

## Heidegger: The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking (1964)

*Note: This is a reproduction of Heidegger's 1964 short essay **The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking**. The section and paragraph numbers are not part of the original essay. They were added later to make it easier to navigate the text for classroom use and in lecture notes. Here is the text:*

1. The title designates the attempt at a reflection that persists in questioning. Questions are paths toward an answer. If the answer could be given it would consist in a transformation of thinking, not in a propositional statement about a matter at stake.

2. The following text belongs to a larger context. It is the attempt undertaken again and again ever since 1930 to shape the question of Being and Time in a more primordial fashion. This means to subject the point of departure of the question in Being and Time to an immanent criticism. Thus it must become clear to what extent the critical question, of what the matter of thinking is, necessarily and continually belongs to thinking. Accordingly, the name of the task of Being and Time will change.

3. We are asking:

1. What does it mean that philosophy in the present age has entered its final stage?
2. What task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?

### **I. What does it mean that philosophy in the present age has entered its final stage?**

4. Philosophy is metaphysics. Metaphysics thinks beings as a whole— the world, man, God — with respect to Being, with respect to the belonging together of beings in Being. Metaphysics thinks beings as being in the manner of representational thinking that gives reasons. For since the beginning of philosophy and with that beginning, the Being of beings has showed itself as the ground (arche, aition, principle). The ground is that from which beings as such are what they are in their becoming, perishing, and persisting as something that can be known, handled, and worked upon. As the ground, Being brings beings to their actual presencing. The ground shows itself as presence. The present of presence consists in the fact that it brings what is present each in its own way to presence. In accordance with the actual kind of presence, the ground has the character of grounding as the ontic causation of the real, as the transcendental making possible of the objectivity of objects, as the dialectical mediation of the movement of the absolute Spirit and of the historical process of production, as the will to power positing values. What characterizes metaphysical thinking that grounds the ground for beings is the fact that metaphysical thinking, starting from what is present, represents it in its presence and thus exhibits it as grounded by its ground.

5. What is meant by the talk about the end of philosophy? We understand the end of something all too easily in the negative sense as a mere stopping, as the lack of continuation, perhaps even as decline and impotence. In contrast, what we say about the end of philosophy means the completion of metaphysics. However, completion does not mean perfection as a consequence of which philosophy would have to have attained the highest perfection at its end. Not only do we lack any criterion which would permit us to evaluate the perfection of an epoch of metaphysics as compared with any other epoch, the right to this kind of evaluation does not exist. Plato's thinking is no more perfect than Parmenides'. Hegel's philosophy is no more perfect than Kant's. Each epoch of

philosophy has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a philosophy is the way it is. It is not for us to prefer one to the other, as can be the case with regard to various world views.

6. The old meaning of the word "end" means the same as place: "from one end to the other" means from one place to the other. The end of philosophy is the place, that place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its most extreme possibility. End as completion means this gathering. Throughout the whole history of philosophy, Plato's thinking remains decisive in changing forms. Metaphysics is Platonism. Nietzsche characterizes his philosophy as reversed Platonism. With the reversal of metaphysics which was already accomplished by Karl Marx, the most extreme possibility of philosophy is attained. It has entered its final stage. To the extent that philosophical thinking is still attempted, it manages only to attain an epigonal renaissance and variations of that renaissance. Is not then the end of philosophy after all a cessation of its way of thinking? To conclude this would be premature.

7. As a completion, an end is the gathering into the most extreme possibilities. We think in too limited a fashion as long as we expect only a development of recent philosophies of the previous style. We forget that already in the age of Greek philosophy a decisive characteristic of philosophy appears: the development of sciences within the field which philosophy opened up. The development of the sciences is at the same time their separation from philosophy and the establishment of their independence. This process belongs to the completion of philosophy. Its development is in full swing today in all regions of beings. This development looks like the mere dissolution of philosophy, and in truth is precisely its completion.

8. It suffices to refer to the independence of psychology, sociology, anthropology as cultural anthropology, to the role of logic as symbolic logic and semantics. Philosophy turns into the empirical science of man, of all of what can become for man the experiential object of his technology, the technology by which he establishes himself in the world by working on it in the manifold modes of making and shaping. All of this happens everywhere on the basis of and according to the criterion of the scientific discovery of the individual areas of beings.

9. No prophecy is necessary to recognize that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and steered by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics. This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being. For it is the theory of the steering of the possible planning and arrangement of human labor. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information.

10. The development of philosophy into the independent sciences which, however, interdependently communicate among themselves ever more markedly, is the legitimate completion of philosophy. Philosophy is ending in the present age. It has found its place in the scientific attitude of socially active humanity. But the fundamental characteristic of this scientific attitude is its cybernetic, that is, technological character. The need to ask about modern technology is presumably dying out to the same extent that technology more definitely characterizes and regulates the appearance of the totality of the world and the position of man in it.

11. The sciences will interpret everything which in their structure is still reminiscent of the origin from philosophy in accordance with the rules of science, that is, technologically. Every science understands the categories upon which it remains dependent for the articulation and delineation of its area of investigation as working hypotheses. Their truth is measured not only in terms of the effect that their application brings about within the progress of research. Scientific truth is equated with the efficiency of these effects.

12. The sciences are now taking over as their own task what philosophy in the course of its history tried to present in certain places, and even there only inadequately, that is, the ontologies of the various regions of beings (nature, history, law, art). The interest of the sciences is directed toward the theory of the necessary structural concepts of the coordinated areas of investigation. "Theory" means now supposition of the categories, which are allowed only a cybernetic function, but denied any ontological meaning. The operational and model character of representational-calculative thinking becomes dominant.

13. However, the sciences still speak about the Being of beings in the unavoidable supposition of their regional categories. They just don't say so. They can deny their origin from philosophy, but never dispense with it. For in the scientific attitude of the sciences, the document of their birth from philosophy still speaks. The end of philosophy proves to be the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world and of the social order proper to this world. The end of philosophy means the beginning of the world civilization based upon Western European thinking.

14. But is the end of philosophy in the sense of its evolving into the sciences also already the complete actualization of all the possibilities in which the thinking of philosophy was posited? Or is there a first possibility for thinking apart from the last possibility which we characterized (the dissolution of philosophy in the technologized sciences), a possibility from which the thinking of philosophy would have to start, but which as philosophy it could nevertheless not experience and adopt?

15. If this were the case, then a task would still have to be reserved for thinking in a concealed way in the history of philosophy from its beginning to its end, a task accessible neither to philosophy as metaphysics nor, and even less so, to the sciences stemming from philosophy. Therefore we ask:

## **II. What task is reserved for thinking at the end of philosophy?**

16. The mere thought of such a task of thinking must sound strange to us. A thinking that can be neither metaphysics nor science? A task which has concealed itself from philosophy since its very beginning, even in virtue of that beginning, and thus has withdrawn itself continually and increasingly in the times that followed? A task of thinking that — so it seems — includes the assertion that philosophy has not been up to the matter of thinking and has thus become a history of mere decline? Is there not an arrogance in these assertions which desires to put itself above the greatness of the thinkers of philosophy?

17. This suspicion obtrudes. But it can easily be quelled. For every attempt to gain insight into the supposed task of thinking finds itself moved to review the whole history of philosophy. Not only this, but it is even forced to think the historicity of that which grants a possible history to

philosophy. Because of this, the thinking in question here necessarily falls short of the greatness of the philosophers. It is less than philosophy. Less also because the direct or indirect effect of this thinking on the public in the industrial age, formed by technology and science, is decisively less possible for this thinking than it was for philosophy.

18. But above all, the thinking in question remains unassuming because its task is only of a preparatory, not of a founding character. It is content with awakening a readiness in man for a possibility whose contour remains obscure, whose coming remains uncertain. Thinking must first learn what remains reserved and in store for thinking to get involved in. It prepares its own transformation in this learning.

19. We are thinking of the possibility that the world civilization that is just now beginning might one day overcome the technological-scientific-industrial character as the sole criterion of man's world sojourn. This may happen not of and through itself, but in virtue of the readiness of man for a determination that, whether listened to or not, always speaks in the destiny of man, which has not yet been decided. It is just as uncertain whether world civilization will soon be abruptly destroyed or whether it will be stabilized for a long time — in a stabilization, however, that will not rest in something enduring, but rather establish itself in a sequence of changes, each of which presenting the latest fashion.

20. The preparatory thinking in question does not wish and is not able to predict the future. It only attempts to say something to the present which was already said a long time ago precisely at the beginning of philosophy and for that beginning, but has not been explicitly thought. For the time being, it must be sufficient to refer to this with the brevity required. We shall take a directive which philosophy offers as an aid in our undertaking.

21. When we ask about the task of thinking, this means in the scope of philosophy to determine that which concerns thinking, which is still controversial for thinking, which is the controversy. This is what the word Sache [matter] means in the German language. It designates that with which thinking has to do in the case at hand, in Plato's language, to pragma auto (cf. "The Seventh Letter," 341c 7).

22. In recent times, philosophy has of its own accord expressly called thinking "to the things themselves." Let us mention two cases which receive particular attention today. We hear this call "to the things themselves" in the "Preface" which Hegel has placed before his work which was published in 1807, System of Science, First Part: The Phenomenology of Spirit. This preface is not the preface to the Phenomenology, but to the System of Science, to the whole of philosophy. The call "to the things themselves" refers ultimately — and that means according to the matter, primarily — to the Science of Logic.

23. In the call "to the things themselves," the emphasis lies on the "themselves." Heard superficially, the call has the sense of a rejection. The inadequate relations to the matter of philosophy are rejected. Mere talk about the purpose of philosophy belongs to these relations, but so does mere reporting about the results of philosophical thinking. Both are never the real totality of philosophy. The totality shows itself only in its becoming. This occurs in the developmental presentation of the matter. In the presentation, theme and method coincide. For Hegel, this identity is called the idea. With the idea, the matter of philosophy "itself" comes to appear. However, this matter is historically

determined: subjectivity. With Descartes' ego cogito, says Hegel, philosophy steps on firm ground for the first time, where it can be at home. If the fundamentum absolutum is attained with the ego cogito as the distinctive subjectum, this means: the subject is the hypokeimenon transferred to consciousness, is what is truly present, which is unclearly enough called "substance" in traditional language.

24. When Hegel explains in the Preface (ed. Hoffmeister, p. 19). "The true (in philosophy) is to be understood and expressed not as substance, but just as much, as subject," then this means: the Being of beings, the presence of what is present, is manifest and thus complete presence only when it becomes present as such for itself in the absolute Idea. But since Descartes, idea means perceptio. Being's coming to itself occurs in speculative dialectic. Only the movement of the idea, the method, is the matter itself. The call "to the thing itself" requires a philosophical method appropriate to it. However, what the matter of philosophy should be is presumed to be decided from the outset. The matter of philosophy as metaphysics is the Being of beings, their presence in the form of substantiality and subjectivity.

25. A hundred years later, the call "to the thing itself" again is heard in Husserl's treatise *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*. It was published in the first volume of the journal *Logos* in 1910-11 (pp. 289 if.). Again, the call has at first the sense of a rejection. But here it aims in another direction than Hegel's. It concerns naturalistic psychology which claims to be the genuine scientific method of investigating consciousness. For this method blocks access to the phenomena of intentional consciousness from the very beginning. But the call "to the thing itself" is at the same time directed against historicism, which gets lost in treatises about the standpoints of philosophy and in the ordering of types of philosophical world views. About this Husserl says in italics (ibid., p. 340): "The stimulus for investigation must start not with philosophies, but with issues and problems."

26. And what is the matter at stake in philosophical investigation? In accordance with the same tradition, it is for Husserl as for Hegel the subjectivity of consciousness. For Husserl, the Cartesian Meditations were not only the topic of the Parisian lectures in February, 1920. Rather, since the time following the *Logical Investigations*, their spirit accompanied the impassioned course of his philosophical investigations to the end. In its negative and also in its positive sense, the call "to the thing itself" determines the securing and development of method. It also determines the procedure of philosophy by means of which the matter itself can be demonstrated as a datum. For Husserl, "the principle of all principles" is first of all not a principle of content but one of method.

27. In his work published in 1913, *Ideas toward a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Husserl devoted a special section (24) to the determination of "the principle of all principles." "No conceivable theory can upset this principle," says Husserl. "The principle of all principles" reads:

*Every originally giving intuition [is] a source of legitimation for knowledge; everything that presents itself to us in the 'Intuition' originally (in its bodily actuality, so to speak) [is] simply to be accepted as it gives itself, but also only within the limits in which it gives itself there. . .*

28. "The principle of all principles" contains the thesis of the precedence of method. This principle decides what matter alone can suffice for the method. "The principle of principles" requires absolute subjectivity as the matter of philosophy. The transcendental reduction to absolute

subjectivity gives and secures the possibility of grounding the objectivity of all objects (the Being of these beings) in their valid structure and consistency, that is, in their constitution, in and through subjectivity. Thus transcendental subjectivity proves to be “the sole absolute being” (Formal and Transcendental Logic, 1929, p. 240). At the same time, transcendental reduction as the method of “universal science” of the constitution of the Being of beings has the same mode of being as this absolute being, that is, the manner of the matter most native to philosophy. The method is not only directed toward the matter of philosophy. It does not just belong to the matter as a key belongs to a lock. Rather, it belongs to the matter because it is “the matter itself.” If one wished to ask: Where does “the principle of all principles” get its unshakable right? the answer would have to be: from transcendental subjectivity, which is already presupposed as the matter of philosophy.

29. We have chosen a discussion of the call “to the thing itself” as our directive. It was to bring us to the path which leads us to a determination of the task of thinking at the end of philosophy. Where are we now? We have arrived at the insight that for the call “to the thing itself” what concerns philosophy as its matter is established from the outset. From the perspective of Hegel and Husserl — and not only from their perspective — the matter of philosophy is subjectivity. It is not the matter as such that is controversial for the call, but rather its presentation by which the matter itself becomes present. Hegel’s speculative dialectic is the movement in which the matter as such comes to itself, comes to its own presence [Prasenz] Husserl’s method is supposed to bring the matter of philosophy to its ultimately originary givenness: that means to its own presence [Prasenz]. The two methods are as different as they could possibly be. But the matter as such which they are to present is the same, although it is experienced in different ways.

30. But of what help are these discoveries to us in our attempt to bring the task of thinking to view? They don’t help us at all as long as we do not go beyond a mere discussion of the call. Rather, we must ask what remains unthought in the call “to the thing itself.” Questioning in this way, we can become aware how something which it is no longer the matter of philosophy to think conceals itself precisely where philosophy has brought its matter to absolute knowledge and to ultimate evidence.

31. But what remains unthought in the matter of philosophy as well as in its method? Speculative dialectic is a mode in which the matter of philosophy comes to appear of itself and for itself, and thus becomes present [Gegenwart] Such appearance necessarily occurs in some light. Only by virtue of light, i.e., through brightness, can what shines show itself, that is, radiate. But brightness in its turn rests upon something open, something free, which might illuminate it here and there, now and then. Brightness plays in the open and wars there with darkness. Wherever a present being encounters another present being or even only lingers near it — but also where, as with Hegel, one being mirrors itself in another speculatively — there openness already rules, the free region is in play. Only this openness grants to the movement of speculative thinking the passage through what it thinks.

32. We call this openness that grants a possible letting-appear and show “opening.” In the history of language the German word *Lichtung* is a translation derived from the French *clairiere* It is formed in accordance with the older words *Waldung* [foresting] and *Feldung* [fielding].

33. The forest clearing [or opening] is experienced in contrast to dense forest, called *Dickung* in our older language. The substantive *Lichtung* goes back to the verb *lichten*. The adjective *licht* is the same word as “open.” To open something means to make it light, free and open, e.g., to make the

forest free of trees at one place. The free space thus originating is the clearing. What is light in the sense of being free and open has nothing in common with the adjective “light” which means “bright,” neither linguistically nor factually. This is to be observed for the difference between openness and light. Still, it is possible that a factual relation between the two exists. Light can stream into the clearing, into its openness, and let brightness play with darkness in it. But light never first creates openness. Rather, light presupposes openness. However, the clearing, the open region, is not only free for brightness and darkness but also for resonance and echo, for sound and the diminishing of sound. The clearing is the open region for everything that becomes present and absent.

34. It is necessary for thinking to become explicitly aware of the matter here called opening. We are not extracting mere notions from mere words, e.g., “opening,” as it might easily appear on the surface. Rather, we must observe the unique matter which is named with the name “opening” in accordance with the matter. What the word designates in the connection we are now thinking, free openness, is a “primal phenomenon,” to use a word of Goethe’s. We would have to say a “primal matter” [Ursache]. Goethe notes (Maxims and Reflections, n. 993): “Look for nothing behind phenomena: they themselves are what is to be learned.” This means the phenomenon itself, in the present case the opening, sets us the task of learning from it while questioning it, that is, of letting it say something to us.

35. Accordingly, we may suggest that the day will come when we will not shun the question whether the opening, the free open, may not be that within which alone pure space and ecstatic time and everything present and absent in them have the place which gathers and protects everything. In the same way as speculative dialectical thinking, ordinary intuition and its evidence remain dependent upon openness which already dominates, upon the opening. What is evident is what can be immediately intuited. Evidentia is the word that Cicero uses to translate the Greek enargeia, that is, to transform it into the Roman. Enargeia, which has the same root as argentum (silver), means that which in itself and of itself radiates and brings itself to light. In the Greek language, one is not speaking about the action of seeing, about videre, but about that which gleams and radiates. But it can radiate only if openness has already been granted. The beam of light does not first create the opening, openness, it only traverses it. It is only such openness that grants to giving and receiving and to any evidence at all what is free, in which they can remain and must move.

36. All philosophical thinking that explicitly or inexplicitly follows the call “to the thing itself” is already admitted to the free space of the opening in its movement and with its method. But philosophy knows nothing of the opening. Philosophy does speak about the light of reason, but does not heed the opening of Being. The lumen naturale, the light of reason, throws light only on openness. It does concern the opening, but so little does it form it that it needs it in order to be able to illuminate what is present in the opening. This is true not only of philosophy’s method, but also and primarily of its matter, that is, of the presence of what is present. To what extent the subjectum, the hypokeimenon, that which already lies present, thus what is present in its presence is constantly thought also in subjectivity cannot be shown here in detail. (Refer to Heidegger, Nietzsche, vol. 2 (1961), pages 429 if.)

37. We are concerned now with something else. Whether or not what is present is experienced, comprehended or presented, presence as lingering in openness always remains dependent upon the prevalent opening. What is absent, too, cannot be as such unless it presences in the free space of

the opening. All metaphysics, including its opponent, positivism, speaks the language of Plato. The basic word of its thinking, that is, of its presentation of the Being of beings, is *eidos*, *idea*: the outward appearance in which beings as such show themselves. Outward appearance, however, is a manner of presence. No outward appearance without light — Plato already knew this. But there is no light and no brightness without the opening. Even darkness needs it. How else could we happen into darkness and wander through it? Still, the opening as such as it prevails through Being, through presence, remains unthought in philosophy, although it is spoken about in philosophy's beginning. How does this occur and with which names?

38. Answer: In Parmenides' thoughtful poem which, as far as we know, was the first to reflect explicitly upon the Being of beings, which still today, although unheard, speaks in the sciences into which philosophy dissolves, Parmenides listens to the claim:

*. . . but you should learn all: the untrembling heart of unconcealment, well-rounded, and also the opinions of mortals who lack the ability to trust what is unconcealed. [Fragment 1, 28 ff.]*

Aletheia, unconcealment, is named here. It is called well-rounded because it is turned in the pure sphere of the circle in which beginning and end are everywhere the same. In this turning there is no possibility of twisting, distortion, and closure. The meditative man is to experience the untrembling heart of unconcealment. What does the phrase about the untrembling heart of unconcealment mean? It means unconcealment itself in what is most its own, means the place of stillness which gathers in itself what grants unconcealment to begin with. That is the opening of what is open. We ask: openness for what? We have already reflected upon the fact that the path of thinking, speculative and intuitive, needs the traversable opening. But in that opening rests possible radiance, that is, the possible presencing of presence itself.

39. 'What prior to everything else first grants unconcealment is the path on which thinking pursues one thing and perceives it: *hopos estin. . . einai*: that presencing presences. The opening grants first of all the possibility of the path to presence, and grants the possible presencing of that presence itself. We must think aletheia, unconcealment, as the opening which first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other. The quiet heart of the opening is the place of stillness from which alone the possibility of the belonging together of Being and thinking, that is, presence and apprehending, can arise at all.

40. The possible claim to a binding character or commitment of thinking is grounded in this bond. Without the preceding experience of aletheia as the opening, all talk about committed and noncommitted thinking remains without foundation. Whence does Plato's determination of presence as *idea* have its binding character? With regard to what is Aristotle's interpretation of presencing as *energeia* binding? Strangely enough, we cannot even ask these questions, always neglected in philosophy, as long as we have not experienced what Parmenides had to experience: aletheia, unconcealment. The path to it is distinguished from the street along which the opinion of mortals wander. Aletheia is nothing mortal, just as little as death itself.

41. It is not for the sake of etymology that I stubbornly translate the name aletheia as unconcealment, but for the sake of the matter which must be considered when we think adequately that which is called Being and thinking. Unconcealment is, so to speak, the element in which Being and thinking and their belonging together exist. Aletheia is named at the beginning of philosophy,



but afterward it is not explicitly thought as such by philosophy. For since Aristotle it became the task of philosophy as metaphysics to think beings as such onto-theo-logically.

42. If this is so, we have no right to sit in judgment over philosophy, as though it left something unheeded, neglected it and was thus marred by some essential deficiency. The reference to what is unthought in philosophy is not a criticism of philosophy. If a criticism is necessary now, then it rather concerns the attempt, which is becoming more and more urgent ever since Being and Time, to ask about a possible task of thinking at the end of philosophy. For the question now arises, late enough: Why is aletheia not translated with the usual name, with the word "truth"? The answer must be:

43. Insofar as truth is understood in the traditional "natural" sense as the correspondence of knowledge with beings, demonstrated in beings, but also insofar as truth is interpreted as the certainty of the knowledge of Being, aletheia, unconcealment in the sense of the opening, may not be equated with truth. Rather, aletheia, unconcealment thought as opening, first grants the possibility of truth. For truth itself, just as Being and thinking, can be what it is only in the element of the opening. Evidence, certainty in every degree, every kind of verification of veritas already move with that veritas in the realm of the prevalent opening.

44. Aletheia, unconcealment thought as the opening of presence, is not yet truth. Is aletheia then less than truth? Or is it more because it first grants truth as *adaequatio* and *certitudo*, because there can be no presence and presenting outside of the realm of the opening. This question we leave to thinking as a task. Thinking must consider whether it can even raise this question at all as long as it thinks philosophically, that is, in the strict sense of metaphysics which questions what is present only with regard to its presence.

45. In any case, one thing becomes clear: to raise the question of aletheia, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth. For this reason, it was inadequate and misleading to call aletheia in the sense of opening, truth. The talk about the "truth of Being" has a justified meaning in Hegel's Science of Logic, because here truth means the certainty of absolute knowledge. But Hegel also, as little as Husserl, as little as all metaphysics, does not ask about Being as Being, that is, does not raise the question how there can be presence as such. There is presence only when opening is dominant. Opening is named with aletheia, unconcealment, but not thought as such.

46. The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not in the philosophy of the Greeks either. It is often and justifiably pointed out that the word *alethes* is already used by Homer only in the *verba dicendi*, in statement and thus in the sense of correctness and reliability, not in the sense of unconcealment. But this reference means only that neither the poets nor everyday language usage, nor even philosophy see themselves confronted with the task of asking how truth, that is, the correctness of statements, is granted only in the element of the opening of presence.

47. In the scope of this question, we must acknowledge the fact that aletheia, unconcealment in the sense of the opening of presence, was originally experienced only as *orthotes*, as the correctness of representations and statements. But then the assertion about the essential transformation of truth, that is, from unconcealment to correctness, is also untenable. Instead we must say: aletheia, as opening of presence and presenting in thinking and saying, originally comes under the perspective

of homoiosis and adaequatio, that is, the perspective of adequation in the sense of the correspondence of representing with what is present.

48. But this process inevitably provokes another question: How is it that aletheia, unconcealment, appears to man's natural experience and speaking only as correctness and dependability? Is it because man's ecstatic sojourn in the openness of presencing is turned only toward what is present and the presenting of what is present? But what else does this mean than that presence as such, and together with it the opening granting it, remain unheeded? Only what aletheia as opening grants is experienced and thought, not what it is as such. This remains concealed. Does this happen by chance? Does it happen only as a consequence of the carelessness of human thinking? Or does it happen because self-concealing, concealment, lethe, belongs to aletheia, not just as an addition, not as shadow to light, but rather as the heart of aletheia? And does not even a sheltering and preserving rule in this self-concealing of the opening of presence, from which unconcealment can be granted to begin with, so that what is present can appear in its presence? If this were so, then the opening would not be the mere opening of presence, but the opening of presence concealing itself, the opening of a self-concealing sheltering. If this were so, then with these questions we would reach the path to the task of thinking at the end of philosophy.

49. But isn't all this unfounded mysticism or even bad mythology, in any case a ruinous irrationalism, the denial of ratio? I ask in return: What does ratio, nous, noein, apprehending, mean? What do ground and principle and especially principle of all principles mean? Can this ever be sufficiently determined unless we experience aletheia in a Greek manner as unconcealment and then, above and beyond the Greek, think it as the opening of self-concealing? As long as ratio and the rational still remain questionable in what is their own, talk about irrationalism is unfounded. The technological scientific rationalization ruling the present age justifies itself every day more surprisingly by its immense results. But this says nothing about what first grants the possibility of the rational and the irrational. The effect proves the correctness of technological scientific rationalization. But is the manifest character of what is exhausted by what is demonstrable? Doesn't the insistence on what is demonstrable block the way to what is?

50. Perhaps there is a thinking which is more sober-minded than the incessant frenzy of rationalization and the intoxicating quality of cybernetics. One might aver that it is precisely this intoxication that is extremely irrational. Perhaps there is a thinking outside of the distinction of rational and irrational, more sober-minded still than scientific technology, more sober-minded and hence removed, without effect, yet having its own necessity. When we ask about the task of this thinking, then not only this thinking but also the question concerning it is first made questionable. In view of the whole philosophical tradition this means:

51. We all still need an education in thinking, and first of all, before that, knowledge of what being educated and uneducated in thinking means. In this respect Aristotle gives us a hint in Book IV of his *Metaphysics* (1006a if): . . . – *“For it is uneducated not to have an eye for when it is necessary to look for a proof and when this is not necessary.”* This sentence demands careful reflection. For it is not yet decided in what way that which needs no proof in order to become accessible to thinking is to be experienced. Is it dialectical mediation or originally giving intuition or neither of the two? Only the peculiar quality of what demands of us above all else to be admitted can decide about that. But how is this to make the decision possible for us when we have not yet admitted it? In what circle are we moving here, indeed, inevitably?

52. Is it the eukukleos Aletheia, well-rounded unconcealment itself, thought as the opening? Does the title for the task of thinking then read instead of Being and Time: Opening and Presence? But where does the opening come from and how is it given? What speaks in the "There is / It gives"?

The task of thinking would then be the surrender of previous thinking to the determination of the matter for thinking.

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