, die Übersetzung im Sinne eines bloßen Versagens abzuwerten. Im Gegenteil: Die Übersetzung kann sogar Zusammenhänge ans Licht bringen, die in der übersetzten Sprache zwar liegen, aber nicht herausgelegt sind. Hieraus erkennen wir, daß jedes Übersetzen ein Auslegung sein muß. Zugleich gilt aber auch das Umgekehrte: Jede Auslegung und alles, was in ihrem Dienst steht, ist ein Übersetzen. Dann bewegt sich das Übersetzen nicht allein zwischen zwei verschiedenen Sprachen, sondern es gibt innerhalb derselben Sprache ein Übersetzen. Die Auslegung der Hymnen Hölderlins ist ein Übersetzen innerhalb unserer deutschen Sprache. Das gleiche gilt von der Auslegung, die z.B. Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft' oder Hegels 'Phänomenologie des Geistes' zum Thema hat. In der Erkenntnis, daß es sich hier notwendig um ein Übersetzen handelt, liegt die Anerkennung, daß solche 'Werke' ihrem Wesen nach übersetzungsbedürftig sind. Diese Bedürftigkeit ist aber kein Mangel, sondern ihr innerer Vorzug. [...] Das Auslegen als Übersetzen ist zwar ein Verständlichmachen - freilich nicht in dem Sinne, wie der gemeine Verstand dies meint. [...] Verständlichmachen darf nie heißen, eine Dichtung und ein Denken jedem beliebigen Meinen und dessen Verständnis-Horizont anzugleichen; verständlich machen heißt, das Verständnis dafür wecken, daß der blinde Eigensinn der gewöhnlichen Meinens gebrochen und verlassen werden muß, wenn die Wahrheit eines Werkes sich enthüllen soll. (*Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'* p77-78)

There is no translation in the sense that a word from one language could or should be brought to cover the word from another. This impossibility ought not to tempt us to devalue translation as a complete failure. On the contrary: the translation can even bring contextures to light which lay in the translated language, but not laid out. From this we see that every translation must be an interpretation. Straight away,

however, the reverse holds: every interpretation and everything in its service, is a translation. For the translation does not simply move between two different languages, but there is a translation inside the same language. The interpretation of Hölderlin's Hymns is a translation within our German language. The same goes for the interpretation, which for example Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' or Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit' have for a theme. In the knowledge that it is a matter of translation here, lies the recognition that such 'works' are in need of translation according to their essence. This need is not a lack, but their inner distinction. [...] Interpretation as translation is indeed a making understandable - but certainly not in the way common sense means it. [...] To make understandable must never mean to align a piece of poetry or thinking with whatever opinion (and horizon of understanding of that opinion) one likes; to make understandable means to waken an understanding of the necessity for the blinding stubbornness of common opinion to be broken and left behind, if the truth of the work is to uncover itself.²⁸

A work such as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* or Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is an interpretation (*Auslegung*), and thus a translation, within the German language, but one which is not laid out (*herausgelegt*). Such works are consequently in need of translation (*Übersetzungsbedürftig*), that is, they require further translation in order to uncover their truth as the movement of the translation which constitutes them. This further translation is thus the laying out (*Aus-legen*) and reinstating of the translation constituting the text. The end of the quotation is again a reference to the way the making-understandable of a text is a breaking of the dominance of *Ge-Stell* and thus the holding open of a glimpse of *Ereignis* in which the work may stand in the truth of its unconcealment.

For Heidegger, the translation of Greek philosophy took pre-eminent importance in regard to this opening up of *Ge-Stell*. The temporality of language he 'found' there was an authentic circularity in transition to a reflectivity of static realms (cf. above, on Heidegger's interpretation of φύσις). Put in another way, truth as unconcealment, the letting-show of something in its coming to presence, was in transition to truth as correctness, the accurate correspondence of a thing to its idea. Heidegger's relationship to Aristotle and Plato is thus marked by an ambiguity²⁹

where the covering up of truth as unconcealment was already taking place, but where the laying out of this translation which constitutes their philosophy would at the same time bring to light a more authentic way of thinking. The disaster which Heidegger saw in the Latin translation of Greek terms consisted precisely in the levelling of Greek philosophy to the idea of truth as correctness, in a translation which did not respond to the need of the translation constituting Greek thought. In particular, Plato's work became a certain Platonism of distinct and separate realms where the Christian doctrine of creator and creation could take up their respective abodes, and in which form, the ground was laid for metaphysics.

Heidegger's translations of Greek philosophy aim, therefore, to bring to light the authentic circularity already being closed down in Greek philosophy in comparison to the dominance of this closure in *Ge-Stell*, and by so doing keep open the glimpse of *Ereignis* in *Ge-Stell*. This bringing to light of the circularity of *Ge-Stell* by a translation of Greek philosophy which shows a more authentic circularity is most clearly illustrated in the 1967 lecture *Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens*³⁰. The lecture falls in three parts, the first outlines the circular essence of Greek thought, the second describes its restriction to the reflectivity of object and subject, and the third stresses the need for a step back into a retranslation of Greek thinking in order to move beyond this closed reflectivity. The circularity of the Greek experience of knowledge is presented in terms of the prior look of Athena, the goddess of practical wisdom, which guides the artisan:

Wohin geht der sinnende Blick der Göttin. Auf den Grenzstein, auf die Grenze. Die Grenze jedoch ist nicht nur Umriß und Rahmen, nicht nur das, wobei etwas aufhört. Grenze meint jenes, wodurch etwas in sein Eigenes versammelt ist, um daraus in seiner Füller zu erscheinen, in die Anwesenheit hervorzu- kommen. Der Grenze nachsinnend hat Athene schon im Blick, wo auf menschliches Tun erst vorblicken muß, um das so Erblickte in die Sichtbarkeit eines Werkes hervorzubringen.
(*Denkerfahrungen* p138)

Towards what is the meditative look of the goddess directed? Towards the boundary, towards the limit. The limit is certainly not only the contour and setting, and not just the place where something stops. The limit signifies that by which something is gathered into what is proper to it, in order for it to appear in this way in all its plenitude, in order to come to presence. On meditating on the limit, Athena already has in view that towards which human action must first of all look in order to carry what it has seen into the visibility of a work.

The look of Athena which keeps the end in view at the beginning and guides the emergence of the thing to completion, expresses a hermeneutic thinking vastly different to the circularity of *Ge-Stell*, though they belong together in the same. Heidegger expresses the thinking of the *Ge-Stell* as follows:

Der Sieg der [wissenschaftlichen] Method entfaltet sich heute in seine äußersten Möglichkeiten als Kybernetik. Das griechische Wort κυβερνήτης ist der Name für den Steuermann. Die wissenschaftliche Welt wird zur kybernetischen Welt. Der kybernetische Weltentwurf unterstellt vorgreifend, daß der Grundzug aller berechenbaren Weltvorgänge die Steuerung sei. Die Steuerung eines Vorgangs durch einen anderen wird vermittelt durch die Übermittlung einer Nachricht, durch die Information. Insofern der gesteuerte Vorgang seinerseits auf den ihn steuernden sich zurückmeldet und ihn so informiert, hat die Steuerung den Charakter der Rückkoppelung der Information. Die hin- und herlaufende Regelung der Vorgänge in ihrer Wechselbeziehung vollzieht sich demnach in einer Kreisbewegung. (*Denkerfahrten* p141)

The victory of [scientific] method develops itself today in its most extreme possibilities, as cybernetic. The Greek word κυβερνήτης is the name for helmsman. The scientific world is becoming a cybernetic world. The cybernetic project of the world supposes, in its prior grasp, that the fundamental characteristic of all the calculable processes of the world, is the command. The command of one process by another is made possible by the transmission of information. In the extent to which the commanded process returns messages to the one who commanded it and thus informed it, the command has the character of the retroaction of information. The regulation in the two directions of the processes in mutual relation accomplishes itself therefore in a circular movement.

This quotation clearly shows that the heart of *Ge-Stell* is the law of translation as the transmission of information. Heidegger's translations of Greek philosophy have the purpose of allowing the 'kybernetisch' circularity of this transmission to show itself and thus bring to light the possibility of a more authentic circularity. It is by now clear that

Heidegger's translations are not simply the transmission of information about the Greek world. The translation of ἀλήθεια by 'Unverborgenheit' is not the attempt at simply a 'literal' translation, rather the way the Greek world is understood, and the way its translation is continued, is *always guided in advance* by the way of thinking named by *Ereignis*.

Heidegger is not claiming to have access to the Greek world 'the way it really was'; the *Wiederholung* of Greek thinking is a translation which is always directed towards the illumination of the present. The way a work is held to be in need of translation is guided by the need to open up the possibility of a turning of *Ge-Stell* and the law of translation into *Ereignis* and the proper hermeneutic circularity of the temporality of language. At the same time, however, this idea of a translation in the present being guided in advance, implies a certain understanding of the way the past as such is seen, that is, the way the writing of history is undertaken from out of a hermeneutic circle. Heidegger's project of the destruction of the history of metaphysics is precisely a rethinking of how the past is to be thought in relation to the way it is 'handed on' to the present, and that means: how it is to be translated. Translation for Heidegger is always constituted by the need to rethink the hermeneutic way a past philosophy or work is translated in and to the present. Heidegger's translation of Greek philosophy can thus only be fully understood in relation to a rethinking of history and tradition in the light of *Ereignis*. It is this idea of the need to think translation as a rethinking of the nature of history which will now be explored.

III: Translation and the Temporality of Tradition

It is of central importance in understanding Heidegger's thinking of translation and of the history of philosophy to appreciate that the mode of access to the past is thought from out of the hermeneutic situation of the present.³¹ History, for Heidegger, must always be thought phenomenologically. In Chapter 2 it was shown how the project of fundamental ontology began by reflection on the circularity of every mode of questioning. Thus the phenomenon of the past shows itself always in the way of a certain λόγος, where λέγειν is taken to mean ἀποφαίνεσθαι, the letting something be seen from what the discourse is about (*Being and Time* H.32). In relation to translation, this means that the way a work shows itself for translation and is correspondingly translated, is guided in advance by the way its letting-be-seen.

For Heidegger, the standard way of translating a text, is not sufficiently aware of its hermeneutic situation and thus translates unknowingly according to the prevailing horizon of opinion; predominantly, that is, according to the *Ge-setz*, the law of translation. Only when an authentic analysis of the circle in which text and translator stand has been undertaken, does it become possible for the text to show itself in terms of the hermeneutic circularity which constitutes it; and this showing, conversely, allows the hermeneutic situation of the present to remain open, beyond the objective reflectivity of original text and translated text (or between word and thing), of the law of translation. Heidegger writes, for instance:

Wo es daher nötig wird, das griechische Wort alter Sprüche zu Gehör bringen, kann die Übersetzung genügen, unter der Bedingung freilich, daß die Erläuterung dessen, was das Wort uns sagt, nicht fehlt, daß sie durchdacht wird im Gesichtskreis unseres eigenen Erfahrens und Wissens. (*Grundbegriffe*, GA 51, 16)

Where it becomes necessary then to listen to the Greek word of an ancient saying, translation can be sufficient as long as the explication of what the word says to us is thought through in the horizon of our own experience and knowledge. (*Basic Concepts* p13)

In opposition to the tendency to denigrate the translation in favour of the importance of the original, Heidegger stresses the importance of translation when what is to be translated has been thought through from a proper understanding of the present:

Auf unserem jetzigen Weg gilt es aber erst zu sehen, daß unser heutiges Vorstellen, solange es sich auf sich selbst verstreift, sich selber den Weg in den Beginn und damit in den Grundzug des abendländischen Denkens verlegt. Das zeigt sich schon an den Übersetzungen. (*Was heisst Denken?* p129)

On the path we are now following, the important thing to see, however, is that our modern way of representational ideas, as long as it stubbornly holds to its way, blocks its own access to the beginning and thus to the fundamental characteristic of Western thinking. The translations alone make this point clear. (*What is Called Thinking?* p213)

The translation of a text which, of course, is in one way or another, must be ventured in the face of how beings are now, how they predominantly show themselves, and that means in the light of an analysis of *Ge-Stell*. From within the hermeneutic situation it is clear that there can be no simple appeal to an objective access to the past, free from interpretation; to do so would be to precisely interpret and assimilate a past text into the way of thinking in the *Ge-Stell*. Heidegger writes for instance, in preparation for his interpretation-translation of Parmenides:

Dagegen wird es nötig, bei dieser Gelegenheit auf eine Täuschung hinzuweisen, der man immer wieder allzu leicht anheimfällt. Man meint nämlich, man ginge voraussetzungslos und objektiv auf den Spruch zu, wenn man ihn, ohne etwas zu ahnen oder gar zu bedenken, zur Kenntnis nimmt. Man nimmt ihn zu der Kenntnis hinzu, die man über solche Sachen ohne weiteres zu besitzen meint. Aber dieses ahnungs- und fragenlose und anscheinend von keiner Vormeinung beschwerte Zur-Kennntnis-Nehmen ist die voraussetzungsvollste und voreingenommenste Auslegung, die im vorliegenden Fall möglich ist. (*Was heisst Denken?* p109)

It becomes necessary here to point out an illusion to which we all too easily fall victim again and again. It is that one thinks one is approaching [Parmenides'] saying objectively and without presuppositions when one takes cognizance of it without

suspicious or prior considerations. One adds it to the knowledge, which one thinks one possesses without further ado, of such matters. But this suspicionless and questionless taking into cognizance, seemingly unburdened by any prejudice, is an interpretation as charged with presuppositions and prejudices as is possible in this case. (*What is Called Thinking?* p176)³²

The idea of a work being constituted by a translation in the circular play of its temporality of language, a translation which is in need of further translation in the light of an analysis of the hermeneutic situation of the present, is clearly already a specific perspective. It is a perspective which has been reached, however, precisely by a phenomenological thinking through of the circularity of every interpretation and questioning in terms of the temporality of that circularity, and with the purpose of allowing a work to show itself beyond a certain narrow conception of the temporality of language (ie. the *Ge-setz*). The further purpose of this approach, as was shown above, is to allow the *Ge-Stell* to be grasped as a particular determination of the hermeneutic situation constituted by a Newtonian temporality and thus to open the possibility of another way of thinking. Since, as *Being and Time* makes clear, this clarification of the hermeneutic situation of the present is guided by the ecstatic nature of temporality, and this means taking account of the thrownness of the present situation in its place in a tradition and a history, it can be seen that Heidegger's thinking of translation is at the heart of a destruction of the history of metaphysics.³³ That is, thinking cannot be made authentic until the philosophical terms used are traced back to the texts which specified them as philosophical terms, or determined them in ways which still influence the present, so that these texts may be thought through and translated in the light of the hermeneutic situation, and not simply taken up in an unthinking way. This destruction of the tradition of metaphysics is, thus, by no means an attempt to throw off the weight of tradition, but rather a thinking through of how a text hands itself on and shows itself, in the ecstatic

comportment of the hermeneutic circle towards the past, thus giving rise to a more authentic way of translation or interpretation.³⁴

One of the clearest statements of Heidegger's way of taking up and translating the texts of Western metaphysics, through a rethinking of how tradition itself is understood, comes in an early text which pre-dates *Being and Time*, though shares with it an emphasis on the hermeneutic situation of all research, historical or otherwise. The text, entitled 'Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation'³⁵, was written in 1922, and while being very dense it is in some respects clearer than *Being and Time*, where Heidegger's style reached the pinnacle of its neologism. The beginning of the text stresses that the situation of interpretation is always the situation 'of a living present' (p358; 'eine lebendigen Gegenwart' p237).³⁶ An interpretation of what informs the present must therefore be taken on in the face of the present, such that it 'forces the present back upon itself' (p360; 'die Gegenwart gerade auf sich selbst zurückstößt' p239). In this way a critique of history is always only a critique of the present and Heidegger goes on to specify this critique as 'destruction', making clear that it is not an abstract philosophical exercise, but rather always aimed at an understanding of the situation from which it is undertaken:

Die phänomenologische Hermeneutik der Faktizität sieht sich demnach sofern sie der heutigen Situation durch die Auslegung zu einer radikalen Aneignungsmöglichkeit mitverhelfen will – und das in der Weise des konkrete Kategorien vorgebenden Aufmerksammachens –, darauf verweisen, die überkommene und herrschende Ausgelegtheit nach ihren verdeckten Motiven, unausdrücklichen Tendenzen und Auslegungswegen aufzulockern und im abbauenden Rückgang zu den ursprünglichen Motivquellen der Explikation vorzudringen. *Die Hermeneutik bewerkstelligt ihre Aufgabe nur auf dem Wege der Destruktion.* [...] Die Destruktion ist der eigentliche Weg, auf dem sich die Gegenwart in ihren eigenen Grundbewegtheiten begengen muß. [...] Die lediglich schon durch den konkreten Vollzug der Destruktion entspringende Kritik gilt dabei nicht der Tatsache, daß wir überhaupt in einer Tradition stehen, sondern dem *Wie*. (p249-250)

The phenomenological hermeneutic of facticity sees itself, insofar as it wants to help today's situation through interpretation towards a radical possibility of appropriation (and this in the manner of a making attentive which first provides concrete categories), as called upon to loosen up the handed-down and dominating interpretedness in its hidden motives, unexpressed tendencies, and ways of interpretation; and to push forward in a dismantling return towards the primordial motive sources of explication. *The hermeneutic carries out its task only on the path of destruction.* [...] The destruction is the authentic path upon which the present must encounter itself. [...] Thus the critique which simply and already arises from the concrete actualization of the destruction does not apply to the bare fact *that* we stand within a tradition, but applies rather to the *How*. (p371)

This description of the hermeneutic 'path of destruction' as a loosening up of the tradition of philosophy, is familiar from *Being and Time*. What this passage makes clear, however, is that there is no leaving of the hermeneutic situation in order to investigate texts the way they *really* were, but only ever a taking up of the way they are held to be handed-on into the hermeneutic situation, and thus a rethinking of the notion of tradition itself.³⁷ The hermeneutic situation, therefore, does not stand over and above history and the tradition of philosophy such that it may be held to investigate the past in the objective light of modernity, rather its 'way of destruction' arises from its very historicity, the ecstatic temporality of its stand within tradition and history.

In this context, it may be understood that Heidegger's continued interest in, and rethinking of, Greek philosophy is not an uncritical extolment of the correctness of their thinking, but a destructive rethinking of the dominant interpretation in which they are held and in which they inform the basic concepts of philosophical thought.³⁸ This means that, paradoxically, Heidegger is not suggesting the need to take up a position in the Greek world, but essentially counselling an 'identification' with the Roman world. As was mentioned above, philosophy as a tradition of thinking emerged in the Roman world in its taking up and translation of Greek thinking. To a great extent the Roman world con-

stituted itself as being traditional, in the precise sense of both standing in a position of inheriting Greek texts taken as authorities (*auctoritates*), and augmentation of them by authors (*auctores*) taking on and developing the insights they found there.³⁹ The richness and variety of Roman culture is evidence that its traditionality was no mere subservience to Greek thinking. The words *auctoritas* (also meaning 'source', 'guidance', 'example') and *auctor* (also meaning 'originator', 'teacher', 'leader') are themselves related to the verbs *auctare* and *augere*, both meaning 'to increase' or 'to enrich'. Heidegger's disparagement of the Latin translations of Greek philosophical terms stems not simply from the fact that an interpretation was imposed through the translation (this is unavoidable according to Heidegger), but from the fact that the hermeneutic situation in which the translations were performed was not thematized, and thus there was no possibility of a translation heightening the questioning of that situation. Heidegger is thus proposing the taking up of the Roman position in its idea of an augmentative traditionality in relation to Greek thinking, but thinking it through in a more authentically hermeneutic way.

In the foreword to *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, the book which contains the essays *The Question Concerning Technology* and *Science and Reflection* (two essays which make explicit reference to Greek thinking in the thinking through of *Ge-Stell*), and also three of the essays included in the volume *Early Greek Thinking*, it is striking that Heidegger makes explicit reference to 'Roman' nature of the book:

Das Buch ist, so lange es ungelesen vorliegt, eine Zusammenstellung von Vorträgen und Aufsätzen. Für den Leser könnte es zu einer Sammlung werden, die sich um die Vereinzelung der Stücke nicht mehr zu kümmern braucht. Der Leser sähe sich auf einen Weg gebraucht, den ein Autor vorausgegangen ist, der in Glücksfall als *auctor* ein *augere*, ein Gedeihenlassen auslöst. (VA, Vorwort)

This book, so long as it lies unread, is a collection of essays. For the reader it could become a gathering, which is no longer concerned with the individuality of the pieces. The reader

would see himself brought on a path, on which the author has gone on ahead, who with luck, as *auctor*, triggers off an *augere*, a letting-thrive.

While this quotation makes clear that Heidegger's usual denigration of Latin translations is not part of an uncritical neo-classicist awe in the face of Greek thinking, it is still true that Heidegger differentiates various 'epochs of being' in the history of metaphysics, and sees the Latin translations as inaugurating a new epoch of being. This idea, when separated from Heidegger's concern that all historical interpretation and translation to be carried through from out of a questioning of the hermeneutic situation, easily suggests that the 'of' in the phrase 'epochs of being' expresses a relationship between particular and universal. In such an interpretation a particular epoch would be the 'appearance' of Being in a certain period, which thus exists as a superhistorical genus. Heidegger, however, hears in the word 'epoch' (German: *Epoche*) the Greek *ἐποχή*, 'to hold back', and understands it in the context of the destiny of being (*das Geschick von Sein*) and the idea of sending in the 'Es gibt Sein'.⁴⁰ In Chapter 2 it was argued that, for Heidegger, the 'It' which sends being does not name *Ereignis* as a timeless realm existing independently of what it sends, rather the 'It' names *Ereignis* as the hermeneutic path of thinking the inescapable circularity of language and time.

Die Folge der Epochen im Geschick von Sein ist weder zufällig, noch läßt sie sich als notwendig errechnen. Gleichwohl bekundet sich das Schickliche im Geschick, das Gehörige im Zusammengehören der Epochen. (*Zeit und Sein* p9)

The sequence of epochs in the destiny of being is not accidental, nor can it be calculated as necessary. Still, what is appropriate shows itself in the destiny, what is appropriate shows itself in the belonging together of the epochs. (*Time and Being* p9)⁴¹

The destiny of being is the belonging together of the epochs in the same, not as modifications of a universal genus, but rather thought of as the multifarious way being is only spoken from out of a determination of the

hermeneutic circularity of language and time, uncovered in the process of questioning the hermeneutic situation of the present. Heidegger writes for example:

Die Rede von 'Sein' versteht diesen Namen auch nie im Sinne einer Gattung, unter deren leere Allgemeinheit die historisch vorgestellten Lehren vom Seienden als einzelne Falle gehören. 'Sein' spricht je und je geschicklich und deshalb durchwaltet von Überlieferung. (*Die Onto-Theo-Logische Verfassung der Metaphysik* p117)

Discourse about 'being' also never understands this name in the sense of a genus, an empty generality under which the historically represented doctrines of beings are subsumed as individual cases. 'Being' ever and always speaks as destiny, and thus permeated by tradition. (*The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics* p51)

The idea of the destiny of being is a thinking of being in the light of a rethinking of the traditionality which informs the hermeneutic situation. By tracing back philosophical terms to the epochs which specified them as philosophical terms, and thinking through the understanding of being which determined them in the epoch's hermeneutic circularity of language and time, it then becomes possible to translate them in a way which does not simply impose on them the law of the *Ge-Stell*, but allows further questioning of it.⁴²

The glimpse of *Ereignis* in *Ge-Stell*, as the recognition of *Ge-Stell* as only one way of thinking the hermeneutic circularity of language and time, again could easily suggest that *Ge-Stell*, as a sending of being, is only a temporary, particular appearance or distorted manifestation of *Ereignis*, understood as existing like a timeless Idea, in a certain interpretation of Plato. In the essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger deals with this interpretation primarily in terms of a rethinking of the word 'essence' (*Wesen*) in the idea that 'the essence of technology [ie *Ge-Stell*] is nothing technological' (VA 38; QT 30). That is, *Ge-Stell* cannot be thought of as an essence which is individuated into

particular machines or practices. He then only passingly mentions that the way of revealing, which is the *Ge-Stell*, is also neither a particular of an even higher 'essence':

Aber diese Weise sind nicht Arten, die nebeneinander geordnet unter den Begriff des Entbergens fallen. Die Entbergen ist jenes Geschick, das sich je und jah und allem Denken unerklärbar in das hervorbringende und herausfordende Entbergen verteilt und sich dem Menschen zuteilt. (VA 38)

But these ways are not kinds that, arrayed beside one another, fall under the concept of revealing. Revealing is that destiny which ever suddenly and inexplicably to all thinking, apportions itself into the revealing that brings forth and challenges, and which allots itself to man. (QT 29)

Heidegger clearly seems to have thought that it was enough to have prevented a Platonic divide (from a certain Platonism) being imposed on the 'particularity' of *Ge-Stell*, by preventing the notion of the 'essence of technology' being thought Platonically. To prevent a regression to a Platonic interpretation of *Ereignis*, in a Platonism interpreted in the temporality of *Ge-Stell*, it is necessary to remember that Heidegger's thinking of the epochs, as multifarious ways of revealing, is thought from out of an authentic hermeneutic analysis of the present. It is a questioning of the givenness of any one way of revealing and thus is part of a rethinking of the traditionality with which it is handed on and taken up in the present.

In Heidegger's early 'Indications' paper this questioning of the hermeneutic situation and its historicity in tradition is termed a 'temporalizing safe-keeping' (p371; 'zeitigende Verwahrung', p250). This idea of a destructive *Widerholung* which constitutes an authentic traditionality in the light of the hermeneutic circle of the present, and thus brings history into an authentic safe-keeping, bears great similarity to Hegel's thinking of phenomenology, and spirit's becoming certain of itself.⁴³ It is necessary only to think of how Hegel took up Kant's idea of the mediatedness of knowledge in the distinction of experience and the

a priori concepts of understanding, to see that Hegel's project is profoundly hermeneutic. Both Heidegger and Hegel were concerned to think through the 'circular existence' which Kant's work had uncovered. By viewing Hegel's phenomenology as a systematic application of Kant's thinking of the historicity of knowledge, it is possible to see how Heidegger's transformative taking up of Kant's legacy gives rise to a transformed thinking of history beyond its limitation to a Newtonian temporality. After Hegel's death, German Idealism as a whole fell into disrepute at the hands of Neo-Kantian schools which criticised what they saw as a teleological and determinist conception of history, being guided by a superhistorical *Geist*. Heidegger, in his work on Hegel, did not cease to encourage his students not to accept the 'obviousness' of such an interpretation. His 1930 lecture course *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* and the 1942 text *Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung* constitute methodical and detailed readings of Hegel.⁴⁴

In the 1957 text, *Identity and Difference*⁴⁵, Heidegger takes up both the principle of identity in relation to the question of being (that is, how to think of the 'same', if it is said that what *is*, is the *same* as itself), and the question of the difference of beings and being, explicitly by way of *Gespräch* with Hegel (p42/107). Heidegger writes for example:

Die gemäÙere Formel für den Satz der Identität A ist A sagt demnach nicht nur: Jedes A ist selber dasselbe, sie sagt vielmehr: Mit ihm selbst ist jedes A selber dasselbe. In der Selbigkeit liegt die Beziehung des 'mit', also eine Vermittlung, eine Verbindung, eine Synthesis: die Einung in eine Einheit. [...] Nur eines ist zu behalten: Seit der Epoche des speculativen Idealismus bleibt es dem Denken untersagt, die Einheit der Identität als das bloÙe Einerlei vorzustellen und von der in der Einheit waltenden Vermittlung abzusehen. (*Der Satz der Identität* p87,88)

The more fitting formulation of the principle of identity 'A is A' would accordingly mean not only that every A is itself the same; but rather that every A is itself the same with itself. Sameness implies the relation of the 'with', thus a mediation, a connection, a synthesis: the unification into a unity. [...] Just one thing we must keep in mind: since the era of speculative

idealism, it is no longer possible for thinking to represent the unity of identity as mere oneness, and to disregard the mediation that prevails in unity. (p24-25)

If it may be said that Hegel's Spirit is the same in all the stages of its manifestation, a sameness which must be gathered up and run through in spirit's becoming certain of itself, then it will ultimately be a question of how, or if, Heidegger's understanding of the 'same', in the idea of the sameness of the epochs and their being brought to authentic 'safekeeping' through the thinking of *Ereignis*, distances his project from Hegel's. To the extent that Heidegger wished to overcome the all too easy interpretation of Hegel's phenomenology, as appealing to a timeless, superhistorical entity, and rather wished to interpret it as a project concerned with the temporality of thinking, his interpretation will also throw light on his own thinking of history and tradition in relation to the Kantian legacy.⁴⁶

Commenting on the notion that for Hegel, history was the self-externalization (*Äußerlichkeit*) of the Idea and thus must be thought dialectically, Heidegger writes:

Man bleibt daher weit hinter dem eigentlichen Gedanken Hegels zurück, wenn man feststellt, Hegel habe in der Philosophie das Historische Vorstellen und das systematische Denken zu einer Einheit gebracht. Denn für Hegel handelt es sich weder um Historie, noch um das System im Sinne eines Lehrgebäudes. (p110)

We thus fall far short of Hegel's genuine thought if we state that Hegel has brought historiographical representation and systematic thinking into a unity in philosophy. For with Hegel it is not a question of either historiography or of system in the sense of a doctrinal structure. (p44)

Rather it is the case, Heidegger explains, that for Hegel the matter of thinking is historical (*geschichtlich*), in the sense of the happening (*Geschehen*) of thinking, and in the coming to itself of thinking thinking itself, in its running through of the process of its dialectical happening. This running through of spirit's speculative development must itself be understood as a *Gespräch* with the history of thinking, and Heidegger goes on to discuss the difference between his own criterion for the

conversation with the historical tradition, and Hegel's. He writes that both are an entering into the force (*Kraft*) of earlier thinking, but that he himself seeks that force in what has not been thought. Heidegger's notion of what is 'unthought' pertains to the need to question an epoch concerning the way the difference between being and beings is thought and how this difference is thought from out of a certain hermeneutic and systematic circularity. He writes:

Die Maßgabe des Ungedachten führt nicht zum Einbezug des vormals Gedachten in eine immer noch höhere und es überholende Entwicklung und Systematik, sondern sie verlangt die Freilassung des überlieferten Denkens in sein noch aufgespartes Gewesenes. Dies durchwaltet anfänglich die Überlieferung, west ihr stets voraus, ohne doch eigens und als das Anfangende gedacht zu sein. (p114-5)

The criterion of the unthought does not lead to the inclusion of previous thought into an always still higher development and a systematization which surpasses it. Rather, the criterion demands that traditional thinking be set free into its *having-been* which is still saved up. This *having-been* prevails incipiently throughout the tradition, its essences constantly in advance of tradition, without being thought though properly and as the incipiency. (p48-9, my emphasis)

What is so interesting about this passage is that it does more to bring Heidegger's way of thinking of tradition closer to Hegel's, as Heidegger interprets him, than differentiating them. In Hegel's work, the mediatedness of subjectivity and objectivity in their hermeneutic belonging together in Spirit, can be thought of very much as the 'unthought' of an epoch. Further, for Hegel, the essence of thinking, and the force of its movement, is linked very clearly to the notion of essence as 'having-been', in his idea that: '*das Wesen ist was gewesen ist*'.⁴⁷

Hegel analyses the common distinction between essence and existence as a hierarchy where the former term is to provide a stable and unchanging ground of identity for what exists. However, if essence were wholly external to existence (understood as being-in-itself, immediate being), existence would have no essence, thus existence must itself be presupposed by essence, even though essence is the presupposition of

existence. Hegel understands this circularity as reflection; essence, as the negativity of being, is the reflection of being back into itself:

Aber da diese Negativität dem Sein nicht äußerlich, sondern seine eigene Dialektik ist, so ist seine Wahrheit, das Wesen, als das *in sich* gegangene oder *in sich* seiende Sein; seinen Unterschied vom unmittelbaren Sein macht jene *Reflexion*, sein Scheinen in sich selbst, aus, und sie ist die eigentümliche Bestimmung des Wesens selbst. (*Die Wissenschaft der Logik* p231)

But since this negativity is not external to Being, but is its own dialectic, so essence, the truth of Being, is Being which has gone *into itself*, or is being *in itself*; its difference from immediate Being constitutes that *reflection*, its shining into itself, and this is the peculiar characteristic of essence itself. (*Hegel's Logic* p162)⁴⁸

Since essence is constituted via reflection, it may also be regarded as the subtraction of the *hic et nunc* from what exists. This subtraction is, for Hegel, nothing other than the movement of time itself, as the very heart of the dialectic. Time itself is the force which drives the reflection of what is, into itself, thus 'essence is what has been'. Though Hegel makes clear (on commenting on the way *Wesen* is used for the past tense of *sein*):

Dieser Irregularität des Sprachgebrauchs liegt insofern eine richtige Anschauung vom Verhältnis des Seins zum Wesen zugrunde, als wir das Wesen allerdings als das vergangene Sein betrachten können, wobei dann nur noch zu bemerken ist, daß dasjenige, was vergangen ist, deshalb nicht abstrakt negiert, sondern nur aufgehoben und somit zugleich konserviert ist. (p232)

This linguistic irregularity implies to a correct intuition of the relation between being and essence (since we can certainly regard essence as past being), only to the extent that it is remembered that what is past, is not thereby abstractly denied, but only passed over and thus at the same time conserved. (p163)

It is thus the understanding of time as the force of the 'having been' which constitutes Hegel's dialectical thinking of tradition, and which is to be brought to consciousness in thinking's thinking of its history. It appears, therefore, that for Hegel as well as Heidegger, it is a question of rethinking tradition in the having-been which prevails in it. It will

thus be in the understanding of this 'having-been', in the way it is passed over and passed on, that one must look for a difference.

Whilst Heidegger's longer texts on Hegel are for the most part detailed readings, emphasizing the need to think through his work, there are always elements of a 'destruction' at work. There is also one shorter text, *Hegel und die Griechen*, which clearly sets out a distancing from Hegel.⁴⁹ Heidegger's destructive reappropriation of Hegel starts out from the view that Hegel's spirit in its gathering up and running through of its history, is a working through of the Kantian idea of the transcendental ego with respect to history.

Wenn so das Bewußtsein hinsichtlich seiner eigenen relativen Wahrheit auf die Wahrheit als Selbstbewußtsein zurückgebracht werden soll, dann ist gemäß dem ganzen Ansatz Hegels damit im vorhinein die Basis gewonnen, von der aus erst verständlich gemacht und begründet werden kann, *warum* das so ist und sein muß, was man da als Grundtatsache ins Feld führt: cogito = cogito me cogitare. Wenn Hegel sich von vorneherein in dieser Dimension des Selbst hält, dann ist sein Ansatz nichts Geringeres als die Verwandlung und Ausgestaltung einer Grundabsicht der Kantischen Problemstellung, die darin zum Ausdruck kommt, daß die ursprüngliche synthetische Einheit der transcendentalen Apperzeption – das 'ich denke', das alle meine Vorstellungen muß begleiten können – als Bedingung der Möglichkeit aller Gegenständlichkeit gefaßt wird. Gerade weil Hegel auf die spekulative *absolute* Überwindung dieser Kantischen Position drängt, mußte er ihren Grundansatz mitübernehmen, d. h. das Bewußtsein und Ich in seiner Transzendenz in den Ansatz bringen. (*Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, GA 32, 194)

If consciousness with regard to its own relative truth is thus supposed to be brought back to truth as self-consciousness, then, according to Hegel's approach, the basis is thus obtainable in advance for making intelligible and justifying *why cogito = cogito me cogitare* (which is brought up as a basic fact) and *must* be so. If Hegel from the very start keeps within this dimension of the self, then his starting point is nothing less than the transformation and working out of a fundamental intention of Kant's problematic, which is expressed as the original synthetic unity of transcendental apperception (the 'I think' that must accompany all my representations) as the condition for the possibility of all objectivity. Precisely because Hegel pushes for the speculative *absolute* overcoming of the Kantian position, he had to take over its approach, that is, take consciousness and the ego in its transcendence, as his starting point. (*Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* p135)

In the light of Heidegger's work on Kant discussed in Chapter 2, Hegel's

taking up of the Kantian position becomes problematic. Heidegger's 'violent' interpretation of Kant was aimed at showing how Kant's analysis of time provided resources for undermining the interpretation of the transcendental ego with which Kant grounded his critique. That is, Heidegger tried to show how the generation of time in the transcendental imagination could give rise to a thinking of the ecstatic temporality of the self and not the ultimately Cartesian self, existing object-like in Newtonian time, which Kant fell back on. Like Hegel, then, Heidegger wished to take over Kant's position as a 'starting point', but precisely through a rethinking of the temporality of the 'circular existence' in which the Kantian ego was involved. Hegel's taking up of Kant's position brought with it, however, the Cartesian determination of the self, and this led to two related problems when Kant's approach was applied to a thinking of tradition and the history of philosophy. The first is that in Hegel's rightly hermeneutic approach to history, the Cartesian subject is always projected in advance in the thinking through of a historical position. In *Hegel und die Griechen*, Heidegger shows how Hegel interprets Greek philosophy according to the measure of certainty expressed in the Cartesian self where philosophy reached firm ground. Previous philosophy is always a 'not yet' in comparison to this firm ground which has always already been found.

Hegel erklärt: 'Mit ihm (nämlich mit Descartes) treten wir eigentlich in eine selbständige Philosophie ein...Hier, können wir sagen, sind wir zu Hause, und können wie der Schiffer nach langer Umherfahrt auf der ungestümen See 'Land' rufen;...' (WW.XV, 328). Hegel will mit diesem Bild andeuten: Das 'ego cogito sum', das 'ich denke, ich bin' ist der feste Boden, auf dem die Philosophie sich wahrhaft und vollständig ansiedeln kann. In der Philosophie des Descartes wird das Ego zum maßgebenden subiectum, d.h. zu dem im vorhinein Vorliegenden. Dieses Subjekt wird jedoch erst dann in der rechten Weise, nämlich im Kantischen Sinne, transzendental und vollständig, d.h. im Sinne des spekulativen Idealismus in Besitz genommen, wenn die ganze Struktur und Bewegung der Subjektivität des Subjektes entfaltet und diese in das absolute Sichselbstwissen gehoben ist. (p429-430)

Hegel explains: 'With him (that is, Descartes) we enter properly into an independent philosophy...Here we can say that we are at home, and can cry, like a sailor after long travel on the impetuous sea, 'land ho!' [...] Hegel wants to suggest with this image: The 'ego cogito sum', the 'I think, I am', is the firm soil upon which philosophy can truly and fully install itself. In Descartes' philosophy the ego becomes the definitive *sub-jectum*, that is, on hand in advance. This subject is taken possession of in the correct manner, namely transcendently and completely, in the Kantian sense, that is, in the field of speculative Idealism, when the whole structure and movement of the subjectivity of the subject unfolds and this is raised into absolute self-knowledge.

The problem here is not simply that Greek philosophy was conceptualized from out of the hermeneutic circularity of the unfolding of spirit - *Being and Time* makes clear that there can be no avoidance of the way every questioning is hermeneutically guided in advance - but rather that the hermeneutic situation was not properly questioned as to its temporality. The result of this is that a past epoch is measured according to the reflectivity of subject and representation across a Newtonian divide, taken up from the Kantian conception of the *a priori*. Since for Hegel the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity comes about through the movement of spirit, the temporality of this movement also takes up the Newtonian conception of time.⁵⁰ Spirit develops by grasping or espying the unification of oppositions in their reciprocal reflection; this is the heart of the movement (*Gang*) of spirit's gathering itself up and making itself concrete: *Ausgang* as thesis, *Fortgang* as antithesis, *Übergang* as synthesis and thus *Rückgang* to itself. The becoming mediated of the thesis in the move to antithesis is the force of time in the becoming past of what is, and while the past is not simply left behind but becomes the essence of what is, the movement of spirit remains held in a Newtonian temporality. Spirit moves from moment to moment without loss and with the necessity of the Newtonian time-order. As a consequence of this, Hegel's hermeneutic thinking of history becomes the treatment of the succession of spirit's manifestations which remain

fixed in their chronological order, with a corresponding emphasis on the relation of one manifestation to the next.

In contrast, Heidegger's treatment of history remains the thinking of a past event in the light of the hermeneutic situation of the present, thus without emphasis on the connection between epochs, except where this has immediate bearing on the way a philosophical term is understood in the present. While Hegel's use of a starting point determined by a Newtonian understanding of time leads ultimately to an understanding of the time of spirit in terms of a Newtonian time-order, Heidegger is concerned always to illuminate the hermeneutic situation by bringing to light the play of the determination of time with language's proper temporality in a text or epoch.

In a Kantian perspective, as was shown in Chapter 1, it was language in its role in the synthesis of recognition in a concept, which was to determine time as a Newtonian time-order and thus justify the causal sequence of representations. Kant's treatment of teleology fell into difficulty because the concept of an organism brought to light an experience of time beyond its determination into sequential now-points. And for Heidegger it is language's temporality and historicity which ultimately breaks open the causal sequence of epochs, and allows the 'having been' at the heart of tradition to speak within the hermeneutic situation of the present, and thus break open the narrow circularity of the *Ge-Stell* and its *Ge-setz* of the correspondence of word and thing, as the reflectivity of two objects. For Heidegger, the past shows itself in language, and it is by the translation of the past from out of a temporal analysis of the *Ge-setz* of language in the present, that language's temporality can show the ecstatic temporality of the hermeneutic situation in its traditionality.

Even though Heidegger's thinking of history is ultimately far

distanced from Hegel's, Hegel's thought still retained a fundamental importance for Heidegger. Modern historiography, for Heidegger, was a thinking of history which was blind to its hermeneutic determination within *Ge-Stell* and the Newtonian temporality of the subject. Hegel was the first thinker to bring this hermeneutic situation to light and think it through to its completion. It is only where historiography is thus thought through to its conclusion that the possibility arises of the glimpse of another thinking of history. If Hegel's experience of history is thought of as the supreme 'danger', and for Heidegger this always means the objectification of language in a Newtonian temporality, then, as in *The Question Concerning Technology*, it is only through this 'danger' that the 'saving power' grows:

Nun bewegen sich aber schon jede historische Aussage und deren Begründung in einem Verhältnis zur Geschichte. Vor dem Entscheid über die historische Richtigkeit des Vorstellens bedarf es daher der Besinnung darauf, ob und wie die Geschichte erfahren wird, von woher sie in ihrem Grundzügen bestimmt ist. Im Hinblick auf Hegel und die Griechen heißt dies: Allen richtigen oder unrichtigen historischen Aussagen voraus geht, daß Hegel das Wesen der Geschichte aus dem Wesen des Seins im Sinne der absoluten Subjectivität erfahren hat. Es gibt bis zur Stunde keine Erfahrung der Geschichte, die, philosophisch gesehen, dieser Geschichterfahrung entsprechen könnte. Allein die speculativ-dialectische Bestimmung der Geschichte bringt es nun gerade mit sich, daß es Hegel verwehrt blieb, die *Ἀλήθεια* und deren Walten eigens als *die Sache des Denkens* zu erblicken, und dies genau in der Philosophie, die 'das Reich der reinen Wahrheit' als 'das Ziel' der Philosophie bestimmte. (*Hegel und die Griechen* p440-1)

Now every historiographical statement and its justification, however, already moves in a relationship to history. Before a decision over historiographical correctness of the representations, reflection is needed on whether or how history is experienced, and from where it is determined in its fundamental traits. In view of Hegel and the Greeks this means that Hegel's having experienced the essence of history out of the essence of being in the sense of absolute subjectivity, goes in advance of all correct or incorrect historiographical statements. There is still no experience of history which, philosophically regarded, could match up to this historio-experience. Only the speculative-dialectic determination of history now immediately brings with it what was denied to Hegel: the glimpse of *ἀλήθεια* and its rule specifically as *the matter of thinking*, and this precisely in the philosophy which determined 'the realm of pure truth' as 'the goal' of philosophy.

The mirror play between subject and object by which spirit develops always already moves within ἀλήθεια, unconcealment, which Heidegger understands as the thinking of a temporal-linguistic phenomenology. That is, when the determination of time which governs the unfolding of spirit is grasped, the possibility is opened of glimpsing a more authentic thinking of time, and thus of allowing the language's ecstatic temporality to inform the traditionality of the present. However, unless historiographical representation is thought through to its completion in absolute subjectivity, it will always remain caught in a *Gestell*-like form of thinking where the historian or translator envisages himself standing over and above history which he can examine objectively with the tools of thinking. It is Hegel's work which brings to completion the hermeneutic consequences of this bending-back of thinking upon its own history, and thus allows *Ereignis* to be glimpsed beyond this completion in an authentic thinking of time and language.

In the light of this importance which Heidegger attached to Hegel's work it can now be understood why Heidegger should have seen such an affinity between his own thinking and the poetic work of Hölderlin.⁵¹ He saw the young Hegel and Hölderlin as together thinking through the need to bring Kant's thinking to completion, but that ultimately Hölderlin could not distance himself sufficiently from language and its historicity in order to be able to remain with the Newtonian temporality in which Kant had determined it. Hölderlin may thus be thought of as moving beyond Hegel in much the same way as Heidegger: that is, not left behind, nor a moving beyond which conserves what is past in an *Aufhebung*, but by allowing time to be rethought hermeneutically from out of language's historicity, that is, in an authentic hermeneutic thinking of the temporality of language.

The clearest indication of how Heidegger wishes to interpret

Hölderlin is found in the introduction to his lecture course on the hymn *Andenken*. Heidegger writes that he is not concerned to give a 'correct' reading of Hölderlin in the way of modern 'literary-historical' research; this approach regards the work as an object to be explained by contemporary conditions and facts. Through a blindness to the hermeneutic situation of all research, the work is thus enclosed by the thinking of *Ge-Stell* and its law: the researcher tries to elucidate the correspondences between Hölderlin's language and other facts, through the use of the conceptual tools of his research procedure.

Wir verzichten auf den Anspruch, den historisch richtigen Hölderlin zu entdecken. Wir nehmen uns aber auch nicht das Recht, aus der Dichtung Hölderlins 'Stücke' und 'Stellen' zusammenzutragen, um mit deren Hilfe etwa das jetzige Zeitalter zu bestätigen und zu beleuchten und so Hölderlin 'gegenwartsnah' zu machen. Der 'historisch tatsächliche' und 'richtige' Hölderlin und der 'gegenwartsnahe' Hölderlin sind beides gleich verwerfliche 'Produkt' eines Verfahrens, das im vorhinein gar nicht auf *das* hören will, was der Dichter sagt. Vielmehr nimmt man das gegenwärtige historische Bewußtsein und das gegenwärtige 'Erleben' für 'das Wahre' an sich und unterwirft den Dichter und sein Wort diesem Maßstab, der wahr sein soll, weil er gerade geläufig ist. (*Hölderlins Hymne 'Andenken'* p4-5)

We are giving up the claim to be discovering the historically correct Hölderlin. We are also though not assuming the right to collect together pieces and passages out of Hölderlin's work, and with their help uphold and illuminate the present age and so make Hölderlin 'relevant'. The 'historically factual' and 'correct' Hölderlin and the 'relevant' Hölderlin are both equally reprehensible 'products' of a process that from the start does not at all listen to *what* the poet says. Rather present historiographical consciousness and present 'life experience' are taken as 'truth' in itself, and the poet and his word are subjected to this standard, which is said to be true precisely because it is current.

As was shown in chapter 2, Heidegger's appeal to the need to 'listen' to a poet may be understood as the need to allow language to speak in the fullness of its historical and poetic resonances and thus to be understood from out of an authentic circularity of language and time, and not simply under the rule of the *Ge-setz* of translation. This approach allows the word to be heard in its ambiguity, not in order to track down a poem's true content, but rather that in the word's speaking from what Heidegger

calls the 'spaces of its self-over-swinging' ('sich überschwingenden Räume'), this movement thereby names 'incipiency' ('Anfängliches', p15). This authentic movement of the word was termed *translation* ('Übersetzen') in the lecture courses on *Parmenides* and *Der Ister*; in the *Andenken* course, the same thinking gives rise to Heidegger's word *überdichten* ('trans-poetise'). It is this movement which constitutes Hölderlin's work and which is in need of further translation in order to allow it to unfold in the hermeneutic situation of the present and keep open the possibility of its transformation.

Wenn wir versuchen, das in Hölderlins Dichtung Gedichtete zu denken, dann betreiben wir nicht das Unmögliche, Hölderlins einstmalige 'Vorstellungswelt' und seinen Gemütszustand wieder herzustellen und nachzuvollziehen. Dagegen müssen wir einen Weg suchen, das, was den dichter selbst überdichtet, zu ahnen und aus diesem Ahnen ein wesentliches *Wissen* zu entfalten, in dessen Umkreise alle unsere sonstige Kenntnisse erst Wurzel und Stand finden. (p7-8)

When we attempt to think the poetised in Hölderlin's poetry, we do not strive to produce again and comprehend the impossible: Hölderlin's former 'world of ideas' and his state of mind. On the contrary, we must seek a way to glean what transpoetises the poet himself, and to unfold out of this gleaning an essential *knowing*, in whose circle all our remaining facts first find root and standing.

The 'circle' ('*Umkreis*') of an 'essential knowing' which is to be unfolded from Hölderlin's work is precisely the circle of the way of thinking named by *Ereignis*. This circularity which constitutes the work, Heidegger calls the '*Gedichtetes*'.⁵² Whilst Heidegger never explains why it was, that Hölderlin's work should have occupied such a unique place in his later work, one may surmise that it is related to Hölderlin's proximity to Hegel. In the lecture course on *Germanien* (GA 39, pp3-151), Heidegger briefly mentions that in thinking through the relationship between Hegel and Hölderlin, there must not simply be an explaining of Hölderlin's work from out of Hegel's system or a measuring of the influence of the poet on the thinker, but rather 'we must learn to experience the great conflict between the two' ('müssen wir lernen, den großen Widerstreit der beiden

zu erfahren', GA 39, p129). Hölderlin's path as poet was one of *Gespräch* with the thinker who, for Heidegger, is the pinnacle of a thorough-going thinking of transcendental subjectivity, and, since this dominance of subjectivity prevails unthinkingly in *Ge-Stell*, it is Hölderlin's work which is best placed to reopen a *Gespräch* with a thoughtful questioning of *Ge-Stell*.

In both Hegel and Hölderlin, Heidegger found a profound experiencing of history, but it is in the *Widerstreit* between them that it becomes possible to think a way beyond the determination of history in a Newtonian manner, a determination which ultimately led Hegel to a machine-like approach to the movement of traditionality. Heidegger writes in the lecture course on *Andenken*: 'Only the poet who himself founds history can know what poetry is and perhaps must be' ('Nur der selbst geschichtestiftende Dichter läßt erkennen, was Dichtung ist und vielleicht sein muß', p3). The poet founds history in the way that each poem opens a circle of an authentic thinking of language and time and thus an authentic thinking of the ecstatic traditionality of the hermeneutic situation. The overarching systematicity of Hegel's project is broken into a multiplicity of poetic 'words', of hermeneutic circularities - a multiplicity of *Gedichtete*. This however must take place within a temporal analysis of the circularity of *Ge-Stell*, which predominately determines the hermeneutic situation. In this way temporal phenomenology enters into a circularity with poetry's temporality and historicity, to thus give rise to a temporal-poetic phenomenology; that is, a way of thinking named, it was argued in Chapter 2, *Ereignis*.

In conclusion then, the translation of a text is the thinking through of the traditionality with which the text shows itself in the present, a thinking through it itself opens the present to its ecstatic temporality and thus to a way of thinking beyond the closed Newtonian circularity of

Ge-Stell and its *Ge-setz* of translation. Translation thus thought is a translation into a realm beyond *Ge-Stell*, though not 'beyond' in the sense of a leaving behind, but rather a widening or opening of the hermeneutic situation into the authentic circularity of the temporality of language. In discussing Benjamin's thinking of translation in the next chapter, it will be seen that Benjamin follows the same path, with the same purpose.

Notes

1. The word 'tradition' needs to be heard in an active sense, that is, as a verbal substantive from the latin *traditio*, meaning 'to hand on' or 'to hand down'.
2. In his lecture course on *Der Ister* (GA 53), Heidegger writes that not only must every translation be considered as an interpretation (*Auslegung*), but also that 'every interpretation and everything in its service, is a translation' (p75). This will be taken up in detail below.
3. Eliane Escoubas has produced some interesting work on a Heidegger-Benjamin dialogue on the question of translation (particularly 'De la traduction comme 'origine' des langues: Heidegger et Benjamin', *Les Temps Modernes* 514-515 (1989), 97-142). However, the dialogue is predominantly conducted by synthesising both writers into a Humboldtian energetic view of language. In so doing, she ignores Heidegger's injunction in *The Way to Language* about assimilating language to a higher universal, where Humboldt's work is mentioned specifically. A further consequence is that she does not, therefore, allow the very different 'languages' of the work of Heidegger and Benjamin to remain different, nor ask about the significance of this difference. One other problem is the way sets up her reading of both Heidegger and Benjamin through an idea that for a language to be a language it can neither be completely untranslatable nor completely translatable. For Escoubas, a language which was completely translatable would be a 'code' and not a language. This, however, overlooks the way that for Heidegger, language is determined, in the *Ge-Stell*, precisely as a code, in the sense of a pure carrier of information. Language thus determined does not, thereby, stop being a language, rather it is a case of questioning the hermeneutic situation in which language can so appear. The use of the opposition translatable-untranslatable seems to have gained new currency through the work of Derrida (see the note below), and is foreign to the thinking of both Heidegger and Benjamin. A true dialogue between their work on the temporality of language can only take place once the place of translation in relation to each has been clarified.
4. Jacques Derrida, 'Envois', in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1987), pp109-143.

5. There is a lengthy treatment of *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis* in John Loscerbo, *Being and Technology: A Study in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 249-263. Loscerbo concludes, however, that *Ereignis* 'consists in the right relation between *Ge-Stell* and *Geviert*, without saying what he means by 'right relation', or taking into account that Heidegger describes the *Geviert* as 'der Reigen des Ereignens' ('Das Ding', in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* p179)

Otto Pöggeler's well known essay 'Being as Appropriation' (trans. by Rüdiger H. Grimm, in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Murray (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 84-115), does not mention Heidegger's idea of *Ge-Stell*. He writes, for example, concerning the everyday way of thinking about being: 'Being and beings are not kept apart in such a way that the meaning of Being could become problematic.' (p102) In this way, Pöggeler overlooks precisely the hermeneutic circularity between being and beings which is named both in *Ge-Stell* and *Ereignis*.

6. Antoine Berman, *Épreuve de l'étranger: Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), chapter 3.

7. Berman p89.

8. Berman p72-74.

9. The striking subjectivism of this statement, particularly in the use the word 'wer', sets up an interesting resonance with the conception of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*. *Dasein* exists as always already outside of itself, and is a 'Who' and not a 'What'. In Chapter 2 it was shown that soon after writing *Being and Time*, Heidegger became dissatisfied with the underlying subjective ground of its hermeneutic project. Yet it could thus be argued that the idea of *Dasein* has metamorphosized into a thinking of ecstatic cultural identity, in the sense of a culture formed on the basis of the German language. It would not, of course, be any simple (un-mediated) notion of identity, and Heidegger precisely criticises, in lectures given in the same period as that on the Ister hymn, the notion of national identity, which he sees as merely an idea of the Cartesian ego *en grand*. Yet given that the *Ister* lectures were given in 1942 in Nazi Germany, it will be necessary to ask (though it will be outside of the scope of this thesis) if or how Heidegger's notion of translation, as the mediation constitutive of his idea of the linguistic-cultural identity of Germany, ultimately succeeds in providing a way of thinking cultural identity beyond nationalism.

10. Andrew Benjamin, *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989). The following works by Derrida contain a particular emphasis on translation: *Du droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1990), particularly in section II, 'Théologie de la traduction', p371-394; 'Des Tours de Babel' in *Différance in Translatin*, ed Joseph F. Graham (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp209-248; *The Ear of the Other*, ed Christie V. McDonald, trans Peggy Kamuf (New York: Schocken Books, 1985). 'Des Tours de Babel' will be considered in more detail in Chapter 5.

11. An interesting statement of principle by Derrida on how he thinks of translation, and which guides his other more lengthy treatments, can be found in his interview with Kristeva in *Positions* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972), and translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981):

In effect, the theme of a transcendental signified took shape within the horizon of an absolutely pure, transparent, and unequivocal translateability. In the limits to which it is possible, or at least *appears* possible, translation practices the difference between signified and signifier. But if this difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of transformation: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and in fact have never had, to do with some "transport" of pure signifieds from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched. (p20)

The word 'translation' is clearly complicit, for Derrida, with a metaphysics of a pure, transcendental meaning, floating free from any particular language; he thus recommends the word be given up. Derrida nowhere else suggests that there may be a different tradition of thinking about translation which does not move within a 'logocentric' economy. This leads his more lengthy treatments of translation to remain fixed within the opposition translatable-untranslatable. Further, by ignoring the possibility of other understandings of translation, Derrida ignores the question of whether deconstruction may also be thought of as a form of translation, and thus may have affinities to other critical projects which precisely understand themselves as processes of translation.

12. This procedure will indeed be the same for Benjamin, since, though he wrote explicitly on translation in *The Task of the Translator*, this text can only be understood as a focusing point of his thinking of the temporality of language.

13. There have been several interesting such reconstructions recently: Parvis Emad, 'Thinking More Deeply into the Question of Translation: Essential Translation and the Unfolding of Language', in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, ed. by Christopher Macann, 4 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), III, pp. 57-78, and Andrzej Warminski, 'Monstrous History: Heidegger Reading Hölderlin', *Yale French Studies*, 77 (1990), 193-209. Emad's is problematic because it ultimately falls back on a correspondence theory of the *anfänglich* force of the word. He writes, for example: 'The most an essential translation can convey is a sense of 'way making' [be-wëgen] that occurs in strict correspondance with the unfolding of the language to be translated' (p70). Both writers treat Heidegger's understanding of translation in his later work in isolation from his hermeneutic considerations. The continued presence of hermeneutics in Heidegger's later work was shown in Chapter 2, and it only becomes clear by thinking through his path of thinking from, but never leaving behind, the hermeneutic project of *Being and Time*.

14. Heidegger does actually refer to the word *Ge-setz* in an explanation of the term *Ge-stell* in *The Principle of Identity* (in *Identity and Difference* trans. Joan Stambaugh, dual language edition (New York and London, Harper & Row, 1969), English: 23-41 and German: 85-106). He writes:

Der Name für die Versammlung des Herausforderns, das Mensch und Sein einander so zu-stellt, daß sie sich wechselweise stellen, lautet: das Ge-Stell. Man hat sich an diesem Wortgebrauch gestoßen. Aber wir sagen statt 'stellen' auch 'setzen' und finden nichts dabei, daß wir das Wort Ge-setz gebrauchen.

Warum also nicht auch Ge-Stell, wenn der Blick in den Sachverhalt dies verlangt? (p99)

The name for the gathering of this challenging which delivers man and being over to each other such that they set each other mutually, is: *Ge-Stell*. This word use is jarring. But we say instead of *stellen* also *setzen*, and we do not see anything wrong with using the word *Ge-setz*. Thus why not also *Ge-Stell* if a glance into the matter calls for it? (p35; only the first sentence of the German is translated in the English version.)

Heidegger's term *Ge-Stell* is translated 'the framework' by Stambaugh (*das Gestell* is a common German word for a frame or stand); another common translation is 'the enframing' which is better since the prefix *en-* has connotations of 'surrounding' as in 'enmesh', but this still does not convey the thought of gathering together which Heidegger wishes to convey with the prefix *Ge-* (cf *The Question Concerning Technology* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p19; *Die Frage Nach der Technik in Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1954), p28). The verb *setzen* has usages close to that of *stellen*, for example 'to place', 'to set', 'to set up'. The modern meaning of *das Gesetz* is 'rule' or 'law'. In its older meaning it is a verbal substantive to *setzen* in its different meanings and is also related to the Middle High German verb *gesetzen*, which the Grimm Deutsches Wörterbuch lists as *festsetzen, einrichten, bestimmen* ('to order', 'to arrange', 'to determine'). The question arises, therefore, as to why Heidegger chose *Ge-Stell* and not *Ge-setz*. One reason would be the link between *Ge-Stell* and verbs such as *herstellen* ('to produce') and *vorstellen* ('to represent'). Another could be that Heidegger wanted to mark a difference to the writers in German Idealism, for example Fichte and Hegel, for whom *setzen* was an played a central role. Since, however, Heidegger in the *Parmenides* lecture course envisages 'übersetzen' ('to translate') as 'übersetzen' (intransitive meaning: 'to cross over', transitive meaning: 'to carry or transport something accross'), the question of Heidegger's relation to German Idealism cannot be avoided. The use of *Ge-setz* for the essence of modern *übersetzen* allows the issues of modernity, of going accross to antiquity and of a relation to a Hegelian philosophy of history, to be brought together in Heidegger's thinking of translation.

15. In a similar way, Benjamin opens his essay on translation by questioning whether a translation is meant for those who cannot understand the original. And in an analagous fashion, Benjamin's essay disposes of the view that translation is concerned with the wider imparting of information and argues that something else is glimpsed in translation properly understood.

16. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), p12). Concerning philology, Heidegger writes in *Science and Reflection*:

Wenn die Philologie von der Sprache handelt, bearbeitet sie diese nach den gegenständlichen Hinsichten, die durch Grammatik, Etymologie und vergleichende Sprachhistorie, durch Stilistik und Poetik festgelegt sind. (VA 64)

When philology deals with language, it treats it in accordance with the objective ways of looking at language that are established through grammar, etymology, and comparative

linguistic-history, through stylistics and poetics. (*The Question Concerning Technology and other essays* p175)

17. Concerning a 'sign theory' of language, Heidegger writes:

[Die Sprache] läßt beides zu: einmal, daß sie zu einem bloßen, von jedermann gleichförmig benutzbaren Zeichensystem herabgesetzt und dieses als verbindlich durchgesetzt wird; zum anderen, daß die Sprache in einem großen Augenblick ein einziges Mal Einziges sagt, das unerschöpflich bleibt, weil es stets anfänglich ist und deshalb unerreichbar für jeder Art von Nivellierung. (*Was Heißt Denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1961), p168)

Language admits of two things: One, that it be reduced to a mere system of signs, uniformly available to everybody, and in this form be enforced as binding; and two, that language at one great moment says one unique thing, for one time only, which remains inexhaustible because it is always originary, and thus beyond the reach of any kind of leveling. (*What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Grey (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p191-2.

The essence of modern translation, *Ge-setz*, is precisely this idea of the correct use of signs being 'bindingly enforced', 'verbindlich durchgesetzt'. Thus in relation to the understanding of the word as a name, in a technological way of thinking, Heidegger writes:

Wenn wir den Sachverhalt so vorstellen, machen wir den Namen gleichfalls zu einem Gegenstand. Wir stellen die Beziehung zwischen Namen und Ding als Zuordnung zweier Gegenstände vor. (*Was Heißt Denken?*, p84)

If we conceive of the situation in this way, we turn the name, too, into an object. We represent the relation between name and thing as the coordination of two objects. (*What is Called Thinking?*, p120)

18. The word *Verkehrsmittel*, translated 'means of transport', is a common German word denoting the generality of buses, cars, trams and the like.

19. In an otherwise excellent overview of Heidegger's work on science and technology, Harold Alderman, 'Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology', (in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Murrey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 35-50), ultimately offers a highly voluntaristic interpretation. In discussing 'cause' as 'responsibility', in Heidegger's essay 'The Question Concerning Technology', Alderman writes: 'Man can either be responsible for beings in a way which is in harmony with the *aition* of *physis*, or he can take responsibility in a way which is opposed to it.' (p44-45)

20. It was shown in Chapter 1 that the Newtonian temporality of the *a priori* ultimately enabled the transcendental ego and the experience of Newtonian objects to mutually justify each other. Chapter 2 showed how Heidegger emphasised that this circularity could not be avoid, but rather how, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger attempted to rethink Dasein's 'circular existence' in a more authentic way. Further it was shown how the 'authentic analysis' of Dasein became, in Heidegger's later work, the

thinking of *Ereignis* as a more critical hermeneutic way of thinking, but again constituted in its circularity by ecstatic temporality.

21. Heidegger writes in *The Question Concerning Technology*:

So ist denn, wo das Ge-Stell herrscht, im höchsten Sinne Gefahr. 'Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst / Das Rettende auch.' [...] Wenn das Wesen der Technik, das Ge-Stell, die äußerste Gefahr ist und wenn zugleich Hölderlins Wort Wahres sagt, dann kann sich die Herrschaft des Ge-Stells nicht darin erschöpfen, alles Leuchten jedes Entbergens, alles Scheinen der Wahrheit nur zu verstellen. Dann muß vielmehr gerade das Wesen der Technik das Wachstum des Rettenden in sich bergen. (VA p36)

Thus, where *Ge-Stell* reigns, there is *danger* in the highest sense. 'But where danger is, grows / The saving power also.' [...] If the essence of technology, *Ge-Stell*, is the extreme danger, and if at the same time Hölderlin's word speaks the truth, then the reign of *Ge-Stell* cannot exhaust itself solely in blocking all lighting of every revealing, all appearance of truth. Rather, precisely the essence of technology must harbour in itself the growth of the saving power. (QT p28)

22. The word 'found' must be taken with caution here. As will be shown below, it is never a case for Heidegger of asserting an idea of objective access to the past, rather every 'finding' in the past is always hermeneutically guided in advance.

23. Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), is unable to think beyond a modernity versus antiquity opposition in Heidegger's work - an interpretation which he takes from Derrida: 'Derrida has argued that Heidegger did not carry out the deconstruction of metaphysics to its completion, because he failed to deconstruct the idea of a "primordial" epoch, blessed by a direct encounter with being.' (p258) 'Heidegger never really abandoned what Derrida has described as the Platonic yearning to overcome fallenness and to attain authentic nearness to being' (p259).

24. For further detail on this idea, see Thomas Sheehan, 'On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology', *The Monist*, 64(2) (1981), 534-542. Sheehan develops an interesting reading of *Ereignis* in terms of a rethinking of kinesis.

25. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις. Aristoteles, Physik B,1* in *Wegmarken* GA 9, pp239-301 (p293). Translated as *On the Being and Conception of Φύσις in Aristotle's Physics B, 1* trans. Thomas J. Sheehan, *Man and World* 9 (1976), p219-270 (263).

26. Heidegger's word is 'Verständlichmachen', see below: *Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'*, GA 53, 77-8.

27. The meaning of 'particular' here, will be discussed in detail below, in the context of thinking it beyond its opposition to a 'timeless' universal.

28. The sections of this quotation which have been omitted involve a metaphor Heidegger develops of the translation as a path leading up to the pinnacles in the landscape of language which works of poetry and thinking constitute.

29. For example, ἀληθεια is always the movement of its own concealment. That is, it is always on the way to being understood as the correct correspondence or agreement of two entities, separated by a static divide. This explains the ambiguity of Heidegger's relation to both Plato and Aristotle: there are remnants of an *anfänglich* thinking of ἀληθεια, but their philosophical work moves predominantly in a concealing of its essence. It is in the context of this ambiguous relationship that Heidegger's remark, to the effect that Greek philosophy must be read in an even more Greek way, can be understood. Heidegger discusses the ambiguity he finds in Aristotle in *Parmenides* GA 54, 206-7 (In the English translation, p139). And concerning Plato, see for example 'Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit in *Wegmarken* GA 9, pp203-238 (231), translated as 'Plato's Doctrine of Truth', trans. John Barlow, in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken (New York: Random House, 1962), vol. 3, pp251-270 (265).

30. The lecture was delivered in French, in Athens, as 'La provenance de l'art et la destination de la pensée', and reprinted in *Les Cahiers de l'Herne: Heidegger* (Paris: Éditions de l'Herne, 1983), 84-92. The German version, *Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens* appeared in *Denkerfahrten* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), pp. 135-149

31. 'Hermeneutic situation' is the name given by Heidegger to the circular existence of all questioning and interpretation. He writes, for example, in *Being and Time*:

Every interpretation has its fore-having, its fore-sight, and its fore-conception. If such an interpretation, as Interpretation, becomes an explicit task for research, then the totality of these 'presuppositions' (which we have called the 'hermeneutic situation') needs to be clarified and made secure beforehand. (H.232)

And later on in *Being and Time*, this is discussed explicitly in terms of circularity; for example:

We have indeed already shown, in analysing the structure of understanding in general, that what gets censured inappropriately as a 'circle' belongs to the essence and to the distinctive character of understanding as such. In spite of this, if the problematic of fundamental ontology is to have its hermeneutical Situation clarified, our investigation must now come back to this 'circular argument'. (H.314)

32. Heidegger's idea here, that an approach which is taken to be free of presupposition is, in fact, charged all the more implicitly with prejudice, is to be found in a similar formulation in an *Athenaeum* fragment by Friedrich Schlegel. The thinking of history developed by the Early German Romantics will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

33. The criticism made by David Couzens Hoy in 'History, Historicity and Historiography in *Being and Time*', in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Murrey, is fundamentally misguided. Hoy concludes by criticising *Being and Time* for providing 'no criteria for deciding between conflicting historical accounts' (p349). Whilst Heidegger's linking of the temporality of Dasein with the historicity of world is problematic, it is clear, nonetheless, that Heidegger is dealing with both at an

ontological level, and not in terms of a regional, ontic science such as historiography.

34. Charles R. Bambach, 'Phenomenological Research as *Destruktion*: The Early Heidegger's Reading of Dilthey', *Philosophy Today*, 37(2) (1993), 115-132, gives an important analysis of Heidegger's unpublished Kassel lectures of 1925, and the way Heidegger's understanding of the destruction of the history of metaphysics is developed in the light of the hermeneutic situation of the present. In Bambach's view, these lectures bring to light explicitly Heidegger's attempt to develop his view of tradition in opposition to both Husserl and Dilthey. 'From each side there was a tendency to disguise the hermeneutic situation of the present.' (p119)

35. 'Phänomenologisch Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Anzeige der hermeneutische Situation' in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften*, ed Frithjof Rodi, Vol. 6 (1989), pp237-269. Translated as 'Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indications of the Hermeneutic Situation', trans. Michael Baur, in *Man and World* 25 (1992), pp355-393. This text is of great importance in that it raises the possibility of regarding *Being and Time* as constituting in its entirety, a *Widerholung* of Aristotle's philosophical approach. Much scholarship has been undertaken recently on tracing the correspondences between Heidegger's analysis of Aristotle in this text and the existential analysis in the first half of *Being and Time*. It needs to be asked, however, why Heidegger erased almost all trace of this taking up of Aristotle - the main focus upon Aristotle appears at the end, in the context of the inadequacy of his conception of time. Heidegger's erasure of his dependence on tradition would appear to be closely connected with the problematic subjectivity which grounded the hermeneutic circle in *Being and Time*. Both conspire to place *Being and Time* in the mould of Enlightenment thinking - with its concern to appear divorced from traditional ideas and a dependence on the role of the subject. To have made clear that he was taking up Aristotle's work as a starting point, in a way which would be circularly justified by the conclusion (ie the ecstatic temporality of the hermeneutic situation), would have immediately have given the project a certain historicity and thus avoided the difficulties Heidegger gets into trying to reconcile the temporal analysis of Dasein and the historicity of being-in-the-world.

36. The full quotation runs: 'Die Situation der Auslegung, als der verstehenden Aneignung des Vergangenen, ist immer solche einer lebendige Gegenwart.' (p237; 'The situation of the interpretation, of the understanding appropriation of the past, is always the situation of a living present', p358)

37. A profounder mis-reading, arising from an overlooking of the hermeneutic situation of writing history, is given by George Joseph Seidel, *Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics: An Introduction to his Thought* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1964). 'Only that which truly *has been*, as one might put it, can have worked its way into the present and then come under the consideration of the historian. [...] The reconstruction of the historical past, which truly was there, and which therefore has worked itself into the present in its effects, can come under the consideration of the historian only it is was there for *Da-sein*.' (p20) Quite apart from not specifying the difference between what 'was there' and what 'truly was there', it is clear that on Seidel's interpretation, what 'truly was there' can only be so judged if

its effects reach to the present, but this latter condition is precisely what it means for something truly to have been.

38. Seidel's book is a prime example of a tendency to find this prelapsarian longing for the Greek world in Heidegger. For example: 'Heidegger studies Parmenides and Heraclitus in an attempt to regain our authentic origins, such that our own thinking may be projected in an authentically historical manner into the future.' (p121) And 'to get back to their true meaning, an authentic interpretation must point out that which no longer stands in the words, but which is nevertheless said in the words.' (p126)

39. An interesting overview of the meaning of *traditio* and words connected with it is given by Antoine Berman, 'Tradition - Translation - Traduction', in *Po&sie* 47 (1988), pp85-98.

40. cf. *Zeit und Sein*, particularly pp8-9; *Time and Being*, pp8-9.

41. Both *das Schickliche* and *das Gehörige* have a meaning approximate to 'what is proper, fitting, becoming'.

42. If the idea of epoches is not understood in relation to hermeneutics, Heidegger's thought can easily be made to defend historicism. For example, Siedel writes that Heidegger's work seems 'to explain one problem which had always troubled historicism: namely, how philosophers somehow exhibited influences from their predecessors [...] even where there seemed to be no points of actual historical or textual contact. Heidegger's suggestion is that although thinkers are not always in contact with one another, they are in contact with being.' (p156). The idea of being 'in contact with being' is based on an objectification of being into a trans-historical ground.

43. In the following quotation from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, the similarity to Heidegger's early 'Indications' paper is striking:

Dies ist ebenso unsere und jedes Zeitalters Stellung und Tätigkeit, die Wissenschaft, welche vorhanden ist, zu fassen und sich ihr anzubilden, und ebendarin sie weiterzubilden und auf einen höheren Standpunkt zu erheben. Indem wir sie uns zu eigen machen, machen wir aus ihr etwas Eigenes gegen das, was sie vorher war. In dieser Natur des Produzierens, eine vorhandene geistige Welt zur Voraussetzung zu haben und sie in der Aneignung umzubilden, liegt es denn, daß unsere Philosophie wesentlich nur im Zusammenhange mit vorhergehender zur Existenz gekommen und daraus mit Notwendigkeit hervorgegangen ist; und der Verlauf der Geschichte ist es, welcher uns nicht das Werden fremder Dinge, sondern dies unser Werden, das Werden unserer Wissenschaft darstellt. (*Werke*, 20 vols, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), Vol 18, p22)

This then is the function of our own and of every age: to grasp the knowledge which is already existing, to make it our own, and in so doing to develop it further and to raise it to a higher level. In thus appropriating it to ourselves we make it into something different from what it was before. On the presupposition of an already existing intellectual world which is transformed in our appropriation of it, depends the fact

that philosophy can only arise in connection with previous philosophy, from which of necessity it has arisen. The course of history does not show us the becoming of things foreign to us, but the becoming of ourselves and of our own knowledge. (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Humanities Press, 1963), vol 1, p3-4)

44. Martin Heidegger, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, GA 32. Translated as *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988). 'Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung' in *Holzwege*. Translated as 'Hegel's Concept of Experience' ed. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). Heidegger's criticism of Hegel in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger brings in Hegel's work to illuminate his argument that one cannot move from an understanding of time as isolated now-points to an ecstatic temporality, while the latter may certainly be 'levelled off' to give the former, is treated by Parvis Emad, 'The Place of Hegel in Heidegger's Being and Time' in *Research in Phenomenology* 13 (1983), pp159-173. For a general overview of the relation between Heidegger and Hegel, see Denise Souche-Dagues, 'The Dialogue between Heidegger and Hegel' in *Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, 4 vols, ed. Christopher Macann (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), II, 246-271. Her article does not, however, consider the differences in their understandings of temporality, which will be discussed below.
45. Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, dual language edition, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1969). This book contains the two essays 'The Principle of Identity' (p23-41; 'Der Satz der Identität', p85-106) and 'The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics' (p42-74; 'Die Onto-Theo-Logische Verfassung der Metaphysik', p107-143).
46. Alexandre Kojève's work may be understood as an attempt to take Hegel's work seriously in this way. See, for example, 'The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel', in *Hegel: Critical Assessments*, II, 311-358.
47. The necessity of understanding Hegel's view of essence through his view of time, is treated well in Joseph C. Flay, 'Essence and Time in Hegel', in *Hegel: Critical Assessments*, III, 389-410.
48. Hegel, *Werke*, vol 8, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik: Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I*. Translated as *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the 'Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences'*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, 3rd ed.) The word 'Being' is capitalised here only so as to be able to mark the difference between 'Sein' and 'seiende'.
49. 'Hegel und die Griechen', in GA 9: *Wegmarken*, 427-444
50. This criticism of Hegel is developed initially by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, for example:

No detailed discussion is needed to make plain that in Hegel's Interpretation of time he is moving wholly in the direction of the way time is ordinarily understood. When he characterizes time in terms of the 'now', this presupposes that in its full structure the 'now' remains levelled off and covered up, so that

it can be intuited as something present-at-hand, though present-at-hand only 'ideally'. (H.431)

51. Andrzej Warminski, 'Monstrous History: Heidegger Reading Hölderlin', *Yale French Studies*, 77 (1990), 193-209, brings together Hölderlin's and Heidegger's thinking on translation. He gets caught up, however, in the metaphysics of Hölderlin's famous letter to Böhlendorf (4 Dec 1801), discussing the law of history in terms of that which is one's own nature and that which is of a foreign nature. The Greek's own nature was 'the fire from heaven', that which was foreign for them was the 'clarity of representation' and 'Junonian sobriety'. Warminski comments that, however, 'what is natural for us, is what was appropriated by the Greeks. [...] Our nature is Greek culture.' (p203). The talk of different natures would seem based on a rather historicist standpoint, and does not seem helpful for understanding Heidegger's work on translation or on Hölderlin's poetry, precisely because the Warminski does not discuss the hermeneutic aspect of an understanding of Greek culture.

52. In the next chapter it will be seen that Benjamin also develops an approach to Hölderlin's poetry in terms of the hermeneutic circularity of a poem, which he names *das Gedichtete* also.

CHAPTER 5: BENJAMIN AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSLATION

I. Introduction

In Chapter 3, Benjamin's thinking of time and language was provided with methodological grid as the ground upon which his presentational *Umweg* took place. This distinction between ground and presentation was not, however, considered uncritically - Benjamin's thinking of symbol was itself seen to be principally concerned with a criticism of such divisions as form and content, signifier and signified. Rather it was argued that to ignore the task of providing Benjamin's style of thinking and writing with a theoretical grid would be to lose precisely the tension involved in the inseparability of 'form' and 'content', and thus allow Benjamin's work to appear complicit with the Newtonian temporality he wished to criticise. The theoretical underpinning concerned Benjamin's taking up of the Kantian legacy and the thinking through of the question of the belonging together of language and time. This was seen to give rise to a linguistic phenomenology (for example, in *On Language As Such and On the Language of Man*), which was thoroughly hermeneutic (for example, in the circularity of experience and the knowledge of experience), and whose temporality was not that of the Newtonian time-order, but that of a continuum ('fulfilled time' or 'messianic time'). While Benjamin's way of thinking out of Kant may thus be named a temporal-linguistic hermeneutic phenomenology, the systematicity of such a 'way' was self-reflexively questioned. Kant's idea of the linguistic systematicity of his work was modelled on the experience of things as organisms, an experience which involved the determination of the manifold by a concept. In chapter 1 it was shown that the conceptuality of the organism required a stretched

temporality which thus was at variance with the Newtonian temporality which the system itself served to justify. For Benjamin, this led to a questioning of the transcendental ego's unity of apperception, which ultimately for Kant underpinned the unity of the critical system; a questioning which resulted in the fragmentation of the categories into a multiplicity of *Urbegriffe*. Benjamin understood these *Urbegriffe* linguistically as naming a multiplicity of monadically hermeneutic systems or ideas. It is this thinking of multiplicity which is evidenced in the presentational 'form' of Benjamin's way of thinking - an *Umweg* of philosophical treatises, fragments, montage and 'strikingly obscure, indeed mystifying language'. There is here a clear affinity to Heidegger's way of thinking from the systematicity of *Being and Time* to the occasionality of his later pieces, which will be explored further in the Conclusion. In order for this affinity to be investigated it is necessary first to clarify further Benjamin's thinking of the nature of the linguistic work and its temporality. As was the case for Heidegger, this clarification will be undertaken through an *Auslegung* of Benjamin's idea of translation.

Benjamin's essay on translation, *The Task of the Translator*¹, in the way it appears to stand alone, in its ellipticism, from any longer term philosophical investigation or development of Benjamin's thought, is a prime example of Benjamin's *Umweg*. The essay's enigmatic nature has also spawned a large number of thoughtful and insightful interpretations.² Many of these pieces, however, treat the essay in isolation from an attempt to provide Benjamin's work with a theoretical underpinning.³ The approach of this chapter will be to unfold the essay in the light of Benjamin's way of thinking detailed in Chapter 3. Conversely, and as was the case for the treatment of Heidegger in the previous chapter, Benjamin's thinking of translation will also form a focus with which to further illuminate his rethinking of language and time. More precisely,

this clarification will involve the interpretation of the translation essay in such a manner as to narrate a move from systematic 'way' to multifarious '*Umweg*' in Benjamin's phenomenology.⁴ By so doing, Benjamin's translation essay is allowed to stand, in its ellipticism, as a symbol of the inseparability of 'form' and 'content' in his thinking.

II. The Phenomenology of Language

On finishing his dissertation on the Early German Romantics in 1919, Benjamin was soon occupied in finding a subject for his *Habilitationschrift*. He writes as follows to Scholem in early 1920, concerning his work towards this end:

Von dieser besteht bislang nur die Intention auf ein Thema; nämlich irgend eine Untersuchung, welche in den großen Problemkreis Wort und Begriff (Sprache und Logos) fällt, mit dem ich mich beschäftigen werde. Vorläufig suche ich angesichts der ungeheuren Schwierigkeiten nach Literatur, die wohl nur im Bereich scholastischer Schriften oder von Schriften über die Scholastik zu suchen ist. Wobei in der ersten mindestens das Latein eine harte Nuß ist. (*Briefe I*, 230; 13 January 1920)

Of this, only the intention towards a theme exists as yet; namely some sort of investigation into the large circle of problems of word and concept (language and logos), with which I will occupy myself. At present, in the face of enormous difficulties, I am looking for literature which no doubt can only be sought in the realm of Scholastic writings or writings about the Scholastics. In the former at least, the Latin is a tough nut.

It was this interest in the philosophy of language, and the linguistic theories of the Scholastics in particular, which was to occupy Benjamin throughout 1920, and which provides the immediate context for his translation essay, which was begun in March 1921. It was to the Scholastic idea of intentionality, which Benjamin looked in order to find an understanding language beyond a simple dualism of signifier and signified; a

dualism which was a parallel of the 'epistemological mythology' of subject and object in Kant's work, which his *Program* essay had attacked. Whilst the translation essay does not specifically mention the sign theory of language, as did the essay *On Language As Such* (1916), which described it as a 'bourgeois' conception of language, Benjamin's notes from 1920 clearly show that this was still very much his focus of criticism. He writes for example in fragment 9:

Das Wort ist nun eben nicht Zeichen, sondern das Bezeichnete, und nicht die Bedeutung, sondern das *Bedeutende*, was eben das Zeichen mangels seiner intentionalen Unmittelbarkeit nie sein kann. (<fr 9>, GS VI, p20)

The word is not just a sign, but the signified, and not the meaning, but *what does the meaning*, which precisely the sign, for the lack of its intentional immediacy, never can be.⁵

This fragment also shows how Benjamin's thinking of the 'magic immediacy' of language from the 1916 essay was, in the period of the translation essay, being rethought in terms of intentionality.

The most obvious result of this criticism of a sign theory of language on the translation essay, is his rejection, at the very beginning of the essay, of certain 'technological' views of translation. Benjamin asks whether a translation is meant for readers who cannot understand the original (AÜ 9/TT 69), and answers that any translation that wishes to 'mediate' (*vermitteln*, intransitive) the contents of the original to a wider public in this way can only 'convey' (*vermitteln*, transitive) 'statement' or 'information' (*Aussage, Mitteilung*), and thus only what is inessential. Nor, however, can it be understood as the attempt to convey something of the spirit of the original, understood as something 'unfathomable, mysterious or "poetic"' (TT 70; 'das Unfaßbare, Geheimnisvolle, "Dichterische"', AÜ 9). Benjamin's rejection here of an understanding of translation as a certain means to a human end, is a clear parallel of Heidegger's rejection of the 'correct' understanding of translation. Concomitant with this, for Benjamin, is also a rejection of a reception

theory of the original artwork itself: 'Consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful for knowledge concerning a work of art or an art form' (TT 69; 'Nirgends erweist sich einem Kunstwerk oder einer Kunstform gegenüber die Rücksicht auf den Aufnehmenden für deren Erkenntnis fruchtbar', AÜ 9). An example of a reception theory of art would be Kant's 'Analytic of the Beautiful' in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*⁶, where the perception of the beautiful object brings about a free-play of the faculties. A reception theory of art posits a subject-object divide, parallel to the signifier-signified dualism underpinning the common understanding of translation. That is, language is seen as the bearer of the meaning or spirit of the original to the mind of the subject, a communication which, thus, may be attempted in a different language.

Benjamin's interest in researching a scholastic view of language as a way of criticising a sign theory must also be understood in relation to the growing dominance of phenomenology and its use of an idea of intentionality.⁷ Benjamin had been familiar with the work of Husserl from early on, the first mention being in 1913, concerning Husserl's programmatic essay 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science' ('Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft', published 1910⁸). The *Program* essay (1917) points forwards to a possible future confrontation with phenomenology in terms of its scholastic inheritance:

Wie sich der psychologische Bewußtseinsbegriff zum Begriff der Sphäre der reinen Erkenntnis verhält bleibt ein Hauptproblem der Philosophie, das vielleicht nur aus der Zeit der Scholastik her zu restituieren ist. Hier ist der logische Ort vieler Probleme die die Phänomenologie neuerdings wieder aufgeworden hat. (*Programm* p163)

How the psychological concept of consciousness is related to the concept of the sphere of pure knowledge remains a major problem of philosophy, one which perhaps can only be restored out of the age of Scholasticism. Here is the logical place for many problems that phenomenology has recently raised anew. (*Program* p5)⁹

It was Brentano who had first explicitly turned to the Scholastics and recovered the idea of intentionality in his work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*.¹⁰ He uses the term to describe mental phenomena as having 'intentional in-existence'.¹¹ Whilst Husserl took up the idea of intentionality from Brentano, there is no evidence in his work that Husserl was particularly familiar with the Scholastic use of the term, nor with its roots in Aristotle via the Arabic writings of Avicenna. Rather, there is a sense in Husserl's work that the validity of the term arises only from the actual success of phenomenological descriptions of reality. Yet conversely the significance of an idea of intentionality for Husserl lies precisely in the way it was able to establish philosophy's scientific credentials by indicating that all knowledge may be lead back to its original sources in immediate experience, that is, to the immediate self-givenness of 'the things themselves'. There is thus in Husserl's work a certain dismissing of philosophical tradition in order to give phenomenology the feeling of 'rigorous science', and it is perhaps this implicit appeal to progress, in phenomenology itself, which also lies behind Benjamin's concern to research and 'restore' its Scholastic heritage.

In the context of the *Program* essay, however, Benjamin's central philosophical argument with phenomenology is the same one which lead Heidegger to develop his idea of Dasein as always already outside of itself: the idea of intentionality, as used by Husserl, structures an uncritical subject-object divide in which the ego intentionally directs itself towards objects outside of itself. Medieval thought, with its underlying emphasis on unity in the idea of the belonging together of knower and known before the face of God, would clear hold possibilities of moving beyond this dualism.¹²

By July, Benjamin had read Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift, Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, published 1916.¹³ His

highly negative evaluation has been quoted in the introduction to this thesis; Benjamin was clearly unhappy with the way the work remained uncritical of Husserlian phenomenology. Benjamin did not, of course, go on to write his *Habilitationsschrift* on Scholasticism.¹⁴ However, in one of his fragmentary notes, dated to the end of 1920, Benjamin signals that his planned research was centrally to involve the work of Duns Scotus; he also outlines his planned approach in terms of the thinking of language he had developed in his work on Kant.¹⁵ This fragment will be quoted at length because of its importance in a comparison with Heidegger's treatment of Duns Scotus, and more immediately because of the insight it gives into Benjamin's engagement with an idea of intentionality, and thus into the appearance of the idea in the translation essay.

Wenn nach der Theorie des Duns Scotus die Hindeutungen auf gewissen modi essendi nach Maßgabe dessen<,> was diese Hindeutungen bedeuten, fundiert sind, so entsteht natürlich die Frage, wie sich von dem Bedeuteten irgend ein Allgemeineres und Formaleres als sein und also des Bedeutenden modus essendi irgendwie abspalten lasse<,> um als Fundament des Bedeutenden zu gelten. Und wie man von der völligen Correlation zwischen Bedeutendem und Bedeutetem hinsichtlich dieser Fundierungsfrage zu abstrahieren vermöge, so daß also der Zirkel vermieden wird: Das Bedeutende zielt hin auf das Bedeutete und beruht zugleich auf ihm. – Dieser Aufgabe ist durch die Betrachtung des Sprachbereichs zu lösen. [...] Der Sprachbereich erstreckt sich als kritisches Medium zwischen dem Bereich des Bedeutende<n> und dem des Bedeutete<n>. (<fr 11>, GS VI, 22–23)

If, in the theory of Duns Scotus, the pointings at certain modi essendi (which the pointings mean in their accordance with them) are founded, then naturally the question arises of how anything more general and more formal, such as being, may be separated from what is meant, and thus how a modus essendi may be separated from what does the meaning, in order to qualify as a fundament of what does the meaning. And how one is capable of abstracting from the complete correlation between what does the meaning and what is meant, in regard to the question of foundation, so that the following circle may thus be avoided: What-does-the-meaning aims at what-is-meant and at the same time is based on it. – This task is to be solved through the consideration of the realm of language. [...] The linguistic realm stretches itself as a critical medium between the realm of what does the meaning and the realm of what is meant.

The word *Hindeutungen* (translated 'pointings') refers to the relationship of intentional directedness between the *Bedeutendes* ('what does the meaning') in the mind of the knower and the *Bedeutetes* ('what is meant'), considered to be in the world external to the mind. The circle which Benjamin refers to is the closed reflectivity between two realms modelled as Newtonian objects, as was discussed in Chapter 3. Benjamin wishes to replace this with a properly temporalized hermeneutic situation where language is considered as a 'critical medium' which 'stretches' between subject and object. In the *Program* essay this medium was understood as the 'continuum of experience' considered linguistically, and in the translation essay it will appear under the name of 'pure language'. In order to clarify the understanding of intentionality in the translation essay, where it appears in guise of *das Gemeinte* ('what is meant') and *die Art des Meinens* ('the mode of meaning', translated by Zohn as 'mode of intention'), in relation to the idea of pure language, it will be useful to briefly consider the Scholastic doctrine and its usefulness to phenomenology.

Whilst Benjamin never mentions the works of Scholasticism in which he was interested, one may surmise, given his familiarity with Heidegger's essay, that his interest in Duns Scotus centred on the work *Tractatus de modis significandi seu grammatica speculativa*, which Heidegger focuses on in the second half of his essay. At the time of Heidegger's and Benjamin's interest in this work, it was attributed to Duns Scotus, but it is now generally considered to be the work of the Scotist, Thomas of Erfurt. There is, however, no consensus over how the Scholastic thinking of intention is to be understood. Up until the period of high Scholasticism the word *intentio* simply had the practical meaning of 'striving towards' or 'aiming at'. Herbert Spiegelberg, the historian of phenomenology, argues in his influential essay 'Der Begriff der

Intentionalität in der Scholastik, bei Brentano und bei Husserl', that from Aquinas on, the idea of *intentio* always referred to a mental object as a imprint on the mind of the object outside, and never to anything act-like. Spiegelberg is thus able to charge the Scholastics with an always implicit subjectivism, which ultimately lead to Brentano's *Immanenzkrise*, and which was finally countered, in Spiegelberg's view, by Husserl's completely new understanding of intentionality. Ausonio Marras, on the contrary, in his essay 'Scholastic Roots of Brentano's Concept of Intentionality' regards Scholastic thought as unmistakably realist and argues that even in Aquinas' work the idea of *intentio* is understood not as a mental object, but as a mental directedness. He writes:

The species or *intentio* is not *that which* (*id quod*) is directly or primarily known by the understanding [...] but is instead *that by means of which* (*id quo*) the extramental object is known. The species is the vehicle which carries the reference to the non-immanent object. (p137)

It is this latter understanding of *intentio* which interested Heidegger and Benjamin in its possibilities of opening an engagement with phenomenology. Medieval thinking of *intentio* after Aquinas was structured, in general, in a three level way, involving the *modus essendi*, *modus intelligendi* and the *modus significandi* ('mode of being', 'mode of understanding' and 'mode of signification'). The *modus significandi* was directed towards the *modus intelligendi*, which was in turn directed towards the object's *modus essendi*. Many treatises were written concerning these relationships; they were generally titled *De modis significandi* and the authors were generally known as *modisti*.¹⁶ The superiority of such a three level semantics in comparison to the two level approach of signifier and signified, in the treatment of philosophical problems such as identity of referent, reference to non-existent or imaginary objects, and mistaken identity of a referent, became clear to Husserl through the work of Frege. That is, a three level semantics

explains in a more satisfactory manner how a single referent, such as the planet Venus, may be referred to by two different expressions (this will be of particular importance for Benjamin in the translation essay), or how a word, such as 'unicorn', may have meaning but no referent, or how a tree may be mistaken for a person in twilight. However, the decisively phenomenological interest in the idea of intentionality comes through the recognition that such an idea brings with it an emphasis on the immediacy of experience, in opposition to a sign theory. The notion of a signifier existing in the mind as a mental object consisting of a 'bundle of impressions' or an 'idea', and which is then considered by the mind to represent an external object, did not well explain the way we see, for example, not colour sensations or impressions, but coloured things.¹⁷ Or to use Heidegger's favorite example, we do not hear a sound outside and mentally compare it with other sounds we have heard, rather we hear the aeroplane; that is, we hear the sound as the sound of an aeroplane. It was this immediacy which Benjamin sought to account for in the linguistic phenomenology of his *Language As Such* essay, and which he developed in relation to Kant into the idea of the continuum of experience.

In the translation essay Benjamin develops his concern with a phenomenological account of intentionality by way of thinking through the nature of translation. After mentioning the importance of distinguishing between what is meant and the mode of meaning, Benjamin writes:

In 'Brot' und 'pain' ist das Gemeinte zwar dasselbe, die Art, es zu meinen, dagegen nicht. In der Art des Meinens nämlich liegt es, daß beide Worte dem Deutschen und Franzosen je etwas Verschiedenes bedeuten, daß sie für beide nicht vertauschbar sind, ja sich letzten Endes auszuschließen streben; am Gemeinten aber, daß sie, absolute genommen, das Selbe und Identische bedeuten. (AÜ 14)

While what is meant in 'Brot' and 'pain' is the same, the manner of meaning it, is not. It is owing to the mode of meaning that both words mean something different to a German and a

Frenchman, that these words are not interchangeable for them, that indeed they ultimately strive to exclude each other; as to what is meant, however, the two words, taken absolutely, mean what is the same and identical. (TT 74)

This passage makes clear that Benjamin is making use of the fundamental distinction, in a phenomenological approach to language, between that which is meant and its mode of signification, to explain how two different expressions may have one and the same referent. A two level semantics of signifier and signified would suggest that in any context one signifier is replacable by another having the same signified. This is clearly not the case where different languages are involved.¹⁸ The use Benjamin wishes to make of a distinction between what is meant and mode of meaning is also illustrated by his application of it to the case of poetry:

Denn [Sinn] erschöpft sich nach seiner dichterischen Bedeutung fürs Original nicht in dem Gemeinten, sondern gewinnt diese dadurch, wie das Gemeinte an die Art des Meinens in dem bestimmten Worte gebunden ist. Man pflegt dies in der Formal auszudrücken, daß die Worte einen Gefühlston mit sich führen. (AÜ 17)

For the sense in its poetic significance for the original is not limited to what is meant, but achieves it through the way in which what is meant is bound to the mode of meaning in the particular word. It is usual to express this in the formula that words have emotional connotations. (TT 78)

To put this in Fregean terminology: a word has both sense and reference, that is, an intentional content and a referent. In certain contexts, such as poetry, the particular referent of a word is often not so important as the mode in which it is meant, and indeed may even be of negligible importance in comparison to it. It is in this context which Benjamin discusses the usual opposition between 'fidelity and freedom in translation' (TT 79; '[...] Treue und Freiheit der Übersetzung seit jeher als widerstrebende Tendenzen betrachtet wurden', AÜ 18). By this he means the tension between a perceived need to remain true to the individual words and syntactic form of the original, and the desire of the

translator to ignore the individual words and thus have the freedom to recreate the considered sense of the original. Literality (*Wörtlichkeit*) with respect to syntax is a direct threat to the comprehensibility of the original, 'thus the demand for literalness cannot be derived from an interest in the retention of sense' (TT 78; 'Demgemäß ist die Forderung der Wörtlichkeit unableitbar aus dem Interesse der Erhaltung des Sinnes', AÜ 18). Benjamin has no desire, however, to produce a schema for mediating or balancing these two claims as traditionally understood. As was shown above, the translation essay starts with a rejection of the idea that a translation's purpose is the wider circulation of what an original communicates to a reader, that is, precisely a rejection of an idea of translation as the 'reproduction of sense' (TT 78; 'die Wiedergabe des Sinnes', AÜ 17). To this end, fidelity to literalness is given absolute priority over the 'poetic' freedom of the translator, precisely in that the referentiality of a word in its *Gemeintes* is demolished in favor of its *Art des Meinens*. That is, in order to avoid the situation in which the *Gemeintes* is taken as what the original wants to communicate, it is dismissed in favour of an emphasis on the word's mode of meaning. In this way, and to use Benjamin's simile, the translation touches on the original's *sense* as a tangent touches a circle, before continuing on its straight path to infinity under the laws of fidelity (AÜ 20-1/TT 80).

For Benjamin, therefore, the translation is to bring about a death of the *intentio* of the word, as was discussed in Chapter 3. That is, the bringing together of the modes of meaning from the different languages is to put in question the notion of a referent simply existing as an object external to the subject. Through its 'death', an *intentio* no longer structures a subject-object dualism, and instead its intentionality is directed towards the linguistic realm which 'stretches' between that which does the meaning and that which is meant. The opacity of the passage in

which Benjamin first introduces the ideas of *Gemeintes* and *Art des Meinens*, is caused by the way Benjamin's account moves seamlessly from the case of the words 'Brot' and 'pain' having the same referent (*Gemeintes*), to the situation of the death of the intention which is the result of bringing the expressions together. That is, the referent of the term *Gemeintes* changes from the identical object-like referent of the two words, to the pure continuum of experience, or 'pure language'. The death of an intentionality to an external referent occurs in the following passage, which comes immediately after the discussion of the words *Brot* and *pain*, quoted above:

Während dergestalt die Art des Meinens in diesen beiden Wörtern einander widerstrebt, ergänzt sie sich in den beiden Sprachen, denen sie entstammen. Und zwar ergänzt sich in ihnen die Art der Meinens zum Gemeinten. Bei den einzeln, den unergänzten Sprachen nämlich ist ihr Gemeintes niemals in relativer Selbständigkeit anzutreffen, wie bei den einzelnen Wörtern oder Sätzen, sondern vielmehr in stetem Wandel begriffen, bis es aus der Harmonie all jener Arten des Meinens als die reine Sprache hervorzutreten vermag. (AÜ 14)

While, in this way, the modes of meaning in both these words conflict with each other, they complement each other in the two languages from which they come. And indeed, they complement each other in them, in regard to what is meant. In the individual, uncomplemented languages namely, what is meant is never found in relative independence, as in individual words or sentences, rather it is in a process of constant change, until it is able to emerge from the harmony of all the various modes of meaning, as pure language. (TT 74)

In this passage, Benjamin moves from the idea that the words *Brot* and *pain* have the same referent, but their modes of meaning are in conflict, to the idea that these conflicting modes complement each other, when brought together according to the concept of fidelity, with regard to a higher referent, the realm of pure language. In a language which is not regarded through its relationship with another in translation, thus 'uncomplemented', this higher referent is understood in terms of one epistemological mythology or another (cf. Chapter 3), and thus 'is in a process of constant change'. It is only through the 'harmony' of the

belonging together of the modes of meaning that pure language, as the critical medium of all epistemological mythologies, may thus be indicated.

This notion of 'harmony' in '*Sprachergänzung*' (AÜ 18/TT 79) must not be misunderstood. It is clearly not a reference to an understanding of 'pure language' as an ideal and perfectly referential language, since it is reached through the death of the *intentio*. Benjamin rejects this interpretation, when he writes:

In dieser reinen Sprache, die nichts mehr meint und nicht mehr ausdrückt, sondern als ausdrückloses und schöpferisches Wort das in allen Sprachen Gemeinte ist, trifft endlich alle Mitteilung, aller Sinn und aller Intention auf eine Schicht, in der sie zu erlöschen bestimmt sind. (AÜ 19)

In this pure language - which no longer means and no longer expresses, rather as the expressionless and creative word, which is what is meant in all languages - all communication, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined to be extinguished. (TT 80)

Nor should the idea of 'harmony' in relation to 'pure language' be understood in any sense as a reference to some imagined greater language which existed before a 'fall' into a multiplicity of languages.¹⁹ Benjamin specifically rejects this imputation of a prelapsarian longing in the idea of pure language in a preparatory note to the translation essay:²⁰

Die Vielheit der Sprachen ist eine derartige Wesensvielheit. Die Lehre der Mystiker vom Verfall der wahren Sprache kann also wahrheitsgemäß nicht auf deren Auflösung in eine Vielheit, welche der ursprünglichen und gottgewollten Einheit widerspräche, hinauslaufen, sondern - da die Vielheit der Sprachen sowenig wie die der Völker ein Verfallsprodukt, ja soweit davon entfernt ist es zu sein, daß gerade eben diese Vielheit allein deren Wesenscharakter ausspricht. (<fr 12>, GS VI, 24)

The multiplicity of languages is a kind of essential multiplicity. The teaching of the mystic about the fall of the true language thus cannot truly concern its dissolution into a multiplicity which contradicts an original and divinely desired unity. Rather, since the multiplicity of language is as little a product of the fall as the multiplicity of peoples, indeed so far is it to be distanced from this idea, that it is precisely this multiplicity which alone expresses the essential character of that true language.²¹

This reference to the essential multiplicity of the realm of pure language is parallel to Benjamin's emphasis on the multiplicity of ideas in *The*

Origin of German Tragic Drama, the work which constituted his *Habilitationschrift* after his decision to give up research in the field of pure philosophy of language, and which was discussed in Chapter 3.22 There it was shown how Benjamin understood truth through the 'round dance' of the multiplicity of ideas, thus freed from their referentiality to external objects (OGTD p23; GS I.1, 209). A further image which Benjamin used was the revealing of truth in the 'burning up' (*das Aufflammen*) of its cover in the work, as the latter enters the circle of ideas (OGTD p31; GS I.1, 211). This image of flame appears also in the translation essay for the idea of the revelation of the truth of a work in its translation:

Wenn aber diese [unergänzte Sprachen] derart bis ans messianische Ende ihrer Geschichte wachsen, so ist es die Übersetzung, welche am ewigen Fortleben der Werke und am unendlichen Aufleben der Sprachen sich entzündet. (AÜ 14)

If, however, these uncomplemented languages grow in this manner until the messianic end of their history, then it is the translation which catches fire on the eternal living-on of the works and the perpetual renewal of languages. (TT 74)

This passage links the idea of the *Gemeintes* of uncomplemented languages to the complementation of language in translation, through an idea of the life of a work and its translation. Benjamin's references here to 'life' in the terms *Fortleben* and *Aufleben*, refer back to Benjamin's idea that the concept of life be applied to that 'of which there is history' (p71; 'wovon es Geschichte gibt', p11), which he introduced near the beginning of the essay. It is clear, then, that the truth revealed by a translation is a truth concerning time – the history of language and the history of the work. This short passage introduces, therefore, a second aspect of the essay, a question of time, which has not been emphasized in this section – in which the emphasis has been upon language. To this end, the next section will move towards Benjamin's understanding of time and history in relation to translation, just as was the case in the chapter on

Heidegger's view of translation.²³ These ideas will be taken up in the light of Benjamin's doctoral dissertation on German Romanticism, written two years before the translation essay. The question of Benjamin's relation to Hegel will also need to be raised²⁴, as was also the case for Heidegger. This will be considered in section IV.

III. The Nature and History of the Art-Work

According to Benjamin, the process of 'literal' translation, as explored above, transplants (*verpflanzt*) the original work into a higher linguistic realm, and it does so 'ironically' (AÜ 15/TT 75). Benjamin draws attention to the way the word 'ironically' brings the Romantics to mind, and writes that 'they, more than any others, were gifted with an insight into the life of literary works' (TT 76; 'Diese haben vor andern Einsicht in das Leben der Werke besessen', AÜ 15). This consideration of the life of a literary work, manifested in translation, marks a second focus in the translation essay, concentrating on the original work as a whole, and not on the translation of individual words. These two foci are intertwined throughout the essay, and are separated here only for clarity. This emphasis on the work as a whole will be explored via Kant's idea of the work of art, leading to an investigation of the affinity between Benjamin's concept of translatability and his view of the concept of the criticism of the art-work in German Romanticism.

In a long footnote to the late essay *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire* (1939), Benjamin writes that the art-work, as beautiful thing (*Das Schöne*), may be defined in two ways: in its relationship to history and to nature (*Baudelaire* p140; GS I.2, 638). Understood on the basis of its historical

existence, the beautiful thing is an appeal to join those who admired it an earlier time. In this definition, the beautiful appearance (*Schein*) does not consist in there being an 'identical object' (*identische Gegenstand*) which each generation takes up independently of the last and thereby reaches a valuation without recourse to earlier assessments. This historical existence of the work, in that there is no 'identical object' which, in its unchanging existence, underpins the appreciation of its beauty, is what Benjamin calls its life or afterlife in the translation essay:

Denn in seinem Fortleben, das so nicht heißen dürfte, wenn es nicht Wandlung und Erneuerung des Lebendigen wäre, ändert sich das Original. (AÜ 12)

For in its afterlife - which could not be called that if it were not a transforming and renewing of something living - the original changes. (TT 3)

The translation essay thus uses a 'natural' image ('life') for the historical existence of the work. This suggests an essential link between the historical definition and the second definition Benjamin gives in the footnote (the work's relationship to nature).

Concerning this second definition, Benjamin writes that the beautiful thing can be defined as that which "remains the same as itself in essence only under its covering" (*Baudelaire* p140; "wesenhaft sich selbst gleich nur unter der Verhüllung bleibt", GS I.2, 638). This definition, quoted by Benjamin, is taken from his own essay *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* (GS I.1, 195), which was begun in the Summer of 1921, whilst he was finishing the translation essay. Benjamin develops this definition at length in the *Goethe* essay, in criticism of the ideas that beauty is the mere appearance of truth, or the becoming visible of truth in a form not proper to it, or that beauty is the covering of truth which exists object-like beneath it.

Nicht Schein, nicht Hülle für ein anderes ist die Schönheit. Sie selbst ist nicht Erscheinung, sondern durchaus Wesen, ein solches freilich, welches wesenhaft sich selbst gleich nur unter

der Verhüllung bleibt. [...] Denn weder die Hülle noch der verhüllte Gegenstand ist das Schöne, sondern dies ist der Gegenstand in seiner Hülle. Enthüllt aber würde er unendlich unscheinbar sich erweisen. Hier gründet die uralte Anschauung, daß in der Enthüllung das Verhüllte sich verwandelt, daß es 'sich selbst gleich' nur unter der Verhüllung bleiben wird. Also wird allem Schönen gegenüber die Idee der Enthüllung zu der der Unenthüllbarkeit. Sie ist die Idee der Kunstkritik. Die Kunstkritik hat nicht die Hülle zu heben, vielmehr durch deren genaueste Erkenntnis als Hülle erst zur wahren Anschauung des Schönen sich zu erheben [...]: zur Anschauung des Schönen als Geheimnis. [...] Weil nur das Schöne und außer ihm nichts verhüllend und verhüllt wesentlich zu sein vermag, liegt im Geheimnis der göttliche Seinsgrund der Schönheit. (*Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* GS I.1, 195)

Beauty is not a semblance, not a cover for something else. It is not an appearance, but rather thoroughly an essence, one certainly which remains the same as itself in essence only under the covering. [...] For the beautiful thing is neither the cover nor the covered object, rather it is the object in its cover. Uncovered, it would show itself infinitely invisible. Here is the basis of the prehistoric view that what is covered changes in its uncovering, that it will remain 'the same as itself' only under its covering. Thus the idea of uncovering in relation to everything beautiful becomes the idea of uncoverability. This is the idea of art-criticism. Art-criticism has not to lift the cover, rather to raise itself first, through the most precise knowledge of the cover as cover, to the true view of the beautiful thing [...]: to the view of the beautiful thing as a secret. [...] Because only the beautiful thing and nothing else is capable of being essentially covering and covered, the divine ground of the being of beauty lies in this secret.

This complex and enigmatic passage, itself taken from a much longer discussion of the essence of the art-work, can be seen, in the light of the later footnote in the *Baudelaire* essay, to concern the definition of the beautiful thing in relation to nature. Just as, however, its definition in relation to history appealed to a natural image ('life'), so here the definition of the beautiful thing in relation to nature is clarified by an appeal to art-criticism, and thus the history of the work. It is this essential inter-linking of the two definitions, found in the *Baudelaire* essay, which is expressed in the translation essay. That is, the history of a work in its translation can only be understood in connection with the 'nature' of the original; its life only in connection with its criticism and translation. Benjamin's dissertation *The Concept of*

Art-Criticism in German Romanticism (1918-19) maintains an emphasis on the historical definition of the work, while the essay *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* (1921-22) emphasizes the natural definition, and the translation essay, written in the period between them, elliptically presents the two together.²⁵ This intertwining of the definitions of the art-work in the translation essay may best be investigated by allowing the two essays either side of it to sketch Benjamin's view of the passage of Kant's legacy through Fichte, and on to the Early Romantics and Hegel.

Though Benjamin cites the *Goethe* essay in connection with the definition of the art-work in relation to nature, the quotation would seem at first sight to have little to do with nature. The explanation of the beautiful thing as being a unity of both covering and covered, can be understood as parallel to Benjamin's view of symbol, as was discussed in Chapter 3. That is, the art-work does not consist of two distinct realms modelled on a Newtonian understanding of a 'Platonic' divide, such that its truth appears in a material realm in a distorted form, or such that it could be exposed by lifting its cover, its presentational form. Nor, however, is the idea of content simply denied. Rather, the art-work consists in its 'un-uncoverability'²⁶, a unity of what is covered and what covers. This unity must again not be thought of as a simple identity of two realms, which would again be to fall back on the temporality of the Newtonian object, rather, as in the case of the symbol, the unity consists of a 'stretched' temporality. It is this appeal to the unity of the work of art which constitutes its relation to nature. Thus Benjamin writes a little further on in the *Goethe* essay:

Um jener Einheit willen, die Hülle und Verhülltes in [Schönheit] bilden, kann sie wesentlich da allein gelten, wo die Zweiheit von Nacktheit und Verhüllung noch nicht besteht: in der Kunst und in den Erscheinungen der bloßen Natur. (*Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften*, GS I.1, 196)

For the sake of that unity, which the cover and what is covered form in beauty, they can only be essentially valid where the dualism of nakedness and covering does not yet exist: in art and in the appearances of mere nature.

Benjamin is arguing that this relation of cover and what is covered only holds where they do not fall into a dualism of two realms (the realm of a truth which can exist independently and object-like in its nakedness, and the realm of its covering). And for Benjamin, this only holds for the unity of art-works and for the unity 'in the appearances of mere nature'. The context for this assertion in the *Goethe* essay concerns Kant's aesthetics. Immediately before this passage Benjamin mentions Kant's doctrine of beauty as a *Relationscharakter*, which, he states, accomplishes its methodological tendencies in a much higher realm than in a psychologic reception theory of aesthetics (GS I.1, p195-6). It is thus towards Kant one must turn in order to clarify the implications of this unity found both in art and in the appearances of nature, and to clarify the relationship of this unity to art-criticism.²⁷

The *Relationscharakter* which Benjamin refers to is what Kant terms the 'free swing of the mental powers' (CJ p174; 'ein freie Schwung der Gemütskräfte', Ak V, 312) in the perception of the beautiful. In the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, Kant draws a problematic distinction between 'beauty of nature' and 'beauty of art' ('*Naturschönheit*' and '*Kunstschönheit*'); the latter requires, for its appreciation, a concept of that which is being represented, thus he writes:

Wenn aber der Gegenstand für ein Product der Kunst gegeben ist und als solches für schön erklärt werden soll: so muß, weil Kunst immer einen Zweck in der Ursache (und deren Causalität) voraussetzt, zuerst ein Begriff von dem zum Grunde gelegt werden, was das Ding sein soll; und da die Zusammenstimmung des Mannigfaltigen in einem Dinge zu einer innern Bestimmung desselben als Zweck die Vollkommenheit des Dinges ist, so wird in der Beurteilung der Kunstschönheit zugleich die Vollkommenheit des Dinges in Anschlag gebracht werden müssen, wonach in der Beurteilung einer Naturschönheit (als einer solchen) gar nicht die Frage ist. (Ak V, 311)

If, however, the object is given as a product of art, and is as such to be declared beautiful, then, seeing that art always presupposes an end in the cause (and its causality), a concept of what the thing is intended to be must first of all be laid at its basis. And, since the agreement, in a thing, of the manifold with an inner determination belonging to the thing as its end, is the perfection of the thing, it follows that in estimating beauty of art the perfection of the thing must be also taken into account – a matter which in estimating a beauty of nature, as a beauty of nature, is quite irrelevant. (CJ p173)

In estimating a beauty of nature, a concept of the thing as the knowledge of its end is not required, rather only the 'mere form' ('die bloße Form'). However, in the light of Kant's first critique, this distinction between a beauty of art and a beauty of nature is highly problematic. It was shown in Chapter 1 how the experience of an object as such, required the three-fold synthesis to unify the manifold in a stretched temporality according to a concept. Since the three-fold synthesis of the manifold in the transcendental unity of apperception is the root of experience as such, Kant cannot subsequently appeal to the presupposition of a concept in order to differentiate between beauty of art and beauty of nature. In other words, Kant cannot mark a simple distinction between the 'mere form' and the concept of a thing, because it is the synthesis of recognition in a concept which gives the manifold 'mere form'.

The situation is further complicated for Kant because what gives rise to the feeling of pleasure in the perception of a beautiful thing is the 'free swing of the mental powers', and this is brought about only ever through the *form* of the object. Thus Kant's attempted distinction between beauty of nature and beauty of art must always be subsequent to their unity in an idea of form: 'mere form' in one, and the form of the presentation of concept in the other. Kant writes, for example, 'So much for the beautiful representation of an object [in art], which is properly only the form of the presentation of a concept' (CJ p174; 'So viel von der schönen Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes, die eigentlich nur die Form der Darstellung eines Begriffs ist', Ak V, 312). Kant tries, however, to

maintain a distinction between this presentational form and mere form by stating that the former is only found by the artist through long practise:

Daher diese [Form] nicht gleichsam eine Sache der Eingebung, oder eines freien Schwunges der Gemütskräfte, sondern einer langsamen und gar peinlichen Nachbesserung ist, um sie dem Gedanken angemessen und doch der Freiheit derselben nicht nachteilig werden zu lassen. (Ak V, 312-3)

Hence this form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration, or of a free swing of the mental powers, but rather of a slow and even painful process of improvement, directed to making the form adequate to the thought without detriment to the freedom of mental those powers. (CJ p174)

In attempting to differentiate between 'mere form', which would be a 'free swing of the mental powers', and the presentational form of the concept represented in the art work, Kant ascribes to the artist a labour, in which thus through a series of stages, the work reaches a state of perfection in the adequation of form and concept.

Ultimately Kant's attempted distinction rests on the emergence of an uncritical subject-object empiricism in his thinking. As the quotation above shows, for Kant 'the object is given as a product of art' (my emphasis). It is when the critical apparatus of Kant's first Critique is applied to this givenness, that his treatment of beauty becomes productive in a 'much higher realm'. Kant's distinction between 'mere form' of natural beauty and the perfection of the beauty of art becomes a continuum of a series of stages in a continuous labour of reflexion: Experience itself is generated by the running through of the manifold in a determination by a concept; this experience in its givenness is then taken as 'mere form' (beauty of nature) and subsequently further determined by the reapplication (or reflexion) of the concept of what 'the thing is intended to be' (to give the form of a beauty of art); the form of this object is then taken in its givenness (as a product of art), as a subject of further reflexion through the concept, that is, a re-application

of the concept of what it is intended to be; through this reflexion a higher determination is reached in a new stage of the artistic process, and which is again taken as given, so that the labour of reflexion starts again, until perfection (*Vollkommenheit*) is reached. In this application of a critical theory of knowledge to Kant's idea of the difference between objects of nature and objects of art, one sees a glimpse of the complexities of Hegel's phenomenology of experience in its description of the labour of *Geist* in its attainment of the absolute concept - the 'adequation' of form and concept. In order to understand, however, how Benjamin's idea of the art-work and its life in the unity of its form and concept (or content) is different from the Hegelian development of Kant, whilst also liberating Kant's 'methodological tendencies' from an uncritical subject-object dualism, it is necessary to investigate how he saw both Hegel and Early German Romanticism arising from Fichte's development of Kant.

In Fichte's understanding the prevailing reception of Kant's work had turned Kant into a dogmatist, serving a 'beloved, superficial empiricism'.²⁸ That is, the existence of things outside of the self was accepted uncritically, and, as was shown above, this tendency had also crept into Kant's third Critique. Fichte's response to this empiricist interpretation of the first Critique was to cut the self free of any last vestiges of a reliance on an uncritically posited external world by making the transcendental ego into the necessary unity of reflecting subject and reflected object. The ego understood in this way is not a transcendental object, but rather pure and free activity which exists by reason of its own absolute self-positing. On the basis of this activity of the self, as the critical unity of perceived object and transcendental apperception, Fichte raises his *Wissenschaftslehre*:

Hierin liegt nun der ganze Stoff einer möglichen Wissenschaftslehre, aber nicht diese Wissenschaft selbst. Um diese zu Stande zu bringen, dazu gehört noch eine, unter jenern Handlungen

allen nicht enthaltene Handlung des menschlichen Geistes, nämlich die, seine Handlungsart überhaupt zum Bewußtsein zu erheben. [...] Durch diese frei Handlung wird nun etwas, das schon an sich Form ist, die notwendige Handlung der Intelligenz, als Gehalt in eine neue Form, die Form des Wissens, oder des Bewußtseins aufgenommen, und demnach ist jene Handlung eine Handlung der Reflexion. ('Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre', *Sämmtliche Werke* I, 71,72)

The entire contents of a possible *Wissenschaftslehre* lie in this [ie the activity of the self], but not this science itself. In order to create such a science, an additional act of the human mind is required, one not included amongst its other acts, namely, one which rises its own mode of acting to consciousness. [...] By means of this free act, something which in itself is already form (the necessary action of the intellect) becomes the content of a new form (the form of knowledge or of consciousness); and thus this act is an act of reflexion. (*Concerning the Concept of the 'Wissenschaftslehre'* p126,127)²⁹

In this passage, Fichte appeals to a schema of form and content in the construction of his system: the form which transcendently structures experience is made to become the content of a 'new form' through reflexion. Fichte expresses this succinctly in a formulation found in the first edition of the work *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre*, which is also quoted by Benjamin in his dissertation on German Romanticism: the 'act of freedom, through which form becomes the form of form as its content, and turns back on itself, is called reflexion' (p123; '[Die] Handlung der Freiheit, durch welche die Form zur Form der Form als ihres Gehaltes wird und in sich selbst zurückkehrt, heißt Reflexion', I, 67). The above passage raises the question, however, which Benjamin understood as decisive for the reaction of the Early Romantics to Fichte's work: what prevents the 'new form', the knowledge of knowledge or the consciousness of consciousness, from itself becoming the subject of a further reflexion, and thus setting up an infinite series? Fichte avoids this possibility by differentiating the self's act of reflexion from its other acts of knowledge, and this is brought about by appeal to intellectual intuition. This intuition, which cannot be proved to exist, but which everyone must discover for themselves is 'the immediate consciousness

that I act, and what I enact' (*Science of Knowledge* p38; '[Die intellektuelle Anschauung] ist das unmittelbare Bewußtsein, daß ich handle, und was ich handle', I, 463). This immediate intuition, which may be found at any moment of consciousness, is the intuition of the pure activity of the self, that is both the self's reflexion on that which is posited as the not-I (the 'external world') and the self's self-positing as a reflecting I.

The notion of the intellectual intuition both functions to prevent an infinite regress of reflexion, and, because of the immediacy with which the self is able to turn back on its activity, grounds the certainty and systematic unity of Fichte's science.³⁰ For Benjamin, this central focus of Fichte's thought allows two different developments of Fichte's radicalized Kantian system to be seen:

Fichte kennt zwei dergestalt unendlich Aktionsweisen des Ich, nämlich außer der Reflexion noch das Setzen. Man kann die Fichtesche Tathandlung förmlich als eine Kombination dieser beiden unendlichen Aktionsweisen des Ich auffassen, in der sie ihre beideseitige rein formale Nature, ihre Leerheit gegenseitig auszufüllen und zu bestimmen suchen: die Tathandlung ist eine setzende Reflexion oder ein reflektiertes Setzen, '...ein sich Setzen als setzend...keineswegs aber etwa ein bloßes Setzen', formuliert Fichte. Beide Termini besagen etwas verschiedenes, beide sind von großer Wichtigkeit für die Geschichte der Philosophie. Während der Reflexionsbegriff zur Grundlage der frühromantischen Philosophie wird, erscheint - nicht ohne Beziehung auf den letzten - der Begriff des Setzens in seiner vollen Ausgestaltung in der Hegelschen Dialektik. (*Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik*, GS I.1, 22)

Fichte thus recognises two infinite modes of action of the I; that is, besides reflexion, also positing. One can understand the Fichtean activity formally as a combination of these two infinite modes of action of the I, in which they seek to reciprocally fill out and determine the dual and purely formal nature of this combination: '...a self-positing as positing...but in no way some sort of mere positing', formulates Fichte. Both terms mean something different, both are of great importance for the history of philosophy. Whilst the concept of reflexion becomes the basis of early Romantic philosophy, the concept of positing appears - not without connection to the concept of reflexion - in its full development in the Hegelian dialectic.

The early Romantics, in taking up the concept of reflexion from Fichte, were not satisfied with the way he used the idea of intellectual intuition to prevent the infinite regress of reflexions by allowing it to ground

his system as the absolute self-positing act of the I. For the Romantics, such a proposition and thus the form of Fichte's system as a whole, become the content of a further critical reflexion. Freed from its anchor in the self-positing ego, the process of reflection becomes an abyssal multiplication of an endless series of further levels of reflexion. Thus Benjamin writes in his dissertation:

Die Reflexion erweitert sich schranklos, und das in der Reflexion geformte Denken wird zum formlosen Denken, welches sich auf das Absolutum richtet. (GS I.1, p31)

Reflexion expands itself without limit and the thinking formed in reflexion becomes a formless thinking, which is directed towards the Absolutum.

Benjamin uses the word *das Absolutum* here to name the infinity of reflexion, which the early Romantics tried to enclose in their work. The suffix *-tum* is used in German to denote a collectivity or a quality. Benjamin also uses the word *Reflexionsmedium* for this Absolute in order to emphasize the idea that it is not merely a collection of a multiplicity of reflexions, but that it also forms a qualitatively filled medium. It is Benjamin's understanding of the Absolute in Early German Romanticism, as combining both multiplicity and continuity, which brings their work so close to Benjamin's own critical analysis of Kant: in Chapter 3 it was shown how Benjamin's idea of a critical continuum of experience was also thought as a multiplicity of ideas.

Fichte's work provided the Romantics with a far more radical understanding of the transcendental ego in its process of reflexion than Kant, and allowed its function in the limitation of reflexion and the grounding of his system to become clear. As was shown in Chapter 1, systematicity, in its analogy with organism, required, for Kant, a concept as its 'inner determination' and in accordance with the quotation from Kant's *Third Critique* above, the presentation of this concept as the system itself, thus becomes a 'beauty of art'. In this way, art is no longer something to

which the critical system is applied in order to account for the toil of the artist, rather critical philosophy itself becomes understood as art.³¹ By liberating Fichte's idea of reflexion from its anchorage in the ego, the form of Fichte's system becomes the content of a further reflexion, and thus, for the Early Romantics, is taken as a 'product of art'. For the Romantics then, art is taken to name the *Reflexionsmedium* which arises from Fichte's philosophy when the grounding of reflexion in the ego is removed. Thus Benjamin writes:

Im frühromantischen Sinne ist der Mittelpunkt der Reflexion die Kunst, nicht das Ich. [...] Die romantische Kunstanschauung beruht darauf, daß im Denken des Denkens kein Ich-Bewußtsein verstanden wird. Die Ich-freie Reflexion ist eine Reflexion im Absolutum der Kunst. (GS I.1, 39-40)

For the Early Romantics, art is the focal point of reflexion, not the I. The Romantic intuition of art is based on there being no understanding of I-consciousness in the thinking of thinking. The I-free reflexion is a reflexion in the Absolutum of art.

The most obvious consequence of this 'I-free reflexion' is a critical reflexion upon systematic thought, in that no system of thought can make a claim to absolute validity through an appeal to an absolute ground of thought, such as a transcendental ego. There is thus a certain tension between systematicity and the recognition of a system as an artistic presentation, which is expressed in *Athenaeum* fragment 53: 'It is equally fatal for the mind to have a system or not to have one. It will have to decide therefore to combine both' ('Es ist gleich tödlich für den Geist, ein System zu haben, und keins zu haben. Er wird sich also wohl entschließen, beides zu verbinden').³²

Any attempt to conceptualize the Absolutum, itself becomes subject to critical reflexion, such that concepts become artistic presentations, and systems themselves are seen as individual works of art. There can be no straight-forward artistic progression because the systematicity which would account for the goal, and thus give the progress its teleology,

itself becomes an art-work. The result of this, in the work of the Romantics, is that one finds a series of ironic descriptions, images and names for the Absolute, where 'irony' is here itself another name for the process of reflexion. Benjamin thus writes:

Wenn die Kunst als das absolute Reflexionsmedium die systematische Grundkonzeption der Athenäumszeit ist, so findet sich diese fortwährend durch andere Bezeichnungen substituiert, die den Anschein der verwirrenden Vielgestaltigkeit seines Denkens hervorrufen. Das absolute erscheint als Bildung, bald als Harmonie, als Genie oder Ironie, als Religion, Organisation oder Geschichte. (GS I.1 p44)

If art, as the absolute medium of reflexion, is the systematic conceptual foundation of the Athenaeum, it finds itself substituted for other descriptions, which give rise to the appearance of the tangled, many-sidedness of their thought. The absolute appears as culture, as harmony, as genius or irony, as religion, organisation or history.

And Benjamin explains this presentational form of the work of Romantics, in its grappling with the question of systematic thought, with great succinctness as follows:

Schlegels vielfältige Bestimmungsversuche des Absoluten entspringen nicht allein aus einem Mangel, nicht nur aus Unklarheit. Ihnen liegt vielmehr eine eigentümliche positive Tendenz seines Denkens zugrund. In ihr findet die [...] Frage nach dem Grunde der Dunkelheit so vieler Schlegelscher Fragmente und gerade ihrer systematischen Intentionen ihre Antwort. Das Absolute war für Friedrich Schlegel in the Athenaeumszeit allerdings das System in der Gestalt der Kunst. Aber er suchte dies Absolute nicht systematisch, sondern vielmehr umgekehrt das System absolut zu erfassen. (GS I.1, p45)

Schlegel's diverse attempts to determine the absolute sprung not only from lack or unclarity. A far more positive tendency of his thought lies beneath them. In it one finds an answer to the question [...] about the ground of the obscurity of so many of Schlegel's fragments and also their systematic intentions. The absolute was for Friedrich Schlegel in the period of the Athenaeum in fact the system in the figure of art. But he did not seek this absolute systematically; quite to the contrary, he sought to grasp the system absolutely.

Benjamin's formulation, that Schlegel 'sought to grasp the system absolutely', goes to the heart of Benjamin's analysis of the Early Romantics. A work of art or a systematic philosophy is no longer seen to be a stage in the critical reflexion of a transcendently free ego,

such that it may be improved over time and thus become a more perfect presentation of thinking or conceptualization itself and thus approach the absolute. Rather, a work is understood as already containing the absolute in an intensive form, or more precisely, a work itself is, as an enclosing of the Absolute.³³ That is, a work is constituted by an infinite reflexivity between its form and content, whereas in Kant this reflexivity was made into a teleological progress over time. In support of this interpretation of the Romantics, Benjamin quotes one of Schlegel's fragments, as follows:

Gebildet ist ein Werk, wenn es überall scharf begrenzt, innerhalb der Grenzen aber grenzenlos [...] ist, wenn es sich selbst ganz treu, überall gleich und doch über sich selbst erhaben ist. (*Athenaeum* Fragment 297)

A work is formed when it is sharply limited everywhere, but within its limits limitless [...] when it is true to itself, everywhere the same and yet sublimely beyond itself.

From this basis, Benjamin is able to explain the Romantics' idea of art-criticism, in its connection with their idea of 'progressive universal poetry', as the destruction of the limits or boundaries of the work, such as to reinstate the infinite reflexion of the Absolutum. Benjamin quotes the well known *Athenaeum* fragment 116, which reads as a manifesto of their thinking of criticism:

Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie. Ihre Bestimmung ist nicht bloß, alle getrennte Gattungen der Poesie wieder zu vereinigen und die Poesie mit der Philosophie und Rhetorik in Berührung zu setzen. Sie will und soll auch Poesie und Prosa, Genialität und Kritik, Kunstpoesie und Naturpoesie bald mischen, bald verschmelzen, die Poesie lebendig und gesellig und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch machen. [...] Nur sie kann gleich dem Epos ein Spiegel der ganzen umgebenden Welt, ein Bild des Zeitalters werden. Und doch kann auch sie am meisten Zwischen dem Dargestellten und dem Darstellenden, frei von allem realen und idealen Interesse auf den Flügeln der poetischen Reflexion immer Wieder potenzieren und wie in einer endlosen Reihe von Spiegeln verveelfachen. [...] Die romantische Dichtart ist noch im Werden; ja das ist ihr eigentliches Wesen, da sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann. Sie kann durch keine Theorie erschöpft werden, und nur eine divinatorische Kritik durfte es wagen, ihr Ideal charakterisieren zu wollen. (Vol I, p118)

Romantic poetry is a progressive universal poetry. Its mission is not merely to reunite all separate genres of poetry and to put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetorics. It will, and should, now mingle and now amalgamate poetry and prose, genius and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature, render poetry living and social, and life and society poetic. [...] Romantic poetry alone can, like the epic, become a mirror of the entire surrounding world, a picture of its age. And yet, it too can soar, free from all real and ideal interests, on the wings of poetic reflection, midway between the presented and the presenting. It can even exponentiate this reflection and multiply it as in an endless series of mirrors. [...] The Romantic type of poetry is still becoming; indeed, its peculiar essence is that it is always becoming and that it can never be completed. It cannot be exhausted by any theory, and only a divinatory criticism might dare to characterize its ideal.

It is in explicating this idea of the constant becoming of 'progressive universal poetry' in its critical reflexion upon the boundaries of works, genres and disciplines (each as 'enclosures' of the Absolute), that Benjamin elliptically mentions in a footnote that the temporality of this becoming 'follows from Romantic Messianism, and cannot here be justified' ('folgt aus dem romantischen Messianismus und kann hier nicht begründet werden', GS I.1, 92). He argues that the idea of 'progressive universal poetry' is easily misunderstood, if its connection with the idea of the *Reflexionsmedium* is not observed. That is, it must not be taken as 'a mere function of the undetermined and unending nature of the task, on one side, and the empty unendingness of time on the other' ('eine bloße Funktion der unbestimmten Unendlichkeit der Aufgabe einerseits, der leeren Unendlichkeit der Zeit andreseits', p91). Benjamin writes further:

Also nicht um ein Fortschreiten ins Leere, um ein vages Immerbesser-dichten, sondern um stetig umfassendere Entfaltung und Steigerung der poetischen Formen handelt es sich. Die zeitliche Unendlichkeit, in der dieser Prozeß stattfinden, ist ebenfalls eine mediale und qualitative. (GS I.1, 93)

It is not a question of progress into the void, of a vague always-getting-better-poetry, but of a constantly more embracing unfolding and intensification of the poetic forms. The temporal unendingness in which this process takes place is likewise a medial and qualitative one.³⁴

In contrast to the process of improvement which Kant saw in the artist's labour of reflexion on the form of the art-work, and which Benjamin

characterizes here as a *Werdeprozeß*, the unfolding of the art-work's limitation of the Absolute into the *Reflexionsmedium* is an *Erfüllungsprozeß*. This idea of fulfillment, in connection with an idea of a critical *Reflexionsmedium*, is parallel to the idea of fulfilled time, which Benjamin developed in *Trauerspiel und Tragödie* (1916) and its connection to his idea of the critical continuum of experience, explored in Chapter 3.

The identification, which Benjamin makes between the view of temporality in the Romantic ideas of progressive universal poetry and criticism, and his own understanding of a stretching temporality, is the key point of the dissertation and marks the proximity with which Benjamin considered the Early Romantics' work in relation to his own. It is on the basis of this identification that Benjamin takes up the Romantic idea of criticism into view of translation. However, this interpretation of the temporality of progressive universal poetry, is also perhaps the most problematic point of the thesis. It is not clear that a 'medial and qualitative' temporality can be generated from an idea of unending reflexion, given that this latter is derived from liberating reflexion from its grounding in a Kantian transcendental ego. For Kant, form and content are held apart by his idea of the *a priori*, which was shown in Chapter 1 to be modelled on a Newtonian temporality. It would thus not seem possible to move to a 'medial' or 'fulfilled' temporality by making infinitely reflexive a starting point which uses a temporality of isolated now-points.³⁵ That Benjamin appeals to an idea of messianism to underpin this rather 'violent' interpretative move, indicates that his dissertation constitutes a critical appropriation of the resources of Early Romantic thinking by liberating it from a narrow conception of temporality³⁶. Given that Benjamin does 'find' a fulfilled temporality in the Romantics' work, it is possible to see his dissertation as the immediate source of the ideas of the art-work and its criticism (its life and

afterlife), which inform the *Goethe* essay and the essay on translation.

The idea of the art-work as constituted by its containment of the Absolutum, gives rise to a view of criticism as the unfolding of the work's own reflexivity. Benjamin writes as follows concerning the Early Romantic idea of criticism:

Kritik ist also, ganz im Gegensatz zur heutigen Auffassung ihres Wesens, in ihrer zentralen Absicht nicht Beurteilen, sondern einerseits Vollendung, Ergänzung, Systematisierung des Werks, andererseits seine Auflösung im Absoluten. (GS I.1, p78)

Criticism is thus, completely in opposition to today's opinion of its essence, in its central intention not judgment, but on the one hand completion, fulfillment, systematization of the work, on the other hand its dissolution in the Absolute.

Criticism is thus not the judgment of work by the application of external rules of form or morality, rather criticism is immanent to the work itself since the work is constituted by a limiting of the infinite reflexivity of the absolute and thus by its own intrinsic criticisability. The work thus does not exist statically in a moment of time, as does a Newtonian object, rather it exists as its unfolding in a fulfilled temporality. In unfolding itself, the work thus changes, and criticism has the power to destroy the work in the dissolution of its limitation of the Absolute. Benjamin's two-fold definition of the art-work discussed above, thus has its roots in his interpretation of German Romanticism. The definition in relation to nature is the work's containment of infinite reflexivity in the inability to separate its form and content according to a Newtonian temporality. The definition in relation to history is the work's unfolding of its reflexivity in fulfilled temporality. It is this two-fold understanding of the work which underpins Benjamin's idea of the work's translatability

The Romantics themselves recognised that there was a form of translation which would have the same function as criticism, and Benjamin quotes Novalis in this context, in the dissertation:

Beispiele socher vollendenden, positiven Kritik schweben Novalis vor, wenn er von einer gewissen Art von Übersetzungen, welche er mythische nennt, sagt: 'Sie stellen den reinen,

vollendeten Charakter des individuellen Kunstwerks dar [...].' Vielleicht denkt Novalis, indem er Kritik und Übersetzung einander nahe rückt, an eine mediale stetige Überführung des Werkes aus einer Sprache in die andere. (GS I.1, 70)

Novalis has in mind examples of such a completing, positive form of criticism when he speaks of a certain variety of translations, which he calls mystical: 'They present the pure, completed character of the art-work [...].' In that Novalis brings criticism and translation close to each other, he is perhaps thinking of a medial, constant transference of the work out of one language into another.

In the translation essay the 'life' of a work is constituted by its translatability, such that a translation issues from its 'afterlife'. This idea of 'life' may now be understood as the original's reflexivity and its containment of the critical *Reflexionsmedium* in order to be, as a work. Its afterlife is the unfolding of its reflexivity in the temporality of the *Erfüllungsprozeß*. Benjamin makes reference to the Romantics' 'insight into the life of the literary work' (AÜ 15/TT 76) in the context of stating that a translation 'transplants' ('verpflanzt') the original 'ironically' into a 'definitive linguistic realm' ('endgültigeren Sprachbereich', AÜ 15/TT 75), in so far as it cannot be displaced by a further translation of the translation. This may be explained by noting that in his dissertation, the main criticisms Benjamin levels at Schlegel concern instances when the latter forgets that the Absolute may only be grasped ironically and thus seems understand it as the objective content of a work (GS I.1, p73). A translation is, therefore, misunderstood for Benjamin, if it is considered as having an objective content (ie. that of the meaning or 'life' of the original); it must, rather, always be regarded ironically. That is, it must be regarded *formally* in the way it moves the original into the *Reflexionsmedium*, understood here as pure language, by allowing the two 'forms' (the language of the original and that of the translation) to be seen as part of the multiplicitous nature of pure language.

The Romantics understood 'progressive universal poetry' as the amalgamation of genres, disciplines, and other realms considered as bounded (eg. 'work' and 'world'), through their reflexion into the *Absolutum*. Benjamin, in the translation essay, extends this process to include languages. The process of translation allows languages to be broken free of a conception of them as a range of isolated 'forms' of expressing meaning and allows their multiplicity to be seen as the multiplicitous nature of the continuum of pure language. Pure language is the 'purposiveness' which governs the life of the original and its afterlife in translation (AÜ 12/TT 72). Translation, for Benjamin, thus allows languages to break out of their being modelled as a multiplicity of isolated Newtonian objects and allows their 'convergence' into a continuous medium to be glimpsed.

So ist die Übersetzung zuletzt zweckmäßig für den Ausdruck des innersten Verhältnisses der Sprachen zueinander. Sie kann dieses verborgene Verhältnis selbst unmöglich offenbaren, unmöglich herstellen; aber darstellen, indem sie es keimhaft oder intensiv verwirklicht, kann sie es. [...] Jenes gedachte, innerste Verhältnis der Sprachen ist aber das einer eigentümlichen Konvergenz. (AÜ 12)

Translation is thus ultimately purposeful for the expression of the most inner reciprocal relationship of languages. It cannot possibly reveal this hidden relationship itself, or produce it, but it can present it, by actualizing it embryonically or intensively. [...] This posited, most inner relationship of languages is, though, that of a peculiar convergence. (TT 72)

Whereas, for the Romantics, criticism was aimed at the 'convergence' of genres, styles or disciplines in the *Reflexionsmedium*, translation is concerned with the 'convergence' of languages in a *Reflexionsmedium* which is understood, specifically, as linguistic. In his dissertation Benjamin had particularly emphasized Schlegel's 'linguistic' understanding of the Absolute (GS I.1, 47) and had appealed to Novalis, who had a greater leaning towards a mystical or kabbalistic language theory, to emphasize this point above Schlegel's occasional lack of 'irony' in his descriptions of the Absolute. This concern to stress the linguistic nature

of the Absolute would seem to account for Benjamin's ranking of criticism below translation as a 'lesser moment in the afterlife of a work' (AÜ 15/TT 76) in the translation essay. That is, criticism in its concern with genre of writing led Schlegel too easily to an idea of Absolute as itself a work - a work which would consist of the amalgamation of all genres in its *prose* - and thus ascribing to the Absolute an objective, Platonic existence (GS I.1, 90).³⁷ Translation, on the contrary, steers away from this mistake by being concerned not with genres of writing, but with languages themselves. It is translation which releases language from being the linguistic form of the work's content and allows the work to reflexively unfold itself into the pure language, through its own dissolution, the extinguishing of its meaning.

It was the Romantics' emphasis on form and on the multiplicity of forms in the continuum of the *Reflexionsmedium*, which enabled Benjamin to combine their idea of the nature of the art-work with a linguistic phenomenology which stressed 'mode of meaning' (or *Bedeutendes*, the 'form' of *Bedeutung*) above 'what is meant' (or *Bedeutetes*, the 'content' of *Bedeutung*), and the extinguishing of the latter in translation. Benjamin's idiosyncratic mixing of phenomenology with the Romantics' radicalization of a Kantian aesthetics of the art-work, may itself be seen as a Romantic amalgamation of 'genres' of philosophy. However, there is a far more essential reason why Benjamin should have wished to link Early German Romanticism to phenomenology, and that is to provide the latter with a more critical thinking of history and tradition.³⁸ The phenomenological approach to language which Benjamin saw emerging in Husserl's work was profoundly ahistorical in its dismissal of traditionality and emphasis on the subject and its empirical experience.³⁹ A merely phenomenological account of translation would have emphasized the presence of the original before the translator, without an understanding of the temporality of the

way the translation comes *after* the original or the way the original is handed on to the present. Rather both would be collapsed into the subjectivity of the translator:

Was damals jung, kann später abgebraucht, was damals gebräuchlich, später archaisch klingen. Das Wesentliche solcher Wandlungen wie auch der ebenso ständigen des Sinnes in der Subjektivität der Nachgeborenen statt im eigensten Leben der Sprache und ihrer Werke zu suchen, hieße [...] Grund und Wesen einer Sache verwechseln, strenger gesagt aber, einen der gewaltigsten und fruchtbarsten historischen Prozesse aus Unkraft des Denkens leugnen. (p13)

What once sounded fresh, can later sound hackneyed; what was once current can later sound archaic. To seek that which is essential to such changes of connotation, along with the equally constant changes of meaning, in the subjectivity of later generations rather than in the very life of language and its works, would mean [...] to confuse the ground and essence of a matter; or more rigorously put: to deny one of the most powerful and fruitful historical processes out of an impotence of thought. (p73)

It is the work's translatability which is 'essential' ('*wesentlich*') to its life and afterlife (AÜ 10/TT 71). To seek 'that which is essential' ('das Wesentliche') to changes in the use of language in subjectivity, is not to look for the 'essence' at all, but rather for a ground which both accounts for the changes and provides a basis over and above language, from where those changes may be investigated. What Benjamin is proposing here, though in an veiled way, is a rethinking of *Wesen* as the temporality of language, that is, a thinking of it through the temporality of the life and afterlife of language, and thus not as an atemporal 'ground', in the sense of a realm existing 'above' temporal change in a certain Platonic sense.

It is precisely such a confusion of essence and ground which is found in Husserl's essay, *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, which was mentioned above. Husserl was concerned to counter a certain relativism which Dilthey's historicism had introduced in the idea that the study of history destroys a belief in the universal validity of any philosophy or knowledge. 'It is easy to see that historicism, if consistently carried

through, carries over into extreme sceptical subjectivism', Husserl wrote (PRS 186; 'Man sieht leicht, daß der Historizismus konsequent durchgeführt in den extremen skeptischen Subjektivismus übergeht', PSW 43).

Husserl's response is to repeat what was fundamentally Kant's view of history and tradition; in Chapter 1 it was shown how Kant's understanding of the temporality of the *a priori* allowed him to project the transcendental ego across history as an ahistorical ground for reason.

And Husserl writes:

Denn das Reich der Phänomenologie, als einer Wesenslehre, erstreckt sich vom individuellen Geiste alsbald über das ganze Feld des allgemeinen Geistes. (PSW 47)

For the realm of phenomenology, as a theory of essence, extends immediately from the individual spirit/mind over the whole area of the general spirit. (PRS 188)

For Benjamin this was simply to replace one form of historicism with even more insidious one.⁴⁰ Both rely on an implicit appeal to an atemporal realm, a realm separated from temporal change in the same way in which Kant's *a priori* was ultimately modelled on the isolation of Newtonian objects in the time-order. The relativism of Dilthey's view is based on an idea of empathy with the past, 'the way it really was'; the present passes away into an object-like state which the historian can peruse at his leisure. For Husserl, the *Geist* of the phenomenologist becomes the atemporal ground for the historical progression of essences. Husserl's phenomenological investigation aims thus not at essences at all, but at the 'ground' of these essences. From this firm ground, the philosophical and scientific views of the past can be entered into and tested according to the contemporary phenomenological intuitions of the mind, so that:

wir [...] nichts Überlieferetes als Anfang gelten und uns durch keinen noch so großen Namen blenden lassen, vielmehr in freier Hingabe an die Problem selbst und die von ihnen ausgehenden Forderungen die Anfänge zu gewinnen suchen. (PSW 60)

we [...] allow nothing traditional to pass as a beginning, nor allow ourselves to be dazzled by any names however great, but rather seek to attain the beginnings in a free dedication to the problems themselves and to the demands stemming from them.
(PRS 195)

For Benjamin, the task of the translator does not involve an attempt to empathize with the era to which the original belongs, in order to render it in all its strangeness to modern thinking; nor does the translator take up the experiences, concerns and problems expressed in the original and render them in their phenomenological equivalents for the modern mind. Rather, Benjamin's thinking of translation takes up the critical thinking of history and tradition which he found in German Romanticism. He found in their idea of the art-work a profound thinking of tradition which he could take up into his thinking of the continuum of experience, developed in the Kant essay, and thus which he could use to develop the consequences of understanding both translator (or historian) and original (or historical object) as existing in fulfilled, messianic time. The full force of Benjamin's thinking of history and tradition is not laid out in the translation essay, but rather only later, particularly in the texts *Konvolut N* and *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* ('Theses on the Philosophy of History').⁴¹ The former develops a thinking of history in terms of an idea of reading 'the book of the past'; but as was argued in Chapter 3, reading and translation may be seen as different names for Benjamin's thinking through the temporality of language, and thus *Konvolut N* is of central importance for understanding the consequences for a view of history and tradition, of Benjamin's view of translation.

IV. The Task of the Translator

If, in the translation essay, it is the translation which 'catches fire' ('*sich entzündet*', AÜ 14/TT 74) on the life of past works, then in Benjamin's later work it is the 'prophets gaze, which catches fire on the summits of the past' (IN 9,71, *Smith* p64; 'Seherblick, der sich an den Gipfeln der Vergangenheit entzündet', GS V.1, 592) and the historian who is able 'to fan the spark of hope in the past' (*Theses* p255; 'im Vergangenheit den Funken der Hoffnung anzufachen', GS I.2, 695). This transformation of the translator into the prophet/historian is not so much a progression in Benjamin's thinking, as his utilization of the rich imagery of German Romanticism for his own imagistic, and terminologically fluid way of thinking (which was discussed in Chapter 3). In one of the notes to the *Theses*, Benjamin makes explicit reference to *Athenaeum* fragment 80: 'The historian is a prophet facing backwards' ('Der Historiker ist ein rückwärts gekehrter Prophet', GS I.3, 1237). This late reference to the Romantics is only one of many links which could be traced from Benjamin's early work to the later; however, given the purposely fluid nature of Benjamin's terminology, no attempt will be made to trace the 'development' of Benjamin's thought, rather his later writings on history will be used to lay out the thinking of history which lies already in the translation essay.

Benjamin's reference to the 'translatability' of the original (TT 70/AÜ 9) must not be misunderstood as an implicit claim that the translator has access to the objective nature of the work being translated.⁴² What the translation essay does not make explicit is the particular hermeneutic relationship which links the original and translator, in their being understood through the life and afterlife of the work, and in the way both stand within a fulfilled temporality. It may be that Benjamin

thought that by linking a phenomenological approach to language to a Romantic idea of the life of the art-work, he could more effectively bring out this hermeneutical dimension from the latter, however, it is clear from the writings of the Romantics themselves that they did not hold to an idea of objective or presuppositionless access to the past. Schlegel's most sustained fragment on history in the *Athenaeum* runs as follows:

Da man immer so sehr gegen die Hypothesen redet, so sollte man doch einmal versuchen, die Geschichte ohne Hypothese anzufangen. Man kann nicht sagen, daß etwas ist, ohne zu sagen, was es ist. Indem man sie denkt, bezieht man Fakta schon auf Begriffe, und es ist doch wohl nicht einerlei, auf welche. Weiß man dies, so bestimmt und wählt man sich selbst unter den möglichen Begriffen die notwendigen, auf die man Fakta jeder Art bezielen soll. Will man es nicht anerkennen, so bleibt die Wahl dem Instinkt, dem Zufall oder der Willkür überlassen, man schmeichelt sich, reine solide Empirie ganz a posteriori zu haben, und hat eine höchst einseitige, höchst dogmatizistische und transcendente Ansicht a priori. ('Athenaeum Fragment', No.226)

Since people are always so much against hypotheses, they should try sometime to begin studying history without one. It's impossible to say that a thing is, without saying what it is. In the very process of thinking of facts, one relates them to concepts, and, surely, it is not a matter of indifference to which. If one is aware of this, then it is possible to determine and choose consciously among all the possible concepts the necessary ones to which facts of all kinds should be related. If one refuses to recognize this, then the choice is surrendered to instinct, chance or fate; and so one flatters oneself that one has established a pure solid empiricism quite a posteriori, when what one actually has is an a priori outlook that's highly one-sided, dogmatic, and transcendental.

Schlegel's idea of choosing the 'necessary' concepts by which the past is reconstructed in opposition to imagining an objective access to the past, is of great importance for understanding Benjamin's approach. Schlegel's interest in the writing of history was not, however, merely a marginal issue in relation to his literary and critical concerns. The period in which the Romantics wrote was marked by the influence of neoclassicism, which held up the ancient world of Greece as a golden era of the purity and perfection of literature. The first half of the Eighteenth Century had seen an explosion of interest in Antiquity, led by the historian and

archaeologist Winckelmann. To begin with, Antiquity was considered as a whole, an amalgam of the Greek and Roman cultures. The early translations of Greek works, which were very much Germanizations, also tended to efface the differences between the ancient and modern cultures.⁴³ This changed with the translations of Homer by Voss in the late Eighteenth Century; Voss attempted to remain true to the Greek metrical forms and his work began an influential trend towards the 'Greekization' of the German language, which was to include Hölderlin's work. Whereas before, Antiquity as a whole had been regarded as a cultural model, a divide now opened between the Greek and Roman, as the strangeness and distance of Greek culture became more apparent. It is in this context that the Romantics felt a greater affinity with Roman Culture, with its eclecticism, mixture of genres and playing with forms and subject matter, than with the perceived purity of Greek writings. Friedrich Schlegel writes for example in 1797: 'The Romans are nearer to us and more intelligible than the Greeks'.⁴⁴

The Romantics developed their ideas of literature very much in opposition to an aesthetics which judged the present against the posited perfection of a golden age. Schlegel also writes in his *Critical*

Fragments:

Man sollte sich nie auf den Geist des Altertums berufen, wie auf eine Autorität. Es ist eine eigene Sache mit den Geistern; sie lassen sich nicht mit Händen greifen und dem Andern vorhalten. (*Kritische Schriften* p11)

You should never appeal to the spirit of the ancients as if to an authority. It's a peculiar thing with spirits: they don't let themselves be grabbed by the hand and shown to others.

The most radical rejection of the historicism which lay behind neo-classicalism is found in a note by Novalis:

Erst jetzt fängt die Antike an zu entstehen, [...] sie ist uns eigentlich nicht gegeben - sie ist nicht vorhanden - sondern sie soll von uns erst hervorgebracht werden. (*Novalis: Schriften, Vol II, p640, 642*)⁴⁵

Only now is antiquity coming into existence, [...] it is not a given - it is not present to hand - rather it must first be produced by us.

This emphasis on the *now* of the writing of history or the translating of a text, lies implicitly in Benjamin's translation essay, though is hinted at explicitly in its very title which marks the essay as concerning the task of the *translator*.

The affinity which the Romantics felt with Roman culture, in its position of traditionality in relation to the Greek and translation of Greek texts, is itself marked in their name, *die Romantik* (which also is a reference to their theory of the novel, *das Roman*, and its prose as the amalgamation of all genres), and it is significant in this regard that Benjamin should say of them, in one his letters dating from the period of his work on his dissertation, that 'certainly Romanticism is the last movement which once more kept tradition alive' ('freilich ist die Romantik die letzte Bewegung, die noch ein mal die Tradition hinüberrettete', *Brife I*, 138). This motive of rescuing tradition becomes prominent in Benjamin's later work; for example:

Wovor werden die Phänomene gerettet? Nicht nur, und nicht sowohl vor dem Verruf und des Mißachtung in die sie geraten sind als vor der Katastrophe wie eine bestimmte Art ihrer Überlieferung, ihre 'Würdigung als Erbe' sie sehr oft darstellt. (IN 9,4), GS V.1, p591)

From what are phenomena rescued? Not just and not so much from the ill-repute and contempt into which they have fallen, but from the catastrophe when a certain form of tradition presents them so often in terms of their 'value as a legacy'. (*Smith* p63)

And in the *Theses*:

In jeder Epoche muß versucht werden, die Überlieferung von neuem dem Konformismus abzugewinnen, der im Begriff steht, sie zu überwältigen. (GS I.2, 695)

In every epoch the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is about to overpower it. (*Theses* p255)

Benjamin is here proposing a rethinking of traditionality in the face of

historicism, the two fundamental forms of which were discussed above. The first quotation above may be regarded as aiming at a Husserlian view of history where the past is a legacy for the phenomenologist who uses it to reach an intuitive certainty of the conceptuality of his own thinking. The second quotation aims more at Dilthey and the conformism that results from the idea that the historian has a presuppositionless access to the past in his empathy with it. It is in opposition to these views that Benjamin understands the task of the translator. To the extent which Benjamin found Romanticism to be a movement 'keeping tradition alive' in its self-perceived affinity to the traditionality of Roman culture in relation to Greek, one may regard Benjamin as asserting the importance of taking up once again this Roman position. In Chapter 4 it was shown that this was also the implicit thrust of Heidegger's rethinking of tradition, and his concern with *translating* Greek philosophy. In order to further bring to light this parallel between Heidegger and Benjamin, it is necessary to specify more clearly Benjamin's understanding of the *present* in which the translator stands and of the way a past text is read hermeneutically from this present.

In the context of Benjamin's linguistic phenomenology of the circularity of experience and knowledge of experience which was discussed in Chapter 3, the past is also understood 'linguistically': Benjamin talks of reading 'the book of past events' [N 4,2] (*Smith* p52; 'das Buch des Geschehenen', GS V.1, 580). In the translation essay the emphasis is upon the way a translation's ability to point to a messianically linguistic realm came from its bringing together of two languages (the original's and the translator's own language); in the later work, it is a messianic temporality which is brought to light in the historian's bringing together of a past event with the present (the historian's own time). The history which is thus written is thus parallel to the writing of a translation,

and is called by Benjamin a 'dialectical image' - though explicitly an image which is read:

Nur dialektische Bilder sind echt geschichtliche, d.h. nicht archaische Bilder. Das gelesene Bild, will sagen das Bild im Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit trägt im höchsten Grade den Stempel des kritischen, gefährlichen Moments, welcher allem Lesen zugrunde liegt. (IN 3,11, GS V.1, 578)

Only dialectical images are genuinely historical images, that is, not archaic images. The image that is read, meaning the image in the now of recognisability, bears to the highest degree the stamp of that critical, dangerous moment that lies at the base of all reading. (Smith p50-1)

The idea of translation in Benjamin's early essay has become the 'dialectic image' in this later work; the 'now of recognisability' names the hermeneutical present in which the historian/translator reads the past event/work. This is confirmed by two lengthy working notes to the *Theses*, titled respectively 'Das dialektische Bild' (GS I.3, 1238) and 'Das Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit' (GS I.3, 1237). In the former the reading of the past event is linked to the question of translation:

Die historische Methode ist eine philologische, der das Buch des Lebens zugrunde liegt. 'Was nie geschrieben wurde, lesen' heißt es bei Hofmannsthal. Der Leser, an den hier zu denken ist, ist der wahre Historiker. Die Vielheit der Historien ist der Vielheit der Sprachen ähnlich. Universalgeschichte im heutigen Sinn kann immer nur eine Art von Esperanto sein. Die Idee der Universalgeschichte ist eine messianische. (GS I.3, 1238)

The historical method is a philological one, based on the book of life. 'To read what was never written', Hofmannsthal calls it. The reader who is to be thought of here, is the true historian. The multiplicity of histories is similar to the multiplicity of languages. Universal history in the modern sense can only ever be a form of Esperanto. The idea of universal history is a messianic one.

Just as the higher purpose of the translation is to allow the 'convergence' of the multiplicity of languages to be glimpsed not as a higher unity, but as a multiplicity constituting 'pure language', so here the multiplicity of histories, of 'dialectical images' of the past also points to that temporal-linguistic continuum. 'Pure language' is not a form of 'Esperanto' connected to a desire for the universal communicability of the

original; on the contrary it is reached through the 'death of the intentio' and thus through the giving up of a posited referentiality to the objective meaning of the past text/event.

It is essential to remember that this loss of objective reference is not an emphasis on subjectivity for Benjamin, which would be simply to move from one form of historicism to another (ie. from Dilthey's to Husserl's). Rather, 'pure language' or messianic 'universal history' marks Benjamin's attempt to think the temporality of language, in relation to the handing on of past texts/events to the present (the traditionality of the present), with a profound 'finitude'. That is, the attempt to think the traditionality or historicity of the present in a way which does not make implicit appeal to a Newtonian temporality in the separation of a 'timeless' realm (of the meaning of the past historical object, or of the phenomenological subject) from the realm of 'time'. Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language is the attempt to think the linguistic past through the idea of a temporal-linguistic continuum which stretches from past and present as the afterlife or after-history of the text/event in its fulfilled temporality. There can thus be no question of returning to the objective past, or of bringing the past to the subjective present, beyond the hermeneutic circularity in which object and subject, experience and knowledge of experience, exist in the temporal-linguistic continuum of experience. It is the dialectical images, existing in a multiplicity like the 'ideas' in Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, which, like those 'ideas', embody individual hermeneutic circularities of experience and knowledge of experience; or more precisely in the context of history: the past event and knowledge of that event in the present. Whilst Benjamin's thinking through of such individual hermeneutic circularities was discussed at length in Chapter 3, it may now be seen that a conception of the present is essential in such a view. Just as in Chapter 4 it was

shown how Heidegger's thinking of tradition and translation had to be understood as fundamentally linked to his idea of the 'hermeneutic situation' of the present, the same may also be seen to be true for Benjamin. The present in which the translator/historian comes to knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of the past and writes the translation/history is the *Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*.

It is in the lengthy working note to the *Theses*, entitled 'Das Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit' that Benjamin draws on the Romantics' identification of the historian with the prophet.

Das Wort, der Historiker sei ein rückwärts gekehrter Prophet kann auf zweierlei Weise verstanden werden. Die Überkommene meint, in eine entlegene Vergangenheit sich zurückversetzend, prophezeie der Historiker, was für jene noch als Zukunft zu gelten hatte, inzwischen aber ebenfalls zur Vergangenheit geworden ist. Diese Anschauung entspricht aufs genaueste der geschichtlichen Einfühlungstheorie, die Fustel de Coulonges in den Rat gekleidet hat: Si vous voulez revivre une époque, oubliez que vous savez ce qui s'est passé après elle. - Mann kann das Wort aber auch ganz anders deuten und es so verstanden: der Historiker wendet der eignen Zeit den Rücken, und sein Seherblick entzündet sich an den immer tiefer Vergangene hinschwindenden Gipfeln der früheren Menschgeschlechter. Dieser Seherblick eben ist es, dem die eigene Zeit weit deutlicher gegenwärtig ist als den Zeitgenossen, die 'mit ihr Schritt halten'. [...] Genau dieser Begriff von Gegenwart ist es, der der Aktualität der echten Geschichtsschreibung zugrunde liegt. Wer in der Vergangenheit wie in einer Rumpelkammer von Exempeln und Analogien herumstöbert, der hat noch nicht einmal einen Begriff davon, wieviel in einem gegebenen Augenblick von ihrer Vergegenwärtigung abhängt. (GS I.3, 1237-8)

The expression, 'the historian is a backwards facing prophet', can be understood in two ways. The usual one means that the historian, placing himself back into a remote past, prophesies what was still the future for it, which meantime, however, has become past. This view corresponds precisely to the historical theory of empathy, which Fustel de Coulonges dressed up in the following advice: 'If you want to relive an epoch, forget that you know what has happened since'. One can, though, also interpret the expression above differently: the historian turns his back on his own time, and his prophetic gaze sets itself ablaze on the peaks of earlier generations, constantly dwindling deeper into the past. This prophetic gaze is the one to which his own time is far more clearly present than his contemporaries, who 'keep abreast of the times'. [...] It is precisely this concept of the present, which grounds the actuality of the genuine writing of history. Whoever rummages around in the past, like in a junkroom of examples and analogies, has no idea of how much, in a given moment, depends on its present-ation.

The quotation starts with a rejection of the historicist idea of 'empathy'; Benjamin makes clear that the prophet/historian must not be understood as prophesying another, perhaps more hopeful, future of a past event, (and this thus flatly contradicts the interpretation of Benjamin's work which has become influential from Peter Szondi's work⁴⁶). The prophet/historian turns his back on the present, but sees it more clearly than his contemporaries, and understands at the same time that the past depends on the present, on its being made present, on its 'present-ation' (*'Vergegenwärtigen'*). The section which has been omitted from the above quotation concerns a quotation from Turgot (repeated in [N 12a,1]) about the non-static nature of a subject of research, in that it has changed several times, in the time it takes to observe it. Again this is a rejection of an idea of the static, object-like nature of the past. The past 'itself' depends on its being made *present*, in other words, 'our coming was expected on earth' (*Theses* p254; 'sind wir auf der Erde erwartet worden', GS I.2, 694).⁴⁷ This rejection of objectivity must again not be taken as correlative emphasis on subjectivity or anthropocentrism, but rather as the expression of the necessarily hermeneutic way history is written in and for the present.

Benjamin's later writings have many images for this understanding of history as written in a 'now of recognisability'; it is stated most plainly in [N 9a, 8] as follows: 'For the materialist historian, every epoch with which he occupies himself is only a fore-history of the one that really concerns him.' (*Smith* p65; 'Für den materialistischen Historiker ist jede Epoche, mit der <er> sich beschäftigt, nur Vorgeschichte derer, um die es ihm selber geht', GS V.1, p593). Just as the 'now' of the task of the translator is the 'now' of his knowledge of the present state of his own language, so the 'now' of the historian is the 'now' of his knowledge of the present state of affairs. This 'now' does not presuppose an objective

access to the present, such as would be presupposed in a Husserlian phenomenology of essences. Rather, the 'now' is always the 'now' of a determinate 'now of recognisability', and thus belongs to the hermeneutic circularity of an individual dialectical image. Likewise, the past is not an objective or intuited past, but rather the past of a determinate 'now of recognisability', or what Benjamin calls the 'historischer Index' ('historiographical index') of a past event. Further, the (multiplicity of) dialectical images written by the historian serve a higher 'purposiveness', as do translations: the bringing together of past and present in the hermeneutic circularity of an individual image serves to extinguish the 'intentio' of the image to an objective realm and thus to point to the temporal-linguistic continuum of 'pure language' or messianic 'universal history'.

Was die Bilder von den 'Wesenheiten' der Phänomenologie unterscheidet, das ist ihr historischer Index. [...] Jedes Jetzt ist das Jetzt einer bestimmten Erkennbarkeit. In ihm ist die Wahrheit mit Zeit bis zum Zerspringen geladen. (Dies Zerspringen, nichts anders, ist der Tod der Intentio, der also mit der Geburt der echten historischen Zeit, der Zeit der Wahrheit, zusammenfällt.) Nicht so ist es, daß das Vergangene sein Licht auf das Gegenwärtige oder das Gegenwärtige sein Licht auf das Vergangene wirft, sondern Bild ist dasjenige, worin das Gewesene mit dem Jetzt blitzhaft zu einer Konstellation zusammentritt. Mit andern Worten: Bild ist die Dialektik im Stillstand. (IN 3, 11, GS V.1, 578)

What differentiates images from the 'essences' of phenomenology is their historiographical index. [...] Every now is the now of a determinate recognizability. In it, truth is loaded to the bursting point with time. (This bursting point is nothing other than the death of the intentio, which thus coincides with the birth of authentic historical time, the time of truth.) It is not that the past casts its light on what is present or that what is present casts its light on what is past; rather, an image is that in which what-has-been enters in to a constellation with the now like a flash of lightning. In other words: an image is dialectics at a standstill. (Smith p50)

Benjamin's image of the 'flash of lightning' was discussed in Chapter 3 as the way a fulfilled temporality breaks open the isolated now-point of a Newtonian temporality. The reference of the 'death of the intentio' makes clear how much Benjamin's later thinking of tradition and time is the

reverse side of his emphasis on language in the period of the translation essay. Here the 'death of the intentio' coincides with the birth of the 'time of truth'; in the translation essay it pointed to pure language as the 'language of truth'; and 'truth' was discussed in Chapter 3 in terms of the 'round dance' of ideas in the temporal-linguistic continuum of experience.

'Truth' was further understood in the translation essay in terms of the multiplicity of languages, and in the later work in terms of the multiplicity of histories constituting 'universal history'. A working note to the *Theses* poetically unites these two aspects, however:

Die messianische Welt ist die Welt allseitiger und integraler Aktualität. Erst in ihr gibt es eine Universalgeschichte. Was sich heute so bezeichnet, kann immer nur eine Sort von Esperanto sein. Es kann nichts entsprechen, eh die Verwirrung, die vom Turmbau zu Babel herrührt, geschlichtet ist. Sie setzt die Sprache voraus, in die jeder Text einer lebenden oder toten ungeschmälert zu übersetzen ist. Oder besser, sie ist dieser Sprache selbst. Aber nicht als geschriebene sondern vielmehr als die festlich begangene. Dieses Fest ist gereinigt von aller Feier und er kennt keine Festgesänge. Seine Sprache ist die Idee der Prosa selbst, die von allen Menschen verstanden wird wie die Sprache der Vögel von Sonntagskindern. (GS I.3, 1239)

The messianic world is the world of all-sided and integral actuality. Only in it is there a universal history. What is so described today can only be a form of Esperanto. Nothing can correspond to this universal history until the confusion, which stems from the Tower of Babel, is settled. It presupposes the language in which every text of a living or dead language can be translated without diminishment. Or better this universal history is this language itself. But not as written, rather as a festively observed language. This festival is purified of all celebration and it knows no festival songs. Its language is the idea of prose itself, which is understood by all people, like the language of the bird, by Sunday's children.

The reference again to Esperanto makes clear that the mentions of the Tower of Babel and Garden of Eden are not part a longing for a higher, unitary language. Rather the idea of 'prose' points back to the Early German Romantics and their conception of prose as being constituted by all genres of writing.⁴⁸ If translation, in Benjamin's translation essay, had been understood as coinciding with the dismissing of the referent-

iality of the original, then the language of universal history, in to which 'every text' can be translated without diminishment, is one into which the language of the original has already been gathered and thus where translation no longer need have the function it did in the earlier essay.

Whilst this late appearance of the idea of translation is not found in the *Theses* themselves, an equivalent idea is that found in thesis III: 'Only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments' (*Theses* p254; 'Erst der erlösten Menschheit ist ihre Vergangenheit in jedem ihrer Momente zitierbar geworden', GS I.2, 694). The past becomes citable in all its moments only in universal history, that is, when the past already is as having been gathered into universal history, what Benjamin calls its 'all-sided and integral actuality'. The idea of pure language or of universal history as being the higher 'purposiveness' of all translation and all writing of history, yet also the critical medium in which all 'epistemological mythologies' are constructed, marks Benjamin's proximity to and distance from Hegel's idea of the progress of spirit towards sureness of itself as Absolute concept:

[Das Wahre] ist das Werden seiner selbst, der Kreis, der sein Ende als seinen Zweck voraussetzt und zum Anfange hat und nur durch die Ausführung und sein Ende wirklich ist.

The true is its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.⁴⁹

As was argued in Chapter 4, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* presents a profound working through of the Kantian position with respect to history and tradition. Spirit's coming to self-consciousness is itself a process of wresting tradition away from the 'conformism' of its being thought of as objectively given to the mind. Through the recognition of tradition as its own alienated reflection of itself, the reflectivity of subjectivity and objectivity in a particular epoch is glimpsed in its hermeneutic circularity and thus raised into spirit's

growing awareness as one of its shapes (*Werke* 3, 38; *Phenomenology* p21).

Benjamin follows Hegel more closely here than did Heidegger, since an essential moment of this dialectical movement of Spirit is understood through the extinguishing of a concept's referentiality to a posited objectivity. The moment of sense certainty concerns language's inability to denote the particular in its 'here' and 'now', since any truth of sense certainty is expressed in universals: 'We express what is sensuous as a universal; [...] in other words, we do not strictly say what we *mean* in this sensuous certainty' (p60; 'Als ein Allgemeines *sprechen* wir auch das Sinnliche aus; [...] oder wir sprechen schlechthin nicht, wie wir es in dieser sinnlichen Gewißheit *meinen*', *Werke* 3, p85). The Absolute is reached when spirit no longer has to go outside of itself, in this way, in referentiality:

Das *Zeil* aber ist dem Wissen ebenso notwendig als die Reihe des Fortganges gesteckt; es ist da, wo es nicht mehr über sich selbst hinauszugehen nötig hat, wo es sich selbst findet und der Begriff dem Gegenstande, der Gegenstand dem Begriffe entspricht. Der Fortgang zu diesem Ziele ist daher auch unaufhaltsam, und auf keiner früheren Station ist Befriedigung zu finden. (*Werke* 3, p74)

But the *goal* is as necessarily fixed for knowledge as the serial progression; it is the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where knowledge finds itself, where concept corresponds to object and object to concept. Hence the progress towards this goal is also unhalting, and short of it no satisfaction is to be found at any of the stations on the way. (*Phenomenology* p51)

Hegel's startling image for this state of affairs, where spirit has gathered itself into Absolute knowledge and is able to cite and run through all its moments, is that image echoed in the quotation from Benjamin above: that of the feast.

Nicht das Abstrakte oder Unwirkliche ist ihr Element und Inhalt, sondern das *Wirkliche*, sich selbst Setzende und in sich Lebende, das Dasein in seinem Begriffe. Es ist der Prozeß, der sich seine Momente erzeugt und durchläuft, und diese ganze Bewegung macht das Positive und seine Wahrheit aus. [...] Die Erscheinung ist das Entstehen und Vergehen, das selbst nicht entsteht und vergeht, sondern an sich ist und die Wirklichkeit und Bewegung des Lebens der Wahrheit ausmacht. Das Wahre ist so der bacchantische Taumel, as dem kein Gleid nicht

trunken ist; und weil jedes, indem es sich absondert, ebenso unmittelbar [sich] auflöst, ist er ebenso die durchsichtige und einfache Ruhe. (*Werke* 3, p46)

Philosophy's element and content is not the abstract or non-actual, but the *actual*, that which posits itself and is alive within itself - existence within its own Concept. It is the process which begets and runs through its own moments, and this whole movement constitutes what is positive and its truth. [...] Appearance is the arising and passing away that does not itself arise and pass away, but is in itself, and constitutes the actuality and the movement of the life of truth. The true is thus the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose. (p27)

Benjamin's modification of this image so that the feast is one of sobriety and not one of drunkenness indicates the peculiar nearness and distance of his work to Hegel's. In his dissertation discussed above Benjamin traced the different approaches of Hegel and the Early Romantics back to Fichte and suggested that while the Romantics took up the thinking of reflexion, Hegel took up the idea of the *sich Setzendes*. The Romantics' idea of the intensive reflexivity of the art-work was interpreted by Benjamin as existing in a fulfilled temporality, and thus while Benjamin does not engage explicitly with Hegel at any length in his work, one may presume that a distance between them lies in their understanding of time.

The self-positing of spirit as it unfolds itself, and thus comes to know itself, remains with a Newtonian conception of mediation which Hegel took from the Kantian *a priori*. The result is that the stages of spirit's development remain fixed in a Newtonian time-order and thus appear as a chronological progression towards 'satisfaction'. Given that Benjamin's later writings constantly attack the conception of progress in its being based on an 'empty, homogeneous' Newtonian time-order, it is clear that Hegel's 'Bacchanalian revel' would have seemed to be the idea of the Absolute as triumphalist celebration. Benjamin's image of the feast, for his interpretation of the Romantic Absolutum and idea of prose as a linguistic-temporal continuum, indicates the way it is constituted by a

'round dance' of ideas and not a progression: As was shown in Chapter 3, the ideas break free from their being held in a systematic order and by their movement into multiplicity, bring to light that continuous multiplicity in which they exist. In one of his early Kant notes, Benjamin calls this their 'inconspicuous celebrating dimension'⁵⁰ - for Benjamin, the celebration is always sober.

Given the closeness of Benjamin's thought to Hegel's it is perhaps not surprising that this 'paradox' of a sober celebration should find its first expression in Benjamin's early essay *Zwei Gedichte von Friedrich Hölderlin* (1914-15). In this essay, Benjamin narrates a process of *Aufhebung* (GS II.1, 126) from the poem 'Dichtermut' to its later version, 'Blödigkeit'; from the dependency on Greek mythology in the first to the forging of a new mythical world in the second. This developmental approach to the two poems is offset, however, by Benjamin's methodology, which is to find for each poem the 'special and unique sphere' of its 'functional unity' ('*die Funktionseinheit*', GS II.1, 106), or what Benjamin calls '*das Gedichtete*', 'the poetized'. This functional unity is, as the 'boundedness' ('*Verbundenheit*') of its 'spiritual-intuitive structure' ('*die geistig-anschauliche Struktur*', p105), the truth of the poem. Benjamin quotes Novalis in support of this idea:

'Jedes Kunstwerk hat ein Ideal a priori, eine Notwendigkeit bei sich, da zu sein.' (Novalis) Das Gedichtete ist in seiner allgemeinen Form synthetische Einheit der geistigen und anschaulichen Ordnung. Diese Einheit erhält ihre besondere Gestalt als innere Form der besonderen Schöpfung. (GS II.1, 105-6)

'Every art-work has an ideal, a priori, - a necessity in itself to be there.' (Novalis) The poetized is, in its general form, a synthetic unity of the spiritual and intuitive orders. The unity maintains its particular shape as the inner form of the particular creation.

There can only ever be, thus, a multitude of *Gedichteten*, reflecting the multiplicity of art-works. In these notions one clearly sees an early form of what Benjamin later developed into his thinking of the circularity of

knowledge of experience and experience, and the multiplicity of such circularities in the 'ideas'.⁵¹

The two poems which Benjamin treats in the essay both concern the relationship of the poet to the people, and the progression which he finds between them concerns the way the later one expresses a *Gedichtetes* with what Benjamin describes as a 'stretched' temporality and spatiality, a circularity unbroken by reference to an external mythology which separates the poet from the 'living':

Die Aktivität des Dichters findet an den Lebendigen sich bestimmt, die Lebendigen aber bestimmen in ihrem konkreten Dasein [...] sich an dem Wesen des Dichters. Als Zeichen und Schrift der unendlichen Erstreckung seines Schicksals besteht das Volk. Dieses Schicksal selbst ist, wie später deutlich wird, der Gesang. (GS II.1, 116)

The activity of the poet finds itself determined in the living, the living however determine themselves in their concrete existence [...] in the essence of the poet. The people exist as sign and writing of the infinite stretching of his fate. This fate is, as becomes clear later, the song.

Thus while Benjamin finds in the second poem, an *Aufhebung* of the first, it is precisely a movement into the particularity of the individual poem, and thus not into the unity of overarching *Gedichtetes*, but into a multiplicity constituting a linguistic-temporal continuum. It is this movement into a multifarious continuum and not into a systematic science which thus distances Benjamin from Hegel.

In conclusion, Benjamin's thinking of translation has been shown to involve two aspects: the allowing of the language of the original to point to a 'language of truth', and its anteriority to point to a 'time of truth'. These two aspects belong together in Benjamin's thinking of the temporality of language and concomitantly the thinking through of the traditionality of the present in which translator or historian writes. In Chapter 3, hope was discussed in its stretched temporality and thus its ability to break open the now-point of the Newtonian time-order; it may now be seen that it is the writing of the translator/historian which

allows hope to be read in the book of past events. Benjamin expresses this when he writes, at the end of the *Goethe* essay, 'that the ultimate hope never is for the one who cherishes it, but for those alone, for whom it is cherished' ('daß die letzte Hoffnung niemals dem eine ist, der sie hegt, sondern jenen allein, für die sie gehegt wird', GS I.1, 200).

In the following chapter, the work of Heidegger and Benjamin on the temporality of language will be brought together, and the significance of the similarities for an understanding of Kant's legacy will be discussed.

Notes

1. 'The Task of the Translator' in *Illuminations*, trans Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp 69-82; cited below as 'TT'. Translation of 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', GS IV.1, 9-21; cited below as 'AÜ'.

2. Notable are: Paul de Man, "'Conclusions": Walter Benjamin's *The Task of the Translator*' in YFS, 69 (1985), 25-46; Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', trans Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, ed Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 165-207, the French original is given in an appendix to the same book, pp. 209-248; Carol Jacobs, 'The Monstrosity of Translation', MLN, 90 (1975), 755-766; and Eliane Escoubas, 'De la traduction comme "origine" des langues: Heidegger et Benjamin' in *Les Temps Modernes*, 514-5 (1989), 97-142. While each of these provides a strong reading of Benjamin's essay in the light of his rejection of a sign theory of language, no attempt has been made to think through Benjamin's approach in the light of the 'phenomenological' context of this rejection. De Man does, however, touch upon the significance of the idea of a 'mode of meaning' (p39), and indeed Derrida mentions that it is a category 'borrowed from the Scholastics by Brentano and Husserl' (p200), but without following this lead. Jacobs and Escoubas provide other frameworks for understanding the essay: a deconstructive criticism of Saussurian linguistics, and a Humboldtian energetics of language, respectively. A survey of recent reactions to Benjamin's essay may be found in Susan A. Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption: Jewish Thought and Literary Theory in Benjamin, Scholem and Levinas* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 38-44.

3. Winfried Menninghaus, *Walter Benjamin's Theorie der Sprachmagie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), gives a reading of the essay in the light of 'Language As Such', but by omitting a discussion of Benjamin's detailed work on Kant, in the period between the two essays, he is unable to give Benjamin's work philosophical credibility other than in terms of the taking up of ideas from Humboldt, the German Romantics, Hamann, etc.

4. This imposition of a 'narrative' is thus the reverse of the approach taken to Heidegger, which had to counter the appearance of a chronologically developmental narrative in the move from his early to later work.

5. In this quotation, and below, the words *bedeuten*, *das Bedeutende*, and *das Bedeutete* are translated as 'to mean', 'what does the meaning' and 'what is meant'. The awkward phrase 'what does the meaning' is used to emphasize a more active connotation in the difference between *das Bedeutende* and *die Bedeutung*, both of which could be translated as 'the meaning', since English does not express a difference between a present participle substantive and a noun indicating the action of a verb.

6. The first half of: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); cited below as 'CJ'. Translation of *Kants Werke*, Akademie-Textausgabe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), V: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, pp. 165-486; cited below as 'Ak V'.

7. The question of phenomenology's debt to Scholasticism has given rise to much scholarly and interesting work, notably: Herbert Spiegelberg, 'Der Begriff der Intentionalität in der Scholastik, bei Brentano und bei Husserl', *Studia Philosophica*, 29 (1970), 189-216, originally published in 1936 and translated as "Intention" and "Intentionality" in the Scholastics, Brentano and Husserl', trans. Linda L. McAlister and Margarete Schättele, in *The Philosophy of Brentano*, ed. Linda L. McAlister (London: Duckworth, 1976), pp. 108-127; Klaus Hedwig, 'La Discussion sur l'origine de l'intentionnalité Husserlienne', *Les Études philosophique*, 3 (1978), 259-272, and 'Intention: Outlines for the History of a Phenomenological Concept', *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 39 (1978-79), 326-340; and Ausonio Marras, 'Scholastic Roots of Brentano's Concept of Intentionality', also in the McAlister volume, pp. 128-139. The opposition between the views of Spiegelberg, a distinguished historian of phenomenology, and Ausonio Marras is touched on below.

8. Edmund Husserl, 'Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft' in *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl, Gesammelte Werke* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), XXV: *Aufsätze und Vorträge, 1911-1921*, pp. 3-62; cited below as PSW. Translated as 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science', trans Quentin Lauer, in *Husserl: Shorter Works* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 166-97; cited below as PRS.

9. There is a remarkable parallel to this passage in a footnote to *Being and Time*:

Daß und wie die Intentionalität des 'Bewußtseins' in der ekstatischen Zeitlichkeit des Daseins *gründet*, wird der folgende Abschnitt zeigen. (Footnote to H.363)

That the intentionality of 'consciousness' is grounded in the ecstatic temporality of Dasein, and how this is the case, will be shown in the following Division. (Footnote xxiii to page H.363)

As chapters 2 and 3 have made clear, Benjamin's concept of pure knowledge as the sphere of the hermeneutic circularity of experience and knowledge of experience is very much parallel with Heidegger's thinking of Dasein.

10. Franz Brentano, *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte*, 2 vols, (Leipzig: Dunkler & Humblot, 1874). Translated as *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Linda McAlister, trans Antos C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrel and Linda McAlister (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

11. *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* p88-9.

12. This is clearly a central concern of Heidegger in his *Habilitations-schrift* on Scholastic thought. He writes concerning the Scholastic concept of analogy, that it is:

den begriffliche Ausdruck der *qualitativ* erfüllten, wertbehafteten, auf die Transzendenz bezogenen Erlebniswelt des mittelalterlichen Menschen; [der Begriff der Analogie] ist der begriffliche Ausdruck der bestimmten, im transzendenten Urverhältnis der Seele zu Gott verankerten Form inneren Daseins. (GA 1, 408-9)

the conceptual expression of the world of experience of medieval man, *qualitatively* filled, charged with value and drawn into relationship with the transcendent; [the concept of analogy] is the conceptual expression of the determinate form of inner existence anchored in the primordial and transcendental relationship of the soul to God.

13. In Scholem's reply to the letter from which the quotation above is taken, he refers Benjamin to Heidegger's Habilitationsschrift *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*. Benjamin wrote back saying he did not know the work (*Briefe* I, 235; 13 February 1920). He clearly obtained it at some point towards the end of 1920, and his negative reaction is contained in a letter to Scholem dated c. 1 December 1920 (*Briefe* I, 246). Heidegger's *Habilitations-schrift* is found in GA 1, 189-411. By early 1921, however, shortly before starting work on the translation essay, Benjamin had become concerned that to continue research into Scholasticism would only be a detour from a proper engagement with contemporary philosophy of language. He seems to suggest that an engagement with the contemporary philosophy of language which Heidegger's approach had used, was more essential:

Ich bin auch nach meinen bisherigen Studien vorsichtig geworden und bedenklich, ob es richtig ist die Verfolgung der scholastischen Analogien als Leitfaden zu benutzen und nicht vielleicht ein Umweg, da die Schrift von Heidegger doch vielleicht das Wesentlichste scholastischen Denkens für mein Problem - übrigens in ganz undurchleuchteter Weise - wiedergibt, und sich auch das echte Problem im Anschluß an sie schon irgendwie andeuten läßt. So daß ich mich vielleicht zunächst eher bei den Sprachphilosophen umsehen werde. (*Briefe* I, p252; January 1921)

I have become wary and anxious of my former studies, whether using the pursuit of the Scholastic analogies as a lead is correct and not perhaps a detour, since the essay by Heidegger provides perhaps the most essential scholastic thinking for my problem - in a completely unilluminated way, though - and it also in some way already intimates the genuine problem in connection with it. So I will perhaps look through some language philosophers for the time being.

This quotation indicates that the central problem with which he was concerned, the question of language in the light of Kant's transcendental critique of knowledge, the question announced in the *Program* essay and discussed in his dissertation on German Romanticism, was still of paramount importance in his concern with philosophy, at the time of writing the translation essay.

14. It is ironic, in the light of his extollment of *Umweg* in his *Habilitationsschrift, Origin of German Tragic Drama*, that Benjamin should have been so concerned that his research into Scholasticism was a 'detour' (cf. quotation above in footnote 12), even more so when it is borne in mind that the subject he ultimately chose for his attempted *Habilitation*, Baroque drama, is far more obscure, far more of a detour, than a work on Scholasticism, which would have had great contemporary relevance in the questioning of phenomenology. What the letters to Scholem do not reveal so clearly, however, is Benjamin's losing of interest in the narrow discipline of philosophy and his growing interest in literature.

15. Benjamin's interest in Duns Scotus and in researching the Scholastic roots of phenomenology appears to have been completely overlooked in the secondary literature on Benjamin.

16. Useful overviews of this form of treatise are given by R.G. Godfrey, 'The Language Theory of Thomas of Erfurt', in *Studies in Philology*, 57(1) (1960), 22-29, and by Anton Dumitriu, *History of Logic*, 4 vols, (Kent: Abacus Press, 1977), II, 139-143.

17. cf. also Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J.N. Findlay, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Logical Investigation V, sec. 11 (p559): 'I do not see coloured sensations but coloured things, I do not hear tone-sensations but the singer's song.'

18. This point is also illustrated by the non-interchangeability of the expressions 'morning star' and 'evening star' when someone does not realise they both refer to the planet Venus.

19. Derrida, in 'Des Tours de Babel', interprets the broken vase metaphor as indicating that the translation acts to 'reconstitute' a higher unity of language, which thus acts as an ideal against which individual languages are measured. As the quotation below shows, however, Benjamin wishes the emphasis to be on the multiplicity of parts and not on a projected reconstitution of them into a unity, an idea which Benjamin refers to as 'Esperanto'.

20. Ascription of a simple 'prelapsarian' longing, or 'fall' motif in Benjamin's work has been common in criticism of his work. For example, this is implicit in Derrida article, and may be found also in Andrew Benjamin, 'Tradition and Experience: Walter Benjamin's "Some Motifs in Baudelaire"' in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 122-140. Yves Kobrey in his fine article, 'Walter Benjamin et le langage', (in *Revue D'Esthétique*, 1 (1981), pp. 171-176), provides a strong reading of Benjamin's rejection of a sign theory of language, with particular concern to emphasize that this does not entail a longing for a 'prelapsarian' perfectly referential or pre-figurative language. A strong reading of Benjamin's biblical imagery in the essay 'On Language As Such', beyond a simple condemnation of it as 'logocentric' is given by Iving Wohlfarth, 'On Some Jewish Motifs in Benjamin' (in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno*

and Benjamin, pp. 157-214). Wohlfarth's article is an implicit attack on a programmatic application of terms, such as 'logocentric' or 'metaphysics of presence', as if the problems these terms mark can be simply by-passed. Wohlfarth argues that if the essay is logocentric, then it is a logocentrism that has always already put itself into question:

'Paradise epitomizes what would today be called a "metaphysics of presence". Its self-presence is that of a language resting blissfully in itself. But a certain tension already ruffles the calm of its present tense. Paradise is a "future anterior" or future perfect, a world which will have always already taken place.' (p179)

In this way, Wohlfarth shows that the essay provides a deeper meditation on language than the view of language in which it would be dismissed as merely 'logocentric'.

21. Benjamin also refers to 'pure language' as 'the true language', in the translation essay.

22. There is thus no question of the individual languages being 'forgotten' in the pure language, as argued by Timothy Bahti, 'Theories of Knowledge: Fate and Forgetting in the Early Works of Walter Benjamin' in *Benjamin's Ground: New Readings of Walter Benjamin*, ed. Rainer Nägele (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), pp. 61-82 (79).

23. For an interesting reading of the afterlife of a text in terms of the temporality of the 'here and now' in which a text exists, see Andrew Benjamin, 'The Decline of Art: Benjamin's Aura' in Andrew Benjamin, *Art, Mimesis and the Avant-Garde* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 143-154: 'What cannot be contextualized, and what exists in a temporal domain other than history, is the potential for after life, for reinterpretation, for continual translation, inherent in the work of art itself.' (p152)

24. The importance of raising the question of the relation between Benjamin and Hegel is raised by Thomas Pfau, 'Thinking before Totality: Kritik, Übersetzung and the language of Interpretation in the Early Walter Benjamin', *MLN* 103(5) (1988), 1072-97: 'The question arises whether it may be necessary or even possible to prevent the Hegelian concept of history and interpretation from already reinscribing itself within a systematic interpretation of Benjamin before it ever gets underway.' (p 1073) Pfau attempts to distance Benjamin from Hegel in a highly problematic way, however. He does so by setting up 'an unbridgeable hiatus' (p 1086) between the temporal concerns of translation, criticism and history, and the messianic realm of the end of history. Pfau thinks that it is in this way that Benjamin avoids 'any totalizing metaphysics' (p 1087); however, by such a move, Pfau seems to simply posit a Platonic separation between a temporal realm and a timeless one, in Benjamin's thinking of history.

25. Winfried Menninghaus, 'Walter Benjamins Romantische Idee des Kunstwerks und seiner Kritik', *Poetica*, 12 (1980), 421-442, provides a useful overview of Benjamin's thinking of the artwork in the dissertation and the *Goethe* essay. Curiously, he overlooks the translation essay - this leads him to posit little, if no difference between Benjamin and the Early Romantics. In order to understand Benjamin's distancing himself from the romantic theory of criticism in the translation essay, it is more useful to investigate Benjamin's work on the romantics in the light of his work on

Kant. Menninghaus' work on Benjamin, as a whole, is characterized by the lack of importance he attaches to the Kant essay and notes.

26. Or less awkwardly: 'unexposability'; this latter expression is perhaps more accurate, (though its connection with the series *Hülle, Verhülltes, enthüllen* and *Enthüllung* is lost), since the German expression *Unenthüllbarkeit* does not have a repetition of the prefix *un-*, but rather also has the prefix *ent-*, which has a far more active connotation of removing or distancing, and not the static negation of *un-*)

27. At the beginning of his work on the Romantics, Benjamin asserts the importance of understanding their work in relation to Kant's aesthetics, in a letter written early on in his work:

Seit der Romantik erst gelangt die Anschauung zur Herrschaft daß ein Kunstwerk an und für sich, ohne seine Beziehung auf Theorie oder Moral in der Betrachtung erfaßt und ihm durch den Betrachtenden Genüge geschehen könne. Die relative Autonomie des Kunstwerkes gegenüber der Kunst oder vielmehr seine lediglich transzendente Abhängigkeit von der Kunst ist die Bedingung der romantischen Kunstkritik geworden. Die Aufgabe wäre, Kants Ästhetik als wesentliche Voraussetzung der romantischen Kunstkritik in diesem Sinn zu erwiesen. (*Briefe I*, 180; 30 March 1918)

Since the Romantics, the view has become dominant that an art-work can occur in and for itself, without its connection to theory or morals either being grasped in its consideration or adequate to it through these considerations. The relative autonomy of the art-work in regard to art, or rather its merely transcendental dependency on art became the condition of Romantic art-criticism. The task would be to show Kant's aesthetics to be an essential presupposition of Romantic art-criticism in this sense.

The place of Kant in the final dissertation is, however, minimal. The most likely explanation of this is that Fichte's radicalization of Kant's work brought out more clearly the elements of systematization against which the Romantics reacted: the grounding of the system in a form of transcendental ego which would prevent the development of an infinite regress of levels of reflexion.

28. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p12. Translation from *Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämtliche Werke*, ed. J.H. Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), vol I, 430.

29. This text may be found in *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 94-135. Benjamin quotes this passage near the beginning of his dissertation, GS I.1, 20.

30. Fichte thus writes concerning the intellectual intuition of the activity of the self: 'All that matters to me is to be understood and persuasive on this point, which constitutes the basis of the whole system being presented here' ('Es liegt mir alles daran, über diesen Punkt, der die Grundlage des ganzen hier vorzutragenden Systems ausmacht, verstanden zu werden, und zu überzeugen', *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*, I, 528).

31. Schlegel (Friedrich is meant, unless otherwise stated) writes for example:

Die ganze Geschichte der modernen Poesie ist ein fortlaufender Kommentar zu dem kurzen Text der Philosophie: Alle Kunst soll Wissenschaft, und alle Wissenschaft soll Kunst werden; Poesie und Philosophie sollen vereinigt sein. ('Kritische Fragmente', No.15, in *Kritische Schriften*, ed Wolfdietrich Reich (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1971), p22)

The whole history of modern poetry is a commentary on the brief text of philosophy: all art must become science, and all science art; poetry and philosophy must be reunited.

32. Friedrich Schlegel and August Wilhem Schlegel, *Athenaeum*, 2 vols (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969)

33. For further discussion of the idea of the artwork as an enclosing of the Absolute, see Winfried Menninghaus, 'Walter Benjamins Idee des Kunstwerks und seiner Kritik', pp. 425-6.

34. It is significant for an understanding of the proximity of the translation essay to Benjamin's interpretation of the Romantics, that a similar expression to the phrase 'a constantly more embracing unfolding' ('stetig umfassendere Entfaltung'), which appears at the key point of the interpretation of the temporality of the Romantics' thought, is found in the translation essay: 'In translations the life of the original attains its constantly re-newed latest and most embracing unfolding' (TT 72; 'In Übersetzungen] erreicht das Leben des Originals seine stets erneute späteste und umfassendste Entfaltung', AÜ 11)

35. This is essentially Heidegger's criticism of Hegel's understanding of time in *Being and Time* H.428-436, as was discussed in Chapter 4.

36. The question of the relationship of Benjamin's own thinking to that of Early German Romanticism remains a much disputed question. The recent edition of *Studies in Romanticism* 31(4) (1992) on Benjamin demonstrates this well. David Ferris, in his essay ('"Truth is the death of intention": Benjamin's Esoteric History of Romanticism', pp. 455-480), writes that Benjamin's dissertation is a commentary, rather than a work of criticism (p455). The main purpose of Rodolph Gasché's paper ('The Sober Absolute: On Benjamin and the Early Romantics', pp433-453), is to demonstrate that although the topics considered, such as criticism and translation, are the same, and their theories closely related, Benjamin's essay maintains a 'massive and intransigent criticism of the romantic conception of art and its concept of criticism', and manifests an 'unyielding and unrelenting negative critical gesture that dominates the whole of the dissertation' (p452). Gasché's attempt to sever any link between Benjamin's thinking and that of the Early Romantics is achieved at the cost of presenting Benjamin as arguing for a view of the Absolute as 'absolutely transcendental, radically distinguished from everything profane' (p452). Quite apart from the questionable nature of such an assertion in terms of Benjamin's own work, one of Schlegel's main criticisms of Fichte was directed at the latter's radical separation of the self-reflexive absolute ego from its representations. Gasché's position, therefore, results in drawing Benjamin back towards Fichte - a proposition which is certainly not in keeping with Benjamin's manifest criticisms of Fichte. This view needs to be compared with that of Irving Wohlfarth, 'The Politics of Prose and the Art of Awakening', in *Glyph* 7

(1980), p131-147. Wohlfarth sees a clear influence of Romantic thinking upon Benjamin's, to the extent of his taking certain lines of thought directly from them. For Wohlfarth this throws a shadow of idealism across Benjamin's work which fundamentally weakens its philosophical credibility:

Benjamin's materialism undeniably rests on idealist premises in as much as it varies motifs from German Romantic aesthetics. Idealisms can always afford to immerse themselves in the world because they are always sure of recuperating themselves in the process. (p142)

Gasché's account is unconvincing because it makes no reference to the most important reason as to why Benjamin was drawn to an engagement with the Early German Romantics: the need for a rethinking of language and time in the wake of Kant's philosophy. However, this affinity between the projects of Benjamin and Schlegel does not mean that Benjamin's work has inescapably idealist presuppositions, as Wohlfarth concludes. It is not clear, firstly, that Schlegel's work can be labelled straightforwardly 'idealist', and second, the complexity of Benjamin's stance towards Romanticism does not allow simple lines of lineage to be drawn. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the dissertation must be seen as an implicit engagement with the traditionality with which Neo-Kantianism saw itself as an inheritor of Kant's work. In general the question of the proximity of Benjamin's thinking to the Early Romantics must rest on the question of his having 'found' a fulfilled temporality in their work.

37. Benjamin ascribes this tendency of Schlegel to describe the Absolute as itself a work, to good motives:

Dies Motiv war das Bestreben, den Begriff der Idee der Kunst vor dem Mißverständnis zu bewahren, er sei eine Abstraktion aus den empirisch vorgefundenen Kunstwerken. Er wollte diesen Begriff als eine Idee im platonischen Sinn, als ein πρότερον τῆ φύσει, als den Realgrund aller empirischen Werke bestimmen, und er beging die alte Vermengung von abstrakt und allgemein, wenn er ihn darum zu einem individuellen machen zu müssen glaubte. Nur in dieser Absicht bezeichnet Schlegel wieder und wieder mit Nachdruck die Einheit der Kunst, das Continuum der Formen selber als ein Werk. (GS I.1, 90)

This motive was the effort to keep the concept of the idea of art from being misunderstood as an abstraction out of empirically given art-works. He wanted to determine this concept as an Idea in the Platonic sense, as a πρότερον τῆ φύσει, as the real ground of all empirical works. He believed for this reason that he had to make the concept into an individual work, and by so doing he fell into the old mixing of abstract and universal. Only with this intention did Schlegel again and again emphatically describe the unity of art, the continuum of forms, as itself a work.

38. The importance for Benjamin of the thinking of history and tradition in German Romanticism, in his criticism of phenomenology and Neo-Kantianism is treated well by Claude Imbert, 'Le present et l'histoire', in *Walter Benjamin et Paris*, ed Heinz Wismann (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986), pp. 743-792.

39. This was essentially Heidegger's criticism of Husserl in the Kassel lectures, as detail by Charles R. Bambach, 'Phenomenological Research as *Destruktion*: The Early Heidegger's Reading of Dilthey', *Philosophy Today*, 37(2) (1993), 115-132.
40. Bambach's article again confirms a similarity of development in Heidegger's thought, as Heidegger sought to develop his thinking of tradition also precisely in opposition to Husserl and Dilthey.
41. 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in *Illuminations*, pp. 253-264; cited below as 'Theses'. Translation of 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', GS I.2, 691-704. 'Konvolut N [Re the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress]' trans. Leigh Hafrey and Richard Sieburth, in *Benjamin*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 43-83; cited below as 'Smith'. Translation of 'N [Erkenntnistheoretisches, Theorie des Fortschritts]', GS V.1, 570-611.
42. Nor, in the light of Benjamin's complex intertwining of phenomenological and romantic motifs, can 'translatability' be understood merely as a theory of the indeterminacy of language. Such a conclusion is reached by Barbara Kleiner, *Sprache und Entfremdung: Die Proust-Übersetzungen Walter Benjamins innerhalb seiner Sprach- und Übersetzungstheorie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1980). She writes: 'Resümierend läßt sich sagen, daß für Benjamin die Übersetzbarkeit eines Text in seiner formalen und semantischen Polyvalenz besteht.' (p102)
43. cf. Antoine Berman, *L'épreuve de l'étranger*, 81-2
44. Friedrich Schlegel, 'Kritische Fragmente', No. 46: 'Die Römer sind uns näher und begrifflicher als die Griechen', *Kritische Schriften* p12.
45. *Novalis: Schriften*, 4 vols, ed. Richard Samuel (Stuttgart: W.Kohlhammer, 1981)
46. Peter Szondi, *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), chapter 9: 'Hope in the Past: On Walter Benjamin'
47. Christop Hering in his article 'Messianic Time and Materialistic Progress: Aspects of the Relationship between Theology and Marxism in Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*' (*Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 16(2) (1985), pp. 156-166), discusses this in the idea that the past has rights on the present.
48. Irving Wohlfarth treats this reoccurrence of the Romantic idea in Benjamin's later work in his article 'The Politics of Prose and the Art of Awakening', where he sees it as highly problematic (cf above). Arne Melberg in his article 'Benjamin's Reflection', *MLN* 107 (1992), pp. 478-498, also takes up Benjamin's use of an idea of prose. He sees 'prose' as a pseudonym for pure language, which is used to evoke the latter as a 'pre-figurative state of language' (p497). This is again to interpret Benjamin's work as containing a strong prelapsarian intent, rather than understanding pure language as a critical medium.
49. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p10; cited below as 'Phenomenology'. Translation of G.W.F. Hegel, *Theorie-Werkausgabe*, 20 vols (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol 3, 23: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*; cited as 'Werke 3'.

50. 'die unscheinbar verherrlichende Dimension', <fr 20>, GS VI, 39.

51. Michael Jennings in his article 'Benjamin as a Reader of Hölderlin: The Origin of Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism', *The German Quarterly*, 56(4) (1983), pp. 544-562, also argues that the 'Gedichteten' are a precursor of Benjamin's 'ideas' in the *Origin of German Tragic Drama*.

CONCLUSION: THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF LANGUAGE AND TIME

I. Weg and Umweg

It has become clear from the preceding chapters that a substantial degree of concord exists between the thinking of Heidegger and Benjamin. This concord has appeared through an analysis of the way both thinkers took up the legacy of Kant's co-ordination of language and time, and further by investigating how, in each case, this legacy was reflected in their work taken as a 'whole'. For Heidegger, this necessitated an approach which did not separate his early and late work, but rather allowed the early temporal phenomenology to resonate with the later linguistic and poetic emphasis. In the case of Benjamin, it was seen that no such chronological development existed in his work, which, rather, was characterized from early on by a reflexivity upon the writing of philosophy. It was argued that this necessitated that a 'theoretical grid' be artificially separated out in order to allow the tension between theoretical 'content' and presentational 'form' to appear, thus letting Benjamin's work stand as a 'whole' in their inseparability. It was noted that Benjamin himself expected sparks to fly in the clash between his understanding of history and Heidegger's¹, but by allowing the question of translation to form a focus, illuminated by and illuminating the 'whole' of their work in each case, substantial agreement has again been found, precisely concerning the hermeneuticism and purposiveness of the handing on and taking up of a linguistic legacy.

Benjamin's aversion to Heidegger's work, an aversion which is first found in Benjamin's reaction to Heidegger's trial lecture at Freiburg (1915) and thus before Heidegger's National Socialist involvements, is perhaps one reason why their common ground has been so little re-

searched. Benjamin's predicted *'entre-choc'* between their work has predominantly become, in Benjaminian and Heideggerian literature, merely the indifference of one school to another, evidenced solely by the paucity of references one camp makes to the other.² Investigating Heidegger and Benjamin through their relation to Kant has the effect of breaking open the insularity of the respective schools, which otherwise are in danger of simply becoming dogmatic, and of laying a ground for a productive dialogue between them. The possibility of such a dialogue between 'parts' of their work, for example, detailed appraisals of their approaches to German Romanticism and Neo-Kantianism, Husserl and Dilthey, the nature of the work of art, etc, is conditional upon their work as a 'whole' being brought together on a possible ground of their relation. This has been achieved through the Kantian legacy of the question of language and time.

This concluding chapter will explore the contours of this belonging together in relation to Kant's legacy, but subsequently will discuss the significance of this belonging together for an understanding of that legacy – the question of the temporality of language, a question which must always fall back on any answer and thus exceed its containment in any work.

The few essays which have treated the relationship of Heidegger and Benjamin have for the most part neglected the question of the ground upon which such an encounter may take place. Ellane Escoubas in *'De la traduction comme "origine" des langues: Heidegger et Benjamin'*³, provides an interesting account of the proximity of their views of translation, but the proximity is understood in terms of their assimilatability to a Humboldtian analysis of language. By appeal to Humboldt's 'energetic' view of language, Escoubas moves too quickly to an identification of Benjamin's and Heidegger's understanding of time in the unquestioned temporality implicit in Humboldt's work. Rebecca Comay's essay *'Framing*

Redemption: Aura, Origin, Technology in Benjamin and Heidegger' and Christopher Fynsk's 'The Claim of History' are both concerned to show how Benjamin's work can fill in the 'apolitical' lacuna in Heidegger's later system of thought, but without making clear the ground of such a claim for the synthesis of their respective 'systems'.⁴ Howard Caygill's essay 'Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition'⁵ provides a thorough investigation of the proximity of their views of time and tradition, focusing particularly on their essays on the nature of the work of art, but does not, however, consider their rethinking of language, which was shown above to be central to the question of tradition. Andrew Benjamin's essay 'Time and Task: Benjamin and Heidegger Showing the Present'⁶ is, however, clearly premised on the need to understand the relation of language and time in the work of both Heidegger and Benjamin; he finds, though, a clear distance between their projects. Heidegger's way of thinking is found to be an imperative to think 'without' metaphysics. The idea of being able to leave metaphysics behind in a past which is thus cut off from the present ascribes to Heidegger's thinking a temporality of progress structured on the isolation of Newtonian now-points, such that a past now-point stands in essential isolation from the present.⁷ The above chapters have shown that Heidegger's thinking of tradition may be understood through his idea of ecstatic temporality thought as a 'stretching' of time in opposition to the discontinuities of the Newtonian time-order.

There is, however, a profound sense of distance, though not opposition, between the words *Weg* and *Umweg* which have been used in the chapters above to characterise, respectively, the work of Heidegger and Benjamin, taken in each case as a whole. Heidegger's work may seem to constitute a path followed determinedly in the ever more radical questioning after a single goal, the meaning of being. Benjamin's work,

in contrast, seems to be an aggregate of diverse treatises, reviews and essays, with no clear goal in mind. These impressions have been shown to be misleading once their projects are taken respectively as 'wholes'. Heidegger's work consists of a move from the systematicity of a temporal phenomenology in *Being and Time* to a more critical approach to language and the occasionality and poeticism of his later essays. Yet this 'move' is not to be understood as the leaving behind of the early work⁸, but rather Heidegger's way of thinking is to hold both together in the circularity of a temporal-poetic phenomenology, the way of thinking named by *Ereignis*. For Benjamin, it was necessary to make clear the theoretical basis which underlay his manner of thinking and writing, in terms of his idea of a critical medium of language and time, in order to avoid his *Umweg* being understood as a montage modelled on the discontinuities of a Newtonian time-order. With this approach, *Umweg* could thus be understood as the maintenance of a thorough-going circularity between a theoretical rethinking of language and time and the question of its presentational form.

In both cases, Heidegger and Benjamin, their projects may be understood as the thinking through of the circularity of the temporality of language. The circularity is, in each case, that between a theoretical critique of temporality and a reflexion upon the language and linguistic presuppositions of such a critique. In order to further clarify this outline of the proximity of their thinking in taking up the Kant's legacy of the question of language and time, it will be useful to briefly survey the areas of agreement which have arisen in the preceding chapters.

Chapter 1 showed how Kant recognised that the experience of an organism required a teleological determination of time by a concept, beyond the synthesis of the manifold into the time-order of Newtonian objectivity. Kant, however, held teleology and mechanism apart by making

teleology a principle of reason, a heuristic, though necessary, regulative judgment, as opposed to mechanism which was a principle of understanding and thus of the determinant synthesis of the manifold. By holding them apart in this way, the critical project could be validated in the light of Newtonian science – the very thing it sought to transcendently justify.

Chapters 2 and 3 set out how Heidegger and Benjamin took up the essential circularity in Kant's project between Newtonian temporality and its transcendental justification. For Heidegger, this idea became that of Dasein's 'circular existence', and for Benjamin it was understood in terms of the circularity of knowledge of experience and experience. In both cases, however, they were concerned to counter Kant's reliance on a Newtonian temporality which functioned to underpin a closed reflectivity between transcendental ego (taken as object-like) and the Newtonian objects of its experience. To this end, both Heidegger and Benjamin think time in terms of a stretching temporality, that is, where time is not thought of as originally a series of point-like moments, but rather where this Newtonian determination was only a particular, narrow determination of the span of a stretched 'now'. Heidegger and Benjamin thus essentially collapse the opposition between mechanism and teleology by arguing that language or conceptuality does not determine experience primarily into a Newtonian form, but rather according to a stretched temporality. By so doing they may be regarded as releasing the critical potential which was contained in Kant's idea of the teleological determination of time by the concept of organism. Chapter 1 argued that Kant's understanding of teleology was closer to *τέλειν*, in the sense of the temporal 'coming to pass', and did not simply mean the possession of a futural orientation within a Newtonian time-order.

Radicalizing Kant's approach in this way, language could also no

longer be understood through a sign theory where words simply label the objects given in experience. Rather, the phenomena of experience must be thought of as linguistically determined and to this end both Heidegger and Benjamin develop linguistic phenomenologies. For both, such a phenomenology can no longer be structured on an uncritical subject-object divide, rather subject and object must be thought of as standing together within a more critical circle of language and time. The place of this 'circular existence' is the 'Da' of Heidegger's Dasein, which later became rethought as 'the opening' (*das Offene*) and 'the clearing' (*die Lichtung*), and is thought by Benjamin as 'the knowledge-contexture' (*der Erkenntnis-zusammenhang*) and 'the absolute surface' (*die absolute Fläche*).

Kant, by seeking to ground the circularity of his project in the *a* priority of the transcendental ego, conceived the latter as existing outside of the temporal experience it generated in the three-fold synthesis. In this way the transcendental ego could function as an atemporal ground of history and thus allow Reason to stand over and above tradition. In chapters 4 and 5, on translation, it was seen how both Heidegger and Benjamin wished to rethink the traditionality of the linguistic past from out of the place of the hermeneutic circularity of knowledge. In both cases the linguistic work was understood as constituted by its encapsulation of a circularity of language and time, yet a circularity which exceeded its linguistic containment and called for translation into the hermeneutic situation of the present. For both Heidegger and Benjamin, such translation was 'purposive', in the sense of being hermeneutically guided by that situation, with the aim of opening up the present from its narrow determination in a Newtonian time-order and the concomitant metaphysics of subject and object. For Heidegger, translation served to allow a more authentic thinking of language and time (named by *Ereignis*) to be glimpsed from out of their narrow determination in *Ge-Stell*. For

Benjamin, translation served the purpose of pointing the way to the 'language of truth' and 'time of truth' from out of a 'uniquely temporally limited' experience.

The proximity of their views of the linguistic work and its power to open up the hermeneutic situation of the present, is testified to in the significance they laid on Hölderlin's poetry and translations. This was understood above through the proximity of their thinking to that of Hegel, taken as a profoundly hermeneutic and historical working-through of Kant's position. In the context of Hölderlin's desire to distance himself from the over-arching systematicity of Hegel's Science, both Heidegger and Benjamin sought to understand his poetry in terms of each poem being constituted by a hermeneutic and systematic circularity, for which they both use the term *das Gedichtete*. Benjamin writes, for example: 'Das Gedichtete ist in seiner allgemeinen Form synthetische Einheit der geistigen und anschaulichen Ordnung.' (GS II.1, 106; 'The poetized is, in its general form, a synthetic unity of the spiritual and intuitive orders'). And for Heidegger, to think the *Gedichtetes* in Hölderlin's poetry is 'ein wesentliches Wissen zu entfalten, in dessen Umkreise alle unsere sonstige Kenntnisse erst Wurzel und Stand finden' (GA 52, 8; 'to unfold an essential knowing, in whose circle all our remaining [historical and biographical] facts first find root and standing'.)

It is in this context of the idea of the linguistic work being constituted by the systematization of language and time in its hermeneutic circle of 'knowing' (experience and knowledge of experience) that the difference between *Weg* and *Umweg* may be understood. Benjamin's thinking has a clear emphasis on the idea of the multiplicity of hermeneutic circularities (ideas, monads, treatises, dialectical images), such that the multiplicity itself functions to point to the temporal-linguistic

continuum of truth. Whilst one also finds the idea of a multiplicity of hermeneutic circularities in Heidegger's work (for example, the idea of regional ontologies, of 'epochs of being', and the occasionality and poeticism of his later essays), the emphasis is on the thorough *Auslegung* of a work in order to bring the meaning of being, which may be said in many ways, to illumination.

If, however, one neglects Benjamin's thinking of a critical ground for *Umweg*, which is evidenced in the idea of temporal-linguistic continuum, then the idea of mere multiplicity is made to concur with a Newtonian determination of experience as consisting of isolated, object-like, now-points.

If the idea of multiplicity is neglected in Heidegger's work, then being is made to become the unitary ground in a new *Weg* of thinking, a ground to which Heidegger has access in opposition to the tradition of philosophy which can be done without.

Benjamin's *Umweg* of 'ideas' and Heidegger's *Weg* of 'questioning after being' both have the purpose of bringing to light the inescapably hermeneutic belonging together of time and language: the temporality of language. The proximity of the projects of Heidegger and Benjamin points to the belonging together of *Weg* and *Umweg* in each. That is, each thinker must be understood in terms of an attempt to systematically think through the belonging together of language and time, together with a questioning of the claim that a linguistic work can encapsulate this belonging together. For both Heidegger and Benjamin this latter questioning leads to what seems a certain rejection of system. It must be emphasised again, however, that there is no simple passing beyond systematicity for either Heidegger or Benjamin. It is rather a rejection of Kant's desire to ground system in the Newtonian temporality of a transcendental subjectivity. Such a grounding itself forces a certain

object-like status upon system, such that it may be thought of as ensnaring and gathering the truth existing outside of it. The systematic thinking of the belonging together of language and time is, rather, always a circling which drives itself beyond its closure in a system thought of with a Newtonian temporality. This tension between the having and not having of a system is famously stated in Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenaeum* fragment 53: 'Es ist gleich tödlich für den Geist, ein System zu haben, und keins zu haben. Er wird sich also wohl entschließen, beides zu verbinden.' (It is equally fatal for the mind to have a system or not to have one. It will have to decide therefore to combine both.) It is now clear that for both Heidegger and Benjamin it is this combination, and the maintenance of tension between systematicity and system's own reflexive surpassing from the imposition of a Newtonian temporality, which constitutes the 'whole' of their thinking in each case.

What, then, is the meaning of 'whole', the word which has been used through-out to emphasize the need to take account of both the 'systematicity' and 'un-systematicity' in the work of Heidegger and Benjamin? In each case, it has been used to prevent the uncritical division of their work: for Heidegger, the division of early and later; for Benjamin the division of presentational 'form' from its theoretical '*Gradnetz*'. It can now be seen that both these divisions are modelled on a Newtonian temporality: the simple isolation of now-points permitting the separation of periods in Heidegger's work, and the isolation of realms ('form' and 'content') modelled on such now-points, in the case of Benjamin's work

The word 'system', however, derives from the Greek συνίστημι, 'I put together', thus suggesting that to put together systematicity and un-systematicity as a 'whole', yields an even higher level systematicity. Such a higher level systematicity in the case of the work of both Heidegger

and Benjamin would, it would seem, turn back on itself to give a further un-systematicity, signalled precisely in the individuality of their respective systems. The belonging together of Heidegger and Benjamin in relation to Kant's legacy would suggest, however, a further, higher, systematicity, and so the regress would go on. This regress only occurs, however, if systematicity is caught within the opposition and subsequent combination of 'having a system' and 'not having a system'. This formulation suggests that a system is an object-like possession which the mind can decide to have or not. It is rather that the word 'whole', in the belonging together of 'systematicity' and 'un-systematicity' in the work of Heidegger and Benjamin, marks the rethinking of systematicity itself, beyond this opposition.

The significance of bringing their work together is not in order that they may be synthesized into a more complete system, but rather that both their projects attest to the need to think systematically, but in a transformed sense. Kant's legacy to posterity was not simply a philosophical system, but rather the necessity of systematic thinking. It is this legacy, taken up and transformed in the work of Heidegger and Benjamin, which ultimately accounts for the proximity of their projects. In order to understand, then, the rethinking of systematicity which has been marked by the word 'whole' it is necessary to look again briefly at the question of system in Kant's work.

II. Kant's Legacy: The Systematization of Language and Time

As has been quoted already, Kant anticipates the question: 'what sort of a treasure is this that we propose to bequeath to posterity?' (*Critique of*

Pure Reason Bxxiv). Kant's answer, as was discussed in Chapter 1, is essentially that his legacy is system. The chapter went on to show how Kant's thinking of his system as an organised unity was modelled on the experience and conceptualization of organisms. This necessitated a teleological determination of time in the sense that the temporal 'span' of the experience of an organism stretches beyond the now-point in which the Newtonian object stands. The critical system itself was understood, though, as giving a transcendental justification of mechanistic science. That Kant was unable to resolve his opposition of mechanism and teleology, led to profound problems for his project. This tension is captured well when Kant writes: 'By a system I understand the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea' ('Ich verstehe aber unter einem Systeme die Einheit der mannigfaltigen Erkenntnisse unter einer Idee', A832/B860). The idea Kant has in mind, concerning the critical system as a whole, is the transcendental ego as the transcendental unity of apperception. Whilst the 'ground' for the experience of an organism as a systematic unity is its concept, which determines the synthesis of the manifold in a teleological way, in the case of the systematic unity of the critical project, Kant falls back on the positing of a ground with object-like existence, the transcendental ego. With this dis-analogy between organism and system the latter becomes grounded in an uncritical Newtonian temporality. Having now explored the way Heidegger and Benjamin take up the question of the belonging together of language and time, beyond Newtonian conceptuality and temporality, it is possible to allow their work to throw light on the deeper significance of Kant's legacy: the necessity of system

In the *Opus Postumum*⁹ one finds formulation after formulation of the idea of system, as if Kant himself were struggling to come to terms with the legacy of his critical work. The reason for this is that Kant's

system had not simply concerned the systematization of empirical experience into a unitary framework, but had concerned, rather, the ground of the possibility of the systematization of experience as such. He had written, for example, in the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*:

Wenn Philosophie das System der Vernunftkenntnis durch Begriffe ist, so wird sie schon dadurch von einer Kritik der reinen Vernunft hinreichend unterschieden, [...].diel nicht als Teil zu einem solchen System gehört, sondern so gar die Idee desselben allererst entwirft und prüfet.

If philosophy is the system of rational cognition through concepts, this characterization distinguishes it from a critique of pure reason. [...] The latter does not belong to a system of philosophy as a part of it, but outlines and examines the very idea of such a system in the first place.¹⁰

It is in the three-fold synthesis as the focal point of the inter-play of language and time in Kant's work that the necessity of systematicity lies. For Kant, synthesis is the focal point of the σύνταξις, the standing together, of language and time. As the ordering, connecting and bringing into relation of the manifold, synthesis is a condition of the possibility of experience, and it is experience as thus synthesized which gives rise to knowledge of experience as systematic. Thus Kant writes further on in the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*:

Wir haben in der Kritik der reinen Vernunft gesehen, daß die gesamte Natur als der Inbegriff aller Gegenstände der Erfahrung, ein System nach transcendentalen Gesetzen, nämlich solchen, die der Verstand selbst *a priori* gibt [...] ausmache. Eben darum muß auch die Erfahrung, [...] so wie sie überhaupt objektiv betrachtet, möglich ist (in der Idee), ein System möglicher empirischen Erkenntnisse ausmachen. [...] So weit ist nun Erfahrung überhaupt nach transcendentalen Gesetzen der Verstandes als System und nicht als bloßes Aggregat anzusehen. (Ak XX, 208-9)

We saw in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that nature as a whole, as the sum total of all objects of experience, constitutes a system in terms of transcendental laws – those that the understanding itself gives *a priori*. [...] That is why experience, too, considered objectively, ie. in the way experience as such is possible (in the idea) must constitute a system of possible empirical cognition. [...] Experience must be regarded, according to transcendental laws of the understanding, as a system and not as a mere aggregate. (p397)

The *Critique of Pure Reason* concerns the *a priori* of system in that the systematicity of temporal experience and the systematicity of conceptual knowledge are shown to spring forth together from a common root, the transcendental synthesis. Kant's transcendental philosophy is thus a system of the necessity of system; his legacy is ultimately the claim of the necessity of system. Yet as has been shown, in order to give transcendental justification to Newtonian science, Kant grounded the transcendental synthesis in a transcendental ego with an uncritical Newtonian temporality. In the profound dis-analogy between Kant's view of his critical system and organism, it is the latter which points the way to a more critical reflection on the temporality of language (subjective genitive) of system, such that language is seen to determine the temporality of experience beyond the uncritical primacy of Newtonian temporality.

Heidegger and Benjamin, in resolving the tension between teleology and mechanism in a thorough-going temporal-linguistic phenomenology, re-instate the circularity between language and time which had been grounded by Kant. Their work constitutes an understanding of the teleological temporality of system as a thinking of the radical finitude of the belonging together of language and time. That is, their work allows system to be thought more properly in its teleological temporality, understood as a stretching of time, without the imposition of an object-like grounding. In both, there is a move from understanding system as standing object-like and completed in an empty now-point which contains it, to an understanding of system as the hermeneutic present of a stretching temporality. System, thought of in its hermeneutic circularity, no longer stands over against the philosophical tradition as if its language were not handed on from that tradition, nor is it to be regarded as the gathering of past philosophical systems and works into

an absolute truth as if that past consisted of objects awaiting collection. Rather, system itself becomes the principle of a radical temporal-linguistic finitude, such that in its systematization the past is taken up, translated to the present, illuminating the inescapable togetherness (σύστασις) of language and time in the hermeneutic situation of the present.

NOTES

1. *Walter Benjamin: Briefe*, II, 506. Quoted above in the Introduction.
2. Michael W. Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), makes no reference to Heidegger despite being concerned with Benjamin's thinking of the history of literary works. Julian Roberts, *Walter Benjamin* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), suggestively proposes that '[Benjamin's] attack on "judgment" as lying at the root of language's degradation after the fall is obviously a close parallel to the work of Lask and Heidegger'. (p91) Roberts does not, however, expand upon this remark, and nor is it 'obvious' that a proximity between Heidegger and Benjamin can be conceived on this basis. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1989), cites many of Benjamin's comments on Heidegger's work, but by reading Benjamin solely in the light of the Frankfurt School, she does not provide a suitable basis for understanding their proximity. Concerning the scholarly literature on Heidegger, there would appear to be no references made to Benjamin.
3. Eliane Escoubas, 'De la traduction comme "origine" des langues: Heidegger et Benjamin', *Les Temps Modernes*, 514-515 (1989), 97-142.
4. Rebecca Comay, 'Framing Redemption: Aura, Origin, Technology in Benjamin and Heidegger', in *Ethics and Danger: Essays on Heidegger and Continental Thought*, ed. by Arleen B. Dallery, Charles E. Scott and P. Holley Roberts (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 139-161; Christopher Fynsk, 'The Claim of History', *diacritics*, 22 (1992), 115-126. Comay writes, for example: 'Benjamin promises to provide a kind of historical concretion or focus to Heidegger's thinking - both a date and a place - a focus which, I believe, might bring out some of the practical resources still latent (despite everything) in the Heideggerian system, resources still potent for politics today' (p140). And in a similar vein, Fynsk: 'Would it be possible to read Heidegger's later thought on language in the light of Benjamin's reflections on history and thereby develop this later thought in more concrete, historical terms' (p116).
There are clear indications in both of these statements that an implicit purpose of associating Benjamin with Heidegger is to rehabilitate Heidegger's thinking from any simple affiliation to Nazism. The proximity of their projects, yet the fact that Heidegger saw his work as being in

support of Nazi reform while Benjamin understood his own work as utterly anti-fascist, must surely give rise to more serious reflection on the situation of praxis than merely the desire to find in Heidegger's work 'latent resources' which show that he was simply mistaken about the political direction of his work. To argue that Heidegger was, in some sense, mistaken about the political resources available in his work is close to assigning fascism itself to a past from which we have moved on and now judge from the wisdom of our posterity.

5. Howard Caygill, 'Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition', in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne, pp. 1-31.

6. Andrew Benjamin, 'Time and Task: Benjamin and Heidegger Showing the Present', in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne, pp. 216-250

7. Andrew Benjamin writes: 'In both instances, Heidegger and Benjamin, the present is to be differentiated from itself. In Heidegger's case this is necessary because the present is taken to be metaphysics - the "age" - and therefore the task involves "leaving metaphysics to itself" and thus to think "without" it. Here there is a differentiation that necessarily eschews relation.' (p244-5) A further difficulty with Andrew Benjamin's view concerns the understanding of 'continuity' in relation to tradition and its temporality. Whilst criticising Heidegger for counselling a break, or discontinuity with the tradition of metaphysics, he affirms Benjamin's imperative concerning the need to 'blast open' the 'continuity of history'. The meaning of 'continuity' in relation to the Newtonian view of time, which is precisely characterised by a discontinuity of isolated now-points, and in relation to a stretched or 'fulfilled' temporality, which breaks open the Newtonian, object-like now-point, was discussed in Chapter 3.

8. Heidegger's statement to this effect, in the forward to William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought*, pp. xxii/xxiii, was quoted above in Chapter 2.

9. Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, in *Kant's Werke: Akademie-Textausgabe*, vol XXI and XXII. Selections translated as *Opus Postumum*, ed. by Eckart Förster, trans. by Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Kant's series of attempts to define his system may be found in Ak XXI, 25-99; translation p228-256.

10. Immanuel Kant, 'First Introduction' to the *Critique of Judgment*, in *Critique of Judgment*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp. 385-441 (385). Translation of 'Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft', Ak XX, 195-251 (195).

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- I. Works by Martin Heidegger
- II. Works by Walter Benjamin
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